

Such an approach to phonological relevance of the quantity of English vowels is shared by most Russian and many British phoneticians.

The problem of vowel length also concerns the status of phoneme [æ]. It is treated as a historically short vowel that tends to be lengthened before lenis consonants [b, d, g, m, n, z] almost the same as long vowels. Nowadays the most part of phoneticians considers that [æ] belongs to the subclass of long vowels on the basis of its qualitative — quantitative relations in the opposition [æ] vs. [ə].

Seminar 3

1. Give reasons why the opposition ‘vowels vs. consonants’ is considered to be a linguistic universal.
2. How is the distinction between vowels and consonants understood on the material side of phonetic units’ representation?
3. What is the way to represent vowels and consonants on the functional level?
4. Characterize consonants as a class of speech sounds. How many consonant phonemes exist in English?
5. Point out the main principles of consonant classification. Explain the divergences of the articulatory and phonological classifications.
6. Give an overview of the articulatory classification of consonants compared to their phonological classification. Discuss the relevance of the following points:
 - a) the degree of noise and the manner of articulation;
 - b) the place of articulation;
 - c) the presence or absence of voice;
 - d) the position of the soft palate.
7. Characterize vowels as a class of speech sounds. How many vowel phonemes exist in English?
8. Point out the main principles of vowel classification. Explain the divergences of the articulatory and phonological classifications.

9. Give an overview of the articulatory classification of vowels compared to their phonological classification. Discuss the relevance of the following points:
 - a) the stability of articulation;
 - b) the tongue position;
 - c) the vowel length;
 - d) the lip position;
 - e) the vowel tenseness and the character of the vowel end.
10. What criteria — articulatory or phonological — are more suitable in the view of teaching pronunciation? Why?
11. State the essence of the problem of affricates in phonology. What questions should be solved in connection with this problem?
12. What approaches regarding the problem of affricates exist in home and foreign linguistics? Which one is the most suitable in your opinion? Why?
13. State the essence of the problem of diphthongs in phonology. What questions should be solved in connection with this problem?
14. Discuss the nature of English diphthongs and prove their monophonemic character.
15. What can you say concerning the problem of diphthongoids?
16. Discuss the importance of the division of English vowels into monophthongs, diphthongs and diphthongoids in connection with language teaching.
17. Give an account of factors that can influence the quantity of the vowel.
18. Can vowel length differentiate the meaning? Why does this question constitute the subject of controversy among home and foreign linguists?
19. What are the laws characterizing any language system according to V.A. Vassilyev? How does this statement explain the connection between the quantity and quality of vowels.
20. What can you say concerning the status of the phoneme [æ]?