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Pronunciation

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Affricate: sound produced with full stoppage of the airstream followed immediately by constriction.

Allophone: non-distinctive phonetic variant of a phoneme.

Alveo-palatal: sound produced at the hard palate just behind the alveolar ridge.

Alveolar: sound produced at the alveolar ridge, the bony ridge behind the teeth.

Approximants: sounds produced when the articulators approach each other but not so closely as to cause turbulence in the airstream; they include laterals (the tongue touches the top of the mouth but the air is allowed to pass along one or both sides, as in [l]); central (the sides of the tongue are raised so that air flows along the center of the mouth, as in [r]); as well as the labiovelar [w] and palatal [j].

Aspirated: consonant sound released with a puff of air.

Assimilation rule: phonological rule that makes a sound similar to a nearby sound. e.g., palatalization.

Back vowel: vowel produced with the back of the tongue raised toward the soft palate.

Bilabial: sound produced with constriction or closure of the lips.

Broad transcription: the attempt to record pronunciation without regard to non-contrastive details.

Complementary distribution: when the allophones of a phoneme occupy different positions in words.

Consonant: sound produced with complete or partial obstruction of the air flow through the mouth.

Contrastive (also distinctive): sounds used in a language to signal differences of meaning.

Diacritic: phonetic symbols used to represent fine differences in pronunciation, e.g., the [h] that indicates aspiration.

Diphthong: vowel unit that begins with one oral configuration and ends with another.

Fricative: sound produced with constriction of the airstream, producing friction.

Front vowel: vowel produced with the front of the tongue raised toward the hard palate.

Glides: sounds, e.g., [j] and [w], that are intermediate in openness and sonority between consonants and vowels. Also called semivowels.

Glottal: sound produced by constricting or stopping the airstream at the vocal folds. high vowel: vowel pronounced with the mouth in the least degree of openness.

Interdental: sound produced with the tongue protruding between the teeth.

Labiodental: sound produced with constriction between the bottom lip and top teeth.

Labiovelar: sound produced by raising the back of the tongue to or toward the velum and rounding the lips, e.g., [w].

Lateral: sound produced with the tongue touching the top of the mouth with air allowed to pass along one or both sides, as in [l].

Manner of articulation: the kind of closure or constriction used in making a consonant sound.

Minimal pair: two words of different meaning that are phonetically the same except for one sound, e.g., pit and bit (used to demonstrate that [p] and [b] contrast with each other).

Monophthong: vowel unit consisting of a single segment held constant during its pronunciation.

Nasal, nasalized: sounds articulated with air flowing through the nasal cavity.

Nucleus: central part of a syllable, i.e., the segment with the highest sonority. onset: initial part of a syllable; precedes the nucleus.

Rhyme: the nucleus and coda of a syllable. rounded: vowel sound produced with the lips pursed. See unrounded.

Sonorant: sounds produced with a smooth airflow, allowing for a high degree of resonance.

Stop: sound produced with full stoppage of the airstream anywhere in the oral cavity from the vocal folds to the lips.

Velar: sound produced with constriction at the soft palate.

Voiced: sound produced with the vocal folds vibrating.

Voiceless: sound produced with the vocal folds not vibrating.

Vowel: sound produced with smooth, unobstruction air stream through the mouth.

Phoneme: contrastive or distinctive sound category; distinguishes words from each other

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Phonetics (articulatory): the study of how speech sounds are produced.

Phonology: the study of the ways in which a given language shapes sounds into distinctive categories of perception and of its rules of pronunciation.

Place of articulation: the area in the mouth at which the consonantal closure or constriction occurs.