

Introduction to Linguistic Phonetics

What is Phonetics?

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What is Phonetics?

- The study of speech sounds.
- There are three main areas research in phonetics:
 - 1 Speech *articulation*: how speech sounds are produced using articulators
 - 2 Speech *acoustics*: what sounds are like in the air
 - 3 Speech *perception*: how our auditory and cognitive systems interpret sounds

What is Phonology?

- **Phonology** is the other subfield of linguistics that studies speech sounds.
- Phonology is concerned with how the sounds we produced are organized in linguistic systems (i.e., Language and languages) and sound structures (e.g., syllables, words, and phrases).
- We will cover some phonology in this class, but the main focus is phonetics.

What we will cover in this course

- Understand the basic concepts and terminology of phonetics.
- Learn about the articulatory, acoustic, and perceptual aspects of speech sounds.
- Gain familiarity with the methods and tools used in phonetic research.
- Explore the relationship between phonetics and other subfields of linguistics.

- **Phonetic transcription** is a way of visually representing speech sounds using symbols.
- The most common system for phonetic transcription is the **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)**.
- The IPA provides a unique symbol for each distinct sound (or phoneme) in human language.
- We will learn how to use the IPA to transcribe speech sounds accurately.

Why do we need a system for phonetic transcription?

Let's talk about the elephant in the room.

Why do we need a system for phonetic transcription?

English orthography is a mess.

- English spelling is not a reliable guide to pronunciation; it is often inconsistent and ambiguous.
- Is it the worst spelling system?
- Most languages don't require that you do spelling tests in school.