The Mental Lexicon and L2 Vocabulary Acquisition

Department of English Linguistics

Fall 2017
Friday 10-11.40
Main bld. 121.
Seminar, 2 hrs, graded,

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Office hours: Wednesday 13-14
Thursday 9-10
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND AIMS:
The aim of the course is to familiarize students with current issues and experimental findings of psycholinguistic research related to the organization and function of the L2 mental lexicon as well as with some of the latest research results concerning the learning and teaching of L2 vocabulary. The following questions will be addressed: How is our mental lexicon organized? How is semantic and formal knowledge represented, and how can we access lexical information? How does lexical memory work, and what intralingual issues represent a challenge in the memorization of L2 vocabulary? The course will offer a survey of research into the learner’s lexical development with special regard to the role of form and meaning in the function of the mental lexicon. The application of new technologies in L2 vocabulary acquisition will also be discussed. The course comprises seminar input with active participation in class discussions. Micro-teaching practice and project work are also expected of all students to ensure maximum coverage of the syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Attendance and active participation in class discussions are expected of all students. In order to accomplish the course successfully, each student will be requested to do all of the following three tasks:

1. Oral presentation
Each participant is expected to give 1-2 (PowerPoint supported) presentations of 15-20 minutes each on a topic chosen by him/her from the readings assigned on a weekly basis (see the detailed course schedule on my supplementary materials webpage).

2. Electronic summary of presentations
Besides presenting the chosen material in an easily comprehensible and preferably interesting, interactive way (NOT reading it out!) in class, students will be asked to prepare easy-to-
follow summaries on their chosen topics for their peers. These summaries will be emailed to the course teacher, who will post them on his supplemetary materials page, thus making them available for all the group members.

**Format of electronic summaries:**
1. Length: 1-3 pages
2. Font type: Times New Roman 12 (1.5 spacing)
3. Student’s name in the top left corner
4. Author’s name and the full title of the source at the top of the page centralized
5. **File name:** author’s last name_first few words of the title (e.g. Oxford_Language Learning Strategies)

**3. Written tests**
On the basis of the materials covered students will write a mid-term and an end-term test that cover the materials discussed in the course.

**ASSESSMENT:**
Assessment will be based on:

a) quality of the oral presentations  
   (presentation, content and linguistic well-formedness)  20 %

b) quality of the summaries prepared for peers.  
   (presentation, content and linguistic well-formedness)  20 %

c) mid-term test result  30 %

d) end-term test result  30 % of the final grade.

It is important to meet the deadline for presentations as late work will be penalised.

**Grades will be granted as**
90% up: excellent; 80% up: good; 70% up: average; 60% up: poor, below 60%: fail.

**Reading**
The reading materials necessary for the course will be provided in an electronic format. (For further details see my supplementary materials page).

**Course Content and Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Orientation; How to give an effective presentation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>What does it mean to know a word?; Which words and how many words to teach? - selecting and organizing vocabulary</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>Ways of vocabulary teaching</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Oct. 06</td>
<td>The role of context in vocabulary learning. Incidental and intentional vocabulary learning</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>What makes a word easy or difficult to learn?</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td><strong>Mid-term test</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>Memory processes in vocabulary acquisition,</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nov. 03</td>
<td><em>Consultation week</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>The mental lexicon</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>Strategies for learning and remembering vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>New Technologies in vocabulary acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dec. 01</td>
<td>Testing vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dec. 08</td>
<td><strong>End-of-the-term test</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dec. 15</td>
<td>Summing up, assessing students’ work, evaluating the course.</td>
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