

Phonetics: Consonants of Japanese

I. Terms for classifying consonants

Reading: Tsujimura (2007), chapter 2

Try to use the Tsujimura (2007) reading to learn these terms; we will follow up in class discussion

- (1) Parts of the vocal tract:
 - (a) alveolar ridge
 - (b) (hard) palate
 - (c) velum (as place of articulation)
 - (d) velar port (can open and close to control nasal airflow)
 - (e) uvula
 - (f) glottis

- (2) Terms for classifying consonants (§1, §1.1)
 - (a) consonant
 - (b) vowel

 - (c) voicing
 - (d) voiced
 - (e) voiceless

 - (f) nasality
 - (g) oral
 - (h) nasal

 - (i) place of articulation
 - (j) bilabial
 - (k) labiodental [not used for Japanese]
 - (l) dental
 - (m) alveolar
 - (n) alveopalatal (aka post-alveolar, palato-alveolar)
 - (o) velar
 - (p) uvular
 - (q) glottal

(r) manner of articulation

(s) (oral) stop

(t) fricative

(u) affricate

(v) liquid

(w) tap/flap

(x) glide

(y) approximant [not in reading] — useful term covering liquids and glides

(z) nasal (stop)

(3) Some notes on phonetic symbols

- Tsujimura uses a few phonetic symbols that are not recognized by the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), but we will use IPA conventions

Tsujimura uses:

We will use:

[š]

[ɕ] (compare Eng. [ʃ])

[ž]

[ʒ] (compare Eng. [ʒ])

[č]

[tʃ] (compare Eng. [tʃ])

[j]

[dʒ] (compare Eng. [dʒ])

[y]

[j]

For class discussion

II. Phonetics vs. orthography (spelling)

(4) Phonetics: The study of the more-or-less physical aspects of speech sounds

- how speech sounds are articulated
- their acoustic characteristics
- how they are perceived
- which speech sounds audibly occur in a language

(5) Why we need **phonetic transcription** (a phonetic alphabet) to represent speech sounds

(a) The spelling system of a language very rarely represents the sounds of the spoken language in detail. Example: How do you write the name of the capital of Japan?

(b) Without a standard system of phonetic transcription, it is hard to explain to speakers of other languages—or even other dialects—what speech sound you are talking about

III. Consonant properties; basic consonants of Japanese

- (6) Fit the following Japanese phonetic consonant categories into the chart;
 put voiceless sounds in the left half of a cell, and voiced sounds in the right half

b ɸ ç d dz ɸ g h j k m n ŋ ɴ p r s t tɕ ts w z

		bilabial	alveolar	alveo-palatal	palatal	velar	uvular	glottal
(oral) stops								
fricatives								
affricates								
approximants	liquids							
	glides							
nasal (stop)s								