

ORTHOGRAPHIC AND ORTHOEPIC TYPES OF SYLLABLES

Ma'murova Xumora Akmaljon qizi
Filologiya fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD)
Mirzayeva Dilshoda Ikromjonovna

ABSTRACT

Language performs its function as the most important medium of human intercommunication not only in oral, but also in written form. The material integument of written language is made up of graphic symbols, such as letters or hieroglyphics, and it is, therefore, of paramount theoretical and practical importance to know how the written form of language is constructed, how its components function and in what relation they are to speech sounds. Therefore, it is one of the aims of phonetics to study the relationships between the sounds of a given language and the letters of its conventional alphabet used for representing these sounds in writing.

Key words; syllable, phoneme, allophone, graphemes (monographemic, polygraphemic), syllabograph, morphograph

Introduction

The knowledge of the structure and functioning of a writing system includes the knowledge of the principles of orthography upon which it is built. English is notorious for the irregularities of its spelling and the heterogenous nature of its orthography, due to the variety of principles underlying it. This makes mastery of English spelling extremely difficult not only for foreign learners, but also for native speakers of the language.

All the principles of orthography are represented in English spelling, except the so-called phonetic principle. According to some definitions this principle consists in "spelling words in the same way in which they are pronounced" or in "exactly representing the pronunciation of words in their spelling"[4.65]

From a phonological point of view such definitions of the "phonetic principle of orthography" are incorrect because no orthography is capable of representing the actual pronunciation of even a few words of the language, let alone that of all of them, i.e. all the positional and combinatory variants of its phonemes.

Discussion

In connection with the types of syllables from the viewpoint of syllable division it is necessary to emphasize that phonetic syllables, i.e. those which are distinguished in the actual pronunciation of words, must not be confused with orthographic "syllables", i.e. those into which words are divided in writing and print or for the application of the so-called reading rules. Syllables of one type need not coincide with

those of the other. For instance, in writing or print such words as ranging, raging, maker, alien are divided thus: rang-ing, rag-ing, mak-er, al-ien, whereas their purely phonetic syllable division is, respectively, /'reɪn-dʒɪŋ/ /'rei-dʒɪŋ/, /'meɪ-kə/, /'ei-ljən/. Phonetically disyllabic words like rhythm /rɪðm/, middle /mɪdl/, hour /'aʊə/ are treated in writing or print as indivisible monosyllables [5.95].

From the viewpoint of "reading rules" the spelling of such a word as name contains two "open syllables": na-me. But phonetically, it is a single closed syllable: /neɪm/. In this connection it should be borne in mind that all orthographies represent the phonemes of the language and not their particular allophones, although some of the latter are represented by special letters in some languages (for instance, the Russian letter ы for the vowel sound [ы] if the latter is considered a variant of the /и/-phoneme).

Therefore the main principle underlying all orthographies is the phonemic principle in the above broad sense. Since letters represent mainly phonemes and not their particular allophones, it is impossible to avoid regarding relationships between letters and speech sounds as those between letters and phonemes rather than as those between letters and particular allophones of phonemes. But in order to do that, it is necessary to have an orthographic unit with which the phoneme could be correlated. In modern linguistics such a unit has come to be known as the grapheme. A grapheme correlated with a phoneme or a sequence of phonemes, i.e. a grapheme with a phonemic reference, is a letter or letter combination representing this phoneme or sequence of phonemes in writing. A grapheme is indicated by the symbol of the phoneme or sequence of phonemes represented by it included in <>, e.g. <k> — the grapheme of the /k/-phoneme. All the graphemes of a language form its graphemic system, which is sometimes called graphemics.

From a functional point of view the grapheme is similar to the phoneme; like the phoneme, it has two specific functions: (1) constitutive, since the written form of any word consists of graphemes, and (2) distinctive, since the written form of one word may be distinguished from that of another by different graphemes. The distinctive function of graphemes may be performed by them in two ways: (1) directly, i.e. because the opposed sounds represent different phonemes and, therefore, the graphemes denoting those phonemes are also different, e.g. map — nap, man — men, etc.; and (2) indirectly, when graphemes differentiate from each other two homophones, e.g. in — inn, sea — sea.

Since this principle consists in the representation of one phoneme or sequence of phonemes by only one grapheme it would be more exact to call it the monographemic principle of orthography. Monographemic orthographies are extremely rare. The overwhelming majority of the existing orthographies are polygraphemic ones, i.e. those in which one and the same phoneme or sequence of phonemes is represented by more than one grapheme [2.56].

English has only two phonemes which are represented by one grapheme each, but even these are not separate ones, but both represent the two phonemes. Each of all the other RP phonemes is represented by more than one grapheme considering as such doubled letters and combinations of single letters with silent letters because such graphemes often distinguish one homophone from another in writing, (cf. in —inn) or serve as a kind of diacritic mark indicating the phonemic reference of the preceding grapheme (cf. tense /tens/ — tens /tenz/, tatter /'lætə/ — later /leɪtə/. Thus, the monographemic principle is actually not realized at all in English orthography and the latter may be characterized as a polygraphemic one.

Graphemes, like phonemes, have a morphophonological aspect which is due to the fact that graphemes represent in spelling mainly morphemes and not their particular allomorphs (different phonic realizations) in the same way as they represent mainly phonemes and not their particular allophones. The auditory image of a syllable can be shown in transcription: unknown /'ʌn- 'nəʊn/, liner /'laɪ — nə/, maker /'meɪ — kə/. Parts of orthographic and orthoepic syllables do not always coincide.[3.106]

E.g. Word	Phonetic syllables	Orthographic syllables
table	/'teɪ-bl/	ta-ble
pro-gramme		programme/'prou-græm/
laden	/'leɪ-dn/	la-den
poet	/'pou-it/	po-et

Conclusion.

It is very important to observe correct syllable division when necessity arises to divide a word in writing. Division of words into syllables in writing (syllabographs) is based on morphological principles. The morphological principle of word division in orthography demands that the part of a word, which is separated, should be either a prefix, or a suffix, or a root (morphograph): un-divided, utter-ance, pun-ish, be-fore,]imit-ed, smil-ing.

However, if there are two or three consonants before -ing, these consonants may be separated in writing, e.g. gras-ping, puz-zling.

The suffix -ed can be separated in writing only if it is preceded by t, d, e.g. divid-ed

Polygraphs are not separated in writing, e.g. dial, ancient, patience, thoroughly.

Two or more consonants before a suffix that begins with a vowel may be separated in writing, e.g. gras-ping, trick-ling, big-ger.[1.87]

No orthography is capable of representing exactly the pronunciation of the language. But a precise representation of pronunciation is indispensable for various purposes (learning the pronunciation of unfamiliar words of one's mother tongue, in linguistic work and in learning foreign languages).

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