

1.8. PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION

In some languages spelling does not reflect the phonetic structure of a word. This is especially true of the English language in which owing to the peculiarities of its historical development, there is a great difference between the spelling of a word and its pronunciation.

The distance existing between the pronunciation of the word and its spelling creates a special problem in English which is unknown in Ukrainian where spelling is based on the phonematic principle.

The problem could be solved by creating a system of sounds, representing pronunciation – phonetic transcription.

Henry Sweet (1877) described two types of phonetic transcription in English: **broad** and **narrow**.

The **narrow** transcription symbolizes all the speech sounds and all their shades and could be used in different languages.

The **broad** transcription was derived from the narrow transcription for each particular language.

Henry Sweet laid down the principle of symbolizing in Broad transcription only those sounds which were capable of distinguishing one sound from another, i.e. he proposed the method of selection phonetic symbols which is now called phonematic.

D. Jones wrote (1962) that the broad transcription which represents only the problems of a definite language, using for this purpose the minimum number of the letter shapes, comprising a limited number of ordinary Roman letters may be termed phonematic.

Broad and narrow types of transcription are used for different purposes.

Narrow transcription is usually applied for scientific investigations. Broad (phonematic) type of transcription is widely used in English in teaching pronunciation, especially with foreign students.

In teaching English to Ukrainian learners a broad type of transcription is

applied, that is a transcription based on phonematic principals.

In English a separate sign represents a separate phoneme. To achieve it, Roman letters were used in phonetic transcription with the additional signs of the narrow form of transcription, adopted by the International Phonetic Association. Thus, all the English short and long vowel phonemes have different signs: [I] – [J]; [A] – [R]; [P] – [L]; [V] – [H]; [q] – [E:].

The signs of the transcription are enclosed in square brackets. Additional diacritical signs used in transcription in English are:

the sign (:) or (·) denoting length of vowel phonemes, e.g.

girl [gE:l], he [hJ], [hi·];

the sign (') placed before and above a syllable, denotes a primary stress, e.g.

a boy [q 'bOl];

the sign (") placed before and below a syllable, denotes a secondary stress, e.g.

competition ["kPmpl'tISn].

Ukrainian phonetic transcription is also based on the phonematic principle. In dealing with Ukrainian sounds the Ukrainian capital letters are used enclosed in square brackets and one additional sign [G] as in [ГАНОК] is added.

Diacritical signs are more numerous than in English.

Thus, the sign (') is placed after a consonant to denote palatalization. The sign (–) placed above consonants denotes that they are long.

Diacritical signs are of greater importance in Ukrainian than in English. Having been added to a sound in phonetic transcription they may change the meaning of the word.

Thus, the phonetic sign (–) above the sound “H” denotes another phoneme. Compare the words *причина* [ПРИЧИНА] – *cause, reason* and *причина* [ПРИЧИНА] – *mad, crazy*.

The enormous gap between the spelling and the pronunciation in English makes the application of transcription in teaching English pronunciation essential and even inevitable.