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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

English 232: Language Acquisition
09:30 – 10:45 TR
Room 337 Fisk Hall
Fall 2021-2022

Professor Kassim Shaaban
Office: Room 205 Fisk Hall
Office Hours: W 10:30 -12:30
or by Appointment

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce English language students to the field of first and second language acquisition/learning. The course addresses such issues as stages of acquisition, order of acquisition, and theories of language learning. The practicum part of this course involves collecting and analyzing data from first and second language learners. Topics covered in the course include formal cognitive mechanisms relevant to knowledge and use of language, with emphasis on factors that impact the rate and efficiency of acquiring language; role of Universal Grammar in acquisition; the modular view of the mind and its consequences for L1 and L2 language acquisition.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Explain the processes involved in language acquisition/learning,
2. Identify the stages in language acquisition/learning.
3. Explain with examples how children acquire/ learn and develop until they reach communicative competence in the language's phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, words and word-meaning, and pragmatics.
4. Identify and explain the factors that affect the rate and efficiency of language acquisition/learning.
5. Explain the theories and approaches to first language acquisition and second language Learning.

Required Textbook

Gass, S., Behney, J., & Plonsky, L. (2020). Second language acquisition: An introductory course. UK: Routledge.

Recommended Textbooks

Foster-Cohen, S. H. (1999). An introduction to child language development. London: Longman.

Peccei, J. S. (2006). Child language: A resource book for students. UK: Routledge.

Course Policies

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Participation in this course can be satisfied by contributing to the discussion in class and by asking significant questions. You are also encouraged to communicate with me by e-mail/webex and stop by my office if you want to discuss issues related to the course readings/assignments, and if the health regulations allow that.

Accessibility of Learning Experiences to All

‘AUB strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (such as ADHD, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please do not hesitate to inform the Accessible Education Office. In order to ensure that you receive the support you need and to facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you must register with the Accessible Education Office (AEO) as soon as possible: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; [+961-1-350000](tel:+961-1-350000), x3246; West Hall, 314’.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to uphold AUB’s Code of Student Conduct. For more information, please refer to the following AUB link: <http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf>, in particular section 1.1, which concerns academic misconduct including cheating, plagiarism, in-class disruption, and dishonesty. Please be aware that misconduct is vigorously prosecuted and that AUB has a zero tolerance policy. Course policy is that credible evidence of cheating will result in course failure.

Non-Discrimination

AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University’s non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix. To report an incident, contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator Trudi Hodges at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb. An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com

Evaluation of Students' Performance

Homework, Project, Quizzes, and Classroom

Exercises and Activities	20%
Active Participation	05%
Two Tests	45%
Final Examination	30%

Course Schedule

UNIT 1

Overview of the Course

Introductory Remarks

- Psycholinguistics
- Structure, functions, and symbolism of Language
- Language acquisition and language learning

UNIT 2

Language and the Brain

- Structure of human brain
- Brain localization
- Lateralization
- Brain plasticity
- Critical period

UNIT 3

The Modular Mind

- Dissociation of language and cognition
- Aphasia
- Dyslexia
- Split brain
- Genetic basis of language

UNIT 4

First Language Acquisition

- Approaches to first language acquisition
- Phonological, and morphological development
- Syntactic and semantic development
- Discourse and literacy development
- Bilingualism **TEST I**

UNIT 5

Analysis of Child Language

- Child directed speech
- Acquiring sounds, meaning, words, and sentences
- Acquiring communicative competence

UNIT 6

Studies in Language Acquisition

- Perspectives on language acquisition
- Language and socialization
- Development of grammar
- Codeswitching in bilingual children

UNIT 7

Data Collection and Analysis

- Elicitation techniques
 - Imitation
 - Judgments
 - Language games
 - Discourse completion
- Narrative Inquiry

UNIT 8

Second Language Learning

- Comparison with first language acquisition
 - Order of morphemes
 - Factors affecting language acquisition/learning
 - Interference and transfer
 - Avoidance
 - Rate of learning
 - Errors
- Social context of language learning
 - Mediation
 - Zone of proximal development **TEST II**

UNIT 9

Approaches to Second Language Learning

- Universal grammar (UG) hypothesis
 - Access to UG
 - UG principles and parameters
- Semantics-syntax interface hypothesis
- Phonology markedness differential hypothesis
- Functional approaches
- Discourse hypothesis

UNIT 10

Krashen's Monitor Model of Language Learning

- Acquisition vs. learning hypothesis
- Natural Order hypothesis
- Monitor hypothesis
- Comprehensible input hypothesis
- Affective filter hypothesis

UNIT 11

Individual Differences in Language Acquisition/Learning

- Age-related
- Aptitude
- Motivation and demotivation
- Anxiety
- Personality: Extrovert – introvert
- Learning styles and strategies

UNIT 12

Issues in Second Language Learning

- Input and input manipulation
- Interaction and Classroom language
- Feedback
- Accuracy and fluency **FINAL EXAM**

REFERENCES

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