Lecture 3

Describing Consonants & Vowels
Describing Consonants

Four questions for consonants:
1. Where is the sound made?
   (Place of Articulation)
2. How is the sound made?
   (Manner of Articulation)
3. What is happening at the nose?
   (Nasal or Oral)
4. What is happening at the larynx?
   (Voiced or voiceless)
Place of Articulation
- fill in the rest on your own

- Labial: b, p, m
- Labio-dental: f, v
- Interdental: θ, ð
- Alveolar: t, d, s, z, l, r,
- Alveo-palatal
- Palatal
- Velar
- Glottal
Manner of Articulation

Stops/Plosives: airflow is completed stopped at some point  
e.g.  [p], [b]

Fricatives: airflow is partially obstructed causing friction in the airflow  
e.g.  [f], [s]

Affricates: a combined effect of a stop + fricative  
e.g.  [č] in cheese
Manner of Articulation:

Lateral: there is some obstruction in the mouth but not enough to cause turbulence in the airflow

e.g. [l]

Approximants: little or no obstruction in the airstream

e.g. [j] in yellow
[w] in whale
[r] in read
International Phonetic Alphabet

- One alphabet = one sound
- Can be used to described the speech sounds of any human language

- Online Resource: Peter Ladefoged
Every consonant has a name

The name tells you how it is made.
The 4 question gets you the name

[p] - voiceless bilabial (oral) stop

[m] - (voiced) bilabial nasal (stop)

[s] - voiceless alveolar (oral) fricative
Describing Vowels

Four questions for vowels

● How high is the tongue?
  – High, mid, low (vowel height)

● Which part of the tongue is involved?
  – Front, central, back

● What’s happening with the lips?
  – Rounded or unrounded

● What’s happening with the tongue root?
  – Tense or lax
Every vowel has a name too

- [i]
  - High front tense (unrounded) vowel

- [u]
  - High back tense (rounded) vowel
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Diphthongs and triphthongs

- [ai] as in buy
- [au] as in cow
- [ɔi] as in boy
- [aiε] as in fire
- [auε] as in hour
- [ɔiε] as in coir