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

Course code and title

LING2008A Linguistic Argumentation II 語言學論證（二）

Instructor and Teaching Assistant

Instructor: Dr. Margaret Lei

Teaching Assistant: Sunwen Xu, Fei Yuan

Lecture time and venue

Thursdays, 9:30am-11:15am; Y. C. Liang Hall (LHC G06)

Tutorial time and venue

Thursdays, 11:30am-12:15pm; Y. C. Liang Hall (LHC G06)

Course overview

This course enhances students' sensitivity to the structure of linguistic argumentation. It will engage students in critical reflections on the character of linguistic units and categories at various levels of grammar, as well as systematic descriptions and analyses of language phenomena using linguistics concepts. Through critical discussion of selected cases, students will explore the ways in which one may arrive at generalizations based on linguistic evidence, how different analyses may apply to a given linguistic phenomenon, and the grounds on which one analysis may be judged to be superior to another.

Learning outcomes

Students are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes:

(a) A clear understanding of the basic units and categories of language and an ability to define these units and categories cross-linguistically;
(b) An ability to describe the structure of argumentation of a linguistics article, and respond to the ideas contained in it;
(c) An interest to observe the languages encountered in daily life, and some skills in tapping into one's own native language competence;
(d) A basic command of the use of reference grammars for descriptive facts about a language;
(e) An enhanced ability to write clear, well-organized and coherent expository papers on language, making use of techniques such as formulating thesis statements, paragraphing and self-editing;
(f) An enhanced knowledge of some of the typical errors of advanced learners of English.

List of topics

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Module 6: Topics in Linguistics III	
▪ **Arguing about the existence and categorization of linguistic units**	▪ Morphemes, words, and phrases ▪ Cross-linguistic differences in the conception of wordhood ▪ Word classes (parts of speech): nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, and auxiliaries ▪ Justification for the existence of categories and category membership ▪ Cross-linguistic differences in the defining of linguistic categories
Module 7: Topics in Linguistics IV	
▪ **Arguing about realization of and interactions among linguistic units**	▪ Acoustic and perceptual realization of linguistic units; ▪ Interactions among tone, intonation, prosody, and voice quality; ▪ Phonological variation and sound change; ▪ Phonotactic knowledge and wordlikeness
Module 8: Research Idea Development	
▪ **Formulating, justifying, and articulating a research idea in linguistics**	▪ Essentials of academic writing: title, abstract, thesis statement, introduction, elaboration, citation, quotation, reporting results, conclusion ▪ Research topics in theoretical linguistics; ▪ Literature review; ▪ Research methodology: qualitative and quantitative approaches; ▪ Research tools and technologies
Module 9: Argumentation	
	▪ Types of empirical data used as evidence in linguistic argumentation ▪ Arguments based on significant generalizations about language

Learning activities

Lecture		Interactive tutorial		Assigned readings		Writing assignments		In-group discussion		One-on-one consultation		Project / Essay	
(hr) in | out class		(hr) in | out class		(hr) in | out class		(hr) in | out class		(hr) in | out class		(hr) in | out class		(hr) in | out class	
26	0	13	0	0	65	0	65	0	13	0	6	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 ▪ Writing Assignment I: Reading-based essay (20%) ▪ Writing Assignment II: Research proposal o Outline: 5% o Final proposal: 15%	40%
Presentation of research proposal ▪ Each student will deliver an oral defence of their research proposal.	10%
Data-oriented mini-debates ▪ For each required reading, one student group will serve as the affirmative team and another as the negative team. o Affirmative team: Present original linguistic data that support the author's arguments. o Negative team: Present original linguistic data that challenge or counter the author's arguments. ▪ Each group must serve as affirmative and negative once during the term.	20%
Post-reading mini-quizzes ▪ Multiple-choice questions testing key concepts from each required reading.	20%
In-class participation and discussion	10%

Each unexcused absence from classes will result in a 2% deduction from the overall mark.

Policy on late submissions and make-up assessments

Assessment task	Extension allowed (Y/N)	Description of the policy
Writing assignments	Y	Students requesting an extension for the submission of a writing assignment must submit a written application by email to the course teacher for consideration at least five working days before the original deadline, along with valid supporting documentation.[#] Unless an official extension is approved and properly documented, late submission of a writing assignment will result in a deduction of 10% based on the total assessment mark.
Presentation of research proposal	Y	Students requesting an absence from the presentation and a make-up arrangement must submit a written application by email to the course teacher for consideration before the beginning of the scheduled presentation, along with valid supporting documentation.[#] Only one make-up presentation will be scheduled within five working days following the original presentation date, and a deduction of 10% based on the total assessment mark willapply.
Data-oriented mini-debates	Y	Students requesting an absence from a mini-debate and a make-up arrangement must submit a written application by email to the course teacher for consideration before the beginning of the scheduled mini-debate, along with valid supporting documentation.[#] Only one make-up presentation will be scheduled within five working days following the original presentation date, and a deduction of 10% based on the total assessment mark will apply.
Post-reading mini-quizzes	N	Students requesting an absence must submit a written application by email to the course teacher for consideration before the beginning of the scheduled quiz, along with valid supporting documentation.[#]
In-class participation and discussion	N	Students requesting an absence must submit a written application by email to the course teacher for consideration before the beginning of the scheduled quiz, along with valid supporting documentation.[#]

For medical or health reasons, students must provide a medical certificate issued and signed by a registered practitioner explicitly recommending sick leave for the assessment date; other documents such as attendance certificates or

appointment slips will not be accepted. For other compelling circumstances, official documentation confirming the event cannot be rescheduled must be submitted.

Grade descriptors for assessment

Grade	Overall course
A	▪ Recognize almost all the linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course ▪ Recognize and identify a good range of common errors made by Chinese learners of English ▪ Excellent in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing ▪ Excellent in evaluating linguistic papers with a lot of critical insights
A-	▪ Recognize most of the linguistic concepts and their supporting arguments covered in the course ▪ Recognize and identify a good range of common errors made by Chinese learners of English ▪ Good in applying linguistic knowledge and knowledge about academic discourse in writing ▪ Good in evaluating linguistic papers with some critical insights
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 few 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

Recommended learning resources

A. Linguistic argumentation

Aarts, Bas. 2001. *English Syntax and Argumentation*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave.

Haegeman, Liliane M. V. 2006. *Thinking Syntactically: A Guide to Argumentation and Analysis.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Larson, Richard K. and Kimiko Ryokai. 2010. *Grammar as Science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

B. Basic concepts in traditional linguistics

Bauer, Laurie. 2003. *Introducing Linguistic Morphology*. Second edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bloomfield, Leonard. 1933. *Language*. New York: Holt.

Di Sciullo, Anne Marie and Edwin Williams. 1987. *On the Definition of Word*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Hockett, Charles. 1958. *A Course in Modern Linguistics*. New York: Macmillan.

Jespersen, Otto. 1924. *The Philosophy of Grammar.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Krámský, Jiří. 1969. *The Word as a Linguistic Unit.* The Hague: Mouton.

Langacker, Ronald W. 1972. *Fundamentals of Linguistic Analysis*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

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

C. English grammar

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.

McCawley, James D. 1988. *The Syntactic Phenomena of English*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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

D. Chinese grammar

Chao, Yuen Ren. 1968. *A Grammar of Spoken Chinese*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Huang, C.-T. James, Y.-H. Audrey Li and Yafei Li. 2009. *The Syntax of Chinese*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Li, Charles and Sandra Thompson. 1981. *Mandarin Chinese: A Functional Reference Grammar.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

E. Academic writing style

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

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

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

F. Research methods

Coolican, Hugh. 2019. *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology*. 7th ed. Londer: Routledge.

Johnson, Keith. 2008. *Quantitative Methods in Linguistics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Litosseliti, Lisa. ed. 2010. *Research Methods in Linguistics*. London: Continuum.

Menn, Lise, and Nan Bernstein Ratner. 2000. *Methods for Studying Language Production*. Mahwah, N.J.; London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

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
<u>Module 6</u>: Topics in Linguistics III – Arguing about the existence and categorization of linguistic units; <u>Module 7</u>: Topics in Linguistics IV – Arguing about realization of and interactions among linguistic units;			
1	Sept 10 (Thur)	**Course overview** **[Module 6]** The concept of word	Langacker, Ronald W. 1972. Ch. 2 "Lexical analysis." (Section 2.1: The isolation of words) In *Fundamentals of Linguistic Analysis*, 36-50. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Hockett, Charles. 1958. Ch. 19 "Words." (Sections 19.1-19.3) In *A Course in Modern Linguistics*, 166-169. New York: Macmillan.
2	Sept 17 (Thur)	**[Module 6]** Morpho-syntactic criteria of wordhood Mini-debate #1	Bauer, Laurie. 2003. Ch. 4 "Defining the word form." In *Introducing Linguistic Morphology*, 57-69. Second edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Bloomfield, Leonard. 1933. Ch. 11 "Sentence-types." (Sections 11.5-11.6) In *Language*, 177-181. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Duanmu, San. 1998. "Wordhood in Chinese". In *New Approaches to Chinese Word Formation: Morphology, Phonology and the Lexicon in Modern and Ancient Chinese*, edited by Jerome L. Packard, 135-159 (Sections 1-2). Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.
3	Sept 24 (Thur)	**[Module 6]** Wordhood and word classes in Chinese Mini-debate #2	Paul, Waltraud. 2010. "Adjectival modification in Chinese: The rehabilitation of a much ostracized category." In *Adjectives: Formal Analyses in Syntax and Semantics*, edited by Patricia Cabredo Hofherr and Ora Matushansky, 115-151. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing. Packard, Jerome L. 2000. Ch. 2 "Defining the word in Chinese." In *The Morphology of Chinese: A Linguistic and Cognitive Approach*, 7-20. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

4	Oct 1 (Thur)	**No class** (Public holiday – National Day)	
5	Oct 8 (Thur)	**[Module 7]** Acoustic and perceptual realization of linguistic units Mini-debate #3	Aarts, Bas. 2001. Ch. 3 "Form: Words, word classes, and phrases" (Section 3.2: Nouns and determiners). In *English Syntax and Argumentation*, 26-32. Second edition. New York: Palgrave. Duanmu, San. 1998. "Wordhood in Chinese". In *New Approaches to Chinese Word Formation: Morphology, Phonology and the Lexicon in Modern and Ancient Chinese*, edited by Jerome L. Packard, 169-181 (Sections 5). Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.
6	Oct 15 (Thur)	**[Module 7]** Interactions among tone, intonation, prosody, and voice quality Mini-debate #4	Lan, Chen, and Peggy Mok. 2026. Acoustic cues in the production and perception of Cantonese sarcasm. *Language and Speech* 69(2): 378-411.
7	Oct 22 (Thur)	**[Module 7]** Phonological variation and sound change Mini-debate #5	Mok, Peggy P. K., Donghui Zuo and Peggy W. Y. Wong. 2013. Production and perception of a sound change in progress: Tone merging in Hong Kong Cantonese. *Language Variation and Change* 25: 341-370.
8	Oct 29 (Thur)	**[Module 7]** Phonotactic knowledge and wordlikeness Mini-debate #6	Kirby, James P. and Alan C. Y. Yu. 2007. Lexical and phonotactic effects on wordlikeness judgments in Cantonese. In *Proceedings of the International Congress of the Phonetic Sciences XVI*, 1389-1392. Germany: Saarbrücken. Ma, Joan K.-Y., Valter Ciocca, and Tara L. Whitehill. 2011. The perception of intonation questions and statements in Cantonese. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 129(2), 1012-1023.
9	Nov 5 (Thur)	**In-class completion of reading-based essay**	Paper #1 due on Nov 5, Thur, 12:15

10	Nov 12 (Thur)	**No class** (The 97th Congregation)	
Module 8: Research Idea Development; Module 9: Argumentation			
11	Nov 19 (Thu)	**[Module 8]** Essentials of academic writing **[Module 9]** Argumentation	
12	Nov 26 (Thur)	**[Module 8]** Literature review **[Module 9]** Argumentation	Proposal outline due on Nov 28, Sat, 23:59
13	Dec 3 (Thur)	**[Module 8]** Research topics in syntax, semantics, phonetics, and phonology **[Module 9]** Argumentation	
14	Dec 7 (Mon, 9:30-12:15pm, WMY 403)	**[Module 8]** Research methodology: qualitative and quantitative approaches **[Module 9]** Argumentation	
15	Dec 8 (Tue, 9:30-12:15pm, WMY 403)	**Presentation of research proposal**	Research proposal due on Dec 12, Sat, 23:59

Contact details for instructor and TA

Instructor	
Name:	Dr. Margaret Lei
Office location:	LG02, Leung Kau Kui Building, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Telephone:	3943-7014
Email:	margaret@cuhk.edu.hk
Office hours:	By appointment

Teaching Assistant	
Name:	Sunwen Xu, Fei Yuan
Email:	1155276016@link.cuhk.edu.hk, f.Yuan@link.cuhk.edu.hk
Office hours:	By appointment

Details of course website

LING2008A on Blackboard
https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk/

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools by Students in Learning Activities and Assessments

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

Students are not allowed to use any AI tools in any kind of learning activity or assessment that will be counted towards students' final grade of the course, or used for evaluating students' attainment of the desired learning outcomes. Students are expected to produce their own work independently without any collaboration or use of AI tools.

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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