



昆明理工大學
KUNMING UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



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HPEN7004

Key Issues in Linguistics

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Minimal pairs

最小对立体



Tin & Din

- Phonological analysis relies on the principle that certain sounds cause changes in the meaning of a word, whereas other sound do not.
- Eg. Tin [tin], if we replace [t] by [d], a different word result: *din*. [t] and [d], are thus important sounds in English, because they enable us to distinguish *tin* and *din*, *tin* and *din*, and many more word pairs.



[i:] & [i]

- [i:] and [i] can be shown to be important units too, because they distinguish between *beat* and *bit*, *bead* and *bid* and many other pairs.
- This called the “**MINIMAL PAIRS**” test, can be used to find out which sound substitutions cause differences of meaning.



Some of the Minimal Pairs

- Vowels

- /i:/- /i/ beat-bit /i/- /ɛ/ bit-bet /ɛ/- /a/ bet-bat /a/- /ʌ/ bat-but
- /ʌ/- /a:/ but-heart /a:/- /ɔ/ heart-hot /ɔ/- /ɔ:/ pot-port
- /ɔ:/- /ʊ/ port-put /ʊ/- /u:/ full-fool /u:/- /ʊ:/ cool-curl



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Some of the Minimal Pairs

- Vowels

- /ɜ:/ - /ei/ girl-gale

- /ei/ - /ai/ tale-tile

- /ai/ - /ɔi/ tile-toil

- /ɔi/ - /ou/ toil-toll

- /ou/ - /au/ tone-town

- /au/ - /iə/ how-here

- /iə/ - /ɛ:/ here-hair

- /ɛ:/ - /ʊə/ pair-poor

- /ʊə/ - /i:/ poor-pea



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Some of the Minimal Pairs

- Consonants

- /p/-/b/ pit-bin /b/-/t/ bin-tin /t/-/d/ tin-din /d/-/k/ din-kin
- /k/-/g/ coat-goat /g/-/h/ got-hot /h/-/m/ height-might
- /m/-/n/ might-night /n/-/ŋ/ kin-king /ŋ/-/l/ tin-till



Some of the Minimal Pairs

- Consonants

- /l/-/r/ led-red /r/-/w/ lad-wad /w/-/j/ wet-yet
- /j/-/tʃ/ yolk-choke /tʃ/-/dʒ/ choke-joke /dʒ/-/f/ jade-fade
- /f/-/v/ fail-veil /v/-/θ/ heave-heath /θ/-/ð/ wreath-wreathe



Some of the Minimal Pairs

- Consonants

- /θ/-/s/ though-sew /s/-/z/ bus-buzz /z/-/ʃ/ zoo-shoe
- /ʃ/-/ʒ/ Confucian-confusion /ʒ/-/t/ beige-bait



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tian & dian

In every Chinese syllable (pīn yīn), it always has four tones “^ˉ, ^ˊ, ^ˇ, ^ˋ”, like “^ˉa, ^ˊa, ^ˇa, ^ˋa”. And every tone may has none or several Chinese characters.



tian & dian

Eg.

tian -

tiān,

天
添

tián,

田
甜

tiǎn,

舔
腆

tiàn

舔
填

dian -

diān,

滇
颠

dián,

--
--

diǎn,

点
典

diàn

殿
电



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◆ háng xíng háng xíng háng háng xíng, cháng zhǎng cháng zhǎng cháng cháng zhǎng

◆ 行 行 行 行 行 行 行, 长 长 长 长 长 长 长。

◆ 行 háng: career, job

◆ 行 xíng: well

◆ 长 cháng: adv. always or adj. long

◆ 长 zhǎng: grow

Every job you do, you can do it well.

Every time it grows, it will grow very long.



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Thank you for listening!

