

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
First Term, 2026-27

Course Code: LING1002 Title in English: Exploring Grammar: Cantonese Title in Chinese: 語法探索：粵語
Course Description: This course begins with the discussion of the importance of Cantonese and its grammar in linguistics research with special reference to the Hong Kong context. It begins with a brief overview of the historical development of Cantonese in relation to Sinitic and non-Sinitic languages in the region, which has given rise to some unique features of Cantonese. Taking a descriptive but critical approach, the course surveys various basic features of Cantonese grammar. The topics include Cantonese morphology, syntactic categories, morphology, phrases, verbal suffixes, sentence-final particles, clause types and grammatical constructions in Cantonese. Contrasts between Cantonese and Mandarin will be highlighted. Students will develop a sharpened sensitivity to the characteristics of Cantonese grammar and be able to appreciate the complexities of the language. To benefit from this course, students should be speakers of Cantonese or be actively learning Cantonese. Lectures, assignments and exams will be in English, but discussion in lectures and tutorials may also be conducted in Cantonese or Putonghua.

Learning outcomes

Upon successfully completing the subject, students are expected to: • have an informed understanding of the value of the study of Cantonese and its grammar in linguistics and multilingual societies, • grasp grammatical concepts and terms used in the analysis of Cantonese, • describe and analyze critically major grammatical phenomena of Cantonese, and • be able to compare the grammatical features between Cantonese and Mandarin.
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Course Syllabus

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Why Study Cantonese?	Cantonese as conservative language
History of Cantonese	Descriptive vs prescriptive approaches
Phonology	Origins of Cantonese; language contact, Substrate influence
Morphology	Romanization; tone, tone-melody matching
The verb phrase	Reduplication, affixation and tone change;
Syntactic categories	Ideophones and iconicity
Syntax: constructions	Tense, aspect and verbal particles
Syntax: subordination	Classifiers, adpositions, verbs and adjectives
Information structure	Ditransitive and serial verb constructions
Discourse	Relative clauses, complementation
	Topicalization, focusing and dislocation
	Sentence-final particles; written Cantonese

Course components (Teaching modes and Learning activities)

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face (please specify if it is hybrid, i.e. some students will attend the activities elsewhere)	Percentage of time
<i>e.g. Lectures (hybrid: yes, as backup option only)</i>	30
<i>Interactive tutorial (hybrid:no)</i>	20
Online asynchronous	
<i>e.g. Lecture recordings</i>	5
<i>Multimedia resources</i>	5
<i>Assigned reading</i>	20
Out-of-classroom	
<i>Research and preparation for presentation</i>	20
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Learning activities

Lecture (hr) in class	Interactive tutorial (hr) in class	Projects (hr) in /out class	Other (hr) in /out class
22	10	10	13
M	M	M	M

M: Mandatory activity in the course

Assessment scheme

Assessment type	Percentage
Written Assignments (2)	30
Presentation in tutorial (individual or pair)	30
Attendance and participation in tutorials	10
Final exam	30

Assessment rubrics
Please see grade descriptors below

Late submission policy

Department Guidelines:

Timeline for making requests:	Students with valid reasons for late assignment submission must submit a formal request, including supporting documentation, to the course teacher at least 5 working days or 7 calendar days before the original deadline.
Supporting documents:	Extension requests, accompanied by valid and official supporting documents, must be submitted to the course teacher by email for approval.
Penalty:	Unless an official extension is approved and properly documented, late submissions of assignments may incur a penalty. The specific penalty on late submission arrangements for each assessment item in a course will be determined by the respective course teacher and must be explicitly outlined in the course syllabus.
Remarks:	Requests submitted late or without valid reasons and supporting documents will not be accepted.

Assessment task	Extension allowed (Y/N)	Descriptions of Late submission policy
written assignments	Y	<i>Late submissions will result in a deduction of 10% of the marks awarded per day.</i>

Make-up Test Arrangements

Department Guidelines:

Timeline for making requests:	Students seeking permission to be absent from an assessment and requesting a make-up arrangement must submit a written application to the relevant course teacher on or before the scheduled test date , accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation.
Supporting documents:	1. <u>For medical and/or other health reasons:</u> Students must submit their request together with a valid medical certificate, issued and signed by a registered medical practitioner, explicitly recommending sick leave for the exact date or period of the relevant assessment. Attendance certificates will NOT be accepted. 2. <u>For other compelling reasons/events:</u> Students must provide official documentation, such as invitation letters from competition organisers, interview invitation letters or emails from employers, or external examination schedules, clearly stating that the event cannot be rescheduled. These documents will serve as supporting evidence for consideration by the course teacher.
Timeline for conducting make-up tests:	All approved make-up arrangements must be completed within a specified timeframe, i.e., 5 working days or 7 calendar days following the date of the originally scheduled examination for the entire class.
Number of attempts:	Upon approval of a student's absence application, only one make-up test will be scheduled according to the timeline specified above for each assessment.
Penalty:	A penalty may be applied to students who take a make-up test for any reason , with a specified percentage deducted from their total assessment mark. The specific penalty on make-up arrangement for each assessment item in a course will be determined by the respective course teacher and must be explicitly outlined in the course syllabus.
Remarks:	1. Late submissions or requests that do not include valid supporting documents will NOT be considered. 2. Students who are absent from any examination without prior approval will receive a failing grade for that examination.

Assessment test	Makeup allowed (Y/N)	Description of Makeup arrangement and penalty (if any)
1 final exam.	Y	<i>Students must submit a written application to the course teacher on or before the scheduled test date, together with appropriate supporting documentation, to be considered for a make-up test. A penalty of 10% deduction from the full mark of the test will be applied, unless well-documented medical reasons are provided.</i>

Required and recommended readings

Required readings: Readings will be assigned each week through Blackboard.

Recommended readings:

1. Bauer, R. S., & Benedict, P. K. (1997). *Modern Cantonese Phonology* (Vol. 102). Walter de Gruyter.
2. 張洪年 (2007) 香港粵語語法的研究 [A grammar of Cantonese as spoken in Hong Kong]. 香港:中文大學出版社. (https://julac.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1fusua3/CUHK_IZ511019877800003407)
- 3 鄧思穎 (2015) 粵語語法講義 [Lecture notes on Cantonese grammar]. 商務印書館(香港)有限公司.
- 4 Matthews, Stephen and Virginia Yip. (2011). 2nd edition. *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar*. London: Routledge.

Feedback for evaluation

- a. The Online Course and Teaching Evaluation (OCTE) survey will be conducted upon the last few teaching weeks of the course. Students are reminded of their responsibility and right to give feedback to facilitate enhancement of the course.
- b. Students are welcome to give feedback to the course teacher at any time in person or through emails.

Grade Descriptors

A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. The student can master the grammatical concepts in Cantonese grammar, and comprehensively describe grammatical structures and phenomena in Cantonese. A deep understanding is shown towards the major morpho-syntactic and semantic properties of these structures. The student can effectively apply the analytical skills to conduct grammatical analysis in Cantonese and to compare and contrast grammatical phenomena in Cantonese and Mandarin.

A- Very good performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes. The student generally has a good grasp of the grammatical concepts in Cantonese grammar. S/he can rather comprehensively describe grammatical structures and phenomena in Cantonese and their morpho-syntactic and semantic properties. The student demonstrates good capability in conducting grammatical analysis and in comparing Cantonese and Mandarin grammar.

B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, or high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. The student has a reasonable understanding of the concepts in Cantonese grammar. S/he is able to list major Cantonese grammatical phenomena taught in the course and most of their morphosyntactic and semantic properties. The student can conduct grammatical analysis to some extent and identify some major grammatical differences between Cantonese and Mandarin.

C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses. The student only demonstrates reasonable but partial understanding of the concepts in Cantonese grammar, and is able to collate relevant information or enumerate major grammatical phenomena and their properties. However, there are obvious problems in describing and analysing these phenomena. The student is aware of some grammatical differences between Cantonese and Mandarin.

D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. The student is able to recall some concepts taught and to provide vague description of the Cantonese grammatical phenomena taught. However, the understanding of the grammatical concepts and properties of the phenomena is generally poor. The student is barely able to do grammatical analysis and has difficulty telling the grammatical differences between Cantonese and Mandarin.

F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified assessment requirements. The student can only name some grammatical concepts at best and barely have any understanding of the concepts and grammatical phenomena. They have little idea how Cantonese structures are described and diagnosed.

Course schedule**Weekly Course Schedule:**

Class/Week	Date	Topic	Requirements
1.	Sept 14	Why Study Cantonese?	
2.	Sept 21	History of Cantonese	Reading
3.	Sept 28	Phonology	Reading
4.	Oct 5	Morphology	Written assignment
5.	Oct 12	The verb phrase	Reading
6.	Oct 17 (TBC) (make-up class)	Syntactic categories	Reading
7.	Oct 26	Syntax: constructions	Written assignment
8.	Nov 2	Syntax: subordination	Reading
9.	Nov 9	Information structure	Reading
10.	Nov 16	Sentence particles	Project presentation
11.	Nov 23	Written Cantonese	Project presentation
12.	Nov 30	Final exam	Project presentation
13.	Dec 7 (make-up class)	Review and course evaluation	Project presentation

Teachers' or TA's contact details

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	
Name:	MATTHEWS, Stephen
Office Location:	via Zoom or by appointment
Email:	stephenjamesmatthews@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	UCC C2
Website:	Please see Blackboard
Other information:	

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	LIU Xinyue
Office Location:	Rm G19, Leung Kau Kui Bldg
Telephone:	
Email:	1155166630@link.cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	UCC C2

Website:	
Other information:	

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	YU Yan
Office Location:	Rm G19, Leung Kau Kui Bldg
Telephone:	
Email:	1155249179@link.cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	UCC C2
Website:	
Other information:	

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	WEI Sihui
Office Location:	Rm G19, Leung Kau Kui Bldg
Telephone:	
Email:	1155241844@link.cuhk.edu.hk / wsh20030622@outlook.com
Teaching Venue:	UCC C2
Website:	
Other information:	

Details of course website

<https://ling.cuhk.edu.hk/programmes/undergraduate-programme/major-programme-in-linguistics/>

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.

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

Use of generative AI tools

(Teachers should include information relevant to the approach to be adopted in the course here)

Approach 1 - **All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks**

Guideline on sharing lecture recordings

1. The copyright of any lecture recordings shared in the course, whether they are produced by teachers, students, or peer note-takers, belongs to the University.
2. Students should not share these recordings with others without obtaining prior written consent from the teacher(s).

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