

LT4227: FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

First Language Acquisition

Subject Code

LT - Linguistics and Translation

Course Number

4227

Academic Unit

Linguistics and Translation (LT)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

LT2201 Introduction to Linguistics or LT2229 Fundamentals of Linguistics or LT2290 Introduction to Language Studies

Precursors

LT2204 Language and Mind

Equivalent Courses

CTL4227 First Language Acquisition

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

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.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe the biological bases of language.		x	x	
2	Discover and analyse the phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic developmental patterns of English-speaking and Chinese-speaking children.		x	x	x
3	Discover and examine individual differences in first language acquisition.		x	x	x
4	Compare different approaches to language acquisition.		x	x	x
5	Evaluate the major approaches to language acquisition.		x	x	

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 real-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.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Readings	Students will read book chapters and articles.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
2	Lectures	Students will learn theories, concepts, and explanations.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	Class activities	Students will participate in group discussions on audio-visual materials and do data analysis practices.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?	
1	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.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	Students can use GenAI tools to brainstorm, gather information, and solve problems.	Yes
2	Project The project requires data analysis, 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.	2, 3, 4, 5	40	Students can use GenAI tools to brainstorm, gather information, solve problems, format references, and edit language. Students should give proper acknowledgment to all the content from GenAI tools that they incorporated into the assignment and keep a journal of their GenAI conversations. Students should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

60

Examination (%)

40

Examination Duration (Hours)

2

Additional Information for ATs

Examination Long questions will be set to assess students' mastery of key concepts and ability to analyze and evaluate. (CILO No.1-5)

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

1. Class activities

Criterion

Data description and analysis;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Completion of tutorial assignments with excellent results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Completion of tutorial assignments with good results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Completion of tutorial assignments with fair results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.

Marginal (D)

Completion of tutorial assignments with marginally acceptable results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.

Failure (F)

Completion of tutorial assignments with very poor results. The assignments require data description and analysis, and concept application.

Assessment Task

2. Project

Criterion

Data analysis,
Pattern discovery,
Knowledge and theory application,
Presentation skill,
Creativity (when applicable)

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application, and presentation. Very creative.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application, and presentation. Creative.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application and presentation. Fairly creative.

Marginal (D)

Marginally acceptable data analysis, pattern discovery, theory application and presentation. Not creative enough.

Failure (F)

Poor data analysis and presentation. No pattern discovery. No theory application. Not creative

Assessment Task

3. Examination

Criterion

Analyses and evaluation of language data and developmental pattern, and comparison and evaluation of theories.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstration of very high ability to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstration of high ability to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstration of average ability to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.

Marginal (D)

Can marginally analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and compare and evaluate theories.

Failure (F)

Unable to analyse and evaluate language data and developmental patterns, and to compare and evaluate theories.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

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

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Gleason, J. B. & Ratner, N. (Eds.) (2024) The Development of Language. 10th edition. Boston: Pearson

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Brown, R. (1973) A First Language: The Early Stages. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
2	Bloom, P. (2000) How Children Learn the Meaning of Words. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3	Clark, E.V. (2003) First Language Acquisition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4	Dobbinson, S. , Trott, K. & Griffiths, P. (2006) The Child Language Reader. London: Routledge.
5	Fletcher, P. & MacWhinney, B. (Ed.) (1995) Handbook of Child Language. Oxford: Blackwell.
6	Foster-Cohen, S. H. (1999) An Introduction to Child Language Development. London: Addison Wesley, Longman.
7	Guastic, M. T. (2002) Language Acquisition: the Growth of Grammar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8	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:
9	Ritchie, C.W. & Bhatia, T. (Ed.) (1999) Handbook of Child Language Acquisition. San Diego: Academic Press.
10	Saxton, M (2010) Child Language : Acquisition and Development. Los Angeles; London : SAGE

11	Strozer, J. R. (1994) Language Acquisition after Puberty. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
12	靳洪剛 (1994) 《語言發展心理學》台北:五南圖書出版公司
13	靳洪剛 (1996) 《語言獲得理論研究》北京: 中國社會科學出版社
14	謝錫金 (2006) 《香港幼兒口語發展》香港:香港大學出版社
15	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
16	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
17	Online resource: Childe's Talkbank https://talkbank.org/childes