

Language is primarily expressed through sound, using the **vocal tract** to produce **speech**. Another term for this kind of expression is **pronunciation**. People who study speech or pronunciation are concerned with such things as the physical way in which sounds are made (**phonetics**) and the way in which sounds are organized to produce meaning (**phonology**). A *phonetician* is interested in such things as whether the tip of your tongue is touching your teeth or the lumpy ridge behind your teeth when you make the sound spelt 't' in English. A *phonologist* is interested in whether replacing the 't'-sound with the 'p'-sound changes the meaning of a word (eg *top*, *pop*).

Accent

Special forms of pronunciation used in different parts of the world are known as **accents**. Accent should not be confused with **dialect**. Any dialect has a special form of **grammar** and **vocabulary** as well as accent. Accent is simply one aspect of dialect.

Accents can change over time, as the result of social change. Thus the accent of one area will change when people from outside that area move in and people react to the new kinds of pronunciation which they hear. It is an interesting fact that people generally take their accent not from their parents but from people of their own age and social group.