

Phonetics and phonology

Phonetics

What is phonetics?

- ❖ All the languages of the world use certain sets of sounds for the purpose of speech.
- ❖ The individual sounds of languages are combined to produce words.
- ❖ These words are used to produce meaningful sentences or utterances. Though all of these sounds of different languages are produced by almost the same kind of organs of speech, the process of production of these sounds gives them the distinctive features.
- ❖ How a sound is produced, what organs are involved in its production, and what distinctive features, this particular sound has got, etc. are the issues taken up in phonetics.

- ❖ It takes into account the way different sounds are transmitted through air from the speaker to the listener along with their reception by the listener.
- ❖ That is to say, phonetics studies scientifically the sounds of human languages in entirety.

The production of speech sound is studied under:

- ✓ The heading articulatory phonetics;
- ✓ its transmission is studied under the heading acoustic phonetics;
- ✓ And its reception is studied under the heading auditory phonetics.

All these processes of production, transmission and reception are quite objective in nature, and so, it becomes possible to undertake a scientific study of phonetics.

Even scientific instruments are used to measure the amplitude, frequency, pitch, etc. of sounds produced by our organs of speech.

Articulatory phonetics:

1. Articulatory phonetics: describes the role of organs of speech and the mechanism involved in production of speech sounds.
2. Acoustic phonetics: deals with the physical properties of sounds during transmission.
3. Auditory phonetics: studies the way speech sounds are received with change in their physical properties like loudness, frequency, etc.

In the modern world of globalization, phonetics has become a very important field of study because of growing inter-cultural migration of people. The emerging need of learning new languages induced by international migration has popularized phonetics.

Importance of phonetics:

- It is phonetics that makes a scientific analysis and description of speech sounds of languages, and so, it

facilitates the learning of the sounds of the target language.

- The use of modern scientific devices has made phonetics very interesting and easy as well, a subject to master.
- It is considerably helpful in understanding the differences existing among the varieties of a language.
- For example, the differences between British English (R.P.) and American English or Australian English can easily be understood in the light of phonetic description.
- The discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation existing in some languages is highlighted in phonetics, and it proves to be a much help in developing a clear concept of pronunciation in the concerned languages.
- Thus, phonetics has emerged as a highly technical and scientific field of study in recent years.