

JLP315H1S Language Acquisition

Winter 2016

Wednesdays 3-6, SS2118

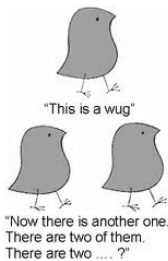
Instructor: Ana T. Pérez-Leroux

Office hours: Wednesdays 10-12 in UC F201, 416-978-8404, or by appointment

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Course Description

Welcome to JLP315! This course offers an overview of the field of first language acquisition, examining issues in language development from infancy through to early school age. The textbook and materials used in this course are interdisciplinary in nature, exploring issues of interest to linguists, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, early childhood educators, and parents alike.



In the first half of the course we will learn about linguistic and communicative development in infancy, as well as what is known about the acquisition of different components of linguistic ability (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, the lexicon, and pragmatics) in typically developing children. In the latter half of the course, we will examine theoretical perspectives on language acquisition. We will also look at various experimental approaches to the study of

child-language, and the more complex learning circumstances of certain populations, like bilingual children and children presenting atypical development (e.g., due to autism, down syndrome and other).

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Identify and describe the stages and phenomena that characterize child language in various linguistic domains (e.g., phonology, syntax, semantics)
- Understand the dominant theoretical standpoints and research approaches in the field
- Discuss and analyze child language data from an informed linguistic perspective
- Use CHILDES (a digital database of spontaneous naturalistic child language from various populations) to methodically collect data and compute some basic descriptive statistics.
- Write an IMRD (Intro~Methods~Results~Discussion) linguistics paper based on your own CHILDES-based research guided by scaffolded assignments and activities.
- Know more about young children and about the complex phenomena of language development.

Evaluation

| Component | % of Grade | DUE DATE |
|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| Online Quizzes (5) | 10% (combined) | Blackboard Quizzes; Ongoing (see <i>Timetable</i>) |
| Phonology assignment | 5% | February 10 th (delivered online) |
| CHILDES Treasure Hunt | 5% | Blackboard Quiz; March 2 nd |
| Midterm (1.5 hours) | 20% | February 24 th (in class) |
| CHILDES paper | 20% | April 6 th (hard copy in class; data used to be delivered online) |
| Final Exam (2 hours) | 40% | TBA |

Late Submission. The late penalty is -5% per day on the assignment (if it's worth 100pts, then -5pts; if it's worth 30pts, then -1.5pts). Assignments which require a hard copy are due in class. Blackboard-based assignments have strict closing times. After one business week has elapsed I will no longer accept late work. The sole exemptions include medical illness (requires submission of the official U of T medical certificate) and compassionate cases (accompanied by a letter from your college registrar). Talking to me in advance of being late is better than after, when possible.

Quizzes (10% Combined; 2% each quiz). Quizzes are meant as an ongoing reading assessment with two distinct goals: a) to ensure you are doing your course readings on time (before the lecture and discussion) so you are able to engage with the lectures fully, and b) to orient you to the kind of information that you are meant to extract from the course readings. I recommend you consider quizzes as part of your reading work; complete the quiz as soon as you are done your reading. Quizzes will be short and consist of multiple choice, true/false and fill-in-the-blank type questions. Each quiz will be available on Blackboard for one week (or more) and all quizzes will close at 11am the day of the class in which the reading is due. One practice quiz will cover textbook Chapters 1 and 2.

Phonology Assignment (5%). DUE February 10th in the portal. This assignment asks you to apply your knowledge of child communicative development and phonological processes. You will analyse audio/video selections of infant and toddler speech, according to what we have learned in class. This assignment provides you with child-language analysis skills in the area of speech production and communicative development.

CHILDES Treasure Hunt Quiz (5%). DUE March 2nd, by 11am on Blackboard. CHILDES is an online corpus of actual child language data (<http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/>). The CHILDES Paper will require the use of CHILDES to collect data. To prepare you for this we will do an introduction to CHILDES in-class (see timetable) and your homework is to apply the knowledge you learned in class to complete a treasure hunt. This assignment will familiarize you with CHILDES and the search commands used to explore the CHILDES database. This assignment will be completed via the Blackboard Quiz function.

CHILDES Paper (20%). DUE April 6th in class. As a final written component of the course you will conduct your own data-driven research on CHILDES. This assignment allows you to integrate your new knowledge on using CHILDES to conduct research, the IMRD writing format, and the course content. For your CHILDES Paper you are expected to conduct a well thought-out study and write it up using the IMRD style and format (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion). You will be asked to post your data through the Blackboard Portal.

Midterm (20%)/Final (40%). Exams have three goals: 1) to verify your understanding of the core concepts and terms, 2) to test your ability to thoughtfully interpret child data; and 3) to test your ability to understand and evaluate theoretical positions. Exams are also a learning opportunity for you – studying for exams and sitting exams helps you integrate and apply your knowledge and see where you are in your learning. Both exams will be formatted in a similar fashion: short answer and long-answer. All exam questions will be drawn from assigned readings and lectures (*including* any videos we may watch during class time). The final exam is cumulative, and will contain approximately 1/3 pre-midterm questions and 2/3 post-midterm questions.

Missed Exams. Exams cannot be written earlier or later than the scheduled date. Rather, you will have to take a special make-up exam. This is only permitted upon presentation of a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate or a college registrar letter. If you miss the Midterm Exam you must contact

me within 24 hours of the exam to let me know so I can arrange a make-up exam. If you miss the Final Exam you must contact your registrar or the Faculty of Arts and Science to request a make-up.

Departmental Grading Policy. The Faculty of Arts and Science uses the “Refined Letter Grade Scale” which states that “the cumulative scores [for course work] may not be directly identified with the final grade.” (1.4) See: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/newstudents/transition/academic/grading>

Required Readings

Textbook.

Hoff, Erika. 2014. *Language Development* (5th Edition). Wadsworth: Belmont, CA.

- Available in U of T bookstore to buy used, new and looseleaf.
- For the ebook option: <http://www.nelsonbrain.com/shop/isbn/9781133939092>.

Articles selections

- 1) Yeung, H.H., Chen, L.M., & Werker, J.F. (2014). Referential labeling can facilitate phonetic learning in infancy. *Child Development*, 85(3), 1036-49. <http://infantstudies-psych.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2015/07/Yeung-Chen-Werker-2014-Referential-Labeling-Can-Facilitate-Phonetic-Learning-in-Infancy.pdf>
- 2) Paquette-Smith, M. & Johnson, E.K. (in press). Toddlers' use of grammatical and social cues to learn novel words. *Language Learning and Development*. [PDF] <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/infant-child-centre/publications-elizabeth-johnsons-class-lab>
- 3) Lee, K. (2013). Little liars: Development of verbal deception in children. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7(2), 91-96. doi: 10.1111/cdep.12023. [\[link to pdf\]](#)
- 4) Paradis, J., Schneider, P. & Sorenson Duncan, T. (2013). Discriminating children with language impairment among English language learners from diverse first language backgrounds. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*. 56, 971-981. https://www.ualberta.ca/~jparadis/Johanne_Paradis_Homepage/Publications_files/PS%26SD%282013%29_JSLHR.pdf
- 5) Yang, C. (2004). Universal Grammar, statistics, or both. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8 (10), 451-456. <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~ycharles/papers/tics-final.pdf>

Support readings

Berko Gleason, J. & N. B. Ratner. 2013. *The Development of Language* 8th Edition, Pearson, 2013.

Classroom Conduct and Policies

Academic Honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with university policy on academic dishonesty (see: <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/academicoffenses.html>), and to be familiar with guidelines on plagiarism (see: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>). Lack of familiarity with the rules is not an excuse. If you are unclear about a certain practice, please ask me. Written assignments must be written alone. You do not learn by stealing words, ideas or answers from other people and you risk incurring academic offenses which can lead to a 0 for the assignment or the course, or expulsion. Do not cheat yourself. I will take appropriate action.

Blackboard. <http://portal.utoronto.ca>; log in with your UTORid and password. For assistance with utormail or UTORid, please call 416-978-HELP or visit the Help Desk at the Information Commons on the first floor of Robarts Library. Online quizzes, the CHILDES treasure hunt, class notes, and additional materials are posted regularly; I encourage you to check in regularly!

E-mail policy. To ensure that your email will be read, please write to me from your utoronto address ONLY. Please also include “JLP315” on the subject line. I will respond to administrative emails. Course content questions should preferably be asked in class, or in office hours. Emails pertaining to course content questions may be sent to ALL STUDENTS to ensure that everyone receives fair treatment. Please allow up to 48 hours for email responses (weekends excluded).

Lecture slide policy. I will be posting lecture Powerpoint slides *after* the lecture. This choice is motivated by two factors: a) it encourages class attendance and attention to the lecture (which is not a direct reflection of the readings, but a supplement), and b) I would like you to develop your own note-taking style that is personal and tailored to your learning style. Good notetaking should help you better process and more quickly recall the material. All of my Powerpoint slides will contain a visible slide-number, use this number to orient your notes to my slides. I will point key questions and key words Friday before class, to help orient your reading.

This website is an excellent resource for building personal note-taking skills:

- <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/notes.html>

This note-taking system is tried and true and many people rely on it:

- http://lsc.cornell.edu/LSC_Resources/cornellsystem.pdf

The slides are meant to complement the lecture; they do not stand alone. **So, come to class.**

Writing Help. For help with writing your CHILDES Paper, consider making an appointment with a college writing centre. <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres> **Plan Ahead! Everyone ever wants help the last week of classes.**

English Language Learners. For those of you who are ELL students, there are some helpful resources available for both general advice for keeping up with readings and following lectures, as well as specific advice for help with writing in academic English. Please feel free to come talk to me if you have specific concerns and we can work together to help you achieve your learning goals.

- <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/undergraduate/ell>
- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/english-as-a-second-language>

Accessibility. I want to emphasize that students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Staff at Accessibility Services are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Accessibility Services is located at:
Robarts Library, 130 St. George Street, 1st Floor
416-978-8060; accessibility.services@utoronto.ca
<http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>

Class Format and Timetable

- Expect to be in class for 3 hours. This class is formatted like a 2hr class plus a 1hr tutorial, but all three hours are together and taught by me. Some weeks we will only use 2hrs or 2.5hrs.

| Date | Week # & Topic | In class | DUE | Homework |
|-------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Jan 13 | 1. Introduction to Language Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus and course overview; In-class activity TEDtalk: Deb Roy Christopher | | Text: Chaps. 1 & 2 |
| Jan 20 | 2. Language development and biology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture Secret of the wild child 003347 In-class activity | Practice quiz | Text: pp. 80-87; Chap. 4 Article: Yeung et al. 2014 |
| Jan 27 | 3. Phonological development. Pre-linguistic perception and early years. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture TEDtalk Patricia Kuhl Introduce phonology assignment Article discussion: (Yeung et al. 2014) | Quiz 1 | Start phonological assignment Text: Chap. 5 |
| Feb 3 | 4. Lexical development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture "Human language series video 003305 | Quiz 2 | Text: ch. 6 pp. 169-188 |
| Feb 10 | 5. Syntactic Development 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture In-class activity | Phonology assignment (due online) | Midterm preparation |
| Feb 17 | Reading week | | | |
| Feb 24 | 6. Midterm 1 | | | Ch.6 pp. 189-203 Paquette-Smith & Johnson(in press) |
| Mar 2 | 7. Syntactic development 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture In-class activity Article discussion (Paquette-Smith & Johnson) Introduce CHILDES essay | CHILDES quiz | Lee (2013) Text Chap. 7 + pp. 74-78 |
| Mar 9 * | 8. Pragmatic development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture In-class activity Article discussion (Lee 2013) | Quiz 3 | Text: Chap. 8 + pp. 89-103 |
| Mar 16 | 9. Input, learning & representations. Theoretical perspectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture In-class activity Human language series 2: 003305 | | Text: Ch.9 Article: Paradis et al (2013) |
| Mar 23 | 10 Bilingualism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture In-class activity Article discussion (Paradis et al 2013) Growing up different 007035 | Quiz 4 | Text: Ch. 11 |
| Mar 30 | 11. Clinical populations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture In-class activity The secret life of the brain: From syllable to sound. 006422 | Quiz 5 | Article: Yang (2004) Bring questions! |
| Apr 6 | 12. Final remarks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Article Discussion (Yang 2004) | CHILDES essay DUE IN CLASS | |
| April 12-26 | Final examination period | | | |

- Last day to drop S courses/To change CR/NCR status is March 13.