

Linguistic Notes

(1) Phoneme:

A phoneme is the smallest significant sound unit in a language. It distinguishes one sound from the other sound. One or more than one phoneme can make a syllable. For example : pin and bin (/p/ and /b/)

coat and goat (/k/ and /g/)

Consonants: bat, cat, hut, mat, sat, that, thin

(/b/, /k/, /h/, /m/, /s/, /ð/, /θ/)

Vowels : hat, heart, hit, hot

(/æ /, / i: /, /I/, /ɑ/)

Phonemes are abstract (mental) representations of speech sounds. They are written in slant brackets (/ /).

Phonemes can be consonants as well as vowels. Phonemes are tested with the help of “minimal pairs” or “minimal sets”. If you exchange one phoneme for another, the meaning of the word will change.

E.g. In the words enough and stuff the letters ‘gh’ and ‘ff’ represent the same phoneme ‘f’.

Allophones = Phoneme

Phonemes = Syllable

Syllables = Word

(2) Allophones:

An Allophone is a word which has been derived from Greek “allo” = “other”, “Phone” = “Sound”. It is an audibly distinct variant of a phoneme. The phoneme is an abstract representation of a sound while the allophone is a phonetic manifestation or realization of a phoneme.

For example, we can perceive three different allophones of the phoneme /t/ in the following **3** words:

top (/ t / is aspirated)

stop (/ t / is unaspirated)

better (/ t / is flap)

The substitution of one allophone with another does not change the meaning of the word.

Allophones are phonemically considered to be the same sound but they vary in pronunciations.

For example, the phonemes / t / and / æ / are pronounced perceptibly differently in the following pairs of words:

Far (aspirated), Star (unaspirated)

Mad (/ æ / is relatively long)

Mat (/æ / is relatively short)

(3)Dialect:

A dialect is a distinct variety or form of a language. Any language may have a number of dialects. The dialects are Geographical, Social and Ethnic varieties of the same language. Dialect is also called a Regional Language. The dialect differs from one another in vocabulary and accents but they are closely related to each other.

E.g. Braj Bhasha, Khari Boli, Haryavvi, Rajasthni etc.

Dialects are considered mostly as spoken varieties. They have no official status and are not taught in schools.

The speakers of the different dialects of one language use standard language in writing. E.g. French, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Portuguese began as dialects of the Latin language.

For example, Dante used the Tuscan dialect in “The Divine Comedy”.

Geoffrey Chaucer used the contemporary London dialect which provided a foundation for the Standard English.

(4)Linguistics:

Linguistics is the scientific study of the human language. Till the 19th century, it was known as “philology” (the comparative study of languages). The main concern of Modern Linguistics is to study the structure, meaning and use of language.

The science of studying language with describing the particular rules and regulations like this.

The Sanskrit Grammarian, Panini, was probably the first linguist in the world. Noam Chomsky is one of the most influential linguists of all time. Linguistics covers all areas of language study- Semantics, Grammar etc. Linguistics has close links with a wide range of other academic disciplines. Linguistic research has also proved useful in the development of computer programmes and software.

(5) Syllable:

Phonemes include distinct sounds like Vowels and Consonants in a particular language. A syllable is a cluster of sounds (Vowels and Consonants) containing at least one vowel or diphthong. Generally, there can be no syllable without a vowel or a vowel like sound. A consonant or consonant cluster may or may not precede or follow the vowel in a syllable.

For example-

The English word “I” contains only a vowel (diphthong) no consonant.

The basic elements of the syllable the “onset” followed by the rhyme. E.g. me, play, tea, to, we etc.

The consonants or consonant cluster that follows the vowel in the syllable is called ‘coda’ also called closed syllables.

Examples of coda- all, ask, eat or ink, out, up etc.

The vowel sound is called ‘nucleus’ of the syllable also called open syllables.

Examples of ‘nucleus’ – adore, busy, cat, check, hungry, language, type, unity etc.

(6) Foreign Language

Foreign Language is any language of non-native origin. Any second language is non-native origin for the learner. But in India, there is there is a difference between foreign language and second language.

Foreign language is not used widely for communication in a particular country. Thus, the French or Spanish are foreign languages in India. Individual learners learn a foreign language as a matter of personal choice or professional requirement.

In a globalized world, it is useful to learn a foreign language for Business purpose. Many schools in India teach foreign language like French and German for the purpose of broader intellectual development and cultural exposure.

(7)First Language (Mother Tongue)

The first language which is spoken by the child after his birth is called Mother tongue. So, first language is always mother tongue and mother tongue is always first language. It in vice versa.

For example, the Japanese is invariably the first language in Japan. First language always interferes in the learning of any subsequent languages or second language.

The concept of first language is not that simple in India as there are many different languages in the country. Sometimes Indian children grow up learning two or more languages simultaneously. They speak one language at home but use another language outside home. For example Madhavan, the actor born to Tamil parents in Jamshedpur where the local language is Hindi. In such a situation first language is a language that the child feels most comfortable with.

(8) Second Language:

As the name suggests second language is learnt after first language or Language 1. Second language is not native to the country where it is widely used as the means of communication.

For example,

English is used as second language in the countries like India, Nigeria, Singapore etc.

Second language is used as a means of communication in education, administration, media, industry etc. The Supreme Court of India does not allow the use of any language other than English.

There is a difference between second language and foreign language. Foreign language is not used for communication by the people in a particular country.

English is used as second language in India though it is not the language of Indian origin. Those who possess a good knowledge of English in India have better job opportunities and chances of economic advancement.

(9)IPA

IPA means the International Phonetic Association and the International Phonetic Alphabet. The International Phonetic Association was established in 1886 in Paris. It is considered the oldest organization for the Phoneticians in the world. And its aim is to promote the scientific study of Phonetics and encourage its practical application or use in life.

The International Phonetic Alphabet is a system of Phonetic notations. It provides unique symbols for all recognizable speech sounds in language across the world. The IPA was first published in 1888 and has been revised a number of times in the following sequence beginning in 1914 and continued to be published in 1947,1993,1996,2003 and till 2005.

International Phonetic Alphabet is used by the Linguists, Lexicographers, Language Teachers, Translators, Speech Therapists, Actors and Singers. The English Dictionaries published by the Oxford University Press use IPA to represent the pronunciation or articulation of words.

(10) Phonology

Phonology is the branch of Linguistics. It is the study of sound system of some particular language. Phonemes or Individual Sounds have no meaning on their own. They can make meaning only when they combine together as per Phonological rules. Thus Phonology deals with the sound patterns that are possible in a language.

Sound patterns are more or less predictable in every language. For example, English Phonology does not allow the combination of consonant sounds such as “zbf”. There is a fundamental difference between Phonetics and Phonology. Phonetics deals with the individual sounds of any language and how the sounds are produced and classified.

Phonology, on the other hand, deals with the way sounds interact with one another in a given language. Phonology studies the sound patterns as two different levels: segmental and supra-segmental. Segmental Phonology deals with individual sounds like Vowels and Consonants. And Supra-segmental Phonology deals with the elements of stress, pitch, tone and intonation.

(11)Morphology

The word 'Morphology' literally means "the study of forms". The word "morph" means "form". But, as a branch of Linguistics, morphology is the study of the formation of words in a language. And language is a symbolic system of communication. Words convey meaning. Words can be divided into morphemes- the smallest units of meaning in language. But morphemes cannot be divided further. For example, the word "morphology" has two morphemes- "morph" and "ology".

The Morphemes can also perform grammatical functions like tense formation etc. The following examples can be considered.

Tense Formation: "Play" (the base form of a verb) and
"played" (the past form of a verb)

Plural Formation: "book" (the singular form)
"book(s)" (the plural form)

Words have minimum one morpheme.

For example- "I", "It", "bat", "English" etc.

Most words have two or more morphemes. The morphemes which can be used independently are called "free morphemes". The morphemes which cannot be used independently like "ed" and "s" are called "bound morphemes".

In this way, morphology is the study of how morphemes join together to form words. It has a close connection with other branches of Linguistics like phonology and syntax.

(12)Lingua franca

The literal meaning of Lingua franca is “the language of the Franks”.

Because the Franks were a Germanic tribe that conquered Gaul (France) in the 6th century. The term “Lingua franca” is used for a language that is used as a means of communication between people who speak different languages.

The terms “link language” and “auxiliary language” are also used synonymously with “Lingua franca”. In the Middle Ages, Latin was used as a lingua franca in Western Europe. One of the native of indigenous languages or a foreign language can serve as a lingua franca.

French, Arabic and Swahili function as Lingua franca in many countries in the world. We have many different languages in India. Most people in Southern India are against the dominance of Hindi. In such a situation, English serves as a Lingua franca.

(13)Language Acquisition

Acquaintances

(11)The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man

Name of the Author : James Joyce
Type/Genre of Work : Autobiographical Novel
Year of Publication : 1916
Period or Age : The Inter-War Years.

(12)Sons and Lovers

Name of the Writer : D. H. Lawrence
Genre/Type of Work : Autobiographical Novel
Year of Publication : 1913
Age or Period : The Inter-War Years

(13) Gone With the Wind

Name of the Author : Margaret Mitchell
Type/Genre of Work : Historical Novel
Year of Publication : 1936
Period or Age : The Inter-War Years

(14) Kim

Name of the Author : Rudyard Kipling

Type/Genre of Work : Picaresque/Adventure Novel

Year of Publication : 1901

Period or Age : The Modern Age

(15) Oliver Twist

Name of the Author : Charles Dickens

Type/Genre of Work : Social Novel

Year of Publication : 1838

Period or Age : Victorian Age

The Influence of the King James Bible

(The Authorized Version) on English.

Introduction:

The English Bible Translations were largely the outcome of the Reformation movement. William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale translated the Bible into English while they were in exile in Germany.

The Importance of the King James Bible:

The King James Bible or the Authorized Version appeared in 1611. It was an astonishing achievement of scholarship. It was the culmination of all previous English translations of the Bible. For the next four centuries, the King James Bible was read in the Church of England every Sunday.

The Influence of the Authorized Version:

The Authorized Version had the greatest influence on the development of the English language.

John Piercy comments:

The King James Bible is often described as the most important book in the English language and the one single source that has had the deepest influence on the way English evolved over the last four hundred years.

The Demand of Puritans:

The Puritans demanded a state authorized version of the Bible for the sake of uniformity in the Church service. The Geneva Bible was then used widely in the Church of England. In 1604, King James I convened a conference and a team of 54 scholars was selected to undertake the translation.

The Translators of the King James Bible

All scholars, except one, were clerics (priests). All of these translators belonged to the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster. The team of the scholars was divided into six committees, with each committee having eight members. It was a difficult task as the translators used multiple Bible versions available in different languages. The Authorized Version used the Bishop's Bible (1568) as a model for the translation. It was produced as a result of seven years of painstaking team work.

An Imitation of Tyndale's Translation

The Authorized Version copied a vast deal of phrases from Tyndale's translation. Many phrases, in spoken and written English, derive from the Authorized Version, for example- a broken reed, the fatted calf, the skin of the teeth, to wash one's hands, the writing on the wall etc.

The Use of Archaic Words

For the sake of dignity, the Authorized Version used words that were archaic even at that time.

Words like - apparel, damsel, fragrant, raiment, travail etc. – were thus preserved in English.

The Vocabulary of the Authorized Version

The Authorized Version used simple vocabulary because it was intended to be read in the church. Its words and phrases have become a part of everyday language.

The Pilgrim Fathers took the Authorized Version to the United States of America. It was used in the Church of England throughout the **British Empire** during the **Victorian Period** (1837-1901).

Conclusion

Thus the Authorized Version became a widely read and most frequently quoted book in English.

C. L. Wrenn comments:

... the Authorized Version has remained a dominant influence on the literary language through it at times even on the language of ordinary talk.

Influence of John Milton on the development of English Language.

Introduction:

John Milton (1608-1674) is one of the most influential of English poets, perhaps second only to Shakespeare. He was a scholar, philosopher and statesman. From his boyhood, Milton dedicated himself to the ideal of being a great poet. He had a wide interest in languages and knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian and Dutch. At a time when Latin was still the language of science and philosophy, Milton proclaimed his faith in the potential of English for the highest poetic expression.

He is best known for his epic, the **Paradise Lost** (1658-1663). In the majesty of style and the grandeur of the subject, Milton ranks with Homer, Virgil and Dante. He was a master of plain diction as well as poetic style. Milton was greatly influenced by the Bible translations and Shakespeare.

C. L. Wrenn comments:

Like the Bible translations and Shakespeare, Milton's more outstanding permanent influence on the English language is to be seen in his phrases.....

Milton's Contribution in English Vocabulary

By Milton's time, Elizabethan irregularity in English grammar had greatly reduced. His major contribution to the English language is the invention of a number of new words, phrases and expressions.

Milton has contributed about 630 new words to English including -anarch, complacency, debauchery, didactic, ecstatic, embittered, enjoyable, fragrance, horrent, impressive, irresponsible, liturgical, sensuous, stunning, terrify, unenviable, unhealthy etc.

Milton used some compound words for the first time, for example far-sighted, full-grown, hot-headed, idol-worship, self-delusion etc.

Some phrases that Milton used for the first time are now part of the English language. These included – a heaven on earth, all hell broke loose, every cloud has a silver lining, a pillar of strength, prove a bitter morshal, to save appearances, secret conclave etc. In Milton's **Paradise Lost**, the capital city of hell is called 'Pandemonium' (chaos). The word is formed with the combination of two Greek origin words "pan" (all) "daimon" (demon).

Conclusion:

Thus, Milton had a genuine faculty for word making but he exercised it sparingly. In spite of his literary brilliance, the extent of Milton's influence on common English speech is much less than Shakespeare. Milton served as a minister under Oliver Cromwell. He was a public spirited politician. He wrote tracts and pamphlets.

Gavin Alexander comments:

Milton was an extraordinary linguist and his freedom with language can be related to his advocacy of personal, political and religious freedom.