

ELEMENTARY PHONOLOGY
FOR STUDENTS IN OTHER DISCIPLINES
A SYLLABUS

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by

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1. Introduction

1.1 A background in linguistics is becoming increasingly useful in a wide variety of disciplines. Students who have a background often find themselves in an advantageous position as linguistics becomes more current in their chosen field, while students without it may find themselves at a disadvantage in an advanced course and, to compound the problem, find that is not feasible to pick up a full semester introductory linguistics course. From the point of view of the instructor offering a course with linguistics orientation, the options include limiting the course to students with linguistics background, or limiting course content to accommodate students without the requisite background, or sacrificing some of his instruction time to the presentation of the requisite linguistics information. Those choosing the third option find a notable lack of appropriate instructional materials.

1.2 Several introductions to phonology are available in linguistics textbooks. Gleason (1961), for example, offers an introduction to the sounds of English and a general introduction to articulatory phonetics including exotic sounds. The degree of sophistication required to study this text successfully is about that of an undergraduate, but the material is directed more to linguistics majors and should be adapted for students in other disciplines. This criticism applies to most other introductory linguistics textbooks. Pike (1947) has produced a standard work on analysis and description of

exotic sounds and phonemicization of phonetic data. This work presents a wealth of detail, a characteristic that makes it difficult to use in undergraduate instruction. Materials are needed in language appropriate to non-linguistics majors and in a form allowing for optimum use by students outside of class. This report is an attempt to help fill this need.

1.3 The solution selected for instruction in phonology is a set of lessons written in a style appropriate to undergraduate non-linguistics majors. Materials covering the sounds of speech are presented in student handout form, a form selected because of the success experienced with it in other courses.

2. Student Handouts

2.1 Phonology is presented in a series of fifteen lessons designed for use over a period of six weeks. The handouts for these lessons are presented as appendix A of this report.

2.2 The student handouts introduce the student to the recognition, production, and transcription of the sounds of English and selected non-English sounds, and to the phonemicization of phonetic data. An introduction to distinctive feature analysis in very elementary terms is included for the purpose of making students aware of one of the newer linguistic models gaining wide use in other disciplines.

2.3 A short introduction to the nature of speech, its production, and its study in articulatory phonetics is followed by an introduction to the sounds of English.

2.4 The presentation of English phonology begins with a study of the stops, chosen for initial study because their mode of production

is easily apprehended as being different from that of all other sounds. Following stops, the fricatives, affricates, resonants, and vowels are introduced in that order. Although the vowels are introduced last, there is some practice in vowel discrimination given in earlier consonant exercises for two purposes. First, it allows the student to practice whole word transcription, which seems to be more motivating than practicing with single sounds. Second, the student gains a preview of vowel transcription before actually confronting the discussion of vowel articulation.

3. Instructor Notes

3.1 Notes to the instructor are provided, paralleling each lesson in the student handouts. These notes are presented as appendix B of this report.

3.2 The content of these notes is threefold. First, the notes the instructor to those parts of the lesson which may prove difficult for the student. Second, supplementary and complementary material is included to augment the handout explanation. Third, the notes contain practice transcription material. In most cases this material is also suitable for duplication and distribution as reading exercises.

3.3 The instructor notes are separated by lessons, and all dictation exercises are in transcription in a larger size type face, for the convenience of the instructor.