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## **THE NATURE OF PHONOLOGY IN A DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW OF ARABIC PHONEMES**

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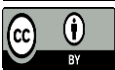
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### **ABSTRACT**

In human life, language is a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by humans to communicate with each other. As a system, language has systematic (ruled) and systematic (subsystem) properties. One of its subsystems is phonology. Phonology is a branch of linguistics that explains issues about language sounds spoken through the vocal tract. The sounds of language spoken can produce thousands of meaningful words. Thus, from a series of words that are arranged, sentences can be produced so that they become complex languages. Phonology explains language sounds in general and functionally. Phonemes can be described as the smallest language units, meaning that phoneme units have a function to distinguish the meaning of language. Before learning how to structure a language and its meaning, you must first know the sounds of the language in it. In learning Arabic, the first thing that must be known is the sound of the language. Therefore, phonology has an important role in learning and mastering language.

Keywords: *Phonology, Phonemes, Sounds.*



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## **Introduction**

Language as the focus of linguistic studies has a vital role in human life. Language and life are two phenomena that are closely interrelated. The human need for language is fundamental in fulfilling needs and maintaining the continuity of social interaction. It should be understood that language in this context is a system of sounds produced through speech. Basically, language is indeed a spoken sound, a characteristic that applies to all human languages, including Arabic. The sounds recognized by a person are then assembled into an expression that has meaning (Amrullah, 2016) .

Language in a society is very diverse due to the existence of different social groups. Each group chooses the language used according to the situation and social context. As a result, many language variations arise as a result of the social rules set by the community (Ihsan & Siagian, 2023) .

One of the branches of linguistics is phonology, which studies the sounds of language. For learners of a language, such as Arabic, understanding the sounds of a language is the first step before learning about language structure, meaning and other aspects. It is important to understand that sound and voice are not the same thing. Sounds can be produced by various frictions of an object or human voice instrument, while sounds have certain distinctive characteristics (Amrullah, 2016) .

Sounds that are not produced by human speech cannot be considered language sounds. In fact, some sounds that come out of human speech, such as coughing or sneezing, are also not considered language sounds because they have no meaning or are not included in the sound system. Simply put, language sounds are also called speech sounds, which are sounds produced by human speech. In the study of phonetics, this sound is known as sound, while in phonemics it is called phoneme (Amrullah, 2016) .

Phonology plays an important role in everyday life, especially in language use. Phonology, which deals with the sounds of language, affects the way we communicate. Every language has a distinctive sound system that determines how words are pronounced. When we speak, we naturally follow phonological rules. For example, the pronunciation of words in Indonesian is different from other languages because the sound system is not the same. In addition, aspects such as intonation and rhythm in speaking, which are part of phonology, can also change the meaning of sentences, such as when conveying questions, commands, or emotions. (Wulandari et al., 2024)

From the above background, the researcher chose the title of the nature of phonology in Arabic descriptive review is a researcher's desire to understand and

study more deeply about phonology. For language learners, such as Arabic, understanding the sounds of the language is the first step before studying language structure, meaning, and other aspects.

## **Research Method**

The method of this article using library research is data collection by studying theories from various references related to the research. According to Zed in (Malahati et al., 2023) there are four steps in library research, namely preparing the equipment needed, preparing a list of reference activities, classifying the duration of reading and writing research material. Collecting information by searching for sources from books, journals, and existing research. Descriptive analysis method, library materials found from various references are analyzed critically and in depth.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **A. Definition of Phonology**

Phonology is a branch of linguistics that studies the sequence of language sounds, including the formation, transfer, and reception of these sounds. The term phonology comes from the words "phone" (sound) and "logos" (science or order). In Arabic, phonology is known as the science of al-Aswat (Amrullah, 2016) .

The term phonology comes from the Greek phone = 'sound', logos = 'science'. Literally, phonology is the science of sound. Phonology is a part of linguistics that studies sound. The first object of study of phonology language sounds (phon) called sound system (phonetics) and the second examines phonemes called phoneme system (phonemic) (Lafamane, 2023) .

Phonology is a branch of linguistics that examines the sound system in a language. According to Rogers lass in (Ihsan & Siagian, 2023) , phonology specifically studies the role of sound in language, this includes analysis of the sounds used in speech and sound in general. In addition, phonology also includes the study of the role, behavior, and structure of sounds as part of the linguistic system. This study focuses not only on linguistic aspects, but also on the physiological, anatomical, psychological, and neurological aspects involved in the process of sound production, which is the study of phonetics.

The history of phonology can be traced through the development of the use of the term "phoneme" in linguistic studies. On May 24, 1878, Dufriche Desgenettes introduced the term in a session of the Paris Linguistic Society as a translation of the German term *sprachlaut* which means the sound of language. Later, Ferdinand

de Saussure in his book "*Mémoire sur le Système Primitif des Voyelles dans les Langues Indo-Européennes*" published in 1878, described phonemes as basic models and hypotheses that are the origin of various sounds in Indo-European languages (Wulandari et al., 2024) .

There are several experts who explain the position of phonology at the linguistic level. According to Chaer in (Triadi & Emha, 2021) , states that the object of phonological study based on the level of sound units can be divided into two fields, namely phonetics and phonemics. The difference between phonetics and phonemics lies in the focus of the study. Phonetics is generally considered as a branch of phonology that studies the sounds of language without considering whether these sounds play a role in distinguishing meaning. While phonemic is a branch of phonology that specifically studies the sounds of language by showing its role as distinguishing meaning.

## **B. Theory of Phonology**

In the discussion of phonology or the science of *al-Aswat*, the sounds of this language can be categorized into: Phonetics: Discusses the sounds of language without regard to function and meaning, such as how to produce a sound, its machraj, and properties. Phonemes: Discusses language sounds that affect meaning, such as the difference in sound between the words "rice" and "stale". Allophones: Discusses language sounds that have no distinguishing function, such as the difference between nun izhar and nun ikhfa. Based on the characteristics of sound, there are three types of sound. *First*, Vowels (صوائت/حركات): Sounds that result from the vibration of the vocal cords without constriction, such as the "a", "i", and "u" sounds; *Second*, consonants (صوامت/حروف): Sounds that result from airflow resistance, such as the "b", "t", and "k" sounds; *Third*, semi-Vowel (الحركات نصف): A sound that has the properties of both a consonant and a vowel, such as the "w" and "y" sounds.

Vowels in Arabic can be divided into several types, *First*, Long and Short Vowels: Long vowels (mad) take twice the time of short vowels; *Second*, Thick, Semi-Thick, and Thin Vowels: Thick vowels (mufakhamah) occur in platal consonants, semi-thick in velar consonants, and thin vowels in other consonants; *Third*, Single and Compound Vowels: Single vowels (monoftong), double vowels (diphthong), and triple vowels (triftong). Consonants in Arabic number 26, with some experts saying 28. Consonants are divided into several types based on the place and manner of articulation, *First*, Platal Consonants: Consonants articulated with the tongue and hard palate; *Second*, Velar Consonants: Consonants articulated

with the tongue and soft palate; *Third*, Labial Consonants: Consonants articulated with the lips (Amrullah, 2016) .

### **C. Phoneme Identification**

Phoneme identification is an attempt or process to find out whether a sound is a phoneme or not. The process is done by finding a language unit (a word) that contains a sound, then comparing it with another language unit that is similar to the first language unit. If the two are different in meaning, then it can be determined that the sound is a phoneme.

In Indonesian, for example, the word larang is compared to the word lalang. Both have similar sounds and even the same number of sounds (6 sounds). The only difference between the two is the /r/ sound in the first word and the /l/ sound in the second word. The difference between the two sounds can distinguish the meaning. Therefore, in Indonesian, /r/ and /l/ are phonemes, because they function in distinguishing meaning (Nasution, 2017) .

It should be noted that the identification of a phoneme only applies in one particular language. For example, in Mandarin (Chinese) there is the phoneme /t/ and the phoneme /th/ because there is a minimal pair, namely the word /tin/ which means 'nail' and the word /thin/ which means 'to hear'.<sup>110</sup> In Arabic there is the phoneme /ط/ and /ت/, the minimal pair such as the word /فاتر/ which means 'nail-warm' and the word /فاطر/ which means 'who creates'. And so on.

### **D. Phoneme Classification**

In the process of determining whether a sound is a phoneme or not, a phoneme classification is first carried out. This is necessary in order to get more accurate results, because each sound to be identified should be similar. In the study of phonology, phonemes can be classified into two: first, segmental phonemes, and second, supra segmental phonemes. According to Kridalaksana, what is meant by segmental phonemes are focals and consonants in phonology. What is meant by supra segmental is the interweaving or arrangement of sounds that can distinguish the meaning of a word from other words. Meanwhile, what is meant by a segment is a language unit abstracted from a speech or text context, for example, phones or phonemes as sound units, morphs or morphemes as grammatical units (Nasution, 2017) .

## **E. Arabic Phonemes**

### **1. Vowel phonemes in Arabic**

Although phoneme is the smallest unit in language sound, it has a very big role in determining the meaning of language sound in Arabic. Not only from the aspect of letter differences that make the meaning not the same, but also influenced by the length and shortness of language sounds. Phonemes that sound short do not have the same meaning as phonemes that sound long in Arabic. Vowels in Arabic include fathah, kasrah and dhammah sounds. (Amrullah, 2016)

Here are some examples of vowel phonemes in Arabic in terms of the length of the language sound, or in Arabic known as mad; *First*, Fathah Vowel Phoneme, the word (الريب) la royba) with (لريب) la royba). Both words have similar sounds and the same number of sounds (four sounds). The difference between the two words lies in the long and short aspect of the sound, which of course affects the different meanings. The sounds la and la are both phonemes. If la in the word la royba, which means there is really doubt, is then replaced with la in the word la royba, it will become no doubt, so this affects the change in meaning; *Second*, Kashrah Vowel Phonemes. The word (مسلم) muslimin) with (مسلمين) muslimin). Both words have similar sounds. The difference between the two words lies in the long and short aspects of the sound which certainly affects the different meanings. The sounds mi and mi, both are phonemes. If mi in the word muslimin which means a Muslim, then replaced with mi in the word muslimin it will become the plural form of Muslims, so this affects the change in meaning.

*Third*, Dhammah Vowel Phonemes, The word (محب) muhibun) with (محبون) muhibbun). Both words have similar sounds. The difference between the two words lies in the long and short aspect of the sound which certainly affects the different meanings. The sounds bu and bu, both are phonemes. If bu in the word muhibun which means a person who is liked, then replaced with bu in the word muhibun it will become plural form of people who are liked, so this affects the change in meaning. (Amrullah, 2016).

In addition to some of the divisions of vowel phonemes mentioned above, there are also kinds of vowels that can affect the shape and meaning of words. The division is based on the thickness of the vowel. Especially in the aspect of thin vowels. For example شرح and سرح, both of which have thin vowels. The first word means to walk, while the second word means to explain.

### **2. Arabic consonant phonemes**

Consonant phonemes in Arabic can be found in two words that have similarities or similarities in Arabic, but the consonants used are not the same. Of course, the

meaning of each of the two words must not be the same; *First*, Consonant ta ( ت ) with t}a ( ط ) تابع - طابع The consonants ta ( ت ) and t}a ( ط ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The word meanings are printer and follower; *Second*, Consonant ta ( ت ) with da ( د ) دم - تم The consonants ta ( ت ) and da ( د ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The meaning of the word is finished and blood; *Third*, Consonant ka ( ك ) with qa ( ق ) قبل - كبل The consonants ka ( ك ) and qa ( ق ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The word meanings are guarantee and shackle.

*Fourth*, Consonant da ( د ) with d}a ( ض ) ضار - دار The consonants da ( د ) and d}a ( ض ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The word meanings are house and ferocious; *Fifth*, Consonant ta ( ت ) with z}a ( ذ ) ذم - تم The consonants ta ( ت ) and z}a ( ذ ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The meaning of the word contained is perfect and blame; *Sixth*, f. Consonant z}a ( ذ ) with z{a ( ظ ) ظل - ذل The consonants z}a ( ذ ) and z{a ( ظ ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The word meanings contained are low and continue.

*Seventh*, Consonant sa ( س ) with s}a ( ص ) صباح - صبح The consonants sa ( س ) and s}a ( ص ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The meaning of the word is praising and saying good morning; *Eight*, Consonant sa ( س ) with sha ( ش ) شح - شب The consonants sa ( س ) and sha ( ش ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The meaning of the word is swimming and spreading; *Nineth*, Consonant h}a ( ح ) with ha ( ه ) حال - هال The consonants h}a ( ح ) and ha ( ه ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The meaning of the word is state and frightening; *Tenth*, Consonant h}a ( ح ) with 'a ( ع ) عرف - حرف The consonants h}a ( ح ) and 'a ( ع ) are two different phonemes that can distinguish meaning. The meaning of the word is leaning and knowing. (Amrullah, 2016)

## **Conclusion**

One of the branches of linguistics is phonology, which studies the sounds of language. For language learners, such as Arabic, understanding the sounds of the language is the first step before studying language structure, meaning, and other aspects. Language as the focus of linguistic studies has a vital role in human life. Language and life are two phenomena that are closely interrelated. The human need for language is fundamental in fulfilling needs and maintaining the continuity of social interaction.

This language sound is categorized into two, one of which is the discussion in this paper, namely phonemic. Phonemes discuss language sounds that affect meaning. Based on the division of sounds on their characteristics, linguists divide



sounds into three types, namely: vowels or صوائت، حركات (Long Short Vowel Aspect; long vowels and short vowels, Thick Thin Vowel Aspect; thick vowels, semi-thick vowels and thin vowels, Single Compound Vowel Aspect), consonants and the semi-vowel نصف الحركات . The vowel phoneme itself in Arabic consists of *fathah* vowel phoneme, *kashrah* vowel phoneme, and *dhammah* vowel phoneme. All of these phonemes in Arabic have an influence on the formation of the meaning contained in each word. Words with different phonemes in them certainly do not have the same meaning.

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