The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages

Course code and title: BMBL2002: Sign Linguistics II: Morphology, Syntax and Semantics

Course overview:
This course provides an overview of the major linguistic issues related to morphology, syntax and semantics in sign linguistics, with particular focus on how sign languages resemble and differ from spoken languages in these grammatical aspects. Areas to be covered include word class and word-formation strategies, agreement, tense, aspect and modality, classifier constructions, word order and sentence types, negation, constructed actions, metaphors, use of space, lexical semantics and information structure.

Learning outcomes:
Students completing this course will achieve a basic understanding of the followings:
1. Sign languages are natural human languages having striking grammatical parallels with spoken languages in terms of morphology, syntax and semantics.
2. The simultaneous and sequential nature of different morphological processes in sign languages.
3. The different types of sentence types and how their syntactic structures can be analysed
4. Fundamental semantic and pragmatic concepts in sign languages

List of topics:

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Morphology	How words and constituents are defined, word formation rules, derivation, inflection, compounding, agreement, morphological markers for tense, aspect and modality, classifier constructions
Syntax	Different sentence types and syntactic structures, word order patterns, interrogation and negation, constructed actions
Semantics and pragmatics	Role of iconicity in semantics, metaphorical use of language, different types of signing space, lexicon, lexical semantics and information structure

Learning activities:

Lectures (hr) in /out class	Interactive tutorial discussions (hr) in /out class	Field-trips, Visits & Deaf activities (hr) in /out class		Project Presentations (hr) in /out class		Web-based learning (hr) in /out class		Readings (hr) in /out class	
25	15							30	
M	M	M	O	M	O	M	O	M	O

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

Assessment scheme:

Tasks	Description	Weight
Class participation	Students' active participation in class discussion	10%
Student presentation	Students will be asked to make a group presentation during tutorial sessions on the selected sign linguistics papers	10%

Short assignments	Students will complete a number of short take-home assignments on sign language syntax, morphology and semantics	20%
Final quiz	This final quiz covers the content of the entire course (can be done online)	30%
Paper	Students will write up a paper related to a chosen aspect of sign language syntax, morphology and semantics	30%

*The final grade attained will be adjusted downward for each unexcused absence or tardiness in submitting assignments.
*Students are encouraged to be punctual and there is a 15-minute allowance beyond which time the attendance is counted as zero.

Grade descriptors

Grade	Overall Course
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes; A solid understanding of the linguistic concepts covered in class; and Outstanding ability to analyse linguistic data with appropriate linguistic concepts.
B	Satisfactory performance on most of the learning outcomes; Satisfactory understanding of most of the linguistic concepts covered in class; Sufficient ability to analyse linguistic data with appropriate linguistic concepts, with occasional errors.
C	Satisfactory performance on some of the learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses; Satisfactory understanding of some of the linguistic concepts covered in class; and Still developing the ability to analyse linguistic data with appropriate linguistic concepts.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on some of the learning outcomes. A basic understanding of some of the linguistic concepts in class only; and Still developing the ability to analyse linguistic data with appropriate linguistic concepts.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified assessment requirements. Very little understanding of the linguistic concepts in class; and Little ability to analyse linguistic data with appropriate linguistic concepts

Recommended learning resources:
There will be:
1. Handouts and reading materials to enhance understanding of the fundamental concepts about sign language research

Feedback for evaluation:
1. There will be a midterm evaluation for the instructor to obtain students' feedback
2. There is an end-of-term course evaluation

Course schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Reading + Presentations

1	10 Sept	**Morphology 1** Sublexical elements and lexical families	Pfau et al. (2012) Unit 5: word class and word formation	
2	17 Sept	**Morphology 2** Word classes in sign languages	Baker et al. (2016) Unit: 5: Constituent and word classes	
3	24 Sept	**Morphology 3** Determining word classes	Pfau et al. (2012) Unit 5: word class and word formation	Fenlon et al. (2019) Comparing sign language and gesture: Insights from pointing Cormier et al. (2013) Pronouns and pointing in sign languages
	1 Oct	No Class (Public Holiday)		
4	8 Oct	**Morpho-syntax 1** Use of space in grammar	Pfau et al. (2012) Unit 19: Use of sign space (Section 1 and 2 only) Liddell (1995) Real, surrogate, and token space: Grammatical consequences in ASL	Sze & Tang (2018) R-Impersonal constructions in Hong Kong Sign Language.
5	15 Oct	**Morpho-syntax 2** Morphological processes (i)	Pfau et al. (2012) Unit 5: word class and word formation Baker et al. (2016) Unit 9: morphology	林慧思 (2011) 香港手语动词一致关系 Tang et al. (2008). Acquiring verb agreement in HKSL: Optional or obligatory?
6	22 Oct	**Morpho-syntax 2** Morphological processes (ii)		Aronoff et al. (2005) Paradox of sign language morphology
7	29 Oct	**Morpho-syntax 3** Classifiers (i)	Pfau et al. (2012) Unit 8: Classifier	Schembri (2003) Rethinking classifiers Liddell (2003) Sources of Meaning in ASL Classifier Predicates
8	5 Nov	**Morpho-syntax 3** Classifiers (ii)		Özyürek et al. (2010) Locative constructions in sign languages
9	12 Nov	**Syntax 1** Word order	Pfau et al. (2012) Unit 12: word order Sze (in press) Effects of the semantic and morphological factors on word order	Sze (2012). Right dislocated pronominals in HKSL
	19 Nov	88th Congregation for the Conferment of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees		
10	26 Nov	**Syntax 2** Sentence types	Baker et al. (2016) Unit 6: simple sentences Zeshan, Ulrike. 2004. Interrogative constructions in signed languages: crosslinguistic perspectives.	Zeshan (2004) Hand, head and face: Negative constructions in sign languages
11	3 Dec	**Semantics 1** Metaphors	Taub (2001)	Sze (Under Review). From gestures to grammatical non-

			Chapter 7: Many metaphors in a single sign Chapter 8: The Vertical Scale as Source Domain	manuals in sign language: a case study of polar questions and negation in Hong Kong Sign Language.
12	T.B.C.	Final Quiz		

Useful references:
A. Journals

1. Journal of Sign Language Studies (http://gupress.gallaudet.edu/SLS.html)
2. Journal of Sign Language and Linguistics (https://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/sll/main)
3. Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education (http://jdsde.oxfordjournals.org)
4. Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research (http://jslhr.pubs.asha.org)
5. Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism (http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbeb20/current#.Usn5tqVmsWY)

B. Books
Baker, Anne, Beppie van den Bogaerde, Roland Pfau & Trude Schermer. 2016. *The Linguistics of Sign Languages: an Introduction*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Pfau, Roland, Mark Steinbach and Bencie Woll. 2012. *Sign Language: An International Handbook*. De Gruyter Mouton.

Other readings (lectures + student presentations)

- Aronoff, Mark, Irit Meir, Wendy Sandler. 2005. Paradox of sign language morphology. *Language (Baltim),* 81(2): 301–344.

- Cormier, Kearsy, Adam Schembri & Bencie Woll. 2013. Pronouns and pointing in sign languages. Lingua 137, 230-247.

- Fenlon, Jordan, Kensy Cooperrider, Jon Keane, Diane Brentari & Susan Goldin-Meadow. 2019. Comparing sign language and gesture: Insights from pointing. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 4(1): 2. 1–26, DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.499.

- Liddell Scott. 2003. Sources of meaning in ASL classifier predicates. In: Emmorey K., editor. Perspectives on Classifier Constructions in Sign Languages. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 199–220

- Özyürek, Asli, Inge Zwitserlood & Pamela Perniss. 2010. Locative expressions in signed languages: a view from Turkish Sign Language (TİD). *Linguistics* 48(5), 1111-1145.

- Schembri Adam. Rethinking "classifiers" in signed languages. In: Emmorey K., editor. Perspectives on Classifier Constructions in Sign Languages. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; Mahwah, NJ: 2003. pp. 3–34.

- Sze, Felix & Gladys Tang. 2018. R-Impersonal constructions in Hong Kong Sign Language. *Sign Language & Linguistics*, 21(2), 284-306.

- Sze, Felix. (in press). Effects of the semantic and morphological factors on word order in simple transitive clauses in three Asian Sign Languages. *Minpaku Sign Language Studies.*

- Sze, Felix. 2012. Right dislocated pronominals in Hong Kong Sign Language. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44 (14), 1949-1965.

- Tang, Gladys, Scholastica Lam, Felix Sze, Prudence Lau & Jafi Lee. 2008. Acquiring verb agreement in Hong Kong Sign Language. In: Ronice Müller de Quadros (ed.) *Sign Languages: spinning and unraveling the past, present and future. TISLR9, forty five papers and three posters from the 9th. Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research Conference, Florianopolis, Brazil, December 2006.* (http://www.editora-arara-azul.com.br/EstudosSurdos.php., pp.612-638.)

- Taub, Sarah. 2001. Language from the body: Iconicity and metaphor in American Sign Language. Cambridge University Press.

- 林慧思. 2011. 香港手語動詞一致關係. 《當代語言學》第13卷2011年第2期124 -133.

Contact details:

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Lecture Time and Venue:
Lecture Time: Thursdays, 9:30 – 11:15 am

Details of course website:
Blackboard will be used to distribute the reading materials and course handouts, as well as to support discussions among students.

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. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign on the declaration.

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. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.