The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
Second Term, 2024-25

1. Course Code: LING3107

2. Title in English: Comparative Grammar

3. Title in Chinese: 比較語法

4. Course description

There is a growing body of evidence that languages of the world do not vary at random and that many aspects of linguistic structure are universal to all languages. Meanwhile, in most structural domains where we do find variation across languages, this variation appears to follow certain identifiable patterns.
Based on the comparative study of a selection of morphosyntactic domains (including word order, valency, case, wh-question, relativization, and reflexives, etc.) within a variety of the world's languages, this course introduces some properties of language that appear to be universal. We will also identify several patterns of variation in these domains. We further explore some accounts for the range of syntactic variation and seek some explanations for restrictions on this variation.

5. Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you are expected to:

- Appreciate both the universality and typological differences in morphosyntactic domains across natural languages.
- Describe and analyze syntactic structures and/or morphosyntactic variations based on comparative data, and form empirical generalizations accordingly.
- Argue and reason explicitly regarding analyses of such structures and variations.
- Develop good insights on current issues and explanations of a selection of morphosyntactic phenomena cross-linguistically.

6. Course syllabus

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Word order	Word order correlation, mixed word order, non-configurationality
Valency	Valence-changing processes, valence-decreasing, valence-increasing
Case	The organization of case systems, split case systems
Wh-questions	wh-in-situ, multiple wh-questions, multiple wh-fronting, partial wh-movement
Relativization	Dimensions of variation, correlations between word order and relative clause types, relativization strategy correlations, the accessibility hierarchy and relativization
Reflexives	Historical sources, local versus long-distance reflexives, properties of long-distance reflexives, verbal reflexives, logophors

7. Course components (Teaching modes and Learning activities)

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face	Percentage of time
Lectures (hybrid no)	20%
Interactive tutorial (hybrid no)	10%
Out-of-classroom	
Homework assignments	35%
Group projects	30%
Consultations & Office hours (hybrid yes)	5%

8. Assessment type, percentage and rubrics

Assessment type	Percentage
Individual homework assignments	50% =
• There will be a total of 4 take-home written homework assignments.	12.5% * 4
• 20% of your raw score will be taken off for each day overdue.	
• They are not group projects and you are expected to work on them individually.	
Language comparison group projects	25% =
• Students are expected to form groups (2-3 students each group) to propose and collaborate on a language comparison project.	5%
• Each group will deliver a 15-minute presentation to share the result of their project.	10%
• Each group will write a final paper (8-10 pages) to report their findings in the project.	10%
Individual final exam	
• There will be one cumulative take-home final exam.	15%
Participation	
• Consistent and active participation in lectures and tutorials is required.	10%
• For each missed class meeting without a documented family or medical emergence, 2% will be taken off.	

Assessment rubrics	
Grade	Overall course
A	The student shows excellent and thorough mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to familiar and novel bodies of linguistic data in a clear and cogent manner that would surpass the normal expectation at this level.
A-	The student shows substantial and very good mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to familiar and some novel bodies of linguistic data in a logical and clear manner.
B+ B B-	The student shows general and sufficient mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to most (but not necessarily all) familiar and novel bodies of linguistic data in an accurate and comprehensive manner.
C+ C C-	The student shows general mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to most (but not necessarily all) familiar and standard linguistic data, but with occasional errors.
D	The student shows partial mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to state and apply the theories or subject matter to some simple linguistic data only.
F	The student shows little or no evidence of mastery of the course materials, or fails to meet specified assessment requirements.

9. Required and recommended readings

- **Required reading**:
  Keenan, Ed., H. Torrence, A. Mahajan, & T. Stowell. (2014). *Introduction to Syntactic Typology.* Ms. The University of California, Los Angeles.

- **Recommended readings**:
  - On linguistic typology and language description/documentation:
    1. Comrie, B. (1989). *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology (Second edition).* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (Online access is here).
    2. Shopen, T. (Ed.). (2007). *Language Typology and Syntactic Description (Second edition).* Cambridge University Press (Online access is here).
    3. Song, J. J. (2011). *The Oxford handbook of linguistic typology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press (Online access is here).
    4. 劉丹青. (2017).《語法調查研究手冊》(第二版). 上海教育出版社.
    5. 夏俐萍, 唐正大. (2021).《漢語方言語法調查問卷》. 上海教育出版社.

  - On syntactic theory and comparative syntax:
    1. Cinque, G., & Kayne, R. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The Oxford handbook of comparative syntax.* Oxford University Press. (Online access is here)
    2. Everaert, M., & van Riemsdijk, H. C. (Eds.). (2017). *The Blackwell companion to syntax (Second edition).* John Wiley & Sons. (Online access is here)
    3. Freidin, R. (Ed.). (1995). *Current issues in comparative grammar.* Springer Science & Business Media (Online access is here).
    4. Li, Y. H. A., Simpson, A., & Tsai, W. T. D. (Eds.). (2015). *Chinese syntax in a cross-linguistic perspective.* Oxford University Press (Online access is here).
    5. Saito, M. (Ed.). (2014). *Japanese syntax in comparative perspective.* Oxford University Press (Online access is here).
    6. Sjef, B., Corver, N., & Polinsky, M. (Eds.). (To appear in Apr, 2025). *The Cambridge Handbook of Comparative Syntax.* Cambridge University Press (A preview of the content is here).

- Electronic databases
  - Linguistic terms and glossing conventions:
    1. The SIL Glossary of Linguistic Terms
    2. Glottopedia
    3. LSHK Linguistic Glossary 香港語言學學會雙語術語對照表
    4. Leipzig Glossing Rules

  - World's languages and their variations:
    1. Glottolog 5.1
    2. Ethnologue
    3. The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS)
    4. Terraling
    5. Syntactic Structures of World Languages (SSWL)
    6. The Yale Grammatical Diversity Project (YGDP)
    7. Scots Syntax Atlas

- Lecture handouts will be posted on the Blackboard website for download before class.

10. Feedback for evaluation

- In addition to the standard final course evaluation, starting from Week 3, we will also set up **an anonymous Google form** for you to ask questions or make suggestions throughout the entire term. Your feedback will be incorporated accordingly.

- Meanwhile, you are also more than welcome to share your thoughts and concerns by emailing your feedback or questions to us, or making in-person/virtual appointments with us.

- Whenever you feel that you are falling behind and have content questions, please also do not hesitate to ask us for help!

- When you contact us via emails, please kindly put "LING3107 Comparative grammar" in the subject line and allow us **24 hours (on weekdays)** to respond.

11. Course schedule (subject to change)

Class/ week	Date	Topic	Requirements/comments
1	Jan 10	Introduction	
2	Jan 17	Word order I	
3	Jan 24	Word order II	Guest lecture I, HW1 assigned
4	Jan 31	No class: Lunar New Year Vacation	
5	Feb 7	Valency	HW1 and group project proposal due
6	Feb 14	Case	HW2 assigned
7	Feb 21	Interrogatives I	HW2 due
8	Feb 28	Interrogatives II	Guest lecture II, HW3 assigned
9	Mar 7	No class: Reading week	
10	Mar 14	Subordination and Relativization I	HW3 due
11	Mar 21	Subordination and Relativization II	HW4 assigned
12	Mar 28	Reflexives I	HW4 due
13	Apr 4	No class: Ching Ming Festival	
14	Apr 11	Reflexives II	
	Apr 15	Group project presentation	Group project paper due
	Apr 22	Take-home final exam due	

12. Teachers' and TA's contact details

Instructor:	
Name:	CHEN Zhuo 陳卓
Office Location:	G27 Leung Kau Kui Building, https://cuhk.zoom.us/j/5652900145
Email:	zhuochen[AT]cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	Lecture: Fri 09:30-11:15, ERB 804 Tutorial: Wed 17:30-18:15, LDS 214
Office hours:	TBA or by appointment

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	LI Xiangyu 李翔羽
Office Location:	G19 Leung Kau Kui Building
Email:	lixy255[AT]link.cuhk.edu.hk
Office hours:	TBA or by appointment

13. Details of course website

- We will use the course Blackboard website to post course materials (lecture handouts and optional readings), assignments, and announcements.
- We will also send out email reminders once we post assignments and make announcements, please make sure to check your email regularly.

14. Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.
- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.
- Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.
- Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher.

Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions, etc., produced by staff members/ teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to

CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/ teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard, adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/ share/ copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/ teachers concerned.

15. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks

For assignments and assessment tasks that count towards the final course grades, students are not allowed to submit work which is produced with the collaboration of or supported by the use of any generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT).

Any breach of the regulations will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the University's *Procedures for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty.*

In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course teacher.

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