

## “THE IMPORTANCE OF PHONEMES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING”

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article provides information about phonemes, which are the smallest units of sound that help distinguish meaning in words. It also discusses the importance of phonemes in the process of learning a language. The purpose of this article is to show how phoneme awareness improves pronunciation and communication during language learning.

**Key words:** phoneme, phonology, phoneme awareness, linguistics.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is an evolving and dynamic system. It consists of many elements such as sounds, words, and grammar. Among these sounds play a significant role in helping us communicate clearly and fluently. One of the most important aspects of sound in any language is the phoneme. It is a distinctive sound that differentiates one word from another and can change the meaning. For example, the words hat and rat differ from each other by only one sound. This example shows that phonemes are vital in distinguishing words and ensuring clear communication. Without a solid understanding of phonemes, learners may find it difficult to pronounce words correctly or understand what others are saying. Understanding phonemes is essential because they play a major role in promoting literacy and helping learners comprehend and pronounce words correctly within a language.

### **MAIN BODY**

In language learning, phonemic awareness helps students identify, hear, and manipulate sounds. According to *Phonemic Awareness Activities for Early Reading Success: Easy, Playful Activities That Prepare Children for Phonics Instruction* by Wiley Blevins, phonemic awareness includes tasks such as hearing rhymes, blending sounds, splitting syllables, and manipulating phonemes. When learners are able to recognize and produce individual sounds, they can form accurate mental representations of words. This not only improves pronunciation but also listening comprehension. For example, in English, learners who can distinguish between /b/ and /p/ will find it easier to pronounce and understand words such as bat and pat. Furthermore, this awareness supports spelling and reading development. As noted by *Phonemic Awareness: Playing with Sounds to Strengthen Beginning Reading Skills* by Jo Fitzpatrick, phoneme-awareness activities (e.g., sound isolation, blending, segmentation) are essential before or alongside phonics instruction. When students understand how sounds correspond to letters, they can decode unfamiliar words more effectively. In this sense, phoneme instruction serves as a bridge between spoken and written language. Another important aspect is the variation of phonemes among different languages. Each language has its own unique set of sounds. For example, English has around 44 phonemes, while Uzbek and Russian have different systems. This can make pronunciation challenging for learners when their native language lacks certain sounds found in the target language. By studying phonemes, learners become more conscious of these differences and can adapt their speech accordingly. Similarly, the broader concept of phonological awareness (which includes phonemic awareness) is highlighted by the International Literacy Association as a key skill: “Phonics, phonemic awareness, and phonological awareness play an integral role in evidence-based reading instruction and student success.” This shows that attention to individual sounds isn’t just a detail—it’s central to how learners build strong language skills.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, phonemes play a vital role in language learning as they form the basis of pronunciation, reading, and listening comprehension. Understanding and practicing phonemes help learners improve their communication skills and gain confidence in using

the target language. Teachers should include phonemic awareness activities in their lessons to support students in mastering the sound system of the language. By doing so, learners can achieve clearer pronunciation, better comprehension, and more effective interaction with others.

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