

SEL2086/SEL8687

Introduction to Child and Adult Language Acquisition

Module coordinators

Module coordinator for Part I: Child Language Acquisition

- Dr Emma Nguyen (Emma.Nguyen@newcastle.ac.uk), Percy 2.05

Module coordinator for Part II: Adult Second Language Acquisition

- Dr James Corbet (James.Corbet@newcastle.ac.uk), Percy 2.03

Consultation and feedback hours for both Dr Emma Nguyen and Dr James Corbet are available on Canvas and on the SELLL website.

Module Overview

Please refer to the online module information (<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue/module.php?code=SEL2086>) or the ‘Syllabus’ section of the course Canvas site for information about the syllabus for the course.

The course is divided into two parts – Child Language Acquisition (before enrichment week), and Adult Second Language Acquisition (after enrichment week).

Weekly Activities

Lecture 1: Monday 4pm-5pm, Percy G.05

Lecture 2: Tuesday 4pm-5pm, Percy G.05 (*exception: Nov 1., DMBB G.01*)

Seminars:

- SEL8687
Wednesday 10am-11am, Armstrong 3.38
- SEL2086
Thursday 9am-10am, Barbara Strang B.29
Thursday 11am-12pm, Barbara Strang B.30

Thursday 3pm-4pm, Barbara Strang B.29

Thursday 4pm-5pm, Barbara Strang B.30

Please only attend the seminar group that you have been allocated to.

General Expectations

Students are strongly encouraged to actively and meaningfully contribute to both lecture and seminar discussions on a regular basis.

Both module coordinators will use Canvas and email to provide updates regarding the module. They are also committed to responding to your emails within 5 working days.

Course materials will be available on Canvas.

Assessment

1. Examination covering key topics in child language acquisition

- 50% of module grade
- Takes place 01/11/2022 in [DMBB G.01](#)

The examination will measure your understanding of foundational concepts and facts presented during the first half of this introductory module.

2. 2,000-word essay on a topic in second language acquisition

- 50% of module grade
- Due on 19/01/2023

Further details, including the list of topics, will be made available in the lectures on 29/11, and made available on Canvas after the lecture.

Weekly outline:

Week	Lecture	Seminar
Wk1 26/09	Monday: Why study language acquisition Tuesday: Children's input and research methods	Discussion of lectures and readings
Wk2 03/10	Monday: Theoretical approaches Tuesday: Language and cognition	Discussion of lectures and readings

Week	Lecture	Seminar
Wk3 10/10	Monday: Language is a human instinct Tuesday: The Critical Period Hypothesis	Discussion of lectures and readings
Wk4 17/10	Language in special populations	Discussion of lectures and readings
Wk5 24/10	Language and the brain	Discussion of lectures and readings
Wk6 31/10	Monday: Exam Prep and Q&A Tuesday: Examination	<i>No seminars.</i> <i>Preparatory reading for SLA section.</i>
Wk7 07/11	<i>Enrichment week – no lectures</i>	<i>Enrichment week – no seminars</i>
Wk8 14/11	Monday: Introduction to SLA Tuesday: The role of age in SLA	Types of data worksheet
Wk9 21/11	Monday: L2 morphosyntax Tuesday: L2 syntax	Morphosyntax data activity (<i>The Terminal</i>)
Wk10 28/11	Monday: L2 phonology Tuesday: Essay introduction	Phonological data activity (WHO)
Wk11 05/12	Monday: Social context in SLA Tuesday: Individual differences in SLA	Factors affecting SLA worksheet
Wk12 12/12	Monday: Input in SLA Tuesday: Beyond SLA	<u>Essay question and answers</u>

Primary module textbooks

For Part I (Child Language Acquisition), the primary textbook is Lust (2006).

For Part II (Adult Second Language Acquisition), the primary textbook is Gass et al. (2013).

Bibliographic details of these textbooks, and other recommended material, is provided on the module list, which you can [access using this link](#) or through Canvas. Additionally, key readings are provided in a bibliography at the end of this document.

Part I: Child Language Acquisition (CLA), Weeks 1-6

Section overview:

The first part of the module is a brief introduction to the field of child/first language acquisition. The focus will be on gaining an appreciation of the challenges that the infant is faced with during language development, while “cracking the code”. Here are some of the topics to be covered:

- The logical problem of language acquisition
- What needs to be acquired? Universal Grammar
- Ingredients of a theory of child language acquisition
- Leading research questions in the field of child language
- The biological basis of language acquisition, critical period
- Methodology challenges in studying child language

Section aims:

To introduce foundational notions in the field of child language acquisition, including major theoretical approaches, fundamental research questions, critical discoveries, and how we can scientifically study child language.

YOU WILL GAIN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT:

- Basic understanding of fundamental theoretical questions in CLA
- Basic understanding of methodological issues in CLA
- Basic understanding of certain empirical discoveries in CLA

YOU WILL IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS IN:

- Participating in small/large group discussions
- Taking notes effectively in lectures, seminars, and from published sources
- Researching a topic in appropriate books
- Working as a member of a group to discuss key issues
- Constructing a coherent oral argument based on empirical evidence

Part II: Adult Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Weeks 8-12

Section overview:

The second half of the module gives you knowledge about issues, hypotheses, models, and theories in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the research which revolves around them. Through discussion of central issues in SLA and team-based and individual analysis of second language learner data with team and individual presentation of results, you will hone skills in argumentation. Module content from lectures, reinforced by seminars, is relevant both to the team-based posters in December and the individual reports due in January. Lectures and seminars also provide suggestions for topics to investigate for Stage 3 extended studies and dissertations.

Section aims:

An introduction to the nature of second language (L2) competence, the internal and external influences involved in its acquisition and to how research is conducted. The vast majority of SLA research is on adults and this is therefore our focus.

YOU WILL GAIN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT:

- Similarities and differences between children's L1A and (adults') L2A
- The role of the learner's first/native language in L2 acquisition
- Stages in the L2A of morphosyntax, syntax and phonology
- The role played by internal linguistic factors in L2A
- The role played by external factors in L2A

YOU WILL IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS IN:

- Taking notes effectively, in lectures and from published sources
- Researching a topic in appropriate books, journals and electronic sources
- Analysing l2 learner data
- Working as a member of a research team
- Presenting analysis of data in a concise format (posters)
- Writing reports
- Constructing a coherent argument based on empirical evidence

Bibliography of key resources

Part I: Child Language Acquisition

Key books

Lust, B. 2006. *Child Language: Acquisition and Growth*. Cambridge University Press.

Rowland, C. 2013. *Understanding Child Language Acquisition*. Routledge.

Hoff, E. 2005. *Language Development*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Other useful books

Aitchison, J. 1998. *The Articulate Mammal: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics*. Routledge.

Jackendoff, R. 1994. *Patterns in the Mind: Language and Human Nature*. Basic Books.

Pinker, S. 1994. *The Language Instinct: The New Science of Language and Mind*. Allen Lane.

DVDs

Searchinger, G., M. Male, and M. Wright. 2005. *The Human Language Series*. Equinox Films / Ways of Knowing, Inc.

Dale, R., R. M. L. Winston. 2001. *The human body: the incredible journey from birth to death*. BBC Worldwide.

Part II: Adult Second Language Acquisition

Key book

Gass, S., J. Behney, and L. Plonsky. 2013. *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*, 4th edition. Routledge.

Other useful books

Colantoni, L., J. Steele, and P. Escudero. 2015. *Second Language Speech: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Hansen Edwards, J., and M. L. Zampini (eds). 2008. *Phonology and Second Language Acquisition*. John Benjamins.

Hawkins, R. 2001. *Second Language Syntax*. Cambridge University Press.

Herschensohn, J. and M. Young-Scholten (eds). 2013/2018. *The Cambridge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.

Piske, T., and M. Young-Scholten (eds). 2009. *Input Matters in SLA*. Multilingual Matters.