

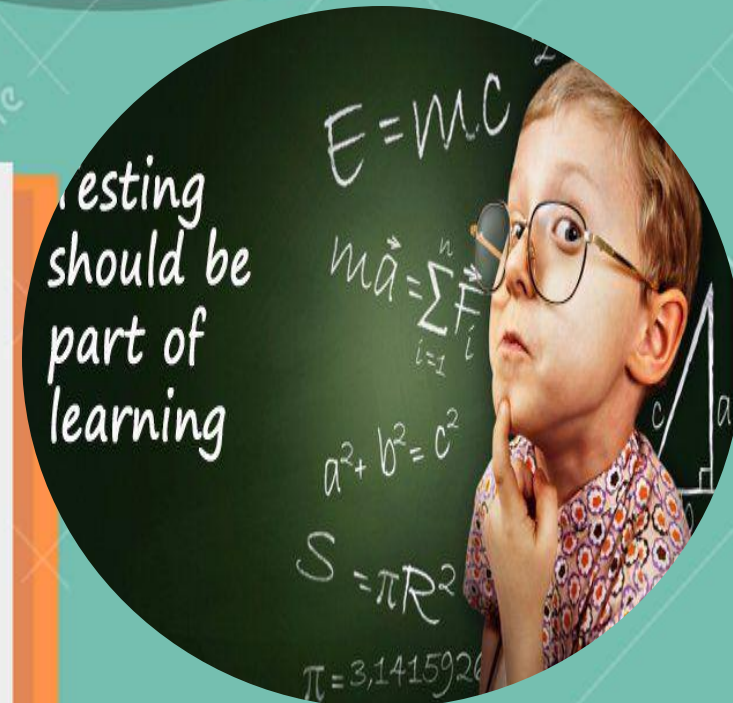


Differences between accents

Phonetic and Phonological

Questions

- 1) What types of phonological differences do you know?
- 2) What is Systemic differences?



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACCENTS

are of two main types: phonetic and phonological.



When two accents differ from each other only phonetically, we find the same system (i.e. number of phonemes) in both accents, but some of the phonemes are realized differently.



These are REALIZATIONAL differences.

E.g Vowel sound in CAT is realized as /æ / in RP, as /a/ in Yorkshire and as /ɛ/ in New Zealand.

Differences between accents

Many accents of English also differ noticeably in intonation without the difference being such as would cause a difference in meaning; some Welsh accents, for example, have a tendency for unstressed syllables to be higher in pitch than stressed syllables.

Such a difference is, again, a phonetic one.

An example of a phonetic (non-phonological) difference in stress would be the stressing of the final syllable of verbs ending in ‘-ise’ in some Scottish and Northern Irish accents (e.g. ‘realise’ ria'laiz).

Phonetic differences

By '**phonetic**' differences refer to differences in the phonetic quality of sounds (vowels or consonants, or even for that matter suprasegmental characteristics), differences which however do not affect the underlying system of oppositions nor the way the underlying units (phonemes or whatever) are distributed in the lexicon.





Take, for example, the minimal pair **bed** and **bad**. All native speakers of English consistently distinguish this pair and similar pairs; we all have an opposition in the vowel system between the vowel in the word meaning a place to sleep and the word meaning the opposite of good.



Some of us may pronounce [bed] and [bɛd]. This does not matter. We can all equally learn to identify the short value of the letter **e** with whatever we do in the place to sleep, and the short value of the letter **a** with whatever we do in not good. The actual vowel qualities – the vowel heights, or other phonetic, realizational characteristics of the two sounds, are irrelevant.

PHONOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Can be subdivided into several groups:

- ✓ Systemic differences
- ✓ lexical incidence
- ✓ Structure (phonotactics)
- ✓ morpheme and word boundary effects

SYSTEMIC DIFFERENCES

1. **Systemic differences**: Differences in the set (number and variety) of phonemes and contrasting oppositions (minimal pairs) in each accent
2. E.g., :when considering Scottish /kɒt/ for both COT and CAUGHT, we can say that the single Scottish vowel /ɒ/ will always correspond to RP /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/. That means that the Scottish vowel system has one phoneme fewer than the RP system. Or, RP consonants /ð / and / θ / are realized in Cockney accent as /v/ and /f/, making the consonantal system 2 consonants fewer than the RP inventory. Differences which affect systems, such as RP /ɒ/ and /ɔ: / vs. Scottish /ɒ/, or RP /f/ and /v / Cockney /ð / and /θ / are SYSTEMIC.

Lexical incidence differences



Lexical incidence differences involve the occurrence of different phonemes in the same word in the two accents in question and do not necessarily have implications for the phonological systems of the two accents, nor for the phonetic realization of the phonemes in question.



An example of a lexical incidence difference between northern and southern accents of English involves words such as *pass*, *laugh*, *bath*. In many northern accents these contain the vowel phoneme /æ/, whereas in the south the vowel is usually /ɑ:/. Both accents have both phonemes, /æ/ in *gas*, *mass*, for instance, and /ɑ:/ in *father*.

Structure (phonotactics) differences



Certain sequences of sounds are permitted in some accents but not in others.

For the same reason, it is easier for the Scots than for the English to spell words written with initial **wh** or **w**, e.g. *whine*–*wine*, *where*–*wear*. A Scot has only to consult his own pronunciation: is it **[hw]***ine* or **[w]***ine* — and he knows which word to write with **wh** and which to write with **w**. But an English or Welsh person, who pronounces *whine* and *wine* identically, is faced by an arbitrary decision and must learn the spellings by heart. (I am assuming here that we analyse the first member of each such pair as phonologically involving a consonant cluster, **/hw/**, so that the issue is one of whether this cluster is permitted.



Morpheme and word boundary effects differences



accent

Phonemes change in different accents according to their morphological position in words and phrases

The Cockney [pʊo] may be either *pool* or *pull*: the difference in their spelling and identity is recoverable from *pooling* ['pʊolɪn] vs. *pulling* ['pʊlɪn].

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, on the other hand, *pooling* and *pulling* are just as **homophonous** as *pool* and *pull*, and their spellings must be learnt by rote.