

568790	<b>The acquisition of second language (L2) speech</b> [2,5 ECTS – OPT.]	<b>Joan C. Mora</b>
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## Course Description

This course deals with the acquisition of L2 speech and two important perceptual dimensions of L2 learners' spoken interlanguage, degree of foreign accent and intelligibility/comprehensibility. The cognitive processes and mechanisms underlying L2 speech development as well as the individual and contextual factors affecting the pronunciation of a L2 will be analysed within the framework of current L2 speech models (SLM, PAM, NLM) as well as practically through the design and analysis of production and perception tasks. The relationship between accentedness and intelligibility/comprehensibility will be analysed through objective and subjective measures.

The factors affecting and shaping the production and perception of L2 learners' speech are the object of intensive research from both psycholinguistic and learning and teaching perspectives. This research seeks to better explain and understand the development of L2 learners' oral production ability, in particular with respect to pronunciation skills. The study of these factors has important implications for foreign language teaching and may be very useful in the design of communicative tasks for oral skills development, pronunciation in particular, and in L2 oral competence assessment. What determines the intelligibility level of different foreign accents? To what extent does a foreign accent affect the intelligibility of fluent L2 speakers? How is the speech of L2 learners perceived by native and non-native speakers and other L2 learners? Why is L2 pronunciation often a challenge for L2 learners, and why is there such huge variation in the levels of attainment achieved? These questions will be explored from a real data analysis perspective and the answers will be interpreted in the light of current speech perception/production models.

## Syllabus

1. Plasticity in L2 speech perception and production.
2. Models of L2 Speech learning: SLM, PAM-L2, NLM-e.
3. Non-native accents: Accentedness, intelligibility and comprehensibility
4. Experiential and contextual factors in the acquisition of L2 speech.
5. Measuring L2-speech perception and production.
6. L2 pronunciation teaching and learning in instructed SLA.
7. Individual differences in the acquisition of L2 speech.

## Methodology

This subject is structured along three complementary types of task: (1) critical reading of articles and book chapters and active participation in the discussion of proposed readings; (2) the analysis of oral data based on proposed measures and group discussion of methodological approaches used; and (3) a real experiment to assess accuracy in L2 speech production or to assess non-native speech samples for either accentedness or intelligibility/comprehensibility.

## Assessment

The assessment in this course will be based on a final project (60%) and several tasks (40%), as follows:

Task 1 (10%): Written critical review of Kuhl et al . 2008 (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman size 12)

Task 2 (10%): Acoustic analysis task.

Task 3 (10%): Oral presentation of one research article (5 minutes max.) + 2 minutes for questions and changing presenter.

Task 4 (10%): Research design of a study on L2 speech acquisition.

Final Project (60%): The final project consists of two parts: a written descriptive report of your experiment as specified in the task description (10 pages max., double-spaced, Times New Roman size 12); and the experiment itself.

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