

**Sandra Ferrari Disner**  
**Associate Professor (Teaching), University of Southern California**

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**Education:**

University of California, Los Angeles, M.A. (1978), Ph.D. (1983) in Linguistics.  
Wellesley College, B.A. (1972). Phi Beta Kappa.

**Language Proficiency:**

English, Italian, Spanish (Native speaker fluency)  
French, German (Near-native speaker fluency)

**Academic Employment:**

Department of Linguistics, University of Southern California

Instructor, <i>Language and Law</i> (Ling 412)	2012-17
Instructor, <i>New Horizons in Speaker Identification</i> (Ling 450)	2011-18
Instructor, <i>Introduction to Linguistics</i> (Ling 210)	2010-17
Instructor, GE course <i>Language, Society and Culture</i> (Ling 115)	2013-19
Instructor, <i>Phonetics</i> (Ling 415)	2013, 2018
Instructor, <i>Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology</i> (Ling 301)	2010, 2012
Instructor, GE course <i>Language and Mind</i> (Ling 275)	2007, 2009-17
Instructor, <i>Forensic Linguistics</i> (Ling 499)	2010
Instructor, <i>Graduate Seminar on Speaker Identification</i> (Ling 632)	2006
Instructor, <i>Introduction to Phonetics</i> (Ling 580)	2006

Department of General Education, University of Southern California:

Instructor, <i>Language, Law, and Literature</i> (ARLT 100; GESM 120)	2014-19
Instructor, <i>Leaving Our Own Imprint</i> (ARLT 100)	2011
Lecturer and section leader, <i>America, the Frontier &amp; the New West</i> (AMST 301)	2009
Lecturer and section leader, <i>Short Stories and One-Act Plays</i> (ARLT 101)	2008-09
Lecturer and section leader, <i>L.A.: The Fiction</i> (ARLT 101)	2008-09

Department of Linguistics, UCLA

Instructor, <i>Introduction to Phonology</i> (Ling 120)	2008
Instructor, <i>Introduction to Phonetics</i> (Ling 103)	2006

Department of Comparative Literature & Foreign Languages, UC Riverside

Instructor, <i>Introduction to Phonetics</i> (Ling 111)	1981
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**Full-Time Teaching Appointments:**

Lecturer, University of Southern California	2008-12
Assistant Professor (Teaching), University of Southern California	2012-15
Associate Professor (Teaching), University of Southern California	2015-17

**Research Position:**

Visiting Scholar, Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ 1979-80

**Invited Talks:**

Featured Speaker, Distinctive Voices Lecture Series, National Academy of Sciences 2018  
<https://youtu.be/-HygSri7o0M?t=2279>  
 Invited Lecturer (annually), UCLA, *Introduction to Applied Phonetics* (Ling 102) 2015-9  
 Invited Lecturer, USC Law School, *Trademark Law in Practice* (Law 660) 2018  
 Invited Lecturer (via Skype), Macalester College, *The Human Voice* (Ling 494) 2016  
 Invited Lecturer, UCLA, *Voice and Its Perception* (Communication Studies 197) 2007  
 Invited Lecturer, University of Pennsylvania, *Language and Law* course 1997  
 Invited Lecturer, California State Univ., Northridge, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Ling 503) 1996  
 Invited Speaker, Annual Linguistic Forum, University of Pisa, Italy 1987

**Forensic Consulting:**

Expert Witness in Forensic Linguistics 1983-present

**Representative Books, Articles, and Conference Presentations:**

- S. Disner and A. Benítez (2018). *F2 and F3 covariance as evidence of speaker identity*  
 Paper presented at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the International Association for Forensic  
 Phonetics and Acoustics, Huddersfield, England.
- P. Ladefoged and S. Disner (forthcoming). *Vowels and Consonants (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*.  
 Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- S. Disner and A. Benítez (2017). Case study: Earwitness reliability through a lens of  
 psycholinguistics and acoustics. Paper presented at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the  
 International Association for Forensic Phonetics and Acoustics, Split, Croatia.
- S. Disner (2016). A trademark case which relies crucially on phonetics and dialectology.  
 Paper presented at the 25<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the International Association for Forensic  
 Phonetics and Acoustics, York, England.
- S. Disner (2015). Closing remarks of Discussant Session on Forensic Phonetics and Speaker  
 Characteristics. 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, Glasgow, Scotland.
- L. Fadden and S. Disner (2013). Forensic linguistics. Article in the *Encyclopedia of*  
*Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Heidelberg: Springer.
- S. Disner (2013). Sound analysis of trademarks. Paper presented at the 11th Biennial  
 Conference, International Association of Forensic Linguists, Mexico City.
- S. Disner (2013). Fanciful trademarks require some sleuthing. Paper presented  
 at the 6<sup>th</sup> West Coast Roundtable on Language and Law, San Francisco, CA.
- P. Ladefoged and S. Disner (2012). *Vowels and Consonants (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*.  
 Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- S. Disner (2012). Phonetic complements to linguistic evidence. Paper presented  
 at the 5<sup>th</sup> West Coast Roundtable on Language and Law, Vancouver, Canada.
- S. Fulop and S. Disner (2011). Examining the voice bar. Acoustical Society of  
 America, Proceedings of Meetings on Acoustics, Vol. 14, pp. 060002.
- S. Disner and S. Fulop (2011). Individuating vocal characteristics with the reassigned  
 spectrogram. Paper presented at the 10th Biennial Conference, International  
 Association of Forensic Linguists, Birmingham, England.
- S. Disner, S. Fulop and F.-Y. Hsieh (2010). The fine structure of phonation as a biometric.  
 Paper presented at the 2nd Pan American/Iberian Meeting on Acoustics, Cancun, Mexico.

- S. Fulop and S. Disner (2009). Advanced time-frequency displays applied to forensic speaker identification. Proceedings of Meetings on Acoustics 6, Acoustical Society of America.
- S. Fulop and S. Disner (2007). Using the reassigned spectrogram for voice identification. Paper presented at the 16th Int'l Congress of Phonetic Sciences, Saarbrücken, Germany.
- S. Disner (2007). A new tool for speaker identification. Paper presented at the 8th Biennial Conference, International Association of Forensic Linguists, Seattle, WA.
- S. Disner (2004). Panel discussion, *Everything you always wanted to know about voices, but were afraid to ask*. SpeechTEK, New York, NY.
- S. Disner (1986). On describing vowel quality. In J.J. Ohala & J. J. Jaeger, *Experimental Phonology*. Orlando: Academic Press.
- S. Disner (1985). Insights on vowel spacing: results of a language survey. In Ian Maddieson, *Patterns of Sounds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- S. Disner (1983). Vowel quality: the relation between universal and language-specific factors. *UCLA Working Papers in Phonetics*, 58:1-158.
- S. Disner (1982). Stress evaluation and voice lie detection: a review. *UCLA Working Papers in Phonetics* 54:78-92.
- R. A. Harshman, M. E. Lundy, and S. Disner (1980). 'Intelligent' (statistically-guided) algorithms for vowel normalization. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 68:S32.
- S. Disner (1980). Evaluation of vowel normalization procedures. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 67:253-261.
- S. Disner (1979). Panel discussion, *Voice stress analysis*. Acoustical Society of America, Salt Lake City, UT.
- S. Disner (1978). Normalization across languages. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 64:S21.
- S. Disner (1978) Vowels in Germanic Languages. *UCLA Working Papers in Phonetics* 40:1-79.
- S. Disner (1977). Cross-linguistic survey of vowel quality. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 62:S49.
- P. Ladefoged, A. Cochrane, and S. Disner (1977). Laterals and trills. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 7:46-54.
- [Note: Between 1988 and 2001 I was working for firms whose corporate policy made it impossible to publish information about ongoing research.]

#### **Broadcast interview:**

- CNN interview. 2014  
<http://newsroom.blogs.cnn.com/2014/06/03/did-bowe-bergdahl-forget-english/>

#### **Employment in Speech Technology:**

- Consultant on speech synthesis, NeoSpeech, Inc., Fremont CA 2003-2005
- Provided ongoing linguistic support to the engineering staff in the development of a text-to-speech conversion system for English.
- Consultant on speech recognition, Breveon, Inc., Sunnyvale CA 1999-2001
- Provided ongoing linguistic support to the engineering staff in the development of a speech-recognition system for medical reports in English.
- Consultant on phonetics of the lexicon, The Software Toolworks, Los Angeles, CA 1991
- Provided overall pronunciation guidelines and specific local pronunciations of toponyms and geographical terms for an interactive US atlas.

Consultant on speech synthesis, Centigram, Inc., San Jose CA	1988-97
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided ongoing linguistic support to the engineering staff in the development of a text-to-speech conversion system for English, French, Spanish, Italian, German.</li> <li>• Designed all the preprocessors and custom dictionaries, and obtained a US patent (#5,634,084 “Abbreviation and Acronym/Initialism Expansion Procedures for a Text-to-Speech System”, with B. Malsheen and G. Groner) on this software.</li> <li>• Tested and debugged all products.</li> <li>• Participated in trade shows, client meetings, and strategic planning sessions.</li> </ul>	
Member, Technical Staff, Mattel Electronics, Hawthorne CA	1981-83
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Served as senior linguist in the development of Mattel's Intellivision, the world's first talking video games.</li> <li>• Participated in script development; also translated scripts into French, Spanish, Italian, and German. Convened panels of native speakers for colloquial usage.</li> <li>• Conducted recording sessions in the US and abroad.</li> <li>• Oversaw the editing and compression of the speech signal.</li> <li>• Tested for clarity and intelligibility; implemented debugging techniques.</li> <li>• Served as liaison between Mattel Electronics (US) and Mattel’s overseas divisions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Employment in Government:</b>	
U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.	1973-75
Translator in Spanish, French, Italian, German. Interpreter in Italian.	
<b>Grants:</b>	
Research grant from the USC Fund for Innovative Undergraduate Teaching, to develop protocols and teaching materials for forensic linguistics.	2009
Faculty development grants from USC College to attend conferences in Birmingham, England; Mexico City; Vancouver, Canada; San Francisco; Missoula, Montana; Glasgow, Scotland; York, England, and Split, Croatia	2011-17
<b>Professional Organizations:</b>	
Member, International Phonetic Association	2015 - present
Member, International Association of Forensic Phonetics & Acoustics	2015 - present
Member, International Association of Forensic Linguists	2008 - present
Member, Dictionary Society of North America	2006 - present
Secretary, Epsilon of California chapter, Phi Beta Kappa	2017 - present
Executive Board Member, Phi Beta Kappa of Southern California	2005 - 2007

**Representative Legal Cases:**

*Trademark litigation between Deckers Outdoor Corp. and Australian Leather, Pty. Ltd.*  
 Kent Raygor, Esq., Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton (September 2017).

*Wrongful termination arbitration (involving speaker identification) between United Steelworkers International Union and Tesoro Refining Company.*  
 Jay Smith, Esq., Gilbert & Sackman LLP (December 2015 – February 2016).

*Trademark litigation between Wild Dale, LLC and Verisign, Inc.*  
Wendy M. Mantell, Esq., Greenberg Traurig, LLP (April 2013).

*Trademark litigation between Alaur Dermatologicals LLC and Syneron Canada Corporation.*  
Sylvia Mulholland, Esq., Mulholland Law LLP (December 2012).

*Defamation litigation between Deepak Kalpoe, et al. and Phillip C. McGraw, et al.*  
Mary Lou Flynn-DuPart, Esq., Jackson Walker, LLP (November 2011).

*Trademark litigation between Sylmark Holdings and Walgreens, Inc.*  
Arlyn Alonzo, Esq., and Keith Fraser, Esq., Connolly, Bove, Lodge & Hutz (April 2008).

*Trademark litigation between Hasbro, Inc. and MGA Entertainment, Inc.*  
Kent Raygor, Esq., Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton (August 2006).

*Trademark litigation between Ugg Holdings, Inc. and Koolaburra et al.*  
Carlo Van den Bosch, Esq., Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton (February 2005).

*Trademark litigation between Innovative Beverage Concepts, Inc. and Ames International, Inc.* Alan Kindred, Esq., Buchalter, Nemer, Fields & Younger (June 2004).

*Trademark litigation between Ameriquest Mortgage Company and Americrest Bank.*  
Mitchell N. Reinis, Esq., and Jason H. Fisher, Esq., Buchalter, Nemer, Fields & Younger (November 2003).

*Trademark litigation between Bandolino Shoes and Bando Fashions.*  
Joseph Golant, Esq., and Jim Stewart, Esq., Morgan, Lewis & Bockius (February 1992).

*Voice identification in a rape case, People v. Smith; consideration of vocal disguise.*  
Craig Silverman, Esq., Office of the District Attorney, Denver, Colorado (May 1991).

*Voice comparison between bomb threats and voice of plaintiff in a false-prosecution case, Henderson v. Cedars-Sinai Hospital.* Linda Miller, Esq., Law Offices of Rushfeldt, Shelley & McCurdy (January 1988).

*Voice comparison between bomb threats to Pan American Airlines and voice of defendant, People v. Prinzivalli.* Ronald A. Ziff, Esq. (March 1984).

*Voice comparison between a tape recording and known exemplars of the voice of L. Ron Hubbard, thought to be missing or deceased.* Mr. Robert Levin (January 1984).

*Voice comparison between tape recording (provided by Larry Flynt) and known exemplars of the voice of John Z. DeLorean.* ABC Television News (October 1983).

[Updated December 7, 2018]