

LINGUISTICS 790: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
TH 5:30-8:00
HUMANITIES CLASSROOM BUILDING 302

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION: Mila Tasseva
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COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course provides an introduction to second language acquisition (SLA) theory and research. The course topics are divided into three different areas of SLA: 1) theoretical approaches to first and second language learning, 2) the external variables that affect SLA, and 3) the internal factors that affect SLA. We begin with descriptive approaches to SLA, and move toward more explanatory approaches, focusing on current theories of SLA. The overall objective of the course is to help students better understand the relationships between SLA theory, research and pedagogy as well as key terms and concepts in SLA.

Specifically, by the end of the course, students are expected to address questions on topics such as:

- 1) variables influencing SLA: social, cognitive, linguistic etc.
- 2) current theories/approaches to the study of SLA
- 3) the relationship between SLA theory and pedagogy both in ESL (K-12) and EFL contexts.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

VanPatten, Bill and Jessica Williams (2007). *Theories in Second Language Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ.: Erlbaum.
(*TSLA*)

Additional readings to be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

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| 1) Class participation and discussion: | 10% |
| 2) Theory critiques: | 30% |
| 3) Article presentations: | 20% |
| 4) Research proposal: | 40% |
| (presentation 20% and manuscript 20%) | |

Participation and Discussion:

The format for this course is lecture/discussion, which means that the students are expected to discuss their understanding of the issues at every class. Thus, the assigned readings must be done **prior** to the class during which the topics are to be discussed. Active participation in the class discussion, which will help you better understand topics/issues, is encouraged. Needless to say, all attendance rules of the University of South Carolina apply to this class too.

Theory Critiques:

An important part of what we do as researchers is the development of the theoretical tools we use. But before we get there we need to understand the current theories and be able to see what kinds of data will support or revoke a particular approach. Very often the same empirical evidence can be used to support different theoretical approaches. We need to learn how to sift through the evidence so we can find the grain that is most

useful for our purposes. One way to learn how to do that is to look at the same set of data through the lens of different theories. For the Theory Critiques I will give you a published article and will ask you to analyze the data taking the viewpoint of two theoretical approaches. More on that later.

Article Presentations

Each one of you will have to present two articles from the list of reading for this course. The articles that are available for presentation are highlighted in the schedule below. Since those are preparing you for future professional presentations, you are required to provide visual aids for your audience (a handout and/or a PowerPoint/Keynote presentation).

Research Proposal

The biggest outcome of this class, besides learning the different theories in our field, is that you will start laying out the building blocks of your research. The class is an introduction to the field and I will not require that you conduct a fully fledged study (although if you want to, you are very welcome to do so). However, no matter if your orientation is theoretical or practical by end of the course you should be able to develop your own research proposal. I encourage you to start thinking about your research proposal right away. In week 8 we will discuss all research question in class. In the following weeks you will be working on finding a research method that you think will produce a straight answer to your question. In the last week of classes you will present your research question and your proposed research design in class. Again, you will need some visual aids (handout and/or PowerPoint/Keynote presentation). The last step of this process is the written research proposal. This should take the form of an article publication. The length of the paper should be approximately 10 pages, typed, double-spaced. **Due: 5/5 at 5 PM.**

GRADING SCALE

The summaries, presentations, projects and the final proposal will be graded on the following scale:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-
97-100%	93-96%	90-92%	87-89%	83-86%	80-82%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%
etc.								

A = excellent, extraordinary, exceptional, exemplary

B+ = very good, commendable, admirable, praiseworthy

B = good, acceptable, adequate, passable, ok

C+ = not graduate level

C = unsatisfactory

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR READINGS/DISCUSSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

(Note: The full list of readings which are not chapters in TSLA is given at the end of the syllabus)

Week 1	January 15	Introduction and background	
Week 2	January 22	Input, Interaction and Output	TSLA ch 10 Gass and Alvarez-Torres (2005)
Week 3	January 29	Input Processing Theory	TSLA ch 7 VanPatten, B. (2000) VanPatten, B. & Cadierno, T. (1993)
Week 4	February 5	Skill Acquisition Theory	TSLA ch 6 DeKeyser (1997) Ellis (2005)
Week 5	February 12	Generative SLA: - Fundamental difference	TSLA ch 3 Bley-Vroman (1989)
Week 6	February 19	Generative SLA: - transfer	Vainikka & Young-Scholten (1998) Schwartz & Sprouse (1996) Theory Critique #1 due
Week 7	February 26	Generative SLA: - initial and final state	Slabakova (2003) Hawkins & Hattori (2006)
Week 8	March 5	Research question presentations	
Week 9	March 12	No class – Spring Break	
Week 10	March 19	Lexicon and cognition	Sunderman, G., & Kroll, J. F. (2006) Clahsen, Harald & Claudia Felser (2006)
Week 11	March 26	Socio-cultural theory:	TSLA ch 11 Lantolf (2006) Theory Critique #2 due
Week 12	April 2	SLA and sociolinguistics Language policies and politics	Bardovi-Harlig (1999) Pavlenko (2002)
Week 13	April 9	Internal factors: Critical Period Hypothesis	Hyltenstam, K & Abrahamsson, N. (2003) DeKeyser (2003)
Week 14	April 16	L1/L2 Attrition and Maintenance	Sorace, A. (2000) Montrul (2006) Theory Critique #3 due
Week 15	April 23	Research presentations	
Final	May 5, 5:00 PM	Research Proposal due	

*** SLA RELATED JOURNALS:

Applied Linguistics
Applied Psycholinguistics
Language Learning
Second Language Research
Studies in Second Language Acquisition
TESOL Quarterly

READINGS (POSTED ON BLACKBOARD):

- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (1999) Exploring the interlanguage of interlanguage pragmatics: a research agenda for acquisitional pragmatics. *Language Learning* 49:4, 677-713.
- Bley-Vroman, Robert. (1989) What is the logical problem of second language learning? In Gass, S & J. Schachter (eds.) *Linguistic Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*.
- Clahsen, Harald & Claudia Felser (2006) Grammatical processing in language learners. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 27, 3-42.
- DeKeyser, R. M. (1997). Beyond Explicit Rule Learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(02), 195-221. doi:
- DeKeyser, R. M. (2003). The Robustness of Critical Period Effects in Second Language Acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 22(04), 499-533. doi: null.
- Ellis, N. C. (2005). At the Interface: Dynamic Interactions of Explicit and Implicit Language Knowledge. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 27(02), 305-352.
- Gass, Susan and Maria Jose Alvarez-Torres (2005). Attention when? An investigation of the ordering effect of input and interaction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 27, 1-31.
- Hawkins, R., & Hattori, H. (2006). Interpretation of English multiple wh-questions by Japanese speakers: a missing uninterpretable feature account. *Second Language Research*, 22(3), 269-301. doi: 10.1191/0267658306sr269oa.
- Hyltenstam, K & Abrahamsson, N. (2003) Maturational constraints in SLA. In Doughty, C. & Long, M. (eds). *The Handbook of SLA*.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2006). Sociocultural Theory and L2: State of the Art. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 2006, 28, 1, Mar, 67-109.
- Montrul, S. (2006). On the Bilingual Competence of Spanish Heritage Speakers: Syntax, Lexical-Semantics and Processing. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 10(1), 37-69.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. 2002. Poststructuralist approaches to the study of social factors in second language learning and use. In *Portraits of the L2 user*, ed. Vivian Cook. 275-302. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Schwartz, B. & Sprouse, R. (1996) L2 Cognitive States and the Full Transfer/Full Access Model. *Second Language Research*, 1996, 12, 1, Jan, 40-72
- Slabakova, Roumyana. 2003. Semantic evidence for functional categories in interlanguage grammars. *Second Language Research* 19.1: 42-75.
- Sorace, A. (2000) Differential effects of attrition in the L1 Syntax of near-native L2 speakers. In Howell, C.S. et al (eds), *BUCLD 24 Proceedings*, 719-725.
- Sorace, A. (2003) Near-Nativeness. In Doughty, C. & Long, M. (eds.), *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*.
- Sunderman, G., & Kroll, J. F. (2006). First Language Activation during Second Language Lexical Processing: An Investigation of Lexical Form, Meaning, and Grammatical Class. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28(3), 387-422.
- Vainikka, A. , and Young-Scholten, M. 1998. The initial state in the L2 acquisition of phrase structure. In *The generative study of second language acquisition*, eds. Suzanne Flynn, Gita Martohardjono and Wayne O'Neal, 17-34. New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum.
- VanPatten, B. & Cadierno, T. (1993) Explicit Instruction and Input Processing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 1993, 15, 2, June, 225-243.
- VanPatten, B. (2000). Thirty Years of Input (or Intake, the Neglected Sibling). In *Social and cognitive factors in Second Language Acquisition: Selected proceedings of the 1999 Second Language Research Forum*, eds. Swierzbini, Bonnie, Morris, Frank, Anderson, Michael E., Klee, Carol A., & Tarone, Elaine, Somerville, MA: Cascadilla, 2000, pp 287-311.