

## LDTTC Workshop 4



### Orthography and Sound Systems



## Writing your language

- Orthography- a writing system specific to a language
- Why is it important to have an orthography?
  - As we said in week one, a language that has not been documented is at risk of being lost forever
  - Writing systems can create community cohesion
  - Good or bad, a language with a writing system tends to be viewed with more respect

## Sound Systems

- A sound system is a list of the contrastive sounds in a language
- Activity: how many sounds are in the following words?
  - Sea
  - Stick
  - Mix
  - Choose

## The sounds of the world

- The IPA – International Phonetic Alphabet
- a consistent way of representing the sounds of language
- one-to-one correspondence between sounds and symbols
- like music, it should be accessible to anyone who has learned it

## The IPA Consonants

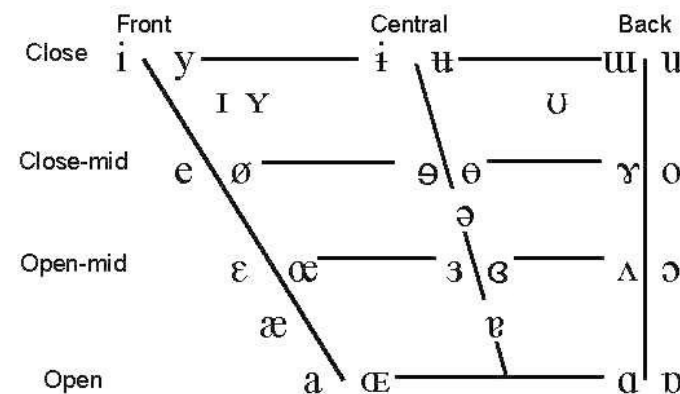
THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (2005)

### CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Epi-glottal	Glottal
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ			
Plosive	p b	ɸ β		t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ	ʔ̚
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	ħ̣ ʕ̣	h ɦ
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ				
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ			
Tap, Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ						
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ		ɮ̺	ɬ̺	ɮ̺				
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ				
Lateral flap				ɭ		ɮ̺						

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a modally voiced consonant, except for murmured *f*. Shaded areas denote articulations judged to be impossible. Light grey letters are unofficial extensions of the IPA.

## The IPA Vowels



## Sound Systems

- No one language has all of these sounds
- It is important to find out every sound that contrasts in your language
  - The IPA chart is a tool to help linguists do just that
  - Minimal Pairs are another tool

## Minimal Pairs

- Two words that differ by one sound, and have different meanings
  - Examples: hat/at, bat/pat, fat/vat, cat/gat,
  - This shows us that each one of those sounds is very important in a language, they are **phonemes**
  - Different languages will contrast different sounds
    - In English, the 'l' in 'leaf', and the 'l' in 'feel' do NOT contrast, but they sound very different
      - But they might contrast in other languages!
    - In English, the 'f' in 'leaf' and the 'v' in 'leave' DO contrast
      - But they might not in other languages

## Types of Orthographies

### Logographic System

- Basic principle: each morpheme has its own symbol
- Unless you grow up with this tradition, it can be very hard to learn
- To read a typical Chinese newspaper, you need to know around 6,000 symbols!

### Example

- 玉 – ‘jade’
- 爱 – ‘love’
- 下跌 – ‘fall’
- 叶 – ‘leaf’
- 落叶 – ‘falling leaves’

## Types of Orthographies

### Syllabary

- Basic Principle: one symbol per syllable
- Depends on the syllable constraints of the language
- A syllable is made up of three basic parts
  - onset (the consonants in the beginning)
  - nucleus (the vowel in the center- the glue of a syllable)
  - coda (the consonants in the end)

### Example

- Japanese *katakana*, *hirigana*

a	e	i	o	u
ア	エ	イ	オ	ウ
ba	be	bi	bo	bu
バ	ベ	ビ	ボ	ブ
da	de	di	do	du
ダ	デ	ヂ	ド	ヅ

## Types of Orthographies

- Alphabets – Basic Principle: one symbol per meaningful sound, or **phoneme**.
  - Roman alphabet (ex: English, Italian);
  - Cyrillic alphabet (ex: Russian, Bulgarian)

а б в г д е ж з и й к л м н о п р  
с т  
у ф х ц ч ш щ ъ ы ь э ю я

## What if you don't have an orthography?

- You can develop your own working orthography!
- Things to keep in mind when developing a working orthography:
  - 1 sound to 1 symbol is best
  - Don't use letters you don't need
  - Think about making your writing system computer-compatible. Remember, non-standard symbols take longer to type, and all people who want to read and write about your language in the future may not have your same non-standard symbols installed on their computers.

## Today's activity

- Develop, or document, your language's orthography
  - Use the minimal pairs exercise on your handout with your mentor
- In **your web template "Orthography"**
  - Write out each sound symbol with your mentor
  - Try to find the IPA used for that sound
  - Come up with an example word
    - Every word should use the sound word-initially, unless that sound does not occur word initial
    - Should be followed by the same vowel (ex, /a/)
    - Should be the same number of syllables

## Wrap-up

- Any interesting sounds, symbols used?
- Any problems encountered?
- Questions?
- Next week: Morphology and glossing
  
- Thank you!