

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
Second Term, 2025-2026

Course Title: LING5302
Title in English: Approaches to English grammar
Title in Chinese: 英語語法研究

Course Description:

This course introduces students to various approaches to the study of English grammatical constructions, including formal, functional, and cognitive approaches. Students are encouraged to analyze grammatical constructions in terms of form-function relationships, cognitive processing and information flow. This course is designed to enhance students' sensitivity to the interactive aspects of grammatical analysis.

Course Syllabus

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Constituents and Phrases	functional categories; lexical categories; count; mass; determiner; verbal noun; deverbal noun; unaccusative; gradability; comparatives; agent-oriented adverbs; speaker-oriented adverbs
Simple Clauses	predicate; complement; expletive; agreement, finite clauses and non-finite clauses
Subordination and Coordination	coordination; embedding; relative clauses; noun clauses; adverb clauses; simple clauses; compound clauses; complex clauses
Finite and Nonfinite Clauses	matrix clause; tense-person-number agreement; infinitival clauses; participle clauses; if-clauses; conditionals; verbless clauses; small clauses
Interrogatives	clause types; argument questions; adjunct questions; determiner questions; intensifier questions; multiple wh-questions; negative inversion; wh-exclamatives
Negatives	negative and positive clauses; negative polarity items; morphological negation; syntactic negation; absolute negator; approximate negator; NPI licensing; scope of negation
Passives	voice; agentless passives; long passives; short passives; simple passives; complex passives; be-passives vs. get-passives; adjectival passives; stative passives
Relative Clauses	gap; relative head; relative pronoun; bare relatives; free relatives; infinitival relatives; pseudo-cleft sentences; restrictive relatives; nonrestrictive relatives
Information packaging	reflexives; there-insertion; raising; extraposition; clefting; pronominalization; substitution; ellipsis

Learning outcomes

Upon successfully completing the subject, students should be able to:

- To enhance students' understanding of how meaning is made by means by grammar;
- To foster students' understanding of the place of grammar within a broader framework of communication;
- To apply the concepts of syntactic analysis to describe the structure, meaning and use of English grammar;

- To generalize from findings to establish rules;
- To understand and use English effectively and accurately.
- To develop a sensitivity to the possibility of alternative analyses for the same linguistic phenomena;
- To develop an enhanced knowledge of the typical errors of advanced Chinese learners of English.

Course components (Teaching modes and Learning activities)

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face	100%

Lecture (hr/week) in class	Interactive tutorial (hr/week) in class	Reading (hr/week) out class	Assignments (hr/week) out class	Final project (hr/week) out class
2 hours	1 hour	10 hours	5 hours	
Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	

Assessment scheme

Task nature	Description	Percentage
Weekly assignments	Group assessments (No more than 3 students in each group)	30%
Midterm exam March 11	Individual assessment (2 hours)	30%
Final exam April 22	Individual assessment (3 hours)	40%

Required and recommended readings

Recommended readings:

- Biber, Douglas, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey N. Leech, Susan Conrad, and Edward Finegan. (2021). *A grammar of spoken and written English*. John Benjamins.
- Huddleston, Rodney D., Geoffrey K. Pullum, & Laurie Bauer. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huddleston, Rodney D., Geoffrey K. Pullum. (2005). *A student's introduction to English grammar*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huddleston, Rodney D., Geoffrey K. Pullum, Brett Reynolds. (2021). *A student's introduction to English grammar*. Cambridge University Press.
- Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman.

References:

- Aarts, Bas. (2018). *English syntax and argumentation*. Palgrave.
- Aarts, Bas. (2011). *Oxford modern English grammar*. Oxford.
- Brown, K., & Miller, J. (2016). *A critical account of English syntax: grammar, meaning, text*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Carnie, Andrew. (2013). *Syntax: a generative introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Dixon, Robert M. W. (2005). *A semantic approach to English grammar*. Oxford University Press.
- Downing, Angela. (2015). *English grammar: a university course*. Routledge.
- Edelstein, E. (2020). *English syntax: A minimalist account of structure and variation*. Edinburgh University Press.

Haegeman, Liliane M. V. (2006). *Thinking syntactically: a guide to argumentation and analysis*. Blackwell Publishers.

Haegeman, Liliane M. V., & Jacqueline Guéron. (1999). *English grammar: a generative perspective*. Blackwell Publishers.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. Arnold.

Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. (1985). *A Comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman.

Radford, Andrew. (2009). *An introduction to English sentence structure*. Cambridge University Press.

Radford, Andrew. (2004). *English syntax: an introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, Geoff. (2004). *Introducing functional grammar* (2nd ed.). Arnold.

Yule, George. (2009). *Explaining English grammar*. Oxford University Press.

Feedback for evaluation

To ensure the quality of teaching and learning, students' views and comments are most valuable. Beside formal feedback at the end of the semester, I would appreciate that students give their feedback any time during the semester so that I can act immediately to improve teaching. Suggestions can be made through oral communication or email, either individually or by a group.

Grade descriptor

A	Demonstration of a thorough understanding of basic concepts in grammatical analysis, such as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, construction and constituent, category and function, unit and collocation, clause structure and information packaging; a firm grasp of the methodological reasonings favoring one approach over another, with reference to criteria such as economy, internal consistency, linguistically significant generalizations and learnability; a high degree of competency in describing the structure of a grammatical constituent; an excellent knowledge of some of the typical errors made by advanced Chinese learners of English, and a high degree of competency in correcting such errors.
A-	Demonstration of a thorough understanding of basic concepts in grammatical analysis, such as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, construction and constituent, category and function, unit and collocation, clause structure and information packaging; a firm grasp of the methodological reasonings favoring one approach over another, with reference to criteria such as economy, internal consistency, linguistically significant generalizations and learnability; a high degree of competency (with minor lapses) in describing the structure of a grammatical constituent; an excellent knowledge of some of the typical errors made by advanced Chinese learners of English, and a high degree of competency (with minor lapses) in correcting such errors.
B	Demonstration of a good understanding of basic concepts in grammatical analysis, such as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, construction and constituent, category and function, unit and collocation, clause structure and information packaging; a good grasp of the methodological reasonings favoring one approach over another, with reference to criteria such as economy, internal consistency, linguistically significant generalizations and learnability; a good degree of competency in describing the structure of a grammatical constituent; an good knowledge of some of the typical errors made by advanced Chinese learners of English, and a good degree of competency in correcting such errors.
C	Demonstration of a adequate understanding of basic concepts in grammatical analysis, such as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, construction and constituent, category and function, unit and collocation, clause structure and information packaging; a adequate grasp of the methodological reasonings favoring one approach over another, with reference to criteria such as economy, internal consistency, linguistically significant generalizations and learnability; a adequate

	degree of competency in describing the structure of a grammatical constituent; an adequate knowledge of some of the typical errors made by advanced Chinese learners of English, and a adequate degree of competency in correcting such errors.
D	Demonstration of a limited understanding of basic concepts in grammatical analysis, such as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, construction and constituent, category and function, unit and collocation, clause structure and information packaging; a limited grasp of the methodological reasonings favoring one approach over another, with reference to criteria such as economy, internal consistency, linguistically significant generalizations and learnability; a limited degree of competency in describing the structure of a grammatical constituent; an limited knowledge of some of the typical errors made by advanced Chinese learners of English, and a limited degree of competency in correcting such errors.
F	Demonstration of a minimal understanding of basic concepts in grammatical analysis, such as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, construction and constituent, category and function, unit and collocation, clause structure and information packaging; a minimal grasp of the methodological reasonings favoring one approach over another, with reference to criteria such as economy, internal consistency, linguistically significant generalizations and learnability; a minimal degree of competency in describing the structure of a grammatical constituent; an minimal knowledge of some of the typical errors made by advanced Chinese learners of English, and a minimal degree of competency in correcting such errors.

Course schedule

Units	Dates	Topics	Required reading: Huddleston and Pullum 2021 Additional readings will be assigned in class
1	Jan 07	Introduction	Chapters 1 and 2
2	Jan 14	Verbs I	Chapter 3
3	Jan 21	Verbs II	Chapter 3
4	Jan 28	Clause structure	Chapter 4 and 8
5	Feb 04	Clause type	Chapters 10
6	Feb 11	Noun phrase I	Chapter 5
	Feb 18	Lunar New Year Vacation	
7	Feb 25	Noun phrase II	Chapter 5
8	Mar 04	Adjectives and adverbs	Chapter 6
9	Mar 11	Midterm Test (Units 1-7) Conjunctions	
10	Mar 18	Prepositions	Chapter 7
11	Mar 25	Subordination and finite clauses	Chapter 11, 12 and 13
12	Apr 01	Non-finite and verbless clauses	Chapter 14
13	Apr 08	Negation and coordination	Chapter 9 and 15
14	Apr 15	Information packaging	Chapter 16
	Apr 22	Final Examination (Units 8-14)	

Teachers' or TA's contact details

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	
Name:	FU, Baoning
Email:	baoning@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	YIA LT3
Lecture Time:	Wednesday 6:30PM - 9:15PM

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	LIU Zhuo
Office Location	G16, Leung Kau Kui Building
Email:	zhuoliu@cuhk.edu.hk

Details of course website

A Blackboard account has been set up for students to access information of the course LING5101B on Blackboard eLearning System: <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.