

# Concepts in English Linguistics

## Session 2: Phonetics and Phonology

**Acoustic phonetics** The study of the production of speech

**Affricate** A plosive followed by a fricative when they form a single phoneme: /tʃ/, /dʒ/

**Allophone** One possible realization of a phoneme: [ɹ], [tʰ], [i·], [i:]

**Alveolar** A speech sound produced with the front of the tongue pressed against the alveolar ridge: /t/, /s/

**Approximant** A speech sound consisting in near-contact between two speech organs without notable friction: /r, w, l, j/

**Articulatory phonetics** The study of the production of speech

**Auditory phonetics** The study of the aural reception of speech

**Bilabial** A speech sound produced with both lips pressed against each other: /b/, /p/, /m/

**Coda** Any consonants following a syllable nucleus (i.e. following the vowel); an optional syllable constituent

**Consonant** Phonetically, a sound produced with a marked constriction of the airflow in the speech tract; phonologically, a sound that normally occurs in the syllable boundary, rarely in its nucleus

**Continuant (sonorant)** A consonant without perceptible friction: /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /r/

**Digraph** A combination of two letters representing a single sound: <ea>, <oo>

**Diphthong** A gliding vowel, i.e. an unobstructed sound that changes its place of articulation in the course of its production: /au/, /ɔɪ/

**Egressive pulmonic airstream** An outflow of breath from the lungs

**Fricative** A speech sound consisting in a considerable oral constriction of the airstream: /s/, /ʃ/, /ð/

**Glottal** Produced with modulation (esp. closure) of the glottis other than voicing

**Grapheme** The smallest meaning-distinguishing unit in ordinary writing; a letter

**Labiodental** A speech sound produced with the (upper) teeth pressed against the (lower) lip: /f/, /v/

**Lateral** A speech sound that allows the airflow to escape along the sides of the tongue: /l/

**Ligature** Two graphemes (i.e. letters) joined together into one: <æ>, <œ>

**Liquid** Groups together /l, r/ for their shared phonological characteristics

**Minimal pair** A set of two words of the same language, differing in one sound only and thereby proving the status of the two differing sounds as phonemes of the language in question: *bit* : *bid*

**Monophthong** A static vowel, i.e. an unobstructed sound with a single place of articulation: /æ/, /u:/

**Nasal** A continuant produced with persistent blockage of the oral cavity: /m/, /n/, /ŋ/

**Nucleus** The sole mandatory element of a syllable, consisting of a vowel or syllabic consonant

**Onset** Any consonants preceding a syllable nucleus (i.e. preceding the vowel); an optional syllable constituent

**Palatal** A speech sound produced with the front of the tongue pressed against (or approaching) the

hard palate: [c], /j/

**Phone** Any speech sound, regardless of its status within a language's phonological system

**Phoneme** The smallest meaning-distinguishing unit of language

**Plosive (or stop)** A speech sound consisting in an oral blockage and release of the airstream: /p/, /d/, /g/

**Rhyme** The sequence of a syllable's nucleus and coda

**Semivowel** A speech sound that serves as a consonant phonologically but that has phonetic qualities like those of a vowel: /j/, /w/

**Sonority** The required energy for, and corresponding inherent loudness of, a speech sound relative to others in the system

**Syllable** Smallest rhythmical unit of speech, usually clustered around a vowel: pal·mis·try (phonological division), palm·ist·ry (morphological division)

**Syllable stress** Relative prominence in the production of a syllable; in English, expressed through volume, pitch, and length

**Velar** A speech sound produced with the back of the tongue pressed against the soft palate: /g/, /k/

**Vocal tract** The channel of organs involved in the production and modulation of speech

**Voicing** Vibration of the vocal cords in the production of a sound

**Vowel** Phonetically, a speech sound produced without a marked constriction of the speech tract; phonologically, a speech sound found only as the nucleus of a syllable