UAB
Universitat Autònoma
de Barcelona

Issues and Challenges in Second/Foreign Language Acquisition

Code: 45369
ECTS Credits: 5

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
English Studies: Linguistic, Literary and Sociocultural Perspectives	OP	1

Contact

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Teachers

Celia Gorba Masip

Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this
document.

Prerequisites

- A C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) is required.
Knowledge of oral and written academic English is also requires.

- Knowledge of basic linguistic concepts is required.

Objectives and Contextualisation

This subject has as a main objective to train students onto the acquisition of a foreign language or second
language (L2), in immersion or instruction contexts. The acquisition of the different components of the
grammar will be analysed (structure of words and sentences, structure of sounds and the lexicon). The main
theories of language acquisition will be presented.

Learning Outcomes

1. CA20 (Competence) Formulate research proposals on the acquisition of English applied to the needs
   and challenges in current society.
2. CA21 (Competence) Design studies and experiments that are in line with the methodologies used in the
   field of the acquisition of phonology, lexical access, syntax, and morphology in second languages.

3. CA22 (Competence) Formulate research proposals to correct gender inequalities in English as a foreign language teaching and learning environments.
4. KA22 (Knowledge) Describe the main theories and most influential models in the field of the acquisition of second or foreign languages.
5. KA23 (Knowledge) Relate the factors, processes, and phenomena characteristic of the acquisition of English as a second language to theoretical approaches in this field.
6. KA24 (Knowledge) Define the epistemological, methodological, and analytical principles of the various quantitative and qualitative approaches used in research related to the acquisition of English as a second language
7. SA30 (Skill) Correctly use digital techniques and tools for the collection and codification of phonological, lexical, syntactic, and morphological acquisition data.
8. SA31 (Skill) Examine the different individual factors that impact the acquisition of English as a second language.
9. SA32 (Skill) Apply methodological knowledge and statistical analysis tools as well as tools for the generation and treatment of research data to research into second language acquisition.

Content

First part of the course (Montse Capdevila)

1. Introduction to second/foreign Language Acquisition
2. Theories of L2 acquisition of morphology, syntax and the lexicon
3. Theories of third Language acquisition
4. Methods of data collection
5. Individual differences in the acquisition of a Language

Second part of the course (Celia Gorba)

1. Review of basic notions of phonetics and phonology
2. Main notions in empirical research in phonetics and phonology
3. Theories and models of L2 acquisition
4. Speech perception
5. Learner factors

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Classes pràctiques	20	0.8	
Classes teòriques	30	1.2	
Type: Supervised			
Assignments	27.3	1.09	
Lectures i discussió	20	0.8	
Type: Autonomous			
Exercicis a casa, lectures i estudi personal	20	0.8	

Theoretical and practical classes, readings and discussion, homework and class exercises, comments on exercises and papers, in-class presentation, data collection.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Assignment 1	30	1.85	0.07	CA20, CA21
Assignment 2	30	1.8	0.07	CA20, CA21, CA22, KA22, KA23, KA24, SA30, SA31, SA32
In-class practice	10	0.85	0.03	CA20, CA21, CA22, KA22, KA23, SA32
Oral presentation 1	15	1.6	0.06	CA21, KA22, SA32
Oral presentation 2	15	1.6	0.06	CA20, CA21, CA22, KA22, KA23, KA24, SA30, SA31, SA32

Continuous assessment

Assignment 1 - On a topic related to sessions 1 to 11 (30%)

Assignment 2 - On a topic related to sesions 12 a 21 (30%)

Presentació oral 1 - On assignment 1 (15%)

Presentació oral 2 - On assignment 2 (15%)

Practice (10%)

The student will get the mark "No avaluable" if she/he has not handed in 40% of the evaluation activities.

Single Assessment

Handing in of the 2 assignments on a date provided at the beginning of the course (Assignment 1, 30%; Assignment 2, 30%) and the respective oral presentations (15% i 15%) and practical exercises (10%).

The student will get the mark "No avaluable" if she/he has not handed in 40% of the evaluation activities.

Procedure for the review of marks

At the moment of the making each evaluation activity, the professor will inform students about the procedure and the revision date of qualifications.

Reassessment (for both types of evaluation)

The reassessment of this subject will be done item by item under the following conditions:

- Students will need to have presented a minimum of 2/3 of the evaluation items

- Items with a mark inferior to 4 will be reassessed. Those items with a 4 or a mark higher than 4 will average with the rest of items

- The maximum mark of reassessed items is 5.

IMPORTANT: PLAGIARISING consists of copying text from unacknowledged sources -whether this is part of a sentence or a whole text- with the intention of passing it off as the student's own production. It includes cutting and pasting from internet sources, presented unmodified in the student's own text. Plagiarising is a SERIOUS OFFENCE. Students must respect authors' intellectual property, always identifying the sources they may use; they must also be responsible for the originality and authenticity of their own texts.

This subject entirely prohibits the use of AI technologies in all of its activities. Any submitted work that contains content generated using AI will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade will be awarded a zero, without the possibility of reassessment. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject. Irregularities refer, for instance, to copying in an exam, copying from sources without indicating authorship, or a misuse of AI such as presenting work as original that has been generated by an AI tool or programme. These evaluation activities will not be re-assessed.

Important note for exchange students (Erasmus, etc.) on exams and other tests. Erasmus students who request to bring forward an exam or any other type of assessment activity must present the teacher with an official document from their home university justifying their request.

Bibliography

- General readings on the acquisition of an L2 and the acquisition of the L2 morphology, syntax and the Lexicon

Archibald, John (ed) (2000) *Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Cattel, Ray. (2000) *Children's Language: Consensus and Controversy*, London: Cassell.

Corder, Pit. (1967) *The Significance of Learner's Errors*. De Gruyter Mouton.

Crain, Stephen. & Diane Lillo-Martin (1999) *An Introduction to Linguistic Theory and Language Acquistion*, Oxford: Backwell.

Ellis, Rod. (2004) *Individual Differences in Second Language Learning.*The Handbook of Applied Linguistics.

Guasti, Maria Teresa (2002) *Language Acquisition. The Growth of Grammar*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Hawkins, Roger (ed) (2001) *Second Language Syntax. A Generative Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Radford, Andrew (2004) *Minimalist Syntax. Exploring the Structure of English*, Cambridge, C.U.P

Slabakova, Roumyana (2016) *Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford: O.U.P.

White, Lydia (2003) *Second language acquisition and Universal Grammar*. (2nd edition) Cambridge: CUP.

-General readings on general English phonetics and phonology and speech analysis

Ladefoged, Peter. 1993. A Course in Phonetics. Boston, MA: Thomson Wadsworth. -Chapter 8. Acoustic phonetics.

Spencer, Andrew. (1996). Phonology. Oxford: Blackwell. -Chapter 1. Preliminaries to Phonology

-Specialized articles on the acquisition of phonetics and phonology

Bohn, Ocke-Schwen. 2002. On phonetic similarity. In P. Burmeister, T. Piske and A. Rohde (Eds.). *An Integrated View of Language Development: Papers in Honor of Henning Wode*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, pp.191-216.

Cebrian, Juli. 2006. Experience and the use of non-native duration in L2 vowel categorization. *Journal of Phonetics* 34, 372-387.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Donna Brinton & Janet Goodwin. 1996. *Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 & 2.

Flege, James Emil. 1987. The production of new and similar phones in a foreign language: Evidence for the effect of equivalence classification. *Journal of Phonetics, 15*, 47-65.

Ju, Min & Paul Luce, P. A. 2004. Falling on sensitive ears: Constraints on bilingual lexical activation. *Psychological Science, 15,* 314-318.

Leather, Jonathan. 1999. Second language speech research: an introduction. In J. Leather (ed.), *Phonological Issues in Language Learning*. Oxfod: Basil Blackwell, pp. 1-58.

Logan, John S. & John S. Pruitt. 1995. Methodological issues in training listeners to perceive non-native sounds. In W. Strange (Ed.). *Speech perception and Linguistic Experience: Theoretical and Methodological Issues*. Timonium, MD: York Press, pp. 351-378.

Marian, Viorica & Marian Spivey. 2003. Competing activation in bilingual language processing. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 6, 97-115.

Munro, Murray J. & Ocke-Schwen Bohn. 2007. The study of second language speech. In Bohn, O-S. & M. J. Munro (eds.). *Language Experience in Second Language Speech Learning. In honor of James Emil Flege* (pp.3-11). Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Munro, Murray J. & Tracey Derwing. 1999. Foreign accent, comprehensibility, and intelligibility in the speech of second language learners. *Language Learning 45*:1, pp. 73-97.

Munro, Murray J. & Tracey Derwing. 2020. Foreign accent, comprehensibility and intelligibility, redux. Journal of Second Language Pronunciation, Volume 6, Issue 3, Nov 2020, p. 283 - 309.

Piske, Thorsten, Ian R.A. MacKay & James Emil Flege. 2001. Factors affecting degree of foreign accent in an L2: a review. *Journal of Phonetics*, 29, 191-215.

Trofimovich, Pavel, & Paul John, 2011. When three equals tree: Examining the nature of phonological entries in L2 lexicons of Quebec speakers of English. In P. Trofimovich & K. McDonough (Eds.), Applying priming methods to L2 learning, teaching and research: Insights from psycholinguistics. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 105-129.

Wayland, Ratree (Ed.). 2021. *Second language speech learning: Theoretical and empirical progress*. Cambridge University Press.

Weber, Andrea, & Cutler, Anne. 2004. Lexical competition in non-native spoken-word recognition. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 50(1), 1-25.

See also: http://liceu.uab.es/~joaquim/applied_linguistics/L2_phonetics/Fonetica_L2_Bib.html

Software

It does not apply.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(TEm) Theory (master)	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed