

# Language Acquisition (LING 222)

Term 1

Instructor: Claire Moore-Cantwell

MW 11:00 - 12:00  
MacLeod 228

## General Info

INSTRUCTOR: Claire Moore-Cantwell

EMAIL: [claire.moore-cantwell@ubc.ca](mailto:claire.moore-cantwell@ubc.ca)

OFFICE HOURS: MW 12:30-1:30 Totem Field Studios rm. 228

TA: Wendy Amoako

SECTIONS: F 9:00-10:00 and 10:00-11:00

EMAIL: [wendy.amoako@ubc.ca](mailto:wendy.amoako@ubc.ca)

OFFICE HOURS: T 3:00-4:00 Brock Hall Annex rm 2354

TA: Mikayla Blumenthal

SECTIONS: F 11:00-12:00 and 12:00-1:00

EMAIL: [Mikayla.blumenthal@ubc.ca](mailto:Mikayla.blumenthal@ubc.ca)

OFFICE HOURS: M 10:00-11:00 Brock Hall Annex rm 2354

The course runs 5 September-28 November. Finals run 5-20 December.

**Course website:** There is a Canvas website for this course, which you can access through your student account. This website will contain readings, lecture notes, and assignment instructions. Additionally, you will submit most of your assignments through the Canvas course.

**Textbook:** Hoff, Erika. (2014) *Language Development*, 5th edition. Belmont, CA Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. \$197 at the UBC bookstore, \$98 on Amazon, and [from the publisher](#): \$185 for Hardcover, or \$110 to rent an e-book until February.

## Description

In this course we will discuss the acquisition of a first language by infants and children. We will discuss how children learn sound system of the language, the words of the language, the structure of sentences and words in the language, and how they learn to use the language

in conversation and to accomplish tasks. We will discuss what abilities develop when, as well as theories of language acquisition, including discussion of whether other animals can acquire language, the role of age in acquiring a first language, and how children learn multiple languages at once. We will not cover atypical development in this course.

In this course you will learn the basics of language acquisition theories and findings, and you will learn how to reason critically about evidence and methodologies in language acquisition research.

There are no prerequisites for this course, but some background in linguistics is desirable.

## Requirements

- Exams: 45%

There will be two exams in this course, one Midterm worth 20% of your final grade, and one Final worth 25% of your final grade. The Midterm will be in class on **Monday, 22 October**. The date and time of the Final will be determined mid-October. Finals run between 5 December and 20 December. Make-up exams will be given at the instructor's discretion (except in cases where required by university policy). If you will miss either exam date and will require a make-up exam, please contact me at least **two weeks** in advance to make arrangements.

- Homeworks: 25%

There will be a total of **6 Homeworks** assigned throughout the course, as well as **2 Challenge Homeworks**. Challenge Homeworks are optional, and are intended to be much more difficult than regular homeworks. You can replace any one grade on Homeworks 1-3 with your grade on Challenge Homework 1, and you can replace any one grade on Homeworks 4-6 with your grade on Challenge Homework 2. Your final grade will be computed based on the best 5 homework grades you hand in. So, if you just complete the 6 regular Homeworks, your worst grade will be dropped. If you complete one or both of the Challenge Homeworks and use that grade to replace a grade from an eligible homework, that new grade (or grades) will stand in for the old grade(s), and the best 5 out of the new 6 grades will be used for calculating your final grade. Homeworks should be turned in via Canvas, and **will only be accepted in PDF format**. Most word-processing programs, like Word, have the ability to export a document as a PDF. Sometimes the option is under the Print menu, sometimes under Save. If you have trouble converting your document this way, try using an online file converter (there are so many I cannot make a recommendation - just Google 'online file converter PDF' or something similar).

**IMPORTANT:** Homeworks and Challenge Homeworks are due via Canvas by 5:00pm on the dates listed in the schedule below. **NO late homework will be accepted in this course for any reason.**

- Reading: 15%

Reading original research in Language Acquisition is a big part of this course. You will read a total of four articles throughout the course, and turn in write-ups for three of them. The first article you read you will discuss in sections, and that discussion will be worth **5%** of your final grade. The remaining three articles you will write short summaries of (less than one page). Your worst grade on these will be dropped, and the final two write-ups will together count for **10%** of your final grade.

- Quizzes: 10%

You will take a short quiz each week in your discussion section, on Friday. These quizzes will be under 10 minutes, and will be based on material from the previous week's readings and lectures. Your best 10 quiz grades, out of 13, will be used to calculate your final grade.

- Participation/Exit questions: 3%

During each lecture I will ask the class a very short prompt. This might be a review question, might ask you to think critically about some aspect of the lecture, or might ask you to come up with your own question. Write down your answer on a piece of paper and hand it in as you leave each lecture. This should take no more than 3 minutes, and you **will not be graded on content**, only on whether or not you handed in an answer.

These questions are intended to help you retain lecture content better, and also to give me a sense of what material is more difficult or easier for the class, to help me tailor my lectures better to your needs. Finally, the questions also serve as a measure of class attendance.

- Linguistics Outside the Classroom (LOC): 2%

Participation in Linguistics Outside the Classroom (LOC) is required for this course. This is a means of increasing your involvement in learning about linguistics outside of regular classroom instruction. There are two ways of satisfying this requirement.

(1) One way is by participating in 2 points worth of experiments being run by researchers in the Department of Linguistics. To sign up for experiments, please visit <https://ubclinguistics.sona-systems.com> to register and participate. Experiments typically take anywhere from 15 minutes to 1 hour and offer the opportunity to contribute to and learn about linguistics research first hand. Your participation in research is voluntary.

(2) A second way of completing this requirement is by attending Linguistics research seminars or colloquia and writing a one-paragraph summary of each talk, which you turn into your instructor \*within a week of attending\*. You can browse the talk series here: <http://www.linguistics.ubc.ca/events>. (You can also satisfy this requirement by participating in the appropriate (for your course) combination of experiments and talks.) The credits associated with experiments vary according to their duration, and attending a talk and writing a summary constitutes two LOC points.<sup>1</sup>

For more information about the LOC system, see <https://linguistics.ubc.ca/undergrad/current-students/linguistics-outside-the-classroom-loc/>

## Academic honesty

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the Presidents Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

The UBC Faculty of Arts' policies on academic honesty can be found online at <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,286,0,0>. I encourage all students to visit this website and familiarize themselves with the university's policies regarding academic honesty. Nothing in this syllabus is intended to contradict the university's policies, and material provided here is simply for your convenience. A very good guide for avoiding problems can also be found at <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/>.

UBC's policy on Academic Freedom can be found at <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0>, and its commitment that students be able to engage in their studies free from harassment and discrimination can be found at <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,87,0>

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<sup>1</sup>This is the standard text for the LOC program. It turns out the combination option is not appropriate for Ling 222 because doing the talk option fulfills your credit requirement by itself. Doing both the talk and experiments will result in you having more credits than you need. You are of course welcome to participate in extra experiments or attend talks because you are interested, but you can only use a maximum of 2 LOC credits for the course.

## Accommodations

If you have a disability or ongoing medical condition, and require accommodations for this course, you will need to provide an Academic Accommodation Letter. If you need more information or support, please contact the Centre for Accessibility:

Website: <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>  
Phone: +1 604 822 5844  
Email: [accessibility@ubc.ca](mailto:accessibility@ubc.ca)  
Physical Location: Brock Hall, room 1203

## Other Academic Concessions

Other concessions can be made in this course in order to fully support you as a student and as a person. **Please let me know as soon as possible** if you need to miss class or assignments because of reasons such as physical illness or injury, mental health concerns, religious observance, obligations to UBC or the Canadian government, work to support yourself or a family member, or caretaking responsibilities. For foreseeable conflicts, such as religious observance, you must notify me in advance, preferably at least one week in advance. For unforeseeable conflicts, like illness, injury, mental health concerns, or sudden changes in job/caretaking schedule, let me know as soon as possible. **For all conflicts you must notify me by email, even if you also mention it to me in person!**

The university's full policy on academic concessions can be found here <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>. You may find this document useful for specific policies on things like religious observances, as well as for information about what to do in case of ongoing concerns like long-term illness or serious injury that might impact your academic life over several weeks or months.

## Sexual misconduct

UBC does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or any other form of sexual misconduct. You can review the full policy at [https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2017/05/policy131\\_final.pdf](https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2017/05/policy131_final.pdf).

If you or anyone you know has been the victim of sexual assault, or if you would like to know more about resources for preventing sexual violence, please visit <https://svpro.ubc.ca/>

## Communication and Office Hours

I encourage all of you to drop by my office hours for any course-related reason. This is time I have set aside to discuss your questions about material covered in class or related material, one-on-one or in a small group. You can also use this time to get additional review of course

material, discuss your progress in the course, or to raise any concerns you have about any aspect of the course. I am available between 12:30-1:30 Mondays and Wednesdays, in Totem Field Studios, room 228. You do not need an appointment to come by during this time. If you want to talk to me at a different time, email me to make an appointment. I will be on campus Mondays and Wednesdays, and may be available other days to meet over Skype or other videoconferencing system.

The TA's for this course will also hold office hours, in which they can answer questions about course content and some questions about grades. You may find it particularly useful to ask the TA's questions about parts of lectures you found confusing - sometimes hearing a concept from a different person with a different way of explaining things can be very helpful.

**Email:** Email is also a good way to communicate with me, as well as with the TA's, but we will generally not answer emails outside of business hours (Monday-Friday, 9-5), except in case of emergency. Please ensure that your email registered to Canvas is up-to-date and that you check it regularly as I will periodically send email announcements this way. You are responsible for all communication sent via Canvas, so make sure you get them!

It's not always easy to figure out how to actually write an email to a professor, especially if you are not sure how they'll respond to your request or question. A straightforward approach is usually best, and will hopefully save you time and energy. I've included a few sample emails on Canvas to guide you. I prefer to be addressed by my first name (Claire) in emails, but if you want to be more formal please address me as Dr. Moore-Cantwell or Dr. Claire Moore-Cantwell, or even Dr. Claire. Please don't use Miss, Ms., or Mrs.

## Course Outline

Readings should be completed **before** the class date listed.

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
1	Wed	5 Sept.	Introduction		
	Fri	7 Sept.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 1		
2	Mon	10 Sept.	Methodologies for studying Language Acquisition	Hoff, Chapter 1	
	Wed	12 Sept.	Early Language Perception	Hoff, Chapter 3 pp. 80-87	
	Fri	14 Sept.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 2		<b>Homework 1</b> 5:00pm via Canvas

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
3	Mon	17 Sept.	Phonological Devel. I	Hoff, Chapter 4	
	Wed	19 Sept.	Phonological Devel. II		
	Fri	21 Sept.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 3, Discussion of reading	Werker and Tees	<b>Be prepared to discuss Werker and Tees (1984)</b>
4	Mon	24 Sept.	Phonological Devel. III		
	Wed	26 Sept.	Learning Words I	Hoff, Chapter 5	
	Fri	28 Sept.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 4		<b>Homework 2</b> 5:00pm via Canvas
5	Mon	1 Oct.	Learning Words II		
	Wed	3 Oct.	Learning Words III		
	Fri	5 Oct.	<b>NO SECTIONS THIS WEEK</b>	Choi and Gopnik	<b>Choi and Gopnik (1995) Summary</b> 9:00am via Canvas
6	Mon	8 Oct.	<b>NO CLASS</b> Thanksgiving		
	Wed	10 Oct.	Learning Words IV		
	Fri	12 Oct.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 6		<b>Homework 3</b> 5:00pm via Canvas
7	Mon	15 Oct.	Learning Words V		
	Wed	17 Oct.	Early Sentences		
	Fri	19 Oct.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 7		
8	Mon	22 Oct.	<b>MIDTERM</b>		
	Wed	24 Oct.	Syntactic Development	Hoff, Chapter 6	
	Fri	26 Oct.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 8		<b>Challenge Homework 1</b> 5:00pm via Canvas (optional)
9	Mon	29 Oct.	Morphological Devel. I		
	Wed	31 Oct.	Morphological Devel. II		
	Fri	2 Nov.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 9		<b>Homework 4</b> 5:00pm via Canvas
10	Mon	5 Nov.	Pragmatics & Discourse I	Hoff, Chapter 7	
	Wed	7 Nov.	Pragmatics & Discourse II		
	Fri	9 Nov.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 10	Andersen et al.	<b>Andersen et al. (1999) Summary</b> 9:00am via Canvas

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
11	Mon	12 Nov.	<b>NO CLASS</b> Remembrance Day		
	Wed	14 Nov.	Input & Learning I	Hoff, Chapter 3, pp 97-107	
	Fri	16 Nov.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 11		<b>Homework 5</b> 5:00pm via Canvas
12	Mon	19 Nov.	Input & Learning II	Hoff, Chapter 2, pp 31-34	
	Wed	21 Nov.	Input & Learning III		
	Fri	23 Nov.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 12	Goldin-Meadow and Feldman	<b>Goldin-Meadow and Feldman (1977) Summary</b> 9:00am via Canvas
13	Mon	26 Nov.	Multilingualism I	Hoff, Chapter 9	
	Wed	28 Nov.	Multilingualism II	Hoff, Chapter 2, pp. 47-57	
	Fri	30 Nov.	<b>Sections:</b> QUIZ 13		<b>Homework 6</b> 5:00pm via Canvas
	Fri	7 Dec.			<b>Challenge Homework 1</b> 5:00pm via Canvas (optional)

## References

- Elaine S. Andersen, Maquela Brizuela, Beatrice DuPuy, and Laura Gonnerman. Cross-linguistic evidence for the early acquisition of discourse markers as register variables. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31:1339–1351, 1999.
- Soonja Choi and Alison Gopnik. Early acquisition of verbs in Korean: a cross-linguistic study. *Journal of Child Language*, 22(3):497–529, 1995.
- Susan Goldin-Meadow and Heidi Feldman. The development of language-like communication without a language model. *Science*, 197(4301):401–403, 1977.
- Janet F. Werker and Richard C. Tees. Cross-language speech perception: evidence for perceptual reorganization during the first year of life. *Infant behavior and development*, 7: 49–63, 1984.