TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MASTER OF ARTS
LALS 512 PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH
15 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2015

Important dates

Trimester dates: 2 March to 1 July 2015
Teaching dates: 16 March to 5 June 2015
Easter/Mid-trimester break: 3 to 19 April 2015
Last assessment item due: 22 June 2015

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Wednesday, 16.10 -18.00; VZ 108

Names and contact details

Course coordinator / lecturer:
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Communication of additional information

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be announced in on campus classes and posted on the course website in Blackboard.

Prescription

An analysis and evaluation of diverse pedagogical interventions intended to facilitate grammar acquisition, with a view to helping practitioners optimise their design of course materials and classroom activities.

Course content

After discussing what is understood by 'grammar', we investigate the challenges that second language learners face when it comes to acquiring L2 grammar, and we explore the factors that influence the likelihood that a given grammar feature will be acquired incidentally.

We then characterise the main strands in L2 grammar pedagogy, and evaluate these strands with reference to published research findings.

Students will weigh the benefits of different interventions and will learn to make judicious decisions about grammar-instruction.

The insights which this course aims to foster are relevant to L2 grammar in general, but most of the examples and materials used in the course concern L2 English.

The course content is planned as follows:

class	topic
1	Conceptions of "grammar"
2	Justifications for a focus on grammar
3	Textual enhancement
4	Processing Instruction, part 1
5	Processing Instruction, part 2
6	Present – Practise – Produce (PPP)
7	Focused tasks in Task-Based Learning (TBLT), part 1
8	Focused tasks in Task-Based Learning (TBLT), part 2
9	Data-driven / Discovery learning: From exemplars to patterns
10	Exploring rhyme and reason: Cognitive Linguistic approaches

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. make informed judgements about the need for their students to receive instruction intended to raise their awareness of particular L2 grammar features

2. accurately describe the morphological and syntactic regularities of English, using accepted terminology

3. make informed predictions about the likely benefits resulting from particular interventions intended to foster learning of particular L2 grammar features

4. identify the 'schools of thought' behind activities and exercises in textbooks intended for grammar learning

5. evaluate classroom activities intended to foster learning of a particular grammar feature

6. design informed classroom activities intended to foster learning of a particular grammar feature.

Teaching format

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance.

On campus classes are run as workshops.

For distance students, the course is delivered on-line through http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz.

In both modes, students are expected to participate actively in activities and discussions. Preparation for each class involves reading one or more articles and performing a task / responding to a question.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:
1. submit all assignments
2. attend at least 8 of the 10 two-hour sessions (campus students)
3. respond to the questions/tasks either on Blackboard (distance students) or in class.

Workload

It is anticipated that students will invest 150 hours in this course, which includes attending classes / contributing to the discussion board on Blackboard, reading the essential and recommended texts, and preparing the assessment items. Time invested in preparing the assessment items is likely to vary from one student to the next, but each of the assessment items is estimated to require at least 10 hours of work.

Assessment

The following table outlines the assessment components for LALS 512:

	Component	Value	Word count	Due date	CLOs
1.	Identify a grammar feature of English that is (a) problematic for a group of learners you are familiar with, (b) unlikely to be acquired without explicit instruction. Explain why. Contrast this with a feature that you expect to be acquired relatively easily by these learners without the need for instruction.	30%	1,500	13 April	1, 2
2.	Analyse and evaluate the way a grammar feature of your choice is tackled in a textbook.	30%	1,500	18 May	3, 4, 5
3.	Design a classroom activity (or a sequence of activities) of about 50 minutes intended to foster mastery of a chosen grammar feature. Describe the rationale for the proposed lesson.	40%	2,000	22 June	1, 2, 6

The criteria for marking are:

- coherence and clarity of the argumentation
- factual accuracy of the language description
- linkage with relevant research literature.

Grade descriptors (applicable to all LALS MA courses) will be made available on Blackboard.

Submission and return of work

All assignments are to be submitted electronically via Blackboard. Feedback will be given to students also via Blackboard. Feedback on assignment one will be given within a period of one week after submission. Feedback on assignments two and three will be given within a period of two weeks after submission.

Extensions and penalties

No penalty will be imposed if you obtain permission to submit the assignment after the deadline. Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the course coordinator. Also consult the course coordinator in case your text exceeds the word limit.

Materials

Apart from the mandatory reading (see below), you will need access to EFL/ESL textbooks or other EFL/ESL pedagogic materials for analysis and evaluation.

Set texts

Articles to exemplify (research on) diverse approaches to L2 grammar, and a time schedule for reading them, will be made available on the LALS 512 Blackboard site. You will typically be required to read two articles per class. These should be read before the relevant class.

Recommended reading

Additional articles on diverse strands of research on L2 grammar learning will be made available on Blackboard.

Students without any linguistics training will be required to familiarise themselves with descriptions of English grammar – it would be hard to make informed decisions about English grammar instruction and to communicate about those choices if one had no metalinguistic knowledge or shared terminology about the morpho-syntactic features of the language.

A document (devised by the course lecturer) explaining some basic terms will be made available on Blackboard as minimal support, but students may find it useful to consult a more comprehensive, published, descriptive grammar of English. Many good sources are available. Past cohorts of students have found the following books helpful (but these are just suggestions):

Kennedy, G. (2003). Structure and meaning in English: A guide for teachers. Harlow, England: Pearson/Longman.

Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Leech, G. (2002). Longman student grammar of spoken and written English. Harlow, England: Pearson/Longman.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative for the MA programme will be selected in the first week of the course. Her/his name and contact details will be posted on Blackboard.

Student feedback

Enhancements made to the course based on the feedback of previous students will be covered during the course. Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progess (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter

- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz