

## (Second Year) Lecture No. 11

### Chapter 13: Problems in Phonemic Analysis (P. 97-99)

#### First: Affricates

One of the most important problems of phonemic analysis in English is the case of affricates. Affricates are called **complex consonants** because they are composed of two consonants i.e. a stop followed by a fricative. We have two affricates in English which are /tʃ/ and /dʒ/.

/tʃ/ is seen as a **stop** sound /t/ followed by the **fricative** /ʃ/ as in "chair" /tʃɜ:/.

/dʒ/ is seen as a **stop** sound /d/ followed by the **fricative** /ʒ/ as in "jam" /dʒæm/.

#### Q: Is the affricate one phoneme or two phonemes?

There are two approaches to deal with analysis of affricates:

##### A. Two-phoneme Analysis

Based on this approach, the affricate is to be considered as **two** phonemes, which are /t/ and /ʃ/, /d/ and /ʒ/. This analysis is motivated by the idea of **economy**. This means that there is no need to have two extra symbols in the list of English phonemes (/tʃ/ and /dʒ/), what we need is the four symbols (/t/, /d/ and /ʃ/ and /ʒ/) which are already found in the list.

If we adopt the two-phoneme analysis, the word "church" would be made up of **five** sounds /t- ʃ- ɜ:- t- ʃ/.

## B. One-phoneme Analysis

Based on this analysis, an affricate is considered as a distinct phoneme which should be given a distinct symbol. In this case, we will have two extra symbols in the list (/tʃ/ and /dʒ/).

If we adopt the one-phoneme analysis, the word "church" would be made up of **three** sounds /tʃ- ɜ:- tʃ/.

This analysis is motivated by several assumptions:

1. Phonetic quality: it is assumed that there are **acoustic differences** between the sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ when they are alone and when they are parts of an affricates. More specifically, the sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ tend to be longer when they are alone from their counterparts in the affricates.

**Note:** Not enough research has been conducted to prove this.

2. Distribution: it is assumed that the affricates can be found in different positions of words (initial, medial, and final). This makes them distinct phonemes and should be treated as individual phonemes.

**Note:** There are phonemes that cannot occur in all positions, yet they are phonemes such as /h/ and /r/.

3. Consonant Clusters: it is assumed that affricates can combine with other consonants to make clusters of consonants such as (watched /wɒtʃt/ and wedged /wedʒd/).

Note: However, affricates cannot be parts of initial clusters.

4. Native speakers' Intuition: most native speakers who do not have phonetic knowledge feel that an affricate is one phoneme not two when they are asked about their opinion. If we are guided by their intuition, we can say they are distinct phonemes.

Note: It is not accurate because sometimes native speakers intuition might be affected by spelling or the nature of the task given to them.

The four assumptions mentioned above can more convincing if they are taken into account altogether, however, no one of them is convincing enough by itself.