Teaching Pronunciation: Theory and Practice
TESL 542, Spring 2013
Robin Barr & Cynthia Hatch

Instructors

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Course Description
Teaching Pronunciation introduces the formal analysis of phonetics and phonology along with techniques for incorporating these into practical classroom instruction. This course places an emphasis on problem-solving strategies using data from many languages and contexts, and on effective techniques for instruction. The main project for this course involves working with a non-native English speaker to identify and address pronunciation issues relevant to the learner’s needs.

Course Objectives
By the end of the course, students will:
- Have deepened their understanding of theoretical linguistic and psycholinguistic principles involved in second language acquisition
- Be able to use these theoretical principles to devise effective teaching techniques, syllabi, and adapt instructional materials to a specific student’s needs
- Have synthesized their theoretical and practical knowledge in collecting their own data and writing up an extensive case-study of a non-native English speaker.

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Type of Grading</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Problem sets @ 5%</td>
<td>Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonetics quiz</td>
<td>Graded</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonology take-home quiz</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Tutoring Reflections @ 5%</td>
<td>Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials Adaptation</td>
<td>Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pronunciation Project</td>
<td>Individual components will be graded separately. See project guidelines.</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Problem Sets
Four problem sets and answer keys will prepare you for the quizzes and your pronunciation project. You will collaborate with classmates on these assignments and turn them in individually. Late or incomplete assignments may not receive full credit. Problem sets will not be returned; please make a copy for yourself if you want to use them for study.
Quizzes
There are two quizzes: a short, in-class quiz on phonetic transcription and features, and a take-home quiz on phonology. There is no collaboration on quizzes.

Tutoring Reflections
More than a simple blow-by-blow account of what you have been doing with your pronunciation student, this assignment allows you to reflect on the practical applications of this course as experienced in your tutoring sessions and to share your experiences with your classmates. Each reflection paper must include these three components:

- **Tutoring Update**: provide an update on your tutoring sessions followed by observations and/or any questions you may have about the instructional work you are doing with your subject.
- **Targeting Pronunciation**: reflect analytically upon a particular chapter or activity in your pronunciation textbook that you have found useful or otherwise remarkable with respect to your tutoring. Suggested topics: personalization, adaptation (for level or learning style), or scaffolding.
- **Connections**: explore an idea, experience or discovery from your tutoring session that illustrates points emphasized in your readings and in class.

Each log will be ~500 words, posted on Blackboard by the due date. In addition, you will be required to comment on your classmates’ reflections. We will discuss the reflections the following week.

Materials Adaptation Assignment
Starting from typical non-pronunciation instructional material, you will 1) identify opportunities for pronunciation instruction and practice, and 2) adapt material to reflect the specific needs (goals, interests, background, learning style, and level) of your tutee. This may involve personalizing content, omitting content or activities that do not match your tutees’ needs, and adding activities or smaller instructional steps that will benefit your tutees. We urge you to collaborate with others in the class whose tutees have similar needs; if so, a group may turn in a single project.

Pronunciation Project
Here, you will use the insights and skills that you are developing in this class to perform an in-depth assessment of your tutee’s pronunciation. See the Pronunciation Project Overview and additional handouts for more information. This task will include:

- Finding a cooperative non-native English speaker who wants to improve his/her pronunciation
- Recording interviews and making transcriptions of his or her pronunciation
- Using this data to analyze and diagnose his/her pronunciation problems
- Developing an individualized pronunciation syllabus and lesson plan for a hypothetical 12-week course that will improve your student’s intelligibility
Required Texts

- Avery, Peter and Susan Ehrlich. 2007. *Teaching American English Pronunciation*
- Miller, Sue F. 2006. *Targeting Pronunciation, 2nd Edition* (with audio CDs)

Additional required and supplementary readings will be available at the library, on e-reserves, or from the professors. Some homework will require use of software in the TESOL office. The following recommended texts (with CDs) have been ordered through the bookstore:

- Gilbert, Judy. *Clear Speech From the Start* (student edition). [if your subject is a beginner]
## Syllabus: Teaching Pronunciation  
**TESL 542, Spring 2013**

### UNIT I: INTRODUCTION and SUPRASEGMENTALS

| Week 1  | Jan 15 | Course Introduction: a suprasegmental approach  
Introduction to the Project: first, catch your rabbit.  
Introduction to sociocultural issues.  
Practice diagnosis and phonetics review. | Related Readings:  
- Avery intro, 1  
- Yavas phonetics charts |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 2  | Jan 22 | Pronunciation discovery stations  
Introduction to Project Part 1.  
Introduction to suprasegmentals. | Related Readings:  
- Avery 2, 4, 16  
- Ladefoged 5  
- Yavas 7 |
| Saturday  | Jan. 26 | AU TESOL Spring Workshop: “Meeting Educational Challenges of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students” Butler Boardroom 9:00am – 2:00pm. | Coursework Due:  
- Problem Set 1 DUE  
- Reflection 1 DUE  
Related Readings:  
- Avery 5, 6  
- Yavas 6 |
| Week 3  | Jan 29 | I got rhythm  
Suprasegmentals and sociocultural issues, continued. | Coursework Due:  
- Problem Set 2 DUE  
Related Readings:  
- Avery 9 |
| Week 4  | Feb 5 | Songfest: the music of suprasegmentals  
Using songs to teach pronunciation. |  |

### UNIT II: SEGMENTAL PHONETICS

| Week 5  | Feb 12 | Rubber bands, Color Vowel Charts, and Koosh Balls™  
Vowel length and reduction.  
Introduction to Project, Part 2.  
Guest Lecture by Shirley Thompson. | Coursework Due:  
- Project Part 1 DUE  
Related Readings:  
- Avery 3, 11  
- Yavas 3, 4, 5  
- “Arthur the Rat” dialect variation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 6  | Feb 19 | You’re from a cow?!  
Linking, glottal stops and other rules your students don’t believe in.  
Introduction to syllable structure and its effects on phonology. | Coursework Due:  
- Problem Set 3 DUE  
Related Readings:  
- Avery 7, 8  
- Yavas 2, 8 |
| Week 7  | Feb 26 | It’s not ‘sloppy,’ it’s efficient!  
Why linking, vowel length, and vowel reduction are necessary rules of English. | Coursework Due:  
- Reflection 2 DUE  
Related Readings:  
- Avery 2, 3, 4 (review)  
- DARE excerpt |
| Week 8  | Mar 5 | PHONETICS QUIZ  
Metalinguistic attitudes. Which English do we teach? Video: “American Tongues.” Phonology and the Color Vowel Chart. | Coursework Due:  
- Problem Set 4 DUE  
Related Readings:  
- Ohio Files  
- Halle & Clements excerpts |

Mar 10-17  
**SPRING BREAK**
## UNIT III: PHONOLOGY: sound patterns, rules, and mental representations.

### Week 9
**Mar 19**

**Pigeonholes and phonemes - Finding the rules**
How to describe linguistic patterns and systems. Introduction to Project Part 3. Discussion: Learner attitudes about dialect variation. **PHONOLOGY QUIZ** distributed (due Week 11).

**Coursework Due:**
- Project Part 2 DUE

**Related Readings:**
- Sapir

### Week 10
**Mar 26**

**Syllabus Design and Lesson Plans**
Planning effective pronunciation lessons. Introduction to Project Part 4 and Materials Adaptation.

**Categorical Pizza**
How phonemic categorical perception develops. Led by Robin Barr. Mary Graydon Center 247. 8:10pm - 9:30pm.

**Coursework Due:**
- Phonology Take-Home DUE

**Related Readings:**
- Avery 13, 14

**Free to all Pronunciation students, who are encouraged to attend. Pizza is provided.**

### Week 11
**Apr 2**

**Your Students’ Phonologies**
Sound patterns in the classroom. What doesn’t happen in class: the pronunciation learner’s learning curve.

**Lecture and Book Signing** *“Bilingualism in Schools and Society: Language, Identity, and Policy” by Sarah J. Shin*
4pm-5:30pm, Founders Lounge, SIS

**Coursework Due:**
- Project Part 3 DUE

**Related Readings:**
- Eimas
- Menn 5, 9

### Thursday
**Apr. 11**

**What Goes on in Your Mind**
Language processing. Lexical chunks.

**Coursework Due:**
- Materials Adaptation DUE
- Reflection 3 DUE

**Related Readings:**
- Avery 10
- Celce-Murcia 9

### UNIT IV: INTERACTION OF PHONOLOGY WITH OTHER AREAS

### Week 12
**Apr 9**

**Pronunciation in the ESL/EFL Classroom**
Integrating pronunciation into daily instruction.

**Coursework Due:**
- Project Part 4 DUE

**Related Readings:**
- Avery 12
- Yavas 9

### Saturday
**Apr. 27**

**WATESOL- AU TESOL Spring Conference:**
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

*Sign up for WATESOL membership!*

### April 30 – Spring Study Day: No Classes

### Week 13
**Apr 16**

**What’s that in the road, a head?!**
General conclusions. Course evaluations.
TESL 542 Supplementary Readings. Note: Some of these will be required, others recommended or optional. These and other additional readings will be available at the library or from the professors.

Ladefoged, Peter. 2001. Vowels and Consonants: An Introduction to the Sounds of Languages. (& CD)
Ohio State University. Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics.
Reis Pereira, Ivana Brasiliero. 2009. The Effects of Bilingualism on Children’s Perception of Speech Sounds. Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics/ Landelijke – LOT.