



香港中文大學  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Public Lecture by Wilson T. S. Wang — New Method College  
Visiting Professor in Language Education

# Cultivating Linguistic Awareness in Language Education: Comparative Lessons from the Linguistic Tapestry of Chinese, Romance and Germanic



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**Date:** March 25, 2026 (Wednesday)

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. - 6:15 p.m. (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)

**Venue:** Lecture Theatre 4, Cheng Yu Tung Building (CYT\_LT4)  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## Abstract

On the surface, languages from different families, and even those belonging to the same family, can often appear radically different in their grammatical structures in ways which are not immediately predictable. Indeed, to the casual observer, learning the grammar of a foreign language can frequently seem a daunting task, involving apparently arbitrary rules and exceptions that do not find any immediate parallels in one's native language. In this talk, however, it will be shown that a deeper examination of the linguistic tapestry of Chinese, Romance and Germanic languages, which may seem typologically quite disparate, reveals that they are, in fact, more similar than we might at first think. In particular, a rudimentary knowledge of current linguistic theory can unveil otherwise hidden parallels between these three language families, demonstrating that differences in linguistic structure and variation are not unconstrained but, rather, obey a finite set of linguistic rules and principles that hold of all languages. By revealing connections in this way, it becomes apparent that there are no 'wild' grammars or unpredictable rules: individual languages simply represent distinct instantiations of the same options universally available to the language faculty. In short, the study of linguistics proves to be highly beneficial, not to say essential, in language education, as it can readily elucidate and demystify many of the so-called difficult grammatical aspects of language learning. In addition to enhancing the acquisition and mastery of foreign languages, the cultivation of greater linguistic awareness in the classroom through the formal comparative study of unrelated or distantly-related languages can also offer a deeper understanding of the structures and variation found in our native languages, leading us in some cases to critically question, challenge and reappraise received thinking.

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