

Morphofunctional Aspects of Phonetics

E. Evgenieva, V. Radeva

Department of Special Education, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", Sofia

The establishment of a holistic approach in the work on problems related to man will allow of their live description and analysis. The previous strong differentiation of the sciences of language has led to accumulation of extremely varied and vast information. However, this information is still away from the real language practices. The development of an approach for description of the morphofunctional aspects of phonetics will be a step toward the process of building up a specific level of the science of language and of bringing life to it.

Key words: interdisciplinary approach, universal (abstract) sound potential, unique (individual) modified sound variant, discrepancies between the different levels of language modification.

The problem to be dealt with poses a challenge because it is on the boundary of several fields of science — functional morphology, psychology and linguistics, in addition it expands the ontogenetic description of the language/speech phenomenon and it also has an applied contribution to the therapy and rehabilitation of a number of communication disorders.

The place of the problem among all these sciences is determined by the necessity to look at man and his identification as an individual using the holistic approach instruments. The existing differentiation of sciences makes it necessary to find out bridges between them in order to achieve a common theoretical and practical analysis of the problem. The study of the personality from a morphofunctional, psychological and linguistic points of view is expected to give a full picture of a definite level of the individual's self-fulfilment — the language/speech level. The presentation of the development process of the individual aims to describe the level of self-fulfilment, which corresponds to the idea of the level reached in ontogenesis. It should also be taken into account that the strongly changing environment (including the social one) brings about changes, though slow ones, of the individual. In many cases they are insignificant from a morphofunctional viewpoint, but examined in the light of psychology and linguistics they give a possibility to find out tendencies in the process of development. For example, the considerable changes resulting from the introduction, first, of the alphabet and, second, of electronic media have led to considerable changes in the model of social behaviours, as well as in the activity of sensory channels for perception of the surrounding reality. However, work on this issue starts with a description and observation of the changes

in the social realisation at the morphofunctional level of a communication model. The reason is that, firstly, these changes are related mostly to the individual's adaptation to the new environment, secondly, to the process of developing a purposeful applied model of interaction and of provoking a socially productive behaviour (in this case development of a communication level). It is only then that changes at the morphofunctional level are taken into account. It takes long for the changes imposed by the environment to have an effect on the individual's development and social functioning. This leads to a logical alternation of the state of differentiating the sciences dealing with such descriptions and their subsequent integration in quest of an overall approach for description of the observations. This understanding has made it necessary to look at the problem in question from the viewpoint of several sciences — phonetics (linguistics), functional morphology and psychology.

Dealing with the above problem is planned in the light of the phonetic aspects which correspond to the structural division of the science of language sound composition — phonetics, phonematics, speech pathology and speech therapy.

Phonetics is a science of the sound essence of the language reality. Its subject matter is *the universal sound potential* of Homo sapiens. Each individual and national language seizes or *partially* acquires this reality. The acquired portion of the universal sound potential is the one that is necessary and sufficient for the corresponding (national or individual linguistic practice). This partial acquiring leads to a definite level of modification of sounds.

Phonematics is a science of the phonologically determinable linguistic realities. Such a reality is usually described for every single language. At the same time, *every individual* realises it as a *unique variant*. Of key importance for clarifying the status of phonetics and phonematics are the concepts universal (understood as abstract language) and unique (understood as individual acquiring and modification). The interrelation between these can be found out with every individual. On the one hand, an individual can produce, create every single phoneme of the abstract language, and modify it accordingly, on the other, at the level of national realisation and mostly at the level of individual realisation. Evidence of this modification is the speech (pattern) of Bulgarians who have lived abroad for a long time. In their case a modification of the phonemic composition of the national language is observed at an individual level by bringing in of tempo-rhythmic elements of the foreign language. This shows the flexibility of the mechanisms of phoneme production, as well as the individual's unlimited process of modifying.

Logopaedia registers the difference and discrepancies between the specific sound reality of a concrete language and the specific modification on the part of an individual. Taking into account the universal-unique relation, the so-called deviation (from the concrete native language) could also be looked at as an unlawful borrowing from the universal sound reality whose potential bearer the individual is.

The morphofunctional aspects are related to a description of the instruments (organs) whose function is to carry out the production of sounds and is an object of their functional morphology (in the biological sense). It is viewed not only as a function of the voice-forming organs, but also as a result of the functions of definite brain structures and their relation to the former.

The viewpoints brought forward will be of broader significance if subjected to description and analysis on definite psychological grounds. The individual's communication ability (a considerable part of which is made up of the phonetic level development) is dealt with in the context of the higher psychic functions and their role in rationalising the information received and the individual's verbal response to it.

The description of the morphofunctional aspects of phonetics has its linguistic origin. The pragmatic aspect of the individual's communication ability defined as a linguistic manifestation is a precondition for the morphofunctional and psychic interpretation of the problem. This is what outlines the tasks of logopaedia in the existing private science practice.

The projected base points, which the viewpoint system is to be built on, cannot start co-functioning without giving reasons for the way in which they interact and without grounds that are wide enough for this interaction to develop. For the purposes of this interpretation of the problem the differentiated scientific theories interact in two basic ways: a) two by two and b) the three of them at a time. The interaction *in pairs* has already been developed and subject to a broad comment. There is knowledge of a number of discoveries achieved by supplementing the morphofunctional plan of analysis and its psychic correspondence. Traditional phonetics has described the major articulation and acoustic characteristics of speech by combining the morphofunctional and logopaedic analysis. A wide scope of questions focuses on description of the psychic peculiarities of the process of communication (production and perception, understanding and mastering of a language). These already developed relations will serve as a point of departure in the description and systematisation of the set morphofunctional basis of phonetics. The addition to this already existing theory is the work done at the level of *triple* supplement to the above fields of science. The most important peculiarity of the quest of a theoretic description of this triple interaction is its real existence in the linguistic practice. For this reason its description has been incomplete so far, which has had an effect on the pragmatic aspect of the morphofunctional aspects that are being developed. Without a detailed description of this really existing interaction it is impossible to develop adequate (live) methods for purpose-oriented formation of this important level of the communication competence.

Rationalisation of this problem is a challenge to a future study.

References

1. Spinnler, H., L. A. Vignolo. Impaired Recognition of Meaningful Sounds in Aphasia. — *Cortex*, 2, 1966, 337-348.
2. Shankweiler, D. P., K. S. Harris. An experimental Approach to the Problem of Articulation in Aphasia. — *Cortex*, 2, 1966, 277-292.
3. De Renzi, E., A. Pieczuro, L. A. Vignolo. — *Cortex*, 2, 1966, 50-73.
4. Винарская, Е. Н., А. М. Пулатов. Дизартрия и ее топико-диагностическое значение в клинике очаговых поражений мозга. Ташкент, Медицина, 1973, 9—49.
5. Современная американская лингвистика: Фундаментальные направления. (под. ред. А. А. Кибрика, И. М. Кобозевой и И. А. Секеринов). Москва, 2002, 168-203.