LECTURE 2

Topic: **Segmental Phonemes**

The Plan:

- Main Trends in Phoneme Theory
- Methods of Phonological Analysis
- English Consonant Phonemes
- English Vowel Phonemes

I. Main Trends in Phoneme Theory

I.A. Baudouin–de–Courtenay
the *"mentalistic" view* of the phoneme

The phoneme is a psychological image of a sound; it is a complex perception of the articulatory movements connected with the resulting acoustic impressions all of which react on the mind simultaneously.

Ferdinand de Saussure,

L. Hjelmslev

(the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle)

the *"abstract" view* of the phoneme

The phoneme is independent of the phonetic properties, i.e. acoustic and psychological.

N.S. Trubetskoy, L. Bloomfield, R. Jakobson
the *"functional" approach*

The phoneme is the minimal sound unit by   which meanings of morphemes and words may be differentiated.

Daniel Jones
the physical view

The phoneme is a "family" of sounds; the members of the family can occur in the same phonetic context as any other member.

L.V. Shcherba and V.A. Vassilyev
the materialistic view

The phoneme is regarded as a dialectical unity of three aspects:
1) material, real and objective;
2) abstractional and generalized;
3) functional.

II. Methods of Phonological Analysis

Each language has its own system of phonemes: in one language community two physically different units are regarded as the same; but in another they are referred to as different because they perform different linguistic functions.

The English [l] - [ɫ] (clear and dark) – one phoneme: the articulatory difference doesn't affect the meaning and the communication process.

In Russian the articulatory difference between [л] - [л'] affects the meaning: "лук"– "люк" => two different phonemes.

The aim of phonological analysis is

- to determine which differences of sounds are phonemic, i.e. sense-distinctive, and which are non-phonemic;

- to find the inventory of the phonemes of a language;

- to systematize the sounds of a language or to group them into functionally similar classes.

The procedure of defining the phonemes:
1) to single out the minimal segments of speech, i.e. the speech sounds, and to record them graphically – to transcribe allophonically - the comparison of [stɪk] and [stæk] > [ɪ], [æ]; of [stɪk] and [spɪk] > [st], [sp]; the comparison of them with [tɪk], [tæk,] [sɪk], [sæk] > [s], [t], [p].
 BUT: further comparison followed by division is impossible => we have minimal, further indivisible units – phonemes;

2) to distribute the sounds into functionally similar groups with the help of two methods: *distributional and semantic.*

Distribution - a unity of sound environment, consisting of homogeneous elements within which a given element can occur in speech, i.e. preceding and following phonemes.

3 types of distributional correlations:

- E.g.: even if we fully palatalize [l] in the word "let" it will be still "let" but not "pet" or "bet";

[t] in "tone" and [t] in "stone" =>

If more or less similar sounds occur in different positions and never occur in the same phonetic context they are allophones of one and the same phoneme – *the complementary distribution*

- E.g., initial consonants in words: "pin", "bin", "tin", "kin", "chin", "gin", "fin" and so on =>

If more or less different sounds occur in the same phonetic context they are allophones of different phonemes => their distribution is *contrastive*.

- E.g., in Russian plosive [г] and fricative [ɣ] or "шкаф" and "шкап", "калоши" and "галоши".

If the sounds occur in the same phonetic contexts and don't perform the distinctive function they are considered to be *free variants* of one and the same phoneme.

The semantic method is based on the fact that phonemes can perform the significative function, i.e. distinguish words and morphemes when opposed to one another.

The principle of minimal pairs – we substitute one sound for another to find out in what cases the phonetic context being unchanged, this substitution leads to the change of meaning – **the commutation test.**

"Triangular tables for the phonemes of English"
by A.S.C. Ross and J. Josephs:

	[i:] (seen)	[e] (bet)	[eɪ] (day)	[æ] (cat)	[ɛə] (there)	[a:] (cart)
[ɪ] (pit)	peat pit	pet pit	pate pit	pat pit	cared pit	cart pit
	[i:] (seen)	pet peat	pate peat	pat peat	pears peas	car key
		[e] (bet)	pate pet	pat pet	fared fed	hard head
			[eɪ] (day)	pat pate	fared fade	marred made
				[æ] (cat)	fared fad	marred mad