

Special Topics in Linguistics: Language Development
01:615:471
Spring 2020

Instructor: Prof. Kristen Syrett (kristen.syrett@rutgers.edu)
Meetings: Mondays Wednesdays 1:10 pm - 2:30 pm
Frelinghuysen A3
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30 am -11:30 am and by appointment
Room 304, Linguistics Department (18 Seminary Place)
Prerequisite: 615:201 (Introduction to Linguistic Theory)

Course website on Canvas

Course Description

This course focuses on first language acquisition and development in children. We provide an overview of child language development in the major subfields of Linguistics: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. We explore the cognitive, biological, environmental, and social-cultural influences on linguistic knowledge; analyze the major competing theoretical approaches to language acquisition and development; cover experimental methodologies used to assess linguistic competence and performance; and review the empirical data used to identify developmental milestones, distinguishing between linguistic competence and performance. We briefly extend this 'typical baseline into bilingualism, second language acquisition, and language acquisition and development in special populations.

Course Learning Goals

In this course you will

- be able to identify the linguistic developmental milestones from infancy through the early school years
- understand the ways in which cognitive, biological, environmental, and social-cultural factors interact in the process of language development
- become acquainted with methodologies used in the field of child language research on different populations
- review empirical data used to plot language development in children
- become familiar with the major theoretical frameworks and proposals to account for language acquisition and development
- communicate related issues to a 'lay audience' such as parents and teachers to promote education, a connection between the classroom and the world, and a broader understanding of the process of language development

Grading and Assessment

You will be graded according to the following schema. Please note that although I am known for making assignments and exams that are notoriously challenging, I am also equally notoriously fair in taking this into account, and generous in assessing student effort. I will not debate grades once assigned. Office hours are not for that purpose.

A:	≥90
B+:	85 to 89
B:	80 to 84
C+:	75 to 79
C:	70 to 74
D:	60 to 69
F:	<60

Please be advised that I will issue Warning grades for students who appear to be struggling with attendance, participation, and/or academic performance.

There are **4 main components** to your grade.

1) Attendance and participation 10%

You must attend every class, and actively participate. Please see the rubric in Canvas.

2) Weekly discussion posts 20%

Each week, you are required to participate in the designated discussion on our course website. The format of these posts may vary from week to week; instructions will accompany individual discussion. Discussion posts are due no later than Sunday at 9 pm. No exceptions. Posts must be substantive, be at least one paragraph in length, and follow the instructions. You may start your own thread or add to another. There will be 12 discussion posts; the lowest two will be dropped.

3) Group projects (n=2) 40%

There will be two group projects. Groups of $x \leq 5$ will be assigned by me, and you will be graded on an individual basis. You will indicate to me what you think your grade and the grade of your group members will be based on your respective contributions, and I will take this into account. The purpose of these projects is to help you to learn how to communicate what you've learned in class to "laypeople" outside of class in a clear and engaging way, and to make connections between the course content and the people and world around you. I will provide you with instructions for each.

- Components for the group projects (20% each project)
 - a. Topic, outline, proposed format 5%
 - b. List of 5 annotated references (APA format) 5%
 - c. Rough draft 5%
 - d. Final project 5%
- Project #1 FINAL due March 4.
- Project #2 FINAL due April 15.
- See schedule for component due dates. No late work will be accepted.

4) Final exam (cumulative) 30%

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 12 12-3 pm

In-Class Final Exam Review: Monday, May 4

There is a Google doc linked to our course in Canvas we will use as a study guide.

Readings

- All readings can be found in the designated Canvas modules. These have been carefully chosen across various textbooks and language acquisition/development resources, listed below.
- Please see the schedule for assigned readings.

Clark, Eve. (2018). *First language acquisition*, 3rd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (CLA)

Golinkoff, Roberta, & Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy. *How babies talk*. Plume. (GOL-HP)

Guasti, Maria Teresa. *Language acquisition*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (GUA)

Hoff, Erika. (2014). *Language development*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. (HOFF)

Jusczyk Peter. (2000). *The discovery of spoken language*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (JUS)

Saxton, Matthew. (2017). *Child language*. London: Sage. (SAX)

Tomasello, Michael, & Akhtar, Nameera. (2000). Five questions for any theory of word learning. In Marc Marschark (Ed.), *Becoming a word learner* (pp. 179-186). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (TOM-AKH)

Woodward, Amanda. (2000). Constraining the problem space in early word learning. In Marc Marschark (Ed.), *Becoming a word learner* (pp. 81-114). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (WOOD)

Class Schedule			
Date	Class	Topic	Readings / Assignment (due before class unless otherwise specified)
W 1/22	1_1	Introduction	discussion post 1 due Sun 1/26 after class: SAX ch1, CLA ch 1
M 1/27	2_2	Developmental Milestones	GUA ch 2 pp. 47-53, HOFF ch 1 pg. 20
W 1/29	2_3	Developmental Milestones	GOL-HP ch 2-8, JUS pp. 174-185
M 2/3	3_4	Theories of LA and LD, part 1	TOM-AKH, HOFF pp. 20-21, GUA ch 1 pp. 8-19, SAX ch 10
W 2/5	3_5	Theories of LA and LD, part 2	JUS ch 2
M 2/10	4_6	Methods of studying LA and LD	GUA ch 2 pp. 24-28, HOFF ch 1 pp. 21-26, ch 3 pp. 74-89, JUS appendix
W 2/12	4_7	Methods of studying LA and LD	
M 2/17	5_8	The role of the adult, part 1	GOL-HP pp. 25-37, HOFF ch 3 pp. 97-106
W 2/19	5_9	The role of the adult, part 2	Project #1 (a) due
M 2/24	6_10	Acquisition of Phonology	Project #1 (b) due HOFF ch 4, GOL-HP pp. 23-25, GUA ch 2
W 2/26	6_11	Acquisition of Phonology	Project #1 (c) due CLA ch 5, JUS ch 4 pp. 48-58
M 3/2	7_12	Acquisition of Morphology	CLA ch 8, HOFF ch 6 pp. 170-184
W 3/4	7_13	Acquisition of Morphology	Project #1 FINAL (d) due
M 3/9	8_14	Acquisition of the Lexicon	HOFF ch 5, JUS pp. 10-11, SAX ch 6
W 3/11	8_15	Acquisition of the Lexicon	GUA ch 3 pp. 55-75, WOOD
Spring Break!			
M 3/23	9_16	Acquisition of Syntax	HOFF ch 6 184-203, GUA ch 3 90-97
W 3/25	9_17	Acquisition of Syntax	
M 3/30	No class (Prof. Syrett away)		
W 4/1	10_18	Acquisition of Semantics	Project #2 (a) due CLA ch 6
M 4/6	10_19	Acquisition of Semantics	Project #2 (b) due
W 4/8	11_20	Acquisition of Pragmatics	Project #2 (c) due CLA ch 12
M 4/13	11_21	Acquisition of Pragmatics	HOFF ch 7
W 4/15	12_22	The Critical Period Hypothesis	Project #2 FINAL (d) due GUA ch 1 pp. 20-21
M 4/20	12_23	Biology, Cognition, Memory, and LA	CLA ch 15, JUS pp. 200-204
W 4/22	13_24	Bilingualism and L2 Acquisition	CLA ch 14, HOFF ch 9
M 4/27	13_25	Bilingualism and L2 Acquisition	
W 4/29	14_26	LA and LD in Special Populations	HOFF ch 11
M 5/4	27	Wrap-Up and Final Exam Review (last day to earn extra credit!)	
T 5/12	Final Exam 12-3 pm		

Class Protocols

Academic Integrity

You are expected to know and follow the Rutgers University policy on Academic Integrity: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>. Cheating, plagiarizing, presenting someone else's work as your own, and not properly acknowledging another student's contribution will not be tolerated. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Making available notes or other materials from this course, especially in return for compensation, is also discouraged.

Attendance and Absences

You are expected to attend and participate in every class, and be present for the final exam. You will receive a zero if you are absent for the final exam. No exceptions! If you anticipate that you will be absent for a class whatever reason, you must notify me in writing via email as soon as possible AND report your absence via this link <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. Not every reported absence is excused. You will still be responsible for the readings for that day, and you should coordinate with a classmate to cover the material covered in that class. Students who miss more than an occasional class (for whatever reason, excused or otherwise) should consult with the Dean of Students. It will be extremely difficult to perform successfully in the class if you miss multiple classes. Your groups also depend on you for the group activities. University policy excuses absences due to religious observance or participation in Rutgers-approved activities, and permits students to make up work missed for these circumstances. If this applies to you, please let me know at least a week in advance.

Civility and Professionalism

In this class, we will be supportive of each other. All course participants will be guided by professionalism, civility, and inclusion. We will welcome diverse opinions, backgrounds, and perspectives. We will reflect respect for each other in our classroom discussions and in any online correspondence.

Disability Services and Support

I am very happy to accommodate students who have a documented disability and a letter of accommodation. Please provide this to me at the start of the semester. You are responsible for coordinating taking your exam with the Office of Disability Services well in advance of the designated exam date (see course schedule). Find out more here: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/my-accommodations>. My office is on the 3rd floor of the Linguistics Department (room 304). There is no elevator. If you have a physical disability that prevents you from climbing these stairs, please let me know, and we will identify another meeting location.

Extra Credit

Some faculty and graduate students in the Department of Linguistics (including me and my students) do experimental research on language. Some of this research is on child language and language acquisition and development, so it is directly relevant to the content of this course. You have the opportunity to raise your final grade by up to 2 % points through participation in a Linguistics experiment. You will get 1 point of credit for every half hour of experimental participation. Experiments are offered through the Linguistics department experiment management system (sona): <http://rutgerslinguistics.sona-systems.com/>.

Towards the beginning of the semester, your name and email will be added to the experiment system. You will be issued an anonymous id to participate in experiments through this system. Once Linguistics experiments are posted, you can sign up online. See the Module on Experimental Participation and Extra Credit for more information and a helpful ppt. Any student enrolled in a Linguistics undergraduate course is eligible to participate in Linguistics experiments, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language status, or impairments, disorders, or disabilities. You cannot be denied participation for any of these reasons. If you are taking multiple Linguistics courses that allow for experimental participation to count towards extra credit, you are responsible for making sure you have assigned the credit correctly through the experiment system online.

Office hours

Office hours are there for you! They are every Tuesday morning and by appointment if you cannot make it then. Use the Calendar function in Canvas to sign up. Please do not hesitate to set up an appointment with me to talk during office hours. Use this time to go over the material, talk about grad school plans, help organize your notes, figure out effective study strategies, or whatever would support you. Appointments can be one-on-one or in small groups. This is also a good time for us to get to know each other, and for me to learn more about your style of communication (which may help when I am reading your writing), or your career plans (which may help if you ask me for a reference letter later on!).

Other Rutgers Resources

Academic Calendar: <https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/academic-calendar>

Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS):

<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: www.vpva.rutgers.edu/