The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
Second Term of 2021-22

Course code and title: LING 5201 Topics in Second Language Acquisition
Lecture & Tutorial: Monday 18:30-21:15
Teaching Venue: YIA LT3

Course description
This course provides students with linguistic, cognitive and social perspectives on second language acquisition (SLA) in child and adult learners. It presents an overview of the field of SLA, surveys various theories and examines their claims in the light of research findings. Research methodology will be illustrated through representative studies and hands-on activities. Students are provided with opportunities to reflect upon their own language learning/teaching experiences, relate them to theoretical issues brought up in class, and explore the possibility of applying research findings to second language learning and teaching.

Learning outcomes
On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- achieve a basic understanding of major theories and concepts in SLA
- describe the processes underlying acquisition of a second language from linguistic, cognitive, and social perspectives
- appraise relevant literature of SLA critically
- develop experimental design and analysis skills for conducting SLA research

List of topics:

Topics	Contents/fundamental concepts
Basics	• first/second/foreign/heritage language, • nature and nurture, • first language (L1) vs. second language (L2) acquisition, • interlanguage, target language, • language transfer, cross-linguistic influence, • age of onset
Linguistic approaches	• input, parsing, the logical problem of language acquisition, • learnability, positive and negative evidence, • competence and performance, • Universal Grammar and SLA
Cognitive approaches	• mental and cognitive processing in language learning • garden-path effects
Social aspects of SLA	• language as communication, social factors
Individual differences	• learner characteristics, language-level factors, external factors
SLA research	• research methodologies and current trends in SLA research
L2 learning and teaching	• implications of SLA on L2 learning and teaching

Grade Descriptors

Grade	Topics in Second Language Acquisition
A	Demonstration of a thorough understanding of basic concepts in SLA and the topics covered regarding theories, input, cross-linguistic influence, and a high degree of competency in comparing different approaches and their implications for L2 learning and teaching, showing • outstanding ability to understand major theoretical and methodological issues in SLA • ability to design a research project with a well-thought-out methodology and produce an outstanding research proposal • ability to reflect on personal L2 learning and teaching experience with a lot of critical insights
A-	Demonstration of a very good understanding of basic concepts in SLA and the topics covered regarding theories, input, cross-linguistic influence, and a fairly high degree of competency in comparing different approaches and their implications for L2 learning and teaching, showing • excellent ability to understand major theoretical and methodological issues in SLA • ability to design a research project with a well-thought-out methodology and produce an excellent research proposal • ability to reflect on personal L2 learning and teaching experience with some critical insights
B	Demonstration of a good understanding of basic concepts in SLA and the topics covered regarding theories, input, cross-linguistic influence, and some degree of competency in comparing different approaches and their implications for L2 learning and teaching, showing • good ability to understand major theoretical and methodological issues in SLA • good ability to design a research project and produce a well-organized research proposal • ability to reflect on personal L2 learning and teaching experience satisfactorily
C	Demonstration of an adequate understanding of basic concepts in SLA and the topics covered regarding theories, input, cross-linguistic influence, and some degree of competency in comparing different approaches and their implications for L2 learning and teaching, showing • adequate ability to understand major theoretical and methodological issues in SLA • adequate ability to design a research project and produce a research proposal • adequate ability to reflect on personal L2 learning and teaching experience
D	Demonstration of some understanding of basic concepts in SLA and the topics covered regarding theories, input, cross-linguistic influence, and some degree of competency in comparing different approaches and their implications for L2 learning and teaching, showing • weak ability to understand major theoretical and methodological issues in SLA • weak ability to design a research project and produce a research proposal • weak ability to ability to reflect on personal L2 learning and teaching experience
F	Demonstration of minimal understanding of basic concepts in SLA and the topics covered regarding to theories, input, cross-linguistic influence, and a lack of competency in comparing different approaches and their implications for L2 learning and teaching, showing • inability to understand major theoretical and methodological issues in SLA • inability to design a research project and produce a research proposal • inability to reflect on personal L2 learning and teaching experience

Learning activities (Mandatory):
Lecture (in class): 2 hours per week
Tutorial (in class): 1 hour per week
Readings (out of class): 3 hours per week

Assessment scheme*:

Task nature	Description	Weight
1. Three written assignments	Assignments I&II: Students will do L2 data analysis and mini tasks to consolidate what they learn in the class. Assignment III: Students will design a one-page infographic PowerPoint presentation of an empirical study in English. They will do a literature search and identify one study on the acquisition, processing or use of a linguistic structure by L2 child or adult learners. They have to read the study carefully, and turn it into a one-page infographic PowerPoint that presents all the key elements of the study accurately (sample to be given later).	30% (10% × 3) – marked by TA under the teacher's supervision
2. Two written quizzes (in class, 50 minutes each)	Two close-book written quizzes will be administered to help consolidate students' understanding of important concepts of SLA and L2 data analysis.	40% (20% × 2) – marked by TA under the teacher's supervision
3. Group project (proposal abstract + oral presentation)	Students in groups of 2-3 will identify a current topic in SLA research. They will provide a critical literature review, lay out some research questions and hypotheses, delineate the methodology and predictions, and make a 20-min presentation in English to the class (15-min presentation + 5-min Q&A). They are required to submit an abstract (max. 450 words) in English before presentation, and revise and finalize the PowerPoint (along with supplementary materials, if any) based on feedback from peers and the teacher after the presentation. Students are encouraged to provide peer feedback for presentations given by other groups regarding the content and its presentation. #	30% (abstract 8%, oral presentation 12%, final PPT 10%) – marked by teacher

* Attendance at lectures and tutorials is required. 5% will be deducted from the final score in cases where students miss three or more lectures without a legitimate reason. Late submission of assignments, abstracts, and PPTs will not be accepted except in case of true emergencies.
# Bonus points for individual students: 5% will be added to the presentation score if the student provides peer feedback for the presentation(s) given by other groups regarding the content and its presentation.

Learning Resources:

Textbook:
Saville-Troike, M., & Barto, K. (2017). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The following books and journal articles are also helpful. Some of them (marked with **) are required readings given in the course schedule.

A. Background readings:
Carroll, S. E. (2001). Input and evidence: the raw materials of second language acquisition. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gass, S., Behney, J., & Plonsky, L. (2020). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course* (5th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Larson-Hall, J. (2010). *A guide to doing statistics in second language research using SPSS*. New York: Routledge.

**Lightbown, P.M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages Are Learned* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Chapter 3: Individual differences in second language learning; Chapter 6: Second language learning in the classroom]

**Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2016). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge. [Chapter 1: Introduction to research; Chapter 3: Common data collection measures]

Mai, Z. (2016). L2 Chinese: Grammatical development and processing. *Second Language Research, 32(1),* 123-141.

Meisel, J. M. (2011). *First and second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, E. (2019). *Second Language Learning Theories* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.

**Paradis, J., Genesee, F., & Crago, M. (2021). *Dual Language Development and Disorders: A Handbook on Bilingualism and Second Language Learning* (3rd ed.) Baltimore; London; Sydney: Paul H. Brookes Publishing. [Chapter 6: Second language development in children]

Roberts, L. (2012). Psycholinguistic techniques and resources in second language acquisition research. *Second Language Research, 28(1),* 113–127.

Slabakova, R., Leal, T., Dudley, A., & Stack, M. (2020). *Generative Second Language Acquisition* (Elements in Second Language Acquisition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108762380

Sorace, A. (2011). Pinning down the concept of 'interface' in bilingualism. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism, 1(1),* 1–33.

VanPatten, B., & Williams, J. (2015). *Theories in Second Language Acquisition: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

White, L. (2003). *Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*. Cambridge University Press.

**Zhao, Y. (2011). A tree in the wood: a review of research on L2 Chinese acquisition. *Second Language Research, 27(4),* 559-572.

B. Empirical studies
Chan, A., Chen, S., Matthews, S., & Yip, V. (2017). Comprehension of subject and object relative clauses in a trilingual acquisition context. *Frontiers in Psychology, 8,* Article 1641. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01641

Hao, Y.-C. (2012). Second language acquisition of Mandarin Chinese tones by tonal and non-tonal language speakers. *Journal of Phonetics, 40,* 269-279.

Yuan, B. (1998). The interpretation of binding and orientation of the Chinese reflexive ziji by English and Japanese Speakers. *Second Language Research, 14,* 325-340.

Yuan, B. (2001) The status of thematic verbs in second language acquisition of Chinese: against the inevitablility of thematic verb-raising in L2 acquisition. *Second Language Research, 17,* 248-272.

Yuan, B. (2010). Domain-wide or variable-dependent vulnerability of the semantics-syntax interface in L2 acquisition? Evidence from wh-words used as existential polarity words in L2 Chinese grammars. *Second Language Research, 26,* 219-260.

Yuan, B., & Zhao, Y. (2011). Asymmetrical syntactic and thematic reconfigurations in English speakers' L2 Chinese resultative compound constructions. *International Journal of Bilingualism, 15,* 38-55.

**Zhou, J., Mai, Z., & Yip, V. (2021). Bi-directional cross-linguistic influence in object realization in Cantonese-English bilingual children. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 24(1),* 96-110.

常辉, 周岸勤. (2013). 母语为英语的学习者汉语中的空论元研究. 《语言教学与研究》[J], 第3期, 7-15页.

黄月圆, 杨素英. (2004). 汉语作为第二语言的"把"字句习得研究. 《世界汉语教学》[J], 第1期, 49-59 页.

黄月圆, 杨素英, 高立群, 崔希亮. (2005). 汉语作为第二语言反身代词习得考察. 《汉语学习》[J], 第5期, 49-60 页.

黄月圆, 杨素英, 高立群, 张旺熹, 崔希亮. (2007). 汉语作为第二语言"被"字句习得的考察. 《世界汉语教学》[J], 第2期, 76-90页.

杨素英, 黄月圆, 高立群, 崔希亮. (2007). 汉语作为第二语言存现句习得研究. 《汉语学习》[J], 第1期, 59-70页.

赵杨. (2009). 汉语非宾格动词和心理动词的习得研究——兼论"超集—子集"关系及可学习性. 《世界汉语教学》[J], 第1期, 86-100页.

C. Journals
Bilingualism: Language and Cognition
International Journal of Bilingualism
International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism
Language Learning
Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism
Second Language Research
Studies in Second Language Acquisition

D. Websites
SLABank
https://slabank.talkbank.org/
Second Language Acquisition Research series published by Routledge
https://www.routledge.com/Second-Language-Acquisition-Research-Series/book-series/LEASLARS

Feedback for evaluation:
Apart from the end-of-term course evaluation, the teacher and the teaching assistant welcome students' timely comments and suggestions on the course in person or through emails.

Course schedule:

Date	Topic	*Readings (required)	Assignment (Asgmt.)/ Quiz/ Group project
10/1/2021	**1. Introduction**	*ST*: Ch.1.	
17/1	**2. Foundations of SLA**	*ST*: Ch.2.	
24/1	**3. Linguistic approaches**	*ST*: Ch.3.	Asgmt. I due by 6pm
31/1	**Happy Chinese New Year—No Class!**		
7/2	**4. Cognitive approaches**	*ST*: Ch.4.	
14/2	**5. Social aspects of SLA**	*ST*: Ch.5.	Asgmt. II due by 6pm
21/2	**6. Individual differences in SLA**	*LS*: Ch.3.	Quiz I on 1ectures 1-5 (6:30-7:20pm)
28/2	**7. SLA research (1)** *Project consultation (1)*	*PGC*: Ch.6. *MG*: Ch.1.	
7/3	**8. SLA research (2)**	Zhao (2011). *MG*: Ch.3.	Asgmt. III due by 6pm
14/3	**9. Learning & teaching L2s** *Project consultation (2)*	*LS*: Ch.6.	
21/3	**10. Workshop: Studying L2 acquisition**	Zhou, Mai & Yip (2021).	Quiz II on lectures 6-9 (6:30-7:20pm)
28/3	**Reading week—No class/TBC**	-	Group project abstract due by 11:59pm
4/4	**11. Student presentations (1)**	-	
11/4	**12. Student presentations (2)**	-	
18/4	-	-	Final version of group project PPT due by 2pm

LS=Lightbown & Spada (2013); *MG*=Mackey & Gass (2015); *PGC*=Paradis, Genesee & Crago (2021); *ST*=Saville-Troike & Barto (2017).
* Other supplementary readings will be provided at class or through the course webpage on Blackboard.

Contact details for teacher and TA:
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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 on 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 by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.