

**CAS LX 359 / GRS LX 659**  
**Interrupted Acquisition and Language Attrition**

Fall 2018

MWF 12:20–1:10, CAS 228

<b>Instructor:</b>	Charles Chang	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tue 12:30–3:30,
<b>Office:</b>	617 Comm Ave, Room 116		or by appointment
<b>Contact:</b>	✉ cc@bu.edu (preferred)		
	☎ (617) 353-8718		

**Course Website:** <on Blackboard Learn>

**Course Description:** The expectation for a language learned from birth (L1) is that it will eventually develop to a native-like standard, yet this does not always occur. In particular, when speakers switch to a second language (L2) as their primary language, their command of the native language often becomes non-native-like. When does the onset of bilingualism in an L2 lead to a non-native-like L1? In what ways may an individual's L1 manifest as non-native-like? Are some aspects of the L1 more likely than others to diverge from native norms or to be forgotten? This course will address these and related questions by studying the findings of two burgeoning areas of bilingualism research: incomplete language acquisition and language attrition. Examining data from bilingual populations around the world, the course will consider various aspects of how L1 knowledge waxes and wanes as a consequence of dominance in an L2. Among these are linguistic differences among monolingual native speakers, heritage speakers, international adoptees, and adult L2 learners; language change in long-term migrants (expatriates and diasporas); and environmental and affective factors conditioning language loss. A recurring theme of the course will be the dynamic and interconnected nature of linguistic knowledge, which students will explore in more detail through a research project on a relevant topic of their choosing.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be familiar with the linguistic profiles of various types of unbalanced bilinguals, as well as the similarities and differences among them.
2. Students will have an understanding of multiple factors that influence an individual's current proficiency in the native language.
3. Students will be able to formulate and explore a specific, testable question related to interrupted language acquisition and/or language attrition.

**Prerequisites:** CAS LX 250 Introduction to Linguistics or equivalent, or instructor approval.

**Requirements:** background reading, homework assignments, participation (including paper presentations), term project (including proposal + oral presentation).

<b>Grading:</b>	30%	homework assignments [best 4 of 5]	(CAS LX 359)
	5%	paper presentation	
	15%	participation	
	5%	project proposal	
	15%	project presentation	
	30%	project write-up	
	30%	homework assignments	(GRS LX 659)
	20%	paper presentations [2]	
	5%	project proposal	
	30%	project write-up	

Grade components will be weighted according to the above percentages to calculate a final grade out of 100, which will correspond to a grade for the course as follows:

<i>Course Grade Scale</i>	≥ 93.00	= A	78.00–79.99	= C+
	90.00–92.99	= A–	73.00–77.99	= C
	88.00–89.99	= B+	70.00–72.99	= C–
	83.00–87.99	= B	60.00–69.99	= D
	80.00–82.99	= B–	< 60.00	= F

**Required Textbooks:** Montrul, Silvina. (2008). *Incomplete Acquisition in Bilingualism: Re-examining the Age Factor*. [ISBN-10: 9027241805, ISBN-13: 978-9027241801]

Schmid, Monika. (2011). *Language Attrition*. [ISBN-10: 0521759935, ISBN-13: 978-0521759939]

N.B. We will cover most of the material in these books, as well as additional material in other readings (including chapters from Herbert Seliger and Robert Vago’s 1991 book, *First Language Attrition*).

### Expectations for Students:

*Background Reading:* Classes will refer to concepts described in the reading, so it will be most helpful to you to complete the assigned reading *before* coming to class. Class is meant to supplement the reading, and assignments may draw upon data or examples in the reading not explicitly discussed in class. Any required readings beyond the required textbooks will be provided via the library’s electronic course reserves or the course website. Please see the Copyright Notice below regarding reading and other course materials.

*Homework Assignments:* Assignments will typically consist of a mix of data analysis, interpretation, and prediction in light of theoretical principles discussed in class. They will require answers written in complete sentences; in writing up your responses, keep in mind that these are exercises in applying knowledge. Also, because possible responses to assigned questions may be

discussed in class on the day that the homework is due, **homework must be submitted—typed, in electronic copy to Blackboard—by the beginning of class (i.e., by 12:20, not 12:30), and late homework cannot be accepted.** For undergraduates, the lowest homework grade will be dropped.

*Paper Presentations:* Each student will individually present, and lead a class discussion of, one or more empirical studies (selected in consultation with the instructor) during one (CAS LX 359) or two (GRS LX 659) class periods. You are free to do this in whatever way you think would effectively convey the study's findings and implications.

*Participation:* Active and constructive participation in class is expected, and will be factored into course grades for undergraduates. Given that you cannot participate in class if you are absent, chronic absence from class will affect your final grade. If you find yourself suffering from illness, please (a) go to the doctor, and then (b) alert the instructor.

*Term Project:* Students will, in pairs (CAS LX 359) or individually (GRS LX 659), propose, present, and write up a research project on a (small) empirical question related to the content of this course. A short proposal for the project (of  $\leq 500$  words, i.e. 1–2 double-spaced pages) is due during the seventh week of classes; a brief, timed oral presentation (of approximately 20 minutes) about the project will be delivered during the last two weeks of classes; and a final paper (not to exceed 4,000 words, i.e. 15–16 double-spaced pages, excluding references), which synthesizes the findings and contextualizes them within the course as a whole, is due by 11:59 PM on the last day of the study period (**Sunday, December 16**). More information about the parameters and expectations for this project will be provided during the third week of classes. (For now, consider what general topic areas you find interesting enough to prepare a presentation and write a paper about!)

**Copyright Notice:** All class materials are copyrighted and may not be redistributed to third parties (not registered for the course) or reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

**Academic Integrity and Support:** You are responsible for understanding and complying with the BU Academic Conduct Code in this course (to review the Academic Conduct Code, please see <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>). Graduate students, take note of the GRS Academic Conduct Code: <https://www.bu.edu/cas/current-students/ma-and-ms-students/academic-policies-and-conduct-code/>. It is assumed, unless you indicate otherwise, that your work in this course is your own. **Work found to be the product of academic dishonesty can receive no credit, and such misconduct must be reported to the university.** If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting your academic advisor (or CAS's Office of Academic Advising: 100 Bay State Rd., Room 401, [casadv@bu.edu](mailto:casadv@bu.edu), 617-353-2400).

**Collaboration Policy:** Although you are welcome (in fact, encouraged!) to discuss the readings and course material with your classmates outside of class (e.g., in a study group), **your written work in individual homework assignments should be entirely your own.** That is to say, you should **write up homework assignments separately** (and explicitly acknowledge any and all collaboration and/or sources consulted), in accordance with the Academic Conduct Code. Please see the instructor if you have any questions about this policy.

**Arrangements for Students with Disabilities:** If you require course material in an alternative format or need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact the instructor and the Office of Disability Services (<http://www.bu.edu/disability/>) as soon as possible.

**Communication:** Announcements regarding class cancellation, room change, and other timely news may be communicated via Slack (primarily) or Blackboard (secondarily), so please make sure you are able to receive messages from both Slack and Blackboard. In addition, you are very welcome to come with any questions to the instructor's office hours or to make an appointment outside of these times if you cannot make it to office hours.

**A Note on Technology:** Students are welcome to bring their personal computers or tablets to class, but are expected to use any technology respectfully—that is, *for the sole purpose of aiding in the learning of course material while not distracting fellow students*. Although it is tempting when you have a computer to multitask and, e.g., switch between Word, Instagram, and email, note that this is very likely to be detrimental not only to your own learning, but also to the learning of those around you (for more, see Sana et al., 2013, "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers," *Computers & Education*, 62, 24–31; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.10.003>). Note also the evidence in favor of taking notes by hand instead of by computer (for more, see Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014, "The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking," *Psychological Science*, 25, 1159–1168; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0956797614524581>). Consequently, the instructor reserves the right to ban the use of computers in class if they become a hindrance. You will never need your cell phone for note-taking, so please silence it and put it away during class.

**Schedule (with Due Dates)**

DATES	TOPIC & READING	WORK DUE
09/05–09/07	Introduction and overview of the course Reading: Montrul, Ch. 1	
09/10–09/14	Late-onset L2 acquisition Reading: Montrul, Ch. 2	
09/17–09/21	L1 attrition in adulthood Reading: Montrul, Ch. 3	Homework 1 due 09/21
09/24–09/28	Early-onset L2 acquisition Reading: Montrul, Ch. 4	
10/01–10/05	Heritage speakers Reading: Montrul, Ch. 6.1–6.2	Homework 2 due 10/05
10/09–10/12	Heritage speakers (cont.) Reading: Montrul, Ch. 6.3–6.4	
10/15–10/19	Research considerations Reading: Schmid, Ch. 9–10	PROJECT PROPOSAL due 10/19
10/22–10/26	Incomplete acquisition of L1 vs. L2 Reading: Montrul, Ch. 7	
10/29–10/31	Linguistic aspects of attrition Reading: Schmid, Ch. 1–3 <b>NO CLASS ON 11/02 (BUCLD 43)</b>	Homework 3 due 10/31
11/05–11/09	Linguistic aspects of attrition (cont.) Reading: Schmid, Ch. 4–5	
11/12–11/16	Extralinguistic aspects of attrition Reading: Schmid, Ch. 6–8	Homework 4 due 11/16
11/19	Language loss in aphasia Reading: S&V, Ch. 3–4	
11/26–11/30	Aphasia and case studies of attrition Reading: S&V, Ch. 12–13	Homework 5 due 11/30
12/03–12/07	Project presentations	
12/10–12/12	Presentations and course wrap-up Reading: Montrul, Ch. 8	
12/13–12/16	STUDY PERIOD	PROJECT WRITE-UP due 12/16 (by 11:59 PM)