“Achievements of Modern Linguistics in the Context of SLA”

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION  Contemporary Topics in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a required component of the HSE Master’s degree in Applied Linguistics. The course provides an introduction to second language acquisition research by providing students with a history of the development of the field and a foundation in the basic themes, concepts, and current research trends. Second language acquisition and bilingualism will be directly compared and contrasted to first language acquisition in order to clarify why research aims differ between the two fields. The course builds upon knowledge gained in Modules 1 & 2 about formal and functional linguistic theory and provides a theoretical basis for practical teaching approaches. Students will utilize their own language learning experiences to further their knowledge of second/foreign language theory and research, including the necessary skills and conditions for successful second and foreign language learning.

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Course objectives include: 1) familiarization of students with the history and current developments in the field of second language acquisition; 2) learning about first and second language acquisition, bilingualism, and multilingualism; 3) learning about biological, social, and environmental factors involved in language acquisition; 4) familiarization with subfields in second language acquisition by acquisition type and phenomenon type.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students will possess the following knowledge and skills upon completion of the course: 1) the ability to identify the different stages of second language acquisition and the competencies exhibited in first and second language acquisition; 2) an understanding of the primary theories to explain second language acquisition; 3) the ability to identify linguistic phenomena associated with second language acquisition, bilingualism, and multilingualism, and differences in their manifestation between groups; 4) the ability to specify topics of research in second language acquisition and appropriate research hypotheses.

4. COURSE PLAN
Topic 1: INTRODUCTION. WHAT IS SLA? HOW DOES SLA DIFFER FROM FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION?
(lecture): Introduction  Readings (79 pp.):
• Introduction. Understanding Second Language Acquisition, Ortega (1-7)
• Central Themes. Language Development and Age, Herschensohn, (3-4)
• Neurolinguistics Considerations. Individual Differences and Universals in Language Learning Aptitude, Diller (3-18)
• Language learning in early childhood. How Languages are Learned, Lightbrown & Spada (5-34)
• Second language learning. How Languages are Learned, Lightbrown & Spada (34-73)

( seminar): Comparing Terms and Concepts in L1 and L2 Acquisition  Readings (119 pp.):
• Central Themes. Language Development and Age, Herschensohn (3-4)
• Right on time: process and schedule of first language acquisition. *Language Development and Age*, Herschensohn (27-63)
• All in good time: a window of opportunity for first language acquisition. *Language Development and Age*, Herschensohn (65-98)
• Behind time: process and schedule of second language acquisition. *Language Development and Age*, Herschensohn (100-133)

**Topic 2: SLA in perspective. How did we reach today’s understanding of the field?**

Day 1 (lecture): Theoretical perspectives

Readings (78 pp.):
• Theoretical frameworks. *Language Development and Age*, Herschensohn, (21-25)
• Explaining L2 learning. *How Languages are Learned*, Lightbrown & Spada (103-121)
• Development of learner language. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (110143)

(seminar): Individual and Environment

Readings (102 pp.):
• The linguistic environment. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (55-80)
• Foreign language aptitude. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (145-166)
• Social dimensions of L2 learning. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (216253)
• Biding time: further considerations of age and acquisition. *Language Development and Age*, Herschensohn, (172-209)

**Topic 3: Motivation, the Acculturation Model, and the Bio-Cultural Model.**

(lecture): Individual differences and Motivation

Readings (69 pp.):
• Individual differences in L2 learning. *How Languages are Learned*, Lightbrown & Spada (75100)
• Affect & individual differences. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (192-211)
• Motivation. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (168-190)

(seminar): Models of language acquisition

Readings (92 pp.):
• Research on the acculturation model for second language acquisition, Schumann (379-392)
• The theory. *The Neurobiology of Affect in Language*, Schumann (1-36)
• Implication. *The Neurobiology of Affect in Language*, Schumann (173-189)
• Cognition. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (82-108)

**Topic 4: Bilingualism and Multilingualism.**

(lecture): Bilingualism – lexicon, phonetics, and word order

Readings (65 pp.):
• Shifting perspectives on bilingualism. *Bilingualism Across the Lifespan*, Genesee (9-17)
• Language contact in early bilinguals. *Individual Differences and Universals in Language Learning Aptitude*, Deuchar & Vihman, (267-278)
• Cross-linguistic influence in word order patterns of Russian heritage speakers in German. *Transfer Effects in Multilingual Development*, Brehmer & Usanova (161-185)
• (seminar): Multilingualism – lexicon, prosody, and syntax Readings (86 pp.):
• Crosslinguistic influences. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Ortega (31-54)
• Lexical cross-linguistic influence in third language development. *Transfer Effects in Multilingual Development*, Bardel (111-125)
• Assessing foreign language speech rhythm in multilingual learners. *Transfer Effects in Multilingual Development*, Gabriel, Stahnke, & Thulke (191-215)
• The role of the second language in third language acquisition: the case of Germanic syntax, Bardel & Falk (459-484)

**Topic 5: Formal Trends in SLA.**

(lecture): Syntax and Semantics

Readings (67 pp.):
• Generative approaches and the poverty of the stimulus. *The Cambridge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, Schwartz & Sprouse (137-158)
• Morphosyntax. *The Cambridge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, Ionin (505-528)
• Semantics. *The Cambridge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, Dekydtspotter (461-481)

• (seminar): Phonetics and Intonational Phonology Readings (50 pp.):
• Nonnative and second-language speech perception, Best & Tyler (2-33)
• Beyond segments: Towards a L2 intonation learning theory. *Prosody and language in contact*, Mennen (171-188)

**Topic 6: Processing Trends in SLA.**

(lecture):

Readings (43 pp.):
• Language system organization in a quadrilingual with a brain tumor: Implications for understanding of the language network. Połczyńska et al., (167-174)

• (seminar):
Readings (41 pp.):
• Understanding the consequences of bilingualism for language processing and cognition. Kroll & Bialystok (497-511)
• Morphologically complex words in L1 and L2 processing: Evidence from masked priming experiments in English. Silva & Clahsen (245-257).
• Learning written word vocabulary in a second language: Theoretical and practical implications, Weekes (1-12)

**Topic 7: Cognitive Trends in SLA.**

(lecture): Constructions Readings (58 pp.):
• Construction learning as category learning. *Cognitive Processing in Second Language Acquisition*, Ellis (27-45)
• Construal, convention, and constructions in L2 speech. *Cognitive linguistics, second language acquisition and foreign language pedagogy*, Waara (51-73)
• Concept stretching and model merging: An attempt to better account for L2 processing and acquisition of grammatical constructions. *Cognitive Processing in Second Language Acquisition*, Seilhamer (9-24)

*(seminar): Pragmatics* Readings (67 pp.):
• Pragmatic competence. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, Kecskes (61-80)
• Formulaic language in L2: Storage, retrieval, and production of idioms by second language learners. *Cognitive Processing in Second Language Acquisition*, Cieślicka (149-164)
• Metaphoric competence in the first and second language: Similarities and differences. *Cognitive Processing in Second Language Acquisition*, Littlemore (293-308)
• Figurative competence is better developed in L1 than L2, or is it. Understanding conversational implicatures in L1 and L2. *Cognitive Processing in Second Language Acquisition*, BromberekDzman & Ewert (317-331)

**Topic 8: PLANNING SLA RESEARCH.**
*(lecture): Discussing proposals/research models*

*(seminar): Student presentations*

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (FINAL PAPERS)**
Drafts and revisions are graded according to clear expectations given beforehand. Generally speaking, they are judged by content (ideas/arguments, incorporation of course content), organization, language and formatting. You will have a chance to practice editing someone else’s paper when you complete in-person peer reviews.

**I. Evaluation of Language Learning Experiences**
Based on the theoretical discussions of language learning you will receive in readings and class lectures, evaluate your own language learning experiences. This paper should articulate your philosophy of successful second/foreign language learning. (5 pages)

**II. Research Proposal**
The primary outcome of this course will be to identify an area of SLA research that you would like to investigate further and to plan your own research project. The project may incorporate any of the methodologies we discuss in class; however, every paper must contain a theoretical grounding for the project and outline how empirical data analysis will take place.

**5. READINGS**
This course does not require the purchase of a textbook. Required readings will be presented at the lectures and seminars.

**6. GRADING SYSTEM**

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Continuous assessment: students have to demonstrate their acquaintance with the basic facts, concepts, notions, and theories discussed in class. By the end of the course students are expected to be able to develop their ideas in their own research paper (gradually, through the first draft).

Final assessment: students have to demonstrate their skills of independent research in SLA.

7. GUIDELINES FOR KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

Accumulated grade ($G_a$) for the student’s work during the module(s) is the lecturer’s assessment of the student’s work during seminars - for participation in the debating panels, quality and quantity of answers and comments in the audience, or for written assignments in the form of essays.

Examination grade ($G_e$) is the arithmetic mean of the grade for the mid-term essay and the examination essay.

The final grade ($G_f$) is the arithmetic mean of the accumulated grade ($G_a$) and the examination grade ($G_e$):

$$G_f = 0.5G_a + 0.5G_e$$

The grades are rounded in favour of the student.

Table of Grade Accordance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten-point Grading Scale</th>
<th>Five-point Grading Scale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - very bad</td>
<td>no pass – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – bad</td>
<td>fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – no pass</td>
<td>pass – 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 – pass</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – highly pass</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 – good
7 – very good

8 – almost excellent
9 – excellent
10 – perfect

good – 4
excellent – 5

During the re-examination, the student has no possibility of obtaining additional mark to raise the grade for current or mid-term assignments.
The resulting grade for the course counts towards the certificate of Master’s degree.

8. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION
The following educational technologies are used in the study process:

• lectures given by the instructor
• group discussion and analysis of the results of home reading;
• presentations of draft projects;
• presentations of the final projects

9. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE SUPPORT

The course requires a laptop with access to the internet, and a projector. For the mid-term and final-class projects the students need access to computers and to the Internet.