



## Bachelor's courses Faculty of Humanities

VU University Amsterdam - Student- & Onderwijszaken - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2019-2020



# First Language Acquisition and Language Impairment

<b>Course code</b>	L_AABACIW111 ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 5+6
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculty of Humanities
<b>Coordinator</b>	dr. P.H.F. Bos
<b>Examinator</b>	dr. P.H.F. Bos
<b>Teaching staff</b>	drs. E. Akkerman, dr. P.H.F. Bos
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Lecture, Seminar
<b>Level</b>	100

## Course objective

To gather knowledge of linguistic theories and research methodologies involving language acquisition and language disorders. To develop basic skills in coding and analyzing child language data and to learn how to cope with the methodological difficulties of child language research (developing a test and recruiting a child to participate in the test).

To become familiar with language assessment materials and to be able to critically assess them. To be able to translate analyses of child language data into advices for parents. To be able to gather information from handbooks on child language acquisition and to critically read research articles on this topic.

## Course content

In this course, we study the phases that every child goes through when acquiring his or her first language. It is amazing to see how children all over the world build up their language system in similar ways as they start out, and how they grow apart more and more as they develop more complex language skills in the typologically different languages of the world. We study the theories that try to explain how it is possible that an average four-year-old is quite fluent in his or her own language(s) while it takes adults years and years to learn a (new) language. We also study the language development of children with a developmental language disorder. These children experience difficulties in acquiring certain aspects of their own language. Sometimes the cause of these difficulties is obvious, for instance in children with hearing loss, and sometimes we don't know what causes these difficulties. We will also study the theories that try to explain the causes of these disorders. Furthermore, we will collect, study and analyze child language data, both manually and automatized. You will also be trained in giving advice to parents who worry about the language development of their child and you will develop and study materials for language assessment.

## Form of tuition

Period 5: one lecture (two hours) and one linguistic lab (two hours) per week and in period 6: two seminars (four hours in total) per week. Attendance at seminars and linguistic labs is obligatory. You must have attended at least 80% of these classes, otherwise you will have to do an extra assignment or extra assignments.

**Type of assessment**

Written exam with open questions and multiple choice questions. You will only be allowed to take part in the exam if you have handed in all assignments (analysis of child language data, lab assignments and wug-test).

**Course reading**

Ambridge, B. & V.M. Lieven (2011). *Child Language Acquisition. Contrasting Theoretical Approaches*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Verhoeven, L. & van Balkom, H. (2004). *Classification of Developmental Language Disorders. Theoretical Issues and Clinical Implications*. Mahwah, NJ/Londen: Lawrence Erlbaum.

**Entry requirements**

You must have participated in the course Introduction to linguistics (code L\_AABACIW103) or an equivalent course at another university.

**Target group**

BA 1 students in Communication and Information Studies (specialization: Language Learning and Language Teaching);  
All other students interested in the topic who meet the requirements of the course.