

Updated 8-30-2018

LLT 841 *Topics in Learning & Teaching*

Fall 2018

Thursdays, 9:10 to 12:00 noon

A334 Wells Hall

Sec. 001: **Individual Differences in SLA**

Dr. Paula Winke (winke@msu.edu), course instructor

B-252 Wells Hall

Office: 517-353-9792; Home: 337-2625; Cell: 775-0156

winke@msu.edu

Office hours: Thursdays, 1 to 2 PM; Fridays, 11 to Noon



Why do some people learn foreign languages easily while others struggle? Why might someone have difficulties learning French or Chinese but pick up German effortlessly? In this course, we explore some of these questions and evaluate different theoretical frameworks related to commonly observed, individual differences (IDs) in SLA. We discuss empirical research on how IDs such as age of onset, aptitude, motivation, willingness-to-communicate, and anxiety relate to SLA. We also explore other areas of IDs that are less studied in SLA; such as stress, economic status (although this is studied much with children), and circadian rhythms.

By the end of this course students will not only understand the relative contributions of IDs to SLA, but they will also understand the following essentials for conducting research on IDs:

1. Principles and practices in questionnaire construction and design: Using Qualtrics
2. Dimension reduction for questionnaire/scale construction: Factor analysis (exploratory and confirmatory)
3. Going beyond correlations: Logistic regression and related techniques (basic concepts + binary, multinomial, and ordinal logistic regression) for understanding how IDs potentially influence or shape L2-learning
4. The basic concepts of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Each week during the semester we will read empirical research articles on IDs as well as other seminal work on IDs from the current SLA literature.

Required Texts (available through MSU library as e-books)

Pawlak, M (Ed.). (2012). *New perspectives on individual differences in language learning and teaching*. Berlin: Springer.

Hummel, K. M. (2014). *Introducing second language acquisition: Perspectives and practices*. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

Highly Recommended Texts

Field, A., Miles, J., & Field, Z. (2012). *Discovering statistics using R* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

The American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Topics and Readings

I. Cognitive IDs

30-Aug. Introduction to the course, introduction to IDs in SLA

Assignment 1 directions handed out in class and explained, and then we can get started: Use LLBA to look up three to five articles that are on an individual difference you are interested in.

5-Sept. Assignment 1 due by 5 PM Wednesday, Sept. 5. Upload to D2L.

6-Sept. Overview of IDs, continued

Readings:

- Chapter 8 in Hummel
- Ellis, R. (2004). Individual differences in second language learning. In A. Davis & C. Elder (Eds.), *The handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 525-551). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Further topics:

- Using Qualtrics for gathering data: An introduction to projects and what you can do with Qualtrics. Likert-scale construction in Qualtrics. Computer adaptability.
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13-Sept. Age, aptitude, and education

Donuts & Distributions: Basics in R from 10 to 11:30, with Bronson Hui, B443 Wells Hall

Readings:

- Chapter 7 in Hummel
 - Fitzgerald, J., Stenner, A. J., Sanford-moore, E. E., Koons, H., Bowen, K., & Kim, K. H. (2015). The relationship of Korean students' age and years of English-as-a-foreign-language exposure with English-reading ability: A cross-age study. *Reading Psychology, 36*(2), 173–202, doi: 10.1080/02702711.2013.843063
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20-Sept. Aptitude, an in-depth look

Readings:

- Zhisheng, E. W., Biedron, A., & Skehan, P. (2017). Foreign language aptitude theory: Yesterday, today and tomorrow. *Language Teaching, 50*(1), 1–31. doi: 10.1017/S0261444816000276
- Li, S. (2016). The construct validity of language aptitude: A meta analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 38*, 801–842. doi: 10.1017/S027226311500042X

Further topics:

- The MLAT: Trying it out.

27-Sept. Working memory

Readings:

- Kim, Y., Payant, C., & Pearson, P. (2015). The intersection of task-based interaction, task complexity, and working memory: L2 question development through recasts in a laboratory setting. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 37, 549–581. doi: 10.1017/S0272263114000618
- Wen, Z. (2014). Theorizing and measuring working memory in first and second language research. *Language Teaching*, 47(2), 174–190. doi: 10.1017/S0261444813000517
- OPTIONAL: Conway, A. R. A., Kane, M. J., Bunting, M. F., Hambrick, D. Z., Wilhelm, O., & Engle, R. W. (2005). Working memory span tasks: A methodological review and user's guide. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 12(5), 769–786.

Further topics:

- Taking WM tests, exploring tests online

4-Oct. Exceptionalism

Readings:

- Biedron, A., & Pawlak, M. (2016). New conceptualizations of linguistic giftedness. *Language Teaching*, 49(2), 151–185. doi: 10.1017/S0261444815000439
- Thurman, J. (2018, September). The mystery of people who speak dozens of languages: What can hyperglots teach the rest of us? *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/09/03/the-mystery-of-people-who-speak-dozens-of-languages>

Further topics:

- Downloading data from Qualtrics. Importing data for analysis.

11-Oct. Cognitive disabilities

Readings:

- Kormos, J. (2017). The effects of specific learning difficulties on processes of multilingual language development. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 37, 30–44. doi: 10.1017/S026719051700006X
- Csizér, K., Kormos, J., & Sarkadi, A. (2018). The dynamics of language learning attitudes and motivation: Lessons from an interview study of dyslexic language learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(3), 470–487. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40856179>

11-Oct. 3A. Project proposal due -- a succinct, two- to five-page (double-spaced) proposal regarding what you would like to do for your final project is due October 11 to D2L.

II. Socially-construed and affective IDs

18-Oct. Personality, willingness to communicate

Donuts & Distributions: Data Visualization in R from 10 to 11:00, with Susie Kim, B443 Wells Hall
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Readings:

- Denies, K., Yashima, T., & Janssen, R. (2015). Classroom versus societal willingness to communicate: Investigating French as a second language in Flanders. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(4), 718–739. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12276>
- Smemoe, W. B., Dewey, D. P., Bown, J., & Martinsen, R. A. (2014). Variables affecting L2 gains during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 47, 464–486. doi: 10.1111/flan.12093

25-Oct. Motivation

Readings:

- I will have the class pick one or two chapters to read from Dörnyei's 2009 edited volume "Motivation, language identity, and the L2 self." Then we will blow these theories out of the water by reading Sasaki and company's paper. Or, individual students in the class can pick different chapters from the book. There are a lot of great chapters in it!
- Sasaki, M., Kozaki, Y., & Ross, S. J. (2017). The impact of normative environments on learner motivation and L2 reading ability growth. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(1), 163–178. doi: 10.1111/modl.12381
- OPTIONAL: Ushioda, E. (2011). Why autonomy? Insights from motivation theory and research. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(2), 221-232. doi: 10.1080/17501229.2011.577536

1-Nov. Anxiety and stress (Affect)

Readings:

- Chapter 10 in Pawlak (The place of affect in SLA by Kębłowska)
- Rai, M. K., Loschky, L. C., & Harris, R. J. (2015). The effects of stress on reading: A comparison of first-language versus intermediate second-language reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(2), 348–363. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037591>

Further topics:

- Analyzing ID data.

8-Nov. Synchrony (A newly investigated ID in SLA)

Donuts & Distributions: Reporting Practice in SLA from 10 to 11:00, with Luke Plonsky, B443 Wells Hall

- de Bot, K. (2015). Circadian rhythms and second language development. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 19(2), 142–155. doi: 10.1177/1367006913489201

15-Nov. Socio-economic status (SES) (An ID that tends to get researched only with children.)

Read all three abstracts, but then, pick one of these three to read in depth. Each hour we will go over one. You will be more responsible for leading discussions on the one you choose to read in full.

- Butler, Y. G., & Le, V. (2018). A longitudinal investigation of parental social-economic status (SES) and young students' learning of English as a foreign language. *System*, 73, 4–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.07.005>
- Huang, B., Chang, Y. S., Niu, L., & Zhi, M. (2018). Examining the effects of socio-economic status and language input on adolescent English learners' speech production outcomes. *System*, 73, 27–36. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2017.07.004
- Nikolov, M., & Csapo, B. (2018). The relationships between 8th graders' L1 and L2 reading skills, inductive reasoning and socio-economic status in early English and German as a foreign language programs. *System*, 73, 48–57. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2017.11.001

Further topics:

- Ways to measure SES and other IDs when longitudinal data is available.

29-Nov. –OPEN (topics/readings to be decided through class interests)

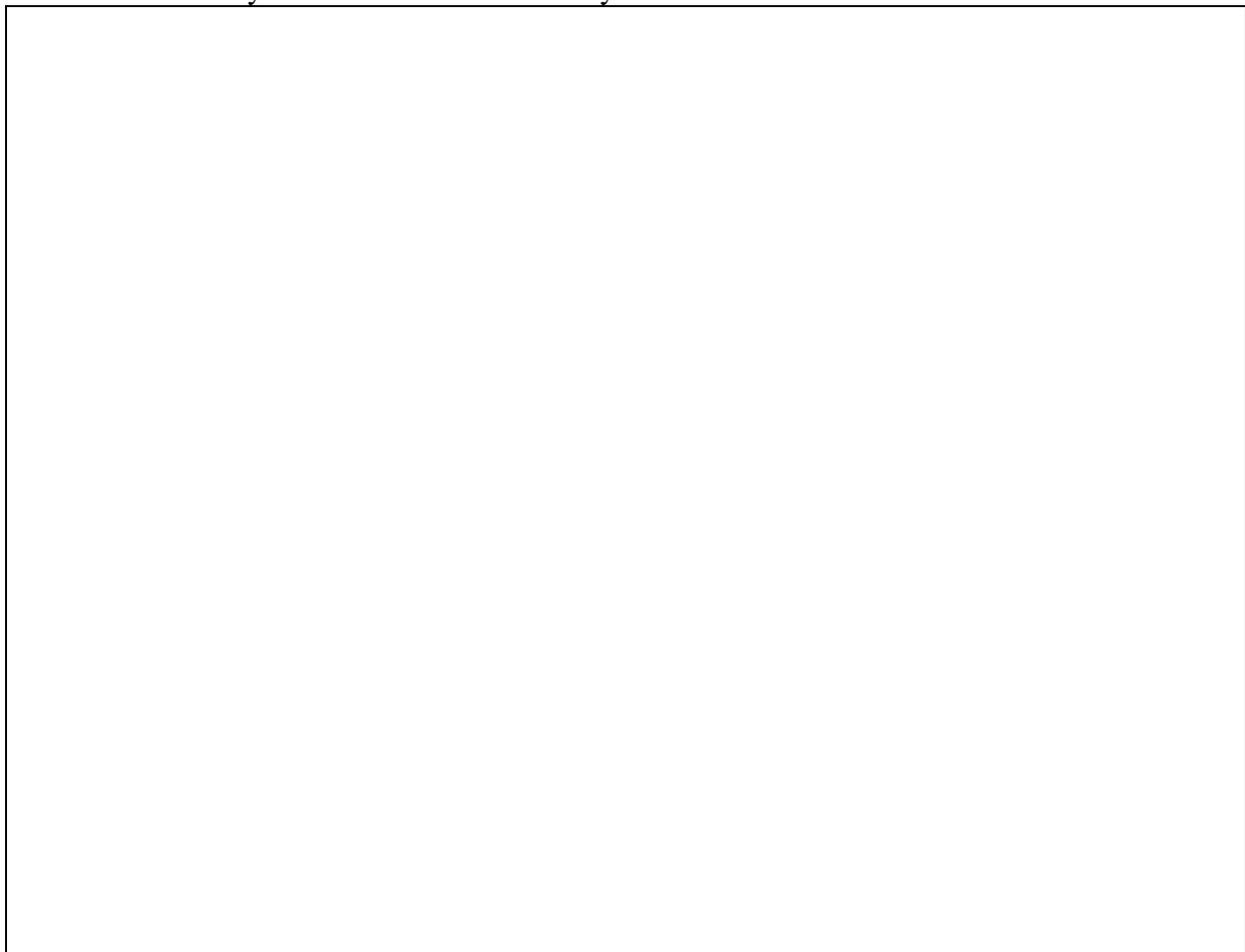
6-Dec. – OPEN (topics/readings to be decided through class interests)

10-Dec. -- 3C. Final paper due by Monday, December 10 at 2:45 PM to D2L folder.

Some suggestions for OPEN days:

- Kissling, E. M. (2014). What predicts the effectiveness of foreign-language pronunciation instruction? Investigating the role of perception and other individual differences. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue Canadienne Des Langues Vivantes*, 70(4), 532–558. doi: 10.3138/cmlr.2161
- Miller, Z. F., Fox, J. K., Moser, J. S., & Godfroid, A. (2018). Playing with fire: Effects of negative mood induction and working memory on vocabulary acquisition. *Cognition and Emotion*, 32(5), 1105–1113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2017.1362374>
- Plonsky, L. (2011). The effectiveness of second language strategy instruction: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 61(4), 993–1038. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00663.x
- Rivera-Mills, S. V., & Plonsky, L. (2007). Empowering students with language learning strategies: A critical review of current issues. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(3), 535-547. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2007.tb02874.x

Feel free to sketch your ideas for the OPEN days here:

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for sketching ideas for the OPEN days.

Assignments and Grading

1. Using LLBA to look up articles on an ID of your choosing (5%)

Use LLBA to look up three to five articles that are on an individual difference you are interested in. Out of those three to five, try to find one study in which the researchers used a Likert-scale to measure the individual difference. Write a one-page summary paper (single spaced, normal 1-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman) that reviews (a) the general trends found across the three to five studies and (b) how the ID was measured by the Likert-scale questionnaire in at least one study. Please briefly report these findings in relation to the Likert-scale:

- i. How many points were on the Likert scale, and is there a justification given for the number of scale points?
- ii. How many questions were used to measure the construct (the individual difference)? And was there a reason given for the number of questions?

(c) End your one-page summary with a few sentences on where you think research involving this ID should go next.

(d) Finally, provide a reference list to the three to five articles on a second page. Please use APA formatting for the reference list. We will go over questions on how to use APA formatting.

- This assignment is for 5 points. I may have you revise. I will provide a limited window of opportunity for the revisions (one week per revision, up to two revisions).

--Assignment 1 is due by 5 PM Wednesday, Sept. 5 via D2L. Upload a Word version. Make sure your name is in the upper-left hand side of the Word document.

2. Article discussion leads (30%)

- Each student will be responsible for leading a **discussion** on one empirical research article this semester (depending on enrollment). Students may pair up.
- You may use the class time for the discussion in whichever way(s) you think best. Activities might include, but are not limited to, presentation of important constructs, discussion of the assigned reading, discussion of the data analysis, and discussion of methodological issues. For the presentation, you can use any combination of Power Point, the document camera, the chalk board, handouts, etc. Make your discussion interactive. Do not lecture. Do not present the paper. Do not bore us. You are encouraged to stop in during my office hours to discuss your plans.

3. Final project proposal, paper, or project (50%)

Each student will complete a final project proposal, paper or project alone or with a partner. The final paper or project can be related to an MA Thesis, a QRP, or a Ph.D. Thesis. A second option is to develop or refine an already established questionnaire or test of an individual difference and report on your work in a final paper. This part of the course requirements is negotiable and can be tailored to meet your interests and individual needs in completing your current degree. Be sure to discuss with me in September your ideas concerning what you would like to do.

3A. Project proposal (10%)

A succinct, two- to five-page (double-spaced) proposal regarding what you would like to do for your final project is **due October 11** to the D2L. You may turn it in anytime before or on October 11. If you already have a more formal proposal that you used for another class or for another project, you may submit that to me for this assignment, revised if needed. That is, you do

not have to reduce what you have to five pages or less; rather, those just getting started only have to produce two to five pages. But do note that you must receive permission from the other class's professor if you want to work on the same project for different assignments.

3B. Presenting your research in progress (10%)

In November and December, once a week a student will take a turn explaining their project to the class. If you are working in a pair, the pair of you will present together.

3C. Final paper (30%)

The final paper based on your work regarding this assignment is **due by Monday, December 10 at 2:45 PM** to D2L folder entitled "Final Paper." The upload function will cease to work at 2:45 PM, so please upload well before then to avoid problems.

4. In-class participation (15%)

Each student will be responsible for reading the literature assigned and actively discussing in class the readings and topics.

Grading Scale

If you get a 94% or above in this class, you will receive a 4.0. This shows that you met all requirements for the course and demonstrated your learning to an exceptional degree, and you even exceeded expectations in this course. Scores between 88% and 93% are a 3.5, 82% to 87% are a 3.0, etc.

94% or above is generally a 4.0 (A)	The student met all requirements for this course and demonstrated his or her learning to an exceptional degree and exceeded expectations in the course.
88% to 93% is generally a 3.5 (A-)	The student met all requirements for this course and demonstrated his or her learning very well.
82% to 87% is generally a 3.0 (B)	The student met most of the requirements for this course and demonstrated his or her learning relatively well.
76% to 81% is generally a 2.5 (C+)	The student did not fulfill all requirements for this course. Learning was demonstrated adequately.
70% to 75% is generally a 2.0 (C)	The student did not fulfill the requirements for this course. Learning was demonstrated somewhat adequately.

Classroom-based Expectations

- Feel free to bring food or drinks to class, but not items that make a lot of noise or that have particularly strong smells. Set your phones on vibrate if they must be on for any reason (sick child at home, etc.). Otherwise, please turn your cell phone ringers off in class.
- If you are sick or are at home taking care of someone who is sick, or if your commute is unreasonable due to bad weather, please let me know and we can see if we can open the class to you via Zoom.
- Communications will be accomplished via email and through D2L. Please make sure that you check your MSU account regularly or have your MSU email forwarded to an address that you do check regularly. If you email me, please email me directly at winke@msu.edu. Do not email me through D2L as I do not check the D2L email account. You are welcome to call me at the office or at home, but don't call after 10:00 PM, please.
- You are responsible for knowing MSU's policy on plagiarism. Familiarize yourself with this site: <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>. Note that this web site states that "plagiarism not only is legally wrong but also morally corrosive... Any paper based upon the writing of others should **acknowledge every source used**." (I added the bolding.) If you plagiarize, I will (a) give you a penalty grade on the assignment, (b) fail you on the assignment, or (c) fail you in the class. Please note that I unfortunately have given all three types of penalties out to students before, and yes, these were penalties given to MSU graduate students. If I give you a penalty, I will inform the director of your program of the penalty. I will also inform your department chair and the dean of your college if required. Note that plagiarism can lead toward expulsion from MSU.
- You are responsible for handing in all assignments on time. I have the right to refuse acceptance of any late assignments. Your assignments must be original and not used in any other class (prior or present) without approval by me and the professor of that other class.
- All assignments are expected to be well written. Free writing assistance is available at the Writing Center in Bessey Hall (<http://writing.msu.edu/>). If a Writing Lab attendant is in this class, you may not seek his or her writing assistance due to a potential conflict of interest. No professional writing assistant can provide you with help on **content**. You are encouraged to ask your peers to review your writing before submitting it to me. This is recommended not only for non-native speakers of English, but for native speakers of English as well. This is good practice for reviewing grammar, for promoting peer discussion, and for receiving peer comments on the content of your work. I will not check that you are doing this, but it will show and make a substantial difference in the quality of your work.

Web Site

The Web space for this course is on D2L. Log in at <D2L.msu.edu>. The online readings are on D2L. Only those enrolled in the course can access the course Web space. If you are auditing, please ask me to enter your email manually so you can access the course on D2L.