

Phonetics

Phonetics is a discipline of linguistics that focuses on the study of speech sounds. It is concerned with the physical properties of these sounds, how they are produced, transmitted and perceived. Roach (1992:81) defines phonetics as:

The scientific study of speech... the central concern in phonetics are the discovery of how speech sounds are produced, how they are used in spoken language, how we can record speech sounds with written symbols, and how we hear and recognize different sounds.

Phonetics is a branch of linguistics that systematically studies the sounds of human speech. It is the scientific study of the segmental and supra-segmental features of speech. Phonetics does not only deal with the process of **articulation**, that is, speech production, but it is also concerned with **acoustics** (the way speech travels in the air in the form of sound waves) and speech **perception** (sometimes referred to as auditory phonetics).

The Branches of Phonetics

There are three major subfields of phonetics, each of which focuses on a particular aspect of the sounds used in speech and communication. Articulatory phonetics looks at how sounds are produced by the human vocal apparatus. Auditory phonetics looks at how people perceive (hear and interpret) the sounds they hear, acoustic phonetics is concerned with the voyage of speech sounds from speaker to hearer. Acoustic phonetics depicts and analyses sound waves that are generally measured by spectrographs to depict waveforms and spectrograms. It studies the duration, frequency, intensity, and quality of sound waves, using machines and computer program.

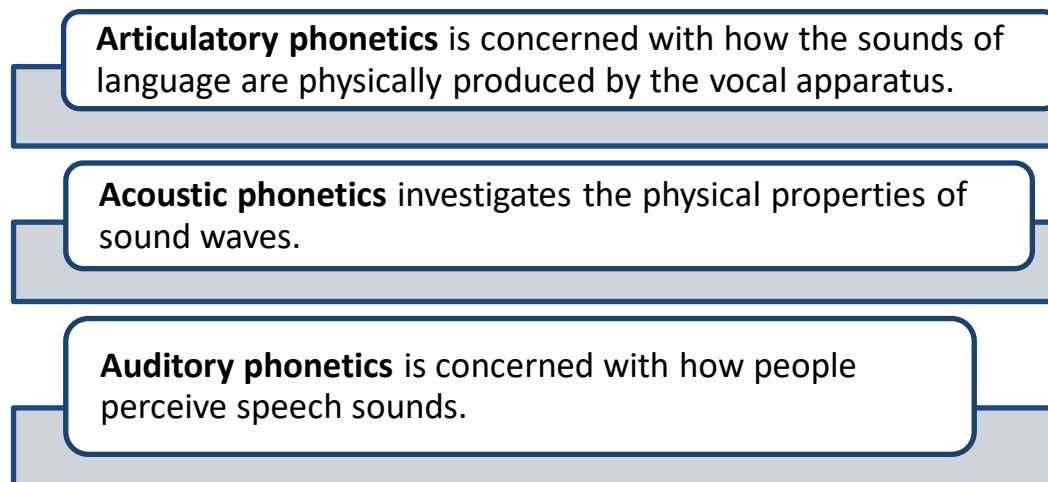


Figure1 branches of phonetics