PLIN Modules – Module Information Sheet (2023/24)

1. General Information

- **Module Code:** PLIN0032

- **Title:** Sociolinguistics

- **Credits:** 15

- **Module Tutor:** Dr Bronwen Evans   **Contact:** bronwen.evans@ucl.ac.uk

- **Other Tutor(s):** Ms Ella Gregory   **Contact:** ella.gregory.21@ucl.ac.uk

- **Module Available at the following levels:**

    o **Level 4 UG:** No

    o **Level 5 UG:** Yes

    o **Level 6 UG:** Yes

    o **Level 7 UG:** No

    o **Level 7 PG:** Yes

- **Module Description:**

What does your accent say about you? Does your age or gender have an effect on how you speak? What about geography or social class? This course aims to develop awareness of the complex relationship between spoken language and society through discussion of existing literature and through experience of experimental paradigms used to study spoken language variation. The focus will be on the study of phonetic aspects of accent variation and change and so it is assumed that students will be familiar with basic concepts in phonetics and phonology.

Understanding patterns of spoken language variation requires a multidisciplinary approach, and so during the course students will be introduced to aspects of historical linguistics, language acquisition, speech perception and production, as well as gaining hands-on experience of carrying out experimental tasks and working with speech data (lab sessions).

The course introduces students to the field through the study of data and theory and assumes no prior knowledge of sociolinguistics. The lectures focus on 3 themes; Lectures 1-4 focus on variation at the level of the individual speaker, focussing in particular on the work of William Labov, the founder of modern-day sociolinguistics, and work that has followed from this (e.g., accommodation theory); Lectures 5 & 6 look at variation within communities of speakers and Lectures 7-10 on language change across the lifespan, both as a result of internal and external factors (e.g., contact between dialects and languages).

- **Prerequisites:** No formal pre-requisites, but students are expected to be familiar with basic concepts in phonetics and phonology

- **Timetable:** https://timetable.ucl.ac.uk/tt/createCustomTimet.do#

- **Summary:**

  Lectures will include the following topics:

  - Regional and Social Dialectology
  - Variation & Style
  - Language Change
  - Variation & Gender
  - Variation & Social class
  - Learning variation in first language acquisition
  - Second dialect acquisition
  - Sociophonetics

- **Information for students on other programmes and Affiliate/intercollegiate students:**

  If you want to take this module, you should select it on Portico as usual. Any general queries about taking the module can be addressed to pals.lingteachingoffice@ucl.ac.uk.

2. Teaching

- **Teaching methods and tutorial/lab arrangements:**

  There is a weekly 1hr lecture followed by a 1hr lab session in which students will gain experience of analyzing speech data and running basic experiments to investigate variation.

  Further reading and discussion topics are provided, which should be utilised in the academic skills component. Lectures for this module are recorded via the UCL Lecturecast system, and a link to recordings will be made available via the Moodle page for this module. Please note that recordings can fail for a number of reasons.

- **Communication:**

  The preferred means of communications is by email to the course coordinator. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

- **Workload:**

  - *Lectures – 10hrs*
  - *Labs – 10 hrs*

- o *The remainder of the time will be spent reading, preparing for lectures and tutorials and completing coursework. It is expected that you will need to spend a minimum of 3hrs each week in background reading.*

- **Core Texts:**

  - o Meyerhoff, M. (2006, also future editions). Introducing Sociolinguistics.
  - o Foulkes, P. & Docherty, G.J. (1999). Urban Voices: Accent Studies in the British Isles. Arnold.
  - o Thomas, E. (2011). Sociophonetics: An Introduction.
  - o Drager, K. (2018). .Experimental Research Methods in Sociolinguistics (Research Methods in Linguistics). Bloomsbury Academic

- **Libraries and other resources:** n/a /

  Other useful general textbooks & edited volumes:
  - o Wardhaugh, R. (1998). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, 3rd Edition.
  - o Chambers, J.K. (2003). Sociolinguistic Theory.
  - o Chambers, J.K. (2001). The Handbook of Language Variation and Change.
  - o Coupland, N. & Jaworski, A. (1997). Sociolinguistics: A Reader and Coursebook.
  - o Strelluf, C. (2023). The Routlege Handbook of Sociophonetics (edited volume). Routlege (online only).

- **Additional Information:** Any requests for extensions to deadlines, or for extenuating circumstances to be taken into consideration by examiners, should be made by completing the relevant form. Instructions are available on the Moodle page for this module, under the Assessment tab. No extensions or special consideration can be given outside of this process, and there is a grading penalty for late submission of coursework. Again, information about this policy can be found on the course Moodle page, under the 'Assessment' tab.

- **Recording:** Lectures for this module are recorded via the UCL Lecturecast system, and a link to recordings will be made available via the Moodle page for this module. Please note that recordings can fail for a number of reasons. Lab sessions are interactive and will not be recorded.

3. Assessment

- **Level: /5/6/7 UG&PG**

Mode of Assessment	Weight	Format
Presentation	**50%**	Video of presentation of an experimental design.
Coursework 2	**45%**	Journal article review (1500 words)
Tutorial (Lab) Participation	**5%**	Assessed by lab workshop leader based on attendance and contribution to labs.

Table 1. Assessment Formats and Weightings

4. Types of Feedback

Types of feedback students on this module can expect to receive.

4.1 Generic Tutor Feedback

Type of Feedback	Provided
Oral feedback is given to the whole class (e.g. this may be about coursework, an in-class or online task).	**Yes**
Electronic feedback to the whole group (e.g. see oral feedback above).	**Yes**
Printed feedback to the whole group (e.g. answers to an exercise done in class, feedback relating to general performance on coursework or a task etc).	**No**
Coverage of topics in class which have been raised by members of the class (e.g. in areas where students ask for clarification/elaboration, these topics are addressed in class).	**Yes**
Electronic responses to the whole group via the VLE or via email (eg sending replies to individual queries to the whole group).	**Yes**

Table 2. Generic Tutor Feedback

4.2 Automated Feedback

Type of Feedback	Provided
Tests / quizzes within Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). These are tests which do not count towards the module mark, but serve to inform students of how well they are understanding materials taught.	**No**

Personal Response Systems used within class (e.g. to test that students understand a concept, to survey which topics students would like elaborated).	**No**

Table 3. Automated Feedback

4.3 Specific Targeted Tutor Feedback

Type of Feedback	Provided
Oral responses within class (e.g. demonstrators talking to students in lab, stats and computing classes).	**Yes**
Oral responses outside class (e.g. students are invited to telephone or meet with module staff with individual queries regarding topics taught).	**Yes**
Electronic responses to queries from individual students are provided (as above)	**Yes**
Summative comments on coursework (e.g. handwritten feedback at the end of a written assessment which counts towards the module mark).	**Yes**
On-script comments in the body of individual summative coursework	**Yes**
Indication of achievement against set marking criteria (e.g. for an individual essay or a lab report).	**Yes**
Feedback using a standard feedback form (e.g. essay feedback form or lab marking forms)	**Yes**
Oral feedback on coursework talking to individual students about their coursework on the phone or in person, this could be summative points or specific comments on parts of the essay / lab report / project.	**No**
Electronic feedback on coursework. This could be via email or within VLE (e.g. using Gradebook on Moodle).	**Yes**

Table 4. Specific Targeted Tutor Feedback

4.4 Feedback From People Other Than Module Staff

Type of Feedback	Provided
Peer feedback: fellow students commenting on/marking each other's work, or working together on a task (e.g. group work providing students with feedback on their ideas/understanding).	**Yes**
Self-feedback (e.g. students evaluating their own coursework, worksheet answers, etc.)	**Yes**

Feedback from seminar tutors: Students may receive feedback on their understanding of topics/answers to queries/feedback on coursework from their tutor (e.g. poster, Research Project presentations etc)	Yes

Table 5. Feedback from People other than Module Staff

4.5 Feedback related to examinations

N/A: This module has no examinations.

Type of Feedback	Provided
A mock examination is given to help students prepare for the final exam.	No
Marks for the previous year provided online, with a breakdown of marks for individual questions	No
Samples of real student work, such as coursework, exam essays, and projects from previous students on the module.	No
Example projects provided	No

Table 6. Feedback related to examinations

5. Specific Transferable Skills

Transferable skills students on this module can expect to develop, categorised into skill areas.

5.1 Academic

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Learning Actively – Able to approach learning as an active agent, taking responsibility for the process and outcomes.	Yes
Analysing Data – Able to filter and organise information to develop an argument and work toward a conclusion, applying numerical analysis where appropriate.	Yes
Thinking Critically – Able to consider claims made against the evidence available and to develop one's own view systematically	Yes
Using Sources – Able to locate and use appropriate books, journals, websites and other sources to gather relevant data	Yes
Solving Problems – Able to use systematic approaches to overcome difficulties in producing a desired outcome	Yes

Managing Projects – Able to plan a coordinated set of tasks and enact over time to produce a substantial result	No

Table 7. Academic transferable skills

5.2 Self-Management

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Reflecting on Learning – Able to review dispassionately one's approaches to learning and the outcomes and progressively improve the process	**Yes**
Managing Time – Able to prioritise tasks and commitments to achieve optimum results in a designated timeframe	**Yes**
Being Creative/Innovative – Able to generate and apply original approaches to tasks and problems and produce improved outcomes	**Yes**
Assessing Oneself – Able to identify one's own strengths, weaknesses, progress made and action needed to improve effectiveness	**Yes**
Being Independent – Able to work at own initiative with minimal supervision, taking responsibility for action and outcomes	**Yes**
Managing Resources – Able to allocate and conserve funds and other resources on a day to day basis and to support projects	**No**

Table 8. Self-management transferable skills

5.3 Communication

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Writing – Able to communicate in textual forms (essay, reports, journal entries, web pages etc.) in an appropriate style with a clear narrative flow	**Yes**
Listening – Able to hear and appreciate the content, background and purpose of what someone else is communicating to you	**Yes**
Using Information Technology – Able to use digital technology for managing information and to mediate communication for learning and other purposes	**Yes**
Presenting – Able to speak to an audience, using visual aids as appropriate and respond to questions	**Yes**
Communication globally – Able to understand and manage factors affecting communication across cultures	**Yes**
Planning and making decisions – Able to identify steps needed to work towards global and communicate them, including means of monitoring progress	**Yes**

Table 9. Communication transferable skills

5.4 Working with others

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Working in teams – Able to co-operate with others, to contribute your strengths and learn from theirs with a common purpose	**Yes**
Negotiating – Able to respect the needs and interests of others when they differ from your own and to find common ground	**Yes**
Leading – Able to galvanise a team into cooperative action, to manage, guide or facilitate a group to maximise success	**Yes**
Understanding others – Able to recognise the variety of ways in which people can thing and approach tasks, adjusting your own to suit	**Yes**
Assessing self and peers – Able to assess your own performance objectively and to give and receive constructive feedback with others	**Yes**
Managing change – Able to adapt to changing circumstance and maintain focus on the group's declared goals	**Yes**

Table 10. Working with others transferable skills