



THE 4TH

Workshop on Innovations in Cantonese Linguistics

Cantonese Linguistics in the Pacific Rim:
Theory and Applications



June 23-24, 2018

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC, Canada



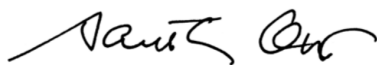
Welcome Word by Santa Ono

On behalf of the University of British Columbia, greetings and warm welcome to all of the attendees of WICL-4, the fourth Workshop on Innovations in Cantonese Linguistics.

Cantonese has a long and rich history in British Columbia, and I am proud that UBC offers the only university for credit comprehensive Cantonese language program in Canada with courses at all levels.

Please accept my best wishes for a fruitful workshop.

Best wishes,



Santa J. Ono
President and Vice-Chancellor
The University of British Columbia



Welcome Word by the Co-chairs

Dear Workshop Presenters and Participants,

Welcome to the 4th Workshop on Innovations in Cantonese Linguistics (WICL-4) at the beautiful campus of the University of British Columbia! We are very excited and honored to have you join us in this exciting event, with many of you coming from different areas in the world to share your latest research work and expertise. With the theme of this workshop being Cantonese Linguistics in the Pacific Rim, it is hoped that the many presentations on new advances in Cantonese Linguistics and the important discussions among all the workshop attendees will continue to inspire and promote scholarly exchange of ideas in this field beyond geographic boundaries. As our own Cantonese Language Program enters its fourth year, the theories and applications coming out of this significant event will only further benefit all the language learners and educators here, and hopefully a lot more across the world.

We want to thank the many people and organizations which play a role in making this event possible: Professor Marjorie Chan of the Ohio State University for entrusting us with this workshop she initiated in the first place, our own Department of Asian Studies for both financial and logistical support, St. John's College for accommodation of out of town guests, the UBC Hong Kong Studies Initiative and Language Science Initiative for their promotion and sponsorship, all the workshop organizing committee members and volunteers for their hard work, and last but not least, all of you for your contribution and participation in this great event.

We wish all of you a very memorable and pleasant time in Vancouver this weekend. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any comments, requests, and suggestions.

Sincerely yours,

Zoe Lam, Raymond Pai, and Qian Wang

Co-chairs

The Fourth Workshop on Innovations in Cantonese Linguistics

Organizing Committee

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Program Schedule

All talks are to take place at
Auditorium, UBC Asian Centre
 1871 West Mall, Vancouver BC V6T 1Z2
23 June (Saturday)

	08:00	<i>Registration</i>	
	08:20	<i>Welcome and announcements</i>	
Phonetics and Its Interfaces	08:30	The Influence of Knowledge of Lexical Tones on the Identification of Statements and Questions in Cantonese Una Y. Chow and Stephen J. Winters (University of Calgary)	
	09:00	Pragmatic Function and Syntactic Position of Cantonese “HLHL” Contour Intonation Mei-Ying Ki (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)	
	09:30	Ultrasound Technology in Teaching and Learning Lauretta Cheng and Zoe Lam (University of British Columbia)	Special Demo Session
	10:15	<i>Coffee break</i>	
Language Education	10:30	The Needs, Practices, and Benefits of Learning Cantonese for the Work Context — Case Study in Hong Kong Winnie Chor (Hong Kong Baptist University)	
	11:00	Motivation of Mandarin Speakers Learning Cantonese in a Transnational Context Shuang Li and Duanduan Li (University of British Columbia)	
	11:30	Teaching Cantonese as Part of a General Education Program: Issues and Challenges Matthew B. Christensen (Brigham Young University)	
	12:00	Digital Literacy in Cantonese Language Education Liam Doherty (University of British Columbia)	
	12:30	Welcome by Professor Ross King, Department Head of UBC Asian Studies <i>Group photo & Lunch</i> (not provided)	

Historical Linguistics and Morphology	14:00	Phonetic Variation and Flexibility in Vancouver-based Cantonese Molly Babel (University of British Columbia)	Plenary Session
	15:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	15:15	One System Fits All? Robert Morrison's Transcription of Mid-Qing Cantonese and Mandarin Ricky Y.H. Sham (University of British Columbia)	
	15:45	The Emergence of the 'Only' Meaning of <i>dak</i> in Cantonese Carine Yuk-man Yiu (The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)	
	16:15	Cantonese Verbal Suffix <i>dak</i> and Intentionality Ka Fai Yip (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)	
Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics	16:45	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	17:00	The Use of Cantonese Discourse Markers by Legislative Council Members in Hong Kong and Macau Zhiyin Tan (University of Macau)	
	17:30	Are Cantonese Commercial Songs Brainwashing Nowadays? Analyzing the Transformation of Cantonese Lyrics in TV Commercial Song Kennedy Wong (University of British Columbia) and Cross Tam (RMIT University)	
	18:00	Identities Are No Joke (or Are They?): Humor and Identity in Vivek Mahbubani's Stand-up Charles Lam (Hang Seng Management College), Genevieve Leung (University of San Francisco), and Raymond Pai (University of British Columbia)	
	18:30	<i>Banquet</i> (A bus has been arranged for attendees to travel from UBC to Red Star Seafood Restaurant, 8298 Granville St, Vancouver, BC V6P 4Z4)	

24 June (Sunday)		
Language Contact	08:30	Tonal Markedness and Word-size Effect in Cantonese Loanword Phonology Alex Hong-Lun Yeung (Stony Brook University)
	09:00	A New Approach to Loanword Semantics John C. Wakefield (Hong Kong Baptist University)
	09:30	East Meets West: Language and Humour in Post-WWII Hong Kong Marjorie K.M. Chan (The Ohio State University)
	10:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
Language Acquisition	10:15	Preserving the Zoeng-construction in Heritage Cantonese: Evidence from the Winston Corpus Ziyin Mai, Yuqi Wu, Kay H. Y. Wong, Tze Yan Law, and Virginia Yip (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
	10:45	Intergenerational Transmission of Cantonese in a Multilingual Context Stephen Matthews (University of Hong Kong) and Virginia Yip (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
	11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
	11:30	Speaking of the South East Asian Chinese Diaspora: A Cambodia Case Study Dana Scott Bourgerie (Brigham Young University)
	12:30	<i>Lunch</i> (not provided)
Syntax	14:00	Constraints of the V-one-V Construction in Cantonese: Evidence from Corpus Data Charles Lam (Hang Seng Management College)
	14:30	Revisiting the Syntax of Two Approximatives in Cantonese Siu Pong Cheng (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
	15:00	The Cantonese ‘Semi-complementizer’ Is Not a Complementizer Tommi Leung (United Arab Emirates University)
	15:30	Wh-ex-situ in Cantonese Cindy Wan Yee Lau (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
	16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
	16:15	Cantonese Studies in the Big Data Era: Applications and Implications of <i>The Corpus of Mid-20th Century Hong Kong Cantonese</i> Andy Chin (The Education University of Hong Kong)
	17:15	<i>Closing remarks</i>

Plenary Session

Plenary Session

THE END
See you at WICL-5!

Abstracts for Plenary Sessions

Phonetic Variation and Flexibility in Vancouver-based Cantonese

23 June
14:00

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Variation and flexibility in speech perception and production are important hallmarks of language vitality. In this talk I explore Cantonese listeners' and speakers' phonetic variation and flexibility. In the Cantonese of Vancouver-based Cantonese-English bilinguals, we might anticipate the variability and flexibility to be shaped by two primary forces. For one, the population of Cantonese speakers in the Lower Mainland is geographically removed from the homeland hub of Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong, providing opportunity for independent language development and change in local speakers of Cantonese and inviting the question as to whether certain sound changes-in-progress are advancing in similar fashion in Vancouver and Hong Kong. A second important factor to consider in Vancouver Cantonese is that most of the local speakers have knowledge of English, and bilingual speakers typically show bidirectional influences in both of their languages (Flege, 1987). Moreover, many Vancouver Cantonese speakers can be described as heritage speakers who learn Cantonese at home as their first language, but often go on to be dominant in English, the most prominent local language. Heritage speakers are characterized as highly heterogeneous in terms of their language experiences and bilingual proficiency, often showing patterns of behaviour that are unique compared to more L1-dominant speakers and late L2 learners (Chang, Yao, Haynes, & Rhodes, 2011). Given this, do Vancouver Cantonese listeners show the perceptual flexibility typical of monolingual native speakers (e.g., Bruggeman, 2016)? I address these questions as I present the results of two experiments that examine sound change-in-progress and perceptual adaptation in Vancouver-based Cantonese speakers.

References

- Bruggeman, L. (2016). *Nativeness, dominance, and the flexibility of listening to spoken language* (Doctoral dissertation, Western Sydney University, Sydney).
- Chang, C. B., Yao, Y., Haynes, E. F., & Rhodes, R. (2011). Production of phonetic and phonological contrast by heritage speakers of Mandarin. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 129(6), 3964–3980.

Flege, J. E. (1987). The production of “new” and “similar” phones in a foreign language: Evidence for the effect of equivalence classification. *Journal of Phonetics*, 15, 47–65.

Speaking of the South East Asian Chinese Diaspora: A Cambodia Case Study

24 June
11:30

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There has been a Chinese population in Cambodia for at least 500 years and contact with Cambodia was mentioned by the eminent China emissary Zhou Daguan (*Customs of Cambodia*) as early as 1296 during his travels there. Despite a relatively high degree of integration into the majority Cambodian culture, ethnic Chinese have maintained their own social organizations, news media, and schools. Until the Khmer Rouge forced closure of Chinese schools in the mid-nineteen seventies, Chinese schools adopted the dialect of their affiliated socio-cultural associations. However, in recent times Mandarin has become the lingua franca of the Sino-Cambodia community and of most local Chinese language schools. However, among ethnic Chinese there are few if any native speakers of any variety of Mandarin.

Through examination of survey data and recorded interviews, this presentation sketches a picture of the contemporary Chinese community in Cambodia with reference to the larger former French Indochina region and with particular attention to the Cantonese population. In particular, I outline some of the possible language change occurring by contact with the majority Khmer language, colonial French, as well influence of Mandarin as a second-dialect. Evidence of contact can be found in the phonology (e.g., implosive initial stops and nasalized vowels), the lexicon, and phrasal ordering (e.g., adjective placement).

Cantonese Studies in the Big Data Era: Applications and Implications of *The Corpus of Mid-20th Century Hong Kong Cantonese*

24 June
16:15

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This talk discusses how big data — linguistic corpus — can benefit Cantonese studies. Corpus data provide us with quantitative and qualitative information to look at how the language is actually used. Taking a bottom-up approach, we can sometimes find from the corpus new patterns and topics for research.

The talk will be divided into three parts: The first part introduces *The Corpus of Mid-20th Century Hong Kong Cantonese* such as its design and source of data. In the second part, I will

discuss how the corpus data can be used for (a) language teaching; (b) pragmatic and discourse analysis; (c) exploring the inter-relationship between language, society and cognition. Some of these topics did not receive much attention in previous studies on Cantonese. The talk will conclude with a demonstration of the phase 2 of the corpus.

Abstracts for Presentations

The Influence of Knowledge of Lexical Tones on the Identification of Statements and Questions in Cantonese

23 June
08:30

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This study investigated how much knowledge of the final tone of an utterance contributes to the identification of statements and echo questions in Cantonese. Cantonese has six lexical tones: high-level [55], high-rising [25], mid-level [33], low-falling [21], low-rising [23], and low-level [22] (Bauer & Benedict, 1997). Regardless of the lexical tone of the final syllable, Cantonese echo questions typically end with a high rise in pitch (Wong, Chan, & Beckman, 2005). Therefore, they can be perceptually confusable with statements that end in a rising [25] or [23] tone for native listeners (Ma, Ciocca, & Whitehill, 2011). English, a non-tone language, also signals echo questions with a final rise in pitch (Wells, 2006). However, English statements typically end with a fall in pitch. Our research questions are the following: Can English speakers who have never learned Cantonese (“naïve” listeners) accurately identify statements and echo questions in Cantonese? If so, how well would they perform compared to native listeners?

Ten native and ten naïve listeners participated in an identification task of 80 pairs of statements and echo questions produced by two male and two female native speakers (e.g., Wong⁵⁵ Ji²² gaau³³ lik²² si²⁵. Wong⁵⁵ Ji²² gaau³³ lik²² si²⁵? ‘Wong Ji teaches history’). These sentences ended in all six tones. In order to determine the effect of the final tone on the identification of the sentence type by each listener group, the listeners were presented with sentences that were gated in three forms: (1) the whole sentence (e.g., Wong⁵⁵ Ji²² gaau³³ lik²² si²⁵ ‘Wong Ji teaches history’), (2) the final syllable (e.g., si²⁵), and (3) the non-final portion of the utterance (e.g., Wong⁵⁵ Ji²² gaau³³ lik²²).

Analysis of variance on perceptual sensitivity revealed that, surprisingly, the naïve listeners were able to perform this task with better than chance accuracy. They also performed as well as the native listeners on the final stimuli, likely because the cue to questions in Cantonese is very similar to the same cue in English. However, the native listeners did perform better than the naïve listeners on both the whole and non-final stimuli, suggesting that native listeners were sensitive to cues to statement type identity in the non-final portions of the utterances, as well. Native listeners were also significantly more sensitive

to final syllables ending in Cantonese's low or mid tone than rising tone, but not the naïve listeners. These preliminary results suggest that accurate identification of statements and echo questions in Cantonese depends on both language-specific knowledge and more general cues which may cross language boundaries.

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Pragmatic Function and Syntactic Position of Cantonese “HLHL” Contour Intonation

Mei-Ying Ki

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The Chinese University of Hong Kong

23 June
09:00

There is little research on Cantonese intonation in the past. The discussion on its syntactic position is correspondingly inadequate too. Out of the six intonation patterns (“suprasegmental utterance particles”) listed in [Leung \(2005\)](#), there is one intonation pattern (marked as ♪) that has a complex pitch contour, which warrants a closer examination.

The contour intonation was first identified in [Lam \(2002\)](#) as a “sentence-final double contour intonation” (“the contour intonation” or “HLHL” hereafter) that expresses “a mood of emphasizing” (1). It is shown to be a prolonged falling-rising-falling intonation pattern in the spectrogram.

(1) The contour intonation (Example from [Lam \(2002\)](#))

子：我 游 蛙泳 唔 使 用 浮板， 你 信 唔 信？
zi2: ngo5 jau4 waa1wing6 m4 sai2 jung6 fau4baan2, nei5 seon3 m4 seon3?
son: I swim breaststroke no need use kickboard you believe not believe
‘When I swim in breaststroke, I do not need a kickboard. Do you believe?’
母： 信！
mou5: seon3! HLHL
mother: believe
‘Sure!’

This paper argues that when the speaker holds the assumption that the hearer is obviously wrong, then the falling-rising-falling intonation is used to emphasize the speaker's disagreement towards the hearer's stance.

This paper aims to find out the syntactic position of the contour intonation. According to their meaning and functions, SFPs can be classified into seven types: event, temporal, focus, modality, interrogative, imperative, and mood (Tang, 2015). The contour intonation is assumed to be an SFP and preliminarily analyzed as a combination of a focus type SFP and a modality type SFP. It is found that the co-occurrence of the contour intonation and SFPs is very consistent: it can only co-occur with event type and temporal type SFPs — SFPs at the lowest syntactic position. It is thus hypothesized that the contour intonation is a higher SFP so that it cannot co-occur with SFPs higher than event type and temporal type. According to the analysis of Tang (2015), focus type SFPs are related closely to the predicate, while modality type SFPs have a function of expressing a subjective thought, judgement or knowledge of the speaker. They both match with the usage of the contour intonation — “presupposing” the stance of the hearer and “emphasizing” the disagreement towards it. Failing to co-occur with focus type or modality type SFPs also supports that the contour intonation may occupy the same syntactic position.

References

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- Leung, C.-S. (2005). *Dangdai xianggang yueyu yuzhuci de yanjiu* [Study of the utterance particles in Cantonese as spoken in Hong Kong]. Hong Kong: Language Information Sciences Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong.
- Tang, S.-W. (2015). *Yueyu yufa jiangyi* [Lectures on Cantonese grammar]. Hong Kong: The Commercial Press.

The Needs, Practices, and Benefits of Learning Cantonese for the Work Context — Case Study in Hong Kong

23 June
10:30

Winnie Chor

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While it seems natural to learn some French or German if you plan to work in Europe, or to take the TOEFL/IELTS test before you are enrolled in a higher education institution there; surprisingly very few people seem to care about learning Cantonese, or taking a Cantonese test/course before they come to work or study in Hong Kong. A major reason as to why learning Cantonese has not been taken seriously is because people have far underrated the

importance and advantages of learning this local language in the work context. This research paper outlines the needs, practices, and benefits, to promote the learning of Cantonese as a local language in the work context.

Resources available to beginning learners of Cantonese are very few; reference books on Cantonese that have a good academic standing are even scarce. Matthews and Yip (2011) and Yip and Matthews (2000, 2001) are probably the only few textbooks on Cantonese that were written by linguists. While there are free/paid online resources or mobile apps that are designed to aid Cantonese learning, their reliability remains doubtful. For instance, the Cantonese introduced there in fact is not the colloquial Cantonese, but Cantonese pronunciation of standard Chinese. For instance, the third person plural pronoun ‘they’ would be introduced as 他們 *taa1mun4* instead of 佢哋 *keoi5dei6*; sample utterance such as ‘he can speak English’ would be translated as 佢會說英文 *Taa1wui5syut3jing1man2* rather than 佢會講英文 *Keoi5wui5gong2jing1man2*. Another potential problem is that these resources tend to focus too much on the learning of vocabulary. For instance, they tend to just group vocabulary items into categories (e.g. kinship terms, body parts, etc.) and give their pronunciation, without putting them into any contexts or syntactic constructions. What is even worse is that many of the pronunciations given are not in standard jyutping romanisation.

Besides these mixed-quality works on Cantonese, materials designed to aid learning Cantonese for the work context is close to none. Taking domestic helpers in Hong Kong as an example (contributing more than 5% of the population), this paper stresses the demand for specifically designed context-based materials to suit the needs of different non-Cantonese speaking workers in different job sectors. Based on findings from questionnaires (via the author’s connection with several agents) and results from using specific materials designed for domestic helpers piloted by the author, this paper further emphasizes the benefits of speaking the local language, including how it can help the workers assimilate and integrate themselves into the Hong Kong society so that they can work more effectively and communicate more effectively, which in the end would benefit the employers and the society as a whole. This research paper will lead to the publication of a resource book for domestic helpers to learn Cantonese (possibly supported by mobile apps). The paper also attempts to offer some insights as to how Cantonese can be assessed in a more standard way in response to the demands from the job market.

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-

Motivation of Mandarin Speakers Learning Cantonese in a Transnational Context

23 June
11:00

Shuang Li and Duanduan Li

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Language learning motivation has been frequently discussed and theoretically examined because of its complex nature and significant role in second language acquisition (SLA) over the past decades (Al-Hoorie, 2017). However, the motivation to learn English as a target language has been given predominant attention in comparison with languages other than English. In order to better satisfy students' multifaceted learning needs and interests, the motivational framework of Languages other than English (LOTEs) should be further explored with a consideration of multilingualism, transnationalism and multiculturalism in light of these sociopolitical, sociocultural, socioeconomic, and ideological changes (Duff, 2015; Darvin & Norton, 2014; Hua & Kramsch, 2016).

This research explores an under-studied area of language learning: the motivation of university students whose mother tongue is an official language (e.g., Mandarin) to learn a regional language or dialect (e.g., Cantonese) in a transnational context (e.g., Canada). Using both quantitative and qualitative research methods this research examines the motivation of Mandarin-speaking learners of Cantonese in a major university of Canada.

Data is collected first by survey questionnaires to investigate students' background information and their language preferences and attitudes with respect to Cantonese specifically. A Likert scale will ascertain learners' motivational profiles on psychological and sociocultural levels for each questionnaire item. The follow-up interviews further investigate participants' reflections and interpretations of their learning motivation and multilingual identities with reference to Cantonese specifically. The data obtained is analysed using thematic analysis based on current motivation models in language learning and based on the learners' responses.

The significance of the study is that it will (1) raise awareness of current language learning motivations in this particular Chinese-related globalized, transnational context, and (2) generate pedagogical implications for curriculum development in Cantonese programs at post-secondary education.

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Teaching Cantonese as Part of a General Education Program: Issues and Challenges

23 June
11:30

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This paper begins with a brief historical overview of Cantonese language instruction at a large private university in North America. It then addresses the issues and challenges of teaching Cantonese to fulfill a foreign language requirement in a general education program at that university. The General Education requirement for foreign languages falls under the global and cultural awareness category and requires students to complete the equivalent of four semesters of Cantonese with instruction in all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Cantonese is treated just as other foreign languages in the college. One of the primary challenges this presents is literacy. Students are expected to be able to read short essays and notes in standard written Chinese. This presents special challenges in a Cantonese course for a number of reasons, including lack of materials for written Cantonese, and how to effectively teach standard written Chinese in a Cantonese context. This paper discusses these challenges and offers strategies for teaching Chinese literacy skills in Cantonese classes. Other issues addressed are student populations (heritage, Mandarin speakers, Cantonese speakers with experience abroad, and learners with no previous experience), and how to integrate them into the program, and using and adapting teaching materials that are suitable for the rigors of a university general education program. A final discussion addresses how to maintain and grow a Cantonese language program in a university setting.

Digital Literacy in Cantonese Language Education

23 June
12:00

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In recent years there has been increasing focus on examining digital literacy in the area of foreign and second language education. Although there is already a great deal of research as well as a plethora of digital resources for literacy development in such languages as English, French, Spanish, Mandarin, and Japanese, there are a number of obstacles which have made the creation and distribution of resources to encourage and facilitate literacy in Cantonese (and other Chinese languages) more difficult. These include:

- A lack of graded basal readers in Cantonese
- A lack of a standardized romanization system for use in learning materials
- A lack of resources and support for Cantonese-specific grammar

This paper examines the development of three open-source, open-licensed, open-access projects which attempt address each of these issues:

1. A full collection of graded digital basal readers in Cantonese, with accompanying audio (available [here](#))
2. A free-standing automated converter for all eight major Cantonese romanization systems, including IPA to facilitate linguistic analysis (available [here](#))
3. A fully client-side queryable database of Cantonese measure words and their collocations, with both romanization and Mandarin equivalents to facilitate cross-linguistic comparison (available [here](#))

The emphasis here has been on creating resources that are widely distributed through digital channels, freely available to learners and researchers alike, and which lower the barriers to access found in traditional learning materials. In particular, the issue of “lock-in” to specific romanization systems that often prevents learners from accessing additional materials using forms of romanization with which that they are not familiar has been addressed by the provision of an easy-to-use tool for converting between and among systems. This paper will discuss various technical, linguistic, and sociolinguistic challenges that have needed to be overcome in the development of these resources, and the ways in which learners, instructors, and linguists may benefit from using them.

One System Fits All? Robert Morrison’s Transcription of Mid-Qing Cantonese and Mandarin

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23 June
15:15

Robert Morrison’s transcription of the Chinese language, though at times drawing from existing romanization schemes of Mandarin devised by continental sinologists, is by and large an innovation of his own. Its application to phonemically transcribe both Cantonese and Mandarin is the first documented attempt at a universal alphabet for all sounds Chinese, but is its “power of the letters” really one system that fits all?

In this paper, it will be argued that, while initially designed for mid-Qing Mandarin, Morrison’s transcription has telltale signs of Cantonese influence. For example, orthographical “ǎ” is phonetically described as Cantonese (CAN.) *ɛ̌, but realizes phonemically as Mandarin

(MAN.) *ə. At the same time, “u” is described as CAN. *ə, but it also transcribes MAN. *wə, ergo “uy” is simultaneously CAN. *əy and MAN. *wəi.

By identifying these letters as phonetically Cantonese, we can resolve inconsistencies between Morrison’s description of their powers and the actual sounds they transcribe. The fact that Morrison is simultaneously transcribing two distinct phonologies with the same set of roman letters may be rather confusing to English learners of Chinese consulting his work. A case in point is “sun”, which not only transcribes CAN. *sən, but also MAN. *swən (neither of which is particularly similar to the English word “sun”, except when it is used in lieu of “sūn” to transcribe CAN. *sən, complicating matters even more).

That being said, when we carefully dissect Mandarin from Cantonese and analyze the two phonologies contrastively, we can come to appreciate the subtle, but informative, differences of mid-Qing Mandarin and Cantonese. For example, the vowel of “ing” in Cantonese is visually and phonetically distinct from that of “een” (i.e., CAN. *eŋ : *in); whereas “ing” and “in” in Mandarin share the same vowel both visually and phonetically (i.e., MAN. *iŋ : *in). More radically, Morrison’s “u” and “eu” transcribe a distinction found in the Cantonese of the 1810s (i.e., CAN. *ə : *y) that does not exist in Mandarin (which only has “eu”, i.e., MAN. *y) and eventually shifts into the /y/ : /əy/ distinction we see in Cantonese today.

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The Emergence of the ‘Only’ Meaning of *dak* in Cantonese

23 June
15:45

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In the literature, the postverbal *dak* is said to be associated with the following three usages: (i) a descriptive marker; (ii) a quantifier with the meaning ‘only’; and (iii) an expression of modal meanings (cf. Bai, 1998; Cheung, 2007; Lee, 1995; Matthews and Yip, 2011; Rao, Ouyang, and Zhou, 1996; Tang, 2002). According to Tang (2002), the above three usages of the postverbal *dak* are found in different environments. Specifically, the descriptive marker *dak* occurs before a bounded adjective (cf. (1)), the quantifier *dak* before a cardinal nominal (cf. (2)), and the modal *dak* in environments other than those of the other postverbal *daks* (cf. (3)).

- (1) *Sau si se dak hou hou*
CL poem write DAK very good
‘The poem is well written.’
- (2) *Ngo maai dak saam bun syu*
I buy DAK three CL book
‘I bought only three books.’
- (3) *Peter jau dak seoi*
Peter swim DAK water
‘Peter can swim.’

A close examination in the Cantonese texts compiled in the 19th and early 20th centuries shows that the usages of the descriptive marker *dak* (cf. (4)) and the modal *dak* (cf. (5)) are found while that of the quantifier *dak* is basically lacking.

- (4) *Zyu dak m hou sik* (Morrison, 1828)
cook DAK not good eat
‘Badly cooked’
- (5) *Ngo paa m hui dak duk Tong syu e* (Bridgman, 1841)
I fear not know DAK read Chinese book SFP
‘I fear I am unable to read Chinese books.’

Examples in which the postverbal *dak* is followed by a cardinal nominal are nevertheless found (cf. (6)-(7)). However, the meanings of ‘attainment’ and modality seem to be more readily available than the restrictive reading ‘only’.

- (6) *Ngo gaahaa tai dak baat fan lok* (Anonymous, 1877)
I now read DAK eight one-tenth SFP
‘I have read eighth out of tenth of the book.’
- (7) *Hung lobaak jiu saap dak jat go zung zing sik DAK* (Bridgman, 1841)
red carrot need boil DAK one CL hour before eat DAK
‘Carrots require boiling a full hour before they become fit to be eaten.’

Literally, the verb *dak* expresses the meanings of ‘to acquire, to have, to get’. The present study tries to explore how the quantifier use of the postverbal *dak* arose and suggests that such use is a result of the frequent co-occurrence of the descriptive marker *dak* and the modal *dak* on the one hand and the restrictive particle *ze* on the other hand (cf. (8)-(9)). This proposal is consistent with the chronology in which the verb *dak* with the meaning of ‘only have’ (cf. (10)) and the “V-*dak* ... *ze*” sequence were found in the texts.

(8) *Ngo sisi dou hai zou dak dikgamdo ze* (Dennys, 1874)
 I always also be do DAK little SFP
 ‘It is always very little that I can do.’

(9) *Zi do ceng dak saam baak gan ze* (Anonymous, 1877)
 most many weight DAK three hundred catty SFP
 ‘The scale can weight only three hundred catty at most.’

(10) *Ngo dak jat go zai jat go neoi* (Wisner, 1906)
 I have one CL son one CL daughter
 ‘I have one son and one daughter only.’

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Cantonese Verbal Suffix *dak* and Intentionality

23 June
16:15

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It is observed that Cantonese has three verbal suffix *daks*: modal, focus operator and descriptive phrase marker (Tang, 2000). It is, however, another *dak* that has been paid little attention on, as in (1). Some exception includes Luke (1999), Peng (2010), and Shan (2012), who document the ‘realization’ reading of this *dak* but without further investigation on it. A detailed study is thus needed.

This paper argues that this *dak* does not express realization of action, rather, it expresses an intention of doing an action. Whether the action is realized depends on context, as contrasted between (1) and (2). Besides, clauses containing *dak* cannot be standalone and an attachment to another clause is necessary (Shan, 2012), as shown in (3). Several grammatical properties have been explored, including humanness requirement on subject, ‘controlability’ requirement on verb (Yuan, 1993), as well as the constraints imposed on the second clause. It is argued that these properties can be explained if *dak* expresses intentionality.

- (1) *Keoi wan-dak nei zau gang-hai jau kwannaan laa* (Luke, 1999, p. 216)
he find-DAK you then must-is have difficulties SFP
‘Now that he found you, he must have some sort of difficulties.’
- (2) A: *Nei zan-hai jiu haang ni jat bou?*
you true-is have walk DEM one step
‘Do you really have to do it?’
B: *Ngo haang-dak ni jat bou zau jyu-zo singdaam jatcai haugwo*
I walk-DAK DEM CL step then expect-PERF bear all consequence
‘Now that I chosen to do it, I have prepared to take all the consequences.’
- (3) *Keoi daa-laan-dak ni joeng je, *(zau m paa cogaam)*
he hit-break-DAK DEM CL thing then not afraid be.imprisoned
‘Now that he broke this stuff, *(he is not afraid of going into jail).’

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The Use of Cantonese Discourse Markers by Legislative Council Members in Hong Kong and Macau

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23 June
17:00

The present study investigates the use of Cantonese discourse markers by the legislative council members in Hong Kong and Macau in the perspective of variationist sociolinguistics. A corpus of transcribed speech data was made from the videos of the meetings of the two legislative councils in 2016. The corpus was examined for the occurrences of discourse markers and their distributions. The use of the discourse markers *gam2* was found among 107 speakers among the 111 speakers who contribute to the speech corpus and thus it is defined as a linguistic variable. Quantitative analyses were made of the variable with its frequency of use among different speakers, in proportion to the amount of utterances, the numbers of exchanges, and the time of speech, and in relation to a few other characteristics of the speech and speakers. The results of analyses show that the use of the discourse marker was variably associated with many interactive and discourse conditions. Moreover, apparent differences were also found between gender and age groups, and some other groupings of the speakers in social background. Apart from supporting the general theme that linguistic variables are constrained sociolinguistically, the study can contribute to the analysis of the formation of regional speech communities.

Are Cantonese Commercial Songs Brainwashing Nowadays? Analyzing the Transformation of Cantonese Lyrics in TV Commercial Song

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23 June
17:30

From the past ten years, ‘zim zim zim’ (尖尖尖), a commercial song of the Lion Corporation (獅王有限公司) together with ‘syut, syut, syut’ (雪雪雪), another song of the Kam Boat Bakery (金龍船餅店), which only consist of a single repetitive word in their lyrics, are crowned as two of the most ‘brainwashing’ commercial songs in Hong Kong.

Dating back to the 1980s, with the aid of the television broadcasting, commercial songs were written in spoken Cantonese language describing product features. Hence, commercial songs had been an effective media for a lot of commercial brands such as Wing Wah Chinese Sausage (榮華臘腸), Sze Hing Loong (時興隆), and Choi Heong Yuen Bakery (咀香園),

etc., to advertise their products. While in 2000-2017, some commercial songs which primarily targeted younger generations imported some trendy English words that are commonly used in daily Cantonese dialogue or adopted repetitive words aforementioned in their lyrics. With the mobile technological advance, audience attention from watching TV has been reduced, and it is likely that repetitive words purposefully make the advertisements more noticeable towards target customers. Thus, the content of lyrics has become more straightforward and 'brainwashing'. The 1980-2000 commercial songs were commonly emphasizing the functions of a product, while those in 2000-2017, were focusing more on the emotional rewards, such as happiness, in the process of purchasing or using the product. The transformation of the use of language aligns with the societal change of Hong Kong, from an industrial society to a service-based post-industrial society. An ideological shift of people's consumption from concerning the function of a product to the self-enjoyment in the process of consumption could be found in the lyrics.

In this paper, in sociolinguistic and sociological perspective, the usage of Cantonese language in commercial songs in the two periods of time (1980-2000 and 2000-2017) are analyzed by discourse analysis to explore the linkage between language, consumerism and societal background that have evolved by time. This paper aims to demonstrate the inter-relationship between the transformation of Cantonese lyrics in commercial songs and the shift of ideology in Hong Kong society, so as to provide a possible explanation why commercial songs become more straightforward and brainwashing nowadays.

Identities Are No Joke (or Are They?): Humor and Identity in Vivek Mahbubani's Stand-up

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23 June
18:00

Humor scholars have noted the unique role that ethnic humor and self-effacing wit play in response to oppression (Juni & Katz, 2001). Jokes and humor created in the course of immigrant assimilation can illustrate tensions around language acquisition, isolation, and general acclimation to host country. This paper investigates the ethnic humor used by Vivek Mahbubani, a Hong Kong-born stand-up comedian of Indian descent. As a non-ethnic Chinese, Cantonese-speaking person in a locale where 88.1% of the population are L1 Cantonese speakers and 92% ethnic Chinese (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2017), Mahbubani reconfigures the landscape of Cantonese speakerhood, winning the title of "Hong Kong's Funniest Person" in 2007. We use narrative analysis to examine videos of his performances from 2007-2017. Viewing his stand-up routines as narratives of self (Ochs & Capps, 1996), we see his personal narratives as "verbalized, visualized, and/or embodied framings of a sequence of actual or possible life events" (p. 24). Through narratives, narrators explore their various historical, cultural, and personal positionings in the world in relation to others through the act of (re)telling their experiences.

Many of Mahbubani's performances include metalinguistic and metapragmatic commentaries about appropriateness of Cantonese language use, including his own. We explore the various themes in Mahbubani's routines that speak directly to race/racial discrimination, language use/acquisition, and othering in Hong Kong and analyze the mechanisms that underpin the humor behind his jokes, more specifically through incongruity and its resolution (Attardo, 1994; Brock, 2017). Mahbubani regularly employs comedic routines that include jokes about racist encounters in Hong Kong (e.g., being a terrorist for Halloween because "people think [he] looks like one," and jokes about the bilingual Cantonese-English exchanges he has after being stopped by a Hong Kong police officer who wants to check his identification card). We argue that these routines disrupt master narratives of legitimacy and authenticity about Hong Kong Cantonese speakerhood and identities, providing powerful counter-narratives mediated by ethnic and self-effacing humor. It also forces the audience to confront the sociolinguistic realities that South Asians face in Hong Kong society. Findings have implications towards understanding and better serving minoritized communities and Cantonese language speakers/learners in Hong Kong.

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Tonal Markedness and Word-size Effect in Cantonese Loanword Phonology

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24 June
 08:30

In Cantonese loanword phonology, both epenthesis and deletion are said to be possible repair strategies for English loanwords with ill-formed Cantonese phonotactics. The choice between the two has been argued as a result of the disyllabic minimal word size requirement (Yip, 1993): if an English word with an onset cluster is monosyllabic, epenthesis is used; deletion, on the other hand, is the preferred strategy to resolve onset clusters in polysyllabic words. In the case of having a fricative coda, which is not permissible in Cantonese, epenthesis is used regardless of the word minimality constraint; deletion of the fricative

coda is not an option. Other asymmetries between resolving ill-formed phonotactics in the two syllabic positions include the segmental and tonal quality of the epenthetic material (e.g., Yu, 2005). In an experiment focusing on ill-formed codas conducted by Luke and Lau (2008), their results suggested that word-size requirement is sensitive to word class. Given a monosyllabic word with an ill-formed Cantonese coda that can be used as a noun or a verb (e.g., *pass*), their participants preferred the monosyllabic output (*pass*) when used as a verb but the epenthetic form (*passi*) when used as a noun. The aim of this experiment is to investigate whether the same category-specific effect is present in the onset position.

Each stimulus was monosyllabic with an onset cluster whose first member is an obstruent and whose second member is the lateral liquid, [l]. These words can function both as a noun and a verb. The two repaired forms, the deleted form (monosyllabic) and the epenthetic form (disyllabic), were included in this experiment. Each stimulus was recorded in two Cantonese sentences, one when used as a noun and the other as a verb. Each stimulus was presented twice consecutively in the experiment. The first question was a forced-choice task: participants were shown the orthography of a stimulus and asked to choose between the two recordings (same carrier sentence, one with the deleted form the other with the epenthetic form). After that, they were asked to rate the naturalness, on a scale of zero (least natural) to six (most natural), of the same recordings. If a participant chose one option in the forced-choice question but rated the other more natural in the second question, these responses would be eliminated. A total of 48 participants completed the experiment.

Results showed an overwhelming preference of the deleted form regardless of lexical categories in all cluster types except the sL-type tokens, where the epenthetic form was preferred. While the distinction between the cluster types can be explained by the perceptual salience of [s] (Yip, 1993), the findings present a paradox: not only is there an absence of category-specific effect, the preference of the deleted, monosyllabic, form contradicts the disyllabic word-size requirement. To provide an answer to this paradox, I argue that it is the avoidance of marked prosodic, more precisely tonal, structure that drives deletion to be the preferred repair strategy of resolving onset clusters, even at the expense of violating the word-size minimality constraint.

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A New Approach to Loanword Semantics

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24 June
09:00

Close contact between two languages inevitably results in lexical borrowing (Tadmor, 2009), and a consequence of this is semantic change (Louwrens, 1993; Kay, 1995). Hong Kong and Guangzhou's historical contact with English has resulted in a large number of English loanwords that have fully integrated into Hong Kong Cantonese (Wong, Bauer, & Lam, 2009). Most (and arguably all) of these words have changed their meanings from the original meanings that they had in English. Many studies have examined the phonology of English loanwords in Cantonese (ELCs), but few have looked at their semantics, with the notable exceptions of Chan and Kwok (1982) and Wong et al. (2009).

The relatively few studies that have looked at the semantics of ELCs, as well as the literature in general on loanwords in other languages, offer good and informative insight from which to build on. The study reported here aims to analyze ELCs based on the combined ideas reported in the literature on loanword semantics (e.g., Louwrens, 1993 and Demuth, 2000, who looked at the semantics of loanwords in Bantu languages; Al-Athwary (2016), who looked at loanwords in Arabic; Kay (1995), who look at loanwords in Japanese; and Chan and Kwok (1982) and Wong et al. (2009), who looked at loanwords in Cantonese). Most such studies talk about two or more types of semantic change and provide examples. Based on this, a list of types of semantic change was created, to which we have added some additional types, resulting in nine types in total, three of which have subcategories. Instead of discussing a type of semantic change and then presenting examples, as other studies have done, the method adopted here is to examine each loanword for evidence of each type of semantic change. The end result is a more detailed and systematic semantic analysis of each loanword.

This paper will present and explain the list of semantic change types, and will present the analysis of some ELCs to illustrate how the methodology works and what the results look like. For example, the ELC adjective *ku1* ("cool"), as in *Lei5go3 pang4jau5 gam3 ku1 ge2?* ("Why is your friend so distant (or unfriendly)"), is concluded to have undergone five types of semantic change: (1) semantic narrowing because it has lost its literal meaning related to temperature; (2) change of emotive content because it is used pejoratively; (3) metaphorical change because its metaphorical meaning is now pejorative rather than positive; (4) syntactic category reduction because it cannot be used as a verb; and (5) change of valency because it can only modify [+Human] entities. The analysis in this study is based on real-life data as well as constructed examples, and is collaboratively based on the intuition of both native-English and native-Cantonese speakers.

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East Meets West: Language and Humour in Post-WWII Hong Kong

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24 June
09:30

In post-World War II Hong Kong, the vast majority of the adult population there — swelling to 3 million by 1960 — were immigrants who came mostly from China's Pearl River Delta region and surrounding districts. This was the first post-World War II generation that came of age in the British colony. They were, by and large, better educated than their parents, with even those in factory and other blue-collar jobs knowing some English. Not surprisingly, major influences on their popular culture came not from the repressive regime of China but from overseas in England and the United States.

This paper presents the interplay of English and Cantonese in the light-hearted use of language for humour that is enjoyed by the general working class. Sources for this study include Cantonese popular songs, films, and opera. Humour derives from the use of loanwords, puns, and other impish linguistic devices and cheeky strategies.

Preserving the *Zoeng*-construction in Heritage Cantonese: Evidence from the Winston Corpus

24 June
10:15

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Heritage language acquisition is an emerging subfield of research in language acquisition and bilingualism (Benmamoun, Montrul, & Polinsky, 2013; Kupisch & Rothman, 2016; S. A. Montrul, 2008; S. Montrul, 2016). So far only a few studies have discussed the structural properties of Cantonese spoken by first and second-generation immigrants in English-speaking countries (e.g., Dennig and Leung, 2012, 2014; Mai, Kwan, and Yip, 2016). Nonetheless, these studies unequivocally found that the *zoeng*-construction, a pretransitive construction in which the object appears before the relevant verb after a marker *zoeng* (Matthews & Yip, 2011), is produced to a significantly lesser extent in elicited production tasks by English-dominant heritage speakers of Cantonese, as compared to Cantonese-dominant bilingual baselines. A similar pattern is found in the Mandarin pretransitive (the *ba*-construction) by heritage speakers of Mandarin (Polinsky, Zhang, & Gallo, 2010). It is proposed that the *zoeng*-construction is particularly vulnerable to cross-linguistic influence and input conditions due to the lack of structural equivalent in English, as well as its relatively low frequency in child-directed speech, namely, input (e.g., 0.009-0.16% in Hong Kong Cantonese Child Language Corpus (CANCORP), Lee and Wong, 1998; finding in Mai et al., 2016). This paper further addresses the combined roles of cross-linguistic influence and input frequency by examining the development of the *zoeng*-construction in a Cantonese-Mandarin-English trilingual child in the US, between the ages of 1;7 and 3;7, based on a newly constructed corpus consisting of longitudinal speech data collected from Winston and his adult interlocutors.

The Winston corpus recorded a relatively high percentage of *zoeng*-sentences by Winston (38 tokens, 1.225% of total Cantonese utterances). Among them only one token is structurally incomplete lacking a lexical verb; the other 37 tokens all appear in the target-like manner, depicting events with temporal boundaries with resultative or directional verb phrases, one of them illustrated in (1). To evaluate the roles of Mandarin influence and Cantonese input, we examined, respectively, the *ba*-sentences in Winston's Mandarin and the *zoeng*-sentences in Winston's mother, who is the main source of Cantonese input for Winston. Results show that Winston produced an even higher percentage of *ba*-sentences in Mandarin (51 tokens, 2.155% of total Mandarin utterances) and his mother, who is a highly proficient Cantonese-Mandarin bilingual, produced a significantly greater proportion of *zoeng*-constructions (49 tokens, 0.865% of total Cantonese utterances), compared with her adult peers in CANCORP. It is likely that the robustness of the *zoeng*-construction in Winston's Cantonese is attributable to Mandarin influence and increased occurrence in the input, consistent with the proposal in Mai et al. (2016). Structural properties of the *zoeng*-construction in the child's utterances will also be discussed.

- (1) Zoeng-construction: Agent-zoeng-Patient-VP
 我 想 你 將 個 蓋 放 翻 去 哩度
 ngo5 soeng2 nei5 zoeng1 go2 go3 goi3 fong3 faan1 heoi3 le1dou6
 1.SG want you ZOENG that CL lid put back to here
 'I want you to put the lid back here.' (Winston, 3;5)

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Intergenerational Transmission of Cantonese in a Multilingual Context

24 June
10:45

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Concern about the future of Cantonese has grown in recent years. Is Cantonese an endangered language? The most detailed metric developed to classify endangered languages, the Language Endangerment Index (LEI) allows the question to be answered based on a set of weighted criteria (Lee & Way, 2016). Here we examine the intergenerational transmission factor and highlight the role of bilingual and multilingual children in preserving the Cantonese language and heritage.

At first sight, with 72 million speakers of Yue dialects worldwide (Simons & Fennig, 2018), Cantonese does not appear endangered. In most of its traditional territory, however, it is in steep decline. In Guangdong, with Putonghua as medium of instruction, intergenerational language shift is in progress (Bauer, 2016). In overseas Chinese communities such as that of Greater Vancouver, rapid replacement of Cantonese by Mandarin has drawn public attention. This leaves Hong Kong as the one territory in which Cantonese appears dominant, still being used in many official functions alongside English and Mandarin which have an increasingly strong presence.

The most critical factor in language endangerment, however, is intergenerational transmission. We have documented some recent longitudinal case studies showing that some children of Cantonese-speaking parents are not acquiring Cantonese in early childhood, while others have English or Putonghua as their dominant language. Older children attending international schools show attrition of Cantonese as English takes over as their dominant language. Putonghua is increasingly adopted as the medium of instruction for Chinese literacy, with immediate effects on children's patterns of language use (Sze, 2010).

Taken together, these developments are suggestive of the early stages of language shift. Based on the LEI criteria, Cantonese is 'vulnerable' on the endangerment scale. The decisive factor is intergenerational transmission: the preservation of Cantonese hinges on whether it is transmitted from one generation to the next as children's first language. Increasingly, children growing up in Hong Kong are exposed to Cantonese, English and Mandarin to varying degrees in early childhood. Cantonese will necessarily be transmitted in a multilingual context. The challenges of nurturing children's bilingual and trilingual abilities are daunting, in part due to the general lack of understanding of how bilingualism works. A common misconception is that giving up Cantonese is the inevitable price of the quest for high proficiency in English and Mandarin. We will show that Cantonese can be acquired by children along with English and Mandarin without compromising any of the languages.

Research in the Hong Kong and international community shows that the effectiveness of bilingual upbringing in the home or bilingual programmes is to a large extent determined by the quality and quantity of input available to the children. To preserve the Cantonese language, bilingual children are the crucial agents who transmit the language intergenerationally.

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Constraints of the V-one-V Construction in Cantonese: Evidence from Corpus Data

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24 June
14:00

This study discusses some constraints of the V-one-V construction in Cantonese. These constraints suggest that the V-one-V construction should not be analyzed as aspectual in parallel to canonical aspect markers like *zo2*, *gan2*, or *gwo3*.

First, the V-one-V construction is restrictive in its co-occurrence with some aspect markers. Example (1) shows the occurrence of *zo2* 㗎 with the V-one-V construction. V-one-V may also occur with aspect markers related to completion like (1), such as *gwo3* 過.

- (1) *tai2 (zo2)jat1 tai2* 睇 (㗎) 一睇
look one look
'to take a look'

However, aspectual markers denoting incompletion/imperfection (e.g., progressive *gan2* 緊, durative *zyu6* 住) are not allowed in the position of *zo2*, which indicates that the Cantonese V-one-V construction denotes delimitative meaning (Li and Thompson (1981) on Mandarin). In addition, the incompatibility with imperfective markers shows that the event must be viewed as a unit by the aspect markers.

Second, V-one-V often occurs as a secondary predicate, following elements like *heoi3* 去 'go', *zau2lai4* 走嚟 'come' like (2), or occurring with *zau6* 就 'then' (attested in HKCanCor Luke and Wong (2015)). This constraint indicates that the V-one-V construction occurs as a non-matrix predicate. Without *zau2lai4* 'come' and *sin1* 'first', (2) becomes less acceptable.

- (2) *zau2lai4 jim6 jat1 jim6 sin1* 走嚟驗一驗先
come test one test first
'to come over for a quick test first'

This subordination constraint separates V-one-V from verbal suffixes like *zo2* and *gwo3*, although they are similar in delimiting the events. The same subordination constraint holds for the less frequent use of Adj-one-Adj, as shown in (3).

- (3) ?/* *keoi5 kam1jat6 leng3 jat1 leng3* 佢今日靚一靚
 3.SG today pretty one pretty
 Intended: ‘S/he looks very nice today.’

In addition, the corpus data indicate that the V-one-V construction is not selective by verb types (both telic *bou3dou2* 報到 ‘sign in’ and atelic *mong6* 望 ‘look’ are attested), or by phonological constraints (attested examples include: *bou3 jat1 bou3dou2* 報一報到 ‘sign in’ and even code-mixed *check jat1 check* ‘to take a quick check’). These differences between the V-one-V construction and markers like *zo2* / *gan2* / *gwo3* suggest that aspect marking in Cantonese can be further divided into separate categories.

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Revisiting the Syntax of Two Approximatives in Cantonese

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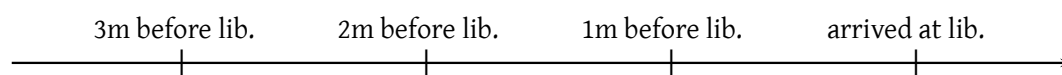
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

24 June
14:30

[Tang \(2009\)](#) studies two Cantonese postverbal approximatives *gam3zai6* and *mat1zai6* and argues that they respectively form a nested construction with their preverbal counterpart; the two nested constructions (“discontinuous constructions”) have a hierarchical structure, i.e., one (*gam3zai6*-construction) embeds another (*mat1zai6*- construction). Two questions arise. What is the precise syntactic status of these two items? Are they hierarchically different? In this paper, it is argued that *gam3zai6* is the head of Degree Phrase, following the analysis of Mandarin *hen* as Deg^o in [Zhang, 2015](#). In the spirit of [Amaral and Prete \(2010\)](#), the use of *gam3zai6* projects a scale that contains a limit point for the situation at stake to approximate on. In (1), the sentence points to an approximation point just before the limit point. Given that a scale is created through quantification, approximation is a step to follow after the scale is created. The effect of *gam3zai6* is thus likened to that of Degree Phrase. The second question is on whether *mat1zai6* is truly posited at a lower syntactic position than *gam3zai6*. Contra [Tang \(2009\)](#), his grammatical sentence, (2), turns out to be rather unacceptable for many native speakers of Cantonese. Judgment aside, the high degree of semantic similarities between the two approximatives suggests that they might possibly share the

same syntactic status. In this paper, it is argued that *mat1zai6* also contains an element that occupies Deg⁰. More precisely, *mat1zai6* is a combination of question word *mat1* ‘what’ and approximative *zai6*. That is to say, *mat1zai6* is an “approximative” only because it contains *zai6* in the compound. The decomposition of *mat1zai6* explains the distributional differences between *mat1zai6* and *gam3zai6* as shown in Tang (2009), such as the need for negation and the apparent acceptability of *mat1zai6* ahead of *gam3zai6*. This is because of the additional effect of question word *mat1*. Nanhai and Shunde Cantonese show that *zai6* can be used independently in some Cantonese varieties, and *mat1zai6* is a special, if not unique, usage of Hong Kong/Guangzhou Cantonese. That helps prove the decomposition analysis proposed here.

- (1) ZS paau2 dou3 tou4syu1gun2 gam3zai6
 ZS run to library GAMZAI
 ‘ZS almost ran to the library.’



- (2) Keoi5 mou5 heoi3 mat1zai6 gam3zai6
 he not go MATZAI GAMZAI
 ‘He almost did not go much at all.’

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The Cantonese ‘Semi-complementizer’ Is Not a Complementizer

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15:00

Previous work on Sinitic SAY verbs adopts the grammaticalization approach that they have undergone grammaticalization from a quotative verb to a complementizer, as shown by the usage of Cantonese *waa* in (1a) and (1b), respectively (Yeung, 2006, Chappell, 2008, a.o.):

- (1) a. *keoi kamjat waa-gwo gamjat wui lai.* [quotative]
 ‘He said yesterday that (he) would come today.’

- b. *ngo soeng waa heoi meigwok.* [semi-complementizer]
 ‘I want to go to America.’

Chappell (2008) argues that Chinese dialects differ in where the SAY verb is placed along the five stages of grammaticalization. Some SAY verbs (e.g., Taiwanese *kong*) is fully conventionalised (Stage V) whereas others (e.g., Cantonese *waa*) are ‘semi-complementizers’ (Stage II/III). This paper departs from Chappell (2008) and argues that the Cantonese *waa* is not a (type of) complementizer, but a marker of modality and moreover of monoclausality (Cinque, 2004). Monoclausal structures contain an ‘impoverished’ embedded clause, which primarily include raising (2) and control (3) clauses, both of which being compatible with the use of *waa*:

- (2) a. *aa-ming honang [waa heoi meigwok duksyu].*
 ‘Ah-Ming is possible to go to America to study.’
 b. *aa-ming houci [waa heoi meigwok duksyu].*
 ‘Ah-Ming seems to go to America to study.’
 (3) a. *aa-ming heimong [waa heoi meigwok duksyu].*
 ‘Ah-Ming hopes to go to America to study.’
 b. *aa-ming hoici [waa duk-faan syu].*
 ‘Ah-Ming starts to study again.’

(2) and (3) show that the embedded subject in raising and control clauses must be coindexed with the matrix subject. On the contrary, (4) shows that *waa* is forbidden in object control:

- (4) *aa-ming hyun (*waa) aa-koeng loulik gungzok.*
 ‘Ah-Ming persuades Ah-Keung to work hard.’

It has been argued that monoclausal structures (with a truncated embedded clause) display *transparency effect* (Cinque, 2004) which is absent in biclausal structures (with a complete embedded clause). The same contrast is demonstrated in Cantonese. One example is the interpretation of the wh-word *matje* ‘what’. The wh-word can be left-dislocated in monoclausal structures, with its interpretation altered. In (5a), *matje* is interrogative, and in (5b) it is a free-choice indefinite:

- (5) a. *aa-ming heimong waa heoi meigwok duk matje aa?*
 ‘What does Ah-Ming hope to go to America to study?’
 b. *aa-ming matje dou heimong waa heoi meigwok duk.*
 ‘Ah-Ming hopes to go to America to study anything.’

Left-dislocation of wh-words, however, is ungrammatical in biclausal structures:

- (6) a. *aa-ming zidou aa-koeng heoi meigwok duk matje.*
 ‘Ah-Ming knows what Ah-Keung goes to America to study.’
 b. **aa-ming matje dou zidou aa-koeng heoi meigwok duk.*

Given that the impoverished embedded clause typed by *waa* is a monoclausal, we conclude that *waa* is not a complementizer, but a marker of modality defined in the TP domain. A CP

is never projected in monoclausal structures, which accords with Chappell’s claim against the CP hypothesis for the Cantonese ‘semi-complementizer’ (though by different reasons).

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Wh-ex-situ in Cantonese

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15:30

Cantonese is a *wh*-in-situ language, meaning that a *wh*-phrase in an interrogative sentence usually remains in its canonical position (= *wh*-in-situ) (see (1)); however, in some occasions the *wh*-phrase can appear at a non-canonical position (= *wh*-ex-situ), as in (2). This paper investigates this non-typical use of *wh*-words in Cantonese.

- (1) 你 覺得 邊 架 跑車 最 型 呀? (Matthews & Yip, 2011)
 nei5 gok3dak1 bin1 gaa3 paau2ce1 zeoi3 jing4 aa3
 you think which CL run-car most cool SFP
 ‘Which car do you feel is the coolest?’
- (2) (係) 邊 架 跑車_i, 你 覺得 _{t_i} 最 型 呀? (Matthews & Yip, 2011)
 (hai6) bin1 gaa3 paau2ce1 nei5 gok3dak zeoi3 jing4 aa3
 is which CL run-car you think most cool SFP
 ‘Which sports car is it that you find most stylish?’

In (2), the *wh*-phrase appears at TP external position and such construction has been called ‘*wh*-fronting’ (Cheung, 2015; Matthews & Yip, 2011): a *wh*-phrase undergoes movement from its canonical position to a fronted position. Such movement is triggered by the optional copula *hai* (‘be’) which highlights the following *wh*-phrase as a focus, forming a cleft construction (Cheung, 2015). Matthews and Yip (2011) described that the fronted *wh*-phrase must be referring something mentioned in the previous discourse.

In this paper, I proposed that ex-situ *wh*-phrase is not necessarily a focus, but a topic which can be base-generated or movement-derived. The copula *hai* (‘be’) is not optional. When the ex-situ *wh*-phrase is preceded by *hai* (‘be’), it is analyzed as focus; otherwise, it is

a topic. Supported evidence comes from (i) insertion of a topic marker *ne/aa*; (ii) resumption (3); allowance of topicalizing a *wh*-phrase from an island within a non-episodic eventuality ((4) and (5)). A *wh*-Topic must be D(iscourse)-linked, explaining why usually the ex-situ *wh*-Topic contains *bin* ('which').

- (3) 邊 個 學生_i 呢, 陳-老師 罰-咗 佢_i 三 次 呀?
 bin1 go3 hok6sang1 ne1 can4-lou5si1 fat6-zo2 keoi5 saam1 ci3 aa3
 which CL student Top^o Chan-teacher punish-ASP him three times SFP
 'Which student x_i is the one that Miss Chan has punished him_i for three times?'
- (4) 邊 套 戲_i, [睇過 t_i 嘅 人] 唔 多? (Complex NP island)
 bin1 tou3 hei3 tai2gwo3 ge3 jan4 m4 do1
 which CL film watch-PERF LP person NEG many
 'Which film x is the one that [the people who had watched x] were not many?'
- (5) 邊 條 裙_i, 呀妹 [著 t_i] 個陣, 好 可愛? (Adjunct island)
 bin1 tiu4 kwan4 aa1mui6 zoek3 go2zan2 hou2 ho2oi3
 which CL dress sister wear when very cute
 'Which dress x is the one that when sister wears x , she will be very cute?'

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