

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Term of 2024-2025**

**1. Course code: LING5503**

**2. Title in English: Topics in Chinese Language Acquisition**

**3. Title in Chinese: 漢語語言獲得**

**4. Course description:**

This course introduces postgraduate students to major empirical findings and theoretical issues in first, second and heritage language acquisition of Chinese across monolingual, bilingual and multilingual contexts. It examines in depth the development in key linguistic areas including the phonology, lexicon, grammar and literacy of Chinese, focusing on a number of prominent linguistic structures and features such as lexical tone, *wh*-words, verbs and event semantics. Methodology of acquisition research is an integral part of the course and will be demonstrated through representative studies and accompanying hands-on tutorials. Basic knowledge of Chinese linguistics is a prerequisite. Medium of instruction is English and Putonghua.

**5. Learning outcomes:**

Students will develop a good understanding of the acquisition tasks facing child and adult learners of Chinese, and the factors affecting the path and outcomes of the acquisition. They will be familiar with the common methods used in empirical research on language development, and be able to elicit and analyze acquisition data for research or teaching purposes.

**6. Course syllabus**

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
General linguistics	Lexical tone, pitch, functional category, Aspect Phrase (AspP), Complementiser Phrase (CP), head-direction, little <i>v</i> , split intransitivity (unaccusative, unergative), argument structure, thematic roles, event structure, telicity, agentivity, information structure, focus, presupposition, features
Chinese linguistics	Tone, null subject, null object, pro-drop, long-distance binding, <i>wh</i> -in-situ, existential polarity words, topic structures, Resultative Verb Compounds (RVC), pretransitive ( <i>ba</i> ), passive ( <i>bei</i> ), aspect markers, sentence-final particles
Language Acquisition	Language input, positive evidence, learner variability, representational deficit, linguistic interfaces and features, cross-linguistic influence, ultimate attainment, statistical learning, processing difficulty, morphological and phonological awareness, working memory, executive function
Research methods	Spoken language corpora, transcription and analysis of speech samples, elicited production and narrative, acceptability and truth-value judgment, standardized assessment, self-paced reading, priming, eye-tracking, tables, figures, descriptive and inferential statistics

**7. Course components:**

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face	Percentage of time
<i>Lectures (hybrid no)</i>	28 hours
<i>Interactive tutorial (hybrid no)</i>	14 hours
Out-of-classroom self-study	
<i>Reading, assignment, group work</i>	42 hours

## 8. Assessment type, percentage and rubrics

Task nature	Description	Weight
1. Class participation	Answer multiple-choice questions on content taught in class via Blackboard - <i>graded by Blackboard</i>	10%
2. Quiz	Two in-class quizzes to test understanding of key concepts and theories - <i>graded by TA, under teacher's supervision</i>	60%
3. Term paper	A paper reviewing empirical studies on a topic related to Chinese language acquisition (2,000-2,500 English words or 4,000-5,000 Chinese characters); student can work individually or form teams with one or two fellow students (max. 3 students per team): in-class oral presentation (15%), written paper (15%) - <i>managed by TA, graded by teacher</i>	30%

Attendance at lectures and tutorials is required.

## 9. Required and recommended readings:

*This course does not have a textbook. Students should read the following book chapters and journal articles:*

- Lee, T. H.-T. (1996). Theoretical issues in language development and Chinese child language, In J. C.-T. Huang and A. Li (eds.) *New Horizons in Chinese Linguistics*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp. 293-356.
- Lu, Y. & Ke, C (2018). L2 Chinese Grammar Development. in *The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Second Language Acquisition*. 1st ed., Routledge, 151–216.
- Mai, Z. (2016). L2 Chinese: Grammatical development and processing. *Second Language Research*, 32(1), 123-141.
- McBride, C. A. (2016). Is Chinese special? Four aspects of Chinese literacy acquisition that might distinguish learning Chinese from learning alphabetic orthographies. *Educational Psychology Review*, 28, 523-549.
- Tardif, T. (2006). "The Importance of Verbs in Chinese." *The Handbook of East Asian Psycholinguistics*. Cambridge University Press, 124–135.
- Wang, Y., Sereno, J. and Jongman, A. (2006) L2 acquisition and processing of Mandarin tones. In Li, P., Tan, L. H., Bates, E. and Tzeng, O. J. L. (eds.) *The Handbook of East Asian Psycholinguistics*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 250-256.
- Yip, V., & Matthews, S. (2010). The acquisition of Chinese in bilingual and multilingual contexts. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 14(1), 127-146.
- Zhao, Y. (2011). A tree in the wood: a review of research on L2 Chinese acquisition. *Second Language Research*, 27:4, pp. 559-572.

## 10. Feedback for evaluation:

Apart from the end-of-term course evaluation, the teacher and the teaching assistant welcome students' timely comments and suggestions on any aspect of the course. Email communication is preferred. Appointment meetings can also be arranged.

## 11. Course schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	References#	Submit
1.	Jan 9	Introduction - Tutorial: Naturalistic data	Lee (1996)	
<b>Part I: Child L1 Chinese</b>				
2.	Jan 16	Phonological and lexical development - Tutorial: CDI	Hua & Dodd (2000); Lin et al. (2020); Hao et al. (2008); Tardif (2006); Tardif et al. (2009)	Q1
3.	Jan 23	Early grammatical forms - Tutorial: CHAT	Shi (2006); Huang et al. (2022); Wong (2023); Zhou et al. (2017)	Q2
4.	Jan 30	No class – Happy Chinese New Year!		
5.	Feb 6	Semantics in child Chinese - Tutorial: CLAN	Zhou & Crain (2010); Zhou & Crain (2011); Shi & Zhou (2018); Zhou et al. (2014a,b); Deng et al. (2018)	Q3
6.	Feb 13	Developing literacy skills - Tutorial: Standardized assessment	McBride (2016); McBride-Chang & Zhong (2006); Chen et al. (2009); Hulme et al. (2019)	Q4
7.	Feb 20	Acquiring Chinese in multilingual contexts - Tutorial: Elicited narration	Yip & Matthews (2010); Sheng et al. (2011); Mai et al. (2016); Mai, Zhao & Yip (2021); Hao & Chondrogianni (2023); Polinsky & Scontras (2020)	Q5
8.	Feb 27	Part I Summary, Q&A <b>Part I Quiz (30%)</b>		
<b>Part II: Adult L2 Chinese</b>				
9.	Mar 6	Lexical tone in L2 Mandarin - Q&A in prep for quiz	Wang et al., (2006); Hao (2012)	Q6
10.	Mar 13	L2 Chinese syntax - Tutorial: Judgment tasks	Lu & Ke (2018); Zhao (2011); Yuan (2001)	Q7
11.	Mar 20	<i>Wh</i> -words in L2 Chinese - Tutorial: Production data	Yuan (2007a, b); Yuan (2010); Yuan & Dugarova (2012); Yuan (2012); Sorace (2011)	Q8
12.	Mar 27	Event semantics in L2 Chinese - Tutorial: online tasks	Yuan & Zhao (2011); Slabakova (2015); Wu (2010); Wu et al. (2022); Mai & Yuan (2016); Lardiere (2009)	Q9
13.	Apr 3	L2 Chinese literacy and pragmatics - Tutorial: Term paper guidelines	Shen (2013); Zhang & Roberts (2019); Yang (2018)	Q10

<i>Part III: Studying Chinese language acquisition</i>				
14.	Apr 10	Part II Summary, Q&A <b>Part II Quiz (30%)</b>		
15.	Apr 17	Student presentations		Slides
	Apr 24			Paper

Notes: #see end of document for full list of references

## 12. Contact details:

Teacher: Prof. MAI Ziyin Maggie 麥子茵

Email: [maggiezymai@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:maggiezymai@cuhk.edu.hk)

Teaching assistant: Ms. Wang Zhuoqun 王卓群

Email: [zhuoqunwang@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:zhuoqunwang@cuhk.edu.hk)

## 13. Details of course website

Course website in Blackboard.

## 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.

## 16. References (advanced and optional)

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- Li, S., & Taguchi, N. (2014). The effects of practice modality on pragmatic development in L2 Chinese. *The Modern Language Journal*, 98(3), 794-812.
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