LING 451/651  ACQUISITION OF PHONOLOGY

Winter 2020
Mon & Wed 2:35-3:55; LEA 210

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Office:  1085 Penfield, Room 320, x4223
Office Hours:  Tu 3:00-4:00 & Wed 1:00-2:00
or by appointment

Prerequisites:
LING 331. LING 355 or equivalent recommended.

Outline:
This course will investigate the development of prosodic (and segment) structure by first (and second) language learners. The focus will be on issues that arise in the context of Optimality Theory, a theory of grammar where the linguistic competence of a speaker comprises a finite set of hierarchically-ranked, violable constraints. The course will examine a number of issues that arise for (first) language acquisition in the OT context including: Is there an initial ranking of constraints? If so, are markedness constraints (which strive for structurally- and/or phonetically-defined well-formedness) initially ranked over faithfulness constraints (which strive to maintain identity between input and output), or is the ranking the reverse? Do children’s early grammars contain all and only the constraints present in adult grammars, or do some constraints emerge later in development? Are there child-specific (interpretations of) constraints? If not, how do we capture child-specific processes such as Consonant Harmony? Can comprehension and production be captured within a single OT grammar? How do we formally capture optionality and overlapping stages in development?

Readings:
Papers: Available on myCourses.

Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Given out Mon Jan 27; due Wed Feb 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Given out Wed Feb 12; due Fri Feb 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Given out Wed Mar 11; due Wed Apr 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper or Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Final paper due on day before the final exam at 11:59pm</td>
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Undergraduate students can choose between final paper (10-15 pages single-spaced) and final exam (open book) – each student must submit decision by e-mail to heather.goad@mcgill.ca by 5:00pm Mon Mar 30. Graduate students must write final paper.

Assignments:
• All assignments will take the form of a problem set for which you are required to provide an analysis.
• Assignment 1 is small, and is intended to ensure that you have theoretical and empirical command of OT as well as a solid grasp of the acquisition issues under focus.
• Assignments 2 and 3 will involve larger sets of data. Beyond providing an analysis of the data, you must include some argumentation that justifies the analysis you have arrived at. The analysis should be written up in squib (short paper) format.
• Each assignment must be handed in by 11:59pm on the due date. Assignments must be submitted electronically (in pdf format).
• Collaboration on assignments is encouraged (maximally 3 students per group). You can discuss the assignments within your group but not across groups; please indicate on the written version with whom you worked. If you choose to collaborate, it would be optimal if you hand in a single group report.
To type IPA characters, including diacritics, there are two options: (1) interactive IPA keyboards: http://westonruter.github.io/ipa-chart/keyboard/ or http://ipa.typeit.org/full/; (2) IPA keyboard layouts for which you need to change keyboard language settings: http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&id=uniipakeyboard.

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In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

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McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

Syllabus (dates are approximate):
Weeks 1-2 (Jan 6, 8 & 13):
• Overview of common processes in the acquisition of phonology
  Optional: Tessier §2.2: Speech perception in the first year of life.

Weeks 2-3 (Jan 15, 20 & 22):
• Introduction to OT and issues for acquisition
  Optional (for now; you will want to come back to these chapters for your assignments):
Week 4 (Jan 27 & 29):
• **Optimizing syllable shape, with a focus on onsets**
  Read: Tessier Ch 3: Early phonology: The shapes of syllables.
  Read: Tessier §5.5.6: Another process among places of articulation.
  Skim: Tessier Ch 5: Early phonology: Consonants.

Week 5 (Feb 3 & 5):
• **Optimizing syllable shape, with a focus on codas**
  Read: Tessier §6.1: Consonants in codas.

Week 6 (Feb 10 & 12):
• **Optimizing word shape**
  Read: Tessier Ch 4: Early phonology: Word sizes and shapes.

Week 7 (Feb 17):
• **Child-specific processes, with a focus on consonant harmony**
  Read: Tessier Ch 5.5.5: Velar Fronting. 5.6: On alternative explanations.
  Tessier, §6.3: Consonant harmony.

Week 7 (Feb 19):
• **Lexical effects and the role of frequency in acquisition**
  Read: Tessier Ch 7: Lexical influences and interactions in phonological learning.

Week 8 (Feb 24 & 26):
• **Phonology–morphology interface**
  Read: Tessier Ch 8: Acquiring Morpho-phonology

Reading Week (Mar 2-6)

Week 9 (Mar 9 & 11):
• **Comprehension vs. production**
  Read: Pater, J. (2004) Bridging the gap between receptive and productive development with
  in phonological acquisition*. Cambridge: CUP, pp. 219-244.

Week 10 (Mar 16 & 18):
• **Formalizing the initial state and the developmental path**
  Read: Tessier Ch 10: Some OT theories of phonological learning.

Week 11 (Mar 23 & 25):
• **The initial state and sources of evidence for grammar construction in L2 acquisition**
  Schwartz, M. & H. Goad (2017) Indirect positive evidence in the acquisition of a subset

Week 12 (Mar 30):
• **Markedness in L2 acquisition**

Week 13 (April 1 & 6):
• **Phonology–morphology interface in L2 acquisition**
  Read: Goad, H. & L. White (2019) Prosodic effects on L2 grammars. *Linguistic Approaches to
  Bilingualism* 9: 769-808.

Week 14 (April 8):
• **Review**