

PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract:

The article is devoted to the study of phonetics and phonology of the Russian language. It examines the main sounds of the Russian language, the features of pronunciation of vowels and consonants, as well as such important phonological phenomena as stress, softening of consonants, assimilation and reduction. The differences between hard and soft consonants, their role in changing the meaning of words, as well as the processes of devoicing and simplification of sounds in words are described. Knowledge of these features is necessary for correct pronunciation and a deep understanding of the structure of the Russian language.

Keywords: Phonetics of the Russian language, phonology of the Russian language, vowel reduction, softening of consonants, phonetic stress, assimilation of sounds, palatalization, hard and soft consonants, consonant clusters, sound system of the Russian language.

Introduction

The Russian language is one of the largest representatives of the East Slavic group of languages, and its unique sound features make it an interesting object of study in phonetics and phonology. The Russian language is characterized by a unique system of vowels and consonants, as well as specific phonological processes such as stress, assimilation and reduction. These processes play an important role in conveying meaning and forming the sound of the language. In this article, we will consider the main features of the phonetics and phonology of the Russian language.

Phonetics of the Russian language: Phonetics studies the sounds of the language, their articulation and acoustic properties. The sound system of the Russian language has a number of features that distinguish it from other languages.

Vowel sounds: There are only six main vowel sounds in the Russian language, which is relatively few compared to, for example, the English language. These sounds are divided into pairs by the type of labialization and pitch:



1. [a] — low unrounded vowel.
2. [o] — mid back rounded.
3. [y] — high back rounded.
4. [э] — mid front unrounded.
5. [и] — high front unrounded.
6. [ы] — high back unrounded, characteristic only of the Russian language.

Vowel sounds in Russian are subject to strong reduction in unstressed positions, when their articulation becomes less clear. Thus, [o] in unstressed positions often changes to [a], which is typical for Russian akanye, and [e] sometimes approaches [и] - a phenomenon called hiccups.

Consonant sounds

The consonants of the Russian language form a more complex system. The Russian language distinguishes between hard (non-palatalized) and soft (palatalized) consonants, which creates unique sound pairs. The main groups of consonants include:

- Softened consonants (e.g. [п'], [т'], [д']): pronounced with an additional rise of the tongue to the hard palate, which gives the sound a "й"-like nuance.
- Hard consonants (e.g. [п], [т], [д]): do not have such a rise of the tongue and sound harder.

The classical consonants of the Russian language can be divided into:

- Plosives: [п], [б], [т], [д], [к], [г];
- Fricatives: [ф], [в], [с], [з], [ш], [ж];
- Affricates: [ц], [ч];
- Nasal: [м], [н];
- Laterals: [л];
- Approximants: [р].

Consonant clusters (combinations of several consonants at the beginning or end of a syllable) are also characteristic of Russian, creating a dense and often "hard" sound.

Phonology of Russian: Phonology studies how sounds are organized in a language system to create meaningful units. In Russian, phonological processes include stress, softening of consonants, and assimilation.

Stress

Stress in Russian is multi-place, i.e. it can fall on any syllable of a word, and, moreover, it plays a meaning-distinguishing role. For example, the words:

- мука [muka] — "flour" (wheat),
- мука́ [muka] — "suffering".

Under the influence of stress, the pronunciation of vowel sounds also changes. As already noted, in an unstressed position, vowel sounds are subject to reduction.

Assimilation is a process in which one sound changes under the influence of a neighboring one. In Russian, there are two main types of assimilation:



1. Assimilation by voicedness — consonants at the end of a word or in combination with voiceless ones can be voiced. For example, the word *vkhod* is pronounced as [фхот], since [в] turns into a voiceless [ф] before [х].

2. Assimilation by place of formation — consonant sounds can change their place of formation under the influence of neighboring sounds, for example, before [н], the sound [д] changes its place of articulation.

Softening of consonants

A feature of the Russian language is the softness of some consonant sounds, which is conveyed using a special symbol — the soft sign ь. Soft consonants are separate phonemes and can change the meaning of a word. For example:

- кон — "completion",
- конь — "horse".

Conclusion:

The phonetics and phonology of the Russian language create a unique and inimitable sound that helps express shades of meaning and convey the nuances of speech. Softening of consonants, assimilation, reduction of vowels in unstressed positions and stress in different places — all these elements play an important role in the Russian language. Studying these aspects helps to better understand how the Russian language is built, and also contributes to the development of correct pronunciation skills and speech perception.

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