COMD 330: Language Development

Syllabus

Instructor: Barbara Culatta; 422-6456; Barbara_Culatta@byu.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 11 in 135 TLRB

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesdays from 8:30 to 10:30 in 124 TLRB

Course Description
This course deals with the nature of language, the processes by which language is acquired, and the sequence of language acquisition. It addresses the development of communication and language from birth through the school age years. Major theories of language acquisition will be contrasted with an emphasis on the contributions and limitations of each. The social-communicative, cognitive, and perceptual bases for language acquisition will be studied, and the components of language (semantics, morphology, syntax, pragmatics, and phonology) will be explored. Information on the acquisition of language will be presented within four major time periods: infancy (birth to one year), the toddler years (1 to 3 years), the preschool years (3 to 5 years), and the school age years (above 5 years). Normal processes of second language acquisition will also be addressed.

Instructor
Barbara Culatta

Office Hours
Tuesday and Thursday: 9:00 to 11:00
Purpose
This course will focus on the development of language in typical children in preparation for working with children with language deficits and differences.

Learning outcomes
The course addresses the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the major theories of language development
- Define the major components of language (syntax, semantic, phonology, morphology, & pragmatics) and differentiate among content, form, and use.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how cultural factors influence first and second language development.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the developmental sequence of pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, and morphologic language behaviors in production and comprehension modalities.
- Demonstrate knowledge of literacy development
- Demonstrate knowledge of how language development is studied.

Additional Objectives
Additional attention will be placed on the ability to . . .

- Identify examples of linguistic and communicative behaviors (e.g., generative and stereotypical language)
- Discuss the cognitive, perceptual, and social bases for language acquisition and explain the relationship between language and cognitive development
- Identify developmental milestones within four time periods: infancy (birth to 1 year), toddlers (12 months to 3 years); preschool (3 years to 5 years); school-age (above 5 years)
- Develop skills in observing language, cognitive, and communicative behavior
- Identify patterns in parent-child interactions; state methods for facilitating language development
- Observe and analyze language data from spontaneous speech samples
- Differentiate between basic language and higher-level academic language skills

Prerequisites
Admittance to the Communication Disorders Program or by instructor permission
Reading materials

Developmental scales and supplemental materials made available on Learning Suite

Course requirements
Examinations: (two exams and a final)
Exams 1 and 2 = 30 points each, and the final = 35 points. Exam 1 will deal with the nature of language and the language learning process. Exam 2 will deal with the development of language in three time frames: infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The final will deal with previously addressed content as well as the development of language in the school-age years and the nature of language disorders and deficits. Study guides will be provided prior to each examination. The materials on each exam will be taken from class presentations and assigned readings. The tests will be administered in the Testing Center (two days each for exams 1 and 2 and during the final exam period for the final).

Project – 25 points
Students will complete an evaluation project worth 25 points. They will observe and analyze the language and conceptual/cognitive behavior of a child between 2 ½ and 5 years of age. Students may work on this assignment in pairs. This assignment will permit students to practice some evaluation techniques, judge children’s language levels, and compare observed behavior with developmental norms/milestones. The observations can be conducted in the child’s home or some familiar context.

The project will include observations and informal analysis of the following:

Vocabulary/Concept development

Probe concept/vocabulary development,
Administer informal language tasks

Comprehension

Observe Responses to statements and commands and connected discourse (story or personal experience texts)

Play behavior

Analyze the symbolic play of a child using the Symbolic Play Scale (Westby, 1988).
Collect the sample, record it on videotape, and analyze the play behaviors.

Collect, transcribe and analyze a play and language sample

**Spontaneous Language Production**
Collect, transcribe and analyze a 50-utterance language sample
Analyze for mean length of utterance, Brown's 14 Grammatical Morphemes, and phrase/sentence constructions.

**Grading scale**
Your final grade will be based on the percentage of points that you have earned out of a possible 120 points. Grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2: Chapters 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3 (Final): Chapters 8 and 9 along with chapters 1 through 7</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project: Language observation/evaluation</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125 points</td>
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**Policies**

**Class Attendance**
Students are expected to attend and participate in each class. The class is organized to provide lecture as well as practice activities designed to strengthen understanding of the concepts presented in class. These “in class” experiences will also assist students in completing class projects.

**Late project or exam**
Penalties will be attached to late assignments. If you are ill and need to take a test late you will be required to provide written documentation from a physician. Late assignments will not be accepted without PREARRANGED agreement with the instructor. If you need to take a test late without prearranged permission (which
will be allowed only in extreme circumstances) you will be penalized 10% per day late.

**Class procedures**

Students are not to use digital devices except to draw upon current class materials.
COMD 330: Lecture Outline and Readings
Complete readings by the class date indicated

9/2: Tues
Introduction
Introduction to the course
Rationale for studying language development
Nature of language
Language, communication, and speech defined
Relationship among language, speech, hearing, communication

9/4: Thurs
Introduction, continued
The components of language
Form, Content, and use
Phonology, morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics
Differentiation between concept (semantics) and symbol (form)
Features of Language
Generativity (productivity), semanticity, specificity, universality, rate of acquisition
Language Differences and Disorders
Readings: Chapter 1

9/9: T
The Science and Theories of Language Development
Reasons for Studying Language Development
Approaches: speech perception, language production, language comprehension
Major theories
Nature inspired
Modularity
Nativist or universal grammar
Bootstrapping theories
Nurture inspired
Behaviorist
Intentionality and usage based

*Nurture inspired – but with interaction between nature and nurture*
Social interactionist theory (vygotsky)
Cognitive theorists (e.g. Piaget)

Nature or nurture
Connectionist theories

Readings: Chapter 2

9/11: Th

The Science and Theories of Language Development, continued
Major theories, continued
Link between theories and practice
Relationship between language and cognition (conceptual underpinnings)

9/16: T

Building Blocks (overview of development, influences, and processes)
Overview of development
Highlights in the developmental process

*Phonological development*

*Morphological development*

*Syntactic development*

Readings: Chapter 3

9/18: Th

Building Blocks, continued
Semantic development
9/23: T
Building Blocks, continued
Pragmatic development

9/25: Th
Neurophysiology of Language and Information Processing
The way the brain processes and produces language
How language is generated and understood
Semantics
Syntax and morphology
Phonology
Pragmatics
Readings: Chapter 4

9/30: T
Neurophysiology of Language and Information Processing (continued)
Models of language comprehension and production
Information processing model
  Competence vs. performance
  Language comprehension processes
  Language production processes

10/2: Th
Neurophysiology of Language and Information Processing (continued)
The Relationship between Cognitive and Language Development
  Relationship between comprehension (receptive) and production (expressive development)
Sensitive periods
10/7: T
Infancy: Development between the ages of 0-12 months

Milestones

Speech perception

Awareness of actions and intentions

Category formation and cognitive development

Early vocalization

Early foundations
Infant directed speech; joint attention, routines, caregiver responsiveness, cognitive development

Readings: Chapter 5

10/9: Th (Exam 1 due at Testing Center by 9:00 pm)

Infancy, continued

Major achievements in Form, Content, Use

Form
Pre-speech babbling; vocalization of emotional states; may produce proto-words

Content
Receptive attachment of words or phrases to a few specific whole events (bye-bye, peek-a-boo)

Use
Socially responsive; takes turn in rituals; develops intentionality

Cognitive/conceptual underpinnings

10/14: T

Infancy (continued)

Factors contributing to development
Intra and inter-individual difference
Assessment

10/16: Th

Toddler Development: 1 to 3 years

Major developmental milestones
First words, gestures
Gestures and single words coordinated (12 to 18 mo.)

Cognitive conceptual underpinnings
Knowledge of objects; object associations

Readings: Chapter 6

10/21: T

Toddler Development (continued)

Achievements

Form (phonology, morphology, syntax)
Single words; successive single words; and two word combinations; 50-word vocabulary at 18 months; transition from single words to two-word combinations at age 2; simple complete sentences at age 3

Content/semantics
  Production of a core vocabulary; recognition of phrases; recognition of common nouns and verbs; development of meaning; over and under extensions; semantic relations; generative comprehension of simple concrete words and two-word combinations; comprehension of sentences; heavy reliance on situational support

10/23: Th

Toddler development: 1 to 3 years, continued

Achievements

Use
  Pragmatic intents
Functions of words
Turn taking
Assessment

10/28: T

Toddler development, continued

Factors that contribute to development
Intra and inter-individual

10/30: Th

Preschool Development: 3 to 5 years

Major developmental milestones

Decontextualized language

Emergent literacy

Major achievements

Form
Produces sentences with conjoining and basic sentences

Content
Comprehends simple statements; comprehends early academic talk with situational support; comprehends connected speech; demonstrates dramatic increase in vocabulary; knows simple relational words

Use
Engages in conversations about familiar events, conveys novel remote events without much detail; participates in conversations about immediately occurring events (adult assumes much responsibility for keeping the conversation going); begins to develop capacity to engage in decontextualized language
Readings: Chapter 7

11/4: T
Preschool Development, continued
Factors that contribute to achievements

11/6: Th

Preschool development, continued

Cognitive/conceptual underpinnings (play)
Representational and symbolic play

Assessment

11/11: T
School aged years: Age 5 and above
Major shifts that occur
Sources of language input

Metalinguistics

Movement from causal talk to academic language

Major Achievements

Form (phonology, morphology, syntax)
Syntactic ability to embed and coordinate ideas

Content/semantics
Development of abstract and relational vocabulary; ability to process connected speech and use language to understand explanations and obtain information
Ability to relate remote events in an organized, sequenced fashion

Use (pragmatics)
Ability to engage in conversations about remote and unfamiliar events; use of higher-level language to persuade and problem solve (higher-level academic functions)
Readings: Chapter 8

11/13: Th: **Exam 2 due at Testing Center by 9:00 pm**

School-aged years

Literacy development and relationship to language

11/18: T

School-aged years, continued

Literacy development and relationship to language

11/20: Th -- **ASHA – Class is cancelled**

11/25 – Friday Instruction

11/27 – Th -- Thanksgiving

12/2: T

School aged years, continued

Literacy development and relationship to language

Assessment
12/4: Th: *Language observation project due*
Language differences and disorders
Dialects and bilingualism; second language acquisition
Language disorders
Readings: Chapter 9

12/9: T
Language differences and disorders
Dialects and bilingualism; second language acquisition
Language disorders

12/11: Th
Language differences and disorders
Review

12/15 – 12/19 --- Final exams available in the Testing Center