Course Specification
(Postgraduate Programs)

Course Title: **Language Acquisition**	
Course Code: **7504 ENG-3**	
Program: **Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics**	
Department: **English Department**	
College: **College of Languages and Translation**	
Institution: **King Khalid University**	
Version: **1**	
Last Revision Date: **10 March 2025**	

Table of Contents

A. General information about the course:

1. Course Identification:

1. Credit hours: (3)

2. Course type

A.	☐ University	☐ College	☒ Department	☐ Track	
B.	☒ Required			☐ Elective	

3. Level/year at which this course is offered: (1/2)

4. Course General Description:

This course introduces influential theories and key concepts that shape our understanding of first and second language acquisition and learning, along with the primary research methods and theoretical frameworks and approaches in this area. The course examines how first and second languages are acquired and used in bilingual and multilingual contexts. Additionally, the course explores the social and psychological factors influencing second language acquisition, as well as the distinctive features of learner language.

5. Pre-requirements for this course (if any):

None

6. Pre-requirements for this course (if any):

None

7. Course Main Objective(s):

The Language Acquisition course aims to:

- Equip students with a deep understanding of key theories and concepts related to first and second language acquisition, maintenance, and use across diverse contexts.
- Develop students' ability to assess linguistic competencies, language learning needs, and the historical and sociocultural factors shaping language instruction.
- Enhance students' capacity to apply knowledge and skills in language acquisition with independence, expert judgment, adaptability, and responsibility.
- Strengthen students' communication skills in articulating language acquisition theories and concepts effectively to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

2. Teaching Mode: (mark all that apply)

No	Mode of Instruction	Contact Hours	Percentage
1	Traditional classroom		
2	E-learning		
3	Hybrid ● Traditional classroom ● E-learning	36 9	80% 20%
4	Distance learning		

3. Contact Hours: (based on the academic semester)

No	Activity	Contact Hours
1.	**Lectures**	45
2.	**Laboratory/Studio**	
3.	**Field**	
4.	**Tutorial**	
5.	**Others (specify) Workshops**	
	Total	45

B. Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), Teaching Strategies and Assessment Methods:

Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Code of PLOs aligned with the program	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
1.0	**Knowledge and understanding**			
1.1	Develop a deep, nuanced understanding of major SLA theories and models, enabling students to critically evaluate the applicability in various contexts, such as instructed	K1	Lectures Assigned readings Group discussions	Final exam Mid term exam

Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Code of PLOs aligned with the program	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
	second language learning, bilingualism, and multilingual acquisition.			
1.2	Critically examine the cognitive, social, and linguistic processes underpinning first and second language acquisition by integrating perspectives from key theoretical frameworks and empirical research.	K2	Lectures Assigned readings Interactive class discussions	Research critique Final exam Midterm exam
1.3	Formulate research questions addressing real-world challenges in SLA, ensuring that investigations are grounded in, appropriate theoretical frameworks while maintaining methodological rigor and ethical integrity.	K3	Case studies and problem-solving exercises Interactive class discussions	Research project
2.0	**Skills**			
2.1	Critically analyze and apply diverse research methodologies to assess their effectiveness in investigating key questions within SLA, demonstrating methodological	S1	Assigned readings Class discussions	Assignments Midterm exam

Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Code of PLOs aligned with the program	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
	competence and innovation.			
2.2	Design and execute original SLA research projects selecting appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches to investigate the complexities of second language learning and use.	S2	Workshops on research methods and data analysis	Research project
2.3	Participate in scholarly discussions and debates on SLA theories, synthesizing and critiquing current research while articulating well-reasoned arguments and proposing theoretical advancements in the field.	S3	Workshops on research methods and data analysis	Research critique Weekly presentations
3.0	**Values, autonomy, and responsibility**			
3.1	Uphold ethical integrity in SLA research by ensuring transparency in data collection, respecting participant rights, and practicing responsible publishing, while navigating ethical considerations in language learning	V1	Group projects and collaborative learning	Research project

Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Code of PLOs aligned with the program	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
	and teaching contexts.			
3.2	Foster a culture of academic collaboration and constructive peer engagement, contributing to the advancement of SLA knowledge through meaningful scholarly discourse and critical review.	V2	Group projects and collaborative learning Assigned readings Interactive class discussions	Research project
3.3	Communicate clearly and knowledgeably about language learning topics to specialist and general audiences.	V3	Assigned readings Interactive class discussions	Class Participation

C. Course Content:

No	List of Topics	Contact Hours
1.	- Introducing First Language Acquisition - Introducing Second Language Acquisition - Key Concepts in SLA, including but not limited to key distinctions (acquisition vs. learning, second vs. foreign language) Interlanguage, Fossilization, Transfer, Input and Output, Learner errors, Noticing Hypothesis, Critical Period Hypothesis, UG, etc.	3
2.	Foundational theories of SLA - Behaviorist theory / Structuralist theory/ Nativism etc - Interactions theory - Universal Grammar (UG) and its relevance to SLA - Krashen's Theories: Input Hypothesis (e.g., comprehensible input, acquisition vs. learning) - Interaction Hypothesis (e.g., negotiation of meaning, feedback) - Output Hypothesis (e.g., the role of producing language) - Sociocultural Theory (e.g., mediation, scaffolding, Zone of Proximal Development)	6

	- Automaticity Theory - Noticing Hypothesis - Dynamic Systems Theory	
3.	Linguistic Dimensions of SLA - Phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics in L2 acquisition: - Transfer effects from L1 (positive and negative) - Developmental sequences (e.g., natural order hypothesis, morpheme studies) - Phonological acquisition and intelligibility - Syntactic competence and parameter resetting	3
4.	Individual differences in SLA - Motivation: Integrative vs. instrumental motivation, self-determination theory - Language Aptitude: Cognitive abilities that predict success in SLA - Learning Strategies: Cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies - Anxiety: How language anxiety affects learning - Personality Traits: Extroversion, openness, and their impact on SLA - Age: The role of age in language learning (e.g., children vs. adults)	6
5.	Social aspects of SLA - Social Context: How environment (e.g., classroom, immersion) affects learning - Identity and Agency: The role of learner identity in SLA - Power and Ideology: How societal power structures influence language learning - Study Abroad: The impact of immersion and cultural exposure - Bilingualism and Multilingualism: How knowing multiple languages affects SLA	3
6.	Cognitive aspects of SLA - Cognitive Learning Mechanisms - Input Processing - Processability Theory - Skill Theory - Usage-based Theory - Working Memory and its implication to L2 learning	9
7.	Error analysis and contrastive analysis	3
8.	Instructed SLA - Interaction in the Second Language Classroom - Sociocultural Theory in the Second Language Classroom - Contexts of Instructed Second Language Acquisition	3

	- Individual Differences and Instructed Second Language Acquisition	
9.	Bilingualism	3
10.	Multilingualism	3
11.	Research in SLA	3
Total		**45**

D. Students Assessment Activities:

No	Assessment Activities *	Assessment timing (in week no)	Percentage of Total Assessment Score
1.	Research Critique Critically analyze a published research article in SLA, assessing its impact and contribution to the field.	4	10%
2.	Midterm Exam	8	20%
3.	Research Project	13	20%
4.	Weekly presentations	**Continuous assessment**	5%
5.	Two assignments due over the course of the semester	**Continuous assessment**	5%
6.	Final exam	16	40%

*Assessment Activities (i.e., Written test, oral test, oral presentation, group project, essay, etc.)

E. Learning Resources and Facilities:

1. References and Learning Resources:

Essential References	- Wong, W., & Barcroft, J. (Eds.). (2024). The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and input processing. Routledge. - Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, E. (2019). Second language learning theories (Fourth edition). Routledge. - Saville-Troike, M. (2017). Introducing second language acquisition. Cambridge University Press. - Loewen, S. (2020). Introduction to instructed second language acquisition (Second edition).
Supportive References	- Ellis, R. (2015). Understanding second language acquisition (Second edition.). Oxford University Press. - V Walter, D. R. (2023). *Psycholinguistic Approaches to Instructed Second Language Acquisition*. Multilingual Matters.

	- Li, S., Hiver, P., & Papi, M. (Eds.). (2022). *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and individual differences*. Routledge. - Clark, E. V. (2016). *First language acquisition* (Third edition). Cambridge University Press. - Guasti, M. T. (2016). *Language acquisition: the growth of grammar* (Second edition). The MIT Press.
Electronic Materials	https://www.routledge.com/Second-Language-Acquisition-Research-Series/book-series/LEASLARS?srsltid=AfmBOor3BJEluPc4UGd-RCho4Rf5tvGYcz7urV3ORapk7pkn3vkLHJdo https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/studies-in-second-language-acquisition
Other Learning Materials	

2. Educational and Research Facilities and Equipment Required:

Items	Resources
facilities (Classrooms, laboratories, exhibition rooms, simulation rooms, etc.)	Well-equipped classrooms
Technology equipment (Projector, smart board, software)	● Quiet study rooms for focused writing and research ● University library (physical and digital access) with academic journals, research papers, and citation guides ● Seminar/conference rooms for peer review sessions ● Technology equipment (Projectors, smart boards, and interactive whiteboards for lecture presentations) ● Grammar and plagiarism detection software (Grammarly, Turnitin, iThenticate) ● Reference management software (EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley) ● Online research databases (Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar) ● Video conferencing tools (Zoom, Microsoft Teams) for online academic collaborations and discussions.
Other equipment (Depending on the nature of the specialty)	● High-speed internet and Wi-Fi access for online research and publishing platforms ● Academic writing handbooks and style guides (APA, MLA, Chicago, IEEE) ● Open-access resources from major publishers (Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Springer)

Items	Resources
	● Learning Management System (LMS) (Blackboard) for course material and submissions.

F. Assessment of Course Quality:

Assessment Areas/Issues	Assessor	Assessment Methods
Effectiveness of teaching	Assessed by students, faculty, program leaders, and peer reviewers using direct feedback and evaluations.	Assessed through student evaluations, peer reviews, classroom observations, and teaching feedback surveys.
Effectiveness of students' assessment	Evaluated by students, faculty, and program leaders through exam performance, project outcomes, and feedback.	Evaluated through analysis of exam results, project outcomes, grading consistency, and student feedback.
Quality of learning resources	Reviewed by faculty and program leaders based on student feedback and peer reviews.	Reviewed via surveys, resource usage analytics, student and faculty feedback, and comparison with academic standards.
The extent to which CLOs have been achieved	Measured by faculty, program leaders, and peer reviewers using assessments, exams, and student portfolios.	Measured through direct assessments like exams, projects, portfolios, and indirect methods like student self-assessment and surveys.
Other	Assessed by a combination of students, faculty, program leaders, peer reviewers, and external evaluators using surveys, feedback forms, and reflective essays.	Assessed using qualitative feedback, focus groups, external reviews, and additional surveys tailored to specific concerns.

Assessor (Students, Faculty, Program Leaders, Peer Reviewer, Others (specify)
Assessment Methods (Direct, Indirect)

G. Specification Approval Data:

COUNCIL /COMMITTEE	ENGLISH DEPARTMENT COUNCIL
REFERENCE NO.	8-17-46
DATE	16 MARCH 2025