LIGN215

VARIATION IN PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

Spring Quarter 2005

Instructor: Amalia Arvaniti

Contact Information  Class meetings
Office: 5236 McGill Hall  Monday-Wednesday
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Phone: 534-8409      5240 McGill Hall
Office hours: Thu-Fri 1-2 or by appointment

Brief course description
This seminar deals with the linguistic and sociolinguistic sources of variation in speech and their formal treatment in theories of phonetics and phonology. Variation is here broadly construed to encompass both low-level phonetic variation (often referred to as gradience) and sociolinguistically-related variation (such as the existence of alternant forms). Similarly, “formal treatment” should be broadly interpreted, since some of the models we will be discussing are more detailed than others. Finally, although production is going to be our main focus, we will also be discussing works that deal with variation and speech perception. Due to the vast literature of this topic (or, rather, group of topics) we will only be covering selected aspects of variation and a limited number of relevant phonetic and phonological models.

There are four parts to this seminar: (i) linguistic sources of variation (particularly prosody and its relation to pragmatics); (ii) sociolinguistic sources of variation (a review of classic variationist research and of more recent models of style and speaker identity); (iii) treatments of variation in phonetic theory; (iv) treatments of variation in phonological theory (particularly OT and usage-based models).

The seminar will be based on readings of primary literature and review papers, with a few lectures interspersed in between providing background information on the topics covered. Each student is expected to lead the discussion of course readings at least twice during the quarter (the exact number will depend on the number of students in the class).

Requirements and grading

- This seminar is based on readings of primary literature and review papers. It is essential that you read the assigned papers in time so that we can have fruitful discussions in class. Note: “reading” above should be understood as synonymous to “studying” not to “skimming.”
- A large part of your grade will depend on your presentations in class and on your participation in class discussions. These tasks largely replace written assignments in this seminar.
- Class papers: the final class papers will be based on projects involving the collection of data on some aspect of variation discussed in class. These projects could be based on
an original idea or they could be a replication of an older study; it is also possible for the class paper to be a review paper on a particular theoretical topic dealing with treatments of variation in phonetics, phonology or both.

**Grades**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class presentations:</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>(the number of presentations will depend on the number of students)</td>
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<td>Participation in class discussions</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Class paper:</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%+</td>
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**A general note on collaboration, acknowledgements and plagiarism:** you are encouraged to work in groups, and to discuss your class presentations with other students. However, all presentations and assignments should be your own work. Any help or contribution from others should be acknowledged in a special acknowledgments section of your written assignments, including any handouts of class presentations (such contribution could be an idea that changed your understanding of a paper or the course of your research paper, help with data collection or analysis, etc.). Please also note that any time you use the ideas or words of someone else you should explicitly acknowledge the source in a citation and in the references. This includes material you found on the web (in which case, you can provide the website in the references).
**SYLLABUS**

*This schedule is subject to (small) changes depending on class interests and progress.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>Introduction to topics and practical details</td>
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<td>3/30 Lecture on linguistic sources of variation: the scope of linguistic variability in speech</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Discussion f prosody readings</td>
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<td>4/6</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on pragmatics and prosody</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>Discussion of word frequency readings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>Lecture of sociolinguistic sources of variation</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on variationist sociolinguistics</td>
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<td>4/20</td>
<td>Discussion of student-selected sociolinguistic readings</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on domains of usage and language change</td>
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<td>4/27</td>
<td>Discussion of student-selected sociolinguistic readings</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on style and social identity</td>
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<td>5/4</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on phonetic theories of variation</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on probabilistic modeling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on usage-based modeling</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>5/16</td>
<td>Discussion of readings on exemplar models</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/18</td>
<td>Discussion of OT treatments of variation (i)</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>5/23</td>
<td>Discussion of OT treatments of variation (ii)</td>
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<td>5/25</td>
<td>Discussion of OT treatments of variation (iii) and the need for level separation</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>5/30</td>
<td><em>No class Memorial Day</em></td>
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<td>6/1</td>
<td>No readings; class presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam week</td>
<td>5/30</td>
<td>Submission of papers (incorporating comments given at presentation)</td>
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READINGS

WEEK 1
3/28: No reading

3/30: Introduction: the scope of variability in speech

WEEK 2
4/4: Prosody

4/6: Pragmatics and prosody

WEEK 3
4/11: On word frequency effects

4/13: Lecture on sociolinguistics sources of variation

WEEK 4
4/18: Variationist sociolinguistics
4/20: Discussion of student-selected sociolinguistic readings

WEEK 5
4/25: Domains of usage and language change

4/27: Discussion of student-selected sociolinguistic readings

WEEK 6
5/2: Style and social identity

5/4: Phonetic theories of variation

WEEK 7
5/9: Probabilistic modeling
5/11: **Usage-based models**

**WEEK 8**

5/16: **Exemplar theories**

5/18: **OT treatments of variation (i)**

**WEEK 9**

5/23: **OT treatments of variation (ii)**

5/25: **Is phonetics separate from phonology?**

**WEEK 10**

5/30: **MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS**

6/1: No readings; class presentations

**EXAM WEEK: SUBMISSION OF PAPERS**
(should incorporate comments given at presentation)