



# PHONOLOGY



- **Phonetics**, as discussed in the previous chapter, provides the means for describing speech sounds.
- **Phonology** studies the ways in which speech sounds form systems and patterns in human language.
- **Phonemes** are the segments used to differentiate between the meanings of morphemes and words.
- A phonetic unit or phonetic segment is called a **phone**.
- When the phones of a phoneme occur in complementary distribution, they are allophones – predictable phonetic variants – of a phoneme.

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# THE PHONEME

The French linguist, Dufriche-Degenettes, is said to have been the first to use the term phoneme in 1873, simply to refer to a speech sound.

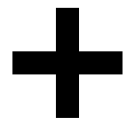
Earliest theories of the phoneme have been formulated by Baudouin de Courtenay, J. Winteler, Henry Sweet, Scerba, F.D. Sausure, Daniel Jones, Nikolai Trubetzkoy and Roman Jakobson

The approaches to the phoneme have seen it as a psychological entity , as a family of physical sounds and as a functional unit to be identified by the oppositions obtaining between it and other phonemes of the language in question

# The Phoneme Theories

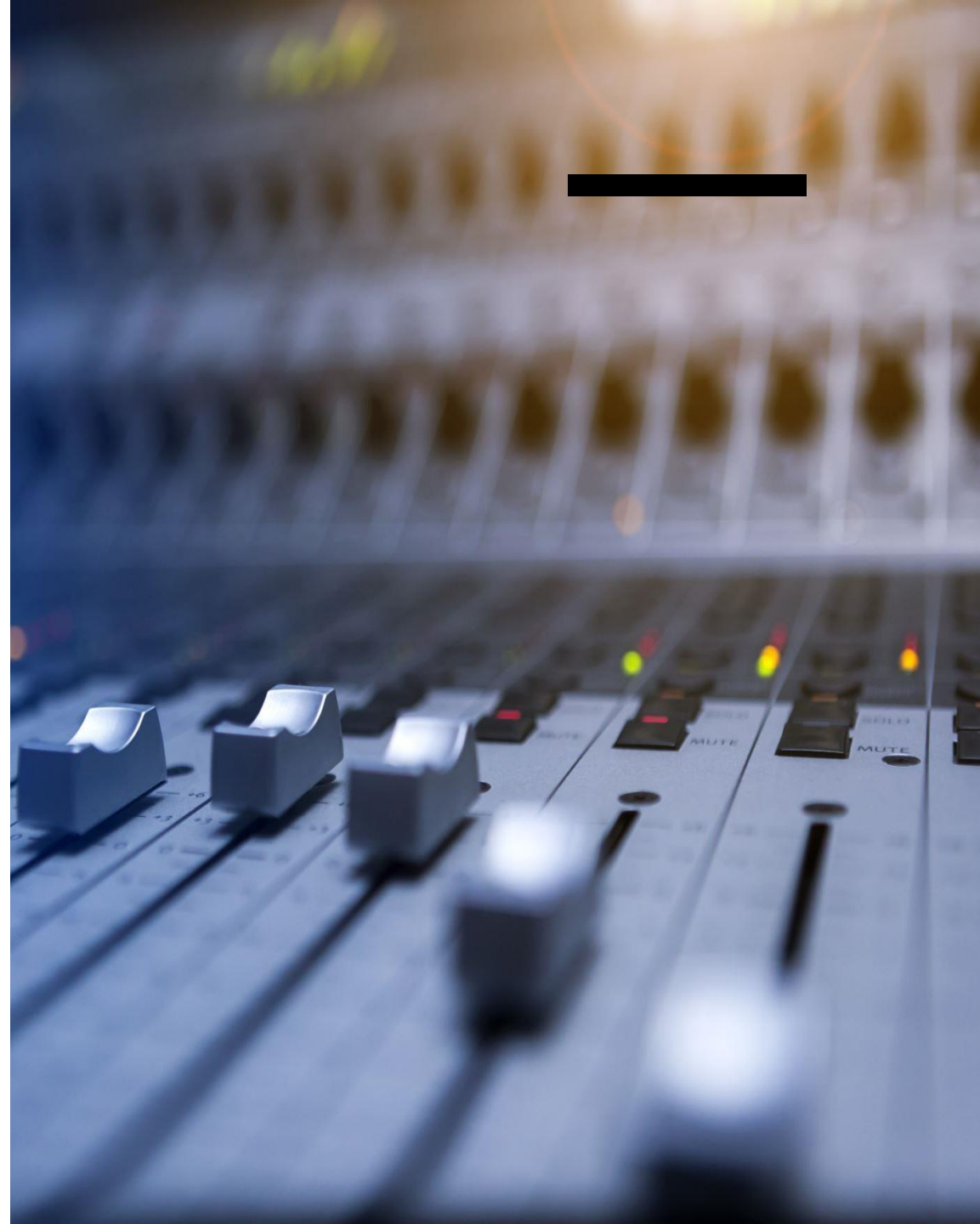
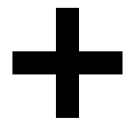
According to Fudge's views of the phoneme fall into four main classes:

1. **The “mentalist” or “psychological” view**
2. **The physical view**
3. **The functional view**
4. **The abstract view**



# The “mentalist” or “psychological” view

- The mentalist or psychological view regards the phoneme as an ideal sound at which the speaker aims



# The “physical” view:

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The physical view regards the phoneme as a family of sounds satisfying certain conditions



The various members of the “family” must show phonetic similarity to one another, in other words be “related in character”



No member of the “family” may occur in the same phonetic context as any other, this condition is often referred to as the requirement of complementary distribution



e.g. The phoneme /l/ has the following phonetic properties:

{ +Consonantal  
+Voiced  
+Alveolar  
+Lateral }

- These variants are slightly different, they still share such similar phonetic properties as <+consonantal>, <+voiced>, <+alveolar>, <+lateral> as the original phoneme.
- They occur in different phonetic contexts (in complementary distribution). They are variants (allophones) of the phoneme /l/

When the phoneme /l/ is realized in speech, its pronunciation may slightly change. It may have the following variants as its realizations:

[l]: **clear** variant when used initially, e.g. *like*.

[l̥]: **devoiced** variant after voiceless /p/, e.g. *play*.

[ɫ]: **dark** variant when used finally or medially, e.g. *midlle*.

# The “functional” view



The functional view regards the phoneme as the minimal distinctive unit of sound in a language by which meanings may be differentiated  
E.g.: sea – she / free - three

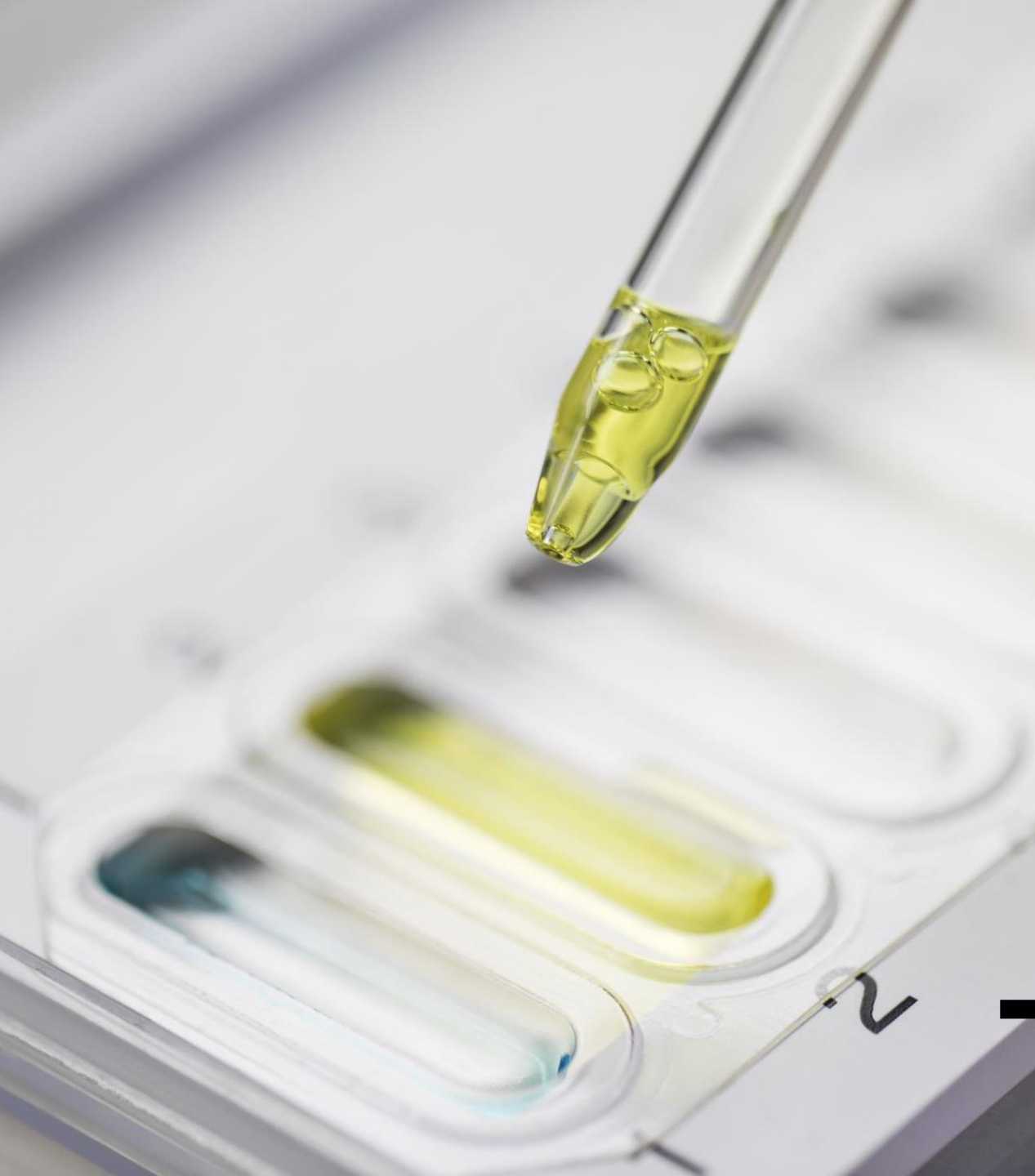


According to this view, the phoneme is defined as the minimal distinctive unit of sound in a language



Its main function is to distinguish between the meanings of two morphemes or two words





# The “abstract” view

- phonemes as essentially independent of the phonetic properties associated with them.



# Minimal Pairs

- When the two words are identical in all respects, except for one segment, they are referred to as minimal pairs.

E.g.: bit – bot

bat – bite

- Using the **Minimal Pair Test**, we can identify the system of phonemes in a language



1	<b>i:</b>	2	<b>ɪ</b>	3	<b>ʊ</b>	4	<b>u:</b>
5	<b>e</b>	6	<b>ə</b>	7	<b>ɜ:</b>	8	<b>ɔ:</b>
9	<b>æ</b>	10	<b>ʌ</b>	11	<b>a:</b>	12	<b>ɒ</b>
13	<b>ɪə</b>	14	<b>eɪ</b>				
15	<b>ʊə</b>	16	<b>ɔɪ</b>	17	<b>əʊ</b>		
18	<b>eə</b>	19	<b>aɪ</b>	20	<b>aʊ</b>		
21	<b>p</b>	22	<b>b</b>	23	<b>t</b>	24	<b>d</b>
25	<b>tʃ</b>	26	<b>dʒ</b>	27	<b>k</b>	28	<b>g</b>
29	<b>f</b>	30	<b>v</b>	31	<b>θ</b>	32	<b>ð</b>
33	<b>s</b>	34	<b>z</b>	35	<b>ʃ</b>	36	<b>ʒ</b>
37	<b>m</b>	38	<b>n</b>	39	<b>ŋ</b>	40	<b>h</b>
41	<b>l</b>	42	<b>r</b>	43	<b>w</b>	44	<b>j</b>

**Figure IV.1: The English Phonemes (RP) [45]**

# PHONEME, PHONE, AND ALLOPHONE

- A phoneme is an abstract unit. It is a **minimal distinctive unit of sound in a language**. It is also defined as **the smallest unit of language existing as such a speech-sound which is capable of distinguishing one word from another or one grammatical form of a word from another form of the same word.**
- **Phone** is a term used in phonetics to refer to the **smallest perceptible discrete segment of sound in a stream of speech (phonic continuum or phonic substance)**. A phonetic unit or phonetic segment is called a phone.
- **An allophone is a predictable phonetic variant of a phoneme.** It can be also defined as a **contextually determined variant of a phoneme**





*thank you*