



Faculty of Arts
School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures

LING 316
Language Acquisition I
Fall 2018
Lectures: **T/Th 14:00-15:15 (75 minutes)**
Location: **ST131**

COURSE OUTLINE

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: Professor Susanne E. Carroll

OFFICE LOCATION: CHD507

OFFICE HOURS: Friday 13:00 to 14:00 or by appointment

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 403-220-5492

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DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to language acquisition with an emphasis on first language acquisition (= FLA or L1 acquisition) in monolingual or single-language use contexts.

Prerequisites: Ling201

OBJECTIVES

Like most of your courses in linguistics, Ling316 will be concerned with two (2) complementary issues: *description of language* (child language and other kinds of behavioural data that involving listening to language or producing it), and *explanation of data through theory*. Like your other courses in linguistics, we weave our way through discussions of very concrete, practical matters (observations of what infants and children do) and abstract explanations.

Unlike your other courses in linguistics (which deal mostly with theories of language & the kind of data and arguments needed to construct a theory of language), we must concern ourselves with several unrelated kinds of theory. At least the following:

- theories of language,
- theories of growth and maturation in humans,
- theories of sensory perception (auditory, visual, haptic, etc.),
- theories of memory,
- theories of neurological structure, brain function and brain development,
- theories of social interaction and social identity.

As you might guess from this list, "explanation" of how language is acquired in developmental psycholinguistics is complicated. It is complicated because the phenomena are complex, there are many different methods used to collect data, there are many unresolved controversial issues and people bring different sets of basic assumptions to discussion depending on how much they know about language and how much they know about the human mind. In this course, we will just get our feet wet. To develop real expertise, you will have to take several different courses in language acquisition, either in Linguistics or in Psychology, and we encourage you to do this in subsequent semesters. The main goal of Ling316 is to provide an overview of critical themes and topics in FLA. We hope that Ling316 will provide a foundation for such subsequent courses in language acquisition that might deal with specific populations (bilingual acquisition of two languages or "2L1", delayed L1, child or adult second language acquisition or "L2") or special topics (acquisition of phonology, acquisition of syntax, acquisition of word meanings, ...). Our



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perspective will be linguistic, befitting a course in the Linguistics B.A. program (as opposed to a course in psychology) but we will try to do justice to beliefs and assumptions in neighbouring disciplines. In the end, we must acknowledge that our job is not to test linguistic theories or to show that linguists are right in their views. Rather, we want to explain why child language looks the way it does and how infants and young children acquire a target grammar from the speech addressed to them by parents, siblings, grandparents, nannies and other people important to them. This means we must camp out on terrain that lies in-between linguistics and psychology, learning what we can from each scientific discipline.

OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this course, these are the kinds of **knowledge** that students will have:

- (1) the names of the principle components of an explanatory theory of language acquisition, their definitions and the contribution they make;
- (2) a simple formal model of language acquisition (a "black box" model);
- (3) the principle **milestones/stages** observed in the speech children produce, with a clear idea of when the particular stages emerge in chronological time, developmental time, or in structural terms, including Mean Length of Utterance;
- (4) the names of the principle **mechanisms** of language acquisition and how they work, what data they can explain and the data they cannot explain;
- (5) some understanding of the main differences between the principal **approaches** (= theoretical paradigms): **functionalist** (grammar develops from conceptual representations or "meanings"), **general nativist** (there are in-born biases for processing parental speech but none of them are specific to language), **special nativist** (Universal Grammar, a set of in-born biases unique to language, severely constrains FLA);
- (6) good understanding of what child language looks and sounds like in comparison to the target adult language (omissions, inventions, differences in word order, etc.);
- (7) some understanding of the ways in which language is similar to other communicative systems that humans use and some understanding of how it is unique;
- (8) some understanding of the history of the field and important participants, and what critical ideas they have contributed;
- (9) a better understanding of important constructs from the core disciplines of linguistics (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics), e.g., syllable, phoneme, morpheme, word, meaning;
- (10) a better understanding of exact relationship between the core disciplines and developmental psycholinguistics.

Skills and abilities:

On successful completion of this course, these are the **skills** that students will have:

- (1) Students will be familiar with the organization and tools available on the CHILDES data base website and will be able to locate data files.
- (2) Students will be able to read and understand the CHAT transcription system.
- (3) Students will be able to use digital tools on CHILDES to search the data base for specific forms.
- (4) Students will be able to organize and present basic quantitative data in summary form in tables and figures.
- (5) Students will be able to present data in standard format for scientific presentation.
- (6) Students will be able to interpret questions about first language acquisition that are couched in the technical vocabulary of the field and will be able to answer those questions, drawing on both theoretical explanations and examples from child language.



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DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES

Participation activities due every week:	15%
4 in-class quizzes (15% each)	60%
Written analysis of data (pairs-work)	25%
	100%

See D2L for dates

Final Exam: no

GRADING SCALE

I use the scale in the University of Calgary calendar on all assignments and examinations. Equivalences in % can be found in D2L. See section F.2 of the Calendar. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>

REQUIRED TEXTS

Clark, Eve. 2016. *First language acquisition*. 3rd edn. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13: 9781316507605.

I have ordered this book for both the bookstore and the library. This is the paperback format. Unfortunately, the CUP website does not list an e-version. If you order directly from the CUP website, the book will cost \$61.55 CDN.

There is a 2nd edition which was published in 2009. The third edition is revised (not just a reprint), includes discussion of much more recent research (it is more up-to-date) and the pagination is not the same as in the 3rd edition. In a pinch, you can get by with the 2nd edition but you will have to take responsibility for ensuring that you access the 3rd edition from time to time to ensure that you are aware of the differences between the two. My advice, if you cannot get a copy of the 3rd edition or cannot get it right a way, is to form a study pair with someone who has it and compare the two editions carefully before you start doing the Participation activities.

Additional readings will be provided in D2L.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

COURSE NOTES

Course Expectations:

See D2L for discussion of Course Policies re attendance, use of cell phones and laptops in-class, documentation required for missed tests/assignments, the assignments, grading practices, additional materials and a few other things that will interest you.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1. **Plagiarism** is a serious offence, the penalty for which is an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. Plagiarism exists when:

- a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);
- b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;



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- c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or
d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted."

Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

2. **Cheating** at tests or examinations includes but is not limited to dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct such as speaking to other candidates or communicating with them under any circumstances whatsoever; bringing into the examination room any textbook, notebook, memorandum, other written material or mechanical or electronic device not authorized by the examiner; writing an examination or part of it, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do so, or leaving answer papers exposed to view, or persistent attempts to read other students' examination papers.

3. **Other academic misconduct** includes, but is not limited to, tampering or attempts to tamper with examination scripts, class work, grades and/or class records; failure to abide by directions by an instructor regarding the individuality of work handed in; the acquisition, attempted acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of examination materials or information not authorized by the instructor; the impersonation of another student in an examination or other class assignment; the falsification or fabrication of clinical or laboratory reports; the non-authorized tape recording of lectures.

4. Any student who voluntarily and consciously aids another student in the commission of one of these offences is also guilty of academic misconduct.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION ASSEMBLY POINTS

Craigie Hall: Professional Faculties food court (alternate: Education Block food court)

Education Block and Tower: Scurfield Hall atrium (alternate: Professional Faculties food court)

Kinesiology: north courtyard, MacEwan Student Centre (alternate: University Theatres lobby)

For the complete list of assembly points please consult <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING AND STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES

Have a question, but not sure where to start?

The Arts Students' Centre is the overall headquarters for undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. The key objective of this office is to connect students with whatever academic assistance they may require.

In addition to housing the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Student Affairs) and the Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Engagement), the Arts Students' Centre is the specific home to:

- Program advising
- Co-op Education Program
- Arts and Science Honours Academy
- Student Help Desk



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Location: Social Sciences Room 102
Phone: 403-220-3580
Email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca
Website: arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Block.

Contacts for the Students' Union Representative for the Faculty of Arts: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT

Graded assignments will be retained by the Department for three months and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Final examinations will be kept for one calendar year and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Said material is exclusively available to the student and to the department staff requiring to examine it.

Please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy> for complete information on the disclosure of personal records.

INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Devices such as laptops, palmtops and smartbooks are allowed provided that they are used exclusively for instructional purposes and do not cause disruption to the instructor and to fellow students. Cellular telephones, blackberries and other mobile communication tools are not permitted and must be switched off.

SAFEWALK

To request a Safewalk escort anywhere on campus, 24 hours a day and seven days a week, please call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help Phones.

Web: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>

STUDENT UNION INFORMATION

Representatives and contact details: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/home/contact.html>

Student Ombudsman: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Writing skills should cross all disciplines. Students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their courses and, where appropriate, instructors can and should use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Centre in the Effective Writing Office (<http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca/>) can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance.