

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
1st Term of 2022-23

Course code and title: LING5104 - Foundations in Sign Language Research

Course overview:

Is sign language a natural language? Is there a universal sign language? In what ways are sign languages similar to and different from spoken languages? What are the modes of communication that Deaf people adopt in their daily communication? Do all Deaf people use sign language? Why is sign language important in the education of Deaf children? All these issues will be discussed in detail in this course. Particular focus will be placed on how the visual-gestural modality of sign languages shapes the organization of grammar at various linguistic levels.

Learning outcomes:

1. Some basic knowledge of Hong Kong Sign Language.
2. An understanding of the communication needs of the Deaf community.
3. An overview of the grammatical properties of sign languages as natural human languages.
4. An understanding of the importance of sign language in the Deaf community, particular in the education of Deaf children.

List of topics:

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Hearing loss	Types of hearing loss Assistive devices for hearing
Misconceptions about deaf people and sign language	Prevalent misconceptions among the hearing communities about deafness and Deaf people on their abilities and their linguistic needs.
Signing as a system of communication	Natural Sign Language, Signed spoken language, Fingerspelling, cued speech, tactile signing
Linguistic properties of Sign Language	Lexicon, phonology, morphology, classifiers, non-manuals, gestural and metaphorical elements in signs
Language Acquisition	The processes of acquiring sign language by Deaf children
Sign Language and Deaf Culture	Oralism, Audism, Cochlear implants, Communication issues, Deaf Culture

Learning activities:

Lectures	Interactive tutorials	Field-trips, Visits & Deaf activities	Project Presentations	Web-based teaching (case study)	Readings
(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	10		3 10		
M	M	M O	M O	O	M

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

Assessment scheme:

Task nature	Description	Weight
Exposure to Sign Languages and Deafness (group presentation plus a ppt report)	Students present the Deaf and sign language situation of a certain place/country. (group presentation)	10%
Exercises	The exercises cover key concepts and basic data analysis. (take-home exercises)	20%
Final Quiz	The final quiz consists of MC and TF questions.	35%
Term paper	Students are required to write a term paper that focuses on an in-depth understanding of deafness and sign language. The paper can be a review of literature on a particular deafness and sign language issue, or some data analysis of a sign language phenomenon. The paper should be no less than 6 pages (normal margin, font 12, Times New Roman, single-spaced).	35%
Class attendance	2% of the final score will be deducted for each unexcused absence.	

Grade descriptors:

Grade	Overall Course
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. • A solid understanding of the communication needs of the Deaf community and the sign linguistic concepts covered in class. • Outstanding ability to analyze sign language data with appropriate linguistic concepts, as reflected in the final quiz. • Outstanding ability in reviewing selected sign linguistics literature and carrying out small-scale sign language research project as reflected in the term paper.
A-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally outstanding performance on most learning outcomes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good understanding of the communication needs of the Deaf community and the sign linguistic concepts covered in class. • Strong ability to analyze sign language data with appropriate linguistic concepts, as reflected in the final quiz. • Strong ability in reviewing selected sign linguistics literature and carrying out small-scale sign language research project as reflected in the term paper.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory performance on most of the learning outcomes. • Satisfactory understanding of the communication needs of the Deaf community and most of the sign linguistic concepts covered in class. • Sufficient ability to analyze sign language data with appropriate linguistic concepts, with occasional errors, as reflected in the final quiz. • Satisfactory ability in reviewing selected sign linguistics literature and carrying out small-scale sign language research project as reflected in the term paper.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory performance on some of the learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses; • Satisfactory understanding of the communication needs of the Deaf community and some of the sign linguistic concepts covered in class; and • Still developing the ability to analyze sign language data with appropriate linguistic concepts, as reflected in the final quiz. • Still developing the ability in reviewing selected sign linguistics literature and carrying out small-scale sign language research project as reflected in the term paper.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barely satisfactory performance on some of the learning outcomes. • A basic understanding of the communication needs of the Deaf community and some of the sign linguistic concepts in class only; and • Very little ability of analyzing sign language data with appropriate linguistic concepts as reflected in the final quiz. • Very little ability of reviewing selected sign linguistics literature and carrying out small-scale sign language research project as reflected in the term paper.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified assessment requirements. • Very little understanding of the communication needs of the Deaf community and the sign linguistic concepts in class; and • Lack the ability of analyzing sign language data with appropriate linguistic concepts as reflected in the final quiz. • Lack the ability of reviewing selected sign linguistics literature and carrying out small-scale sign language research project as reflected in the term paper.

Recommended learning resources:

1. There will be course handouts and reading materials to enhance understanding of the fundamental concepts.
2. Hong Kong Sign Language learning materials will be placed in Blackboard. Students are strongly advised to learn elementary HKSL in order to have a better understanding of the sign language analysis covered in this course.
3. Journals specializing in sign language analysis and deaf studies (Sign linguistic papers are also published in other linguistic journals):
 - Sign Language Studies
 - Sign Language and Linguistics
 - Deaf Studies and Deaf Education
 - Deafness and Education International
4. Online HKSL resources (developed by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, CUHK, <http://www.cslds.org/v4/>):
 - The Asian SignBank (<http://cslds.org/asiansignbank/>)
 - The Hong Kong Sign Language Browser (<http://www.cslds.org/hkslbrowser/>)
 - The Hong Kong Sign Language Medical Databank (http://www.cslds.org/medical_databank/)
 - The Hong Kong Sign Language Sex Education Website (http://www.cslds.org/sex_edu/)
 - Basic Sign Language for First Responders and the Public in Health Emergencies and Disasters (<https://www.hkjcdpri.org.hk/d12-2-basic-sign-language-first-responders-and-public-health-emergencies-and-disasters>) (FREE REGISTRATION until end of October 2022)
5. Selected TED talks related to deafness and sign languages
 - “Dear in the military”, Keith Nolan at TEDxIslay.
 - A Deaf soldier sharing his journey of joining the US military. (https://www.ted.com/talks/keith_nolan_deaf_in_the_military)
 - “Opening our ears to the Deaf”, Pamela Weisman at TEDxCoMo
 - a hearing woman sharing how learning American Sign Language changed her perspective of language and deafness (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6srfOyIVpQ>)
 - “Bridging the gap between the Deaf and hearing community”, Roos Wattel, TEDxAmsterdamWomen.
 - A Deaf dutch woman talking about her experience in making museums more accessible to the Deaf community. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxxMXhcgARI>)
 - “Making education accessible to deaf children, Nyle DiMarco, TEDxKlagenfurt.
 - A Deaf man set up an NGO supporting Deaf children to have access to education. (https://www.ted.com/talks/nyle_dimarco_why_we_need_to_make_education_more_accessible_to_the_deaf) (transcripts available) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_Q7axl4oXY)
 - “ASL & English: Bridges to language acquisition infants & toddlers”, Casie Lucas-Szumigala, TEDxErie
 - A hearing speech therapist advocating for sign language learning for Deaf children (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLBw9nYI_Ks)

Feedback for evaluation:

1. There will be a midterm evaluation for the instructor to obtain feedback from the students
2. There is an end-of-term course evaluation
3. Students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor regarding the conduct of the lessons.

Course schedule:

Week	Date	Topic & Readings
Week 1	9 Sept	<p>General Introduction</p> <p>Marschark, Marc. 2010. <i>Raising and Educating a Deaf Child</i> (Chapter 2 "Practical Aspects of Being Deaf"), New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., pp.26-62.</p> <p>Crowe, Teresa. 2017. You're Deaf? Breaking through Myths for Effective Therapeutic Practice, <i>Journal of Social Work in Disability & Rehabilitation</i>, DOI: 10.1080/1536710X.2017.1372239</p> <p>Websites on misconceptions about deafness: http://www.angelfire.com/mo/PurpleIguanaKingdom/deafmyth.html https://signsoflifeasl.wordpress.com/2013/02/26/audism/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHolRuo0ng4</p> <p>Video-show: <i>A Walk in Your Shoe</i></p>
Week 2	16 Sept	<p>What is natural sign language?</p> <p><u>Basic reading:</u> Marschark, Marc. 2010. <i>Raising and Educating a Deaf Child</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. (Chapter 3 "Communication With Deaf Children", 63-91)</p> <p>Sandler, Wendy. 2006. Sign Language: An overview. In Keith Brown (ed.) <i>Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics</i> (2nd edn.), 328-338. Elsevier Ltd.</p> <p><u>Further reading:</u> McBurney S.L. 2006. History of Research. In Keith Brown (ed.) <i>Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics</i> (2nd edn.), 310-318. Elsevier Ltd.</p> <p>Anne Baker, Beppie van den Bogaerde, Roland Pfau, Trude Schermer (Eds)(2016). <i>The Linguistics of Sign Languages: An introduction</i>. John Benjamins, Chapter 1.</p> <p>Bauer, Anastasia. 2014. The use of signing space in a shared sign language of Australia. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. Chapter 2. Sign language types. Pp.10-32.</p>
Week 3	23 Sept	<p>Linguistic properties of sign language I: Phonetics and Phonology</p> <p><u>Basic reading:</u> Johnston, Trevor; Adam Schembri, 2007. <i>Australian Sign Language: An introduction to sign language linguistics</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p>

		<p>(Chapter 4 "Phonetics and Phonology" Section 4.1 - 4.7) (CU Library electronic copy)</p> <p>Battison, Robbin. 1978. <i>Lexical Borrowing in American Sign Language</i>. P.19-58. (<i>Linguistics of American Sign Language: an introduction</i>, p.199-218)</p> <p><u>Further reading:</u></p> <p>Anne Baker, Beppie van den Bogaerde, Roland Pfau, Trude Schermer (Eds)(2016). <i>The Linguistics of Sign Languages: An introduction</i>. John Benjamins, Chapter 10 & 11</p>
Week 4	30 Sept	<p>Linguistic properties of sign language II: Spatialized syntax</p> <p>Sutton-Spence, Rachel & Bencie Woll. 1998. <i>The linguistics of British Sign Language: an introduction</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 129-153 (Space types and verb types in BSL)</p> <p>Liddell, Scott. 1995. Real, Surrogate and Token Space: Grammatical consequences in ASL. In <i>Language, gesture and space</i>, ed. Karen Emmorey & Judy Reilly, 19-41. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.</p> <p>Lillo-Martin, Diane. 2006. Sign Language: Syntax. In Keith Brown (ed.) <i>Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics</i> (2nd edn.), 351-353. Elsevier Ltd.</p>
Week 5	7 Oct	<p>Linguistic properties of sign language III: Morphology</p> <p><u>Basic reading:</u></p> <p>Johnston, Trevor; Adam Schembri, 2007. <i>Australian Sign Language: An introduction to sign language linguistics</i> (Chapter 5 "Morphology: Sign formation and modification, p.117-156). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Padden, Carol. 1998. The ASL lexicon. <i>Sign Language and Linguistics</i> 1 (1), pp.39-64.</p> <p><u>Further reading:</u></p> <p>Mathur, Gaurav & Christina Rathmann. 2010. Verb agreement in sign language morphology. In Diane Brentari (ed.) <i>Sign Languages</i>, 173-196. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Anne Baker, Beppie van den Bogaerde, Roland Pfau, Trude Schermer (Eds)(2016). <i>The Linguistics of Sign Languages: An introduction</i>. John Benjamins, Chapter 9</p>
Week 6	14 Oct	Student Presentations
Week 7	21 Oct	<p>Linguistic properties of sign language IV: Non-manuals</p> <p><u>Basic reading:</u></p>

		<p>Sutton-Spence, Rachel & Bencie Woll. 1998. <i>The linguistics of British Sign Language: an introduction</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 81-98 (Mouth patterns and other non-manual features in BSL)</p> <p>Sutton-Spence, R. & Day, L. .2001. Mouthings and mouth gestures in Bristish Sign Language. In <i>The Hands are the Head of the Mouth: The Mouth as Articulator in Sign Languages</i>, ed. P. Boyes Braem,. & R. Sutton-Spence, 69-85. Germany: Signum-Verlag.</p> <p><u>Further reading:</u></p> <p>Pfau, Roland & Josep Quer. 2010. Nonmanuals: their grammatical and prosodic roles. In Diane Brentari (ed.) <i>Sign Languages</i>, 381-402. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p>
Week 8	28 Oct	Topic: Workshop on ELAN
Week 9	4 Nov	<p>Linguistic properties of sign language V: Classifier constructions</p> <p><u>Basic reading:</u></p> <p>Supalla, Ted. 1986. The classifier system in American Sign Language. IN <i>Noun classes and categorization: typological studies in language</i>. Vol. 7, ed. C. Craig. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Pp181-214.</p> <p>Johnston, Trevor & Adam Schembri. 2007. <i>Australian Sign Language (Auslan) : An Introduction to Sign Language Linguistics</i>. West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 6: Lexicon, Section 6.2.2. – 6.2.3) (electronic book at CUHK Library)</p> <p><u>Further reading:</u></p> <p>Engberg-Pedersen. 2010. Factors that form classifier signs. In Diane Brentari (ed.) <i>Sign Languages</i>, 252-283. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p>
Week 10	11 Nov	<p>Gestures and natural sign language</p> <p><u>Basic reading:</u></p> <p>McNeill, David. 1992. <i>Hand and mind: What gestures reveal about thought</i>. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. pp.11-35. (Images, Inside and Out)</p> <p>Emmorey, K. 1999. Do signers gesture? In L. Messing & R. Campbell (eds.). <i>Gesture, Speech, and Sign</i>, pp. 133-159, Oxford University Press: New York</p> <p><u>Further reading:</u></p> <p>Wilcox, Sherman. 2007. Routes from gestures to language. In Elena Pizzuto, Paola Pietrandrea and Raffaele Simone (eds.) <i>Verbal and Signed Languages: comparing structures, constructs and methodologies</i>. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp.107-132</p>
Week 11	18 Nov	Metaphors in sign language

		<p><u>Basic reading:</u></p> <p>Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. 1984. <i>Metaphors we live by</i>. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1 – 3, pp.3-13)</p> <p>Taub, S. 2001. <i>Language from the Body: Iconicity and Metaphor in American Sign Language</i>. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 7: Many metaphors in a single sign, pp. 114-137) (Chapter 8: The vertical scale as source domain. Pp.138-158)</p> <p><u>Further reading:</u></p> <p>Taub, Sarah. 2012. Iconicity and metaphors. In Roland Pfau, Markus Steinbach & Bencie Woll (eds.) <i>Sign Language: An International Handbook</i>, 388-412. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.</p>
Week 12	25 Nov	Sign Language and Deaf Culture
Week 13	2 Dec	Final Quiz

Contact details:

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Time and Venue: Friday 6:30 – 9:30pm, Yasumoto International Academic Park LT4

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