

Seminar on “Sign Language and Its Applications in Education”

Date: Thursday 24 October 2019

Time: 18:30 - 20:30

Venue: E33-1045, Faculty of Education

Language: Cantonese

Registration: <https://go.um.edu.mo/zwkzrq1i>

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Speaker:

Mr. Kun Man YIU, is currently the Senior Programme Officer of the Centre for Sign Linguistics & Deaf Studies (CSLDS), which strives to develop an inclusive education model that benefits students with and without hearing loss. After receiving teacher training at the former Grantham College of Education in 1986, he further developed professional knowledge in areas of social work, special education, and psychology. In 1995, he received a professional certificate in technical audiology from the University College London and was awarded the Student of the Year Award from the Association of Audiology Technicians, UK. At The Chinese University of Hong Kong, he completed his M.A. and M.Phil. in Linguistics in 2005 and 2012 respectively. He is now receiving doctoral training in education (Special Needs Education) at the Education University of Hong Kong.

Abstract

Many children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing (DHH children) are not given the opportunity of mastering both a sign language and a spoken language from their earliest years on. It is still quite common for some professionals involved with deafness (doctors, teachers, etc.) as well as for some parents to believe that knowledge of sign language will hinder the development of spoken language. A purely spoken language education is thus often preferred for DHH children even though many of them are obviously not likely to master a language through an aural-oral modality.

However, evidence indicates that there is a risk of language delay if an accessible language is not used as early as possible, even for those DHH children who have some levels of access to spoken language through a hearing aid or cochlear implant. By contrast, the use of sign language has been documented to promote linguistic, communication, cognitive, academic, and literacy development as well as socioemotional growth and identity formation. Accordingly, a bimodal bilingual approach to teaching and learning has been proposed that helps DHH children to

acquire language and learn through their intact visual modality while developing spoken language to the maximum extent possible.

An interesting question remains: Is sign language just for the deaf? Recent research has prompted us to reconsider the relevance of sign language to education even for children who do not have hearing difficulties and children with other special educational needs, such as autism and intellectual disabilities. In this seminar, Chris will introduce the nature of sign language and explain its potential benefits for children's development (both hearing and DHH children) as well as its implications for teaching and learning. Experiential activities will be held in this seminar in which participants will gain a flavor of using sign language and understand further how it could possibly be incorporated into pedagogical activities.