

CHAPTER Three: The Sounds of Language

 Summary by Batool.A.Alshawī

Understanding Speech Sounds

Linguists study the sounds of speech in a field called **phonetics**. Phonetics is the science of how people produce and hear spoken language. It looks at **how** sounds are made by the mouth, **how** they travel through the air, and **how** they are heard by the ear. In this chapter, we focus mainly on how speech sounds are **produced**. This is called **articulatory phonetics**.

Voiced and Voiceless Sounds

Some sounds are made with **vibration in the vocal cords**, and others are not.

- **Voiced sounds** make the throat vibrate.
- **Voiceless sounds** do not.

To feel this, put your fingers on your throat and say “zzz” (voiced) and then “sss” (voiceless). You’ll feel the difference. This contrast helps us tell words apart. For example, “zip” and “sip” differ only in voicing.

Where Sounds Are Made

Different sounds are made in different **parts of the mouth**. Linguists describe these places of articulation with special terms:

- **Bilabial**: both lips touch (like **p, b, m**)
- **Labiodental**: top teeth and bottom lip (like **f, v**)
- **Dental**: tongue touches teeth (like **th** in “think” or “this”)
- **Alveolar**: tongue touches the ridge behind the top teeth (like **t, d, s, z, n, l, r**)
- **Palatal**: tongue near the hard middle part of the roof of the mouth (like **sh, ch, j, y**)
- **Velar**: tongue touches the soft part at the back of the mouth (like **k, g, ng**)
- **Glottal**: sound comes from the throat (like **h**)

Knowing where a sound is made helps us understand how we move our mouth and tongue when speaking.

How Sounds Are Made

Besides where sounds happen, we also look at **how** the air moves:

- **Stops:** the air is fully blocked for a second (like **p, b, t, d, k, g**)
- **Fricatives:** air moves through a small space, creating friction (like **f, v, s, z, sh, th**)
- **Affricates:** a mix of a stop and a fricative (like **ch, j**)
- **Nasals:** air flows through the nose (like **m, n, ng**)
- **Liquids:** air flows around the sides of the tongue (like **l, r**)
- **Glides:** the tongue moves or glides to a position (like **w, y**)

Each of these types of sounds helps form the structure of spoken words.

Special Sound Effects: Glottal Stops and Flaps

Some English sounds don't show up clearly in writing but are common in speech.

- A **glottal stop** [ʔ] is a quick break in sound. For example, some people say "uh-oh" or "bo'le" (instead of *bottle*) with a small pause.
- A **flap** [ɾ] is a quick tongue tap, used in American English. "Butter" often sounds like "budder" in fast speech. These variations are normal in different accents.

Vowel Sounds

Unlike consonants, **vowels** are made when air flows out **without blocking** it. Your tongue moves to different heights and places to make different vowel sounds.

We describe vowels by:

- **High, mid, or low** tongue position
- **Front, central, or back** tongue placement

For example:

- [i] as in *seat* is high and front
- [æ] as in *cat* is low and front
- [ɑ] as in *father* is low and back

Each vowel sound changes depending on mouth shape, tongue height, and lip position. English has many vowel sounds, even though we only use five letters (a, e, i, o, u).

Diphthongs

A **diphthong** is when two vowel sounds are blended in one movement. Your tongue starts in one position and moves to another.

Examples:

- [aɪ] as in *my, ride*
- [aʊ] as in *now, house*
- [eɪ] as in *say, day*
- [oʊ] as in *go, home*
- [ɔɪ] as in *boy, toy*

Diphthongs are common in English, and they often make speech sound smooth and flowing.

Different Accents and the Schwa Sound

People around the world speak English in many different ways. That's called **accent**. Some pronounce certain vowels differently. For example, in some accents, **cot** and **caught** sound the same, but in others, they don't.

There is also a very common vowel sound in English called **schwa** [ə]. It is soft, unstressed, and often used in syllables that don't carry the main stress.

You hear it in:

- *about* (the "a")
- *sofa* (the "a")
- *banana* (the second "a")

Schwa makes English sound more natural and helps with rhythm in speech.

Why Study Sounds?

Understanding how speech sounds work helps in many ways:

- It explains why spelling and pronunciation don't always match.
- It helps language learners speak more clearly.
- It shows how our mouths and voices work together to create meaning.
- It helps us compare accents and languages scientifically.

Phonetics is the first step in understanding the full structure of language. Once we know the sounds, we can look at how they form patterns (which we'll explore in phonology).

The sounds of language are the foundation of how we speak, listen, and understand each other. This chapter shows that spoken language is not random—it's organized and can be studied carefully. From how we make sounds to how we recognize patterns in speech, understanding phonetics opens the door to everything else in linguistics. It helps us hear language with new ears.

MCQs: The Sounds of Language

1. Which of the following best explains why “zip” and “sip” are considered minimal pairs?
 - A. They differ in the number of syllables
 - B. They differ by only one sound in the same position
 - C. They have completely different meanings
 - D. They share identical vowel sounds
2. If someone mispronounces “very” as “fery,” what kind of phonetic confusion might they be demonstrating?
 - A. Place of articulation confusion
 - B. Voicing error
 - C. Nasalization
 - D. Diphthong merging
3. Why might the “p” sound in “spin” feel softer than the “p” in “pin”?
 - A. Because it's a different letter
 - B. Because it's voiced
 - C. Because it lacks aspiration
 - D. Because it's followed by a vowel
4. Which pair of words illustrates a difference in **manner** of articulation?
 - A. Pit / Bit
 - B. Fan / Van
 - C. Leaf / Reef
 - D. Ship / Chip
5. A speaker of British English says “bottle” with a stop sound replacing the “t.” Which sound is most likely being used?
 - A. Voiceless bilabial
 - B. Glottal stop
 - C. Voiced velar
 - D. Voiceless fricative

6. In what way do affricates differ from simple stops or fricatives?
 - A. They occur only in stressed syllables
 - B. They involve both a stop and a fricative movement
 - C. They are always voiced
 - D. They cannot occur at the beginning of English words
7. What makes the sound [m] distinct from [b], even though they share the same place of articulation?
 - A. [m] is voiceless
 - B. [m] is nasal
 - C. [m] is a glide
 - D. [m] is produced at the velum
8. What aspect of English vowels causes difficulty for non-native learners?
 - A. They are all diphthongs
 - B. English has fewer vowels than most languages
 - C. Many vowel sounds are not clearly represented by spelling
 - D. All vowels are voiced
9. Which word below contains a **diphthong** in standard pronunciation?
 - A. Cat
 - B. Bee
 - C. Toy
 - D. Sun
10. Why is it misleading to think that English has only five vowel sounds?
 - A. Because English spelling exaggerates vowel use
 - B. Because each vowel letter has multiple sounds
 - C. Because English actually has many vowel **phonemes**
 - D. Because diphthongs are not real vowels
11. Which phrase describes a **glide** sound?
 - A. A consonant that blocks airflow
 - B. A sound that moves from one vowel quality to another
 - C. A sound made through nasal resonance
 - D. A rapidly produced vowel-like consonant
12. Why might two dialects pronounce “cot” and “caught” differently?
 - A. Different diphthong usage
 - B. Different stress placement

- C. Different vowel phonemes
- D. Different consonant clusters

13. What is one phonetic function of the **velum**?

- A. To produce glottal stops
- B. To allow nasal airflow when lowered
- C. To close the vocal cords
- D. To raise pitch

14. Which set of sounds all share the same **manner** of articulation?

- A. [t], [d], [k]
- B. [f], [v], [m]
- C. [s], [l], [r]
- D. [b], [g], [n]

15. What makes [ŋ] (as in “sing”) difficult for learners of English?

- A. It is always voiceless
- B. It cannot appear at the end of words
- C. It is not used in many other languages
- D. It changes meaning depending on stress

16. What is the function of the **schwa** [ə] in English pronunciation?

- A. To mark loud emphasis
- B. To shorten a diphthong
- C. To fill unstressed syllables
- D. To indicate nasalization

17. How do linguists define the **place of articulation**?

- A. The speed at which the sound is produced
- B. The loudness of the sound
- C. The location in the mouth where airflow is changed
- D. The pattern of voicing in a sentence

18. What role does **voicing** play in distinguishing English sounds?

- A. It determines vowel quality
- B. It shows which syllables are stressed
- C. It marks the difference between some consonants
- D. It changes only vowels, not consonants

19. Which sound is produced **without** any significant airflow blockage?

- A. [s]
- B. [k]

- C. [i]
- D. [t]

20. What could explain why “rider” and “writer” sound the same in American English?

- A. Glottal stops
- B. Schwa insertion
- C. Flapping
- D. Vowel reduction

21. If a speaker replaces [θ] (as in *thin*) with [f], what kind of substitution is this?

- A. From a stop to a glide
- B. From a fricative to an affricate
- C. From dental to labiodental
- D. From voiced to voiceless

22. What makes the sounds [j] and [ɜ] different?

- A. Manner of articulation
- B. Place of articulation
- C. Voicing
- D. Nasalization

23. What defines a **stop** sound in phonetics?

- A. Air passes through a narrow gap
- B. The tongue flaps quickly
- C. The vocal cords vibrate
- D. The airflow is completely blocked, then released

24. Which of these word pairs shows a contrast based on **nasality**?

- A. Bat / Mat
- B. Fan / Van
- C. Pit / Bit
- D. Cot / Cut

25. Why is it difficult to count exactly how many vowel phonemes English has?

- A. English spelling is unclear
- B. English vowels change depending on context and accent
- C. English has too few words
- D. Vowels don't follow rules

26. Which sound is **most likely** to be dropped in fast, casual English speech?

- A. [t] in “center”
- B. [r] in “red”

- C. [m] in “man”
- D. [i] in “bit”

27. In phonetic terms, what is [tʃ]?

- A. A nasal
- B. A diphthong
- C. An affricate
- D. A glide

28. Which of the following is **not** a feature used to classify consonants?

- A. Length of word
- B. Place of articulation
- C. Voicing
- D. Manner of articulation

29. What is true about **articulatory phonetics**?

- A. It only studies vowel sounds
- B. It focuses on how sounds are spelled
- C. It examines how speech sounds are produced
- D. It deals only with dialects

30. Why is it important for learners of English to understand the schwa sound?

- A. It helps improve reading
- B. It helps pronounce stressed syllables better
- C. It's the most common vowel sound in spoken English
- D. It explains spelling patterns

 Answer Key

1. **B** – They differ by only one sound in the same position
2. **B** – Voicing error
3. **C** – Because it lacks aspiration
4. **D** – Ship / Chip (difference in manner: fricative vs. affricate)
5. **B** – Glottal stop
6. **B** – They involve both a stop and a fricative movement
7. **B** – [m] is nasal
8. **C** – Many vowel sounds are not clearly represented by spelling

9. **C** – Toy
10. **C** – Because English actually has many vowel **phonemes**
11. **D** – A rapidly produced vowel-like consonant
12. **C** – Different vowel phonemes
13. **B** – To allow nasal airflow when lowered
14. **A** – [t], [d], [k] (all stops)
15. **C** – It is not used in many other languages
16. **C** – To fill unstressed syllables
17. **C** – The location in the mouth where airflow is changed
18. **C** – It marks the difference between some consonants
19. **C** – [i] (a vowel, with no significant airflow blockage)
20. **C** – Flapping
21. **C** – From dental to labiodental
22. **C** – Voicing ([f] is voiceless, [v] is voiced)
23. **D** – The airflow is completely blocked, then released
24. **A** – Bat / Mat ([b] = oral, [m] = nasal)
25. **B** – English vowels change depending on context and accent
26. **A** – [t] in “center”
27. **C** – An affricate
28. **A** – Length of word
29. **C** – It examines how speech sounds are produced
30. **C** – It’s the most common vowel sound in spoken English

✔ Study Questions – Answers

1. **What is an acoustic phonetic study?**

It looks at the physical sound waves we make when we speak—things like loudness, pitch, and length.

2. **What is an articulatory phonetic study?**

It studies how speech sounds are made in the mouth and throat using the tongue, lips, teeth, etc.

3. **How are consonants distinguished from vowels?**

Consonants are made when airflow is blocked or restricted. Vowels are made with free airflow through the mouth.

4. **How are glottal stops made?**

You close your vocal cords briefly, then open them to release air. It's like the pause between "uh-oh."

5. **How are glottal stops represented in writing?**

Usually with a symbol [ʔ] in phonetic writing, but in everyday writing, they often aren't shown.

6. **How are fricatives made?**

Air is pushed through a narrow space in the mouth, causing friction (like [f] or [s] sounds).

7. **How are affricates made?**

They start like a stop (air blocked), then release like a fricative (air forced out), like [tʃ] in "chair."

8. **How are nasals made?**

Air flows out through the nose while the mouth is closed, like [m], [n], and [ŋ].

9. **How are liquids made?**

The tongue lets air flow around the sides (like [l]) or moves lightly in the mouth (like [r]).

10. **How are glides made?**

They are quick, vowel-like sounds made when the tongue moves from one place to another, like [w] and [j].

11. **What is a schwa sound?**

A weak, unstressed vowel sound, like the 'a' in "sofa" or 'e' in "problem." It sounds like [ə].

12. How are tense vowels different from lax vowels?

Tense vowels use more muscle effort and are longer. Lax vowels are shorter and more relaxed.

13. How are diphthongs made?

Two vowel sounds are combined in one syllable, like [aɪ] in “ice” or [aʊ] in “house.”

 Tasks – Suggested Student-Friendly Answers

1. Describe in simple terms what makes a sound a consonant.

A consonant is made by blocking or squeezing air in the mouth.

2. Which English consonants are voiced? Which are voiceless?

- **Voiced:** [b], [d], [g], [v], [z], [ʒ], [dʒ], [m], [n], [ŋ], [l], [r], [w], [j]
- **Voiceless:** [p], [t], [k], [f], [s], [ʃ], [tʃ], [h]

3. How are the [θ] and [ð] sounds different? What’s a common mistake with them?

[θ] is voiceless (like in “think”), [ð] is voiced (like in “this”). Many learners replace them with [t] or [d].

4. How would you explain the difference between a stop and a fricative?

- **Stop:** Air completely blocked, then released (like [p], [t])
- **Fricative:** Air forced through a narrow space, causing a hissy sound (like [f], [s])

5. What kind of sounds are in the word “sing”?

[s] = voiceless fricative

[ɪ] = vowel

[ŋ] = nasal

6. What is special about the sound [ŋ]?

It’s a nasal made in the back of the mouth, found at the end of words like “sing,” not at the start.

 Discussion Topics – Key Points for Class or Group

1. Why is it helpful to learn the IPA (phonetic alphabet)?

It shows how words are really pronounced, not just how they’re spelled. It’s clearer than regular English spelling.

2. **What problems do English spelling and pronunciation cause?**

Spelling doesn't always match sound. For example, "rough," "though," and "through" all end differently even though they look similar.

3. **Why is understanding speech sounds useful for language learning and teaching?**

It helps learners pronounce words correctly and recognize different accents. Teachers can explain how sounds are made.

■ CHAPTER Four: The Sound Patterns of Language

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Understanding the Sound Patterns of Language

When we speak, our mouths and voices create sounds. But here's the interesting part: even though everyone's mouth and throat are different shapes and sizes, and even though people say words a little differently every time, we still understand each other perfectly. How does that happen?

Why Do Sounds Vary but Words Stay the Same?

Imagine two people saying the word “me.” Because their mouths and voices are different, the sounds they produce won't be exactly the same. Even the same person might say “me” differently when shouting, whispering, or when tired or sick.

Despite these differences, we recognize that all these variations are the same word. That's because our brain knows the *pattern* of sounds that make up each word, not just the exact sound. This is the idea behind **phonology**.

What is Phonology?

Phonology is the study of sound *patterns* in language. It focuses on how sounds work together to make meaning, not on how exactly the sounds are physically made.

Think of phonology as a mental blueprint for sounds. Every speaker knows, without thinking, what sound patterns are allowed in their language and which sounds are different enough to change the meaning of a word.

For example, the “t” sound in words like “tar,” “star,” and “butter” might sound different because of where it appears and how it's spoken. Still, we treat these different versions as the *same* sound because they don't change the meaning.

But changing that “t” sound to “k” or “f” changes the word completely: “tar,” “car,” and “far” all mean very different things.

Phonemes: The Important Sounds That Change Meaning

The smallest sound units that can change the meaning of a word are called **phonemes**.

- If changing one sound changes the word's meaning, those two sounds are different phonemes.

- For example, /p/ and /b/ are different phonemes because “pat” and “bat” mean different things.
- We write phonemes between slashes, like /t/, to show they are the mental idea of a sound, not just one way of saying it.

Phonemes are the building blocks of language sounds, stored in our minds.

Natural Classes: Groups of Sounds That Act Alike

Some phonemes share characteristics. For example, /p/ and /k/ are both voiceless stops—they stop airflow but don’t use vocal cord vibration.

Sounds that share features like this form **natural classes**, and these classes help explain why some sounds behave similarly in a language.

This explains why some sound combinations are common and others aren’t. For example, English words often start with “pl” or “kl” sounds, but you won’t find words starting with “vl” because the sounds don’t fit together according to English rules.

Phones and Allophones: The Many Ways We Say One Sound

While phonemes are mental categories, the actual spoken sounds we produce are called **phones**.

- A single phoneme can be spoken in many different ways depending on context.
- These different versions of a phoneme are called **allophones**.

For example, the phoneme /t/ can be:

- Aspirated [t^h] (with a puff of air), like at the start of “tar.”
- A quick tap [ɾ], like the “t” in “writer,” which sounds like a soft “d.”
- A glottal stop [ʔ], like the “tt” in “butter” for some speakers.
- Dental [t̪], when the tongue touches the teeth, like in “eighth.”

These different ways of saying /t/ don’t change the meaning of the word—they’re just different pronunciations.

Minimal Pairs and Sets: Testing Sounds That Change Meaning

We find **minimal pairs** to test which sounds are phonemes. Minimal pairs are two words that differ by only one sound and have different meanings.

Examples:

- “pat” vs. “bat”
- “fan” vs. “van”
- “site” vs. “side”

If swapping the sound changes meaning, those sounds are separate phonemes.

A **minimal set** is a group of words that differ from each other by just one sound in the same position. For example, “feat,” “fit,” “fat,” “fate,” “fought,” and “foot” differ by vowel sounds but follow the same pattern.

Phonotactics: Rules for Sound Combinations

Languages don’t allow just any sounds to appear next to each other. The rules about which sounds can appear together or where they can appear are called **phonotactics**.

In English, words starting with “vl” don’t happen because they break these rules. Sometimes you might find made-up words like “vig” or “lig,” which could be accepted in English but don’t naturally occur.

Phonotactics is part of what we know when we speak a language, even if we don’t realize it.

Syllables: How Sounds Group Into Units

Words are made of **syllables**, which are smaller sound units.

- Every syllable has a **vowel sound** at its core.
- A syllable often has a **consonant or consonants before the vowel** (called the onset) and sometimes **consonants after the vowel** (called the coda).
- Example: In the word “cat,” the onset is [k], the vowel (nucleus) is [æ], and the coda is [t].
- If there’s no coda, like in “me,” the syllable is called **open**. If there is a coda, like “cat,” it’s **closed**.

Consonant Clusters: When Several Consonants Come Together

Sometimes syllables start or end with more than one consonant—this is called a **consonant cluster**.

- English allows clusters like “st” in “stop.”
- Sometimes there are even three consonants together, like “str” in “stress.”

- English has specific rules for which clusters are allowed. For example, a three-consonant cluster at the start usually begins with /s/, followed by /p/, /t/, or /k/, then a liquid like /l/ or /r/.

Coarticulation: Sounds Influencing Each Other in Speech

When we speak normally, we don't say each sound one by one clearly. Instead, our mouth moves smoothly between sounds, and sounds influence each other. This process is called **coarticulation**.

There are two important coarticulation effects:

1. Assimilation

One sound changes to become more like a nearby sound because it's easier to say.

- Example: In "have to," the "v" sound changes to "f" so it sounds like "hafta."

2. Nasalization

When a vowel comes right before a nasal sound like "n" or "m," it becomes nasalized.

- This means you start letting air flow through your nose while you say the vowel.
- For example, in the word "pan," the "a" is nasalized because it's right before the "n."
- Linguists mark nasalized vowels with a little squiggly line (~), like [ã].
- Nasalization makes speech flow more naturally.

Elision: Dropping Sounds to Speak Faster

Sometimes, in casual speech, sounds get dropped to make speaking quicker and easier. This is called **elision**.

- For example, in "friendship," the "d" sound is often not pronounced.
- In "you and me," the "d" in "and" often disappears.
- This isn't laziness—it's just how speech naturally works to be efficient.

Why Does This Matter?

Understanding phonology and sound patterns helps us see how language works beyond just letters or dictionary words. It explains why we can understand each other even when words sound different, how speech flows naturally, and what rules our minds use to make sense of sound.

MCQs on Sound Patterns & Phonology

1. Why do we recognize different pronunciations of the same word as the same?
 - A) Identical vocal tracts
 - B) Abstract mental sound patterns (phonology)
 - C) People always pronounce the same
 - D) Phonetics ignores variation
2. What sets phonemes apart from allophones?
 - A) Phonemes = physical; allophones = mental
 - B) Phonemes change meaning; allophones do not
 - C) Allophones change meaning
 - D) Phonemes are rare sounds
3. Why are natural classes important?
 - A) Sounds always pronounced the same
 - B) Groups of phonemes sharing features
 - C) Distinguish phonemes from morphemes
 - D) Differentiate phonemes from vowels
4. How do phonotactics affect word formation?
 - A) Define word meaning
 - B) Restrict allowed sound sequences
 - C) Set stress patterns
 - D) Describe speech pitch
5. Why are minimal pairs critical?
 - A) Show meaning contrast from phonemes
 - B) Give syllable examples
 - C) Show allophone variations
 - D) Represent phonotactic constraints
6. Which is NOT an allophone of /t/?
 - A) Aspirated [t^h]
 - B) Flap [ɾ]
 - C) Glottal stop [ʔ]
 - D) Voiced [d]
7. What does nasalization do to vowels?
 - A) Shortens vowels before nasals
 - B) Adds nasal airflow before nasal consonants

- C) Changes vowel length randomly
 - D) Removes nasal quality
8. What does a consonant cluster at syllable start indicate?
- A) Complex onsets allowed
 - B) One consonant only
 - C) No consonant together
 - D) Vowels silent in clusters
9. How does coarticulation affect speech?
- A) Makes sounds distinct
 - B) Sounds influence each other for ease
 - C) Prevents sound change
 - D) Removes consonant clusters
10. What is elision?
- A) Careful pronunciation
 - B) Dropping sounds for speed
 - C) Changing sounds to ease speech
 - D) Adding sounds for emphasis
11. Why might “vig” not be common in English?
- A) Illegal clusters
 - B) Violates minimal pairs
 - C) Phonotactics alone don’t guarantee words
 - D) No syllable structure
12. How does syllable concept help word structure?
- A) Divides words around vowels
 - B) Classifies meaning
 - C) Limits vowels per word
 - D) Focuses on consonants only
13. Which group forms a natural class?
- A) /p/, /b/, /m/
 - B) /p/, /t/, /k/
 - C) /f/, /v/, /s/
 - D) /m/, /n/, /ŋ/
14. Difference between open and closed syllables?
- A) Open ends with vowel; closed ends with consonant
 - B) Open no consonants; closed only consonants

- C) Open has clusters; closed does not
- D) Open has nasalized vowels

15. How does phoneme representation help listeners?

- A) Ignores pronunciation variation
- B) Matches physical sounds exactly
- C) Classifies by physical features
- D) Recognizes different pronunciations as same

16. Why study phonology alongside phonetics?

- A) Phonetics = meaning; phonology = sound
- B) Phonology explains sound function beyond production
- C) Phonetics only written language
- D) Phonology replaces phonetics

17. What happens if you swap one phoneme for another?

- A) New word, different meaning
- B) No change in meaning
- C) Only pronunciation changes
- D) Produces an allophone

18. Why don't some sounds occur in certain word positions?

- A) Phonotactic restrictions
- B) Speaker forgetfulness
- C) They are allophones
- D) Minimal pairs prevent them

19. Which is assimilation?

- A) "input" as [ɪnpʊt]
- B) "input" as [ɪmpʊt]
- C) Dropping /t/ in "next day"
- D) Nasalizing vowels before nasals

20. Why are allophones important?

- A) Show pronunciation variation without meaning change
- B) Create minimal pairs
- C) Are rare exceptions
- D) Only in writing

21. How does aspiration affect phonemes/allophones?

- A) Always changes meaning
- B) Feature of /t/ allophones, no meaning change

- C) Turns vowels into consonants
- D) Eliminates phonemes

22. Relationship between phonemes and meaning?

- A) Phonemes only in writing
- B) Phonemes create meaningful word differences
- C) Allophones same as phonemes
- D) Phonemes and allophones same

23. What defines a minimal pair?

- A) Allophones of one phoneme
- B) Different word positions
- C) Substitution changes meaning
- D) Cannot be pronounced by same speaker

24. How does phonotactics explain unnatural invented words?

- A) They break phonotactic rules
- B) Invented words lack syllables
- C) Phonotactics applies only to real words
- D) Irrelevant to invented words

25. Elision's effect on speech?

- A) Less clarity, more efficiency
- B) More clarity and efficiency
- C) No clarity effect
- D) Less clarity and efficiency

26. What lets vowels change due to neighbors?

- A) Elision
- B) Nasalization
- C) Phoneme substitution
- D) Minimal pairing

27. What is "contrastive function" of phonemes?

- A) Distinguish word meaning
- B) Contrast with allophones physically
- C) Contrast vowel sounds only
- D) Contrast syllables

28. Why distinguish phonemes and phones?

- A) Phonemes written, phones spoken
- B) Phonemes abstract, phones actual sounds

- C) Phones have meanings, phonemes don't
- D) Phones language-specific, phonemes universal

29. How can phonology help language learners?

- A) Memorize exact sounds per word
- B) Know which sound differences change meaning
- C) Ignore sound patterns, focus grammar
- D) Learn alphabet only

30. Role of syllable structure in consonant clusters?

- A) Limits consonants in onset/coda
- B) Applies only to vowels
- C) Eliminates consonant clusters
- D) Separates syllables by meaning

Answer Key:

1. B 2. B 3. B 4. B 5. A 6. D 7. B 8. A 9. B 10. B
11. C 12. A 13. B 14. A 15. D 16. B 17. A 18. A 19. B 20. A
21. B 22. B 23. C 24. A 25. A 26. B 27. A 28. B 29. B 30. A

Study Questions and Answers

1. **In French, are /bo/ (beau) and /bõ/ (bon) different phonemes or allophones?**
They are different **phonemes** because they change word meaning.
2. **What is an aspirated sound? Which words have it: kill, pool, skill, spool, stop, top?**
Aspirated sounds have a puff of air after them.
Words with aspiration: **kill, pool, top**
Words without aspiration: skill, spool, stop.
3. **Which word pairs are minimal pairs?**
Examples include: **pat/bat, tap/pat, bet/vet, fan/van, fat/bat.**
4. **What is phonotactics?**
The **rules governing permissible sound combinations** in a language.
5. **Difference between open and closed syllables?**
 - Open syllables end with a **vowel** (e.g., me).
 - Closed syllables end with a **consonant** (e.g., cat).

6. Which segments in these words are affected by elision: government, postman, pumpkin, sandwich, victory?

Likely dropped sounds:

- government: /t/
- postman: /t/
- sandwich: /d/

Tasks

A. What are diacritics? Which ones were used?

Diacritics are **marks that show detailed sound features**, e.g., aspiration [ʰ], nasalization [̃], dental [̪].

B.(i) How did “Merry Christmas” become “Mele Kalikimaka” in Hawaiian? Which English consonants likely don’t exist in Hawaiian?

Hawaiian inserts vowels to avoid consonant clusters; /r/ and /s/ likely do not exist.

(ii) **Hawaiian consonants (including glottal stop /ʔ/):** /h/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /w/, /ʔ/.

(iii) **Match Hawaiian and English names:** *Henele* = *Henry*, *Kawika* = *David*, etc.

C. Best syllable division in “central”?

cen + tral fits pronunciation and phonotactics.

D. What are suprasegmentals?

Features like **stress, intonation, and rhythm** that modify meaning beyond individual sounds.

E.(i) What is a syllabic consonant? How is it shown?

A consonant acting as a vowel in a syllable, shown with a vertical line below, e.g., [ŋ̩].

(ii) **Words likely with syllabic consonants:** bottle, bottom, button, paddle.

F. Difference between syllable-timed and stress-timed rhythm? Which languages fit each?

- Syllable-timed: equal time per syllable (**French, Spanish**)
- Stress-timed: equal time between stressed syllables (**English**)

G.(i) Phonological rule for Spanish [s] vs. [z]?

“s” is voiced ([z]) between voiced sounds, voiceless ([s]) elsewhere.

(ii) This difference is **allophonic**, not phonemic.