



An Animated and Narrated Glossary of
Terms used in Linguistics
presents

Allophony



Definition

- A phoneme that has a number of corresponding surface forms is said to exhibit **allophony**.
- Each corresponding form is known as an **allophone**.
- Thus whether a phoneme exhibit allophony is dependent on one's specific theoretical assumptions.



/t/ in English

<i>tack</i>	[tʰ...]	/t/ is aspirated
<i>stack</i>	[...t...]	/t/ is not aspirated
<i>tick</i>	[tʰ...]	/t/ is laminal (and aspirated)
<i>two</i>	[tʰ...]	/t/ is labialized (and aspirated)

Allophony under this assumption.

Assumption:

There is only one voiceless alveolar plosive in English.

Phonetically, there are a number of different voiceless alveolar plosives in English.

Note: for some speakers the /t/ in “two” is also laminal.

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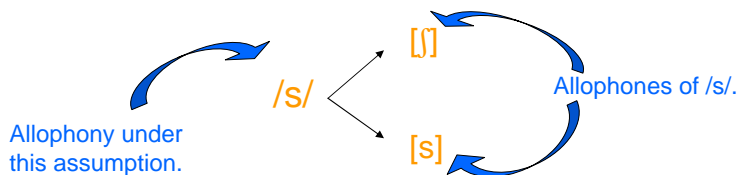


/s/ in Cantonese

In Cantonese [s] and [ʃ] are in complementary distribution.

[ʃ] occurs only when followed by a front rounded vowel (e.g. [ʃy] ‘book’; [ʃœŋ] ‘injury’)

[s] occurs elsewhere (e.g. [sa] ‘sand’; [sin] ‘first’).



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Further reading

- Davenport, Mike and S. J. Hannahs (2005) *Introducing Phonetics and Phonology*, 2nd edition, pp.115-120. New York: Hodder Arnold Publication.
- Fromkin, Victoria and Robert Rodman (1998) *An Introduction to Language*, 6th edition, pp.259-260 . Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Gussenhoven, Carlos and Haïke Jacobs (2005) *Understanding Phonology*, 2nd edition, Chapters 4.2, 4.3, and 8.2. New York: Hodder Arnold.
- Hawkins, Peter (1992) *Introducing Phonology*. London: Routledge.
- Kenstowicz, Michael J. (1994) *Phonology in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Odden, David (2005) *Introducing Phonology*, Chapter 3. Cambridge University Press.
- Tserdanelis, Georgios and Wai Yi Peggy Wong (eds.) (2004) *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction of Language and Linguistics*, 9th edition, File 4.2. The Ohio State University Press.

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The End

Wee, Lian-Hee and Winnie H.Y. Cheung (2009)
An animated and narrated glossary of terms used in Linguistics.
Hong Kong Baptist University.