

ENGL 5060
Second Language Acquisition
Spring 1998

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Auditorium Building 116
(Graduate Studies in English)
Mondays 3:30-4:30 or by appointment
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The purpose of linguistics research in second-language acquisition (SLA) is to ascertain a theory of second-language (L2) knowledge, thereby contributing to an overall theory of mind (see related statements from the International Commission on Second Language Acquisition at <http://www.let.ruu.nl/~icsla/>). In the first part of this course, we review work that has led to the questions being asked today; for the remainder of the course, we not only examine very recent research, but also do original, experimental research on predictions drawn from linguistic theory.

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Examinations	40%
Experimental Research Paper	40%
Bibliography on Experimental Topic	10%
Participation in Experimental Research	10%

The **Research Paper** reports findings from an experiment on L2 knowledge that you conduct (see Experimental Research). Note that while several students will cooperate to conduct each experiment, each student will write a separate report. The paper itself should be some 15-20 pages in length and in APA style. Papers are due the week before the final examination. Grading will be based evenly on content and academic form. The **Bibliography** is a list of articles relevant to the experimental area you choose. Articles for the bibliography may be located in *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts*. This bibliography is due early in the semester (see day-by-day plan). Your **Participation in Experimental Research** is a rating of your work, with your fellow students, on the experiment you conduct. The two **Examinations** are based on both readings and lectures; they involve essay questions of the sort one might expect to see on the MA Comprehensive Examination.

Required reading:

White, L. (1989). *Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
White's text is required.
Readings for Second Language Acquisition.
These required readings are on reserve at Willis Library. See Bibliography for a listing of the articles.

Important Note: The research we will cover presupposes both basic knowledge of Principles and Parameters theory and simple, introductory ideas on L2 acquisition. If you are not familiar with Principles and Parameters theory, you should immediately study Chapter Six of *Coursebook for Principles of Linguistics* (on reserve at the library). Those with no prior exposure to L2 acquisition research should purchase a copy of Ellis' undergraduate textbook, *Second Language Acquisition* (the optional textbook for this class) and read the first 90 pages before the end of the first week of classes.

Second Language Acquisition Day-by-Day Plan

Class	Date	Topic	Readings
1	J21	Introduction: 1970s and early 1980s	(Ellis)
2	J26	Ling. Theory and Language Acquisition	White, Ch. 1; (Coursebook chapters)
3	J28	Logical Problem of L2 Acquisition	White, Ch. 2
4	F2	Principles in L2 Acquisition	White, Ch. 3
5	F4	Parameters in L2 Acquisition	White, Ch. 4
6	F9	Markedness in L2 Acquisition	White, Ch. 5
7	F11	Learnability and UG in L2 Acquisition	White, Ch. 6-7
8	F16	Verb Raising	White 1991
9	F18	Verb Raising and Neg/Exp Data	White 1992
Turn in Research Bibliographies			
10	F23	Verb Raising and Learnability	Schwartz & Gubala-Ryzak 1992
11	F25	Verb Raising and Transfer	Eubank et al. in press
12	M2	Initial State and Transfer	Schwartz and Sprouse 1996
13	M4	Initial State and Minimal Trees	Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1996, in press
14	M9	Binding Theory	MacLaughlin in press
15	M11	Binding Theory	Wells in press
16	M23	Mid-Term Examination	
16	M25	Morphosyn.: Argument Structure	White et al. in press
17	M30	Morphosyn.: Features, Transfer, Impairment	Lardiere 1997, Beck in press
18	A1	Morphosyn.: Features and Impairment	Beck in press
19	A1	Morphosyn.: Clitics	White 1996
20	A6	Syntax-Semantics Interface	Sprouse & Dekydsprotter in press
21	A8	Optional Infinitives in (OIs) L1	Wexler 1994
22	A13	OIs in L2?	Haznedar & Schwartz 1997
23	A15	OIs in L2?	Prevost & White in press
24	A20	OIs in L2?	Eubank & Beck in press
25	A22	Minimalism and L2	Yusa in press
26	A27	Critical Period in L1	Fromkin et al. 1985; Gleitman & Newport 1995
27	A29	Critical Period in L2?	Eubank & Gregg in press
28	M4	L2 Acquisition Coming of Age	White 1996
29	M6	Review Day; Turn in Research Papers	
30		Final Examination	

Bibliography

General background

Ellis, R. 1997. *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford University Press.

Eubank, L. 1998. *Coursebook for Principles of Linguistics: Chapters Five and Six*. Ms., University of North Texas.

OIs

Eubank, L. & M.-L. Beck. 1998. OI effects in adult L2 acquisition. *Proceedings of the 22th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

Haznedar, B. & B. D. Schwartz. 1997. Are there optional infinitives in child L2 acquisition? *Proceedings of the 21th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

Prévost, P. & L. White. In press. Truncation and missing inflection in second language acquisition. To appear in M. A. Friedmann & L. Rizzi (eds.), *The Acquisition of Syntax*.

Wexler, K. 1994. Optional infinitives, head movement and the economy of derivations. In D. Lightfoot & N. Hornstein (eds.), *Verb Movement*, 305-350. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Verb raising

Eubank, L., J. Bischof, A. Huffstutler, P. Leek & C. West. In press. "Tom eats slowly cooked eggs": Thematic verb raising in L2 knowledge. To appear in *Language Acquisition*.

Schwartz, B. D. & M. Gubala-Ryzak. 1992. Learnability and grammar reorganization in L2A: Against negative evidence causing the unlearning of verb movement. *SLR* 8(1): 1-38.

White, L. 1991. Adverb placement in second language acquisition: Some effects of positive and negative evidence in the classroom. *SLR* 7(2): 133-161.

White, L. 1992. Long and short verb movement in second language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 37(2): 273-286.

Initial State

Schwartz, B. D. & R. Sprouse. 1996. L2 cognitive states and the Full Transfer/Full Access model. *SLR* 21(1): 40-72.

Vainikka, A. & M. Young-Scholten. 1996. Gradual development of L2 phrase structure. *SLR* 21(1): 7-39.

Vainikka, A. & M. Young-Scholten. In press. Morphosyntactic Triggers in Adult SLA. To appear in M.-L. Beck (ed.), *Morphology and its Interfaces in Second Language Knowledge*.

Morphology and Morphosyntactic Features

Beck, M.-L. In press. L2 acquisition and obligatory head movement: English-speaking learners of German and the local impairment hypothesis. To appear in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*.

Lardiere, D. 1997. On the transfer of morphological parameter values in L2 acquisition. In *Proceedings of the 21th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

White, L. 1996. Clitics in L2 French. In H. Clahsen (ed.), *Generative Perspectives on Language Acquisition*, 335-368. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

White, L., S. Montrul, M. Hirakawa, D. Chen, J. Bruhn de Garavito & C. Brown. In press. Zero morphology and the T/SM restriction in the L2 acquisition of psych verbs. To appear in M.-L. Beck (ed.), *Morphology and its Interfaces in Second Language Knowledge*.

Syntax-Semantics Interface

Dekydtspotter, L., R. Sprouse & B. Anderson. In press. The Interpretive interface in L2 acquisition: The process-result distinction in English-French interlanguage grammars. To appear in *Language Acquisition*.

Binding Theory

McLaughlin, D. In press. The Acquisition of the morphosyntax of English reflexives by non-native speakers. To appear in M.-L. Beck (ed.), *Morphology and its Interfaces in Second Language Knowledge*.

Wells, T. In press. L2 acquisition of English binding domains. To appear in M.-L. Beck (ed.), *Morphology and its Interfaces in Second Language Knowledge*.

Minimalism

Yusa, N. 1997. Multiple specifiers and Wh-island effects in L2 acquisition: A preliminary study. Ms., MIT.

Critical Periods

Eubank, L. & K. Gregg. In press. Divide et impera: Critical periods and (S)LA. To appear in D. Birdsong (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Critical Period*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Fromkin, V., S. Krashen, S. Curtiss, D. Rigler & M. Rigler. 1985. The development of language in Genie: A case of language beyond the "critical period". In V. Clark, P. Eschholz & A. Rosa (eds.), *Language*, 112-133.

Gleitman, L. & L. Newport. 1995. The invention of language by children: Environmental and biological influences on language acquisition. In L. Gleitman & M. Liberman (eds.), *Language: An invitation to cognitive science*, 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, 1-24. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Finally

White, L. 1996. The tale of the ugly duckling (or the coming of age of second language acquisition research). *Proceedings of the 20th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

Experimental Research

We will be conducting three experimental research projects. Each student in the class will take part in one of these projects. A rough characterization of each project is below.

1. NegP Project. The research question for this project is whether adult L2 learners' early syntactic representations include NegP. The project will elicit data from both native speakers of French and from speakers of English learning French as a second language. Those choosing to take part in this project should familiarize themselves with the theoretical literature on NegP, previous L2 acquisition research dealing with NegP, and some rudiments of French syntax. Note that it is not necessary to be a speaker of French.

2. Be-prefixation Project. The question for this project is whether adult L2 learners are able to connect lexical-conceptual structures to features underlying overt morphology. We examine this connection on the basis of the *be-* verbal prefix in German, which, according to traditional grammarians, is said to make intransitive verbs into transitive verbs (though this turns out to be only a small part of the story, as we shall see). The experimental work will involve not only native speakers of German, but also native speakers of English acquiring German as a second language. Those choosing to take part in this project will need to familiarize themselves with research on lexical-conceptual structure and *be*-prefixation in German and with any previous (generative) research on lexical-conceptual structure and transfer in L2 acquisition. Note that it is not necessary to be a speaker of German.

3. Verb-Raising Project. This project is a follow-up on research conducted earlier by Eubank & Grace (1996) and Eubank et al. (1998), the results of which suggest that adult L2 learners may permit (possibly optional) verb raising to I even when neither the native language (here, Mandarin) nor the mature L2 (here, English) permits it. The earlier research employed a sentence-matching task (Eubank & Grace) or a truth-value task (Eubank et al.). One of the anonymous peer reviewers of the Eubank et al. study asked why one should not employ a traditional grammaticality judgment task instead. The research for the present project will replicate Eubank & Grace and Eubank et al., though with use of the grammaticality judgment task. Those taking part in this project will need familiarity with Eubank & Grace and Eubank et al. and with methodological research on the grammaticality judgment task. Note that it is not necessary to be a speaker of Mandarin.

Statement on Disabilities

In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation under the terms of these acts, please discuss your needs with me during office hours or present a written request to me after class before the fourth class day. If you have not registered with ODA, I encourage you to do so.

Essential abilities for this course include reading, writing, typing (computer or typewriter), and library utilization.