

Second Language Acquisition



Type of course: BA.AA.SW08 (*Aufbaumodul Linguistics*)
Time: Mo. 10-12 a.m. (10:15 - 11:45)
Venue: Carl-Zeiss-Str. 3, SR 122
Workload: **5 ECTS**

Course description

This course will provide a systematic introduction to the scientific study of second language (= L2) acquisition. Proceeding from an outline of the major research interests and some fundamental principles of language acquisition, we will focus on selected factors determining the 'route and rate' of L2 learning. Thus we will discuss in detail the extent to which one's native language fosters or interferes with the construction of L2 knowledge, the influence of individual factors such as age and motivation, and the question of what it is that makes L2 or 'interlanguage' output fluent and idiomatic. The course concludes by considering the implications of L2 acquisition research for our understanding of human language and for a linguistically-informed teaching of second languages in the classroom. However, at all stages of our investigation, linguistic (and not didactic!) questions will be our primary concern, and due attention will be paid to familiarising you with principles and practices of linguistic research. You will get some hands-on training in analysing learner language (both L1 and L2) and in writing up well-designed assignments and a short paper.

Requirements and grading system

Regular attendance and active class participation (i.e. regular oral contributions)
Three homework assignments throughout the semester (about 1 page each)
Term paper (about 12 pages)

In keeping with the *Modulkatalog*, the final grade for the course will be based on the term paper only. The three homework assignments are still an obligatory requirement for completing the course successfully (*Vorleistungen*). Thematically, they will be exercises for various methodological aspects of your term paper (abstract writing, bibliographical research, data analysis etc.). You will get prose feedback and an orientation mark on each of them.

Readings

The seminar discussion is based on obligatory weekly readings (see syllabus for details). It is crucial that you come to class thoroughly prepared since the readings will generally serve as an important basis for the ideas to be developed in our discussions.

For your convenience, the master copies of the *obligatory* readings have been assembled in a **READER**, to be obtained from *Fischer's Copy Shop* (Leutragraben 2, next to *Bagels and Beans*). Reading *suggestions*, supplementary materials and up-to-date information on the organization of our course can be found on **WORDWISE**, the departmental course management system (the course enrolment key will be announced in class). Please check the site regularly for any changes, notices etc.

A general note on the readings: As a Proseminar is supposed to provide a chance to practise the in-depth reading, analysis and discussion of academic texts, the amount of time that you'll probably need to put into the weekly preparation of each session is not to be underestimated! Please remember that the course is worth 5 ECTS (which amounts to a sum total of 150 hours of work).

Office hours

Please take advantage of the office hours taking place every Thursday. This is not only the place to discuss in advance the ideas for your term paper, but also to talk about your progress in the course and any difficulties you may experience, as well as to receive individual feedback on assignments.

Course programme (syllabus)

DATE	TOPIC	PREPARATORY READING (obligatory!)
	Introduction	
1	19.10.09 <i>Goals and scope of the course. Organisation. Issues and research interests in language learning.</i>	
	Principles of language acquisition	
2	26.10.09 <i>Constructing (L1) linguistic knowledge. Analysis of child language data. Theoretical approaches to language acquisition.</i>	Steinberg 1993: ch.1 (3-29).
3	02.11.09	Tomasello 2002 (309-328).
	The nature of L2 acquisition and the field of SLA	
4	09.11.09 <i>L1=L2 acquisition? The multivariate nature of L2 acquisition and its implications for SLA research. The field of SLA.</i>	Gass and Selinker 2008: 1-7. Assignment 1 due
5	16.11.09 <i>Introduction to linguistic (and specifically SLA) research: research principles and quality criteria, operationalizing hypotheses, variables and research designs, bibliographical overview.</i>	Gass and Selinker 2008: ch.3 (selected passages, cf. master copy) [suggested reading: Abbuhl and Mackey 2008 → <i>WordWise</i>]
	Cross-linguistic influence and development in L2A	
6	23.11.09 <i>Conceptions of L1 influence: the contrastive programme vs. error analysis; 'Interlanguage'. Selectivity of transfer and 'psychotypology'.</i>	Gass and Selinker 2008: 89-110 <u>and</u> 136-151.
7	30.11.09 <i>Dimensions of linguistic variation and transfer. Analysis of learner language.</i>	Preparatory worksheet
8	07.12.09 <i>Factors interacting with transfer: Developmental inter-language processes, universals and 'markedness'. 'Fossilization'. Consequences for language instruction.</i>	Assignment 2 due [suggested reading: Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008: 174-193 → <i>WordWise</i>]
	Individual learner variables in L2A	
9	14.12.09 <i>Introduction to 'ID' research; Age and SLA: children versus adults in L2 acquisition, 'critical period' effects, ultimate attainment issues.</i>	Gass and Selinker 2008: 405-416.
10	04.01.10 <i>Language aptitude. Motivation and other affective factors in L2 acquisition.</i>	Kormos and Csizér 2008 [suggested follow-up reading: Dörnyei 2006 → <i>WordWise</i>]
	Constructing L2 knowledge	
11	11.01.10 <i>Language processing. Types of linguistic knowledge and their 'interfaces'. Forms of learning. Memory and attention in L2 acquisition.</i>	Gass and Selinker 2008: ch.8. (selected passages, cf. master copy)
TUTORIAL: Online introduction to advanced bibliographical research tools (Mrs. Astrid Schürmann, ThULB)		
12	18.01.10 <i>What does it take to become a near-native speaker? The ingredients of fluency and idiomaticity. Implications for the the cognitive organization of linguistic knowledge.</i>	Pawley and Syder 1983 Assignment 3 due
13	25.01.10 <i>The psychology of instructed L2 acquisition: Ex-/implicit learning, Focus on form, fluency and automatization, formulaic sequences.</i>	Dörnyei 2009: ch. 7 (267-272 and 279-302).
14	01.02.10 Interaction and the 'social turn' in SLA <i>Micro- and macrosocial aspects of context in L2 acquisition.</i>	Saville-Troike 2006: ch.5 (99-132).
15	08.02.10 Bilingualism continued; final wrap-up and outlook <i>Key issues in bilingualism (differentiation, code switching, cognitive consequences and neurological research). Some remarks on the term paper (meta-analysis).</i>	Hoff 2006: ch.8 (selected passages)