Child Development – Language Acquisition

Course code	ECTS Units	Workload (hours)	Level of course
001	10	250	
Year of Studies	**Semester**	**Type**	**Teaching methods**
			Lectures & Seminars
Hours/ week	**Hours/semester**	**Prerequisites**	**Language of instruction**
3	39	none	English

Instructors

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Objectives

Childhood, and especially its early years, is a "window of opportunity" for the child's development. The goal of this module is to help students understand the processes of growth, change and stability that occur from the moment of conception until the end of adolescence. Child Development is closely linked to the biological maturation and plasticity of the human brain. In recent years, the impressive supply of knowledge from the Neurosciences and Genetics has contributed to understanding the biological basis of development, as well as the aetiology of its disorders. Special emphasis will be given on Language Acquisition; language is the means through which children and adults try to communicate with one another, give information, ask questions, and express their needs. Language development is an ongoing process that is achieved through the development of various mechanisms. Each mechanism presents different characteristics and evolution according to the age and the developmental profile of the child.

Throughout the semester, students will study and discuss topics arising from their course materials, to enhance collaborative work and critical thinking.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course the students are expected to:

a) Acquire knowledge on brain plasticity and the genetic factors which influence child development
b) Be able to discriminate the profiles of various neurodevelopmental disorders
c) Acquire knowledge on the social development of children of typical and atypical development
d) Acquire knowledge on the milestones of typical language acquisition from infancy to adulthood
e) Be able to find the association between language and cognitive development in the human species
f) Be able to understand the development of oral and written language skills from infancy to adolescence
g) Acquire knowledge on the language development in genetic syndromes
h) Plan and deliver oral presentations
i) Contribute to small and large group discussions by being an active and critical participant
j) Actively engage in module seminars
k) Use the internet as a reliable and evidence-based source of information
l) Familiarize themselves with the University of Thessaly academic databases, as well as other resources, including the University's e-class

Content

- An introduction to child development -Genetic and environmental factors and the role of brain plasticity in child development
- Theories of child development
- Brain development and Neurodevelopmental disorders -International Classification systems, Assessment, Diagnosis, and Interventions
- Motor development
- Emotional development
- Atypical child development and the case of autism
- Social Development and autism
- Language acquisition in the human species and language development in relation to cognitive development
- Language acquisition in typically developing children from infancy to adulthood
- Development of expressive and written language
- Language acquisition in bilingual/multilingual children
- First and second language development in children with dyslexia
- Language in atypical development. e.g. neurodevelopmental Disorders (NDDs, genetic syndromes, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, autism)
- Language profile characteristics of children with Down syndrome
- Early intervention. Neuroscience-based educational interventions

Assessment

Students are required to maintain a high attendance rate and complete the course's assignment and assessments to a satisfactory level (50% and above). A variety of evaluation approaches will be used including the composition of a written assignment on a topic related to the module content which will be presented in the class as an oral presentation.

Summative assessment

- Class participation (20%)
- Final written assignment (60%)
- PowerPoint Oral Presentation of final written assignment (20%)

Recommended bibliography

Material will be uploaded after every lecture in e-class.

Abbeduto, L., McDuffie, A., Thurman, A. J., & Kover, S. T. (2016). Language development in individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities: from phenotypes to treatments. International Review of Research in Developmental Disabilities, 50, 71–118.

Abbeduto, L., Warren, S. F., & Conners, F. A. (2007). Language development in Down syndrome: From the prelinguistic period to the acquisition of literacy. Mental retardation and developmental disabilities research reviews, 13(3), 247-261.

Andreou, G. & Baseki, J. (2012). Phonological and spelling mistakes among dyslexic and non-dyslexic children learning two different languages: Greek vs English. Psychology, 13(8), 595-600.

Andreou, G., Liakou, M. & Galantomos, I. (2017). Differences in Syntactic Development in Adolescence. European Journal of Language Studies, 4(2), 6-11.

Feldman, R.S. (2022). Child Development, (9th Edition). NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall

King, S. A., Lemons, C. J., Davidson, K. A., Fulmer, D., & Mrachko, A. A. (2022). Reading instruction for children with down syndrome: Extending research on behavioral phenotype aligned interventions. Exceptionality, 30(2), 92-108.

Kuhl, K. P. (2004). Early language acquisition: Cracking the speech code. Neuroscience, 5, 831-843.

Liakou, M., Andreou, G. & Anastassiou, F. (2017). Comparing syntactic development in adolescents' written texts. In A. Botinis (Ed.) Proceedings of the 8th Tutorial and Research Workshop on Experimental Linguistics (pp. 65-69). Athens: University of Athens.