

SOUNDS OF ENGLISH AND PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION

Jadhav A. M.

Department of English, R. B. Attal College, Georai, Dist. Beed (M. S.)
arunj1984@gmail.com

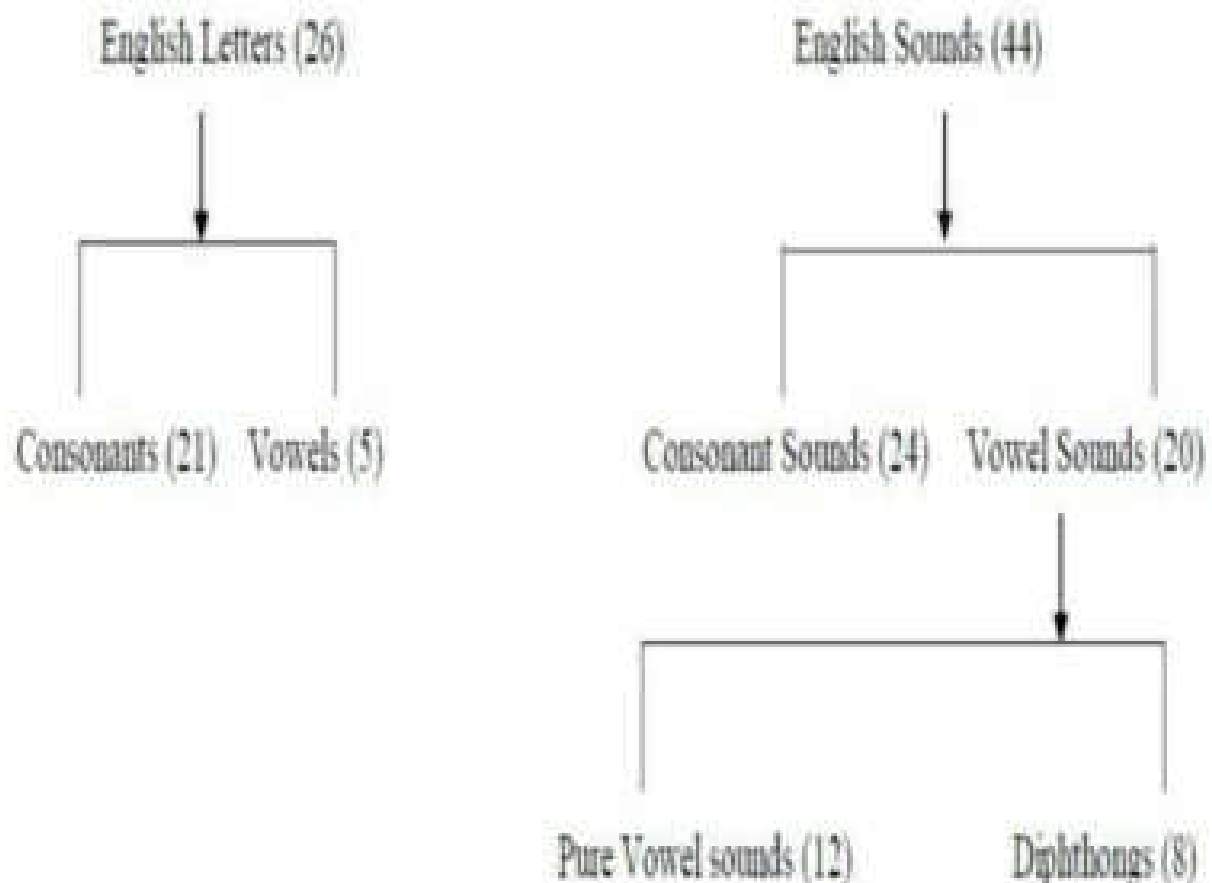
ABSTRACT

English language is an interesting language. In English language there are 26 letters and 44 sounds. In Marathi or Hindi there is no such difference between number of letters and sounds. In Marathi language pronunciation of 'k' is /k/ but in English language the pronunciations of C letter are /ts/ and /k/ ex: In the word 'church' it pronounced as /ts/ but in the word 'cut' it pronounced as /k/. The learner of English language has been facing the same problem. We used to divide the 26 letters as twenty one consonants and five vowels i.e. a, e, i, o, u. But these letters represent forty four sounds.

Keywords: Symbols, Diphthongs, Received Pronunciation

INTRODUCTION

English language has 44 sounds or Phonetic symbols. Before we deal with these sounds let us study why we use the sounds. In English language there is no one to one correspondence between letters and the sounds they produce. Some letters of alphabets carries two sounds. For instance the 'U' letter represents two sounds. If we use 'U' in 'cut' its pronunciation is /k/ but when we use it 'put' its pronunciation is /u/. The five English vowels represent twenty vowel sounds and twenty one consonants represent twenty four consonant sounds. Therefore, it is necessary to learn IPA symbols or sounds. These sounds broadly divided into two types Consonant sounds and Vowel sounds. There are 20 Vowel sounds in English. In the production of vowels sounds there is no narrowing in the mouth cavity. Vowels sounds also divided into two types Pure Vowel Sounds and Diphthongs. Diphthongs are produced when there is a smooth move from one vowel to another within the same syllable. There are 24 Consonant sounds in English. In the production of consonant sounds there is closure in the mouth cavity.



The Forty Four Sounds of English

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| ɪ READ | ɪ BIT | ʊ BOGE | u: TOO | ɪə HERE | eɪ PAK | Ain't, Don't, Few Phonemes 1991 | |
| e MEH | ə AMERICA | ɜ: WORD | ɔ: FORT | ʊə TOUR | ɔɪ FOE | əʊ OO | |
| æ CAT | ʌ BUT | ɑ: PART | ɒ HOT | eə WEAR | aɪ MY | aʊ HOW | |
| p DO | b BED | t TIME | d DO | tʃ CHURCH | dʒ JUDGE | k KILO | g GO |
| f EYE | v VERY | θ THINK | ð THE | s SIX | z ZOO | ʃ SHORT | ʒ CASUAL |
| m MILK | n NO | ŋ RING | h HELLO | l LIVE | r READ | w WINDOW | j YES |

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwTDPu2TE6k>)

Phonetic Transcription

Phonetic Transcription deals with actual pronunciation of a particular English word. In English language letter does not always correspond with sound. For instance 'a' can represent different sounds /æ/, /æ/, /ʌ/. For identification of sounds IPA (International Phonetic Alphabets) are used. The above mentioned symbols are used in phonetic transcription of words. Phonetic transcriptions of some words:

| Word | Phonetic Transcription | Word | Phonetic Transcription |
|-------|------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| gain | /geɪn/ | yard | /jɑ:d/ |
| find | /faɪnd/ | map | /mæp/ |
| light | /laɪt/ | cut | /kʌt/ |
| spoon | /spu:n/ | dean | /di:n/ |
| zoo | /zu:/ | yes | /jes/ |
| bad | /bæd/ | heat | /hi:t/ |
| saw | /sɔ:/ | west | /west/ |
| three | /θri:/ | leisure | /leɪʒə/ |
| lost | /lɒst/ | finger | /fɪŋgə/ |
| girl | /gɜ:l/ | two | /tu:/ |

In short we discussed about sounds of English and their use in Phonetic Transcription. While looking The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary we come across such symbols. These symbols help to the learner of English language about actual pronunciation of English word. The people of Maharashtra consider Marathi language of Pune city as standard language. The pronunciation is Received Pronunciation (RP) for the people of the state. Likewise if we study and use the above symbols while pronouncing English words definitely our pronunciation would be standard or received.

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