

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
Second Term of 2023-24

1. Course code: LING5201

2. Title in English: Topics in Second Language Acquisition

3. Title in Chinese: 第二語言獲得專題

4. Course description

This course provides students with linguistic and cognitive perspectives on second language acquisition (SLA) in child and adult learners. It presents an overview of the field of SLA, surveys various theories and examines their claims in the light of recent research findings. Research methodology will be illustrated through representative studies and hands-on activities. Students are provided with opportunities to reflect upon their own language learning experiences, relate them to theoretical issues brought up in class, and explore the possibility of applying research findings to second language learning and teaching.

5. Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- achieve a basic understanding of how second languages are acquired, and the linguistic, cognitive and social factors affecting the acquisition path and outcomes
- appraise relevant literature of SLA critically
- develop experimental design and analysis skills for conducting SLA research

6. Course syllabus

Topics	Contents/fundamental concepts
Basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquisition vs. learning, naturalistic vs. instructional • first language (L1), second language (L2), foreign language, heritage language, dominant language, majority language, minority language, interlanguage, target language • age of onset, critical/sensitive period • developmental sequences, developmental stages, morpheme orders, U-shaped development • L1 vs. L2 acquisition • initial state, rate of development, ultimate attainment
Linguistic approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competence and performance • the logical problem of language acquisition • positive and negative evidence • language transfer, cross-linguistic influence • Universal Grammar, parameter setting, interface conditions • learnability
Cognitive approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language representation • information processing, usage-based, declarative and procedural memory, implicit learning • frequency, saliency, Competition Model
Social aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • input hypothesis, interaction hypothesis, output hypothesis
Individual differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age effect, aptitude, motivation
Learning and teaching in L2s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom teaching of L2
SLA research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas, design of SLA research

7. Course components:

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face	Percentage of time
<i>Lectures (hybrid no)</i>	28 hours
<i>Interactive tutorial (hybrid no)</i>	14 hours
Out-of-classroom self-study	
<i>Reading, assignment, group work</i>	42 hours

8. Assessment type, percentage and rubrics

Task nature	Description	Weight
1. Class participation	Answer multiple-choice questions on content taught in class via Blackboard - <i>graded by Blackboard</i>	10%
2. Quiz	Two in-class quizzes to test understanding of key concepts and theories - <i>graded by TA, under teacher's supervision</i>	50%
3. Term project	A research proposal including literature review, methods and research predictions on a topic related to second language acquisition (2,500-3,500 words); student can freely choose between individual and group papers (group size: max. 3 students): in-class oral presentation (20%), written paper (20%) - <i>graded by teacher</i>	40%

Attendance at lectures and tutorials is required.

9. Required and recommended readings:

Textbook

Gass, S. M., Behney, J. and Plonsky, L (2020) *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. Fifth edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

Articles:

Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Comajoan-Colomé, L. (2020). The aspect hypothesis and the acquisition of L2 past morphology in the last 20 years: A state-of-the-scholarship review. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 42(5), 1137-1167.

Sorace, A. (2011). Pinning down the concept of “interface” in bilingualism. *Linguistic approaches to bilingualism*, 1(1), 1-33.

10. Feedback for evaluation:

Apart from the end-of-term course evaluation, the teacher and the teaching assistant welcome students' timely comments and suggestions on any aspect of the course. Email communication is preferred. Appointment meetings can also be arranged.

11. Course schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (textbook)	Requirements
1.	Jan 12	Introduction	Chapter 1 & 2	
2.	Jan 19	Historical overview	Chapter 3 & 4	Question #1, 1%
3.	Jan 26	UG and L2 morphosyntax	Chapter 6.1-6.4	Question #2, 1%
4.	Feb 2	Interfaces and L2 semantics	Chapter 6.5,	Question #3, 1%

			Sorace (2011)	
5.	Feb 9	No class – Happy Chinese New Year!		
6.	Feb 16	Typological models	Chapter 7 & 16.3	Question #4, 1%
7.	Feb 23	Temporality in L2 and functional approaches	Chapter 8	Question #5, 1%
8.	Mar 1	Quiz I (25%) - Workshop on term project (I)		
9.	Mar 8	L2 lexicon	Chapter 9	Question #6, 1%
10.	Mar 15	Processing the L2	Chapter 11	Question #7, 1%
11.	Mar 22	Input and interaction in the L2	Chapter 12	Question #8, 1%
12.	Mar 29	No class – Good Friday		
13.	Apr 5	L2 learner-internal differences	Chapter 15	Question #9&10, 2%
14.	Apr 12	Quiz II (25%) - Workshop on term project (II)		
15.	Apr 19	Student project presentations		Slides due (20%)
	Apr 26			Written paper due (20%)

12. Contact details:

Teacher: Prof. MAI Ziyin Maggie 麥子茵

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13. Details of course website

Course website in Blackboard.

14. Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. **In the case of group projects**, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents. For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality. Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher. Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall

be regarded as having committed **undeclared multiple submissions**. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

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15. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks. For assignments and assessment tasks that count towards the final course grades, students are not allowed to submit work which is produced with the collaboration of or supported by the use of any generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT). Any breach of the regulations will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the University's Procedures for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty. In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course teacher.