

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ISSUES IN THE CHANGE OF PHONETICS OF SOUND: A 21ST CENTURY VIEWPOINT

Dinesh Kumar

Dyal Singh College, Karnal, India

dineshkarnal1@gmail.com

In the present paper an attempt has been made to trace out the changes in pronunciation and sound speech in the field of phonetics. As we are familiar that nowadays in the 21st century, we can perceive drastic changes in the production of speech sounds in phonetics. It has long been witnessed that speakers produce and listeners perceive non-random, systematic phonetic variants that serve as the raw material for sound changes in linguistics.

Key words: *sound change, phonetic variation, gestural overlap and reduction, perception-production relation, individual differences, origin and spread of change.*

The present study is supposed to focus on some of the recurrent areas of speech sounds, i.e. general phonetic principles underlying variation, specific phonetic ‘preconditions’ and biases arguably linked to specific patterns of phonological instability and change, and the production and perception of variation by speaker-listeners in situations of actual ongoing change and by interacting agents in computational simulations of change. The findings in these three areas of phonetic study have brought sea-changes in theoretical and empirical advancements in our understanding of phonetic change in the contemporary period.

Besides, the present study will also throw ample light how to engage readers with selected current issues in the phonetic study of phonological instability and change in a way that shows why these issues matter, why they are challenging to solve, and where research in this field is taking us.

In the twentieth and twenty first centuries, one of the most focused areas in linguistics has been how to study variations in phonetics by making a systematic study of this field coupled with its fundamental understanding. If we study the concept of sound changes through the theories of phonetics, we can witness that it tends to explain diverse phonetics variations as well as the forces that shapes it and capture how phonetic variation can contribute to, but need not result in, new articulatory and perceptual norms. Thus, theoretical approaches to change, like phonetic theories more extensively, study the articulatory and perceptual principles that lead to phonetic sound variation.

The prime motive in this paper is to engage readers with selected current issues in the phonetic study of phonological instability. Besides, some changes in phonetic sounds in a way shows why these issues matter, why they are challenging to solve, and where answers are taking us. In the beginning, an attempt has been

made to identify two major developments in phonetic theory, gesturalist and usage-based approaches, and illustrate the impact they have had on the 21st century approaches to the study of sound changes.

Keeping in view the advancements in phonetic theory in relation to the study of changes in pronunciation and sound speech in the field of phonetics, we come across two most significant and vital developments – both of which emerged prior to 2000, have had considerable impact on advancements in sound change research over the past 25 years.

The increased emphasis on the dynamics of speech articulation is one of the influential advancements in the phonetic theory, especially the view that speech articulation can be represented in terms of vocal tract gestures.

This viewpoint has been most explicitly developed in Articulatory Phonology which propounds that the gesture is the basic unit of speech. Gestures, which correspond to neither features nor segments, are dynamic actions of the vocal organs (e.g., lips, tongue tip, tongue dorsum, velum, glottis). As dynamic, physical events, gestures have extent in space and time; consequently, at any given moment in time, gestures overlap with each other.

Among the most vital and important consequence of the gesturalist perspective is that it has considerably influences the ways researchers think about, and study, the speech behaviors of speakers and listeners. Thus, regardless of whether the gesture is taken to be the basic unit of speech, there now appears to be general acceptance of the characterization of speech dynamics in terms of overlapping articulatory gestures.

References

- Gavrilova, M.I. & Odarich, I.N. (2015). Professional competence of a bachelor. *Azimuth of Scientific Research: Pedagogy and Psychology*, 1 (10).
- Bazaluk, O. A. (2003). *The origin of mankind: a new cosmological concept*. Thresholds.
- Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T. (1986). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A description and analysis*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Hismanoglu, M. (2004). *Problematic English Consonants and Vowels for Turks in Relation to ELT: Text Development*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Ankara: Hacettepe University.
- Foulkes, P., & Docherty, G. (2006). The social life of phonetics and phonology. *Journal of Phonetics*, 34(4), 409–438. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2005.08.002>
- German, J. S., Carlson, K. & Pierrehumbert, J. B. (2013). Reassignment of consonant allophones in rapid dialect acquisition. *Journal of Phonetics*, 41(3), 228–248. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2013.03.001>
- Goldrick, M. (2011). Linking speech errors and generative phonological theory. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 5(6), 397–412. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2011.00282.x>