

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	:	Language and Society
Course Code	:	ENG202
Recommended Study Year	:	2 nd & 3 rd Year
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	:	2 hours Lecture/week 1 hour Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme	:	Required Course
Prerequisite(s)	:	N/A
Co-requisite(s)	:	N/A
Exclusion(s)	:	N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	:	N/A

Brief Course Description

This subject is aimed at giving students a basic understanding of how language is used in society from both a macro and micro perspective. It encompasses traditional sociolinguistic themes as well as those from social psychology, ethnography of communication, semiotics, pragmatics, and critical linguistics. It is believed that only such a varied approach can give students a more comprehensive understanding of how language is essentially both a process and product of society. Because of its social orientation, the subject also acts as a link between the more formal aspects of linguistics and the other applied areas of language studies. Apart from giving students grounding in relevant theories, it also exposes them to issues arising from the use of language in contemporary society, using Hong Kong as an example.

Aims

1. To understand how language is used for communication in the social context;
2. To acquire theoretical frameworks for the analysis of language as a social artifact;
3. To be able to analyze sociolinguistic propositions critically;
4. To be aware of the patterns of language use in society, especially in Hong Kong;
5. To develop a critical attitude towards the way language is used in society;
6. To understand and evaluate some of the issues in bilingualism, language education and language policy.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to understand the relationship between language and society, to apply sociolinguistic concepts, and to analyze patterns of language use in society, especially in this age of computer-mediated communication.

Indicative Content

1. Approaches to the study of language: the formal, the functional and the ethnographic
2. Code choice, code-switching and code-mixing
3. Diglossia, bilingualism and trilingualism
4. Language attitudes
5. Acts of identity
6. Varieties of language
7. Varieties of English
8. Computer-mediated communication
9. Politeness
10. Language education and language policy
11. Approaches to sociolinguistic research

Teaching Method

The course is delivered mainly through lectures and tutorials. Students will be asked to prepare critical reading either individually or in small groups. They will be expected to take an active part in class discussions. They will also be required to carry out small-scale research projects to gain experience of sociolinguistic approaches to language study.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Through class discussions, presentations, research projects, essays and final examination.

Assessment

60% Continuous Assessment

40% Final Examination

Required Readings

Bolton, K., 'The sociolinguistics of Hong Kong and the space for Hong Kong English', in K. Bolton (ed.) *Hong Kong English – autonomy and creativity*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2002.

Chan, E., 'Beyond pedagogy: language and identity in post-colonial Hong Kong', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(2), 271-285, 2002.

Ho, J.W. Y., Functional Complementarity between Two Languages in ICQ, *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 10(4), 429-451, 2006.

Lai, M.L., 'Language attitudes of the first postcolonial generation in Hong Kong

- secondary schools', *Language in Society*, 34, 363-388, 2005.
- Li, D.C.S., Cantonese-English code-switching research in Hong Kong: a Y2K review, *World Englishes*, 19(3), 305-322, 2000.
- So, D.W.C., Achieving biliteracy and trilingualism without MOI-based bifurcation of the schools: a plea for third alternatives, in Li, D.C.S, Lin, A. and Tsang W.K. (eds), *Language and Education in Postcolonial Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Linguistic Society of Hong Kong, pp. 9-33, 2000.
- Wardhaugh, R., *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 5th ed., Malden, M.A.: Blackwell, 2006.

Supplementary Readings

- Bolton, K. (ed.), *Hong Kong English – Autonomy and Creativity*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2002.
- Bolton, K. & Kwok, H., The Dynamics of the Hong Kong Accent: Social Identity and Sociolinguistic Description, *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 1(1), 147-172, 1990.
- Crystal, D. *English as a Global Language*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Crystal, D., *Language and the Internet*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Gibbons, J. *Code-mixing and Code Choice: A Hong Kong Case Study*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1987.
- Green, C. and Evan, S., A survey of language use in the professional workplace in Hong Kong, *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 60-77, 2000.
- Herring, S. C. (ed.), *Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social and Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1996.
- James, G., 'Cantonese particles in Hong Kong students' English e-mails', *English Today*, 67, 17 (3), 9-16, 2001.
- Jenkins, J., *World Englishes: A Resource Book for Students*, London & New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Kachru, Y. and Nelson, C. L., *World Englishes in Asian Contexts*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006.
- Lee, C.K.M., Literacy practices in computer-mediated communication in Hong Kong, *The Reading Matrix*, 2 (2), 1-25, 2002.
- Li, David C.S., The functions and status of English in Hong Kong: a post-1997 update, *English World-Wide*, 20 (1), 67-110, 1999.
- Li, D.C.S, Lin, A. and Tsang W.K. (eds), *Language and Education in Postcolonial Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Linguistic Society of Hong Kong, 2000.
- Merchant, G., 'Teenagers in cyberspace: an investigation of language use and language change in internet chatrooms', *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24 (3), 293-306, 2001.
- Pennington, M. (ed.), *Language in Hong Kong at Century's End*, Hong Kong University Press, 1998.

- Pennycook, A., *The cultural politics of English as an international language*, London: Longman, 1994.
- Scollon, R. & Scollon, S., *Intercultural Communication*, 2nd ed., Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 2001.
- Welpton, J., 'Cantonese, English, and Putonghua in a Hong Kong secondary school: language use and language attitudes', *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 4, No.2, pp.79-92, December, 1999.