Course Description

The aim of this course is to explore in some depth the main areas of syntactic theory within the context of first language acquisition. Topics will include clause structure and finiteness, A and A’ movement, control, null elements, binding, and tense/aspect. Time permitting we may also cover some aspects of creolization.

Course Requirements

Students will each present two (primary-source) readings in class, and turn in a squib on an additional primary-source reading. This work (along with general class participation) will count for 40% of your grade. The remaining 60% will be your term paper.

Your term paper will present original research, using empirical L1 data (from a child or using CHILDES) to explore a theoretical issue. A draft of the paper will be due by April 3rd, and we will “workshop” the papers in the following class meeting. The final paper will be due Monday, April 29.

The squib is due on March 20 (first meeting after spring break).

Text


Additional readings on Sakai.
## Topics and Readings

N.B. Readings in italics are possible squib articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>week</th>
<th>topic</th>
<th>readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2–3</td>
<td>Argument Structure and Syntactic Bootstrapping</td>
<td>Guasti ch.3 (sec. 3.3 to end), Kirby (2009, ch.2) Gleitman (1990); Gleitman et al. (2005); Papafragou et al. (2007); Becker and Estigarribia (in press) Lidz et al. (2003); Gertner et al. (2006)</td>
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<td>7–8</td>
<td>Null Arguments</td>
<td>Guasti ch.5, Hyams (1987); Valian (1991); Gerken (1991); Hyams and Wexler (1993); Rizzi (1999); Hyams and Schaeffer (2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Guasti ch.10, Chomsky (1969); McDaniel and Cairns (1990), Kirby (2009, chs. 5 &amp; 7)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>A’-movement (wh-mvt and relatives clauses)</td>
<td>Guasti ch.6, Stromswold (1995); Thornton (2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Binding Theory</td>
<td>Guasti ch.8, Chien and Wexler (1990); Wexler and Manzini (1987); Elbourne (2005), excerpt from Thornton and Wexler (1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Quantification</td>
<td>Guasti ch.9, Crain et al. (1996); Musolino and Lidz (2003, 2006); Gualmini (2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Creolization</td>
<td>Kegl et al. (1999); Kam and Newport (2005); Singleton and Newport (2004)</td>
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## References


Becker, Misha, and Bruno Estigarribia. in press. Harder words: How children learn abstract verbs with opaque syntax. *Language Learning and Development* x.


