

Linguistic Notation Conventions

Brackets

<...> ANGLE BRACKETS are used when referring to **orthographic letters** (also called **graphemes**)

Example: In English, the letter sequence <sh> usually refers to just one sound.

[...] When referring to **sounds on a phonetic level** (i.e. when talking about concrete sounds as found in actual speech), SQUARE BRACKETS are used – square brackets refer to the **formal** aspect of speech sounds.

Example: The sounds [b] and [g] are articulated in different places in the oral tract.

Allophones (the realizations of a phoneme) are also put in square brackets.

Example: Depending on the phonological environment, the English phoneme /p/ is pronounced as [p], as [p^h] or as [p^ː].

/.../ SLASHES are used when referring to **phonemes as part of a sound system** (when the differences between the sounds of a language have to be indicated, but the precise realization is not important) – slashes refer to the **functional** aspect of speech sounds.

Example: The existence of minimal pairs such as cat/pat shows that /k/ and /p/ are two distinct phonemes in English.

Allomorphs (the realizations of morphemes) are also put in slashes.

Example: The regular English plural ending of words like *fish* and *loss* is realized as /-ɪz/.

{...} In morphology, CURLY BRACKETS indicate **morphemes**.

Example: English uses the morpheme { -z } to form regular plurals.

Others

italics

Use italics if you provide **examples**, no matter if your example consists of just a single word or a whole paragraph. Compare the clarity of the following two lines:

(1) The article the in the end and the in the box are pronounced differently.

(2) The article *the* in *the end* and *the* in *the box* are pronounced differently.

If italics are not available (if you're using handwriting or an old typewriter, for example), you may use underlining instead.

Examples: The article in *the end* is pronounced as /ðɪ:/.

The article in the end is pronounced as /ðɪ:/.

'...' The use of single quotation marks is restricted to explanatory notes, such as **translations** or **paraphrases**.

Example: The German word *Dose* ('tin') should not be confused with English *dose* ('a quantity of medication').

CAPITALS **Semantic concepts** are set in capital letters.

Example: OAK and BIRCH are hyponyms of TREE.