

## SYLLABUS

Communication Sciences 3301

*Speech and Language Development*

Spring, 2008

1700 N. Broad St., Rm 302; 1:10-2:30 TTh

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Office Hours: 10:00-11:30 TTh; other times by appointment

### I. General description and objectives

The major business of this course is to make you familiar with the growth of language ability in typically developing children. We will focus most strongly on the following questions:

a. In the typical case, how, when and in what sequence do children develop the core areas of language competence: syntax, phonology, morphology, and the lexicon?

b. What are the circumstances in which children develop language, and what sort of theory can best explain the facts of language acquisition in this context?

c. How do we go about conducting research on language acquisition, and what sorts of mistakes do we tend to make when we do?

We will also consider certain other topics in less detail: the nature and extent of individual and cross-linguistic differences in the course of acquisition, the social and cognitive context of language acquisition, the nature of deficits and delays in language acquisition, the development of reading, and changes in linguistic competence and performance at times of life following the primary acquisition period for language.

Objectives for the course are that you come to understand the above, particularly to understand the nature of the questions (a) through (c) and the answers that are available for them. Pardon me: I should have written “demonstrate understanding” rather than “understand”.

### II. Requirements, etc.

There will be four in-class examinations, noncumulative, "objective", and roughly equal in weight. I anticipate that each exam will contain about 30 multiple choice and short answer questions. The first will cover the general issues about language and language acquisition which will be presented in the first few class meetings, some material on prelinguistic development in infants, and lexical acquisition. The second will be on the acquisition of phonology, the third on syntax and morphology, and the fourth on a mixture of topics including pragmatic and cognitive development, reading, differences and atypicalities in language development, and certain theoretical issues about the nature of language acquisition. Together, the exams will comprise 60% of the course grade.

The remaining 40% of the course grade will be determined by a paper in which you analyze the language use of a child. Exact instructions for this task will be provided next week and posted on Blackboard, but a preview is appropriate now. The paper will need to include a section on phonology and word usage and another section on morphology and syntax. A draft of the section on words and phonology will be due on March 20. I will review it, scrawl it full of whatever commentary is needed, and return it to you for revision, but it will not be graded. The draft of the morphology/syntax section will be due on April 10, and I will treat it in the same way. The final paper will be due at 2:00 on May 8, when the last examination will take place.

Please note that I do not make special deals about grading with anyone, except for giving makeup examinations and permitting postponements of paper deadlines in cases of illness or serious personal disaster. In particular, there is no such thing as “extra credit” work, so please do not ask me for it.

Since I hold the belief that university students should be treated like adults when possible, I do not keep attendance records. Keep in mind, however, that missing classes is pretty stupid. For one thing, you paid for them; for another, they may, on rare occasions, help you understand the material.

If you have need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. The Center for Disability Resources and Services (215-204-1280; 100 Ritter Annex) coordinates reasonable accommodation for students with documented disabilities.

University policies on academic honesty are in effect. These policies may be found in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins, either in their paper or web versions. The web versions may be found by following links from the site index at [www.temple.edu](http://www.temple.edu). Policies and procedures concerning discrimination and harassment may also be found in the bulletins.

The Temple telephone number for police and fire emergencies is 215 204 1234 (1 1234 from a campus land line telephone).

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: [http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02).

Attached to this syllabus is a form that responds to certain portfolio requirements of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. If you are taking this course as a prerequisite for graduate study in speech-language pathology or audiology, you must sign this form, get me to sign it, and retain the thing. The form will become part of a portfolio that you will eventually need for certification in the field. If you are not going into this field and are absolutely certain that you will never want ASHA certification, you may ignore the form.

This course assumes at least some knowledge of linguistics. Before taking it, people generally take CS 1108 or the equivalent course in the English Department, or CS 2207/2208 and CS 2217. If you have no background in this area, it would be a good idea to get hold of one of the popular introductory textbooks (such as Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams: *An Introduction to Language* or Akmajian, Demers, and Harnish: *Linguistics* or O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Somebody: *Contemporary Linguistics*) and read through the sections on phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Early in the course, it will be particularly useful to know something about phonetics. The books cited above will do fairly well for this, or you might want to look through one of the many introductory phonetics textbooks on the market in order to pick up the articulatory terminology and something about the transcription system. Perhaps the best of a poor lot in this area is Larry Small's *Fundamentals of Phonetics*.

Like most courses at Temple, this one has an associated site on the Blackboard system. I do not use Blackboard as intensively as some faculty members do, but I will post announcements and assignments from time to time, as well as the sort of supplementary materials that we used to call "handouts" back in the days when they were distributed in hard copy. I will generally announce postings in class, but it is good practice to check the site frequently for things I may have forgotten to mention. Everything I put on the site will be in pdf format. In order to read and print the materials, you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader. It can be downloaded at no charge from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com). If you have the full Adobe Acrobat program, you do not need to worry about this. If you have not used Blackboard before, it is accessed through TUPortal, and you must have a Temple AccessNet account to get there. If you do not have one for some reason, follow the link to "computing" from the Temple homepage ([www.Temple.edu](http://www.Temple.edu)) and click the "for students" button. All will be explained. If you need additional assistance in these matters, ask me for advice or call the computer help desk at 204-8000.

### III. Readings

Berko Gleason, ed.: *The Development of Language*, sixth edition; Allyn and Bacon; ISBN 0-205-39414-0  
Various small things that will be posted on Blackboard

### IV. Approximate course calendar

1/22-1/31: General issues, methods, behavior and capacities of prelinguistic infants

- a. What is learned: the nature of adult linguistic knowledge
- b. Some general properties and milestones of first language learning
- c. The learning environment in childhood
- d. Language and maturation
- e. Nativist and empiricist approaches to language acquisition
- f. Working with kids, and how to make mistakes when doing so
- g. Proto-linguistic behavior and capacities in infants

Readings for the above: JBG Chs. 1 and 2

2/5-2/12: Lexical acquisition

- a. The semantic and syntactic properties of early words
- b. The vocabulary explosion
- c. Overextensions, underextensions, and accuracy
- d. Strategies for word learning?

Readings for the above: JBG Ch. 4

2/14: First exam; happy Valentine's Day

2/19-3/4: The acquisition of phonology

- a. Babbling vs. speech; what must change to make an adult speaker
- b. Jakobson's generalizations
- c. Types of sound modifications in childhood
- d. Reasons for child language sound modifications
- e. Do we hear what we think we hear?
- f. Phonological processes and the distinction between knowledge and production

Readings: JBG Ch. 3, various Blackboard postings

3/6: Second exam

3/11, 3/13: Spring vacation. Get out of here.

3/20: Phonology/lexicon draft due

3/18-4/3: The acquisition of syntax and morphology

- a. Telegraphic syntax
- b. Inflection, morphology, and syntactic categorization
- c. Topicalization
- d. Questions, negatives, passives, etc.
- e. Complex sentences and embedded structures
- f. Empty categories, grammatical opacity, influence of universal syntactic properties

Readings: JBG Ch. 5

4/8: Third exam

4/10: Morphology/syntax draft due

4/10-4/24: Miscellaneous things

- a. Individual differences in language acquisition
- b. Atypical language development
- c. Pragmatics and metalinguistic awareness
- d. Literacy and other later developments

Readings: JBG Chs. 6, 8, 9, 10

4/29-5/1: What does it all mean, and how can we explain it?

- a. Nativism and empiricism revisited
- b. Interactionism and its discontents

Readings: JBG Ch. 7

5/8, 2:00 PM: Fourth examination; final version of paper due

# KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION FORM

## CS 3301 Speech and Language Development

ASHA Standard

KASA Element

Initials

IIIB

By discussion, examination, and written analysis of a child speech sample, student demonstrates knowledge of the development of the linguistic structure and interactional skills underlying human communication.