Session 1 Description

In this session students will be introduced to theories of second language acquisition. It will start with students reflecting on their own experiences on the development/acquisition of language(s) followed by a group discussion. The second part or body of the session will address the different theories providing some examples and making connections with students’ experiences if possible. For the last part students will be given students’ case scenarios to match with what they have learned (different theories) and then have a discussion as a whole group.

Session 1 Readings:
Students must have read the following articles before coming to class: (you may go to the relevant link for brief summaries of each article)


Additional Readings:


Session 1 Lesson Plan:

1. Reflecting and sharing on their language(s) learning experiences: (45 minutes). The goal of this activity is to get students to think about the different issues English language learners (ELLs) experience when learning a second language. Even though students may not be proficient in a second language the activity creates rich discussions.

   a. Have students reflect about their language(s) learning experiences individually based on the following questions (15 minutes):
How and when did you learn to speak, read, and write?
In which language did you learn to speak, orally comprehend, read, and write first (or simultaneously if there was exposure to two languages)?
What language development experiences have you experienced in your lifetime (school, family, friends, etc.)?
Were there specific individuals who affected and influenced your language development (positively or negatively)?
How did schooling impact your language development?
What were the contexts in which you felt you were most successful in learning a second language?
What circumstances led to maintenance or loss of languages in your family?
What texts have you found to be influential, and what language(s) were they written?
How have your feelings about language development changed over time?

b. Students share their language(s) learning experiences with the rest of the students (30 minutes)

2. PPT on second language acquisition theories (with examples and making connections with previous activity when possible), (60 minutes)

3. Students will be provided with a handout (to work and discuss in pairs) to match different case scenarios of students with theories of second language acquisition (30-35 minutes).

4. Discussion of case scenarios in whole group and review and comments of the lesson (closing) (15-20 minutes).