

Stricture Features

Major class features

[±consonantal]

A [+cons] sound is produced with a “drastic” constriction in the oral tract.

A [–cons] sound lacks such a “drastic” constriction.

[±sonorant]

A [+son] sound (a “sonorant”) is produced with no obstruction of the airflow, so the air pressure is the same inside the vocal tract and outside.

A [–son] sound (an “obstruent”) is produced with an obstruction of the airflow so there is greater air pressure behind the obstruction than in front of it.

[±syllabic]

A [+syll] sound is one that holds the major energy of the syllable.

A [–syll] sound is one that occurs on a margin of the syllable.

Type-of-constriction features

[±continuant]

A [+cont] sound is one in which the air flows continuously through the center of the mouth (the “mid-sagittal region”).

A [–cont] sound is one in which the air does not flow continuously through the mid-sagittal region of the mouth. (Note: this includes sounds like nasals and laterals.)

[±delayed release]

A [+del rel] sound is one in which a closure is released gradually, resulting in a plosive followed by a fricative (i.e. an affricate)

A [–del rel] sound is one in which a closure is released abruptly, resulting in a plosive.

[±lateral]

A [+lat] sound is one in which the air is blocked in the middle of the mouth but flows around the sides.

A [–lat] sound is one in which the air is treated uniformly across the mouth.

[±strident]

A [+strid] sound is one in which there is “noisy friction”, produced by having the air strike and bounce off of two surfaces.

A [–strid] sound is one in which the air does not strike two surfaces.

[±tense]

A [+tense] sound is produced with a high degree of muscle tension.

A [–tense] sound is produced with a low degree of muscle tension.