

# Phonology Analytics in DROP

**v5.13** 10 April 2021

**Introduction**

**Overview**

1. Alternate Meanings of the Term Phonology: *Phonology* is a branch of linguistics that studies how languages or dialects systematically organize their sounds – or signs, in sign languages. The term also refers to the sound system of any particular language variety.
2. Focus of the Phonology Field: At one time, the study of phonology only related to the study of systems of phonemes in spoken languages. Now it may relate to:
   1. Any linguistic analysis either at a level beneath the word – including syllables, onset and rime, articulatory gestures, articulatory features, mora, etc. OR
   2. All levels of language where sounds or signs are structured to convey linguistic meaning (Brentari, Fenlon, and Cormier (2018)).
3. Phonological Equivalents in Sign Languages: Sign languages have a phonological system equivalent to the system of sounds in spoken languages. The building blocks of signs are specifications for movement, location, and hand shape (Stokoe (1978)).

**Terminology**

1. Phonology as a Language System Component: The word *phonology* – as in *the phonology of English* – can also refer to the phonological system – the sound system – of a given language. This is one of the fundamental systems that a language is considered to comprise, like its syntax, its morphology, and its vocabulary.
2. Distinction between Phonology and Phonetics: Phonology is often distinguished from *phonetics*. While phonetics concerns the physical production, acoustic transmission, and perception of the sounds of speech (Lass (1998), Carr (2003)), phonology describes the way sounds function within a given language or across languages to encode meaning.
3. Distinction between Theoretical/Descriptive Linguistics: For many linguists, phonetics belongs to descriptive linguistics, and phonology to theoretical linguistics, although establishing a phonological system of a language is necessarily an application of theoretical principles to the application of phonetic evidence.
4. Conflation between Phonology and Phonetics: This distinction was not always made, particularly before the development of the modern concept of the phoneme in the mid-20th century.
5. Crossover of Phonology with Phonetics: Some sub-fields of modern phonology have a cross-over with phonetics in descriptive disciplines such as psycholinguistics and speech perception, resulting in specific areas such as articulatory phonology or laboratory phonology.

**Derivation and Definitions**

1. Origin of the Term Phonology: The word *phonology* comes from the ancient Greek φωυη, *phone, voice, sound*, and the suffix -*logy*, which is from the Greek λογος, *logos, word, speech, subject of discussion*.
2. Trubetzkoy’s Definition of the Term: Trubetzkoy (1939) defines phonology as *the study of sound pertaining to the system of language*, as opposed to phonetics, which is *the study of sound pertaining to the act of speech* – the distinction between *language* and *speech* being basically Saussure’s distinction between *langue* and *parole*.
3. Lass Definition of the Term: Lass (1998) writes the phonology broadly refers to the sub-discipline of linguistics concerned with the sounds of language, while in more narrow terms, *phonology proper is concerned with the function, behavior, and organization of sounds as linguistic items*.
4. Definition of Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher: According to Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher (2007), it means the systematic use of sound to encode meaning in any spoken human language, or the field of linguistics studying this use.

**References**

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