Introduction to Phonology

Lecture 7

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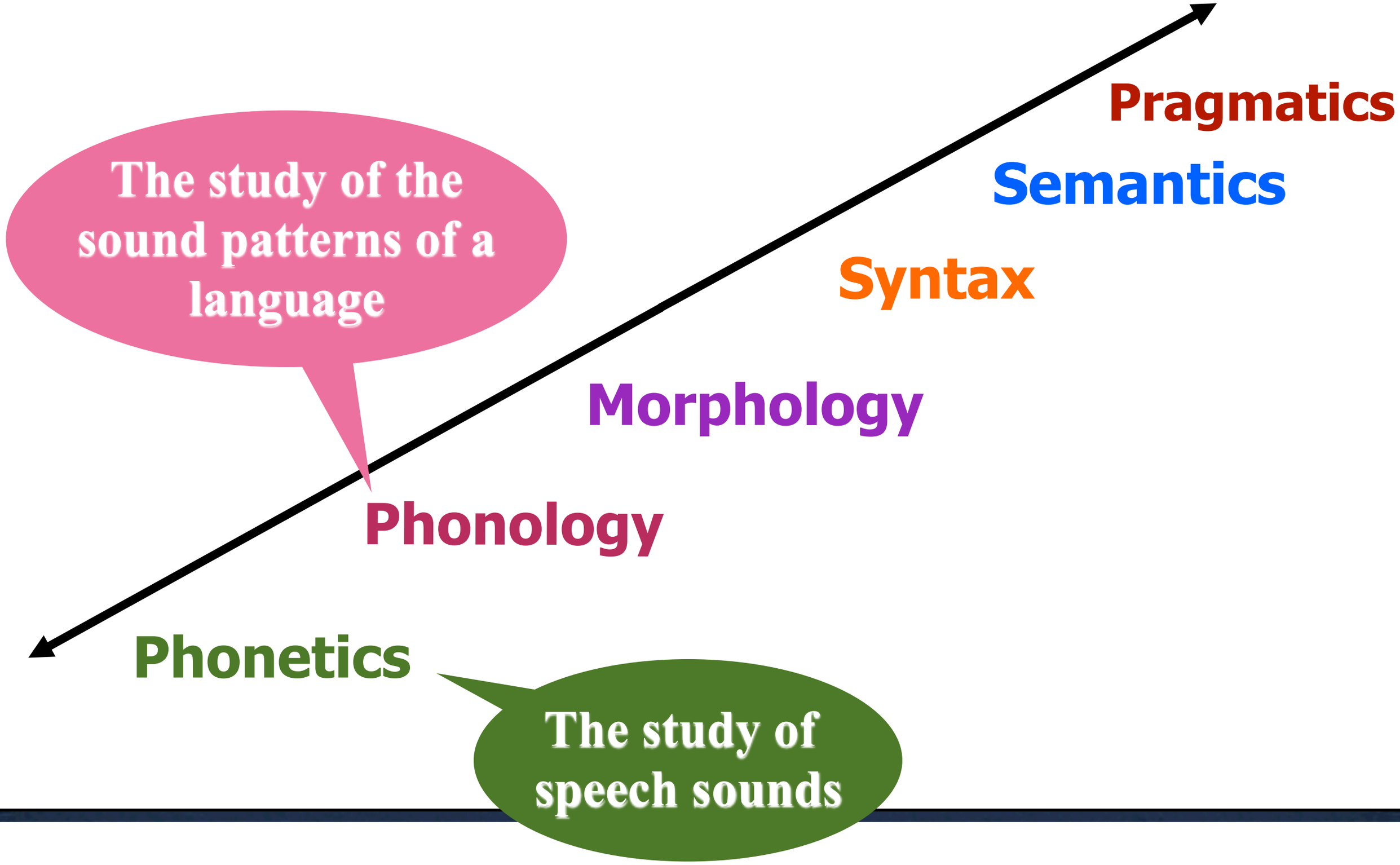
Sound Patterns

Levels of Linguistics



Objectives of Studying Phonology

1. To be introduced to the field of *Phonology*

2. To distinguish *Phonetics* from *Phonology*

3. To identify the *phonemes* & *allophones*

Objectives of Studying Phonology

4. To identify the *syllabus*, *stress* and *intonations*

5. To be introduced to the connected acted speech of English (*assimilation* & *elision*)

What is Phonology?

Phonology is the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language.

It is the study of the *abstract* side of the sounds of a language.

Concerns of Phonology

1. **Phonology considers what the 'sounds' of a language are, that is, the description of sounds.**

Concerns of Phonology

2. It takes account of the rules of combining sounds, i.e. certain combinations of sounds are allowed.

Example:

brick, break, bread **(exist in English)**

blue, blend, brick **(exist in English)**

BUT *blick* **(does not exist in English)**

Concerns of Phonology

3. A phonological analysis also explains the variations in pronunciation.

Example: the plural suffix -s pronounced as:

/s/ in /cæts/

/əz/ as in /bʌsəz/

/z/ as in /ka:z/

Differences Between

Phonetics & *Phonology*

Phonetics	Phonology
1. It studies the actual physical articulation of speech sounds in all languages.	1. It studies the abstract or mental aspect of the sounds in a particular language.

Phonetics	Phonology
2. It is concerned with describing the sounds.	2. It is concerned with how sounds combine and change according to their combination.

Phonetics	Phonology
3. Square brackets [t] are used to indicate a *phone*; a physically produced segment.	3. Slash marks / t / are used to indicate a *phoneme*; an abstract segment.

What is a Phoneme?

A phoneme is the smallest *meaning-distinguishing* sound in a language.

In order to find the phonemes of a language, phonologists developed the concept of the minimal pair.

Minimal Pairs

A minimal pair is any two words that:

(1) Contain the same number of sounds,

(2) Differ in meaning, and

(3) exhibit only one phonetic difference.

Example: pin bin

Minimal Sets

When a group of words are differentiated , each from the others, by changing one phoneme (always in the same position), then we have a minimal set.

Example:

fit feet fat foot fought fate

Phones, Phonemes and Allophones

A **phoneme** is an abstract unit of sounds. But the different phonetic realizations of any phoneme is described as **phones**.

Example: **seed /i:/** **seen / Ĩ /**

NOTE that these ***phonetic variants*** are technically known as ***allophones***.

Differences Between *Phonemes* & *Allophones*

Phonemes	Allophones
1. Substituting one phoneme for another will result in a different meaning (as well as a different pronunciation). e.g. pig big	1. Substituting allophones only results in a different pronunciation of the same word. e.g. feel feel

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Cont.

Some scholars have viewed the phone as a family of sounds (allophones) in which:

(i) The members of the family exhibit a certain family resemblance, and

(ii) No member of the family ever occurs in a phonetic context where another member of the family could occur.

Some scholars have viewed the phone as a family of sounds (allophones) in which:

(i) The members of the family exhibit a certain family resemblance (Free Variation), *and*

(ii) No member of the family ever occurs in a phonetic context where another member of the family could occur (Complementary Distribution).

Free Variation

The pronunciation may vary without signifying a change in meaning. Thus the aspirated *p* and the unreleased *p* in (kæp) are not representations of different phonemes in English but are, allophones of one phoneme.

Free Variation

By using the concept of a minimal pair, we can determine that the three p- sounds do not represent three phonemes.

Example: **[kæp^{h}]** aspirated **[kæp̚]** unreleased

Cont.

The two forms are not a minimal pair, though they involve different sounds because they are identical in meaning. These two p- sounds are said to exhibit free variation.

Complementary Distribution

When phonemes have more than one allophone in a language, the allophones are said to be in complementary distribution.

Complementary Distribution

Complementary distribution means that the *allophones* of a particular phoneme occur in different phonetic environments (that is, with different sounds surrounding them).

FOR EXAMPLE:

[p^h] as in *pot*

[$\bar{p}$] as in *hip*

[$\dot{p}$] as in *spin*

The three allophones, the aspirated, the unreleased, and the unaspirated are said to be in complementary distribution.