

Degree 3, (English Honours)

Paper – Eight

Section - 3

Subject- **Linguistics**

Phonology- Phone, phoneme, allophones, Morpho-phonetics

Phoneme

Most linguists, until recently at least, have regarded the phoneme as one of the basic units of language. But they have not all defined the phonemes in the same way. Some linguists like Bloomfield and Daniel Jones Have described phonemes in purely physical terms. Others like Sapir preferred psychological definitions. Some regard the phoneme only as abstraction fictitious unity and argue that in a language it is not phonemes but allophones that exist in reality. Furthermore, linguists of the Copenhagen School treat the phoneme as glassemes and regard them as algebraical units.

The term phoneme was first used in the late 1870's notably by Kruszewski Saussure too worked on the phonemes. But the most notable work in this field was done by sapir in 1972.

The phonmeme according to Bloomfield, is the minimal unit of distintive sound-feature. In Webster' *Third New International*, the

phoneme is defined as the smallest unit of speech distinguishing one unit from another. In all the variations it displays in the speech of one person or in one dialect as a result of modifying influences, such as neighbouring sounds and stress. In Dorfman's opinion, phoneme is a single speech sounds functioning analogously in a language, and usually represented in writing by the same letter, with or without diacritic marks.

According to most contemporary linguists, however the phoneme is the minimal bundle of relevant sound features. A phoneme is not a sound; it can be realized only through one of its allophones : it is a class of sounds, actualized and realised in a different way in any given position by its representative, the allophone : it is an ideal towards which the speaker strives, while the allophone is the performance he achieves; it occupies an area within which the various allophone move and operate; its outer limits may apporasocho but not overlap thiose of other phoneme, and it cannot invade the territory of another phoneme without loss of phonemic distinction.

By, Arshad Khan

Dept. of English

J N College Madhubani