ET123-15 First Language Acquisition

20/21

Department
Applied Linguistics
Level
Undergraduate Level 1
Module leader
Clay Beckner
Credit value
15
Module duration
10 weeks
Assessment
60% coursework, 40% exam
Study location
University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Learning a language is an amazing feat, but it is one that children seem to take in their stride and manage to do without much effort. In this module you will learn how this happens. What comes first? How are sounds perceived and produced? How are words formed? How is meaning mapped onto sounds? When do word combinations become sentences? You will be introduced to the key concepts, terms, theories and research evidence related to the acquisition of language in children as well as relevant research methods so that you can engage with analysis of child language.

Module web page

Module aims

The module aims to:

- Familiarise students with key concepts and terms, theories and research evidence related to the acquisition of language in children
- introduce students to research methods in language acquisition
- provide students with a foundation in the study of first language acquisition
- Enable students to engage with analysis of child language.

This module will contribute primarily to the achievement of Course Aims #1, #3, #6 and #11:

1. Provide a thorough grounding in theories and research findings related to linguistics and the English Language.
2. Enable students to analyse language in general and the English language in particular at every level from the word to its place in society at large.
3. Give students a solid grasp of the theories and research findings related to language acquisition, language use and applied linguistics.
4. To provide high-quality teaching informed by research at an appropriate level for students choosing to pursue careers as teachers in secondary schools, or as future teachers and researchers in higher education.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

- theoretical perspectives, research methods and questions in first language acquisition
- the acquisition of phonology: perception
- the acquisition of phonology: production
- gesture in early language development
- the acquisition of semantics: word meaning
- the acquisition of morphology
- the acquisition of syntax: basic word combinations
- the acquisition of syntax beyond basic word combinations
- the acquisition of pragmatics
- the acquisition of languages other than English
- first language acquisition in specific circumstances (bilingualism, language impairments)

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Upon successful completion of this course, students should understand a number of topics in first language acquisition. Students should then be able to: describe and discuss theory and evidence in first language acquisition research demonstrate their understanding of key concepts, terminology, research methods and theories of first language acquisition. describe and discuss the development of language in children, including phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic development evaluate theoretical and empirical research in first language acquisition discuss evidence from first language acquisition research in languages other than English and in specific circumstances

Indicative reading list

Clarke, E. (2009). First language acquisition. Second edition. Cambridge: CUP.
O’Grady, W. (2011). How children learn language. Cambridge: CUP.
Peccei, . J. S. (1999). Child language (Language Workbooks). Oxford: Routledge.
Lightbown, P, & Spada, N. (2013). How languages are learned. Fourth edition. Oxford: OUP.

View reading list on Talis Aspire

Research element

Students in this module will delve into classic studies of language acquisition, as well as cutting edge research. For summative essays students should conduct independent research into current studies in the field.

Interdisciplinary

The module integrates insights from linguistics, education, psychology and other cognitive sciences.

Subject specific skills

Be familiar with language development milestones.
Demonstrate a good awareness of cross-linguistic and typological aspects of sounds, sound systems, grammatical structure and meaning.

Transferable skills

- demonstrate their understanding of key concepts, terminology, research methods and theories of first language acquisition.
- describe and discuss the development of language in children, including phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic development.
- evaluate theoretical and empirical research in first language acquisition.
- discuss evidence from first language acquisition research in languages other than English and in specific circumstances

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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	4 hours (3%)
Private study	119 hours (79%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Reading subject materials
Homework tasks

Assignments
Revision

Other activity description

Revision sessions

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D2

	Weighting	Study time
2000 word assignment	60%	
Online Examination	40%	
~Platforms - AEP		

- Answerbook Pink (12 page)

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on the assignment will be provided on the Centre's standard feedback sheets, which conform to Faculty regulations. This will include both summary and detailed feedback. Where appropriate, additional feedback may be provided via personal meetings with the tutor.

Past exam papers for ET123

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UETA-Q311 in English Language and Linguistics (with Intercalated year)