

# Second Language Acquisition



Type of course: BA.AA.SW08 (*Aufbaumodul Linguistics*)  
Time: Wed. 8-10 a.m. (08:15 - 09:45)  
Venue: Carl-Zeiss-Str. 3, SR 221  
Workload: **5 ECTS**

## Course description

In this term, the module "Language Acquisition" will be concerned with the processes of acquiring a language in addition to one's native tongue. Those processes, while being extremely diverse, are collectively referred to as second language acquisition (SLA). The course aims to provide an overview of SLA research from the perspective of linguistics, i.e. it will deal with linguistic and psycholinguistic questions relating to second language acquisition. Even though SLA research tells us important lessons about how languages are learned and which sort of instruction is potentially conducive, it is not a didactic field itself. For future teachers, therefore, the course intends to provide the linguistic underpinning, or background, against which certain methodological and didactic decisions are to be made later on in their careers. For both B.A. and JM students, the course offers an opportunity to become familiar with principles and methods of linguistic research, as we will be practising how to find, read and evaluate original research on the topic.

## Requirements and marking system

Regular attendance and active class participation (cf. below)

Term paper (12-15 pages, to be submitted on 30 September 2013 at the latest)

In keeping with the *Modulkatalog*, the final mark for the course will be based on the term paper only. According to our learning agreement (cf. Slides Session 1), a visible commitment to the course (thorough, continual preparation, active participation/regular contributions, etc.) will be a prerequisite for being admitted to the term paper.

## Weekly preparation

An essential part (and requirement) of the course is your in-depth preparation of each session at home. This usually comes in the form of **readings** (excerpts from textbooks, handbook or journal articles, handouts, etc.) and accompanying **homework**.

*A general note on the readings:* As an Aufbaumodul is supposed to provide a chance to practise the in-depth reading, analysis and discussion of academic texts, the amount of time that you'll probably need to put into the weekly preparation of each session is not to be underestimated! Please remember that the course is worth 5 ECTS (which amounts to a sum total of 150 hours of work).

## The course management system

The course management system of our department, **WORDWISE**, will be the online platform of this class. It is there that you download the weekly readings, follow-up handouts and materials, etc. Important information on the organisation of the course (e.g. announcements etc.) will also be distributed via **WORDWISE** (to your email address). Therefore, please enrol into this course on **WORDWISE** (the password was announced in class) and stay updated.

## Preliminary course programme (syllabus)

DATE	TOPIC	PREPARATORY READING (obligatory!)
1	10.04.13 <i>Goals and organisation of the course. Differences between first and second language acquisition.</i>	
	<b>Introduction to SLA</b>	
2	17.04.13 <i>Research interests, key issues and major theoretical positions in SLA.</i>	Larsen-Freeman and Long 1994: 1-4 and Ellis 1997: 3-14
3	24.04.13 <i>How can we inquire into processes of language acquisition? Overview of research methods and principles in SLA.</i>	Gass and Selinker 2008: ch.3 (selected passages)
	01.05.13 <i>Holiday.</i>	
4	08.05.13 <i>Research methods continued. Bibliographical survey (handbooks, textbooks, journals), tools for literature research. Preview of the term paper.</i>	Guidelines to Writing Papers in Linguistics (department-internal PDF)
	<b>Linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of SLA</b>	
5	15.05.13 <i>Cross-linguistic influence: The contrastive programme,</i>	Gass and Selinker 2008: 89-110 and
6	22.05.13 <i>error analysis, learner language/interlanguage.</i>	136-151
7	29.05.13 <i>Selectivity of transfer and 'psychotypology'. Analysis of learner language and of various dimensions of contrast.</i>	
8	05.06.13 <i>Sequences and processes in interlanguage.</i>	Ortega 2009 (handbook chapter)
9	12.06.13 <i>Investigating L2 knowledge: What makes native-speaker fluency and idiomaticity ('selection')? The role of item-based learning and formulaicity in SLA.</i>	Aguado 2002 and Nation 2002: ch.9 (selected passages)
10	19.06.13 <i>Formulaic sequences in language learning and teaching: Dissecting an empirical study.</i>	Boers et al. 2006
	<b>Extralinguistic aspects of SLA</b>	
11	26.06.13 <i>An overview of extralinguistic, learner-related variables in SLA: aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, age.</i>	Lightbown and Spada 2006: ch.3
12	03.07.13 <i>Age effects in SLA: Dissecting an empirical study against the CPH. Understanding controversial scientific debates.</i>	Nikolov 2000 (or TBA) [post-seminar reading suggestion: Dörnyei 2009 (excerpt on age effects)]
	<b>Conclusion and outlook</b>	
13	10.07.13 <i>Summary of SLA components. Lessons for language teaching. Outlook on the term paper. Evaluation of the course.</i>	Ellis 2005