

Module: English Phonetics and Phonology

Level: First year, groups: 03, 04, 05, 06, 07 & 08

Teacher: Ms. M. LAMANI

Introduction to English Phonetics and Phonology

Lecture's headlines:

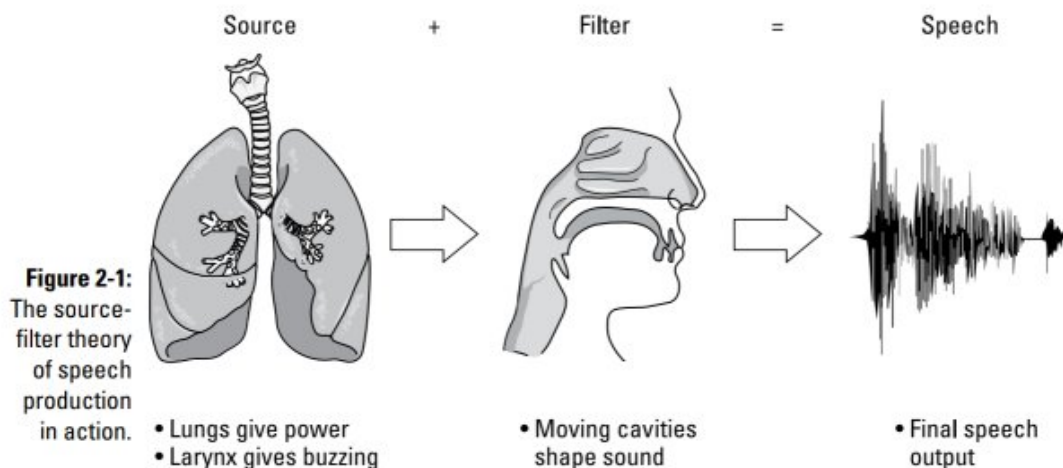
Purpose of the Course

Basic Terminology

1. Linguistics
2. Phonetics
 - a. Articulatory Phonetics
 - b. Acoustic Phonetics
 - c. Auditory Phonetics
3. Phonology

Purpose of the Course:

Human beings are capable of producing an infinite number of sounds, but no language uses more than a small proportion of this infinite set, and no two human languages make use of exactly the same set of sounds. When we speak, there is continuous movement of such organs as the tongue, the velum (soft palate), the lips and the lungs. However, in the written medium, the one puts spaces between individual words, but there are no similar spaces in speech.



Therefore, it is safe to say that the purpose of this course, and what you are going to learn from it, is to acknowledge how English is pronounced as the standard accent of

spoken English in England. This theory in general context is called Phonetics and Phonology. In other words, this theoretical material is necessary for anyone who needs to understand the principles regulating the use of speech sounds and sound system in Spoken English.

1. Linguistics

It is usually defined as 'the scientific study of language'. Scientific that is Systematically studied. Language, then, is a set of signals, sounds, body movements... etc. For instance, Human beings produce speech sounds to communicate, bees communicate through dances, whereas chimpanzees uses vocalizations (ranting) for danger warning... so on so for.

However, linguistics includes many different approaches to the study of Language and many different areas of investigation: *Phonetics and Phonology* study sound system, Syntax studies sentence structure, Morphology studies Word structure, Semantics and Pragmatics studies meaning systems.

2. Phonetics:

The science which studies the characteristics of human sound-making, especially those sounds used in speech, and provides methods for their description, classification and transcription. Three branches of the subject are

- a. **Articulatory phonetics:** deals with the way in which speech sounds are produced. Sounds are usually classified according to the position of the lips and the tongue, how far open the mouth is, whether or not the vocal cords are vibrating, etc.
- b. **Acoustic phonetics:** deals with the transmission of speech sounds through the air. When a speech sound is produced it causes minor air disturbances (sound waves). Various instruments are used to measure the characteristics of these sound waves.
- c. **Auditory phonetics:** deals with how speech sounds are perceived by the listener.

We have been dealing, thus far, with phonetics, We will, henceforth, be dealing with phonology.

3. Phonology

It is not the study of human speech sounds itself, it is concerned with how these speech sounds form patterns in English language. Phonologists investigate, for example, which function a sound has in a language and which sounds can be combined- follow each other- and which cannot. Moreover, phonologists are interested in the sound patterns of particular languages, and in what speakers and hearers need to know, and children need to learn, to be speakers of those languages (English for instance).

Speaker's phonological knowledge is not something they can necessarily access and talk about in detail: they often have intuitions about language without knowing where they come from, or exactly how to express them. For instance, an English native speaker knows that '*snil*' is a possible but non- existent word, whereas **fnil* is not possible. In the usual linguistic terms, *snil* is an accidental gap in the vocabulary, while **fnil* is a systematic gap, which results from the rules of the English sound system. However, English speakers are not consciously aware of those rules, and are highly unlikely to tell a linguist asking about those words that the absence of **fnil* reflects the unacceptability of word-initial consonant sequences with [fn-] in English: the more likely answer is that *snil* 'sounds all right' (and if you're lucky, your informant will produce similar words like sniff or snip to back up her argument), but that **fnil* 'just sounds wrong'.

REMARK:

Phonetics is closely related to phonology, the study of the sound systems and rules in language. The difference between phonetics and phonology can seem a bit tricky at first, but it's actually pretty straightforward. Phonetics deals with the sounds themselves. The more complicated part is the rules and systems (that's phonology). All languages have sound rules. They're not explicit (such as "Keep off the grass!"), but instead they're implicit or effortlessly understood (speaker's intuitive knowledge)