

Cherry Chit-Yu Lam

Curriculum Vitae

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AREAS OF INTEREST

Broad interests: Comparative syntax, Semantics, Language change and variation, Language documentation and conservation
Specific topics: Negation, Aspect, Classifiers, Definiteness and specificity, Yes-no questions, Backchannel (minimal responses)
Frameworks: Minimalist Program (in practice), Lexical-Functional Grammar (working knowledge)
Language specialisation: Sinitic (Mandarin and Cantonese varieties)

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2025.10 – present Affiliated Researcher, Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, University of Cambridge
2021.9 – 2023.8 Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Hong Kong Shue Yan University
2019.8 – 2021.8 Research Assistant Professor, School of Education and Languages, Hong Kong Metropolitan University

EDUCATION

2014–2019 Ph.D. in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics
University of Cambridge, the UK
Dissertation title: *Negation and Aspect: a comparative study of Mandarin and Cantonese varieties*
Supervisors: Ian Roberts and David Willis
Viva committee: Lisa Cheng and Adam Ledgeway
2013–2014 M.Phil. in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics (Distinction)
University of Cambridge, the UK
Dissertation title: *Disambiguating [±Specific] noun phrases in Chinese: A comparative study of Cantonese and Mandarin*
Supervisor: Ian Roberts
Viva committee: Theresa Biberauer and Dora Alexopoulou
2009–2012 B.A. in Linguistics; Language and Communication (First Class)
The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

GRANTS

- 2021.12–2023.5 Principal investigator
A comparative corpus linguistic study of Cantonese and English yes-no questions and answers in structured and non-structured conversations.
HKSJU University Research Grant, Grant no. URG/21/03 (£3738).
- 2021.6–2022.5 Co-investigator,
Study of reading texts in Chinese language education
PI: Edith Cheung
HKMU School Research Fund (School of Education & Languages),
Grant no. R4095 (£3000).
- 2021.1–2021.11 Principal investigator
An exploratory study of yes-no questions in Cantonese and Mandarin: Inventory and functions
HKMU Financial Support for Pilot Work for Resubmission of
Promising Faculty Development Scheme (FDS) Proposals, Grant
no. R6397 (£14,880).
- 2020.6–2021.6 Principal investigator
Yes-no questions and answers in natural conversations: A study of Hong Kong Cantonese
HKMU School Research Fund (School of Education & Languages),
Grant no. R4091 (£1700).

AWARDS

- 2023.1–2024.1 Research-Active Teaching Relief Scheme (HKSJU)
2014–2015 Doris Zimmern HKU-Cambridge Hughes Hall Scholarship
2013–2014 Cambridge Assessment Scholarship

PUBLICATIONS

Journal articles

- Lam, C. accepted. Standard negation and aspectual compatibilities in Mandarin and Cantonese. *Language and Linguistics*. (SSCI)
- Lam, C. to appear. Standard negation in Gaozhou Yue. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*. (SSCI) (January 2026)
- Lam, C. 2023. Rethinking postverbal ‘acquire’ and related constructions in Cantonese: Polyfunctionality and parameters. *Language and Linguistics* 24(4). 674-732. (SSCI)
- Lam, C. 2018. On the interaction between negation and aspect in grammaticalization: a cross-linguistic study of three Chinese varieties. *Current Research in Chinese Linguistics* 97(1). 215-232.

Book chapters

- Lam, C. accepted. Negation in Cantonese. In Andy Chin, Shin Kataoka & Bit-chee Kwok (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Cantonese Linguistics*. Routledge.
- Lam, C. 2022. Croft's Cycle in Mandarin and Cantonese through history and across varieties. In Ljuba Veselinova & Arja Hamari (eds.), *The Negative Existential Cycle from a historical-comparative perspective (Studies in Diversity Linguistics Series)*, 357-401. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Lam, C. 2020. Beyond one, two, three: Number matters in classifier languages. In András Bárány, Theresa Biberauer, Jamie Douglas & Sten Vikner (eds.), *Syntactic architecture and its consequences I: Syntax inside the grammar*, 511-525. Berlin: Language Science Press.

Conference proceedings

- Lam, C. 2022. Standard negation and aspectual definiteness: new evidence from Cantonese. *Proceedings of the 24th Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar (SICOGG 24)*, 59-81. Seoul: Hankook Munhwasa.

PRESENTATIONS

Invited talks

- 2024 Negation and existence: A new perspective on the Chinese negation puzzle. SyntaxLab. University of Cambridge. 18 June 2024.
- 2022 Cohesion analysis of texts: A study on reading comprehension and teaching effect of Chinese pre-service teachers. The Hong Kong Metropolitan University RIBiLT seminar series. 26 January 2022. (with Edith Cheung)
- 2020 Rethinking polysemy: An all-in-one framework of *dak1* in Cantonese. The Open University of Hong Kong RIBiLT seminar series. 23 September 2020.
- 2016 Cantonese: the biggest endangered language. Cambridge Endangered Languages and Cultures. University of Cambridge. 2 March 2016. (with Ricky Chan)

Peer-reviewed conference presentations

- 2024 The evolution of Chinese polar questions: from negative particle to A-not-A. 28th International Conference on Yue Dialects. Hong Kong Metropolitan University (HKMU), Hong Kong. 13-14 December 2024.
- 2024 Negative markers and the evolution of yes-no questions in Cantonese. 15th International Conference of the Association for Linguistic Typology (ALT15). The Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. 4-6 December 2024.

- 2024 The evolution of Chinese polar questions: from negative particle to A-not-A. 37th Paris Meeting on East Asian Linguistics (JLAO37). The Centre de Recherches Linguistiques sur l'Asie Orientale (CRLAO), Paris. 4–5 July 2024.
- 2022 Standard negation and aspectual definiteness: new evidence from Cantonese. 24th Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar (SICOGG 24). Korean Generative Grammar Circle. 12–14 August 2022 [online due to pandemic].
- 2022 Revisiting postverbal 'acquire' in Cantonese. 28th Annual meeting of the International Association of Chinese Linguistics (IACL-28). The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. 20–22 May 2022 [moved online due to pandemic].
- 2021 Postverbal acquisitive modal and related constructions. a parametric approach. 23rd Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar (SICOGG 23). Korean Generative Grammar Circle. 11–13 August 2021 [moved online due to pandemic].
- 2021 Postverbal “acquire” in Cantonese: a unified analysis. 33rd North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics (NACCL 33). University of Chicago. 24–25 June 2021 [moved online due to pandemic].
- 2020 Number matters in Mandarin and Cantonese. 24th International Conference on Yue Dialects. University of Macau. 13–14 November 2020 [moved online due to pandemic].
- 2020 Verbal definiteness and presupposition effects in Gaozhou Cantonese standard negation. North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics (NACCL 32). University of Connecticut. 18–20 September 2020 [moved online due to pandemic].
- 2020 A Chinese negation puzzle revisited: A study of Mandarin and Cantonese varieties. Workshop on Innovations in Cantonese Linguistics (WICL 5). The Ohio State University. 18–19 April 2020 [moved online due to pandemic].
- 2019 A DP account for variation in classifier dependency in Cantonese and Mandarin. LSHK Annual Research Forum. The Education University of Hong Kong. 7 December 2019.
- 2018 Presupposition effects and standard negation in Gaozhou Cantonese. LSHK Annual Research Forum. City University of Hong Kong. 1 December 2018.
- 2017 Polyfunctional GET marker in Chinese varieties: a unified account of postverbal DAK. 22nd International Conference on Yue Dialects. The Education University of Hong Kong. 8–9 December 2017.
- 2017 The shaping of Mandarin negation - a new perspective from grammaticalisation. 25th Annual meeting of the International Association of Chinese Linguistics (IACL-25). Budapest, Hungary. 24–28 June 2017.
- 2017 Croft's negative existential cycle and the shaping of the negation system in varieties of Chinese. Negative existential cycle workshop. Stockholm, Sweden. 4–5 May 2017.
- 2015 On the interaction between negation and aspects in grammaticalisation: a cross-linguistic study of three Chinese varieties. 20th International Conference on Yue Dialects. The Chinese University of Hong Kong. 11–12 December 2015.

- 2015 On the shaping of Chinese negation systems – interaction between Croft’s negative-existential cycle and BE/HAVE evolution. 9th International Conference of the European Association of Chinese Linguistics (EACL 9). Stuttgart, Germany. 24–26 September 2015.
- 2014 Explaining variation in classifier dependency in Mandarin and Cantonese nouns. 2nd Asian and European Linguistic Conference (AE-Link 2). Newcastle, United Kingdom. 5–6 December 2014.

Other scholarly presentations

- 2017 ‘What do you mean by acceptable?’: rethinking the acceptability-grammaticality divide. Re-thinking grammaticality judgment workshop. University of Cambridge. 11 March 2017.
- 2017 The emergence of *mei(you)* as a perfective negator in Mandarin Chinese: a Croft’s Cycle account. Negative cycles workshop. University of Cambridge. 23 February 2017.
- 2016 Unified polyfunctional postverbal DAK: a study of four Chinese varieties. SyntaxLab. University of Cambridge. 31 May 2016.
- 2016 Post-verbal DAK in Chinese: a comparative study of three Chinese varieties. Syntax research cluster workshop. University of Cambridge. 11 March 2016.
- 2015 Negation strategies: A dialectal study of Hong Kong Cantonese and Cantonese in western Guangdong Province, China. British Council Researcher Links workshop - Documenting and preserving indigenous languages: principles, practices and tools. Bangkok, Thailand. 8–14 February 2015.
- 2014 The evolution of A-not-A questions: From 19th century to present-day Hong Kong Cantonese. Cambridge postgraduate research seminar. 13 March 2014.

TEACHING & COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Hong Kong Shue Yan University (2019, 2021–2023)

Course instructor and developer:

Academic Writing – Undergraduate Year 2

Introduction to Linguistics – Undergraduate Year 1

Issues in Pragmatics – Undergraduate Year 4

Linguistic Approaches to Translation – Undergraduate Year 4

Course developer:

Foundations to Applied Linguistics

The Interplay between Grammar and Meaning

English Usage – Undergraduate Year 1, course instructor

Hong Kong Metropolitan University (2019–2020)

Effective Use of English I – Undergraduate Year 1, course instructor

The City University of Hong Kong (2019–2020)

English Academic Writing Workshop – Undergraduate and Postgraduate

The University of Hong Kong (2019)

MAES Capstone experience: dissertation – Postgraduate, course instructor

MA dissertation (Linguistics) – supervisor

Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK (2016)

History of the English Language – Undergraduate Year 2, module leader

University of Cambridge (2015–2016)

Structures and Meanings – Undergraduate Year 1, supervisor

The University of Hong Kong (2012–2013)

Course coordinator and Tutor:

Syntactic Theory – Undergraduate Year 2 &3

Grammatical Description – Undergraduate Year 2

Course tutor:

Introduction to Linguistics – Undergraduate Year 1

Human Language: nature vs. nurture – Undergraduate Year 1

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 2012–2013 | Data collection on Chinese classifiers
Supervisor: Adams Bodomo
Department of Linguistics, The University of Hong Kong |
| 2011–2013 | Literature review on Kwa and Sinitic syntax
Supervisor: Umberto Ansaldi
Department of Linguistics, The University of Hong Kong |
| 2011–2012 | Psycholinguistic experiments on implicit learning
Supervisor: Janny Leung
School of English, The University of Hong Kong |

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Departmental service

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| 2022–2032 | Department secretary |
| 2021–2023 | Undergraduate mentor |

Reviewing

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| 2025-present | Reviewer, <i>Linguistics</i> (De Gruyter Mouton) |
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- 2023–present Reviewer, *Language and Linguistics* (John Benjamins)
 2023–present Reviewer, *The English Teacher (Malaysian Journal of ELT Research)*
 2022–present Reviewer, *Australian Journal of Linguistics* (Routledge)
 2021–present Reviewer, *Journal of Linguistics* (Cambridge University Press)
 2021–present Reviewer, *Journal of Historical Linguistics* (John Benjamins)
 2019–present Reviewer, *Studies in Chinese Linguistics* (CUHK Press)
 2018 Reviewer, Conference of the Student Organisation of Linguistics in Europe (ConSOLE)
 2017 Reviewer, Undergraduate Linguistics Association of Britain (ULAB)

Organising

- 2021 Coordinator, RIBiLT monthly seminars, The Open University of Hong Kong (duties: invite speakers and design theme and programme)
 2017 Organiser, Re-thinking grammaticality judgments workshop, University of Cambridge
 2017 Organiser, Historical Linguistics research cluster workshop ‘Negative Cycles’, University of Cambridge
 2016–2017 Coordinator, Historical Linguistics cluster, University of Cambridge (duties: invite speakers and design programme for historical linguistics cluster meetings)
 2015–2017 Secretary, Cambridge University Linguistic Society (duties: invite speakers and host bi-weekly linguistic talks)

OTHER TRAINING

- 2016 Lancaster summer schools in corpus linguistics and other digital methods
 Lancaster University, the UK
 2016 Norwegian summer institute on language and the mind
 University of Oslo, Norway
 2015 Language documentation workshop
 SOAS, University of London, the UK and Mahidol University, Thailand
 2015 Autumn school of Advanced Core Training in Linguistics (ACTL)
 University College London, the UK
 2012 Swahili summer school
 The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
 2011 Spanish language training
 The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

LANGUAGES

Cantonese (native), Mandarin (fluent), English (fluent, IELTS 8.5); Korean (beginner)
 Fieldwork knowledge in Gaozhou Cantonese;
 Coursework on Swahili and Spanish.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

The Linguistics Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (since 2015)
The Linguistic Society of Hong Kong (since 2015)
International Association of Chinese Linguistics (since 2016)
European Association of Chinese Linguistics (2015)

last updated in August 2025