

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

1. Course Code: LING5604

2. Course Title: Topics in Sociolinguistics

3. Course Title (Chinese): 社會語言學專題

4. Course Description:

This course introduces to students some of the core issues of language and society in recent years. The course investigates the possible relations between language and society. Topics to be covered include languages and dialects, bilingualism and multilingualism, languages in contact, language variation and language change, language in education, language planning, as well as language and identity. Focus will be given to how these sociolinguistic concepts are applied locally and regionally.

5. Course Syllabus

Topics	Concepts
Language, Dialects and Varieties	language vs dialect, standard language, regional dialects, social dialects, ethnic dialects, styles, registers and genres
Language Attitudes and Identity	language attitudes; how identity is expressed through language
Multilingual Societies and Language Contact	lingua francas, pidgin and creole formation, linguistic characteristics of pidgins and creoles
Language Variation and Change	regional variation, linguistic variables, social variation, synchronic variation, and diachronic change
Discourse Analysis	interactional sociolinguistics, conversational analysis
Sociolinguistics and Social Justice	sexist language, gender, and sexuality identities; social dialects and education; legitimation of minority languages and dialects, access to English as a global language
Language Policy and Planning	types of language planning; endangered languages

6. Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand that language behaviors are regulated systematically not only by abstract linguistic principles but also by social factors.
- Identify the key issues in sociolinguistics and discuss these issues in sociolinguistic-specific terminologies.
- Identify and appreciate relevant sociolinguistic phenomena in daily communication settings.
- Analyze sociolinguistic phenomena with concepts learned in the course.
- Greater awareness of local and regional sociolinguistic situations.

7. Course Components (Teaching Modes and Learning Activities)

Lecture: 3 hours in-class

Lecture will be offered face-to-face, with no hybrid mode of teaching and learning.

8. Assessment type

Task nature	Description	Weight
Individual essay	Compare two multilingual societies in terms of their respective 'sociolinguistic' profiles. Summarise your findings in a 1000-word explanatory essay. Deadline: 10 March 2025	40%
Group Project with with powerpoint slides and audio recording	Choose a sociolinguistic topic related to daily life in the speech community with which you are most familiar. In addition to a literature review related to the selected topic, the presentation should include an explanation of the project's aim and approach. (The 'exercises' in Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015) suggest possible topics.) Deadline for submission of ppt and audio file: 11 April 2025	30% (10% presentation ppt file + 20% project paper)
- project paper	A mini-research paper on the chosen topic (1800-2000 words, Roman font 12, single space). Deadline: 22 April 2025	
Midterm Quiz	Multiple Choice, T/F and Short answers Deadline 21 February 2024	30% (marked by TA)

9. Assessment Rubric

LING5604	Topics in Sociolinguistics
A	Recognize almost all the basic concepts about language and society covered in the course; describe with great depth a wide range of factors influencing language use in the society; excellent in analyzing and evaluating linguistic phenomena in real-life situations with a lot of critical insights.
A-	Recognize most basic concepts about language and society covered in the course; describe with great depth a wide range of factors influencing language use in the society; good in analyzing and evaluating linguistic phenomena in real-life situations with some critical insights.
B	Recognize some basic concepts about language and society covered in the course; describe with some depth some factors influencing language use in the society; satisfactory in analyzing and evaluating linguistic phenomena in real-life situations.
C	Recognize relatively few basic concepts about language and society covered in the course; describe rather superficially some factors influencing language use in the society; weak in analyzing and evaluating linguistic phenomena in real-life situations.
D	Recognize very few basic concepts about language and society covered in the course; describe superficially a very limited number of factors influencing language use in the society; very weak in analyzing and evaluating linguistic phenomena in real-life situations.
F	Recognize almost no basic concepts about language and society covered in the course; describe almost no factors influencing language use in the society; extremely weak in analyzing and evaluating linguistic phenomena in real-life situations.

10. Required and recommended reading

Course textbook:

Wardhaugh, Ronald & Janet Fuller. 2015. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Wiley Blackwell. (7th edition)

Additional recommended reading:

Holmes, Janet & Wilson, Nick. 2022. *An introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Routledge. (6th Edition)

11. Feedback for evaluation

Students are encouraged to give feedback or comments on course contents and teaching materials throughout the course, in addition to the midterm and final course evaluation. Students can contact the lecturer directly. See contact details below.

12. Course Schedule

Class/ week	Date	Topic	Required reading
Week 1	10 Jan	Languages, Dialects and other Varieties	W & F Chapter 1-2
Week 2	17 Jan	Language Attitudes and Identity	W & F Chapter 3
Week 3	24 Jan	Multilingual Societies and Language Contact	W & F Chapter 4
Week 4	31 Jan	<i>Public Holiday</i>	
Week 5	7 Feb	Contact Languages: Pidgins and Creoles	W & F Chapter 5
Week 6	14 Feb	Language Variation	W & F Chapter 6-7
Week 7	21 Feb	<i>Mid-term quiz</i>	
Week 8	28 Feb	Language Change	W & F Chapter 8
Week 9	7 March	Discourse Analysis	W & F Chapter 11
	10 March	<i>Individual essay due</i>	
Week 10	14 March	Language, Gender, and Sexuality	W & F Chapter 12
Week 11	21 March	Sociolinguistics and Education	W & F Chapter 13

Week 12	28 March	Language Policy and Planning	W & F Chapter 14
Week 13	4 April	<i>Public holiday</i>	
Week 14	11 April	Language, Text and Context	
Week 15	18 April	<i>Public holiday</i>	

13. Contact details

Professor Jonathan WEBSTER
Email: jonathanjameswebster@cuhk.edu.hk

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 statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.**

You have to submit a soft copy to VeriGuide 2020 on or before the date of the deadline via <https://academic2.veriguide.org/cuhk/login>. Assignments with an originality score above 20% will **not** be graded.

15. Use of Generative AI tools

You have to submit a soft copy to VeriGuide AWD on or before the date of the deadline via <https://awd.veriguide.org/>. Assignments with an AI Detected score above 20% will **not** be graded.