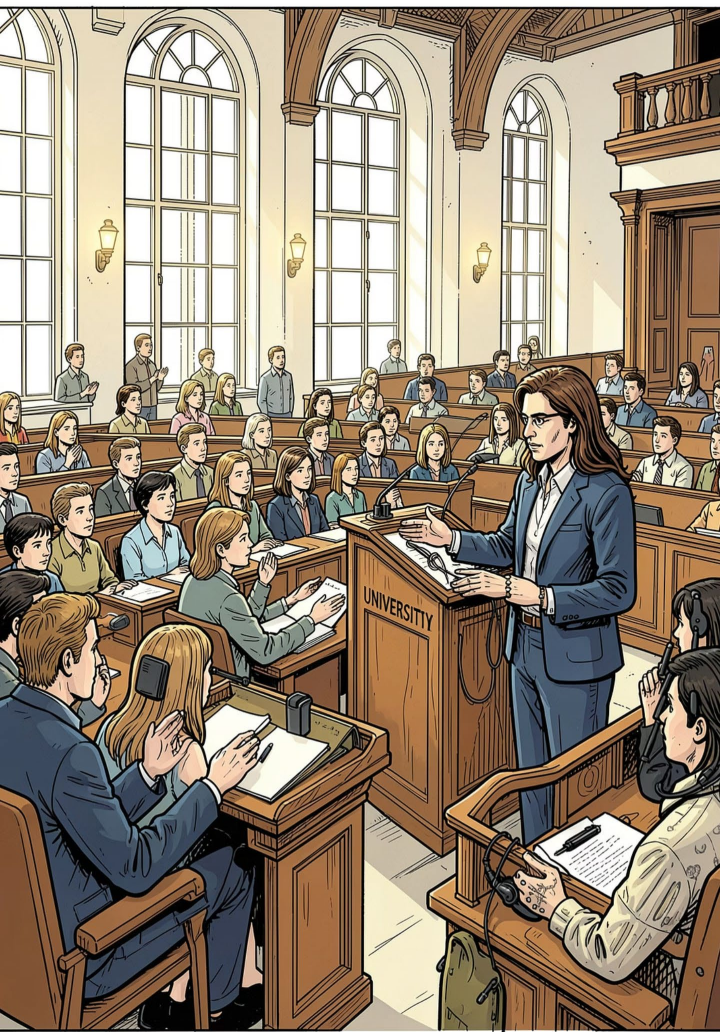




Sign Language Interpreting in Higher Education

International and local perspectives

Dr. Chan Yi Hin, Joanna Chan, Brenda Yu, Anita Yu

Deaf Students in Higher Education

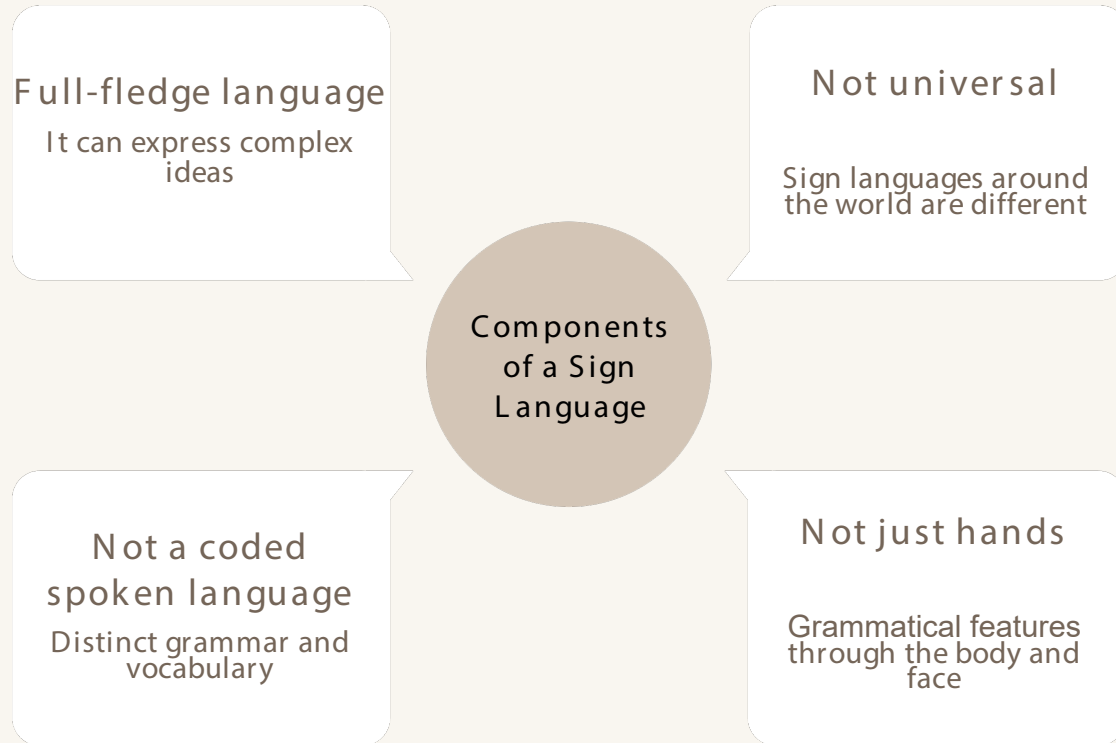
In class: Lectures, group discussions, student presentations, labs, exams

Outside class: Student meetings, internships, teacher-student consultations, administrator meetings, phone calls

Campus life: Dormitory, student clubs, seminars, trips, sports, doctor's appointments and counselling, visitations



Deaf students may use sign language as their major form of communication
But...what is a sign language?



□ In Hong Kong, Deaf people use Hong Kong Sign Language (HKSL)

HKSL: An experience

Key phrases

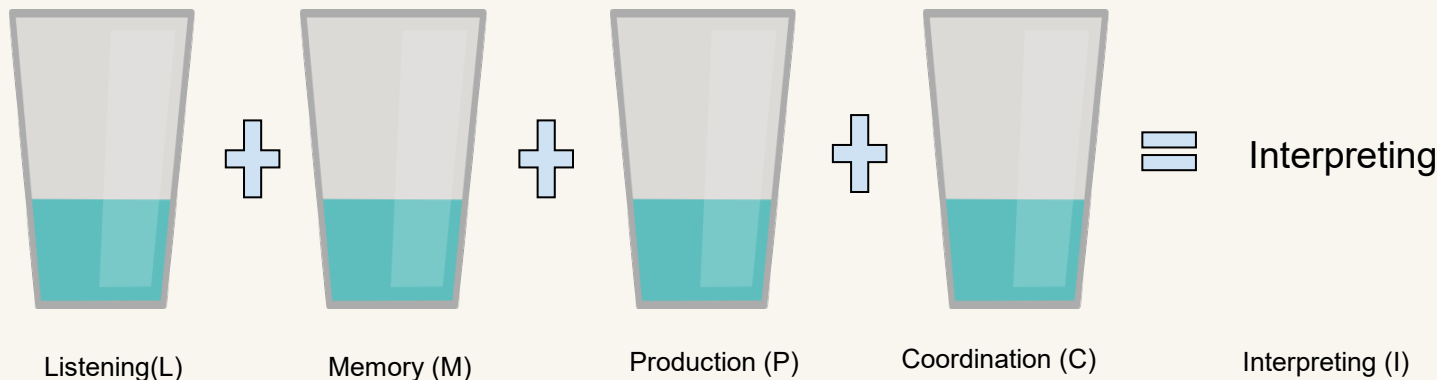
早晨，你好嗎？ (Good morning, how are you?)

你吃了飯沒有？ (Have you eaten?)

我喜歡在大學工作 (I like working in a university.)

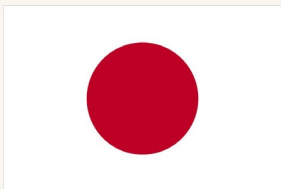
Lexical variation across schools and communities reflects HKSL's natural development as well as marginalization. Professional interpreters are trained to handle variations. They are also trained to work with Deaf students to create new signs for academic terms.

What Does a Sign Language Interpreter Do?



- Simultaneous interpreting is cognitively demanding, preparation is necessary
- Interpreters work with meaning, not word for word
- In higher education, interpreters must also manage rapid lecture pace, discipline-specific knowledge, and multilingual environments.

Sign Language Interpreting Across Asia (Sze, Wong, Lo, et al 2022)



Sign language ordinances throughout Japan. Limited higher education interpreting provision



Sign language recognized as an official language in Taiwan. Government sponsors most daily interpreting.



Government sponsored interpreting in Thailand. Some universities provides interpreting for Deaf students.



Sign language law established in South Korea with government funded interpreting in schools.



No legislation for Singapore Sign Language. Special Education Needs Fund available to cover some interpreting in higher education.



Regulation on the Construction of barrier-free environment. China Disabled Persons' Federation and other deaf associations provide interpreting services.

Sign Language Interpreting in Hong Kong

Discrimination (interpreters, readers and assistants)

For the purposes of this Ordinance, a discriminator discriminates against another person on the ground of that other person's disability if the discriminator treats that other person less favourably because of—

- (a) the fact that other person is accompanied by—
 - (i) an interpreter;
 - (ii) a reader;
 - (iii) an assistant; or
 - (iv) a carer,
- who provides interpretive, reading or other services to that other person because of the disability;

Disability Discrimination Ordinance, part II, 10.

政經 週一 2015-11-09 獨媒報導

職訓課程拒手語翻譯員陪讀 團體轟擺明歧視

立法會議員張超雄 (中)

(獨媒特約報導) 聾人以手語為母語，手語翻譯有助他們學習，但當他們報讀課程進修，卻因此被拒之於門外。聽障人士支援中心「龍耳」及張超雄議員辦事處調查15間職業培訓機構，發現當中只有3間容許聾人帶同手語翻譯員上課，其餘拒絕讓翻譯員進入課室，否則須繳交學費。

工黨立法會議員張超雄批評機構觸犯《殘疾歧視條例》，又指聾人升學困難，很多完成中學便要就業，因此職業教育對他們非常重要。龍耳就業支援主任盤浩雲指所有殘疾人士都應有平等進修機會。平機會拒絕評論事件是否涉及歧視，稱要視乎個別情況。

9/11/2015, 獨立媒體

The United States: Accessibility as a Civil Right

Americans with Disabilities Act
Title II

Qualified interpreters required in
publicly funded colleges and
universities

Americans with Disabilities Act
Title III

Covers many private institutions

Section 35.104 Definitions

Qualified interpreter means an interpreter who, via a video remote interpreting (VRI) service or an on-site appearance, is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.



U.S. context

Sign Language Interpreting in US colleges and universities

Provisions in all disciplines,
all college levels, and all aspects
of campus life

Engage services from freelance
interpreters

Full time interpreters and
coordinators in some colleges

Real time captioning and note-
taking service



U.S. context

Gallaudet University



Video phone and interpreting
(Photo credit: NAVSEA)



Flashing fire alarm



Visually friendly architecture (Photo credit: CBRE)

Sign Language Interpreting in classrooms: Things to know

- Interpreters work in teams in most cases
- Share teaching materials e.g. Slides, videos, textbooks, etc
- Clear sight line
- Talk in normal pace
- Deaf students cannot look at the interpreter and visual materials at the same time
- Expect lag time and clarifications



Photo credit: CSLDS



Sign Language Interpreting in Hong Kong Higher Education

- Interpreter pool is limited, but strong and dedicated
- Interpreters have been paid for and worked pro bono
- They have also been arranged for by the Deaf students themselves and local Deaf associations
- Family members and friends have become interpreters
- Private donations and fundraisings have taken place



20/2/2025, 香港01

社區 / 社區專題 開學前始拒免費安排手譯 教大聾生曾被勸退學 借貸籌錢堅持讀書

試用一個月後，她再向校方要求提供手語傳譯服務，對方則回應說手譯費用高昂，希望同學使用科技如即時字幕等工具學習，並解釋政策需要考慮不同角度。大學有老師更向她表示，若果試用兩星期後仍覺得不合適，可以考慮退學，學校可以退回學費。偏偏這句話一直烙印在Anita的腦海之中。



我很想入來讀書，為甚麼他會想我退學？

Anita



20/2/2025, 香港01

Student sharing