

ENGE 2620 Acquisition of English as a Second Language

1. Contact details for teacher

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2. Course description

This course provides students with a broad overview of concepts, theories, and issues in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). It covers (a) first language acquisition, (b) SLA and diverse factors involved in it, (c) learner language, and (d) research methods in SLA.

The course's focus is on discussing the acquisition of English as a second language as well as the individual and linguistic factors contributing to this process, such as age, input, and crosslinguistic influence. It also offers a variety of SLA-related activities, including discussions and hands-on tasks, to foster students' critical thinking and communication skills.

3. Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students are expected to attain the following learning outcomes:

- Students will develop an understanding of the fundamental concepts and theories needed to understand literature in SLA;
- Students will be able to describe how SLA is different from first language acquisition and what factors are involved in SLA;
- Students will be able to explain the development of learner language; and
- Students will be able to conduct a small-scale project within the framework of SLA.

4. Course syllabus

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Child language acquisition	This section overviews the language development of young children, which will be compared to the process of SLA.
Age	This section centers on the critical/sensitive period hypothesis, according to which there is a particular period within which target-like language acquisition is possible. It also discusses how important age is in SLA and why it matters.
Crosslinguistic influences	This section discusses (a) the effect of knowledge of one language on the knowledge of another and (b) compares and contrasts Cantonese/Chinese and English with respect to their phonology, morphology, and syntax.
Learner language	This section discusses the development of a learner's second language as an interlanguage system. Learner language may exhibit features of their first language, second language, and general characteristics that are commonly found in most interlanguage systems.
Linguistic environment	This section provides an overview of input, output, and interaction.
Individual differences	The focus of this section is on examining different cognitive (e.g., working memory) and affective factors (e.g., motivation) that contribute to individual differences and impact the SLA process.
SLA theories & social dimensions	This section presents four theories for SLA. The behaviorist theory places an emphasis on mimicry and memorization in learning a second language. The innatist view maintains that the language acquisition device in mind guides SLA. The cognitive theory incorporates the role of cognition and usage in SLA. According to the sociocultural theory, "learners jointly construct knowledge which is internalized by the individual" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 223).
Research method	This section introduces a range of research methods for investigating the process of SLA among learners.

Application: small-scale SLA project	Students conduct a small-scale SLA project using one of the research methods discussed in class and present it in a group.						
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5. Learning activities

Lecture and tutorial (hr) in /out class	Discussion (hr) in /out class		Reading (hr) in /out class		Test (hr) in /out class		
3	0	0.5	3	0	3	0.5	0
M	NA	M	M	NA	M	M	NA

Note. M: Mandatory activity in the course; O: Optional activity; NA: Not applicable

6. Required reading(s)

Ortega, L. (2013). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Hodder Arnold.
 Available at: https://julac-cuhk.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991039798111003407&context=L&vid=852JULAC_CUHK&lang=en&search_scope>All&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=default_tab&query=any,contains,Understanding%20second%20language%20acquisition

Lecture slides, reading materials (articles and chapters), and tutorial materials, which will be uploaded to *Blackboard*

Recommended materials:

Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

7. Course schedule

Week	Topic	Reading/Activity	Remarks
1	Introduction	Ortega: Chapter 1	

2	Child language acquisition	Lightbown & Spada: Chapter 1	
3	Age	Ortega: Chapter 2	
4	Crosslinguistic influences	Ortega: Chapter 3	
5	Chinese midterm festival	-	
6	Learner language	Ortega: Chapter 6	
7	Linguistic environment	Ortega: Chapter 4	
8	Individual differences	Lightbown & Spada: Chapter 3	
9	SLA theories & social dimensions	Lightbown & Spada: Chapter 4	
10	Exam		
11	Research method	Acceptability judgment task Picture selection task	
12	Research method	Corpus workshop	
13	Application: small-scale SLA project	Student presentation 1	Presentation slides submission before the class time to Blackboard >> Discussion Board >> Small-scale

			project
14	Application: Small-scale SLA project	Student presentation 2	

8. Assessment scheme

Course requirements and grading breakdown

Requirement	Weight
Participation and contribution to class activity during the lecture and tutorial	10%
Exam	60%
Small-scale SLA project	30%

Participation and contribution to class activity during the lecture and tutorial (10%):

Students are expected to attend every class and participate in the learning activities (e.g., discussions, hands-on activities) conducted in class and tutorial. Their attendance and participation in classes and tutorials, including the comments they are expected to post to Blackboard, are significant factors in determining their grade for this requirement.

Exam (60%):

Exam will cover the key concepts, theories, and issues discussed in class.

Small-scale SLA project (30%):

Students in a group of three or four will apply one of the research methods taught during the lecture in a small-scale project. This assignment requires students to use the critical and logical thinking skills developed in class. They will also present their project in the final weeks.

Note:

The specific guidelines for the above requirements will be shared in due time.

9. Feedback for evaluation

Students will receive detailed feedback on their assignments. They can also freely contact the instructor via diverse channels, such as emails and office-hour meetings.

10. Details of course website

Blackboard will be used for student work submission.

11. Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at:

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

12. Course grade descriptors

Grade	Description
A (Excellent)	Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The A grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority.
A– (Very Good)	Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.
B+	HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates

(Good [Plus])	WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.
B (Good)	SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.
B– (Good [Minus])	GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.
C+ (Adequate [Plus])	VERY ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.
C (Adequate)	ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.
C– (Adequate [Minus])	SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.
D+ (Pass [Plus])	BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.
D (Pass)	ALMOST BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content

	in others.
F (Failure)	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.