Syllabus: Second Language Phonetics and Phonology

Linguistics 526, UNC-Chapel Hill
Elliott Moreton*

2022 August 16 (T)

Time:	TƎ 11:00–12:15
Places:	T: Dey 304
Instructor	Elliott Moreton, `moreton@unc.edu`
Office hours:	W 11–1 and by appointment
Office:	Smith Building, Room 101
Textbook:	none

1 Description

What we will study: The sound system (phonetics and phonology) is one of the very hardest things to learn in a second language (Granena and Long, 2012). This class addresses questions like

- Specifically which aspects of L2 phonetics and phonology are hard? Production? Perception? Phonological rules?

- What makes them so hard? Does the difficulty stem from incompatibility with L1? From language-universal phonetic and phonological factors?

- Is it possible to acquire native-like L2 pronunciation? Does success depend on age? On the learning situation? On particular training techniques? Does improved L2 pronunciation have side effects on L1 pronunciation?

These questions are connected with major theoretical issues in phonetics, phonology, and language acquisition, as well as cognitive science, biology, and even philosophy.

How we will learn about it: This is a seminar-style class aimed at advanced undergraduates and at graduate students. The "textbook" consists of primary research papers from journals, written by experts for experts. None of them have been edited or softened with a student audience in mind; they are what "the frontiers of knowledge" look like.

To make that possible, part of what we will do in this class is learn ***how* to read primary literature**:

- how to tell old information from new

- how to recognize a *point*

- how to follow the *logical links* between theory, hypothesis, experimental design, results, and implications of the results for the theory

- how to follow a scientific debate and recognize when something *new* has happened

- how to tell when something is *interesting*, in the special sense that that word has in the research world

In addition to the scholarly and critical components (reading papers and arguing with or about them), there is also a creative component, in that students will plan (but not carry out) a research study of their own that would constitute a respectable contribution to our knowledge in this area.

2 Course organization

Events. The main events in the class will be *paper discussions*, *exams*, and a *research proposal*.

2.1 Paper discussions

We'll be reading one published research paper each week for most weeks in the semester. Participants will take turns leading the discussion.

Dibs. I will post the discussion papers on the Sakai site, in Forums: Papers for discussion. Each paper will be a .pdf attachment to a Topic. If you want to lead discussion on that paper, just add a message saying so. Each participant has to present once in the first half of the semester, and once in the second half.

Here's what will happen in a normal week:

	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday
Week n			*All*: Begin reading.
Week $n+1$	*All*: Questions due, 11:59 a.m.	*Instructor*: Background class. *Followers*: Reading reactions due, 6 p.m.	*Leader*: Lead discussion. *All*: Discuss article.
Venue	Sakai	classroom	classroom

Questions. Everyone starts reading the paper after class on Thursday, if they can manage to wait that long. By 11:59 a.m. on Monday, *questions* about the paper are due on Sakai. Each student should contribute three to five questions that have not yet been posted by anyone else. To do this, please put your questions together as a Sakai forum post, and add it to the Topic for the paper.

The questions can be about any aspect of the article: What did they mean on p. 316 when they said such-and-such? What does Figure 3 show? Doesn't the conclusion in this paper contradict the one in the paper we read two weeks ago? Isn't there an obvious alternative explanation for the results of Experiment 1? Etc. The questions are there to help provoke a good discussion of the article by inviting differences of opinion. Try to start arguments!

Preparation class. The Instructor will use Tuesday's class to prepare for Thursday, by (e.g.) discussing some of the literature that Thursday's paper cites, demonstrating some of the relevant acoustic-phonetic phenomena, reviewing relevant phonological theory, etc.

Reading reactions. By 6 p.m. Tuesday, each Follower has posted a *reading reaction* — a paragraph or two commenting on some aspect of the reading. These, again, go on the Sakai forum Topic for that paper. The reading reactions help the Leader to know what issues will stimulate class discussion.

Paper discussion. Finally, on Thursday, the Leader will *lead class discussion* of the paper. The Leader doesn't necessarily have to present the article formally to the class as a lecture, but should take charge of organizing the discussion, and come prepared with a set of topics or questions for the class to discuss, formulated as a handout or a slide show (in pdf format) and arranged in a way that you expect to lead to a vigorous discussion.

I'll provide more details on all phases of this cycle later. For the first two times through this cycle, I'll take the role of Leader on Thursdays to demonstrate what's involved. I'll also be filling in as Leader for unclaimed papers.

2.2 Exams (individually)

There will be two take-home, open-book exams, a midterm and a final (see schedule). Both will be cumulative from the beginning of the class. They will focus on concepts, facts, and skills that we have been using in the class. They may cover material that was in the readings, but that we didn't go over in class.

2.3 Research proposal (collaborative)

Reading these papers should make you want to write one yourself. I'm not going to ask you to do that; instead, your task is to write (collectively) a *proposal* for a research study on second-language phonology. The proposal should be detailed enough that someone could actually carry it out from your description. (I owe this idea to my colleague Misha Becker.) That someone might be you, down the road!

The proposal should identify a question that hasn't been answered, review what we now know about it and why we might expect different answers, explain what data you would collect in order to answer it, and say what conclusions you would draw if the results came out this way or that way. (It will make more sense after reading a few papers.) The proposal should run to about 3000 words of actual text (about 10 pages). Class members will have different roles to play in this process. More details will appear in a separate handout.

2.4 Grading

- Each *individual*:

  15% Leading paper discussions.
  15% Posting questions.
  15% Posting reading reactions.
  10% Midterm
  10% Final
  10% Attendance and participation

- All together

  25% Project proposal.

3   Class in the time of coronavirus

As I write this, the University's plan is to remain open for a full 14-week semester, and to hold classes in person. We all have to follow the University's Community Standards ➡[1]. Notably,

- "Each time prior to coming to campus, all members of the Carolina community should self-assess whether you are experiencing any symptoms using a COVID-19 symptom list. If you have any of these symptoms, you should stay home. You should not enter any campus building, attend any class or report to work."

- Masks were made optional in classrooms starting on March 7, 2022, but they are still useful for preventing the spread of Covid-19 and other diseases.

- If you were exposed to someone with Covid-19, Campus Health ➡[2] recommends that you wear a close-fitting mask around others for the next ten days, even if you do not have Covid yourself and are up to date on your vaccinations.

If the virus situation deteriorates, we may shift to remote classes.

4   Where to find necessary things on line

The main tools we will be using to communicate in this course are the following:

1. The class log ➡[3], on the World Wide Web, which is updated after each class. Here you will find (a) a brief outline of what was covered each day, and (b) a list of any assignments made that day

2. The Sakai site ➡[4]. Everyone who is enrolled in the class should already have access to it. Our class's ID, if you need it, is `LING526.001.FA22`. The main things we will need there are

   (a) Course materials like slides, handouts, and readings (under `Materials`)
   (b) A discussion forum for asynchronous collaboration (under `Forums`)
   (c) The gradebook (under `Gradebook`)

5   The International Phonetic Alphabet

We'll need to use the IPA without being able to hand-write it. Here are some links that may help:

1. A freeware Unicode IPA font, Charis SIL ➡[5] that works on Windows, Mac, and Linux systems.

2. An IPA keyboard ➡[6] webpage. You type by clicking on IPA symbols, then cut and paste the result into your word processor.

3. Guidance on typing IPA on a Windows machine ➡[7]

4. Guidance on typing IPA on a Mac ➡[8]

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[1] `https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/community-standards/`

[2] `https://campushealth.unc.edu/services/primary-care/covid-19-service-details-and-faqs/`

[3] `https://users.castle.unc.edu/~moreton/Ling526/526log.html`

[4] `http://sakai.unc.edu`

[5] `https://software.sil.org/charis/`

[6] `https://westonruter.github.io/ipa-chart/keyboard/`

[7] `https://www.gouskova.com/2016/09/04/international-phonetic-alphabet-fonts-and-keyboards/`

[8] `http://wstyler.ucsd.edu/posts/ipa_with_osx.html`

6   Approximate schedule

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings
1	8/16, 8/18	Course organization and overview	Syllabus
2	8/23, 8/25	L2 phonology is learned imperfectly	Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam (2009)
3	8/30, 9/1	Phonetics review. Spectrograms.	—
4	(9/6), 9/8	Sources of systematic error: L1 transfer and universal biases	Broselow and Kang (2013)
		Perception	
5	9/13, 9/15	How does a language become L1 or L2? Focusing of perception on L1 at the end of the first year.	Kuhl (2007)
6	9/20, 9/22	Can you have two L1s? Limits to bilingualism in perception.	Sebastián-Gallés et al. (2005)
7	9/27, 9/29	What does it take to learn to perceive a difficult non-native contrast?	Takagi and Mann (1995)
8	10/4, 10/6	MIDTERM. Phonology review.	
		Phonology	
9	10/11, 10/13	Learning subset and superset phonotactics.	Trapman and Kager (2009)
10	10/18, (10/20)	L1 transfer effects on L2 sequence perception and production.	de Leeuw et al. (2021)
11	10/25, 10/27	L1 transfer effects on L2 phonological processes.	Darcy et al. (2007)
12	11/1, 11/3	Universal biases in L2 perception?	Berent et al. (2007)
		Production	
13	11/8, 11/10	L1 transfer effects on L2, *and vice versa*, in production of L2 sounds.	Chang (2012)
14	11/15, 11/17	L1 and universal-bias effects in production of L2 sequences.	Broselow et al. (1998)
		Endgame	
15	11/22	Project presentations	
16	11/29	Concluding discussion.	
Exam	12/3 Sat.	FINAL EXAM, 8 a.m.	

7 Policies

Attendance. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get missed materials from Sakai or other students. Always check the website if you have been absent.

Reading. Students are expected to come to class having done the readings. If I start getting the impression that people aren't doing the readings, I'm going to institute pop quizzes. These are annoying because they waste class time, but coming to class without having done the reading wastes even more class time.

Written assignments. You'll get detailed information about each one when it's assigned, but there are some general points that apply to all of them.

1. Assignments will be handed in via the `Dropbox` tool on Sakai (see Section 4).

2. Assignments should be in .pdf format (not .doc, .docx, .rtf, etc.). Software for doing things with pdf files, such as annotating them, can be obtained free from ITS➡[9].

3. Assignments handed in on time will be graded on a scale from 1 to 3 in a way that will be explained along with each assignment using a *grading rubric.* The 1–3 scale will map linearly onto an *approximately* 60–100 scale in computation of the final grade. Other homeworks will receive a zero. Hence, a 0 is *much* worse than a 1. Final numerical grades will be mapped onto UNC-CH's A-through-F scale such that each grade level (e.g., B+), has 4 points, except that A has 5 (95 to 100).

Late assignments. As a general rule, NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT. Exceptions *may* be made if

- You got *advance* permission (by asking me *before* the due date) to hand in an assignment late, or

- You couldn't come to campus on the day the assignment is due because of a serious illness or other unexpected emergency. You need to get the assignment in at the earliest possible opportunity with a *written explanation* of the situation. Email is best.

> **The Carolina Honor Code is in effect in this class, and I will treat violations seriously**. You should review it at `http://instrument.unc.edu`. If you have questions about interpretation, you should bring them to me. **Every assignment you hand in must be accompanied by a signed statement that you have complied with the Code requirements in everything related to that work**, e.g., "I completed this assignment in full compliance with the Honor Code.".

8 General UNC-CH course policies and resources

Accessibility Resources The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. See the ARS Website for contact information: `https://ars.unc.edu` or email `ars@unc.edu`.

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[9]`https://software.sites.unc.edu/software/adobe-creative-cloud/`

Attendance Policy   No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Serviceand/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office(EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.

Counseling and Psychological Services   CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: `https://caps.unc.edu/` or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Diversity Statement   I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve, I appreciate suggestions.

Honor Code Statements

1. All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC honor code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from "lying, cheating, or stealing" in the academic context. If you are unsure about which actions violate that honor code, please see me or consult honor.unc.edu. (source: Department of Asian Studies)
2. Students are bound by the Honor Code in taking exams and in written work. The Honor Code of the University is in effect at all times, and the submission of work signifies understanding and acceptance of those requirements. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please consult with me if you have any questions about the Honor Code. (source: syllabus from section of HIST 486 offered in 2015)
3. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to your instructor or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected (honor.unc.edu). (source: syllabus from section of GEOG 67 offered in 2015)

Syllabus changes   The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Title IX statement Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (`reportandresponse@unc.edu`), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (`gvsc@unc.edu`; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at `safe.unc.edu`.

Undergraduate Testing Center The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit `http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/`.

Additional student resources   1. The Learning Center: The UNC Learning Center is a resource both for students who are struggling in their courses and for those who want to be proactive and develop sound study practices to prevent falling behind. They offer individual consultations, peer tutoring, academic coaching, test prep programming, study skills workshops, and peer study groups. If you think you might benefit from their services, please visit them in SASB North or visit their website to set up an appointment: `http://learningcenter.unc.edu`.

2. The Writing Center: The Writing Center is located in the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources. This could be a wonderful resource to help with your writing assignments in this course (and any assignments in your other courses). You do not need a complete draft of your assignment to visit; they can help you at any stage! You can chat with someone in the writing center or set up as appointment on their website: `http://writingcenter.unc.edu`.

3. Resources for Success in Writing: UNC has a Writing Center that provides one-on-one assistance to students free of charge. To make an appointment, browse the Writing Center's online resources, or submit a draft online. They have additional useful information, such as handouts on how to cite online.

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