

**CMM125**  
**Children's Language**

**MODULE HANDBOOK**

<b>Module title:</b>	Children's Language
<b>Module Code:</b>	CMM125
<b>CRN:</b>	63487
<b>Credit points:</b>	20 credits

<b>Module Co-ordinator:</b>	Dr Juliana Gerard ( <a href="mailto:j.gerard@ulster.ac.uk">j.gerard@ulster.ac.uk</a> ) office: 17E07
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<b>Hours per week:</b>	2hrs lecture 1hr seminar ( <i>starting week 2</i> )
	Independent study, assignment preparation and directed reading (including assessment)
<b>When:</b>	Seminar on Thursday <i>either</i> 12:15 <i>or</i> 13: 15 Lecture on Thursday at 14:15
<b>Where:</b>	Seminar in 17E24 (Linguistics & Phonetics Lab) Lecture in 17E25

**Why am I studying this module?**

Even before they begin formal schooling, children are well on their way to mastering the language of their community. This module will introduce students to the major issues that are considered when studying children's language. Students will also learn how these issues relate to the speed and consistency of children's language development all over the world, for any language. The module will cover a variety of topics, from early language development in infancy to later development of more complex structures. We will also consider how these phenomena can inform a more general model of language development.

**What am I going to learn on this module?**

Week 1 (26 Sep):  
Introduction, module overview

Week 2 (3 Oct):  
Properties of language

Week 3 (10 Oct):  
The problem of language acquisition

Week 4 (17 Oct):  
Nature and nurture in children's language

Week 5 (24 Oct):  
Acquisition of morphology

Week 6 (31 Oct):  
Reading week

Weeks 7-8 (7 & 14 Nov):  
Acquisition of phonology

Weeks 9-10 (21 & 28 Nov):  
Acquisition of words

Week 11 (5 Dec):  
Acquisition of syntax

Week 12 (12 Dec):  
Bilingualism and heritage languages

What should I be able to do by the end of this module?

By the end you should be able to:

- Define and discuss the Logical Problem of Language Acquisition in terms of positive evidence, (indirect) negative evidence, and the primary linguistic data
- Distinguish between arguments for the roles of the environment and of internal properties.
- Define and discuss strategies that children might use to identify sounds and words in their native language
- Define and give examples of principles and parameters

How am I going to learn on this module?

You have a **two hour class** during which the material will be presented by the lecturer. Also there will be a **weekly one hour seminar** (starting week 2) for discussing questions about assignments and reviewing course material. Attendance and participation in both the lectures and seminars is important, and will count towards the final grade. Questions may also be posted in the online discussion board before class, and will still count towards participation.

The lecture will introduce new concepts and phenomena in children's language. The seminar will focus more on experimental design, but will also provide more of an opportunity to cover any questions about new material.

How will I be assessed on this module?

- Weekly discussion board posts: 40%
- Assignment 1 (CHILDES analysis): 20%
- Participation/Attendance: 10%
- Assignment 2 (research article analysis, completed as a group project): 30%

Assignments in this module will aim to develop a solid understanding of fundamental issues in children's language development, with the majority of assignments centred around posts to the discussion board about the readings before the following week's class (40%). Issues raised on the discussion board will then be continued in seminar. Two additional assignments will focus on analysing speech in conversations between parents and children, and on evaluating the claims in an academic journal article (60%).

What should I read for this module?

Required reading:

**Main text: O'Grady, William (2005) *How children learn language*, Cambridge University Press.**

**Selections from: Lust, Barbara (2006) *Child language*, Cambridge University Press. (to be posted online)**