

City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of Linguistics and Translation
with effect from Semester B 2022/23

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: First Language Acquisition

Course Code: LT4227

Course Duration: One Semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: B4

Arts and Humanities

Proposed Area:
(for GE courses only)

Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

Science and Technology

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites: LT2201 Introduction to Linguistics or
LT2229 Fundamentals of Linguistics or LT2290 Introduction to Language
Studies
(Course Code and Title)

Precursors: LT2204 Language and Mind
(Course Code and Title)

Equivalent Courses: CTL4227 First Language Acquisition
(Course Code and Title)

Exclusive Courses: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

The aim of this course is to introduce to students how the first language is acquired, and what major issues are investigated in the first language acquisition research.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs [#]	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick ✓ where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Describe the biological bases of language.		✓	✓	
2.	Discover and analyse the phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic developmental patterns of English-speaking and Chinese-speaking children.		✓	✓	✓
3.	Discover and examine individual differences in first language acquisition.		✓	✓	✓
4.	Compare different approaches to language acquisition.		✓	✓	✓
5.	Evaluate the major approaches to language acquisition.		✓	✓	
		100%			

* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Readings – Reading book chapters and articles.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2	Lectures – Theories, concepts, explanations, illustrations, synthesis of readings, in-class activities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
3	Class activities Answer questions, group discussions and activities, audio-visual material analyses, data analysis practice.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	Written Assignments – The project require students to collect child language data (or use the data from CHILDES database), apply the concepts and theories they have learnt to discover language developmental patterns analyse data, and present the analyses in written form.		✓	✓	✓	✓		

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting *	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5			
Continuous Assessment: 60%								
Class activities Short assignments require students to find information, discover language developmental patterns, analyse data, and solve problems. Assignments will be done individually or in group.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		20%	
Project The project requires data collection, patterns discovery, application of learnt knowledge to data analyses, and the writing-up of results and analyses. The small-scale project can be done individually or in pair		✓	✓	✓	✓		40%	
Examination: 40% (duration: 2 hours) Long questions will be set to assess students' mastery of key concepts and ability to analyze and evaluate. (CILO No.1-5)								
							100%	

* The weightings should add up to 100%.

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Class activities	Data description and analysis;	Completion of assignments with excellent results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.	Completion of assignments with good results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.	Completion of assignments with fair results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.	Completion of assignments with marginally acceptable results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.	Completion of assignments with very poor results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.
2. Project	Data analysis Pattern discovery, Knowledge and theory application, Presentation skill, Creativity (when applicable)	Excellent data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application, and presentation. Very creative.	Good data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application, and presentation. Creative.	Fair data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application and presentation. Fairly creative.	Marginally acceptable data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application and presentation. Not creative enough.	Poor data analysis and presentation. No pattern discovery. No theory application. Not creative
3. Examination	Analyses and evaluation of language data and developmental pattern, and comparison and evaluation of theories.	Demonstration of very high ability to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.	Demonstration of high ability to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.	Demonstration of average ability to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.	Can marginally analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and compare and evaluate theories.	Unable to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Animal communication systems, Brain structure and language functions
Phonological, semantic, morphological, syntactic and pragmatic development of English and Chinese children, Individual differences in first language acquisition,
Approaches to language acquisition

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

Key reference

Gleason, J. B. & Ratner, N. (Eds.) (2016) *The Development of Language*. 9th edition. Boston: Pearson

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

Brown, R. (1973) *A First Language: The Early Stages*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Bloom, P. (2000) *How Children Learn the Meaning of Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, E.V. (2003) *First Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dobbinson, S. , Trott, K. & Griffiths, P. (2006) *The Child Language Reader*. London: Routledge.

Fletcher, P. & MacWhinney, B. (Ed.) (1995) *Handbook of Child Language*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Foster-Cohen, S. H. (1999) *An Introduction to Child Language Development*. London: Addison Wesley, Longman.

Guastic, M. T. (2002) *Language Acquisition: the Growth of Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Halliday, M.A.K., Webster, J.J. (Ed.) (2003) *The Language of Early Childhood: Vol. 4, The Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday*. London: Continuum.

Ritchie, C.W. & Bhatia, T. (Ed.) (1999) *Handbook of Child Language Acquisition*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Saxton, M (2010) *Child Language : Acquisition and Development*. Los Angeles; London : SAGE

Strozer, J. R. (1994) *Language Acquisition after Puberty*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

靳洪剛 (1994) 《語言發展心理學》台北:五南圖書出版公司

靳洪剛 (1996) 《語言獲得理論研究》北京: 中國社會科學出版社

謝錫金 (2006) 《香港幼兒口語言發展》香港:香港大學出版社

周國光、王葆華 (2001) 《兒童句式發展研究和語言習得理論》北京:北京語言文化大學出版社

朱曼殊主編 (1986) 《兒童語言發展研究》北京: 華東師範大學出版社