

## Slide 5: Accents, Dialects, and Variation

- **Accent:** Variation in pronunciation (e.g. British RP, General American) – differences in how phonemes sound.
- **Dialect:** Variation including accent plus vocabulary/grammar. Focus here is on accent (pronunciation) differences.
- English has many accents; phonetics studies these by comparing phoneme realizations (e.g. American /ɑ:/ vs British /ɒ/).
- Speaker background (region, social group) influences vowel quality, consonant articulation, and prosody (intonation, rhythm).

## Slide 6: Branches of Phonetics

- **Articulatory phonetics:** How speech sounds are made by the vocal organs (lungs, larynx, tongue, lips, etc.).
- **Acoustic phonetics:** Physical properties of sound waves (frequency, amplitude, formants).
- **Auditory phonetics:** How the ear and brain perceive and process speech sounds.
- Understanding all three areas provides a complete picture of speech production and reception.

## Slide 7: Importance of Phonetics & Phonology

- **Language teaching:** Accurate sound descriptions help learners acquire correct pronunciation and listening skills.
- **Speech pathology and technology:** Knowledge of phonetics is used in diagnosing speech disorders and improving speech recognition/synthesis.
- **Linguistic analysis:** Phonology reveals patterns of sound alternations (e.g. plural, past tense rules) and helps understand language change and dialect variation.
- A solid foundation in phonetics/phonology aids in fields like lexicography (dictionary pronunciation), poetics (rhythm), and forensic linguistics.

## Topic 2: Vowel Sounds of English

### Slide 8: Speech Production and Vowels

- **Articulators:** Vowels are produced with an open vocal tract; key articulators are the tongue (height and backness) and lips (rounding).
- **Voicing:** All English vowels are voiced (vocal folds vibrate) and form the nucleus of a syllable.

- Airflow from the lungs passes through the larynx and is shaped by tongue position to produce different vowel qualities.
- Unlike consonants, vowels have no closure or friction in the oral cavity.