



## School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

### Course Outline

#### LALS 519, Psycholinguistic Aspects of SLA, Trimester 1, 2008

**1. Course Coordinator:**

**Dr. Peter Gu**

VZ 214

Ext. 5606

Email: [petergu@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:petergu@vuw.ac.nz)

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals>

**2. Staff:**

**Professor Hakan Ringbom**

VZ 308

Ext. 5618

Email: [haringbo@abo.fi](mailto:haringbo@abo.fi)

<http://web.abo.fi/fak/hf/enge/staff/hringbom.htm>

**3. Class times and rooms:**

14-27 February 2008, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, 4:10--6pm, KP16, Room 101

**4. Announcements:**

The MA Noticeboard is in the corridor of VZ Level 2.

**5. LALS main office:** VZ210, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

**6. Course Administrator:**

Rachel Scholes, Tel: 463 5600, Fax: 463 5604 [Rachel.Scholes@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Rachel.Scholes@vuw.ac.nz)

**Web contact:** [www.blackboard.victoria.ac.nz](http://www.blackboard.victoria.ac.nz)

**7. Course description**

The course takes up aspects relevant to the learning of foreign languages. The emphasis is on the underlying processes, but some sessions will also deal with external factors such as the social aspect of language learning.

**8. Aims and Objectives:**

To provide a background knowledge of the most important processes underlying the learning of foreign languages, with particular emphasis on the role of the L1 and other previously known languages.

Course members should become aware of and able to critically discuss important issues in current SLA research.

## 9. Content:

### 1. Thursday 14/02 Introduction: Some basic distinctions in SLA

Learning vs. teaching, comprehension vs. production, linguistic competence vs. communicative competence, accuracy vs. fluency

Preparatory reading: Ellis pp.1-40; Ringbom

TASK 1: How are the differences between learning a related language and an unrelated language manifested in vocabulary learning?

### 2. Friday 15/02 Individual differences in SLA: Age, gender and motivation.

Ellis pp. 202-204; Ellis ch.11

### 3. Monday 18/02 Contrastive Analysis

*TASK1 to be submitted*

Ellis 306-309; H. Ringbom, Encyclopedia article on CA in R.E. Asher (ed.) *Encyclopedia for Language and Linguistics*, vol. 2, pp. 737-742. Comment on Robert Lado's statement: "We assume that the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult." (*Linguistics across Cultures*, p. 2)

### 4. Tuesday 19/02 Error Analysis

Ellis, ch.2; H. Ringbom, Encyclopedia article on EA in J. Verschueren et al. (eds.) *Handbook of Pragmatics. Manual*, pp. 581-583. Comment on the questions, "How do you define an error?", "Do native speakers make errors in their L1?"

### 5. Wednesday 20/02 Language Transfer: The Role of Crosslinguistic Similarity

Ellis, ch. 8; H. Ringbom, "Actual, Perceived and Assumed Cross-linguistic Similarities in Foreign language Learning," *AFinLA:n Vuosikirja* 2007, 183-196

### 6. Thursday 21/02 Vocabulary vs. Grammar for the Language Learner

*TASK 2 to be submitted*

How would you define the difference between pedagogical grammars and scientific grammars? What is the relation between knowledge of grammar and the aims of a FL course?

### 7. Friday, 22/02 Acceptability and Near-nativeness

H. Ringbom (ed.) *Near-native proficiency in English* 1993, pp. 4-90, 183-306, R. Coppieters, *Language* 63:3 (1987), 544-573, D. Birdsong *Language* 68:4, 706-755. In the light of your experiences as both native speaker and foreign language learner, comment on those aspects of linguistic performance which generally reveal a person as a non-native speaker. Consider all the areas of phonology, intonation, grammar, vocabulary, discourse and pragmatics. Are there any of these areas where a foreign language learner might achieve fully native-like competence?

8. Monday 25/02 Bilingualism and multilingualism

*TASK 3 to be submitted*

Can bilingualism ever be considered harmful? If so, under what circumstances? What problems can you see in measuring bilingual proficiency? Is there ever complete bilingualism?

9. Tuesday 26/02 The use of L1 in foreign language learning and teaching

To what extent should the L1 be used in FLT?

10. Wednesday 27/02 Concluding discussion, comments on tasks, individual planning of assignments

**10. Expected workload:**

This course is taught intensively over a two-week period. You are expected to prepare for the course by doing the required background reading. In order to make satisfactory progress in this course you should expect to devote a total of 150 hours to it. This includes attendance at classes, background reading, and work on written assignments.

**11. Group work:**

None.

**12. Readings:**

**Main course books:**

R. Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford University Press 1994 or later;  
H. Ringbom, *Crosslinguistic Similarity in Foreign Language Learning*, Multilingual Matters 2007.

**Reference works that may need to be consulted:**

- J. Cenoz, B. Hufeisen & U. Jessner (eds.) (2001) *Cross-linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.  
H. Ringbom (1987) *The Role of the First Language in Foreign Language Learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.  
H. Ringbom (ed.) (1993) *Near-native Proficiency in English*. Abo: English Department Publications 2, Abo Akademi University.  
C. Doughty & M. Long (eds.) (2003). *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell.  
S. Jarvis & A. Pavlenko (2007) *Crosslinguistic Influence on Language and Cognition*. Mahwah, N.J.: Routledge.  
S. Romaine (1995), *Bilingualism*. Oxford: Blackwell.  
N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (eds.) (1997) *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
T. Odlin (1989) *Language Transfer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
G. de Angelis (2007), *Third or Other Language Acquisition*. Multilingual Matters.  
J. Edwards, (1994) *Multilingualism*. Penguin Books.  
D.A. Wilkins (1974) *Second Language learning and Teaching*. Edward Arnold.

**Vicbooks** has two locations - Student Union Building on Kelburn Campus and Rutherford House on Pipitea Campus (which stocks textbooks for Law and Commerce only). They distribute student notes (for Law (all stages) and Commerce from stage 2 upwards only)

from the Pipitea shop and the student notes shop on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz)  
We can courier books to customers or they can be picked up from either shop the day after placing an order online.

Vicbooks can be contacted by telephone  
Kelburn 463 5515  
Pipitea 4636160

Opening hours  
8am - 6pm Mon - Fri (during termtime - we close at 5pm in the holidays)  
10am - 1pm Saturday

### 13. Materials and equipment:

N/A

### 14. Assessment requirements:

The course will be assessed on the basis of three tasks (10% each), to be handed in during the course, and one assignment (70%), to be handed in before Friday 16 May 2008.

#### Submitting assignments and tasks

##### General guidelines

- Set margins to at least 2.5 cm
- Set line spacing to 1.5
- Set font size of 12 point
- Include page numbers
- Include a title page which shows the course number and name, your name, the course lecturer, the title of the assignment, and the date the assignment is due
- Provide a word count at the end of the assignment (not including the Reference section)

##### Hard copy submissions

- Type on one side of A4 paper
- Staple pages together
- Avoid presenting assignments in bulky folders or sleeves unless necessary
- Avoid inserting individual pages in clearfile sleeves

#### Tasks

The answers to each task should typically fit within two pages.

##### Task 1 (deadline Monday 18/02)

How are the differences between learning a related language and an unrelated language manifested in vocabulary learning?

Relevant literature, e.g. H. Ringbom 2007, and 1987; M. Swan in N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (eds.) *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy* 1997: 156-180; B. Laufer in J. Fisiak (ed.), *Further Insights in Contrastive Linguistics*, pp. 573-593.

##### Task 2 (deadline Thursday 21/02)

Comment briefly (5-10 sentences) on each of the following statements below. Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements by inserting one of the following markers in the margin for each statement:

- + + (= Yes, because...)
- + - (= Yes, but ...)
- + (= No: although .... still)
- - (= Definitely no, because ...)

1. "A small child listens and speaks and no one would dream of making him read or write. Reading and writing are advanced stages of language development. The natural order for first and second language learning is listening, speaking, reading, writing."
2. (a) "English is an easy language to learn"  
(b) "English is a very difficult language to learn"
3. "A good teaching method is designed to build up communicative competence, and for this reason this course will have no concentration on grammar or written work."
4. "Ideally a course in a foreign language should be planned according to the needs of the learner."
5. "Learning another language in a natural environment will inevitably result in a higher proficiency than learning in a classroom environment."
6. "In assessing a foreign language learner's proficiency we should not count errors but measure success. Error analysis has been far too dominant in most Western countries."
7. Try to make a very brief general comment on ALL the above statements (3-6 sentences.)

Task 3 To be announced

**Assignment** (deadline Friday 16 May 2008):

Write an essay (15-20 pages) on one of the following topics:

- 1) Is there a need for contrastive psycholinguistics? What would a contrastive psycholinguistic study look like?
- 2) Is it easier to learn a third than a second language?
- 3) How is the concept of cross-linguistic similarity relevant to speakers of your L1 learning English? Compare them to learners of English who have a different starting point. Thus, if your L1 is wholly different from English you should try to compare the learners with a group of learners whose L1 is relatively close to English. If your L1 is English, compare two different groups of learners.

### 15. Penalties:

Since this is a two week course, tasks must be submitted by the due date unless there is a clear medical emergency. Tasks and the final assignment which are plagiarized will not receive a grade and cannot be resubmitted.

### 16. Mandatory Course Requirements (Terms):

- Attend all classes
- Participate in class discussions
- Do all the readings
- Hand in all tasks and the assignment on time (unless permission to do so late has been requested and granted.)

### 17. Communication of additional information:

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students via e-mail to all class members and class noticeboards.

### **General university policies and statutes**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or on the VUW website at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx>

### **Student and staff conduct**

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx)

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/staff.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/staff.aspx)

### **Academic grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; the VUWSA Education Coordinator is available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx)

### **Academic integrity and plagiarism**

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

*The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.*

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

*Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.*

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct. All cases will be recorded on a central database and severe penalties may be imposed. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx)

### **Students with Impairments**

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: [disability@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:disability@vuw.ac.nz)

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

### **Student Support**

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: [student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz)) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/)

VUWSA employs an Education Coordinator who deals with academic problems and provides support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at [education@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz)) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.