

Fall 2025

Sociocultural Approaches to Second Language Learning and Teaching (REQ / 3cr.)

Instructor: Masaki Kobayashi, Ph.D.
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Course Dates:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10/19 (Sun. 10:00-17:00) | 11/23 (Sun. 10:00-17:00) | 12/21 (Sun. 10:00-17:00) |
| 1/18 (Sun. 10:00-17:00) | 2/22 (Sun. 10:00-17:00) | |

Note: Additional online work equivalent to 6 hours will be provided through class discussions and peer feedback.

Delivery: Online

Course Overview

This course provides an overview of sociocultural approaches to second language (L2) learning and teaching by introducing foundational and emergent theories and concepts that have shaped and guided research and teaching practices in this area. It will build on your knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA) and encourage you to consider how sociocultural approaches can inform work in this area. Topics covered will include, but are not limited to, the quality of interaction desired for L2 learning and development, the role of the first language (L1) in L2 learning, learner agency and identity, and the roles of teachers and peers as socializing agents.

The course will examine the implications that sociocultural theories have for English language teaching in Japan. You will be encouraged to use the concepts and insights provided by this course to reflect on and analyze interactions that transpire in your own classrooms. Thus, the major goal of this seminar is to provide you with a set of tools that you can use to reflect on your teaching and promote student learning. More specifically, the course aims to help you develop a solid understanding of sociocultural concepts and principles and to make practical applications of this knowledge in your own situations, and thereby facilitating your learning and development as English language teachers. You will also be asked to draw on your experiences as learners in this course as a basis for class discussion of academic concepts.

Note: This is a reading-intensive course that requires a great deal of peer collaboration. You are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class and come prepared to participate actively in discussions. In the spirit of Sociocultural Theory, you are also encouraged to constructively explore ideas with your peers and instructor throughout the course.

Key Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, participants should be able to:

1. Understand the dynamic relationship between theory and practice in language learning and teaching (DP2)
2. Use major sociocultural concepts and principles to examine and reconsider the teaching-learning processes that take place in their classrooms (DP4 & DP8)
3. Discuss the possible relationships between language, interaction, and learning/socialization (DP3)
4. Explain the role of learner agency in L2 learning, and consider and identify constraints and resources in different situations (DP5)
5. Discuss the role of teachers both as facilitators of student learning and as agents of their colleagues' continuing professional development and their own (DP7)

Note. DP is an abbreviation of Diploma Policy Statements. TESOL Program statements (objectives) can be found [here](#). Numbers correspond to the statement(s) emphasized in each course outcome.

Required Readings

1. Textbook:
Walsh, S. (2011). *Exploring classroom discourse: Language in action*. Routledge.
2. Reading Packet

Pre-course Assignments

1. Read the following texts prior to the first meeting (Day 1):
 - (1) van Lier (1994)
 - (2) Zuengler & Miller (2006)
 - (3) Douglas Fir Group (2016)
 - (4) Chapter 1, Walsh (2011)

- Autobiography Writing: Create a timeline of your language learning/teaching history and write your autobiography as both a language learner and teacher based on this timeline (details available on Google Drive. I will send you an invitation email when I receive my class roster. Please email me directly if don't receive an invitation email by the first week of September). Be prepared to share your timeline with your classmates as you talk about the key events and episodes of your language learning and teaching history.

Required Readings

- Textbook:
Walsh, S. (2011). *Exploring classroom discourse: Language in action*. Routledge.
- Reading Packet

Assignments and Assessment

- Drafts of your autobiography (10%)
- Post-class reflections (20%)
- Group Annotation (15%)
- Article Presentations and Discussion Leading (15%)
- Term Paper (40%)

More details will be provided after Day 1.

Evaluation: Letter grade

A+ (100–95); A (94–85); B (84–70); C (69–60); F (59–0).

Course Schedule:

| Day | Major Topics | In-Class Activities | Out-of-Class Activities |
|-----|---|---|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autobiography writing Pre-course Reading |
| 1 | Introduction to the Course CPD, Theory of Practice Different approaches to L2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autobiography sharing | |

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| | learning, learner agency, co-construction | | |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Annotation (1) • Online Discussion • Reading |
| 2 | Semiotic mediation and languaging, Types of regulation, Use of L1, Peer collaboration | Presentation and discussion leading (1) | |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Annotation (2) • Online Discussion |
| 3 | Everyday concepts & scientific concepts Language socialization | Presentation and discussion leading (2) | |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Discussion • Transcription and Analysis |
| 4 | Classroom Interactional Competence, Types of pedagogical interactions | Peer teaching | |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Annotation • Online Discussion |
| 5 | Evidence-based reflection for CPD Reflection on the course | Presentations and discussion leading Individual presentations of peer-teaching analysis | |

(Subject to change based on the needs of the class.)

Instructor Bio:

I am a professor of educational linguistics and Deputy Chair of the English Department at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS), cross-appointed to the MATESOL

Program. I received my MA in TESOL from the Monterey Institute of International Studies and my PhD in Language and Literacy Education (with a specialization in TESL) from the University of British Columbia. I have had the pleasure of meeting a number of teachers and supervisors through workshops and school visits since I joined KUIS in 2006. My research interests include academic discourse socialization, integrated language and content instruction, language teacher learning and development, dialogic education, and task-based language learning. I have supervised a number of MA projects and BA theses in these areas.