



An Animated and Narrated Glossary of
Terms used in Linguistics
presents

Phone



Different notions

Consider these pairs of English words:

text [tekst]

textual [tekstʃəl]

rite [rait]

ritual [ritʃəl]

act [ækt]

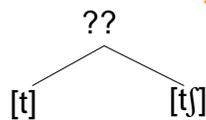
actual [æktʃəl]

[t] ~ [tʃ] alternation



Different notions

[t] ~ [tʃ] alternation



1. underlying identity

same phoneme /t/

2. same number of speech units

[t] and [tʃ] are each a consonant segment

3. difference in compositionality

[t] requires only ONE articulatory gesture

[tʃ] requires TWO articulatory gestures: plosive+fricative

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Different notions and terms

1. The underlying identity of forms in alternation is called **the phoneme**. [For surface phonological/phonetic units corresponding to segments/phones.]
2. The speech unit corresponding to what we typically understand as consonants or vowels is typically called the **segment**.
3. The speech elements that make up complex segments like [tʃ] is called ??.

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Phone

- One possible answer is to think of a phone as a particular configuration of the articulators (i.e. one singular articulatory gesture).
- Thus,
Affricates = 2 phones, e.g. [tʃ], [pf], ...
Prenasalized stops = 2 phones e.g. [mb], [nd] ...

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Phones, Segments, Phonemes

Use of these terms are confusing.

Sometimes, people use

segment = phoneme ≠ phone

segment = phone ≠ phoneme

Here, we are suggesting

segment ≠ phoneme ≠ phone

abstract temporal unit
that is the phonetic form
of a phoneme

underlying form

singular configuration
of articulators, i.e. a
gestural unit.

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Further reading

Ashby, Michael and John Maidment (2005) *Introducing Phonetic Science*, Chapters 1 and 9, Cambridge University Press.

International Phonetic Association (1949/84) *The Principles of the International Phonetic Association*.

International Phonetic Association (1999) *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet*. Cambridge 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.