

Chinese Language, Society and Education in the Global Context

(2018-19)

Course outline (preliminary)

Background

This course will help students who plan to be future L2 Chinese language teachers or to teach ESL in Chinese language communities to better understand and appreciate the Chinese language in the broad social and societal context of the world today. Students will become more sensitive to comparison between Chinese and other unfamiliar languages, particularly non-European languages, and to appreciate salient structural features of Chinese in contrast to them, and to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the course in their future careers.

Learning outcomes

The course introduces students to some key concepts and issues relating to the complex relationship between language, society and education in general, and in Hong Kong and other Chinese speech communities in the region. Students will develop appreciation of the possible correlations and stratification among social, cultural and linguistic factors such as non-standard linguistic varieties, language registers, linguistic thresholds, medium of instruction, class and gender, sociolinguistic handicaps and heritage language, and their dynamic interactions in the past, and in the face of globalization. It should help them to work as language teachers in CSL or ESL contexts in a variety of important situations. They should be able to:

1. give succinct accounts of the basic concepts relating to the social and educational dimensions of language;
2. demonstrate a good understanding of sociolinguistic variation and stratification;
3. demonstrate knowledge of the changing language milieu of Hong Kong and other Chinese speech communities, and relevant language policies;
4. appreciate principles and efforts relating to language standardization and planning in education in general as well as in the Chinese context;
5. understand the inter-relationships among language, culture and society in terms of convergence and divergence and the underlying dynamics;
6. demonstrate a grasp of quantitative and empirical approaches to relevant studies.

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