

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages**  
**Second Term of 2025-26**

**Course code and title**

LING2007A Linguistic Argumentation I 語言學論證（一）

**Instructor and Teaching Assistants**

Instructor: Dr. Margaret Lei

Teaching Assistant: Mr. Zhaohan Jiang

**Lecture time and venue**

Tuesdays, 10:30am-12:15pm; Room 405, William M W Mong Engineering Building (ERB 405)

**Tutorial time and venue**

Tuesdays, 12:30pm-1:15pm; Room 405, William M W Mong Engineering Building (ERB 405)

**Course overview**

This course aims to train students in the articulation of ideas related to language issues. It will engage students in critical reflections on linguistics concepts, as well as systematic observations and descriptions of language phenomena. Through critical discussion of selected cases, students will explore the ways in which one may arrive at generalizations based on linguistic evidence. Students will be introduced to the structure and norms of academic writing in linguistics, and will receive intensive practice in the writing techniques essential for the reporting and analysis of language data, in both English and Chinese.

**Learning outcomes**

Students are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- (a) An appreciation of the complexities involved in the process of reading and writing, and the elements that contribute to effective reading and effective writing.
- (b) An ability to describe the structure of argumentation of a linguistics article, and respond to the ideas contained in it.
- (c) A basic grasp of how to formulate thesis statements, write topic sentences of paragraphs, use paragraphing, as well as articulate ideas in clear and precise language in academic writing.
- (d) A basic command of standard tools that are useful for academic writing: dictionaries, reference grammars, style manuals, and reference management software.
- (e) An enhanced awareness of some of the typical errors of advanced Chinese learners of English.

## List of topics

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
<b>Module 1: Topics in Linguistics I</b>	
▪ <b>The relationship between language and thought</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Linguistic determinism versus Linguistic relativity</li><li>▪ Cross-linguistic evidence on the role of language in shaping human cognition</li></ul>
<b>Module 2: Topics in Linguistics II</b>	
▪ <b>The difference between language and dialect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Classification of speech varieties</li><li>▪ Dialect continua</li><li>▪ Different types of empirical methods for determining mutual intelligibility</li></ul>
<b>Module 3: Argumentation</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Thesis statement</li><li>▪ Topic sentences of paragraphs</li><li>▪ The use of examples and illustrations</li><li>▪ Paragraph structure</li><li>▪ Conclusion</li></ul>
<b>Module 4: Grammar and style</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Linguistic dimensions of style</li><li>▪ Levels of formality</li><li>▪ Typical errors of advanced Chinese learners of English</li></ul>
<b>Module 5: Tools for academic writing</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Dictionaries</li><li>▪ Reference grammars</li><li>▪ Style manuals</li><li>▪ Reference management software</li></ul>

## Learning activities

Lecture		Interactive tutorial		Assigned readings		Writing assignments		In-group discussion		One-on-one consultation		Project / Essay	
(hr)		(hr)		(hr)		(hr)		(hr)		(hr)		(hr)	
in	out class	in	out class	in	out class	in	out class	in	out class	in	out class	in	out class
26	0	13	0	0	39	0	65	0	13	0	3	0	0
M	NA	M	NA	NA	M/O	NA	M/O	NA	M/O	NA	O	NA	NA

M: Mandatory activity in the course; O: Optional activity; NA: Not applicable

## Assessment scheme

Task nature	Weight
Two sets of writing assignments (30% for each set of assignment: outline 5% + paper 25%)	60%
Presentation of reading summaries	20%
In-class discussion of readings	10%
Post-reading mini-quizzes	10%

**Note:** In case face-to-face teaching becomes impossible due to the pandemic, lectures and in-class activities may be conducted online.

## Grade descriptors for assessment

Grade	Overall course
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognize almost all the linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course</li> <li>▪ Recognize and identify a good range of common errors made by Chinese learners of English</li> <li>▪ Excellent in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing</li> <li>▪ Excellent in evaluating linguistic papers with a lot of critical insights</li> </ul>
A-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognize most of the linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course</li> <li>▪ Recognize and identify a good range of common errors made by Chinese learners of English</li> <li>▪ Good in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing</li> <li>▪ Good in evaluating linguistic papers with some critical insights</li> </ul>

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- B
- Recognize some linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course
  - Recognize and identify some common errors made by Chinese learners of English
  - Satisfactory in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing
  - Satisfactory in evaluating linguistic papers
- C
- Recognize relatively few linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course
  - Recognize and identify relatively few common errors made by Chinese learners of English
  - Weak in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing
  - Weak in evaluating linguistic papers
- D
- Recognize very few linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course
  - Recognize and identify very few common errors made by Chinese learners of English
  - Very weak in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing
  - Very weak in evaluating linguistic papers
- F
- Recognize almost no linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course
  - Recognize and identify almost no common errors made by Chinese learners of English
  - Extremely weak in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing
  - Extremely weak in evaluating linguistic papers
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## **Recommended learning resources**

### **A. Basic background texts**

Strunk, W. 2000. *The Elements of Style*. Fourth edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles L. van Doren. 1972. *How to Read a book*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Fromkin, V., R. Rodman, and N. Hyams. 2019. *An Introduction to Language*. 11th edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

### **B. Reference books**

Bauer, Laurie, and Peter Trudgill. eds. 1998. *Language Myths*. London, England; New York, USA: Penguin Books.

Biber D., Leech, G. and S. Conrad. 2002. *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Longman.

Carter R. and M. McCarthy. 2006. *Cambridge Grammar of English*. Cambridge University Press.

Huddleston, Rodney, Geoffrey K. Pullum, and in collaboration with Laurie Bauer. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ohashi, Yoshimasa. 1978. *English Style: Grammatical and Semantic Approach*. Rowley, MA: Newberry House.

Palmer, Frank. 1984. *Grammar*. 2nd edition. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Janand Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.

Wallwork, A. 2013. *English for Research: Usage, Style, and Grammar*. London: Springer.

### **Feedback for evaluation**

A mid-term course evaluation and an end-of-term course evaluation will be conducted. Students are welcome to give feedback to the course teacher at any time in person or through emails.

## Course schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Jan 6 (Tue)	Course overview [Module 1] Topics in Linguistics I - Language and thought #1: An overview	Whorf, Benjamin Lee. 1940/1956. "Science and Linguistics." In <i>Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf</i> , edited by John B. Carroll, 207-219. Massachusetts: MIT Press.  Pullum, Geoffrey K. 2019. Ch. 19 "Does Our Language Influence the Way We Think?" In <i>The Five-minute Linguist - Bite-sized Essays on Language and Languages</i> , 93-97, edited by Caroline Myrick and Walk Wolfram. Third edition. United Kingdom: Equinox eBooks Publishing.
2	Jan 13 (Tue)	[Module 1] Topics in Linguistics I - Language and thought #2: Language and spatial-temporal cognition  [Module 5] Tools for academic writing	Boroditsky, Lena. 2011. "How Language Shape Thought: The Languages We Speak Affect Our Perceptions of the World." <i>Scientific American</i> , February 2011, 63-65.  Majid, Asifa, Melissa Bowerman, Sotaro Kita, Daniel B. M. Haun, and Stephen C. Levinson. 2004. "Can Language Restructure Cognition? The Case for Space." <i>TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences</i> 8(3): 108-114.
3	Jan 20 (Tue)	[Module 1] Topics in Linguistics I - Language and thought #3: Language and spatial-temporal cognition  [Module 3] Argumentation  <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Presentations #1-1 &amp; #1-2</span>	*Boroditsky, Lera, and Alice Gaby. 2010. "Remembrances of Times East: Absolute Spatial Representations of Time in an Australian Aboriginal Community." <i>Psychological Science</i> 21 (11): 1635-1639.  *Núñez, R. K. Celik, and N. Nakagawa. 2019. "Absolute Spatial Frames of Reference in Bilingual Speakers of Endangered Ryukyuan Languages: An assessment via a Novel Gesture Elicitation Paradigm." <i>Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society</i> 41: 890-896.

4	Jan 27 (Tue)	[Module 1] Topics in Linguistics I - Language and thought #4: Language and numerical cognition	*Frank, Michael C., Daniel L. Everett, Evelina Fedorenko, and Edward Gibson. 2008. “Number as a Cognitive Technology: Evidence from Pirahã Language and Cognition.” <i>Cognition</i> 108(3): 819-824.
		[Module 4] Grammar and style	Everett, Caleb. 2013. “Linguistic Relativity and Numerical Cognition: New Light on a Prominent Test Case.” <i>Proceedings of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society</i> 91-103.
		Presentation #1-3	
5	Feb 3 (Tue)	[Module 1] Topics in Linguistics I - Language and thought #5: Language and numerical cognition	*Miller, Kevin F., Catherine M. Smith, Jianjun Zhu, and Houcan Zhang. 1995. “Preschool Origins of Cross-National Differences in Mathematical Competence: The Role of Number-Naming Systems”. <i>Psychological Science</i> 6(1): 56-60.
		[Module 3] Argumentation	Butterworth, Brian, Robert Reeve, Fiona Reynolds, and Delyth Lloyd. 2008. “Numerical Thought with and Without Words: Evidence from Indigenous Australian Children.” <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Science</i> 105(35): 13179-13184.
		Presentation #1-4	Outline #1 due on Feb 7, Sat, 23:59
6	Feb 10 (Tue)	[Module 1] Topics in Linguistics I - Language and thought #6: Language and color perception	*Winawer, Jonathan, Nathan Witthoft, Michael C. Frank, Lisa Wu, Alex R. Wade, and Lera Boroditsky. 2007. “Russian Blues Reveal Effects of Language on Color Discrimination.” <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Science</i> 108: 7780-7785.
		[Module 4] Grammar and style	Heider, Eleanor Rosch. 1972. “Universals in Color Naming and Memory”. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology</i> 93(1): 10-20.
		Presentation #1-5	
7	Feb 17 (Tue)	<b>No class – Lunar New Year Vacation</b>	

8	Feb 24 (Tue)	[Module 1] Topics in Linguistics II: Language and thought #7 – Language and color perception  [Module 5] Tools for academic writing  <b>Presentation #1-6</b>	*He, Hu, Jie Li, Qianguo Xiao, Songxiu Jiang, Yisheng Yang, and Sheng Zhi. 2019. “Language and Color Perception: Evidence from Mongolian and Chinese Speakers.” <i>Frontier in Psychology</i> 10: 1-10.  Reiger, Terry and Paul Kay. 2009. “Language, Thought, and Color: Whorf was Half Right.” <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences</i> 13(10): 439-446.
9	Mar 3 (Tue)	<b>No class – Reading Week</b> <b>Paper #1 due on Mar 6, Fri, 23:59</b>	
10	Mar 10 (Tue)	[Module 2] Topics in Linguistics II - Language and dialect #1: An overview (Part I)  [Module 3] Argumentation  <b>Presentation #2-1</b>	*Chambers J. K. and Peter Trudgill. 1998. Chapter 1 “Dialect and Language”. In <i>Dialectology</i> . 3–12. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  Childs, G. Tucker. 2019. Ch. 3 “What’s the Difference between Dialects and Languages?” In <i>The Five-minute Linguist - Bite-sized Essays on Language and Languages</i> , 16-20, edited by Caroline Myrick and Walk Wolfram. Third edition. United Kingdom: Equinox eBooks Publishing.
11	Mar 17 (Tue)	[Module 2] Topics in Linguistics II - Language and dialect #2: An overview (Part II)  [Module 4] Grammar and style  <b>Presentation #2-2</b>	*Haugen, Einar. 1966. “Dialect, Language, Nation.” <i>American Anthropologist</i> 62(4): 922–935.  Hockett, Charles. 1958. Chapter 38 “Idiolect, Dialect, Language.” In <i>A Course in Modern Linguistics</i> , 321–338. New York: The Macmillan Company.

12	Mar 24 (Tue)	[Module 2] Topics in Linguistics II: Language and dialect #3: Mutual intelligibility (Part I)  [Module 5] Tools for academic writing  <u>Presentation #2-3</u>	*Voegelin C. F. and Zellig S. Harris. 1951. Methods for Determining Intelligibility Among Dialects of Natural Languages. <i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society</i> 95(3): 322–329.  Okura, Eve. 2015. “Language vs. Dialect in Language Cataloguing: The Vexed Case of Otomanguean Dialect Continua.” <i>Working Papers in Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, University of Hawaii</i> 46(5): 1-19.
13	Mar 31 (Tue)	[Module 2] Topics in Linguistics II: Language and dialect #4: Mutual intelligibility (Part II)  [Module 3] Argumentation  <u>Presentation #2-4</u>	*Yang, Changyong, William O’Grady, Sejung Yang, Nanna Haug Hilton, Sang-Gu Kang, and So-Young Kim. 2019. Revising the Language Map of Korea. In <i>Handbook of the Changing World Language Map</i> , edited by S.D. Brunn and R. Kehrein, 1–15. Springer Nature Switzerland.  Bouwer, Leoni. 2007. Intercomprehension and Mutual Intelligibility Among Southern Malagasy Languages. <i>Language Matters</i> 38(2): 253–274.  <u>Outline #2 due on Apr 4, Sat, 23:59</u>
14	Apr 7 (Tue)	<b>No class – The day following Easter Monday</b>	
15	Apr 14 (Tue)	[Module 2] Topics in Linguistics II: Language and dialect #5: The case of Chinese (Part I)  [Module 4] Grammar and style  <u>Presentation #2-5</u>	*Tang, Chaoju and Vincent J. van Heuven. 2009. Mutual Intelligibility of Chinese Dialects Experimentally Tested. <i>Lingua</i> 119: 709–732.  Kurpaska, Maria. 2010. Ch. 5 “Classification of Chinese Dialects”. In <i>Chinese Language(s): A Look Through the Prism of the Great Dictionary of Modern Chinese Dialects</i> , 25–62. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

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16 Apr 21 [Module 2] Topics in  
(Tue) Linguistics II: Language  
and dialect #6:  
The case of Chinese  
(Part II)

[Module 5] Tools for  
academic writing

Presentation #2-6

\*Cheng, Siu-pong and Sze-wing Tang. 2014.  
“Languagehood of Cantonese: A Renewed  
Front in an Old Debate”. *Open Journal of  
Modern Linguistics* 4(3): 389-398.

Mair, Victor H. 1991. “What Is a Chinese  
“Dialect/Topolect”? Reflections on Some Key  
Sino-English Linguistic Terms”. *Sino-  
Platonic Papers* 29: 1-31.

Paper #2 due on Apr 25, Sat, 23:59

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## Contact details for instructor and TA

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### Instructor

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Name: Dr. Margaret Lei  
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Office hours: By appointment

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### Teaching Assistant

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Office hours: By appointment

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### Details of course website

LING2007A on Blackboard

<https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk/>

## 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.

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

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

