

Ling/Span/Fren/Ger/Educ 466:

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Fall 2007 (Wednesdays 4-6:30, January 10)

Instructor

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Office hours: Mondays 2-3:30 and Wednesdays 1-2:30

Course Description

There are many ways in which a second language can be acquired: from infancy as the child of bilingual parents, or later through formal instruction, immersion in a new culture, or in a particular work or social situation. This class is an inquiry into the processes by which acquisition occurs. Topics include the nature of language learning within the scope of other types of human learning, the relationship between first and second language acquisition; the role of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors; insights gained from analyzing learners' errors; key concepts such as interlanguage and communicative competence; bilingualism; the optimal age for second language acquisition; and a critical appraisal of different theories of second language acquisition. Both theoretical and instructional implications of second language acquisition research are considered.

Required Text

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (5th Edition)*.
New York: Longman.

VanPatten, B., & Williams, J. (Eds.). *Theories in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ:
Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grading Components

Midterm (In-Class) Exam	25%	Weekly Assignments	5%
Final (Take-Home) Exam	25%	Participation	9%
Final Paper	25%	Completion of Online	
Article Presentation	10%	Evaluation of Course	1%

Grading Criteria

97-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	60 or below	F
93-96	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D		
90-93	A-	80-83	B-	70-73	C-	60-63	D-		

Exams

There will be two exams in this course: an in-class midterm exam toward the middle of the semester and a final exam at the end of the semester. More details about preparing for each of the two exams will be provided in class.

Final Paper

Each student may choose between two options for the final paper in this course:

Option 1: Annotated Bibliography: The first option is compile an annotated bibliography of 7-8 articles on a topic related to second language acquisition. Length:

Option 2: Research Proposal: The second option is to prepare a research proposal on a topic related to second language acquisition. This research proposal will include a review of 4-5 key articles on the topic in question.

The term paper should follow the style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition)*. The length of the final paper should be 12-14 pages for undergraduates and 15-17 pages for graduate students. More specific instructions for the paper will be provided during the semester.

Article Presentation

During the semester each student will present a summary and a critical analysis of a selected study within the field of SLA. More specific instructions for the article presentation will be provided in class.

Weekly Assignments

Some weekly assignments will be given during the semester. Each student will receive a grade (5% of the final grade) that reflects how well the student completed each assignment. Different point totals will be assigned to different types of weekly assignments.

Participation

Each student will receive a participation grade for the course based upon the degree to which the student is prepared for class, volunteers, interacts, and actively takes part in the course. Absences from class will lower the final participation grade.

466 COURSE SCHEDULE (FALL 2007)

August 29

1. *Course introduction*
2. *What is second language acquisition (SLA)?*
3. *What factors affect success in learning a second language?*
4. *Students' questions about SLA*
5. *Some key issues in SLA*
6. *A brief introduction to some major theories and approaches:*
 - internal versus external theories • generative linguistics and Universal Grammar (UG) (Chomsky) • connectionism/emergentism/CREED • the Input Hypothesis (Krashen) • the Interaction Hypothesis (Long) • input processing principles (VanPatten) • learnability and teachability (Pienemann) • sociocultural approaches (e.g., Vygotskian approaches)

September 5

1. *Key concepts in the study of language and SLA:*
 - key questions about SLA • What is language? • linguistic subsystems • learning and teaching
 - schools of thought (behaviorism, generativism, connectionism/emergentism, constructivism)
 - competence versus performance • nature versus nurture • modularity versus general cognitive mechanisms • systematicity and variability • incomplete success and "fossilization"
 - cross-linguistic influence and language transfer • the information processing perspective (input > developing system > output) • individual differences (cognitive, affective)
2. *Historical overview of SLA research and language instruction:*
 - before 1950s • 1950s to present • current trends
3. *What makes for a good theory of SLA?*
4. *Behaviorism and audiolingualism versus Krashen's Monitor Theory*
5. *The significance of Corder (1967)*
6. *Understanding learner language:*
 - contrastive analysis hypothesis • Prator's hierarchy of difficulty • cross-linguistic influence
 - interlanguage • error analysis • interlingual versus intralingual transfer • stages of development • fossilization • form-focused instruction • error treatment
7. *On Reading SLA Research Articles*

Read: Brown, Chs. 1 and 9; *Theories*, Preface, Chs. 1 and 2; Corder (1967)

Due:

September 12

1. *First language (L1) acquisition:*

- behaviorism • generative linguistics • connectionism • serial versus parallel processing
- functional approaches • competence versus performance • comprehension and production
- nature versus nurture • linguistic universals • principles and parameters (generativism)
- systematicity and variability • practice and frequency • the role of input • discourse competence • insights from L1 acquisition applied to language teaching

2. *The age issue in second language (L2) acquisition:*

- the critical period hypothesis • hemispheric lateralization • the nature of age effects across different linguistic subsystems • cognitive, affective, and linguistic considerations

Read: Brown, Chs. 2-3; Johnson and Newport (1974)

Due:

September 19

1. *SLA within the scope of other types of human learning:*

- learning and training • Pavlov • Skinner • Ausubel • systematic forgetting • Rogers • Gagne's 8 types of learning • transfer • interference • overgeneralization • inductive versus deductive reasoning • language aptitude • intelligence

2. *Universal Grammar and SLA:*

- Chomsky • Universal Grammar (UG) • basics of UG-based (generative) theory • structure dependency • principles and parameters • minimalism • functional categories • UG and L1 acquisition • availability of UG for L1 versus L2 acquisition

3. *Connectionism/emergentism/CREED and SLA:*

- parallel distributed processing • neural networks • nodes • connectionism and L1 acquisition
- connectionist/emergentist/CREED models of processes in SLA

4. *Information processing and SLA*

5. *Perceptual saliency and SLA*

Read: Brown Ch. 4; *Theories*, Chs. 3 and 5

Due:

September 26

1. *The role of input in SLA*
2. *Review of Krashen's Monitor Theory*
3. *Input, interaction, and output in SLA*
4. *Long's Interaction Hypothesis*
5. *Input processing and SLA*
6. *Input, intake, and developing system*
7. *Structured input and L2 instruction*
8. *Processability Theory*
9. *Lexical input processing*

Read: Brown, pp. 294-299 (on Krashen); *Theories*, Chs. 6-8 and 10

Due:

October 3

1. *Learning styles and SLA:*

- field dependence versus field independence • left- versus right-brain dominance • ambiguity tolerance versus intolerance • reflectivity versus impulsivity • visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners

2. *Learning strategies and SLA:*

- metacognitive: advanced organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation • cognitive: repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery auditory representation, the Keyword Method, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing • socioaffective: cooperation, question for clarification

3. *Communication strategies of L2 learners:*

- avoidance: message abandonment, topic avoidance • compensatory: circumlocution, approximation, use of all-purpose words, word coinage, prefabricated patterns, nonlinguistic signals, literal translation, foreignizing, code-switching, appeal for help, stalling or time-gaining • strategies-based instruction

Read: Brown, Ch. 5; Atkinson and Raugh (1975)

Due:

October 10

1. *The role of personality factors in SLA:*

- affective factors: self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, empathy, extroversion • motivation: instrumental versus integrative, intrinsic versus extrinsic • neurobiology of affect
- personality types and Myers-Briggs • measuring affective factors

2. *Sociocultural factors in SLA:*

- stereotypes and generalizations • attitudes • second culture acquisition • social distance • Schumann's parameters of social distance • culture in classrooms • language policy • world Englishes • English as a second language (ESL) and foreign language (EFL) • linguistic imperialism and language rights • "English only" debate • language, thought, and culture • Sapir-Whorf (linguistic determinism) • Vygotsky and SLA • activity theory

3. *Sociolinguistic approaches to SLA:*

- ethnography of L2 communication • variation in L2 use • Schumann's pidginization and acculturation proposals • L2 socialization

Read: Brown, Chs. 6 and 7; *Theories*, Ch. 11
Due

October 17

1. *Communicative competence and L2 development:*

- subcategories of communicative competence (grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, strategic, organizational, illocutionary) • language functions (instrumental, regulatory, representational, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative) • functional syllabuses • discourse analysis • conversation analysis • the importance of pragmatics • language and gender • styles and registers • nonverbal forms of communication

2. *A history of L2 teaching approaches, methods, and techniques in light of SLA research:*

- Grammar-Translation • Gouin and Berlitz • audiolingualism (ALM) • community language learning • suggestopedia • the silent way • total physical response (TPR) • the Natural Approach • strategies-based instruction • "methodology," "approach," "method," "curriculum/syllabus," and "technique" • L2 teaching by principles • error treatment • communicative language teaching (CLT) • Brown's "ecology of language acquisition"

Read: Brown, Ch. 8; Savignon (1972)
Due:

October 24

MIDTERM EXAM

October 31

Summary and critical appraisal of SLA theories:

- theories of SLA versus theories of components of SLA • domains and generalizations
- hypotheses and claims • criteria for a viable theory • evaluating current SLA theories • Brown's suggestions for becoming a "theory builder"

Read: Brown, Ch. 10; *Theories*, Ch. 12

Due:

November 7

1. *Incidental and intentional learning in SLA*
2. *Appraisal of the role of formal instruction in SLA*

- naturalistic and classroom SLA • types of focus on form • defining SLA success • route versus rate • immediate versus ultimate attainment • effects of explicit and implicit grammar instruction • interface versus no interface positions

Read: VanPatten and Cadierno (1993)

Due:

November 14

1. *L2 acquisition and instruction across different linguistic subsystems and modalities:*

- the roles of phonological, lexical, and pragmatic development in SLA • comprehension and production in the spoken and written modes • similarities and differences between the acquisition of signed languages and spoken languages

2. *The developing bilingual lexicon:*

- theory and research on L2 vocabulary learning • development of conceptual mediation in L2

3. *Multi-competence and effects of L2 on L1:*

- types of bilinguals (coordinate, compound) • language interference

Read: Cook (2003); Kroll and Tokowicz (2001)

Due:

November 21

No class today (Thanksgiving break).

November 28

1. *Neurolinguistic research on language acquisition and bilingualism*
2. *Informal information-sharing session related to completed term papers*

*TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED TODAY.

Read:

Due: Final paper

December 4

Due: *TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM (by 5 pm under office door – Ridgley 405)

December 5

Current and future directions in SLA research and L2 pedagogy

Read:

*Note: Take-home final exam will be distributed in class on Wednesday, December 4th and will be due by 5 pm (under office door of Ridgley 405) on Tuesday, December 4th.

Citations for Articles (Required Reading)

Sep 5

Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learners' errors. Reprinted in J. C. Richards (Ed.) (1974, 1984), *Error analysis: perspectives on second language acquisition* (pp. 19 - 27). London: Longman. (Originally in *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 5, 161-169.)

Sep 12

Johnson, J. S., & Newport, E. L. (1989). Critical period effects in second language learning: The influence of maturational state on the acquisition of English as a second language. *Cognitive Psychology*, 21, 60-99.

Oct 3

Atkinson, R. C., & Raugh, M. R. (1975). An application of the mnemonic keyword method to the acquisition of a Russian vocabulary. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, 104, 126-133.

Oct 17

Savignon, S. J. (1972). Teaching for communicative competence: A classroom study. In S. J. Savignon, *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice* (pp. 67-80). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Nov 7

VanPatten, B., & Cadierno, T. (1993). Explicit instruction and input processing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15, 225-243.

Nov 14

Cook, V. (2003). Introduction: The changing L1 in the L2 user's mind. In V. Cook (Ed.), *Effects of the second language on the first* (pp. 1-18). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kroll, J. F., & Tokowicz, N. (2001). The development of conceptual representation for words in second language. In J. L. Nicol (Ed.), *One mind, two languages: Bilingual language processing* (pp. 49-71). Malden, MA: Blackwell.