Welcome to LING 315: Introduction to Phonology

TODAY’S AGENDA

• Information Sheet/Attendance
• Introductions (names/enrollment; our turn)
• Syllabus
• A brief re-introduction to phonology

Something for you to puzzle over:
• Real Lyrics: dud luks lāk ' ledu
• Misheard Lyrics: fu luks lāk ' baedlu / dudlz luks lā ledu

What band sings this song? What does it have to do with phonology?

Phonology

Formal: The study of the structure and patterns of sounds in language.

Informal: The unconscious knowledge a speaker has about the sound system of his/her language.

This is phonology, remember?

✔ Cats meow.
✖ Dogs bark.
✔ Horses neigh.
§ Snakes hiss.
✔ Birds chirp
The Plural Rule

Add “s”

• cat-s
• dog-s
• snake-s
• horse-s

True or False?

True:

- cat-s
- snake-s

False:

- dog-s
- bird-s
- horse-s

What’s going on?

Cat and snake end in /t/ and /k/, respectively. They get an /s/.

Dog and bird end in /g/ and /d/, respectively. They get a /z/.

Horse ends in [s]. It gets /z/. 
Why?

• /t/ and /k/ are both voiceless sounds and so is /s/.
• /g/ and /d/ are both voiced sounds and so is /z/.
• /s/ cannot be followed by /s/, so a vowel must intervene.

Why Phonology?

• Practical purposes (text encoding, SLP, ESL, etc.)
• To understand the source of variation in language
• To understand the limits of language variation
• To characterize universal properties of language
• To understand the relationship between universal and language-specific properties of language
• To understand how language is organized in the brain

Old Terms (1)

Phoneme:

Allophone:

Minimal Pair:

Contrastive: asking whether two sounds are contrastive is the same as asking whether they are phonemic
Old Terms (2)

Distribution: the range of places in which a sound occurs in a word.

hat  ham  clap  pan  atom  hang
[hæt]  [hæm]  [klæp]  [pæn]  [ærm]  [hæŋ]

Conditioning Context/Environment: the particular place in a word that causes one sound to change to another.

Old Terms (3)

Free variation: when allophones occur in the same environment (their distribution is overlapping/parallel).

E.g. [pʰ] and [p] in English.

Complementary distribution: when allophones occur in distinct environments (one never occurs where the other does).

E.g. [tʰ] and [t] in English.

Underlying Representation (UR)

phonemic form
(UR; predictable information is extracted)

application of regularity

phonetic form
Things that Happen to Sounds (1)

Assimilation: a sound becomes more like an adjacent sound with respect to some property; e.g. voicing, as with English plurals.

Dissimilation: a sound becomes unlike an adjacent sound with respect to some property; e.g. manner, as when fricatives become stops in English [ˈstɪk] not [ˈsɪksθ].

Things that Happen to Sounds (2)

Insertion: a sound not present at the phonemic level is produced at the phonetic level; e.g. dance [daːnts], hamster [hæmpstə].

Deletion: a sound present at the phonemic level is not present at the phonetic level; e.g. [ɔpə] not [ɔpəɾə] for opera.