IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

CmDis/Ling 471: Language Development
TR 3:40 - 5:00 PM; FALL 2008; PEARSON 1115

INSTRUCTOR: H. S. Venkatagiri, Ph. D.
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OFFICE HOURS: TWR 11 AM – 12 Noon
By appointment at other times

DESCRIPTION: The course provides a theoretical and factual account of how children acquire their first language.

OBJECTIVES: After the successful completion of this course, you will be:

1. Familiar with the basic components of speech and language.
2. Aware of the genetic, anatomical, physiological, social, and cognitive bases of speech and language acquisition.
3. Able to describe the major milestones in the acquisition of English as a first language.
4. Acquainted with selected models of first and second language acquisition.
5. Familiar with the factors that may affect first language acquisition.
6. Aware of the theories and major scientific findings related to the development of reading and writing.


Web Site: https://webct.its.iastate.edu/webct/logon/646468211011. Course grades are posted to the web by your five-digit ISU ID number as shown at left. Course overheads, tutorials, and study guides are also found on the web site.

GRADING: Grading is on a percentage basis as follows: (Total points: 380)
A = 94 - 100%    A– = 90 - 93
B+ = 86 - 89    B = 82 - 85    B– = 78 - 81
C+ = 74 - 77    C = 70 - 73    C– = 66 - 69
D+ = 62 - 65    D = 58 - 61    D– = 54 - 57

TEST FORMAT: The tests will consist of short-answer and/or multiple-choice questions. Short-answer questions require you to write a word, sentence or a paragraph for each question. Do write in complete sentences and do not use nonstandard abbreviations. Tests will cover both the assigned chapters in the textbook and your class notes and tutorials posted to the web site. The final examination will cover chapters and class notes since the last test (approximately 40 points), all of your class notes up to the last test (approximately 30 points) and questions from the student papers (approximately 30 points).

ASSIGNMENT 1

Each of the four criteria for the evaluation of the paper is rated on a 10-point scale for a total of 40 points for the paper:

Poor (1-2 points)
Fair (3-4 points)
Good (5-6 points)
Very good (7-8 points)
Excellent (9-10 points)

Write a short paper on a topic related to the development of speech, language, reading, or writing. Select an article from a list of articles posted to the course web site. Be sure to follow instructions for selecting an article found on the course web site. The paper is due on November 4. Instructions on how to submit the article are found on the course web site (There is no need to submit a paper copy).

The paper should be about two to three pages in length, double-spaced. Find two or more relevant references related to the topic in addition to the paper you have selected from the list of papers posted to the web. Organize your paper along these lines:

1. At the top right corner of the paper type your full name. Below it provide full citation for the article in the APA format (See examples of APA format on our web site).
2. Clearly state the research questions the article is trying to answer under the heading “Research Questions.”
3. Describe the method used by the authors to answer the questions under “Method.”
4. Provide a numbered list of findings under the heading “Findings.”
5. Now relate the findings of this article to information in two or more reputed sources you found on the topic under the heading “My Evaluation.”

Prepare the paper in such a way that a reasonably informed and interested lay person (such as the parent of a child), with no particular knowledge of linguistics and language development, should be able to understand. This means that all concepts and terms that are not common knowledge should be explained. The papers will be presented in class by its writer and will be posted to the course web site for other students in the class to read.

Evaluation criteria for the paper are: (1) the quality of the additional references selected and the critical evaluation of the findings, (2) content and organization (clear, accurate, comprehensive, and readable); (3) spelling, grammar, punctuation, timely submission, and adherence to all of the
assignments included here; (4) class presentation (organized, clear, and accurate; use of overheads or multimedia is encouraged) and answering questions after the presentation (shows evidence of full understanding of the article and any background materials necessary to fully understand it; I will ask questions; other students may also ask questions). This assignment carries 40 points.

ASSIGNMENT 2

Read the chapters in the book preferably BEFORE the dates indicated in “Course Outline and Calendar” below. Write a summary of important information presented in each chapter. For each chapter, the length of the summary should be not less than two pages and not more than three pages, single-spaced. Submit an electronic copy saved in the .txt file format on or before December 2. Each chapter summary is worth up to 10 points for a total of 90 points for this assignment. Earn points even as you prepare for the tests! Organization, grammar and spelling, accuracy, and completeness are the criteria for evaluating this assignment. At the beginning of each summary, clearly list the chapter number and title as well as your full name.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:
Throughout the semester, there will be several unannounced extra credit in-class activities. Each activity is worth two points. If you miss an in-class activity for whatever reason, it cannot be made up later (no exceptions).

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
Please refrain from reading newspapers and other reading materials or making private conversations during class lectures. You are always most welcome to address any questions and comments to the instructor or the entire class.

DISABILITY STATEMENT
If you have a disability that requires special arrangements, please bring a SAAR form from the Disability Resources office (294-7220; 1076 Student Services Building) specifying the accommodation(s) you will need.

NOTE:
The course calendar, assignments, and the number of tests and the points and dates for tests are subject to change (with notice!).

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

August 26
Course Description, calendar; tests, and grading; What is communication? (Web Unit 1)

28
What do children learn when they learn a language? - phonology (Web Unit 2)

September 2
What do children learn when they learn a language? - phonology continued (Web Unit 2)

4
What do children learn when they learn a language? – morphology (Web Unit 3)

9, 11
What do children learn when they learn a language? – syntax (Web Unit 4)

16
What do children learn when they learn a language? – semantics and pragmatics (Web Unit 5)

18
What are the developmental bases of language acquisition? – hearing and vision (Web Units 6 and 7)

23
What are the developmental bases of language acquisition? – neurological and motor development (Chapter 1; Prepare chapter summary; Web Unit 8)

25
What are the developmental bases of language acquisition? – cognitive and social development (Web Units 9 and 10)

30
Test # 1 (75 points; Bring a #2 pencil to the class)

October 2, 7
Do infants babble their way into language? (Chapter 2; Prepare chapter summary; Web Unit 11)

9, 14
How do toddlers tame language? (Chapter 3; Prepare chapter summary; Web Unit 12)

16
Is language “child’s play” to preschoolers? (Chapter 4; Prepare chapter summary; Web Unit 13)

21
Warning! School-age children use “adult” language!! (Chapters 5 and 6; Prepare separate summary for each chapter; Web Unit 14)

23
Is language “simply” acquired, developed, or learned? (Web Unit 15)

28
Test # 2 (75 points; Bring a #2 pencil to the class)

30
How do children learn to read? (Chapters 7 and 8; Prepare separate summary for each chapter; Web Unit 16)

November 4, 6
How do children learn to write? (Chapter 9; Prepare chapter summary; Web Unit 18)

11, 13, 18, 20
Class presentation of assigned papers

☺☺ Thanksgiving Recess ☺☺

December 2, 4
Class presentation of assigned papers (Continued)

9, 11

Comprehensive final examination (12:00:2:00 PM; In the same room where we meet)

(100 points; Bring a #2 pencil to the class)