



LING3384

Child Language Acquisition: Morphology and Syntax

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2025

Department of Linguistics

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General Information

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

20cp in LING units at 2000 level or above including (LING220 or LING2220)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is an introduction to current theories of child language acquisition, including the generative approach and usage-based approaches. The focus of the unit is typically-developing children's acquisition of morphology and syntax, but we also discuss children with developmental language delay. Tutorials review online lecture content, test linguistic hypotheses by investigating transcript data from children's spontaneous speech, and discuss appropriate methodologies for evaluating knowledge of language in different populations of children. This unit introduces foundational theoretical knowledge regarding child language development that is important for anyone wishing to do the Master of Speech and Language Pathology and work with children.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Demonstrate knowledge of theories of child language acquisition and their predictions for the developmental path

ULO2: Develop skills using data from corpora of child language, and searching them for relevant information, including using CLAN, a software program that searches transcripts of children's spontaneous speech in a repository of child language data.

ULO3: Test linguistic hypotheses, and make further predictions through analysis and interpretation of existing acquisition data, either from a corpus of child language data or from existing experiments.

ULO4: Evaluate methodologies for assessing children's linguistic knowledge including standardised tests and experimental methodologies, and command the ethical issues surrounding working with children

General Assessment Information

Grade descriptors and other information concerning grading are contained in the [Macquarie University Assessment Policy](#).

All final grades are determined by a grading committee, in accordance with the Macquarie University Assessment Policy, and are not the sole responsibility of the Unit Convenor.

Students will be awarded a final grade and a mark which must correspond to the grade descriptors specified in the [Assessment Procedure](#) (clause 128).

To pass this unit, you must demonstrate sufficient evidence of achievement of the learning

outcomes, meet any ungraded requirements, and achieve a final mark of 50 or better.

Further details for each assessment task will be available on iLearn.

Late Submissions

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (OF THE TOTAL POSSIBLE MARK) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a grade of '0' will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted.

For example:

Number of days (hours) late	Total Possible Marks	Deduction	Raw mark	Final mark
1 day (1-24 hours)	100	5	75	70
2 days (24-48 hours)	100	10	75	65
3 days (48-72 hours)	100	15	75	60
7 days (144-168 hours)	100	35	75	40
>7 days (>168 hours)	100	-	75	0

Late submissions for an assessment task will not be accepted once that assessment task has been marked and returned to students.

Special Consideration

If you are unable to complete an assessment task on or by the specified date due circumstances that are unexpected, unavoidable, significantly disruptive and beyond your control, you may apply for special consideration in accordance with the [special consideration policy](#). Applications for special consideration must be supported by appropriate evidence and submitted via ask.mq.edu.au.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Analysing child language data	25%	No	Week 12
Review Quiz	30%	No	Week 8
Final Exam	45%	No	Exam Period

Analysing child language data

Assessment Type ¹: Problem set

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **Week 12**

Weighting: **25%**

In this assignment, you use child language data to test linguistic hypotheses about language development. You will work with data, organise it, use graphs, charts, or tables to illustrate findings, and interpret the data.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of theories of child language acquisition and their predictions for the developmental path
- Develop skills using data from corpora of child language, and searching them for relevant information, including using CLAN, a software program that searches transcripts of children's spontaneous speech in a repository of child language data.
- Test linguistic hypotheses, and make further predictions through analysis and interpretation of existing acquisition data, either from a corpus of child language data or from existing experiments.

Review Quiz

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **Week 8**

Weighting: **30%**

This quiz reviews lecture, reading, and tutorial content on early child language acquisition

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of theories of child language acquisition and their predictions for the developmental path
- Develop skills using data from corpora of child language, and searching them for relevant information, including using CLAN, a software program that searches transcripts of children's spontaneous speech in a repository of child language data.

- Evaluate methodologies for assessing children's linguistic knowledge including standardised tests and experimental methodologies, and command the ethical issues surrounding working with children

Final Exam

Assessment Type ¹: Examination

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **Exam Period**

Weighting: **45%**

The final examination reviews lecture/tutorial/reading content for the entire unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of theories of child language acquisition and their predictions for the developmental path
- Test linguistic hypotheses, and make further predictions through analysis and interpretation of existing acquisition data, either from a corpus of child language data or from existing experiments.
- Evaluate methodologies for assessing children's linguistic knowledge including standardised tests and experimental methodologies, and command the ethical issues surrounding working with children

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Unit content will be provided in lectures, tutorials, readings, and extra activities. There are compulsory readings assigned for some weeks, available via Leganto. If there are reading materials, they will be posted on iLearn under the heading for the relevant week. Some weeks, there'll be extra activities. These activities may provide additional materials, and are for you to get some practice with what we've been discussing that week. They will be posted on the iLearn site. Any practice quizzes will not be assessed, but the contents of the activities are considered

part of the unit materials.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2025.03 of the [Handbook](#)