

Ling 582  
Spring 2016  
TH 4:30-7:10  
Research 202  
Blackboard: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>

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Office hours: W12-1:30; Th 3- 4pm  
and by appointment

## Second Language Acquisition

This course is a linguistic exploration into adult second language acquisition. We begin with an overview of child first language development and attempt to understand a version of *Plato's Problem* --how is it that language learners know so much about their language given so little? But adult language development is not as successful. Here we are faced with a version of *Orwell's Problem* --how is it that most adult learners seem to know so little about an L<sub>2</sub> when exposed to so much?

We will focus on five major issues in language acquisition: 1) the effect of age on acquisition; 2) the availability of Universal Grammar to adult learners; 3) modularity and language learning; 4) the sources of variation in language attainment; and 5) the role of input and instruction.

<b>Requirements:</b>	classroom participation	20%
	homeworks	10%
	single pages	30%
	proposal	5%
	paper	35%

Students are expected to read, discuss, and question all assigned readings. You are encouraged to speak out in class, and send comments and queries via BlackBoard. There will be 5 one-page responses to the reading assignments and class discussions. These will be due on class days and must be no longer than one double-spaced typewritten page (bibliographic entries are required and are on an extra page). These pages are to be creative rather than mere summaries of the material. The page should reflect what the current readings/class discussion mean to you. You may write about implications: pedagogical, linguistic-theoretical, or research. One of your pages can be about your final paper topic.

**ALL WRITTEN WORK (EXCEPT HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS) MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA BLACKBOARD.**

There will be a few short homework assignments that deal with real L<sub>2</sub> data. Students can work together on the solutions, but I expect your own work to be turned in. Homeworks must be typed. A final paper of approximately 7 double-spaced typed pages in length is required. The paper can be on any theoretical topic. A proposal for the paper is also required. This proposal will be a description of a focused topic for the final paper and a short list of tentative bibliographic sources. The entire proposal will not exceed 1/2 page.

We will be using the APA style for our bibliographies. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the assignment(s) from a classmate.

**Texts:**

1. Compiled sets of the required readings. (all can be found on Blackboard)
2. Gass, S. 2014. *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. Fourth Edition. Hillsdale, NY: Rutledge. (G)

Last day to drop with no tuition penalty:

26 january

Last day to drop with tuition penalty:

19 february

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Please abide by the University Honor Code. A description of the honor code is found at: <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>

**calendar:**

proposal due:

on or before 31 march

no single pages will be accepted after  
paper due

14 april

5 may

	<b>Calendar</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<b>Date</b>		
21 january		
Introduction to the field		G ch. 1, ch. 5 (5.1-5.2)
How kids do it: first language acquisition		
28 january		
child language acquisition		Pinker, 1995
4 february		
What is a native speaker?		Davies, 2004
11 february		
On Errors and data		Williams, 1981 G ch. 2-3; ch. 5 (5.3-5.5)
18 february		
The role of the native language in SLA		G ch. 4, 6
25 february		
Second Language Phonology		Eckman, 2004
3 march		
The Critical Period Controversy		Marinova-Todd, Bradford, and Snow, 2000; Long, 2005;

10 march	spring break	
17 march	more on the CP	DeKeyser 2000; Newport, 1991
24 march	Universal Grammar in L2 do adults still have it? yes / no	G ch. 7 Felix, 1991; Schachter, 1991
31 march	Typological Universals and Linguistic markedness relative clauses	G ch. 9 Eckman, et. al 1988
7 april	Modularity: Is Language Learning unique?	G ch. 5 (5.6), ch. 10; O'Grady, 1999; Schwartz , 1999
14 april	Linguistic variation	G ch. 11
21 april	Non-linguistic sources of variation	G ch. 14
28 april	The role of input and instruction The Perfect Language Learner	G ch. 12, 13
5 may	papers due by 5:00 pm on Bb	

## READINGS

- Davies, A. 2004. The Native Speaker in Applied Linguistics. In A. Davies and C. Elder, (eds.), *The Handbook of Applied Linguistics*. Malden MA: Blackwell.
- DeKeyser, R. 2000. The Robustness of Critical Period Effects in Second Language Acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 22: 499-533.
- Eckman, F. 2004. From Phonemic Differences to Constraint Rankings: Research on Second Language Phonology. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 26: 513-549.
- Eckman, F., L. Bell, and D. Nelson. 1988. On the Generalization of Relative Clause Instruction in the Acquisition of English as a Second Language. *Applied Linguistics* 9:1-20.
- Felix, S. 1991. The Accessibility of Universal Grammar in Second Language Acquisition. In L. Eubank (ed.). *Point Counterpoint*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Long, M. 2005. Problems with supposed counter-evidence to the CPH. *IRAL* 43: 287-317.
- Marinova-Todd, S., Bradford, D. and Snow, C. 2000. Three Misconceptions about Age and L2 Learning. *TESOL Quarterly* 34: 9-33.
- Newport, E. 1991. Contrasting Conceptions of the Critical Period for Language. in S. Carey and R. Gelman. (eds.) *Epigenesis of Mind*. Erlbaum.
- O'Grady, W. 1999. Toward a New Nativism. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 21:621-633.
- Pinker, S. 1995. Language Acquisition. In L. Gleitman and M. Liberman, (eds.) *An Invitation to Cognitive Science* vol. 1. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Schachter, J. 1991. Issues in the Accessibility Debate: A Reply to Felix. In L. Eubank (ed.). *Point Counterpoint*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Schwartz, B. 1999. Let's Make Up Your Mind. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 21:635-655.
- Williams, J. 1981. The Phenomenology of Error. *College Composition and Communication*. 32: 152-168.

### Additional Textbook Readings

- Archibald, J. (ed.) 2000. *Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Barasch, R. and C. James (eds.). 1994. *Beyond the Monitor Model*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Birdsong, D. (ed.) 1999. *Second Language Acquisition and the Critical Period Hypothesis*. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Brown, H. 1994. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Brown, H. And Gonzo, S. 1995. *Readings on Second Language Acquisition*. Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Eckman, F., Highland, D., Lee, P., Milcham, J., and Weber, R. (eds.). 1995. *Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Pedagogy*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ellis, R. 1990. *Instructed Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ellis, R. 1994. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Erard, M. 2012. *Babel No More: The Search for the World's Most Extraordinary Language Learners*. New York: Free Press.
- Eubank, L. (ed.) 1991. *Point Counterpoint: Universal Grammar in Second Language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Flynn, S., and W. O'Neil (eds.). 1988. *Linguistic Theory in Second Language Acquisition*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.
- Gass, S., and Madden, C. 1985. *Input in Second Language Acquisition*. Rowley: Newbury House.
- Gass, S. and J. Schachter (eds.). 1989. *Linguistic Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gass, S., and Selinker, L. (eds.) 1983. *Language Transfer in Language Learning*. Rowley: Newbury House.
- Huebner, T., and C. Ferguson (eds.). 1991. *Crosscurrents in Second Language Acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ioup, G., and S. Weinberger (eds.). 1987. *Interlanguage Phonology*. Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. and Long, M. 1991. *An Introduction to Second Language Research*. London: Longman.
- Lippi-Green, R. 2012. *English with an Accent*. London: Routledge.
- Long, M. 2007. *Problems in SLA*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mitchell, R. And Myles, F. 1998. *Second Language Learning Theories*. London: Arnold.
- Pankhurst, J., Sharwood-Smith, M., and Van Buren, P. (eds.) 1988. *Learnability and Second Languages*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Ritchie, W., and T. Bhatia, (eds.) 1996. *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Scovel, T. 1988. *A Time to Speak: A Psycholinguistic Inquiry into the Critical Period for Human Speech*. Cambridge: Newbury House.
- Scovel, T. 1995. Differentiation, Recognition, and Identification in the Discrimination of Foreign Accents. In J. Archibald (ed.) *Phonological Acquisition and Phonological Theory*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Selinker, L. 1992. *Rediscovering Interlanguage*. London: Longman.

- Sharwood-Smith. 1994. *Second Language Learning: Theoretical Foundations*. London: Longman.
- Spolsky, B. 1989. *Conditions for Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Strozer, J. 1994. *Language Acquisition After Puberty*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Swann, M., and Smith, B. (eds.) 1987. *Learner English*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press.
- Tarone, E. 1988. *Variation in Interlanguage*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Tarone, E., S. Gass, and A. Cohen (eds.). 1994. *Research Methodology in Second Language Acquisition*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Towell, R., and R. Hawkins. 1994. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- White, L. 1989. *Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.