

Introduction

Why is it necessary to study phonetics and phonology?

1. To understand the principles regulating the use of sounds in spoken English.
2. All aspects of language learning revolve around the basis of phonetics and phonology because sounds are the basis of a spoken language.

Phonetics, is the scientific study of human speech sounds. It deals with production, transmission, and perception of sounds. In other words, articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetics, and auditory phonetics. Further, phonetics is not language specific and concerned with physical aspects of sounds. Furthermore, phonetics studies sounds as segments.

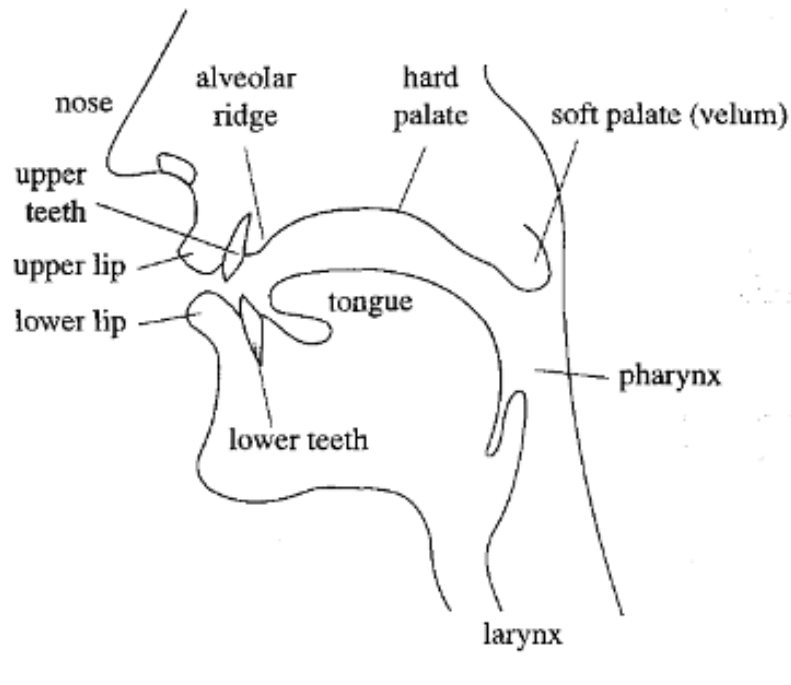
- **Articulatory phonetics**, studies the way speech sounds are made ("articulated" by the vocal organs).
- **Acoustic phonetics**, studies the physical properties of speech sounds as they are transmitted between mouth and ear.
- **Auditory phonetics**, studies the perceptual response to speech sounds, as mediated by ear, auditory nerve and brain.

Phonology, is the scientific study of human speech sound system of a particular language. It is language specific and concerned with the abstract aspects of sounds. Moreover, phonology studies the supra-segmental features of sounds (beyond segments), such as stress and intonation.

A Phoneme, is the smallest unit of sound in a language which can distinguish two words: e.g., sit /sɪt/ and hit /hɪt/

A Consonant, is a speech sound where the airstream from the lungs is either completely blocked (stop; e.g., /p/); or partially blocked (lateral; e.g., /l/); or where the opening is so narrow that the air escapes with audible friction (fricative; e.g., /f/); or completely blocked then released with friction with narrow opening (affricate; e.g., /tʃ/). With some consonants (nasals; e.g., /n/), the airstream is blocked in the mouth but is allowed to escape through the nose.

A Vowel, is a speech sound in which the airstream from the lungs is not blocked in any way in the mouth or throat, and which is usually pronounced with a vibration of the vocal cords; e.g., /i:/ in see /si:/. The type of vowel sound which is produced depends largely on the position (horizontally) and (vertically) of the tongue.



The Tongue, is a major articulator consisting of a muscular structure within the mouth. It is divided into: tip, blade, front, back, and root.

The Palate (velum), is often called the roof of the mouth and separates the mouth cavity from the nasal cavity. It is divided into: the soft palate at the back, the hard palate in the middle and the alveolar ridge right behind the teeth.

The Larynx (Adam's Apple), a structure of cartilage and muscles at the top of the windpipe which contains the vocal cords.

The vocal cords, are two bands of elastic tissue extending from back to front in the larynx which can vibrate, causing voices. They can allow free passage of air for VOICELESS SOUNDS, or completely stop the air-flow giving the GLOTTAL STOP.