

**UNIVERSITY OF THE SACRED HEART  
EDUCATION GRADUATE PROGRAM  
SISTEMAS DE INSTRUCCIÓN Y TECNOLOGÍA EDUCATIVA**

**COURSE TITLE** : **Second/Foreign Language Acquisition Theory**

**COURSE NUMBER** : **ING 615**

**CREDITS** : **3 hours a week three credits, 1 session)**

**PREREQUISITES** : **EDU 600 and EDU604**

**DESCRIPTION** :

Course examines theories of first language learning that help to understand the principles, current approaches, theories, and issues in second/foreign language acquisition and processing. It compares and contrast first and second language acquisition from neurological, psychomotor, cognitive, and affective perspectives. This course also examines how the linguistic system is learned and the various communicative competencies that affect the learning of a second/foreign language. Importance is given to the discussion and evaluation of the multiple teaching methods available to teachers of a second/foreign language. Practical experience is gained through the students individual action research projects.

**JUSTIFICATION** :

Teachers of a second or foreign language must both understand the complexity of this process, and be familiar with the great amount of reliable knowledge already available. It is necessary for them to be acquainted with the linguistic, psychological, and educational perspectives involved in the acquisition of a second language, with the theories of learning, and with the teaching methods based on these theories. This is important so they can develop their own personal, integrated, understanding of how people learn, and of why many times they fail to learn. This knowledge and experience will help them decide on which are the best teaching methodologies for their particular students and for themselves. Material covered in this course gives students at the necessary foundation to understand many of the theories and issues involved in choosing teaching methods.

**OBJECTIVES** :

At the end of the semester the student will be able to:

1. Understand and be aware of the complexity of the process of second language acquisition;
2. Develop an integrated understanding of the principles underlying

the learning and teaching of a second/foreign language;

3. Define and discuss the disciplinary perspectives which must be considered in terms of second language acquisition: linguistically, psychological, educational;
4. Understand the relationship of language to the total human being;
5. Relate the teaching process to the learning process;
6. Compare and contrast first and second language acquisition;
7. Identify the variables in the cognitive domain of language learning and in the affective domain of second language acquisition;
8. Understand the process and issues involved in the learning of the linguistic system;
9. Know the process of teaching a second language as a means to communicate with other speakers of the second language;
10. Analyze and assess the various theories of second language acquisition;
11. Analyze, assess, and choose from the various teaching methods;
12. Assess the value of what they have learned in class from their own experience with a group of second language learners.

#### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

- I. **Week 1** Language, Learning, and Teaching: Complexities involved in the process of acquiring a second language
  - A. Trends in Linguistics and Psychology
  - B. Teaching methods as the application of theoretical findings and positions.
- II. **Week 2** Theories of first language acquisition: Issues in first language learning that help to understand the principles of second language learning.
  - A. Students' Oral Presentations:**
    1. Behavioristic Approaches
    2. The Nativist Approach

- 3. Functional Approaches
- 4. Issues in First Language Acquisition

III. **Week 3** Comparing and Contrasting First and Second Language acquisition: Areas of inquiry in second language acquisition:

- A. neurological,
- B. psychomotor
- C. cognitive
- D. affective
- E. linguistic considerations
- F. The Critical Period Hypothesis

**Due: Students' Reaction Paper 1.**

IV. **Week 4** Cognitive domain of human learning: Learning theories and processes

**A. Students' Oral Presentations:**

- 1. classical behaviorism (Pavlov)
- 2. operant conditioning (Skinner)
- 3. meaningful learning (Ausubel)
- 4. humanistic approaches (Rogers)

- B. Gagné's taxonomy of learning types
- C. The processes of transfer, interference, over generalization, induction, and deduction
- D. Intelligence and second language learning

V. **Week 5 A. PARTIAL EXAM**

- B. Discussion with students about their projects with students of a second language (Action Research).

VI. **Week 6** Cognitive domain of human learning: Cognitive variations in learning a second language:

- A. Variations in learning style: field independence, left- and right brain functioning, ambiguity tolerance, reflectivity, impulsivity, visual and auditory styles.

B. Strategies:

- 1. learning strategies
- 2. communication strategies

**C. Students' Oral Presentations**

Teaching methods:

1. Grammar Translation (The Classical Method)
2. Series Method (Gouin)

VII. **Week 7** Affective domain of second language acquisition:

- A. Personality factors: self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, empathy, extroversion, motivation (instrumental, integrative, assimilative, intrinsic, extrinsic)
- B. Measurement of affective factors
- C. **Students' Oral Presentations**  
Teaching methods:
  3. Audiolingual Method (Army Program)
  4. Direct Method (Berlitz)

VIII. **Week 8** Affective domain of second language acquisition:

- A. What is culture?
- B. Sociocultural factors
  1. Cultural stereotypes, attitudes, acculturation, culture in the classroom, social distance, pidginization, perceived and optimal social distance, sociopolitical considerations.
- C. Language, thought, and culture
- D. **Students' Oral Presentations**  
Teaching methods
  5. Silent Way (Gattegno)
  6. Suggestopedia (Lozanov)

IX. **Week 9 EASTER WEEK**

X. **Week 10** The learning of the linguistic system:

- A. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
- B. Interlanguage
- C. Error Analysis
- D. Fossilization
- E. **Students' Oral Presentations**

- Teaching methods:
7. Total Physical Response TPR (Asher)
  8. Whole Language Approach (Goodman)

**DUE PAPER** (Paper is a written report of their experiences with students of a second language ---Action Research.)

XI. **Week 11** Communicative competence:

- A. Pragmatics
- B. Language functions
- C. Discourse analysis
- D. Language and gender
- E. Nonverbal communication
- F. Communicative language teaching
- G. **Students' Oral Presentations**

Teaching methods:

- 9. Cooperative Learning (Calderon)
- 10. Communicative Language Learning CLL (Curran)

XII. **Week 12** Theories of Second Language Acquisition:

- A. The Acculturation Model
- B. The Nativization Model
- C. Accommodation Theory
- D. **Students' Oral Presentations**

Teaching methods:

- 11. The Natural Approach (Terrell)

XIII. **Week 13** Theories of Second Language Acquisition:

- A. Discourse Theory
- B. The Monitor Model
- C. The Variable Competence Model

XIV. **Week 14** Theories of Second Language Acquisition:

- A. The Universal Hypothesis
- B. A Neurofunctional Model

**DUE: Students' Reaction Paper 2**

XV. **Week 15** Students' presentations, discussions, and assessment of their experiences with second language learners during the past 10 weeks.

**FINAL EXAM**

**TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES:**

Lectures and Explanations

Group Work: (Oral and / or Written Activities)

Discussions  
Reports  
Presentations

Individual Work (Oral and / or Written Activities)

Discussions  
Reports  
Presentations

Written assignments

Reaction paper (review of article on second language acquisition)

Action research project and paper

Use of the Internet for research purposes

### **EVALUATION:**

REPORTS	100 POINTS
TEST	100 POINTS
ASSIGNMENTS, CLASS WORK	100 POINTS
PAPER	<u>100 POINTS</u>
	75% OF GRADE
FINAL EXAM	25% OF GRADE

### **RESOURCES:**

TEXTBOOK: Brown, Douglas H. Ed. Principies of language learning and teaching. 2000. Fourth Edition. New Jersey:Prentice hall Regents.

Students learning English as a second language

Library  
Internet

### **REFERENCES**

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