

Voicing and Voicelessness

Spring 2023

Code

BBN-ANG17-342.07 / BBI-ANG17-342E.07 / BMA-ANGD17-CNy7a.7 / BMI-ANGD17-CNy7aE.7 / OT-ANG17-390.7

Time and place

Thu 12:00–13:30, R327

Value, type

5-credit elective seminar

Host

Department of English Linguistics (DELG)

Instructor

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Course description

In phonology, the terms “voiced” and “voiceless” are often used to refer to obstruents such as /b, d, g/ and /p, t, k/, respectively. Approximately half of the world’s languages are assumed to apply precisely this two-way laryngeal contrast in their obstruent series. But how can this opposition be represented phonologically for different languages, and what do we base these underlying representations on: how can this contrast be realized phonetically, and what kind of laryngeal phenomena can we observe across languages? In order to answer these questions, we are going to look into languages like Hungarian, Polish, Italian, standard accents of English, Durham English, Yorkshire English, Alabama and Mississippi English, German, Swedish, Ukrainian, Meccan Arabic and Oromo. Moreover, Thai, Hindi and Igbo, for instance, will show us that, unlike in the languages most of us might be familiar with, more than two series of laryngeally different obstruents are possible. The examination of these languages will involve learning about phonological representations, distinctive features, phonetic realizations, vocal fold activities, voicing and aspirating languages, laryngeal assimilations, etc.

Readings

A book chapter, an article or excerpts from several works will be assigned every week. The readings will be uploaded to the platform of the course a week in advance.

Course material and communication

The syllabus, the course materials, the home assignments and your results will be made available on the platform of the course (in the Microsoft Teams group), where announcements will also be posted, so it will be your responsibility to check it for updates on a regular basis.

Requirements and assessment

You will be expected to actively participate in the class work, to regularly do your home assignments and to read the obligatory readings *prior to* the classes—please take this course only if you are willing to fulfill these requirements.

Assessment will be based on a midterm test (40%) and an end-term test (60%), which can be substantially modified by in-class participation and the submitted assignments.

Grading policy: 0–59.99% → 1; 60–69.99% → 2; 70–79.99% → 3; 80–89.99% → 4; 90–100% → 5

Regular attendance is necessary; a maximum of three absences can be tolerated.

*Syllabus**

<i>Feb. 23</i>	<i>No class (spring break)</i>
	Introduction
<i>Mar. 2</i>	1. Phonetics vs. phonology; consonant properties
<i>Mar. 9</i>	2. Distinctive features; phonological representation of laryngeal contrast in “Hungarian- type” and “English-type” languages
<i>Mar. 16</i>	3. The phonetic realization of laryngeal contrast in English
<i>Mar. 23</i>	4. Laryngeal phenomena in aspirating and voicing languages and their phonological representation
<i>Mar. 30</i>	5. Laryngeally different accents of English: Yorkshire English and Durham English
	MIDTERM TEST
<i>Apr. 6</i>	6. Two more cases of asymmetrical assimilation: Meccan Arabic and Ukrainian
<i>Apr. 13</i>	7. Two laryngeal features in the same system? The case of Swedish
<i>Apr. 20</i>	8. Two laryngeal features in the same system: Thai and Hindi
<i>Apr. 27</i>	9. Some peculiar cases: Alabama and Mississippi English and Italian
<i>May 4</i>	10. Laryngeal typology of languages with two obstruent series
<i>May 11</i>	11. Further laryngeal categories; examining further languages
<i>May 18</i>	Revision
<i>May 25</i>	END-TERM TEST

* The syllabus is subject to change; please check it regularly for updates.