Important Vocabulary Items for Phonology

(1) **Allophone**
An *allophone* is a speech sound (phone) as it is actually pronounced in the word.

a. **Example:** [tʰ] (aspirated ‘t’) in English
   • The word “top” is pronounced as [tʰɑp] (see slides from Tuesday)

b. **Example:** [t] (unaspirated ‘t’) in English
   • The word “stop” is pronounced as [stɑp] (see slides from Tuesday)

c. **Note:** Allophones are written in between square brackets ([…])

(2) **Phoneme**
A *phoneme* is a speech sound (phone) as it is stored in memory.

a. **Example:** /t/ (without aspiration) in English
   • The word “top” is stored in memory as /tɑp/ (see slides from Tuesday)
   • The word “stop” is stored in memory as /stɑp/ (see slides from Tuesday)

b. **Note:** Phonemes are written in between angled brackets (/…/)

(3) **Being an Allophone of a Phoneme**
[X] is an allophone of /Y/ if [X] is one of the ways that the phoneme /Y/ ends up being pronounced in a word.

a. **Example:**
   [tʰ] is an allophone of /t/ in English (in words like “top” /tɑp/ ~ [tʰɑp])

b. **Example:**
   [t] is an allophone of /t/ in English (in words like “stop” /stɑp/ ~ [stɑp])

(4) **Being Allophones of the Same Phoneme**
[X] and [Y] are allophones of the same phoneme if there is a phoneme /Z/ such that [X] is an allophone of /Z/ and [Y] is an allophone of /Z/

a. **Example:** [tʰ] and [t] are allophones of the same phoneme in English (namely, /t/)

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(5) **Being Allophones of Different Phonemes**
[X] and [Y] are allophones of different phonemes if they are not allophones of the same phoneme.

a. Example: [t] and [d] are allophones of different phonemes in English.
   - [t] is an allophone of /t/
   - [d] is an allophone of /d/

(6) **Contrast**
[X] and [Y] contrast if they are allophones of different phonemes.

a. Example: [t] and [d] contrast in English

(7) **Minimal Pair**
A minimal pair is a pair of words that differ in exactly one phone (allophone).

a. Examples from English:
   - “tall” [tæl] and “doll” [dæl]
   - “sip” [sɪp] and “ship” [ʃɪp]
   - “safe” [sef] and “save” [sev]

(8) **Minimal Pair for [X] and [Y]**
If [X] and [Y] are allophones, then a minimal pair for [X] and [Y] is a minimal pair that differ in that one word contains [X] while the other contains [Y]

a. Examples from English
   - “tall” [tæl] and “doll” [dæl] Minimal pairs for [t] and [d]
   - “sip” [sɪp] and “ship” [ʃɪp] Minimal pairs for [s] and [ʃ]
   - “safe” [sef] and “save” [sev] Minimal pairs for [f] and [v]

(9) **Being In Complementary Distribution**
If [X] and [Y] are allophones, then they are in complementary distribution if there is no minimal pair for [X] and [Y]

a. Examples from English
   - [tʰ] and [t] are in complementary distribution in English
   (just try to find a minimal pair for them in English!)

b. Note: If two phones are allophones of the same phoneme, then they are also necessarily in complementary distribution.