



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *Theoretical Aspects of Language Development - 34944*

*Last update 23-08-2021*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)*

*Responsible Department: Education*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 2nd Semester*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Ainat Guberman*

*Coordinator Email: [msainat@mscc.huji.ac.il](mailto:msainat@mscc.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesday, 16:00 - 17:00 by appointment!*

*Teaching Staff:*

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Dr. Ainat Guberman

Course/Module description:

Current theories regarding three major aspects of first language acquisition will be presented from a historical point of view: lexical learning, the acquisition of grammatical rules and the development of pragmatic competence. Relevant data from atypical and second language acquisition will also be discussed, focusing on the interplay between empirical evidence and theoretical interpretation.

Course/Module aims:

To introduce students to the main theories and findings in first language acquisition, the prevalent research methods in this area of study, and the complex relations between them.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Describe first language acquisition milestones.
2. Gain acquaintance with the dominant theoretical approaches explaining language acquisition.
3. Describe the prevalent research methods in this area of study.
4. Analyse current empirical papers:
  - 4(a). Identify the authors' theoretical convictions.
  - 4(b). Identify methodological strengths and weaknesses.
  - 4(c). Provide arguments explaining which relevant theories are corroborated by the papers' findings and which are undermined by them.
5. Extract educational principles for culturally sensitive linguistic education of children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Attendance requirements(%):

80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecture

Course/Module Content:

Introduction  
Phonological development  
What's a word?  
From intersubjectivity to naming  
The "holophrastic" stage

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Acquiring verbs  
Vocabulary enrichment  
Acquiring syntax  
The nativist approach  
Connectionist and social Learning models  
DLD: What are the implications of Specific language Impairment on theories relating to the acquisition of grammar?  
Pragmatic development  
Language and literacy  
Acquiring additional languages

Required Reading:

- Arnon, I. (2021). The Starting Big approach to language learning. *Journal of Child Language*, 1-22. doi:10.1017/S0305000921000386
- Behrens, H. (2021). Constructivist Approaches to First Language Acquisition. *Journal of Child Language*, 1-25. doi:10.1017/S0305000921000556
- Bialystok, E. (2017). The bilingual adaptation: how minds accommodate experience. *Psychological Bulletin*, 143(3), 233-262.
- Caglar-Ryeng, Ø, Eklund, K., & Nergård-Nilssen, T. (2019). Lexical and grammatical development in children at family risk of dyslexia from early childhood to school entry: A cross-lagged analysis. *Journal of Child Language*, 46(6), 1102-1126. doi:10.1017/S0305000919000333
- Clahsen, H., & Jessen, A. (2019). Do bilingual children lag behind? A study of morphological encoding using ERPs. *Journal of Child Language*, 1-25. doi:10.1017/S0305000919000321
- Elmlinger, S., Schwade, J., & Goldstein, M. (2019). The ecology of prelinguistic vocal learning: Parents simplify the structure of their speech in response to babbling. *Journal of Child Language*, 1-14. doi:10.1017/S0305000919000291
- Emberson, L., Loncar, N., Mazzei, C., Treves, I., & Goldberg, A. (2019). The blowfish effect: Children and adults use atypical exemplars to infer more narrow categories during word learning. *Journal of Child Language*, 1-17. doi:10.1017/S0305000919000266
- Everaert, M. B., Huybregts, M. A., Chomsky, N., Berwick, R. C., & Bolhuis, J. J., (2015). Structures, not strings: linguistics as part of the cognitive sciences. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 19(12), 729-743.
- Guberman, A. (2020). Introducing young children to expository texts through nonverbal graphic representations. *Cuaderno*, 98, 91-112. [https://fido.palermo.edu/servicios\\_dyc/publicacionesdc/archivos/791\\_libro.pdf](https://fido.palermo.edu/servicios_dyc/publicacionesdc/archivos/791_libro.pdf)
- Hartshorne, J. K., Tenenbaum, J. B., & Pinker, S. (2018). A critical period for second language acquisition: Evidence from 2/3 million English speakers. *Cognition*, 177, 263-277.
- Havy, M., & Waxman, S. R. (2016). Naming influences 9-month-olds' identification of discrete categories along a perceptual continuum. *Cognition*, 156, 41-51.
- Højen, A., Bleses, D., Jensen, P., & Dale, P. (2019). Patterns of educational

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achievement among groups of immigrant children in Denmark emerge already in preschool second-language and preliteracy skills. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 40(4), 853-875. doi:10.1017/S0142716418000814

Kuchirko, Y., Schatz, J., Fletcher, K., & Tamis-Lemonda, C. (2019). Do, say, learn: The functions of mothers' speech to infants. *Journal of Child Language*, 1-21. doi:10.1017/S0305000919000308

Liberman, Z., Woodward, A. L., Keysar, B., & Kinzler, K. D. (2017). Exposure to multiple languages enhances communication skills in infancy. *Developmental science*, 20(1).

Lustigman, L., & Clark, E. (2019). Exposure and feedback in language acquisition: Adult construals of children's early verb-form use in Hebrew. *Journal of Child Language*, 46(2), 241-264. doi:10.1017/S0305000918000405

Manwaring, S. S., Lauren, S., Mead, D. L., Chih-Ching, Y., Zhang, Y., & Audrey, T. (2019). The gesture-language association over time in toddlers with and without language delays. *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, 4. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2396941519845545

Moreno-Núñez, A., Rodríguez, C., & Miranda-Zapata, E. (2020). Getting away from the point: The emergence of ostensive gestures and their functions. *Journal of Child Language*, 47(3), 556-578. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0305000919000606

Moscatti, V., Rizzi, L., Vottari, I., Chilosi, A., Salvadorini, R., & Guasti, M. (2020). Morphosyntactic weaknesses in Developmental Language Disorder: The role of structure and agreement configurations. *Journal of Child Language*, 47(5), 909-944. doi:10.1017/S0305000919000709

Ninio, A. (2016). Learning transitive verbs from single-word verbs in the input by young children acquiring English. *Journal of Child Language*, 43(5), 1103 - 1130.

Pinker, S., & Jackendoff, R. (2005). The faculty of language: what's special about it? *Cognition*, 95, 201-236.

Purdy, J. D. Leonard, L. B., Weber-Fox, C., & Kaganovich, N. (2014). Decreased sensitivity to long-distance dependencies in children with a history of specific language impairment: electrophysiological evidence. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 57(3), 1040-1059.

Rowe, L., Jacobson, R., & Saylor, M. M. (2015). Differences in how monolingual and bilingual children learn second labels for familiar objects. *Journal of Child Language*, 42(6), 1219-1236.

Snyder, W. (2021). A parametric approach to the acquisition of syntax. *Journal of Child Language*, 1-26. doi:10.1017/S0305000921000465

Tal, S., & Arnon, I. (2018). SES effects on the use of variation sets in child-directed speech. *Journal of Child Language*, 45(6), 1423-1438. doi:10.1017/S0305000918000223

ter Schure, S.M.M., Junge, C.M.M., & Boersma, P.P.G. (2016). Semantics guide infants' vowel learning: Computational and experimental evidence. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 43, 44-57.

Veríssimo, J., Heyer, V., Jacob, G., & Clahsen, H. (2018). Selective effects of age of acquisition on morphological priming: evidence for a sensitive period. *Language Acquisition*, 25(3), 315-326.

Woolf, A. R., & Nicolopoulou, A. (2021). The Two-Lens Approach: A holistic

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theoretical framework for studying the form, content, and context of children's narratives. *Narrative Inquiry*, 31(1), 191-213.

Zadunaisky Ehrlich, S., & Blum-Kulka, S. (2010). Peer talk as a 'double opportunity space': The case of argumentative discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 21(2), 211-233.

#### Additional Reading Material:

בלום-קולקה, ש' וחמו, מ' (2010). ילדים מדברים: דפוסי תקשורת בשיח עמיתים. תל אביב: מטח.  
תובל, ח', וגוברמן, ע' (2013). טקסטים גרפיים: כלים לטיפול האוריינות בגיל הרך. תל אביב: מופ"ת.

Crain, S. (1991). Language acquisition in the absence of experience. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 14(4), 597-612.

Bornstein, M., Cote, L. R., et al. (2004). Cross-linguistic analysis of vocabulary in young children: Spanish, French, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, and American English. *Child Development*, 75(4), 1115-1139.

Chomsky, N. (1988) *Language and problems of knowledge*. Cambridge, Mass.: The M. I. T. Press.

Fodor, J., & Lepore, E. (1996). The red herring and the pet fish: why concepts still can't be prototypes. *Cognition*, 58, 253-270.

Friedman, N., & Novogrodsky, R. (2004). The acquisition of relative clause comprehension in Hebrew: a study of SLI and normal development. *Journal of Child Language*, 31, 661-681.

Dunham, P. J., Dunham, F., & Curwin, A. (1993). Joint-attentional states and lexical acquisition at 18 months. *Developmental Psychology*, 29, 827-831.

Gentner, D. (1981). Some interesting differences between verbs and nouns. *Cognition and Brain Theory*, 4, 161-178.

Hollich, G. J., Hirsh-Pasek, K., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2000). Breaking the language barrier: An emergentist coalition model for the origins of word learning. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 65(3) (Serial No. 262). Pp. 1-29.

Johnson, C. N., & Wellman, H. M. (1980). Children's developing understanding of mental verbs: Remember, know and guess. *Child Development*, 51, 1095-1102.

Leonard, L. B. (2000). Specific language impairment across languages. In: D. V. M. Bishop & L. B. Leonard (Eds.) *Speech and language impairments in children: Causes, characteristics, intervention and outcome* (Pp. 115-130). Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Radford, A. (1997). *Syntax: a minimalist introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of categorization. In: E. Rosch & B. B. Lloyd (Eds.) *Cognition and categorization*. Hillsdale, N. J.: Erlbaum.

#### Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 100 %

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*Assignments 0 %*  
*Reports 0 %*  
*Research project 0 %*  
*Quizzes 0 %*  
*Other 0 %*

*Additional information:*  
*None*