



ENG 697 Second Language Acquisition
Fall 2012
Tuesday 4.30-7.10
HL 306

Instructor: Dr. Lucy Pickering
Office Location: HL 308/HL 307
Office Hours: Monday 2-4pm; Tuesday 2-4pm; Thurs 1-2pm
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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials

Textbook(s) Required:

Gass, S. & A. Mackey. (2012). *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Routledge.

Course Description

This initial-level seminar focuses on “perennial” issues that arise in the study of second language acquisition and our current understanding, re-evaluation and discussion of these issues within the field. Our discussions will be guided by *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* in order to ensure that everyone has a similar background understanding of these issues; however, topics are not confined to those that appear in the textbook if class participants have additional areas of interest.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- (a) Demonstrate knowledge of the major theories/models of SLA covered in the course. Through class discussion and reading critiques, students are required to demonstrate an increased awareness of the major themes in the field of SLA.
- (b) Engage in an investigation of the processes underlying second language acquisition. This is facilitated through the learner journal assignment that students conduct throughout the seminar on a weekly basis.
- (c) Demonstrate an increased knowledge of genre of research writing in SLA. This is demonstrated using the final research writing project that all students complete.

COURSE ASSESSMENT & INSTRUCTION

Final Project (proposed individually in consultation with prof.)

Proposal	10%
Annotated articles	20%
Final Paper/Project	25%

Journals & Participation

Learner Journal Project	25%
IG Journal	20%

Final Project:

As participants in a graduate level seminar, I recognize that each of you is engaged in different stages of your graduate school career; thus, there are a range of options for this project. In addition to the usual possibilities for a written final project such as a review paper, research proposal or research project report (see descriptions of each below), participants may wish to work on SLA papers/projects for publication or conference presentation (particularly those they might be presenting at conferences in Spring), a chapter outline and annotated bibliography that will form the basis of a dissertation chapter, or a similar SLA-related project. Proposals for the final project will be worked out individually in consultation with the professor.

- (A) *A review paper:* A student can write a review paper in which they analyze, synthesize and evaluate the research done on a specific topic related to SLA. A good review paper will have a specific rather than a general topic, a clear and well-supported theme, and an adequate coverage of information. It should include a minimum of 12-15 references.
- (B) *A research proposal:* A student can write a detailed proposal for a research project that investigates an SLA issue. A good project proposal will have a clearly defined research question, an adequate review of the literature related to the question, detailed description of the method to be used, including such information as participants, experimental paradigms or test methods, test materials and any other instruments. The proposal should also list possible outcomes of the project and potential significance of the findings.
- (C) *A research report:* A student can complete a research project that is related to one of the topics of this course and write a report on the project as a term paper. The project can be a straightforward replication of a published study, a study attempting to extend a published finding to a new participant population or a new language, or a study that examines a research question that has not yet been explored. A good report will have a well-defined research method, a clear presentation of the results and a reasonable interpretation or explanation of the findings.

Proposal & Annotated Articles

For each paper/book chapter in your annotated bibliography, the following information should be included.

- The reference of the article: Authors(s), year of publication, title, journal name
- The purpose and the research question: What is the purpose of the project or the specific research question under investigation? Explain important concepts and definitions if necessary
- Information re. methodology: Participants, materials, design, tasks/procedures, dependent/independent variables

- Results, findings & conclusion: Results of the study, summary of findings, the author's interpretation of findings and conclusions
- Your evaluation of the study, e.g., right question? Appropriate method? Reasonable interpretation of findings? Conflicting evidence?

Learner Journal Project

The processes that underlie second language acquisition are multiple and complex. Ultimate attainment is mediated by factors as diverse as processes of first language acquisition that may apply to all learners and individual differences that apply to only some. All of these areas are under investigation in the field. In addition to reflecting on your own second language learning experience, you will undertake a project this semester with a second language learner of English. Your partner will be a student who is enrolled in the English Language Institute International Students Conversation Partner Program. For your first meeting, you will collect biographical information. Following this, what you choose to work on in any given week is your decision. You may decide, for example, to talk with your learner about some aspect of language acquisition that reflects our reading for that week, e.g. aspects of spoken or written production; you may choose to "survey" your student on some aspect of SL learning that is of particular interest to you. It is not your job to tutor your learner, however, you may decide to do some direct language work to investigate morphosyntactic or phonological development. You will meet to work with your partner once a week throughout the semester. Your journal will come in to me three times during the semester and each entry should be at minimum 1-2 pages in length.

Please note, for graduate classes, "A" grades reflect work which is clearly superior and exceeds the minimum criteria on all dimensions. "B" grades mean a good, solid performance which fulfills the basic requirements for a particular assignment. Any work that receives a grade of "C" or lower does not the minimum requirements for solid graduate work.

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Academic Honesty Policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of academic **dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material.

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce**

Week 7 *Linguistic Perspectives*

10/9 Slabakova: Chapter 8 – L2 Semantics
Bardovi-Harlig: Chapter 9 – Pragmatics in SLA

[Note: Also recommended here is the Laufer & Nation chapter on Vocabulary. Paul Nation is the leading expert in the field with regard to issues of Vocabulary Learning]

Week 8 *Linguistics & Skill Learning: Phonology & Speech*

10/16 Eckman: Chapter 6 – Second language phonology
Pickering: Chapter 20 – L2 speech production

Week 9 *Skill Learning: Reading & Writing*

10/23 Koda: Chapter 18 – Development of SL reading skills
Polio: Chapter 19 – Acquisition of SL writing

PROPOSAL & ANNOTATED ARTICLES DUE

Week 10 *Skill Learning: Perception & Tasks*

10/30 Hardison: Chapter 21 – SL Perception
 Kuiken & Vedder: Chapter 22 – Speaking & Writing tasks

SECOND LEARNER JOURNAL DUE (4 ENTRIES)

Week 11 *Individual Differences I [Online Class – Dr. Pickering in Romania]*

11/6 Skehan: Chapter 23 – Language Aptitude
 Ushioda & Dornyei: Chapter 24 - Motivation

Week 12 *Individual Differences II*

11/13 Williams: Chapter 26 – Working memory
 DeKeyser: Chapter 27 – Age effects

Week 13 *Individual Differences III*

11/20 Han: Chapter 29 - Fossilization
 Byrnes: Chapter 31- Advanced language proficiency

Week 14 *Assessing Learner Knowledge*

11/27 Norris & Ortega: Chapter 35 – Assessing knowledge

Week 15

12/4 **Project Presentations**
FINAL LEARNER JOURNAL DUE (4 ENTRIES)

Research Project Due: Tuesday December 11th