SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, PH.D.

Second language acquisition or SLA is the systematic study of learning, using, and sometimes losing any form of language beyond the mother tongue. Research in SLA is a burgeoning field because today there are more people who use at least two languages than there are monolinguals. For individual learners and for every community in diaspora, second language acquisition is an experience that challenges their knowledge of language, their understanding of different cultures, and their personal identity. These challenges are studied by SLA researchers, scholars whose training is in a variety of fields—linguistics, psychology, sociology, education, anthropology, and communication arts—a variety that makes the study of SLA richly interdisciplinary.

The Ph.D. program in second language acquisition at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is a rigorous and coherently interdisciplinary academic program in a field that embodies the university’s mission to foster the study of globally important issues. In their coursework, students in the program learn from the experiences of a distinguished faculty in many departments and, in their dissertation research, students share with faculty the discovery of new knowledge. Students develop a thorough understanding of the many facets of SLA, including language pedagogy, the study of multilingualism, language acquisition and loss, and multilingual language use in contexts of education, the workplace, and the family. Through the program, students develop skills in research in the sociology and psychology of knowing two or more languages and in the linguistics of languages in contact. A Ph.D. in SLA opens the door to scholarly and professional careers as university faculty, directors of foreign language programs, educational policy makers, and multilingual specialists.

FUNDING

Students in the SLA program, depending on their qualifications, may receive financial support through several departments, programs, and institutes. Many students who minor in a foreign language or ESL work as graduate teaching assistants for the department in which that language is taught. Other students work as graduate project assistants for the Language Institute or other units on campus. In addition to these TA and PA positions, select SLA students receive university fellowships (including the Advanced Opportunity Fellowships) upon entry into the program or when working on their dissertations. If they meet the specific eligibility criteria, students may also compete, with the program’s support, in other grant and fellowship competitions, such as Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships. Additional funding opportunities are included in the information for current students on the SLA website (http://www.sla.wisc.edu/content/funding-resources).

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Ph.D.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

51 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

36 credits coursework plus 9 dissertation credits, for a total of 45 credits.

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

Half of degree coursework (26 out of 51 total credits) must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 6 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions or the UW–Madison. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to the doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

Prior coursework from the UW–Madison undergraduate career may not be applied toward the program.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

Prior coursework from the UW–Madison University Special student career may not be applied toward the program.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

ENGL 318 Second Language Acquisition and ENGL 711 Research Methods in Applied Linguistics, and research methods: one course in qualitative and one in quantitative research methods chosen from an approved list

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

All doctoral students are required to complete an emphasis totaling 12 credits. The emphasis is normally fulfilled by completion of an Option A or B minor; however, if the Option A minor is only 9 credits, the student must choose an additional, 3-credit course on a related topic. Students will submit their plan for completing the emphasis by the end of the first year.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.0 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Incompletes must be resolved by the end of the next fall or spring term in which the student is enrolled. In addition, all incompletes must
be resolved before students may take any portion of the preliminary examination.

PROBATION POLICY
Those students not meeting satisfactory progress requirements may be put on probation for a semester.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
Students are required to meet with their advisor at least once each semester to review their progress, select courses, and to discuss any outstanding issues or questions.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS
Students must take preliminary exams within one semester of completing coursework.

In order to help identify possible funding sources, students whose first language is not English are required to take the SPEAK test, a test of spoken English administered by the Department of English, within the first semester.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Students whose first language is not English are required to take the SPEAK test within the first semester.

Students must submit plans for completing the emphasis requirement and the language requirement for approval by the steering committee within their first year of the program.

Students typically complete all of the coursework requirements within two years of enrolling in the Program. Students are required to complete all coursework and fulfill the language requirement before taking the preliminary examinations.

Students must take the preliminary examination within one semester of completing coursework.

Graduate School regulations require Ph.D. candidates to defend their dissertation five years from the date of passing their preliminary examinations.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
The SLA Ph.D. major requires oral as well as reading proficiency at the advanced level in two languages, including English. Students may not be recommended for preliminary exams until they have fulfilled both parts of the language requirement.

Typically, the student must demonstrate an advanced level of academic oral and reading proficiency in two languages prior to taking preliminary exams. A plan for meeting this requirement is developed by the student and advisor within the first semester of the student’s program. The plan must be approved by the advisor and the SLA steering committee by the end of the first academic year.

COURSES
For detailed information about course requirements, students should consult the SLA Student Handbook (http://www.sla.wisc.edu/content/major-requirements).

ADMISSIONS
The SLA doctoral program requires a master's degree in a foreign language, English, applied linguistics, linguistics, or education. The SLA program requires GRE scores. The GRE examination must be taken within five years before your application to the SLA doctoral program. Please refer to the program website (http://www.sla.wisc.edu/admissions) for application deadlines, required application materials, and required modes of submitting these materials. In addition, general requirements for admission, stipulated by the graduate school (e.g., evidence of English proficiency for certain international students) apply.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE

• Students will demonstrate a strong overall understanding of the scope of the discipline of SLA (e.g., the theories on which research in the field is based; the type of questions that researchers in SLA address; and the variety of techniques used to answer these questions).
• Students will demonstrate an in-depth understanding of theories and research findings related to their focal areas of interest.
• Languages: Students will demonstrate an advanced level of academic oral and reading proficiency in two languages, including English.
• Research: Students will develop and complete original research that advances a specific area of SLA research.
• Students will retrieve, evaluate, and interpret academic publications, and use this information to identify a gap in literature and to develop theoretical frameworks and research designs for their own research projects.
• Students will learn to design realistic and feasible research projects and to prepare necessary protocols.
• Students will collect data following relevant protocols and analyze/interpret the resulting data.
• Students will reflect on the procedures and results of their own projects to identify limitations and propose possible future studies.
• Students will present their research articulately and informatively to diverse audiences.
• Students will prepare manuscripts resulting from their independent research for publication in professional journals and other suitable venues.
• Students will be able to give and receive feedback orally and in writing.

TEACHING

• Students will be able to design a course, evaluating the program’s and students’ needs and identifying suitable learning objectives, as well as materials, methods, and activities to reach the objectives.
• Students will create and execute lesson plans, making changes as they become necessary.
• Students will identify methods to evaluate their students’ progress, and provide feedback and assistance, and/or readjust their approach, as needed.
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- Students will communicate effectively as a member of a professional community.
- Students will seek opportunities to engage in service to the program, the university and/or to the wider community.
- Students will understand responsibilities of researchers who work with human subjects and follow institutional and professional guidelines to adhere to a code of ethics.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Chavez (German), Evans-Romaine (Slavic Languages and Literature), Frantzen (Spanish and Portuguese), Hawkins (Curriculum and Instruction), Mori (East Asian Languages and Literature), Tochon (Curriculum and Instruction), Young (English); Associate Professors Allen, Geyer (East Asian Languages and Literature), Stafford (Spanish and Portuguese), Pacheco (Curriculum and Instruction), Thompson (African Languages and Literature); Assistant Professor Cho