B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title : Practical Phonetics
Course Code : ENG2102 / ENG102
Recommended Study Year : 2nd Year for 4-year System
                      : 1st Year for 3-year System
No. of Credits/Term : 3
Mode of Tuition : Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours : 2 hours Lecture/week
                      : 1 hour Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme : Required Course
Prerequisite(s) : N/A
Co-requisite(s) : N/A
Exclusion(s) : N/A
Exemption Requirement(s) : N/A

Brief Course Description

Phonetics is the systematic study of human speech sounds. It is concerned with how speech sounds are produced and perceived. It provides means to classify and transcribe these sounds. While phonetics can be studied in various ways, we will adopt an articulatory approach in this course, with a practical emphasis.

As an introduction to phonetics, this course assumes no prior knowledge of this field. The purpose of the course is to introduce students to some basic phonetic concepts and to deepen their understanding of the importance of phonetics in language studies and language-related sciences. Students will learn how to recognize, produce, transcribe and classify various speech sounds. They will also learn how their first language (Cantonese) influences their perception and pronunciation of English sounds.

Aims

The course aims to achieve the following:

1. to introduce students to the basic concepts in phonetics;
2. to explore human articulatory capabilities;
3. to promote students’ awareness of the importance of phonetics in language studies;
4. to study some of the differences between the English and Cantonese sound systems;
5. to enhance students’ ability to discriminate various English sounds;
6. to improve students’ pronunciation of English;
7. to develop their ability to read and write transcriptions in the International Phonetic Alphabet;
8. to lay a solid foundation for higher courses, such as ENG271 English Phonology.
Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Transcribe words using phonemic symbols, including the use of stress marks where appropriate
2. Read words accurately from phonemic transcriptions, such as those found in the *Cobuild* dictionary
3. Classify English speech sounds according to their place and manner of articulation
4. Describe how the pronunciation of certain words varies according to whether they are in their strong or weak form
5. Understand the operation of connected speech processes such as linking
6. Recognise the main phonological features of Hong Kong English and understand which are likely to cause communication problems
7. Express different meanings by using a range of phonological features, such as appropriate intonation

Indicative Content

1. An overview of phonetics
2. English consonants
3. English vowels
4. Consonant clusters
5. The syllable
6. Word stress
7. Aspects of connected speech
8. Intonation

Teaching Method

One two-hour lecture and a one-hour language laboratory session per week.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be recorded at the beginning and end of term and their progress in improving certain aspects of their English pronunciation will be assessed (outcomes 6 and 7).
2. The final written test will assess students’ ability to transcribe words and their knowledge of various aspects of the English sound system (outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 5).
3. The final oral test will assess students’ ability to read unfamiliar English words accurately from transcriptions (outcome 2).
4. Written assignments will monitor and assess students’ understanding of specific aspects of the course, including the ability to analyse and prepare texts for reading aloud (outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 5).
Assessment

Assignments: 40%
Final Test: 60% (oral 20%, written 40%)

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Reference Materials


Roach, P. *A Little Encyclopedia of Phonetics*. Available at: [http://www.personal.rdg.ac.uk/~llsroach/encyc.pdf](http://www.personal.rdg.ac.uk/~llsroach/encyc.pdf)