



GRAD 5023: Second Language Acquisition Theory University of Oklahoma

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Office Hours: M 2:30 - 4:30pm & by appointment
Course Meeting Info: MWR 5:30 - 9:10 Hester Hall 150

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Required Texts

Ortega, L. (2013). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Routledge. (Used copies available for purchase on Amazon for \$30.)
Research articles available on D2L.

Other Suggested Texts

Atkinson, D. (Ed.). (2011). *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition*. London: Routledge.
Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. (3rd Edition). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle
Ellis, R. (1997). *Second Language Acquisition* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages Are Learned* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Liu, J. & Berger, C. M. (2015). *TESOL: A Guide*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
Tarone, E., & Swierzbina, B. (2009). *Exploring Learner Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Tea with BVP (an SLA and language teaching comedy podcast): teawithbvp.com
VanPatten, B., & Benati, A. G. (2010). *Key terms in second language acquisition*. London and New York: Continuum.
VanPatten, B., & Williams, J. (2015). *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Course Description

This course covers the essential topics that underlie English language acquisition, with special emphasis on those that will be most pertinent to students who will be teaching English as a Second Language. Topics include age, individual differences, aptitude, cognition, affect, motivation, the learner environment, and social dimensions of learning.

Goals

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a theoretical and experimental field of study that looks at the phenomenon of language development. While the course is designed to be accessible to students from a wide variety of backgrounds, some knowledge of the linguistic structure of English will be assumed. The goal of SLA research is to expand understanding of the complex processes and mechanisms that drive language acquisition. It is not the same as research into language teaching but may inform pedagogy and language education policy. Therefore, applied linguists whose particular interest is in facilitating the language learning process interpret relevant SLA research in ways that will benefit the language teacher. SLA, in this light, should become an essential point of reference for those involved in educational activities as well as for

researchers looking at how to facilitate the learning process. Because language is quite complex, SLA has become a broadly-based field that now involves:

- studying the complex pragmatic interactions between learners, and between learners and native speakers;
- examining how non-native language ability develops, stabilizes, and undergoes attrition (forgetting, loss);
- carrying out an analysis and interpretation of all aspects of learner language with the help of current linguistic theory;
- developing theories that are specific to the field of SLA that aim to account for the many facets of non-native language and behavior;
- testing hypotheses to explain second language knowledge and behavior.

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to:

- develop an expert and personally relevant understanding of fundamentals of second language learning;
- discuss problems and challenges in current research and theory;
- describe how the field developed historically, including major trends in research/theories, major figures;
- become familiar with major theories, methods, figures, and findings in the field of SLA;
- develop the ability to read SLA research articles meaningfully and summarize the important studies and basic ideas of research studies;
- articulate your own stand on theories of SLA (develop your own theory) and describe the principles that will inform your teaching in the field.

Course Expectations

1. Your course grade will be a combination of criterion-referenced and individual-referenced assessment (your writings, especially in regards to theory and research processing and understanding.) I will evaluate the extent to which you have reached the learning objectives stated in this syllabus (the criterion-referenced part of the assessment). I will not compare the quality of your performance to that of other students in the class.
2. Show clear evidence of your intellectual commitment (i.e., engaged curiosity) and academic effort (i.e., hard work) during the semester, and evidence of professional growth. As an MA student, this may mean a changed perspective on your teaching, based on what SLA tells us our students can and cannot do when learning an L2. It may also mean growth in your capacity to critique and contribute ideas for original and useful research on the learning and teaching of second languages.
3. I encourage you to talk to me regularly (either email or face-to-face) for feedback on your progress in the course and to gain a sense for how what you are doing in this course relates to other courses and to your long-term goals as a teacher and/or a researcher.

Additional Materials

The main journals that publish SLA research, in alphabetical order:

Applied Linguistics

The Canadian Modern Language Review

International Journal of Applied Linguistics

International Review of Applied Linguistics
Language Learning
Language Learning & Technology (open access online: <http://llt.msu.edu/>)
Language Teaching Research
The Modern Language Journal
Second Language Research
Studies in Second Language Acquisition
System
TESOL Quarterly

- Two applied linguistics journals are devoted to in-depth reviews of research areas:
Annual Review of Applied Linguistics

Language Teaching

Please see also the sections on “Annotated suggestions for further reading” at the end of each chapter in USLA.

Professional Organizations

As a graduate student preparing to teach (or already teaching) ESL/EFL and earning a professional MA degree, you are strongly encouraged to keep up to date with the latest research and practices in the field by reading newsletters, journals, participating in social media related (e.g. Twitter chats, organized Google Hangout sessions, webinars, etc), attending conferences, becoming part of a SIG (special interest group) in an professional organization, and networking. TESOL International Association (www.tesol.org) is the largest professional organization for teachers of English as a second or foreign language, and they host national and regional events. IATEFL is the International Association for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (www.iatefl.org) is another large professional organized based in the UK. There are many other specialized conferences, and newsletters such as Second Language Studies newsletter (sls.msu.edu) and Linguist List (www.linguistlist.org) disseminate important announcements about the field regarding publications, book, conferences, and jobs listings.

Assignments

Class Participation - 25%

Thoughtful reading is a high priority in this course. You are required to read all items on the syllabus for the date listed. Come to class well-prepared to join in class discussions. Prepare questions for discussion on the syllabus before each class. These questions are meant to help you synthesize your thinking across all the readings for the class session and help formulate ideas for your discussion posts.

Facilitation of Class Discussion of One Research Article - 25%

You will be responsible for facilitating a class discussion for approximately 40 minutes of that date's reading from the course readings. You will be evaluated by both your instructor and your peers and yourself. A rubric will be provided for evaluation.

D2L Discussion Forum Posting, Commentary, and Other Homework - 25%

Each week, in one post, you will summarize and reflect on interesting insights and problems that arose from the class discussion that past week. This can (and should!) be contextualized within your experience as a language teacher and/or as a language learner. Where applicable, your paper must reference the course textbook and/or the articles to support your claims. Article critique can also be included but it should

primarily be a response/reaction paper. The purpose is also to keep a record of what transpires in class each week, to help pace class discussions within the context of the course. Your post must be at least one-page single spaced (500 words minimum). Your two comments/responses should be at least a healthy paragraph each (100 words minimum). A scholarly/academic tone and style of writing is required, as well as respect and kindness toward others. Using the first person is perfectly acceptable; however, for the sake of language economy and maintaining scholarly discourse, avoid writing “I feel...” or “I think that...” or “I believe...”, “In my opinion...” Just state the thing. Posts are due by noon each Sunday, comments due each Monday night. In addition, there may occasionally be some additional homework to complete (such as the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory.)

Final Paper / Project - 25%

Your final paper should be between 10 and 12 double-spaced pages in length in Times New Roman font size 12. A two-page prospectus detailing the topic and specific approach or argument to be used is due at the end of Week 3 via D2L Dropbox. The final paper/project is due one week after last class.

(A) Select a particular feature of the English language of any kind-- phonological, grammatical (morphological or syntactic), lexical, discourse-based, orthographic, or sociolinguistic-- and involving any skill or combination of skills-- listening, speaking, reading, or writing) that is likely to involve some measure of difficulty for learners of non-English background, discuss any particular linguistic and/or pedagogical issues relevant to acquiring this feature of the language by the learners you are targeting, and propose concrete strategies for introducing this in the classroom that addresses these issues. If helpful and relevant, you may choose to present your proposals in the form of a lesson plan built around the feature in question that details the content of one or several classroom periods, including any in-class and out-of-class (homework) activities designed to facilitate acquisition of the feature targeted. Be sure to specify the level of proficiency of the learners involved (beginning? intermediate? advanced?).

(B) If you plan to pursue a higher degree in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or another related field, you will complete a research proposal related in some way to second language acquisition for English language learners, relying either on primary or secondary sources. Examples of possible papers in this category include a critical literature review of or response to a paper/series of papers/research book of your choice, development of an experimental research proposal, or the actual analysis of data from English language learners, either collected originally or based on a corpus of existing data.

Grades:

Class Participation / Absences	25%
Class Facilitation	25%
Discussion Board / Homework	25%
Final Paper / Project	25%

Grading will be determined according to the following chart:

100 - 90%	A	69 - 60%	D
89 - 80%	B	Below 59%	F
79 - 70%	C		

Policy on Missed Coursework

Failure to complete assignments, turn in assignments on the due date indicated on the calendar will result in a failing grade. No late assignments will be accepted unless in the case of medical or family emergencies.

Attendance Policy

1. Punctuality: On-time arrival is expected out of courtesy for your professor and fellow classmates. Four late arrivals to class or early departures will be equals one absence.
2. Class attendance is required: You are allowed to miss a total of **ONE** class. You cannot pass this course if you miss more than one class, regardless of the reason for the absence (health, personal, etc.) It is your responsibility to obtain information about work missed during absences.
3. Electronic devices such as cell/smart phones, tablets, or computers can be used regularly in this class for various brainstorming and research tasks and you are welcome to bring them to all class meetings. However, sending/receiving calls and text messages, checking email or social media, listening to music and playing electronic games during class are disrespectful and will result in a participation grade of 0 on the day devices are used for such purposes.

Academic Integrity

All students in attendance are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University of Oklahoma expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum requires to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student. The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy will be followed in the event of academic misconduct. Cheating is strictly prohibited at the University of Oklahoma, because it devalues the degree you are working hard to get. As a member of the OU community it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the rules. For specific definitions on what constitutes cheating, review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html.

Disability Statement

If you have a disability that may prevent the full demonstration of your abilities in this course, please contact me personally as soon as possible so I can provide an appropriate contact to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. Please contact the Disability Resource Center, Goddard Health Center, Room 166, (405) 325-3852 to make a formal request for accommodation. email drc@ou.edu. For further information, please visit: <http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html>.

Religious Observances

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Students who plan to observe a religious holiday are kindly requested to notify me as soon as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements for class work and/or rescheduling of examinations.

Statement of Inclusivity

Pivotal to OU's educational mission is the need to embrace and value the diversity of the OU community. Acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual, in this course and on campus we seek to cultivate an environment that encourages freedom of expression. Because the University is a community where inquiry is nurtured and theories are tested, every individual has the right to feel safe to express ideas that differ from those held by other members of the community. However, all persons who aspire to be part of our campus community must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Recognizing that the proper balance between freedom of expression and respect for others is not always apparent or easy to achieve, we must continually challenge ourselves and each other in an atmosphere of mutual concern, good will and respect. Therefore, expressions or actions that disparage an individual's or group's ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability are contrary to the mission of OU.

Title IX Resources and Reporting Requirement

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking, the University offers a variety of resources. To learn more or to report an incident, please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at (405) 325-2215 (8 to 5, M-F) or smo@ou.edu. Incidents can also be reported confidentially to OU Advocates at (405) 615-0013 (phones are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Please be advised that a professor/GA/TA is required to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination to the Sexual Misconduct Office. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to: Bobby J. Mason, University Equal Opportunity Officer and Title IX Coordinator at (405) 325-3546 or bjm@ou.edu. For more information, please visit <http://www.ou.edu/eoo.html>.

Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact your professor or the Disability Resource Center at (405) 325-3852 as soon as possible. Please visit <http://www.ou.edu/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html> for answers to commonly asked questions.

Auditors

Auditors are expected to do the same work as required of other students; no grades assigned but all assignments must be completed on time and active, prepared participation is expected.

Tips for Success in this Course

1. Expect to put in a lot of time and effort to understand the reading. Especially at first, most students find it dense and overwhelming. Don't get behind even if you feel frustrated.
2. In the eternal words of Rihanna: "Work work work work work work." Work hard to understand difficult concepts or keep track of complex research findings. If you still have questions, ask. In addition to class time, you can see me during my office hours, make an appointment to see me at another time, or email with a question.

3. Expect to work hard. Graduate courses are not easy and SLA doesn't come easy to anyone; the subject matter is complex, studies can be complicated, and there often seem to be contradictory results. But it's a fascinating subject!

Course Schedule

The following calendar may be modified as needed. Please prepare readings for the week/dates assigned.

Week 1: Introduction to the course; Age

Monday, May 16:

- USLA Ch 1 (Introduction)
- Lessard-Clouston, M. (2007). SLA: What It Offers to ESL/EFL teachers. In G. Anderson & M. Kline (Eds.). (2007). Proceedings of the CATESOL State Conference, 2007. Orinda, CA: CATESOL.

Wednesday, May 18:

- USLA Ch 2 (Age)
- Ioup, G., Boustagoui, E., Tigi, M., & Moselle, M. (1994). Reexamining the Critical Period Hypothesis: A case of successful adult SLA in a naturalistic environment. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16(1), 73-98.
- Marinova-Todd, S. H., Marshall, D. B., & Snow, C. E. (2000). Three misconceptions about age and L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly* 34(1), 9-34.

Thursday, May 19:

- Hyltenstam, K. & Abrahamsson, N. (2001). Age and L2 learning: the hazards of matching practical 'implications' with theoretical 'facts': comments on Stefka H. Marinova-Todd, D. Bradford Marshall, and Catherine Snow's 'Three misconceptions about age and L2 learning'. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(1), 151-170.
- Marinova-Todd, S. H., D. B. Marshall and C. E. Snow (2001). Missing the point: a response to Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson. *TESOL Quarterly* 35(1), 171-176.

Week 2: Crosslinguistic Influences; The Linguistic Environment; Cognition

Monday, May 23:

- USLA Ch 3 (Crosslinguistic Influences)
- Talebi, S. H. (2014). Cross-linguistic transfer among Iranian learners of English as a foreign language. *Issues in Education Research*, 24(2), 212-227.

Wednesday, May 25:

- USLA Ch 4 (The Linguistic Environment)
- <http://indwellinglanguage.com/grammar-is-not-a-skill-or-what-does-it-really-mean-to-know-a-language/>
- Schmidt, R. (1983). Interaction, acculturation, and the acquisition of communicative competence. In N. Wolfson & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 137-174). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Thursday, May 26:

- USLA Ch 5 (Cognition)
- Wang, W. (2015). Factor Affecting Learners' Attention to Teacher Talk in

- Nine ESL Classrooms. *TESL-EJ*, 19 (1) pp. 1-20
- Atkinson, D. (2010). Extended, embodied cognition and second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 31(5), 599-622.

Week 3: Development of Learner Language; Aptitude; Motivation

Monday, May 30:

- USLA Ch 6 (Development of Learner Language)
- Durrant, P., & Schmitt, N. (2010). Adult learners' retention of collocations from exposure. *Second Language Research*, 26(2), 163–188.
- Conklin, K., & Schmitt, N. (2008). Formulaic sequences: Are they processed more quickly than nonformulaic language by native and nonnative speakers? *Applied Linguistics*, 29(1), 72-89.

Wednesday, June 1:

- USLA Ch 7 (Foreign Language Aptitude)
- Abrahamsson, N., & Hyltenstam, K. (2008). The robustness of aptitude effects in near-native second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 30(4), 481–509.
- USLA Ch 8 (Motivation)
- Kormos, J., Kiddle, T., & Csizér, K. (2011). Systems of goals, attitudes, and self-related beliefs in second-language-learning motivation. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(5), 495-516.

Thursday, June 2:

- Guilloteaux, M. J., & Dörnyei, Z. (2008). Motivating language learners: A classroom-oriented investigation of the effects of motivational strategies on student motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42(1), 55-77.
- Niederhauser, J. (2012) Motivating Learners at South Korean Universities. *English Language Forum* 50(3). Retrieved from http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/50_3_6_niederhauser.pdf

Week 4: Affect and Other Individual Differences & Social Dimensions of L2 Learning

Monday, June 6

- USLA Ch 9 (Affect and Other Individual Differences)
- Garrett, P., & Young, R. F. (2009). Theorizing Affect in Foreign Language Learning: An Analysis of One Learner's Responses to a Communicative Portuguese Course. *Modern Language Journal*, 93(2), 209-226.

Wednesday, June 8

- USLA Ch 10 (Social Dimensions of L2 Learning)
- Yan, J. X., & Horwitz, E. K. (2008). Learners' perceptions of how anxiety interacts with personal and instructional factors to influence their achievement in English: A qualitative analysis of EFL learners in China. *Language Learning*, 58(1), 151–183.

- Kubota, R. (2003). Unfinished knowledge: The story of Barbara. *College ESL*, 10(1/2), 11-21.

Thursday, June 9

- Firth, A., & Wagner, J. (1997). On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *The Modern Language Journal*, 81(3), 285-300.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *Principles of Instructed Second Language Acquisition*, Center for Applied Linguistics.

Class Participation Rubric

5: Comes to class prepared; contributes readily to the conversation but doesn't dominate it; makes thoughtful contributions that advance the conversation; listens attentively to others and shows interest in and respect for others' views; participates actively in small groups.

4: Comes to class prepared and makes some thoughtful comments when called upon, contributes occasionally without prompting; shows interest in and respect for others' views; participates actively in small groups. A 5 score may also be appropriate to an active participant whose contributions are less developed or cogent than those of a 6 but still advance the conversation.

3: Might come to class prepared and participate in discussion, but sometimes a problematic way. May talk too much (also known as dominating), and may even make rambling or tangential contributions, interrupt the instructor with digressive questions, and/or bluff their way when unprepared, or otherwise dominate discussions, not acknowledging cues of disturbance from instructor or students. **OR: 3:** Comes to class prepared, but does not voluntarily contribute to discussions and gives only minimal answers when called upon. Nevertheless, shows interest in the discussion, listen attentively, etc. Students in this category may be shy or introverted. Such students may receive a 5 if they participate fully in small group discussions.

2-1: Students in this range often seem on the margins of the class and may have a negative effect on the participation of others. Students receiving a 2 often don't participate because they haven't read the material or done the coursework. Students receiving a 1 may be actually disruptive, radiating negative energy via hostile or bored body language, or be overtly rude.

Facilitation Rubric

We will use this rubric to evaluate each facilitation. Students can look at this rubric to understand what they are being graded on.

	1	2	3	4	Points
Content Did the facilitation contain/produce valuable materials/discussion?	Little to no valuable material.	Moments of value but as a whole was lacking.	Good amount of material; benefitted the class.	Exceptional amount of valuable material; extremely beneficial to synthesis/ understanding of material.	_____
Organization Was it well-organized, easy to follow?	Lacked organization; little evidence of preparation, way under time allotted.	Minimal signs of organization or preparation. Under time.	Had organizing idea but could have been much stronger with better preparation.	Well organized, well prepared, easy to follow.	_____
Facilitation Did they engage the audience? Was it obvious the material was rehearsed?	Facilitator demonstrated little evidence of planning prior to facilitation.	Facilitator was not consistent with level of preparedness they showed classroom but had some strong moments.	Good engagement but facilitator wasn't as engaging as s/he could have been.	Great delivery and did an excellent job of engaging the class. Preparation was very evident.	_____

Total Points: _____ / 12

Guidelines for Group Facilitation

Each of you will lead a class discussion of that week's selected study from the course article readings. The discussion should last no longer than 40 minutes. Leading individuals in a well-structured and on-point discussion can be challenging. Below are some strategies to consider using.



Purposes

- To allow your classmates to come to a better understanding of the selected study by critically assessing the formation of research questions, the research method, the research results and potential practice/teaching applications.
- To promote participation by as many of your classmates as possible.

Strategies

- Orient the group: Keep in mind that some of your classmates may have read the article a few days ago; therefore, you may want to take 5-7 minutes to refresh your classmates' memories of the study's research questions, methods, and results.
- Be focused: Have a vision of how class discussion will proceed and what specific aspects of the study you hope to analyze/critique. (For example, it will be impossible to cover 15 questions in a 35 minute discussion.) Remember that the purpose is to delve into the selected study, not to connect the study with personal experience. Structure the questions accordingly.
- Be clear: Make the discussion questions accessible to your classmates by using PowerPoint, KeyNote, Prezi or the document projector, and/or by creating a handout.
- Promote participation: To promote participation by as many of your classmates as possible, consider using the following strategies:
 - *Elicit Questions*: Prior to class discussion, have your classmates send you 2-3 questions or critiques they had about the study. Choose the most relevant on which to base your discussion, theming your discussion on the research question formation, methods, and results.
 - *Create a Debate*: Design a short true/false quiz about particular aspects of the selected study. After each individual completes the quiz, commence large group discussion in debate format. (Note: Craft statements carefully, centering on issues of research question formation, study design, data analysis measures, or conclusions.)
 - *Think/Pair/Share*: Give students 2-3 minutes to think about a question (or questions) individually, 5 minutes to discuss with a partner, and then share with the class.
 - *Small Group Discussion*: Have your classmates discuss questions in small groups before discussing as a whole class. You may choose to assign each group 1 particular question or a sub-group of questions related to research questions, methods, or results, and have that group report back to the whole group or do a jigsaw. Be sure to tell groups how many minutes they are to discuss and what they are expected to share by the end of their discussion time.

Discussion Board Rubric

5: Student clearly demonstrates s/he understands the material, the theories, the context. Includes notes from classroom discussion, relevant experiences that may jibe with the and backs up all claims with relevant textbook and/or course readings. Does not repeat material or discussion from class but synthesizes, and adds to the ideas, theories, discussion on the topics/problems/issues at hand. An insightful contribution to the Student wrote insightful contribution

4: Student shows understanding of material, and adds onto the materials/discussion in a disconnected or possibly illogical way. Writing may be jumpy or slightly incoherent and/or fails to support claims with relevant course readings as sources. This student may have not completed one or both comments.

3: Student misunderstands the materials, conveys wrong/false information, and/or writes incoherently, does not maintain a scholarly discourse, does not back up claims with relevant sources. Student missed one or both comments and/or post is far below 500 word minimum.

2-1: Student did not post, only commented on other posts; student post is far below minimum standard of 500 words; does not maintain a scholarly discourse; post written hastily, lacks coherence, contains factual, logical, and grammatical errors.

0: Student did not complete the assignment.