



Academic Year/course: 2022/23

32455 - Cognition and language acquisition

Syllabus Information

Academic Course: 2022/23

Academic Center: 803 - Masters Centre of the Department of Translation and Language Sciences

Study: 8039 - Master in Discourse Studies: Communication, Society and Learning

Subject: 32455 - Cognition and language acquisition

Credits: 5.0

Course: 1

Teaching languages:

Theory: Group 1: English

Teachers: Carmen Perez Vidal

Teaching Period: Second Quarter

Schedule:

Presentation

Subject: **32361 COGNITION AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Program: MASTER IN THEORETICAL AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Number of credits: 5 ECTS

Trimester: First

Language: La llengua de la docència serà l'anglès

Instructors: Carmen Pérez Vidal (office 53.722)

Address for correspondence (carmen.perez@upf.edu)

This course is designed with the purpose of providing a general overview of the key issues in **language acquisition (LA) research**, with a **special focus on instructional** settings. It focuses on monolingual, bi/multilingual development, both early and late language development.

Associated skills

General academic reading skills

General academic written skills

Oral presentation skills

Interactional skills for discussion and debate

Critical thinking

Scientific approach to reality and to linguistic data

Ethical views on research with humans

Learning outcomes

The course will enable students to:

- Gain an understanding of the nature of language acquisition cognitive processes and outcomes from a psycholinguistic perspective.
- Relate social and cognitive processes and outcomes to general learning theories.
- Relate processes and outcomes to instructed language acquisition.

- Identify linguistic, i.e., cognitive, and non-linguistic, i.e., social and psychological, individual differences in language learners, and learn how they explain variation in language learning outcomes on the basis of such variables.
- Accomplish practical research by designing (not carrying out) a psycholinguistic research study based on empirical data.

Sustainable Development Goals

The course has **four main goals**:

- a) to make students aware of the fundamental **issues, theories and models** in the study of how languages are learned in **monolingual and bi/multilingual** settings from a psycholinguistic perspective;
- b) to make students gain an understanding of the fundamental **concepts and key terms** in language acquisition, likewise from a psycholinguistic perspective;
- c) to familiarize students with the different **sources of information** in this field: manuals, handbooks, journal articles, abstracts, reviews, posters, videoed and live lectures and talks, etc. ;
- d) to familiarize students with different **methods used to analyse LA processes and outcomes, both in child language**, and in linguistic development taking place later on in life, in particular in **instructed settings**;
- e) to familiarize students with **how to design a research study** so as to learn to **plan research**.

Prerequisites

Adequate academic reading and writing and oral production skills at a C1 level in ONE of the three working languages on the course, Catalan, Spanish or English, and a B.2. level in ANOTHER ONE.

Contents

This course includes the following main topics:

- **SESSION 1 & 2: A historical overview of Language Acquisition theories (L1, L2)**
 - Early theories
 - Universal grammar
 - Skill acquisition
 - Input processing
 - Processability
 - Input, interaction and output
 - Sociocultural theory
 - Usage-based theories
- **SESSION 3-4: Second language acquisition processes**
 - Attention
 - Memory
 - Automaticity and automatization
 - Sentence processing
 - Learnability

- The neurological correlates of cognitive processes
- **SESSION 5-6: Second language acquisition outcomes**
 - Measuring language proficiency in speech and writing
 - Monologuing, interacting, reading, writing, and listening (The CEFR skills)
 - Research paradigms for data analysis: Qualitative and quantitative
 - Research data: sampling issues
- **SESSIONS 7-8: Cognition and instruction**
 - Cognition and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)
 - Focus-on-Form
 - Intentional and incidental learning
 - Explicit and implicit learning
 - Assessment issues
 - Contexts other than instruction (immersion, Study Abroad)
 - Syllabus design
- **SESSIONS 9: Individual differences in language acquisition: concepts and measurements**
 - Aptitude
 - Motivation
 - Psychological dimensions
 - Learner emotions
 - Instructor emotions
- **SESSION 10: Oral/Poster presentations**

Teaching Methods

The contact sessions will be devoted to a general presentation of the topics by the instructor, and the students who are expected to generate and actively participate in the discussions and debates.

Students are expected to read, write home assignments, give presentations to the class displaying critical thinking skills.

Assignments must reach an adequate academic level, but close guidance will be given in order to perform adequately, through tutorials and conferencing.

Evaluation

Students will be assessed as follows.

1. **Weekly readings** on content topics from the course book, the recommended readings and other possible sources to be discussed in class (weeks 2-8).
2. **Weekly written practical tasks** (weeks 3, 5, 7, each counting towards a 15% of the final mark).
3. An **oral presentation to the group of a research article, using audiovisual support** (weeks 4- 8, 20%).
 1. Students will take it in turns every week to present a critical summary of an empirical research study.

4. A written glossary of key terms in SLA research (week 9, 20%).
5. The design of a research study consisting of the replication of prior study in poster format (week 10, 15%).

Bibliography and information resources

Course manual:

Gass, S., M., Behney, J., Plonsky, L., Selinker, L. 2013. *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. Oxon: Routledge Publishing House.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Doughty, C., & Long, M. (Eds.) 2003. *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Loewen, Shawn. & Sato, Masatoshi (Eds.) 2017. *The Routledge Handbook of Instructed Second Language Acquisition*. Routledge.
- Ortega, Lourdes. 2009. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.
- Pérez-Vidal, C., Juan-Garau, M. & Bel A. (Eds.) 2008. *A portrait of the Young in the New Multilingual Spain*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Sanz, C. (Ed.). 2005. *Mind & Context in Adult Second Language Acquisition: Methods, Theory and Practice*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

SELECTED READINGS

Sessions 1-2:

- García-Mayo, M.P., Gutiérrez-Mangado, M.J.& Martínez-Adrian, M. (Eds.). 2013. *Contemporary Approaches to Second Language Acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- VanPatten, B. & Williams, J. 2007 *Theories in Second Language Acquisition. An Introduction*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum editors.

Sessions 3-4:

- Robinson, P. (Ed.). 2001. *Cognition and Second Language Instruction*. Cambridge: CUP. (Spanish translation available at the library).

Sessions 5-6:

- Housen, A., Kuikken, F. & Veder, I. (Eds.). 2012. *Dimensions of L2 Performance and Proficiency*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Leclerq, P., Edmonds, A. & Hilton, H. 2014. *Measuring L2 proficiency. Perspectives from SLA*. Bristol/New York: Multilingual Matters.
- Mackey, A. & Gass, S.M. 2012. *Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition. A Practical Guide*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Manchon, R. 2011. *Learning to Write and Writing to Learn in an Additional Language*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Sessions 7-8:

- DeKeyser, R. & Bottana, P. (Eds.). 2019. *Doing SLA research with Implications for the classroom: Reconciling Methodological Demands and Pedagogical Applicability*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Norris, J. & Ortega, L. 2005. Does type of instruction make a difference? Substantive findings from a meta-analytic review. *Language Learning* 51(s1), 158-213.
- Pérez-Vidal, C. López-Serrano, S., Ament, J. & Thomas-Wilhelm, D. (Eds.). 2018. *Learning context effects: Study abroad, formal instruction and international immersion classrooms*. Berlin: Language Science Press. (available online).
- Pérez-Vidal, C. (Ed.). 2014. *Second Language Acquisition in Study Abroad and Formal Instruction Contexts*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Robinson, P. (Ed.). 2001. *Cognition and Second Language Instruction*. Cambridge: CUP.

Session 9:

- Granena, G. & Long, M. 2013. *Sensitive Periods, Language Aptitude and L2 Language Attainment*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. 2021. *Teaching and researching motivation* (3rd ed.). Harlow: Longman. (A completely

revised and extended version of the 2011 book, covering both the theory and practice of L2 motivation as well as the main methods of researching it.)