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The Hong Kong Cantonese language: Current features and future prospects

香港粵語: 現代特徵與未來前圖

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Abstract: As the contemporary Chinese language has evolved into various distinguishable varieties across East and Southeast Asian speech communities, the term pluricentric (i. e. having multiple centers or standards) has appropriately been applied to it. Because the development of the Chinese variety as spoken and written in Hong Kong has been profoundly influenced by a unique congeries of social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, historical, and linguistic factors intrinsically linked to Hong Kong, it systematically differs from those varieties used in mainland China and on Taiwan. Hong Kong's predominant, most widely-used speech variety is Cantonese: this is to say that 90 % of the ethnic Chinese population of about 6.5 million speak it as their usual, daily language. The Hong Kong Cantonese language has acquired an extraordinary status due to its distinctive vocabulary and indigenous Chinese characters, identifiably colloquial phonetic features, highly conventionalized written form, large inventory of English loanwords borrowed through phonetic transliteration, and tradition of lexicography combined with romanization. Although Cantonese predominates in Hong Kong, however, at the same time, a worrying trend is the increasing number of schools switching their medium of instruction from Cantonese to Putonghua, just one noticeable difference between now and 1997 when Hong Kong, a British Crown Colony since 1841, was returned to China's sovereignty as a Special Administrative Region. The Hong Kong speech community's attitudes toward Cantonese are contradictory: some people denigrate it as "a coarse, vulgar relic of China's feudal past" that should be replaced by Putonghua, the national language, while others praise it for preserving ancient rimes and extol it for expressing social, political, and cultural differences that set Hong Kong apart from mainland China. That Cantonese continues to decline in Guangzhou may be a harbinger of things to come in Hong Kong. Ironically, the Hong Kong government's recognition of the Cantonese language as intangible cultural heritage which would seem to be a good status for it to have, on the contrary, has made some people fear it could become extinct in the future.

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現代漢語逐漸發展成各種可區別的語言變體， 遍及東亞、東南亞洲的語言社區，以多中心語言一詞應於這種狀況最為恰當。香港的漢語變體在說話和書寫的發展中， 一直深受連繫了香港自身， 結集了社會、經濟、政治、文化、環境、歷史、語言性的獨特因素影響，因此，香港的漢語與中國大陸和臺灣的漢語變體之間, 有相當多系統性的差異。 在香港最普遍使用的語言變體是粵語: 就是說六百五十萬的漢族人口當中， 有九成通常、日常都說粵語。香港粵語獲得非凡地位，是由於它具有與別不同的詞彙和本土漢字、可辨認的口語語音特徵、 高度約定俗成的書面語、大量通過音譯而來的英語借詞、詞典編纂結合拉丁化的傳統。粵語雖然在香港佔主導地位，但是同時有令人憂慮的趨勢，那是越來越多學校把教學語言從粵語轉為普通話；現時回歸中國主權作為特別行政區的香港，與1997當年仍屬自1841 年開始成為英國殖民地的香港，二者的明顯分別，從中可見一斑。 香港語言社區對粵語態度矛盾: 有人貶低粵語為一種粗糙、庸俗的封建時代遺物, 應該以普通話, 即國語, 取而代之; 但亦有人稱許粵語保留古韻, 讚譽粵語表現出令香港有別於中國大陸的社會、政治、文化差異。粵語在廣州的日漸衰落，可能是香港發生的許多事情的一個預示。諷刺的是，香港政府承認粵語為非物質文化遺產，似乎是給予粵語一個很好的地位，反而令有些人憂慮粵語將會消亡。

Keywords: Cantonese language, Cantonese lexicography, colloquial register, English loanword, Hong Kong Chinese, phonetic features, morphosyllable, pluricentric language, Putonghua, standard language, written Cantonese

> *… Cantonese is an appropriate medium of folk culture only… in Hong Kong, it is merely a coarse, vulgar relic of China's feudal past. It is fine to use a dialect like Cantonese in the home or wet market, but it is completely inappropriate in a modern city to use it for education and formal communication in the way that Hong Kong people stubbornly do. Hongkongers should be ashamed. Thirteen years after returning to the motherland, the great majority of this city's residents are unable to speak Putonghua well and our children continue to learn a corrupt form of Chinese in schools*, Clark Li, from Letters page, *South China Morning Post*, 5 August 2010.

> *Everything that makes Hong Kong what it is, is under attack – Cantonese, the trees, the trams, freedom of speech, the entire way of life*, Harold Yeo, from Letters page, *South China Morning Post*, August 26, 2015.

> *Localists should take note: native speakers of Cantonese are not the future of* [Hong Kong]. *Mainlanders, and children with a Hong Kong father and a mainland mother, are the future*, Michael J. Sloboda, from Letters page, *South China Morning Post*, October 8, 2015.

> "現在說廣東話是犯法嗎？" ["*Is speaking in Cantonese against the law now?*"], question asked by the taxi-driver character in《十年》"*Ten Years*", the 2015 independent, low-budget Hong Kong movie that depicted mainlandized and dystopian Hong Kong in the year 2025.

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1 Introduction: Chinese as a *pluricentric* language

It appears to have been Bradley (1992) who first recognized that the Chinese language is not an undifferentiated monolith but has developed into different varieties that are now spoken and written in speech communities across East and Southeast Asia; and so for this reason he quite appropriately applied the term *pluricentric* (i. e. having multiple centers or standards) to it. This is to say, the evolution and spread of Chinese into geographically-separate and distinctive languages resemble to some extent the situation for such global languages as English, French, and Spanish in North and South America, Africa, South Asia, etc. It should go without saying that no one would claim our world today has only one kind of "proper" English that is "owned" by a particular country; but rather, we accept there are different varieties that have come to be labeled as American, British, Australian, Canadian, Indian, New Zealand, South African, etc., that they have their own standards within the communities where they are spoken, and that each one of them possesses its own uniquely distinguishing features. By the same token, it needs to be asserted that today there is not just one kind of "proper" or standard Chinese language, but recognizably-different forms are being spoken and written in Hong Kong, Macao, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, as well as mainland China. Indeed, one may presume that the recognition of this fact was the primary motivation for the publication in 2010 of the《全球华语词典》*Quánqiú Huáyǔ Cídiǎn* [dictionary of global Chinese language] which classified a wide range of lexical items as belonging to the Chinese varieties spoken and written in these very nations and territories (Li 2010).

To advance further the documentation of the Chinese language's pluricentric development the current paper has focused only on the Hong Kong Chinese variety. The existence of its distinctive written form can be readily verified any day one picks up the *Apple Daily* newspaper (and certain others) published here in Hong Kong; many of its articles include local, indigenous vocabulary that would be pretty much unintelligible to the reader who is unfamiliar with Hong Kong Chinese and does not speak Cantonese (the distinction between these two linguistic categories should become clear in the discussion that follows). For instance, after the massive explosion of hazardous chemicals in Tianjin in August 2015, *Apple Daily*'s front-page headline on August 16, 2015 was '700 噸山埃散佈爆炸區' [cat1 baak3 deon1 saan1 aai1 saan3 bou3 baau3 zaa3 keoi1 (700 tons of cyanide spread in the explosion area)][1] what attracted the author's

[1] The Cantonese pronunciation of the Chinese characters is transcribed in the Jyutping system, i. e. 粵語拼音 jyut6 jyu5 ping3 jam1 'Cantonese Romanization'. Appendix 2 below lists the correspondences between Jyutping and IPA.

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attention as being noteworthy in this headline was its inclusion of two English loanwords, namely, 噸 deon1 (or dun1 in Putonghua) 'ton' and 山埃 saan1 aai1 'cyanide'; the first lexical item occurs in Putonghua, mainland standard written Chinese (DeFrancis 2003: 221), Hong Kong Chinese, and Cantonese (Lau 1977: 178); but the second can be considered an indigenous or autochthonous word in Hong Kong Chinese (as well as Macao Chinese, according to Li 2010: 717) and Cantonese (Chishima 2005: 797; Wu 1997: 234; Zhu 1997: 22). Interestingly enough, the story does not end here: it turns out that standard Chinese has also borrowed English cyanide but transcribes it as 山奈 shan1 nai4 (DeFrancis 2003: 807) (but cf. the Chinese phrase 氰化物 qing2 hua4 wu4 or cing1 faa3 mat6 'cyanide' Lu 1996: 421).

The author has occasionally heard mainland and Taiwan visitors in Hong Kong point out that such lexical differences as these impede their understanding of what they read; and some may even insist that Hongkongers are not speaking and writing "correct" or "proper" – i. e. standard – Chinese. For sure, the variety of the Chinese language as it is written and spoken in Hong Kong noticeably differs from those varieties used on the mainland and Taiwan, but this is obviously because its development has been deeply influenced by a congeries of social, political, cultural, environmental, historical, and linguistic factors intrinsically linked to Hong Kong. There is no good reason to label Hong Kong Chinese as wrong or nonstandard; it is simply another different, distinctive, and *independent* variety of Chinese.

1.1 The origin of Cantonese

Well over 2,000 years ago during the Qin dynasty 秦朝 (206–221 BCE) Han (i. e. Chinese) soldiers were sent to the South China region which was called 粵 jyut6 to subdue and occupy it, thus bringing these speakers of varieties of Old Chinese (Norman 1988: 210) into prolonged and intimate contact with its non-Han indigenous inhabitants who were called 百越 or 百粵 baak3 jyut6 'Hundred Yue' by the Chinese (Yue-Hashimoto 1991: 294). It is now believed these peoples very likely spoke languages that are now classified as Austro-Asiatic, Tai (including Tai-Kadai and Zhuang-Dong), Miao-Yao, etc. (Yue-Hashimoto 1991: 295–296). Today ethnolinguistic groups speaking varieties related to these language families are referred to in China as 少數民族 siu2 sow3 man4 zuk6 'minority nationalities', and they continue to inhabit various areas of southern China, including Guangxi Zhuangzu Zizhiqu and Yunnan. The largest such group is the 壯族 zong1 zuk6 'Zhuang nationality' who speak varieties of northern Tai language in Guangxi (Holm 2013).

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In the linguistic cauldron of ancient South China situations of mutual unintelligibility must have frequently arisen through the early contacts among the Chinese-speaking Qin soldiers and the indigenous inhabitants speaking their local languages that were ancestral to modern Zhuang, Yao, etc.; despite the early difficulties in communicating, long-term contact would likely have led to intermarriage among the Chinese migrants and local people. As Li (1994: 83–84) has speculated, just such conditions as these were the catalyst for the formation of mixed languages (or pidgins) and creoles; in explicit detail he has proposed this is precisely how the early Yue language was formed and from which Cantonese has ultimately evolved. Interestingly enough, Norman (1988: 210–214) has sketched out a somewhat similar picture for this same region: Based on his identification of "ancient and autochthonous elements" and "convergences" that are shared by South China's three major topolects, namely, Yue, Kejia, and Min, Norman (1988: 210) concluded they must have developed from the same historical source, namely, Old Southern Chinese, a kind of proto-language which originated through the contact among the "aboriginal languages" spoken in what is now Fujian and Guangdong provinces and the Han immigrants' Old Chinese.[2]

That early contacts with non-Han indigenous languages had influenced the development of Yue in South China is supported by the identification of lexical substrata from Tai-Kadai, Miao-Yao, and Tibeto-Burman languages in contemporary Cantonese and other Yue varieties (or dialects) (Bauer 1987, 1988b, 1991, 1996; Li 1994; Ouyang 1993; Yuan 1983; Yue-Hashimoto 1991); some examples of

2 According to traditional accounts, the Kejia topolect originated in northern China and its presence in the South was due to immigration of its speakers beginning in the early fourth century and continuing well into the ninth century C.E. However, as Norman (1988: 222) has pointed out, the name Kejia or Hakka 客家 haak3 gaa1 'guest, stranger' was itself invented by Yue-speakers who already occupied the region for immigrants who came from outside Guangdong province (the Yue-speakers referred to themselves as "本地 Pun-thí (*sic*) 'the original residents'" (Maciver 1926, no pagination), and "本地人 bun2 dei6 jan4 'local people, original people'" to distinguish themselves from the outsider Hakka immigrants (Liu 2008: 22)), and this happened in relatively recent times, i. e. Qing dynasty (17th to early twentieth century, according to Yan 2006: 167 who has also given a different account of the origin of the name Kejia with the Kejia coining it themselves). As a result, it is necessary to distinguish between the origin of the Hakka ethnicity (which Norman does not dispute as having originated in northern China) and the Hakka language, since the two are not equivalent. As Norman's comparative data have demonstrated (1988: 221–228) and at least one classification scheme on semantic innovation has shown (Yan 2006: 50), the linguistic evidence that it shares significant features with Min (and also Yue) indicates the Hakka (Kejia) language had originated in ancient South China.

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these lexical substrata found in contemporary Hong Kong Cantonese are presented in Section 1.4 below.

1.2 The Hong Kong Cantonese language

As quite rightly observed by Bolton (2011: 64), "… Hong Kong is the Cantonese-speaking capital of the world". How did this happen? After all, the name Cantonese itself is derived from Canton, i. e. Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, and the widely-recognized, regional center on which the standard, prestige pronunciation has been traditionally based. In the view of this writer it has been through the unfettered interaction with and development by the Hong Kong speech community over the past 170-plus years that Cantonese today has been elevated to a very special status that has made it into a unique variety of Chinese (Bauer 2014) in comparison to all other regional Chinese varieties (also referred to as dialects or topolects). While Guangzhou still speaks Cantonese to some extent (its decline there is briefly discussed in a following section) and Shanghai Shanghainese (the major variety of Wu), two cities with populations that are larger than Hong Kong's, nonetheless, in both of these places there is no question that Putonghua and modern standard Chinese are predominant, unchallenged (and unchallengeable).

There are at least five facets of the Hong Kong Cantonese language that have together bestowed upon it an extraordinary – even unique – status as follows:

(1) Distinctive lexical items;
(2) Phonetic features that identify colloquial Cantonese pronunciation, and numerous phonetic variations and changes that are underway in its sound system which have been widely observed, commented on, formally investigated, and for which an official, systematically-organized movement was launched to "correct" and eliminate these so-called 懶音 laan5 jam1 'lazy pronunciations';
(3) The extraordinary development, conventionalization, and widespread use of the written form of Cantonese speech in Hong Kong newspapers, personal letters, government posters, comic books, novels, etc.; simply put, Hong Kong written Cantonese is unprecedented in relation to any other regional Chinese variety being used today;
(4) The large-scale borrowing of English words into the Cantonese lexicon due to intimate contact between the two languages that began back in the late seventeenth century and still continues to the present day; and
(5) The tradition of Cantonese lexicography combined with Cantonese romanization – while it is the case that more dictionaries document the lexicon

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of Putonghua/standard written Chinese than Cantonese, nonetheless, over the past decade and a half there have been published in Hong Kong a number of Cantonese dictionaries in which the written form of the Hong Kong Cantonese lexicon has been codified and its pronunciation accurately transcribed in romanization which was historically alien to the Chinese language.

1.3 The Cantonese lexicon and the Hong Kong Chinese language

At the outset we need to make clear that no sharp line separates Hong Kong Cantonese, on the one hand, from Hong Kong "Chinese", on the other. Since all Chinese lexical items are pronounced in Cantonese, the Chinese language as it is used in Hong Kong could just as well be called Hong Kong Chinese, as well as Hong Kong Cantonese. Furthermore, as far as literate Cantonese speakers are concerned, they have essentially learned in school two different varieties of the Chinese language; on the one hand, the colloquial form that they grow up speaking and occasionally see being written but are not explicitly taught to speak, read, or write, and, on the other, the formal, standard variety that they are taught to read and write at school. Not surprisingly, these two linguistic varieties with dual vocabularies overlap to a huge degree, and since the literate speaker has only one brain for storing them, they have combined together into an amorphous mass without subcategories being discretely and overtly coded as "used only in Cantonese speech", or "informal written Cantonese", or "standard formal Chinese", etc.; nonetheless, since lexical usage is determined by habitual behavior, for some Cantonese speakers particular lexical items are indeed marked as belonging to certain registers, e. g., a word is to be used only in colloquial speech and not to be written in an examination paper, for example, or it occurs only in the formal written style and corresponds to a completely different word that must be uttered when speaking, etc. When Cantonese-speakers read aloud a standard written Chinese text, they typically "paraphrase" it by replacing certain words that belong to the standard formal register with their semantic and grammatically-functional equivalents from colloquial Cantonese; so, for example, when they encounter such standard Chinese lexical items as 他們 ta1 men 'they', 是 shi4 'is, are', 在 zai4 'at, in, on', instead of reading them aloud with their standard Cantonese equivalent pronunciations of taa1 mun4, si6, and zoi6, respectively, they will usually utter their semantic Cantonese equivalents of 佢哋 keoi5 dei6, 係 hai6, 喺 hai2. For many Hong Kong Cantonese-speaking students the process of learning to write standard formal

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Chinese has turned into the frustrating task of learning to suppress the urge to write the "wrong" word that they know from their everyday Cantonese speech and instead replace it with the word which they have been taught to associate with the formal written style; so, for example, instead of writing Cantonese 冷氣 laang5 hei3 'air-conditioning' (literally, 'cold air', Lau 1977: 484; Li 2010: 521; Kataoka and Lee 2014: 144), they are taught to use the semantically-equivalent standard Chinese term 空調 kong1 tiao2 (pronounced in Cantonese as hung1 tiu4, literally, 'adjust air', DeFrancis 2003: 512; Li 2010: 490). Because this phenomenon of lexical dualism extends throughout the Hong Kong Chinese lexicon (explicitly and helpfully documented in Kataoka and Lee 2014), it is quite common to see on the Internet a Cantonese-speaker earnestly requesting to know what is the semantically-corresponding lexical item in Putonghua, or the word to be used in formal Chinese writing for a particular Cantonese expression.

The Hong Kong Chinese language has developed its own distinctive characteristics on all linguistic levels, including phonology, lexicon, morphology, syntax, and even Chinese characters. This language shares lexical items with so-called modern standard Chinese as used in mainland China and Taiwan, and so they can be considered "standard" Chinese. At the same time, however, it includes numerous lexical items that are not shared with modern standard Chinese, but are only used within Hong Kong (or in some cases in other regional Chinese varieties spoken in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, etc.). This broad category can be further subdivided into the following four subcategories:

(1) Lexical items that occur in standard Chinese but carry different meanings in Hong Kong Chinese; for example, Cantonese 房車 fong4 ce1 'sedan (in American English), saloon car (in British English)' corresponds to a different type of motor vehicle in Putonghua, i. e. 'recreational vehicle; van' (Li 2010: 257).

(2) Lexical items that are not restricted to the dialectal or colloquial register but are part of the formal language that should be classified as standard Hong Kong Chinese; while the lexical concept may exist in mainland standard Chinese, it is typically expressed with different words. One good example of this category is 入稟 jap6 ban2 'to bring a lawsuit to a court'; this phrase originally from classical Chinese is not used in contemporary mainland standard Chinese, and its meaning can be paraphrased in standard Chinese as 提起訴訟 ti2 qi3 su4 song4 (Liu 2008: 422; Li 2010: 693 has indicated this phrase is used in both Hong Kong and Macau, as well as Singapore and Malaysia). In addition, some words which were originally borrowed from English into Cantonese through phonetic transliteration have become regular, standard, official words in Hong Kong Chinese: for example, 巴士 baa1 si6/2 <= *bus* and 的士 dik1 si6/2 <= *taxi* correspond to

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the standard Chinese semantic translations of 公共汽車 gong1 gong4 qi4 che1 and 出租汽車 chu1 zu1 qi4 che1, respectively. The Chinese characters 巴士站 baa1 si6/2 zaam6 'bus stop' are painted in white on Hong Kong street surfaces to designate those places where buses stop so passengers can board or disembark; and the characters 的士 dik1 si6/2 are painted on the sides of taxis and are used on signs that mark taxi stands.

(3) Lexical items that can be unambiguously classified as belonging to the Yue topolect family, i. e. they are recognized as giving this dialect family its uniquely Yue identity; however, while such items typically occur in the colloquial register, they may not be restricted to it: for example, some Yue function words, such as pronouns 佢哋 keoi5 dei6 'they', deictics 呢度 ni1 dou6 'here', 嗰度 go2 dou6 'there', certain verbs 啱 ngaam1 'to be correct, suitable, fit', 劏 tong1 'to slaughter', 搵 wan2 'to look for, visit', may also be uttered in a formal register. As for the origin of certain of these Yue words, some scholars have come to believe that they reflect traces of ancient, non-Han (i. e. non-Chinese) substrata within Yue; for example, we find evidence pointing to an old Tai substratum in Yue: a number of phonosemantically similar words that are found throughout the Tai-Kadai (Zhuang-Dong) language family are most likely cognate with the following colloquial Cantonese words: 踩 dam6 'to pound', 揼 dap6 'to beat, pound', 撳 gam6 'to press down', 冚 kam2 'to cover', 㧻 kap6 '(for an animal, such as a dog) to bite', 甩 lat1 'to slip off, fall off, lose', 啷 long2 'to rinse, wash', 淥 luk6 'to scald', 呢 ni1 'this, here' (Bauer 1987; Ouyang 1993: 28–33). In addition, traced back to Tibeto-Burman roots are Cantonese 脷 lei6 'tongue' (which corresponds to standard Chinese 舌頭 she2 tou) and 舐 laai2 and 舔 lem2, lim2 'lick' (which correspond to standard Chinese 舔 tian3 which itself has developed from an earlier Sino-Tibetan root) (Bauer 1988b). All of these colloquial Cantonese words presented in this subsection have their semantic equivalents in standard Chinese, but with the exceptions of 度 dou6 and 甩 lat1, none of them can be etymologically related to any standard Chinese characters as their sources, and so have had to be transcribed here with non-standard, "dialectal" Chinese characters that were created by Cantonese speakers (cf. Cheung and Bauer 2002).

(4) Uniquely and specifically Hong Kong Chinese characters, i. e. characters that have been specially created by Hong Kong Cantonese speakers to write Cantonese morphosyllables, and they are restricted to being used in Hong Kong and do not seem to have passed into Guangzhou Cantonese (at least we do not find them listed and defined in dictionaries representing the Guangzhou variety, e. g. Mai and Tan 2011; Rao et al 2009); for example, the following Cantonese characters and lexical items commonly appear in

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Hong Kong's《蘋果日報 *Apple Daily*》newspaper: 㖭 ji1 in 㖭家 ji1 gaa1 'now'; 靚 leng1 'teenager; triad member', 靚模 leng1 mou4 'pseudo model (i. e. a young woman who would like to present herself as a fashion model but may not actually possess all the necessary qualities)' (模 mou4 is the short form for standard Chinese 模特兒 mou4 dak6 ji4 '(fashion) model'); 𨋢 lip1 'elevator, lift' (which is a loanword originally borrowed from British English *lift* and is so indicated in Liu (2008: 236) who cited two common lexical items formed with it, viz. 客𨋢 haak3 lip1 'passenger elevator' and 貨𨋢 fo3 lip1 'freight elevator').

2 The Cantonese sound system

Cantonese phonology is so strikingly different from that of Putonghua that these two speech varieties are mutually unintelligible; this has been the result of historical developments that took them down different pathways in widely separated regions of China, the far South for the former and the North for the latter (Bauer and Matthews 2016; Lo 2014; Shen 2011). At the same time, however, through successive waves of northern migrants to the South, some elements of northern Chinese varieties have accumulated in the Cantonese phonological system. It is generally well known that Cantonese has preserved some sounds that occurred in archaic and ancient stages of the Chinese language, e. g., the syllable-final stops –p, -t, -k (associated with the Rusheng tone category) which means that rhyming words in Tang poetry actually do indeed rhyme and so the poems sound better when read aloud in Cantonese, but these final consonants have all become lost in Putonghua; in addition, the Cantonese tonal system is somewhat more complex due to the splitting (or doubling) of the original four tone categories of the ancient Chinese system. We can identify certain distinctive phonetic features of Cantonese speech that mark it as belonging to the casual or colloquial register (Bauer 2013, 2016).

2.1 Syllables and sound segments in colloquial Cantonese speech

While the written Chinese language is typically described as being monomorphosyllabic, i. e. the reading pronunciation of each Chinese character corresponds to one syllable, the most one can accurately claim for a Chinese speech variety such as Cantonese is that it manifests a tendency to monosyllabism; this is because some individual syllables are simply meaningless when they

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are isolated from the polysyllabic words of which they are an integral part: e. g., the indigenous colloquial Cantonese bisyllabic word 曱甴 gaat6 zaat6/2 'cockroach' is written with non-standard (or dialectal) characters (Bai 1998: 440) and corresponds semantically to standard Chinese 蟑螂 zhang1 lang2 (DeFrancis 2003: 1238; Kataoka and Lee 2014: 303); so if you want to talk about a *cockroach* in Cantonese, then you must say gaat6 zaat6/2, as neither syllable 曱 gaat6 nor 甴 zaat6/2 on its own conveys this meaning.

A typical Cantonese syllable comprises an initial consonant, rime, and tone. There are 20 initial consonants: b, p, d, t, g, k, gw, kw, m, n, ng, f, s, j, z, c, w, l, j, 0 (i. e., zero). These initial consonants combine with 60 rimes which are listed in Appendix 1 to form morphosyllables that are the building blocks of the spoken language. The set of Cantonese morphosyllables forms the syllabary which can be examined from either a narrow or broad point of view. From the broad perspective, all the syllables that occur in the language can be classified into three basic groups: (1) literary syllables that are associated with the standard Chinese characters as their standard reading pronunciations; (2) colloquial syllables that occur in colloquial words; and (3) English-loanword syllables that are used to phonetically transliterate words that have been borrowed from English. Due to homophony, there is much overlap among the three groups. However, we may also view the syllabary more narrowly by dividing it into three mutually-exclusive layers or strata, namely, (1) the major literary stratum comprising those syllables that are associated with the standard Chinese characters as their standard reading pronunciations; (2) the colloquial stratum with syllables that occur only as or in colloquial words (which may or may not have Chinese characters as their written forms); and (3) the smaller English loanword stratum with syllables that only occur in the phonetic transliteration of English loanwords and nowhere else (an early version of the Cantonese syllabary which listed all the occurring and non-occurring morphosyllables and with these three categories explicitly marked on the former set was presented in Bauer and Benedict 1997: 486–487, and it was updated in Bauer and Wong 2010: 21–24).

The colloquial Cantonese register comprises all three of these strata and can be concisely identified by at least five specific phonetic features[3] as

3 While the focus here is only on colloquial phonetic features, it is most certainly the case that lexical items also contribute to creating the colloquial speech register. An especially interesting development of how colloquial Cantonese has focused attention on itself is its increasing use in Hong Kong's courtrooms. According to Leung (2012: 241–242), "[t]he use of Cantonese presents itself as a challenge, since typically a Cantonese courtroom has a less serious and formal atmosphere. Witnesses feel less constrained when speaking in Cantonese directly to the court, and they seem ready to confront counsels and judges, which is a phenomenon unheard of when only English was spoken." Furthermore, as vividly documented by Leung (2012: 256), judges

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follows (see Bauer 2013 and 2016 (to appear) for a more detailed description and analysis):

(1) Colloquial morphosyllables that are formed with colloquial rimes [-ew, -em, -ep, -et], as in 𩪶 beu6 'to jostle with the hips', 𦧺 lem2 as in the phrase 脷𦧺𦧺 lei6 lem2 lem2 'to lick the corners of the mouth', 挾 gep6 'to clasp under the arm', □ pet6 'mass of soft stuff'.

(2) Long vowels occurring in morphosyllables that belong to the 上陰入 Upper Yin Ru tone category (which includes only those morphosyllables with final stop consonants –p, -t, -k) in contrast to the expected short vowels which are typically found in literary syllables with the high stopped tone (marked in Jyutping with number 1), e. g., colloquial 呃 ngaak1 'to cheat' vs. literary 握 ak1 'to grasp', colloquial 黑 haak1 as in 今晚黑 gam1 maan5/1 haak1 'this evening' vs. literary hak1.

(3) Co-occurrence of colloquial morphosyllables with sonorant initial consonants [m-, n-, ng-, l-] and upper register tones in contrast to the expected low tones which are typically associated with literary syllables that carry these four initial consonants, e. g., 孭 me1 'to carry on the back', 呢 ni1 'this, here', 啱 ngaam1 'correct, suitable', 孻 laai1 'youngest, last' as in 孻仔 laai1 zai2 'youngest son in the family'.

(4) Consonant clusters formed with the lateral approximant as in [bl-, pl-, gl-, kl-] through the contraction of two morphosyllables into one in some polysyllabic onomatopoeic expressions and colloquial words that occur in the rapid speech of some speakers; e. g. zik6 blat1 <直筆甩 zik6 bat1 lat1 'ramrod straight', pling1 plaang1 < 呯呤嘭呤 ping1 ling1 paang1 laang1 'rattling, banging (as hail on the roof)', kling1 klaang1 <傾呤□呤 king1 ling1 kaang1 laang1 'banging, clattering (as pots and pans)', glaak3 dai2 <胳肋底 gaak3 lak1 dai2 'armpit'.

(5) Two types of so-called 變音 bin3 jam1 'changed tones' which affect both standard and colloquial morphosyllables (in the tone notation used here the basic tone appears first, and the changed tone follows with slash and changed tone number 1 or 2); the first type of changed tone results from

deliberately switching from English to colloquial Cantonese "... may temporarily reduce the distance between [themselves] and a witness and get [their] message across more effectively, with the ultimate goal of maintaining courtroom order". However, not everyone has approved of judges speaking colloquial Cantonese. Leung cited legal observers who disapproved of judges saying to witnesses the very colloquial expressions "有冇搞錯? jau5 mou5 gaau2 co3 'You must be kidding!', and "你唔好發圍呀!" nei5 m4 hou2 faat3 wai4 aa3 'Are you dissing me?'; the first was labeled as "very rough" and the second "too coarse" to be appropriate for the courtroom (Leung 2012: 244, 246).

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assimilation due to the tonal environment, that is the original basic tone of the morphosyllable is influenced by and becomes like the tone of its neighbor; e. g. 晚 maan5 'evening' => maan5/1 in 今晚黑 gam1 maan5/1 haak1 'this evening', 聽晚 ting1 maan5/1 'tomorrow evening'; 尾 mei5 'tail' => mei5/1 in 攞尾 laai1 mei5/1 'finally, later', 收尾 sau1 mei5/1 'finally, in the end'. The second type of changed tone is used as a morphological device to derive new words, particularly nouns, i. e. by changing the original tone of the morphosyllable to (typically) either tone 1 High Level or tone 2 High Rising its meaning is also changed: e. g., 袋 doi6 'to put something into a bag or pocket' => doi6/2 'bag, pocket'; 妹 mui6 'younger sister' => 妹 mui6/1 'girl', as in 鬼妹 gwai2 mui6/1 'foreign (white) girl', 妹仔 mui6/1 zai2 'servant girl'; 銀 ngan4 'silver' =>銀 ngan4/2 'money', 銀仔 ngan4/2 zai2 'small change'.

2.2 "Lazy" pronunciation and phonetic variation in Hong Kong Cantonese

The Cantonese language continues to carry prestige status as both a regional Chinese variety that is still being widely spoken across Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, as well as the predominant speech variety of Hong Kong. Within the Hong Kong Cantonese speech community there is consensus on what constitutes the traditional, prestige, standard pronunciation. It is usually claimed that those people who are well-educated and belong to a society's relatively high status groups, such as government officials, university lecturers, school teachers, radio and television broadcasters, etc., speak their language with the standard pronunciation. This pronunciation has also been recorded in dictionaries, grammars, reference works, textbooks for students to learn to speak Cantonese, etc.; there is a large inventory of publications on Cantonese, because it is probably the second-most studied Chinese variety after Mandarin/Putonghua, and some of them have represented its standard pronunciation with romanization. However, as far as the use of standard Cantonese pronunciation is concerned, all one needs to do is open one's ears to hear that a number of deviations from the standard are quite common, especially among younger speakers. Many people are aware of these nonstandard differences to the extent that they have become the subject of negative comment, and the community has even given a name to them, that is, 懶音 laan5 jam1 'lazy pronunciation, lazy articulation'. The thinking behind this phrase is that because speakers are unwilling to make the required effort to articulate carefully the correct pronunciations of words, so

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they produce nonstandard sounds, and – strictly speaking – the phrase "speaker's laziness" would not be far off the mark. Of course, phoneticians concerned with the development of phonetic variants and sound changes do not use such a harsh-sounding phrase but have a more euphonious term to express the same idea, namely, Principle of Least Effort, or Principle of (Maximum) Ease of Articulation (Ladefoged 2006: 262). As we will see in the set of phonetic variants that are listed below, speakers are indeed saving effort by eliminating certain sounds or substituting other sounds for them. Some of these phonetic variants and sound changes have been the focus of sociolinguistically-based studies carried out over the past 30-odd years or so and have identified interesting correlations between social factors associated with speakers and their use of certain variant forms (cf. Bauer 1979, 1982a, 1983, 1986a, 1986b; Bauer et al. 2003; Ho 1994; Law et al. 2001).

As noted by Lee and Leung (2012: 7–8), up until 2007 the Education Bureau had paid very little if any attention to Cantonese pronunciation, and that virtually no other aspect of the Cantonese language for that matter is explicitly taught in school. One would think that if the Education Bureau were seriously interested in teaching standard Cantonese pronunciation to Cantonese-speaking students, then some kind of romanization would be an indispensable tool in such a program for primary school students (as is certainly the case with Pinyin in the teaching and promotion of Putonghua across the border in China), but no romanization has ever been taught in Hong Kong's primary schools (indeed, this writer has the distinct impression that the Cantonese language and its romanization have become such politically sensitive issues that education bureaucrats are afraid of Cantonese romanization and would not touch it even with a ten-foot pole!). Nonetheless, in 2007 the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) which advises the government on education issues and spending of the language fund decided that systematic effort was needed to raise the standard of Cantonese pronunciation and counteract the so-called 懶音 laan5 jam1 'lazy articulation, lazy pronunciation' phenomenon that is widely observed among students, and it thereby launched its program entitled "Say 'No' to '*laan5 jam1*'", (in Chinese 謝絕懶音 ze6 zyut6 laan5 jam1) to promote "proper Cantonese pronunciation" (another name also used was 趕走懶音運動 gon2 zau2 laan5 jam1 wan6 dung6 'movement to drive out lazy pronunciation'). Included among the promotional activities were day camps involving games and quizzes organized for schoolchildren; in addition, hundreds of people attended public events at which they "said no to *laan5 jam1*"; and TV and radio programs were broadcast to raise Cantonese speakers' awareness of proper and incorrect Cantonese pronunciations of certain words (SCOLAR 2007, 2009).

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However, in spite of these well-intentioned efforts, from this writer's point of view, it seems highly doubtful that the Education Bureau and SCOLAR were really taking seriously the task of promoting standard Cantonese pronunciation. Indeed, their so-called movement seems downright ironic and even comical. If the promotion of standard Cantonese pronunciation genuinely held central importance for the community, then why has it not been being carried out in a systematic, pedagogically-sound way by teaching it to young students in primary school *with the aid of the very Cantonese romanization that had been employed in this movement*? This would seem to be especially important, given that Cantonese pronunciation has been made an assessed component of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) which students sit after completing 5 years of secondary education; the HKCEE tests students abilities in reading, writing, speaking, and reading aloud; these last two components focus on the students' skills in oral presentation, communication, and *pronunciation in Cantonese* (Lee and Leung 2012: 8–9).

Hong Kong educators need no reminding of the fact that for generations now primary schoolchildren all across mainland China have been being taught standard Putonghua pronunciation with the romanization system called Pinyin. Given the fact that the vast majority of Hong Kong children are Cantonese speakers, then why are they not also being taught with the aid of romanization which is the most objective tool for representing pronunciation? As far as the acquisition of Cantonese pronunciation is concerned, children have had to rely solely on hearing what their parents, siblings, peers, and teachers have been saying (despite their position as models for their students, one cannot automatically assume this last group speaks with the standard pronunciation); and students simply do not have the opportunity to actually *see* and learn Cantonese pronunciation which has been accurately transcribed in a textbook. Given this state of affairs, is it any wonder there is such extensive phonetic variation in Hong Kong Cantonese? Furthermore, it is not as if the Education Bureau does not know about Cantonese romanization, since we observe that the English name of the program "Say 'No' to '***laan5 jam1'*** has indeed used the Jyutping system to transcribe the Cantonese pronunciation of the Chinese characters 懶音 'lazy pronunciation' – and even saw the need to include the tone numbers. For what it is worth, Jyutping is an excellent romanization system, and the author believes it is the best one to have been devised up to the present time (this is because it was created by professional linguists affiliated with the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong back in the early 1990s); whatever the advantages and benefits of Jyutping, they have been largely ignored by government officials, particularly those in education.

As we observe from Table 1, Cantonese phonetic variations affect all components of the syllable, namely, the initial consonant, nuclear vowel, ending

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Table 1: Phonetic variations and changes in Hong Kong Cantonese sound system.

1. Labialized velar varies with or changes to delabialized velar:	
gw- ~/=> g-/oC (C = either final consonant –ng or -k):	
過 gwo3 ‘to go across’	~/=> go3
光 gwong1 ‘bright’	~/=> gong1
國 gwok3 ‘nation, country’	~/=> gok3
狂 kwong4 ‘crazy; violent’	~/=> kong4
2. Alveolar nasal varies with or changes to lateral approximant:	
n- ~/=> l-	
你 nei5 ‘you’	~/=> lei5
男 naam4 ‘male’	~/=> laam4
3. Voiceless velar stop varies with or changes to glottal fricative:	
k- ~/=> h-	
佢 keoi5 ‘he, she, it’	~/=> heoi5
(only this one word)	
4. Velar nasal varies with or changes to zero initial:	
ng- ~/=> 0 (zero)	
我 ngo5 ‘I’	~/=> o5
5. Zero initial varies with or changes to velar nasal initial:	
0- ~/=> ng-	
愛 oi3 ‘love’	~/=> ngoi3
6. Velar nasal syllabic varies with or changes to bilabial nasal syllabic (bilabialization):	
ng ~/=> m	
五 ng5 ‘five’	~/=> m5
吳 ng4 ‘surname’	~/=> m4
7. Velar nasal ending varies with or changes to alveolar nasal ending (alveolarization):	
-ng ~/=> -n	
(1) -aang ~/=> -aan	
橙 caang2 ‘orange (fruit)’	~/=> caan2
(2) –ang ~/=> -an	
燈 dang1 ‘lamp’	~/=> dan1
(3) -ong ~/=> -on	
廣 gwong2 ‘broad’	~/=> gong2
(4) -oeng ~/=> -oen	
香 hoeng1 ‘fragrant’	~/=> hoen1
(5) -eng ~/=> -en	
聽 teng1 ‘listen’	~/=> ten1
8. Velar stop ending varies with or changes to alveolar stop ending or weakens further to glottal stop:	
(1) -aak ~/=> -aat/-aaʔ (glottal stop)	
百 baak3 ‘hundred’	~/=> baat3/baaʔ3
(2) –ak ~/=> -at/-aʔ	
北 bak1 ‘north’	~/=> bat1/baʔ1

(*continued*)

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Table 1: (*continued*)

(3) –ek ~/=> -et/-eʔ	
石 sek6 'rock, stone'	~/=> set6/seʔ6
(4) -oek ~/=> -oet/-oeʔ	
腳 goek3 'foot, leg'	~/=> goet3/goeʔ3
(5) –ok ~/=> -ot/-oʔ	
角 gok3 'horn; corner'	~/=> got3/goʔ3
9. Rimes of certain high frequency words vary with or change to other rimes:	
(1) -i ~/=> -ei	
呢個 ni1 go3 'this'	~/=> lei1 go3
(2) ai ~/=> -ei	
嚟 lai4 'to come'	~/=> lei4
10. Certain tones vary with or change to certain other tones:	
(1) High Level 1 ˥55 ~/=> High Falling ˥˨52	
山 saan1 'hill'	~/=> saan [˥˨52]
(2) High Rising 2 ˧˥25 ~/=> Mid-Low Rising 5 ˨˧23	
椅 ji2 'chair'	~/=> ji5
(3) Mid-Low Rising 5 ˨˧23 ~/=> High Rising 2 ˧˥25	
耳 ji5 'ear'	~/=> ji2
(4) Mid Level 3 ˧33 ~/=> Mid-Low Rising 5 ˨˧23	
試 si3 'try'	~/=> 考試 haau2 si5

consonant, and tone. The table above summarizes these variations and changes and includes a few lexical examples:

From this list of phonetic variations and changes, we can see that in some cases speakers are indeed saving articulatory effort by either eliding sounds, e. g. delabialization of the labialized velar initial stop to plain velar (gw- => g-) and complete loss of the velar nasal initial (ng- => 0), or changing them to other sounds that involve less articulatory effort, e. g., bilabialization of the nasal syllabic (ng ~/=> m), alveolarization of velar endings (-ng ~/=> -n, -k ~/-t). As for tonal variation, the merger (and loss) of the contrast between the high rising tone Tone 2 (˧˥25) and mid-low rising Tone 5 (˨˧23) simplifies the tone system by eliminating one contrastive tone contour.

Despite the extent of phonetic variation and loss of phonological contrasts, speakers' communication does not seem to be adversely impacted due to compensating contextual cues and speakers' subconscious awareness of it. At any rate, one can wonder *if* Hong Kong's Cantonese-speaking children were to be explicitly taught the standard Cantonese pronunciation by learning to write it down with an objective romanization system, would their knowledge help reduce this extraordinary amount of phonetic variations and changes that we observe in Hong Kong Cantonese?

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2.3 Hong Kong's written Cantonese language

Quite unlike school children who are taught their lessons in Putonghua across mainland China, Hong Kong's ethnic Chinese children have been and to some extent continue at this time to be educated through Cantonese as the medium of instruction in some classrooms[4] but the number of primary schools teaching in Cantonese has been declining, with a recent estimate of 70 % of primary schools now using Putonghua as their medium of instruction (Tam and Cummins 2015: 23). It has been this tradition of teaching the Chinese characters with Cantonese pronunciation that has preserved and transmitted the Cantonese pronunciations of the standard, old-style (or complex) Chinese characters from one generation to the succeeding one (in addition to Hong Kong, the complex characters are also still the norm on Taiwan). However, it comes as no surprise to us to discover that with the tradition of learning to read in Cantonese now seriously threatened and undermined by an ever increasing number of schools switching over to Putonghua as the medium of instruction for their Chinese-language subjects, as well as various other subjects, schoolchildren learning to read and write the Chinese language through Putonghua do not know how to pronounce many Chinese characters in Cantonese (Chow 2014: 3).

In this writer's view learning to read with Cantonese pronunciation – more than any other factor – has substantially contributed to the unprecedented development of Cantonese as a written language in Hong Kong, since it could not exist without people who were able to read it. Indeed, today in no other Chinese speech community anywhere in the world can one find a regional Chinese variety that has reached such an astonishing apex in the development of both its spoken and written forms. Today in Hong Kong television and radio programs are being broadcast in Cantonese, sessions of the Legislative Council (Hong Kong's law-making body of elected members which resembles a parliament) are conducted in Cantonese, the Chief Executive (head of the government) gives speeches and holds press conferences in Cantonese; newspapers, novels, advertisements, and even government posters are written in Cantonese and are ubiquitous throughout Hong Kong. No other Chinese variety – except, of course, modern standard Chinese – is being written on such a wide scale and in such a highly developed and conventionalized form as Hong Kong Cantonese (cf. Bauer 1984, 1988a, 2006a; Cheung and Bauer 2002; Snow 2004).

As Snow (2004: 6) has observed, writing in Cantonese dates from at least the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) with the publication of low-priced books of verses

4 The reader is referred to the author's The Hong Kong Speech Community's Cantonese and Other Languages which examined languages used in Hong Kong education.

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in Cantonese, and later Cantonese opera scripts published in the early twentieth century. According to Cheung and Bauer (2002: 4), "[t]oday writing in Cantonese is perceived by writers and readers as conveying the writer's message with a greater degree of informality, directness, intimacy, friendliness, casualness, freedom, modernity, and authenticity than writing it in standard Chinese, which is the formal language the Hong Kong Cantonese speaker learns to read and write in school, but its spoken counterpart s/he does not ordinarily use when speaking with coworkers, friends, and family members."

2.4 我手寫我口 ngo5 sau2 se2 ngo5 hau2 'my hand writes my mouth'

On the one hand, writing Cantonese just the way it is spoken would seem to be a natural phase in its ongoing development, that is, the Cantonese writer is simply putting down on paper or in the computer the way Cantonese speakers speak. There is even a way to verbally express this particular process: 我手寫我口 ngo5 sau2 se2 ngo5 hau2 'my hand writes my mouth'. Indeed, in mainland China back in the 1920s the "Baihua movement" (白話 'plain speech') which was a part of China's modernization succeeded in replacing classical Chinese or Wenyanwen (文言文) with vernacular-style writing which has become China's official standard written language. Yet, on the other hand, it turns out that writing in Cantonese is not a simple matter, because, unlike with Baihua, the written form of Cantonese has never undergone any official standardization process; as a result, writers have had to overcome one major, serious obstacle, namely, the lack of appropriate Chinese characters to write certain Cantonese morphosyllables (sometimes referred to as characterless morphosyllables or *chorphans* which is a portmanteau of ch(aracter) + orphan). As it turns out, the number of morphosyllables that occur in the Cantonese syllabary (cf. Appendix 3, Bauer and Benedict 1997: 486–487; Appendix 1, Bauer and Wong 2010: 21–24) and that are used in Cantonese speech actually exceeds the number of morphosyllables that correspond to the standard reading pronunciations of the standard Chinese characters. As has already been described above, the Cantonese syllabary includes a series of strata or layers: one major layer comprises the syllables that are used in the reading pronunciations of the standard Chinese characters. The second major layer comprises colloquial syllables that are associated with colloquial vocabulary items; some of these are written with standard Chinese characters which have been borrowed for their pronunciations because they are similar to or homophonous with the colloquial words; however, many colloquial words which are etymologically unrelated to their semantic equivalents in standard Chinese are written with nonstandard

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(dialectal) characters which have been created especially for them; e. g., 冇 mou5 ‘not have; no’, 骲 beu6 ‘jostle with hips’, 𨂾 pe5 ‘stagger’, 揼 dam3 ‘droop, hang down’, 氹 tam5 ‘puddle’, 揇 naam3 ‘to measure length of something with one’s extended thumb and forefinger or middle finger’, 掟 deng3 ‘throw (at target)’, 佢 keoi5 ‘he, she, it’, 屙 ke1 ‘shit’, 曱甴 gaat6 zaat6/2 ‘cockroach’, 嘩 kwaak1 ‘loop’, ‘circle’, 𨂺 naam3 ’to step across, go across’, 腍 nam4 ‘soft, tender’, 啱 ngaam1 ‘all right, correct, good’, 𨅝 jaang3 ‘to kick off’ (Cheung and Bauer 2002). At the same time, however, there are still some morphosyllables that have no written forms at all, and so they are typically transcribed with the empty box 口, e. g. 口 faak3 ‘to whisk’, 口 he3 ‘to hang out, idle away one’s time’, 口口聲 wiu1 wiu1 seng1 ‘sound of siren’. There is also a third, smaller layer that includes those syllables that only occur in English loanwords.

An interesting example of the discrepancy between the inventory of Cantonese morphosyllables and the availability of suitable Chinese characters with which to write them is the colloquial phrase wu1 soe4 soe4 (also pronounced as wu1 soe2 soe4) which means ‘to be ignorant; completely in the dark about something’. Although this phrase has been written with Chinese characters as 烏垂垂 (Lau 1977: 864), only the first character 烏 wu1 ‘dark, black’ is correct in terms of both its pronunciation and meaning; the reduplicated morphosyllable soe4 is not etymologically related to the standard Chinese character 垂 seoi4 ‘to hang down’ (Lau 1977: 784), as this standard character clearly differs with colloquial soe4 in both sound and meaning. Lau has merely borrowed standard 垂 for its similar pronunciation and assumes the reader can make the appropriate phonetic and semantic adjustments when reading it. So how to write soe4 does still indeed present a problem. Two nonstandard (dialectal) characters have already been expressly created for its use in this expression, namely, 𠾴 soe4 and 嗚 soe4 (Cheung and Bauer 2002: 138), but these nonstandard characters may be of little use as they may not be well known and may not be available in a computer’s Chinese character font. Nonetheless, at least one writer has found a way to write the morphosyllable in this phrase which was printed on the cover of the tabloid magazine《突然 1 周 *Sudden Weekly*》(Sudden Weekly 2013) with a combination of Chinese character and quasi-Cantonese romanization as “烏 *sir sir*”; this was a relatively simple, direct, and certainly convenient but still *ad hoc* solution for writing soe4, since most Cantonese speakers are already familiar with the Cantonese word 阿 Sir aa3 soe4 which is the term used to address both policemen and teachers (it can also mean both ‘police officer’ and ‘teacher’).

However, given the scale of this phenomenon, the question still arises: How can these anomalous Cantonese morphosyllables be written? One approach which is termed 本字考 bun2 zi6 haau2 ‘investigate the original character’ has been to search through ancient rime books and dictionaries for the so-called *original* characters.

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However, characters that are etymologically connected to these morphosyllables may or may not exist, so trying to identify them may be quite difficult; furthermore, even if the original character can actually be found but is rarely used and so is unknown to most readers, then it would not be suitable. Cantonese writers have adopted essentially three alternative solutions to this problem: One has been to borrow already-existing characters with pronunciations that are homophonous with or similar to the target morphosyllable, e. g. 呢 ni1 'heavy woolen cloth' is frequently used to write the colloquial morphosyllable ni1 'this' (which is very likely an old loan from Tai, cf. Bauer 1987: 106, 1996: 1820). A second solution which is known as 訓讀 fan3 duk6 'reading the Chinese character for its meaning' is to borrow already-existing standard characters which have meanings that are similar to those of the target morphosyllables and then substitute (read them with) the required colloquial pronunciation; e. g. the autochthonous (indigenous) Cantonese morphosyllable maa1 'twin, pair, dual' (which may be a remnant of an ancient Austro-Tai substratum in Cantonese) cannot be etymologically related in terms of both pronunciation and meaning to any standard Chinese character, so Cantonese writers have simply borrowed the semantically-equivalent standard Chinese character 孖 zi1 'twin' (which is rarely used in standard Chinese) (Cheung and Bauer 2002: 18–19); when Cantonese speakers see the phrase 孖仔 'twin boys', they pronounce it as maa1 zai2 (there is no semantically-equivalent word in standard Chinese, so this meaning must be paraphrased with the expression 雙胞胎男孩 shuang1 bao1 tai1 nan2 hai2). Although 孖 is actually pronounced zi1 in standard Cantonese, most Cantonese speakers do not know this (even the compilers of the *Guide to LSHK Cantonese Romanization of Chinese Characters* have omitted this character from page 153 which lists all the Chinese characters that are pronounced "zi1", and assume that "maa1" is its correct and only pronunciation (page 104 of this Guide listed 孖 as one of the characters that is pronounced "maa1"). As for dictionaries, Yao (2000: 433) indicated that the reading of 孖 as "ma1" is 方 fang1 'dialectal', and on page 869 listed "zi1" as the first or standard pronunciation. The Cantonese dictionary of He and Zhu (2001: 7) has distinguished between "maa1" as 語 jyu5 'colloquial' and "zi1" as 正 zing3 'standard, correct' (although nothing is said about the ultimate origin of the morphosyllable maa1). Zhan (2002: 312) also listed "zi1" as the standard pronunciation of 孖 and "maa1" as dialectal.

Finally, a third solution has been to devise or invent new characters that can serve the required purpose, e. g. 冇 mou5 'not have' (equals standard Chinese 沒有 mei2 you3) and 佢 keoi5 'he, she, it' (corresponds to standard Chinese 他 ta1) are so-called non-standard (dialectal) characters that do not appear in standard Chinese dictionaries (unless they are intended for Cantonese speakers, e. g. Yao (2000: 441, 544) has listed both 冇 and 佢 with their Putonghua pronunciations transcribed in Pinyin even though they would not be used in either Putonghua or

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standard written Chinese; and curiously enough, Zhan (2002: 5) listed 冇 but omitted 佢). Furthermore, under China's *Law on Standard Spoken and Written Language* (2001), the use of such nonstandard (dialectal) characters as these is not permitted except in certain restricted circumstances.

2.5 Cantonese-English contact lexical borrowing in South China and Hong Kong

In addition to having a written form, Hong Kong Cantonese possesses one other remarkably salient feature that distinguishes it from other Chinese varieties, namely, its large number of loanwords that have been borrowed from English via phonetic transliteration. Although the earliest European language with which Cantonese established a relationship of prolonged contact was Portuguese through Portugal's establishment of Macao in 1557, its uninterrupted contact with English over the past 300 years has had the more profound impact on the development of Cantonese. Their historical contact began on the South China coast in the late seventeenth century when English-speaking traders from Britain came to buy tea, silk, silver, porcelain, and other goods from local Cantonese-speaking merchants. Increasing numbers of English-speaking foreigners caused this linguistic contact to become more intimate and protracted.

As a result of this language contact, lexical borrowing occurred in both directions, thus augmenting and enriching the Cantonese and English lexicons. Language contact also led to the emergence of Canton Pidgin English or 廣東番話 gwong2 dung1 faan1 waa6/2 which was derived from the earlier Portuguese pidgin (Bolton 2003; Li, Matthews, and Smith 2005). English-speakers learning Portuguese pidgin caused its relexification in favor of English.

Table 2: English loanwords in nineteenth century Canton pidgin

Original Chinese word:	English loanword as transcribed in Canton Pidgin:
老婆 lou5 po4=>	威父 wai1 fu6 'wife'
母 mou5=>	孖打 maa1 daa2 'mother'
父 fu6=>	花打 faa1 daa2 'father'

Source: From Anonymous ca. 1835: 6.

Lexical borrowing has been defined as "[t]he process whereby bilingual speakers introduce words from one language into another language, these loan words eventually becoming accepted as an integral part of the second language" (Trudgill 2003: 19). Loanwords have been defined as "... words borrowed

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from one language into another language,... which have become lexicalized (= assimilated phonetically, graphemically, and grammatically) into the new language... In lexical borrowings the word and its meaning (usually together with the new object) are taken into the language and used either as a foreign word... or as an assimilated loan word...” (Bussman 2000: 287).

Bilingual speakers typically mix their two languages together by switching between them. Switching may involve phrases or words and occurs for at least three reasons, such as due to convenience; no readily available equivalent for the word or phrase exists in other language; or the speaker may simply want to show off his/her knowledge of other language.

2.6 Three methods of borrowing English words into Cantonese

There have been essentially three methods by which words have been borrowed from English into Cantonese as indicated with lexical examples below:

1. **Phonetic Transliteration** 音譯 jam1 jik6: Chinese characters pronounced with Cantonese syllables with sounds similar to source word are used to imitate its pronunciation. When Chinese characters are used in this way, their regular meanings are completely ignored:
   cheese => 芝士 zi1 si6/2
   taxi => 的士 dik1 si6/2
   boss => 波士 bo1 si6/2
   toast => 多士 do1 si6/2

2. **Semantic Translation** 義譯 ji6 jik6: Chinese characters with appropriate meanings are used to translate the meaning of source word into Cantonese, e. g.:
   (1) *lame duck* => 跛腳鴨 bai3 goek3 aap3/2, literally ‘lame’ + ‘foot’ + ‘duck’. The figurative meaning is ‘an elected official or group continuing to hold political office during a usually brief interim between the election and the inauguration of the successor.’
   (2) *white elephant* => 大白象 daai6 baak6 zoeng6, literally ‘big’ + ‘white’ + ‘elephant’. The figurative meaning is ‘something that is an especially expensive burden, e. g. an infrastructure project with construction and maintenance costs that are way out of proportion to its usefulness.’

3. **Combination of Phonetic Transliteration with Semantic Translation** 音譯 jam1 jik6 + 義譯 ji6 jik6: One syllable which imitates the source word’s pronunciation is combined with an indigenous semantically-related Cantonese syllable, e. g.:

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(1) *beer* => 啤酒 be1 zau2, i. e. 啤 be1 < 'beer' + 酒 zau2 'alcoholic drink'
(2) *bargirl* => 吧女 baa1 neoi5/2, i. e. 吧 baa1 < 'bar' + 女 neoi5/2 'girl'
(3) *billiards* => 枱波 toi4/2 bo1, i. e. table ball, 枱 toi4/2 'table' + 波 bo1 < 'ball'

We observe some correlation between the time the loanword was borrowed into Cantonese and the way it is written, that is, the older the loanword the more likely it is to be written with Chinese characters. Based on the study of old Cantonese-English dictionaries, such as the one compiled and published by the British missionary Robert Morrison in 1828 (Morrison 1828), we know that English loanwords must have entered into Cantonese from the very earliest days of language contact. Table 3 below has listed some English loanwords that were recorded in Morrison's dictionary with their modern counterparts. We observe that some loanwords in this list were formed through phonetic transliteration only, and some through the combination of phonetic transliteration with semantic translation.

Table 3: English loanwords listed in Morrison's Cantonese-English dictionary of 1828 and their contemporary equivalents.

arack 亞叻酒 aa3 lik1 zau2	=> 亞力酒 aa3 lik6/1 zau2
ball 波球 bo1 kau4	=> 波 bo1
beer 卑酒 bei1 zau2	=> 啤酒 be1 zau2
brandy 罷蘭地酒 baa6 laan4 dei6 zau2	=> 白蘭地 baak6 laan4/1 dei6/2
cheese 支士 zi1 si6	=> 芝士 zi1 si6/2
chocolate 知古辣 zi1 gu2 laat6	=> 朱古力 zyu1 gu2/1 lik6/1
coffee 架啡 gaa3 fe1	=> 咖啡 gaa3 fe1
couch 勾子床 gau1 zi2 cong4	=> 梳化 so1 faa3/2 <= *sofa*
flannel 佛蘭仁 fat6 laan4 jan4	=> 法蘭絨 faat3 laan4/1 jung4/2
jelly (no characters)	=> 啫喱 ze1 lei1/2
liqueur 利哥酒 lei6 go1 zau2	=> 利嬌酒 lei6 giu1 zau2

Source: From Morrison 1828: no pagination; Bauer and Wong 2008.

2.7 Syntactic categorization of English loanwords and their written forms in Cantonese

The analysis of over 700 English loanwords compiled in a computerized database (Bauer and Wong 2008; Wong, Bauer, and Lam 2009) found that the vast majority or 80.5 % are nouns, although other grammatical categories, such as verbs (11.7 %) and attributives (5.5 %), are also represented, as indicated in Table 4 below:

Due to the lack of the standardization of written Cantonese, there is variation in the phonetic and graphemic representations of English loanwords, with some loanwords having two or more competing pronunciations and written forms; in

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Table 4: Distribution of contemporary English loanwords by syntactic categories.

Syntactic Category:	%:
Nouns:	80.5
Verbs:	11.7
Attributives:	5.5
Classifiers:	1.3
Fixed expressions:	0.6
Adverbs:	0.4

Source: From Wong et al. (2009: 253).

addition, the means of graphemic representation also varies with some loanwords being written entirely with Chinese characters, or entirely with letters of the English alphabet, or in a combination of Chinese characters and letters together. Bauer (2010) has observed that loanwords may be transcribed:

1. Entirely with Chinese characters;
2. With a combination of Chinese characters and letters of the English alphabet that are pronounced in Cantonese;
3. With quasi-romanization of Cantonese syllables (no tone marking);
4. With a combination of the loanword's original English spelling and Chinese characters;
5. With only the loanword's original English spelling which is pronounced with Cantonese syllables.

Some examples of loanwords transcribed with their original English spelling but pronounced in Cantonese when used in Chinese texts are listed in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Some English loanwords retain their original spelling in written Cantonese but are pronounced with Cantonese syllables.

CHEAP cip1	e. g. 佢好 CHEAP 'He's very cheap' <= *cheap*
FAX fak1 si2	e. g. FAX 畀我 fak1 si2 bei2 ngo5 'fax me' <= *fax*
GAG kek1	e. g. 攪 GAG gaau2 kek1 'to pull a gag' <= *gag*
LIKE laai1 ki2	e. g. 我唔 LIKE ngo5 m4 laai1 ki2 'I don't like (it)' <= *like*
MAN man1	e. g. 佢好 MAN keoi5 hou2 men1 'He's very manly' <= *man*
OK ou1 kei1	e. g. O 唔 OK ou1 m4 ou1 kei1 'Is it OK or not?' <= okay OK
TAKE tek1	e. g. 生命冇 TAKE 2 saang1 meng6 mou5 tek1 tu1 'There's no take two in life (i. e. there's no second change)' <= *take two*
TAKE tek1	e. g. 企硬唔 TAKE 嘢 kei5 ngaang6 m4 tek1 je5 'Stand firm and don't take stuff (i. e. drugs)' <= *take*

Source: Bauer and Wong 2008.

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When the same English word is phonetically-transliterated into both standard Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese, this may be with the same Chinese characters in both languages, e. g. *dozen* => Man. 打 da3/2 = Can. 打 daa2/1, *sauna* => Man. 桑拿 sang1 na2 = Can. song1 naa4/2; but, more often, the borrowed word is transliterated with different Chinese characters because of the major differences in the phonologies of the two languages as shown below by the lexical examples in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Same English loanword in Mandarin and Cantonese undergoes different phonetic transliterations.

chocolate	=> Man. 巧克力 qiao3 ke4 li4 vs. Can. 朱古力 zyu1 gu2/1 lik6/1
cocoa	=> Man. 可可 ke3/2 ke3 vs. Can. 嗀咕 guk1 gu2
cyanide	=> Man. 山奈 shan1 nai4 vs. Can. 山埃 saan1 aai1
pudding	=> Man. 布丁 bu4 ding1 vs. Can. 布甸 bou3 din6/1
rum	=> Man. 郎姆酒 lang3/2 mu3/2 ziu3 vs. Can. 冧酒 lam1 zau2
salad	=> Man. 沙拉 sha1 la1 or 色拉 se4 la1 vs. Can. 沙律 saa1 leot6/2
sandwich	=> Man. 三明治 san1 ming2 zhi4 vs. Can. 三文治 saam1 man4 zi6
show	=> Man. 秀 xiu4 vs. Can. 騷 sou1
soda	=> Man. 蘇打 su1 da3 vs. Can. 梳打 so1 daa2
sofa	=> Man. 沙發 sha1 faa1 vs. Can. 梳化 so1 faa3/2
Sony	=> Man. 索尼 suo3 ni2 vs. Can. 新力 san1 lik6
*T-shir*t	=> Man. T恤衫 ti1 xu4 shan1 vs. Can. T 恤 or T 裇 ti1 seot1
toast	=> Man. 吐司 tu3 si1 vs. Can. 多士 do1 si6/2
vaseline	=> Man. 凡士林 fan2 shi4 lin2 vs. Can. 花士令 faa1 si6/2 ling6/2

Source: Bauer and Wong 2008.

We also can observe the same source word being semantically-translated in Mandarin but phonetically transliterated in Cantonese as shown by the examples listed in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Phonetically transliterated English loanwords in Cantonese have semantic equivalents in Mandarin.

buffet	=> Man. 自助餐 zi4 zhu4 can1 = Can. 蒲菲 pou4/6 fei1
clutch	=> Man. 離合器 li2 he2 qi4 = Can. 極力子 gik6 lik6/1 zi2
doughnut	=> Man. 炸麵圈 zha4 mian4 quan1, 炸麵包圈 zha4 mian4 bao1 quan1 = Can. 都甩 dou1 lat1, 咚甩 dung1 lat1
massage	=> Man. 按摩 an4 mo2 = Can. 馬殺厨 maa5 saat3 cyu4 [mak23 satL33
mug	=> Man. 大杯子 da4 bei1 zi = Can. 嘜 mak1
pose	=> Man. 姿勢 zi1 shi4 = Can. 甫士 pou3/1 si6/2
van	=> Man. 麵包車 mian4 bao1 che1 = Can. 軬仔 wen1 zai2, 貨 VAN fo3 wen1

Source: Bauer and Wong 2008.

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In sum, on the basis of the above borrowed forms in Cantonese, we can see that Cantonese phonology is a flexible and dynamic system that responds to the needs of the bilingual speakers who phonetically transliterate English loanwords by not only using existing syllables, but also by creating new ones. Over the past 25 years the author (Bauer 1985, 2006b) has observed that the number of syllables that only occur in English loanwords has increased from 26 to 80 syllables. Cantonese speakers have been creating new rimes and new syllables – not by introducing new, foreign sounds – but by recombining already existing initial and final consonants and nuclear vowels. Through its ongoing contact with English via bilingual speakers in Hong Kong, the Cantonese language continues to absorb new loanwords into its lexicon. In order to phonetically assimilate the new loanwords, the Cantonese syllabary is observed to be continuously expanding by creating new syllables with which to represent the new loanwords. The contemporary Cantonese rime system today comprises a total of 60 rimes. Three of these rimes are relatively "new" in that they were recently created, namely, -om, -op, -oem. As indicated in Table 8 below, they are only found in a few phonetically-transliterated Cantonese loans (Bauer and Wong 2010).

Table 8: Cantonese created three "new" rimes -oem, -om, -op to phonetically transliterate English loanwords.

Cantonese borrowing:	English source word:
foem1	<*firm* (refers to the state of one's muscles)
poem1	<*perm* (<from *permanent*, as a kind of beauty treatment done to one's hair),
toem1	<*term* (as a period of time in the academic year)
fom1	<*form* (as a kind of document to be filled in with information)
wom1	<*warm*
top1	<*top* (<*bra top*)
sop1	<*shopping*
hop1	<*hop* (from *hip hop*)
zop1	<*job*

Source: Bauer and Wong 2010.

2.8 Cantonese lexicography, romanization, and standard pronunciation

In South China beginning in the early decades of the nineteenth century it was the foreign missionaries who were the early pioneers in the work of producing bilingual Cantonese dictionaries and romanizing Cantonese pronunciation, i. e.

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representing it with letters of the English alphabet. The world's first English-Cantonese, Cantonese-English dictionary was compiled by the British missionary Robert Morrison (馬禮遜 maa5 lai5 seon3, 1782–1834) and published in Macao in 1828. The second part of this dictionary listed the romanized forms of Cantonese words in alphabetical order, just as in a regular English-English dictionary. For whatever reason Morrison's romanization system which was relatively accurate and consistent for the consonant and vowels did not indicate the tones; however, a few years later this omission was rectified by S. Wells Williams who used the traditional Chinese symbols of 發圈 faat3 hyun1 which resemble semi-circles (some of which are also underlined) to mark the Cantonese tones in his *Tonic Dictionary* which was published in 1856. The romanizations in these dictionaries have provided us with invaluable material for the study of early nineteenth century Cantonese phonology (Bauer 2005).

2.9 Romanization of Cantonese

This writer believes it is accurate to say that – after standard Mandarin Chinese – Cantonese has been the most lexicographified and romanized of all the Chinese varieties. How many Cantonese romanization systems have been created is hard to say, but they must number in the dozens (Appendix 1 in Bauer and Benedict 1997: 471–475 compared a total of 10 romanization systems, including Chao (1947), Yale (Huang 1970), Lau (1977), Jyutping (LSHK 1994 (= 2002), and several others with the corresponding IPA phonetic symbols). As just mentioned, one of the early romanizations from the nineteenth century left out tone marks; and yet this omission continues today: The Hong Kong government's unsystematic, inaccurate romanization system that dates from the late nineteenth century neither marks tones nor distinguishes between voiceless aspirated and unaspirated stops and affricates or long and short vowel "a". Although this system which has been called the "government system" (Kataoka and Lee 2008) would not be very helpful as a language-learning tool, nonetheless, it does serve the practical purpose of spelling place names on maps and street signs, as well as people's surnames and given names on their Hong Kong identification cards and passports.

In this writer's view, what can be considered one of the best, most efficient, and convenient Cantonese romanization systems ever devised is the 粵語拼音 jyut6 jyu5 ping3 jam1 which was developed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong and promulgated in 1993 after several years of deliberations; the Society's very useful volume《粵語拼音字表 *Guide to LSHK Cantonese Romanization of Chinese Characters*》has romanized the standard and colloquial pronunciations

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of the standard Chinese characters and some Cantonese characters, with the revised edition published in 2002.

2.10 Standardization of Cantonese pronunciation

While the French language has had the *L'Académie française* looking after it for the past 380 years, in Hong Kong there is no similar official body of experts charged with the task of looking after the Cantonese language, such as standardizing its written form (by assigning Chinese characters to Cantonese morphosyllables, or creating new characters for morphosyllables that lack written forms), promoting the standard Cantonese pronunciation (see the above section on variation in Cantonese pronunciation which is popularly known as 懶音 laan5 jam1 'lazy articulation, lazy pronunciation' and the Education Bureau's movement to counteract it), and fixing Cantonese grammatical usage. Nonetheless, filling in this gap, however, are some self-appointed individual scholars who can occasionally be seen on TV, heard on radio, or read in newspapers making pronouncements about the decline in the standard of Cantonese pronunciation, or what is the "correct" Chinese character for writing a particular Cantonese word and its "proper" pronunciation; such judgments have usually been based on these scholars' gleanings from ancient rime books, such as the eleventh century《廣韻》*Guangyun* (1008 CE) and《集韻》*Jiyun* (1037 CE). Indeed, based on the 反切 *fanqie* material (i. e., two Chinese characters whose pronunciations are used to indicate the pronunciation of a third or target character) in these same two ancient works, the volume《粵音正讀字彙》(He and Zhu 2001) has indicated what the authors have determined to be the 正 zing3 'proper, correct' reading pronunciations in Cantonese of the standard Chinese characters (along with a few Cantonese characters) by resorting to romanization and tone symbols, and where necessary, distinctions are made between the 正 and 語 jyu5 'colloquial' pronunciations as used in daily speech.

2.11 Codification as *de facto* standardization of Cantonese

Although Hong Kong has no officially-recognized organization that has been specifically tasked with the formal standardization of the Cantonese language, nonetheless, it has developed a *de facto* standard through its codification in various kinds of publications with the Chinese characters romanized in their Cantonese pronunciations; as already mentioned above, the oldest such dictionary is Morrison's *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* (1828); other valuable dictionaries compiled by

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missionaries include S. Wells Williams'《英華分韻撮要 *Ying wá fan wan ts'üt Iú Tonic Dictionary of the Chinese Language in the Canton Dialect*》(1856), Meyer and Wempe's *The Student's Cantonese-English Dictionary* (1947), and Yu's《同音字彙》tung4 jam1 zi6 wui6 [dictionary of homophones] (1990). A few British colonial officials based in Hong Kong also produced Cantonese dictionaries in the early twentieth century: e. g., *The Cantonese Made Easy Vocabulary* by J. Dyer Ball (1908) and *A Chinese-English Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect* by Ernest John Eitel (1910). Especially useful for its comprehensive Cantonese romanization of both standard and non-standard Chinese characters is the《粵語拼音字表 *Guide to LSHK Cantonese Romanization of Chinese Characters*》which was first published in 1993 and revised in 2002 by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong. The past 20 years or so has witnessed the publication of a number of bilingual Cantonese-Putonghua dictionaries which use the traditional (i. e. complex) Chinese characters as follows (English translations of these titles are given in the References):《廣州方言詞典》gwong2 zau1 fong1 jin4 ci4 din2 by Bai (1998),《廣州話普通話詞典》gwong2 zau1 waa6/2 pou2 tung1 waa6/2 ci4 din2 by Liu (2008),《廣州話方言詞典》gwong2 zau1 waa6/2 fong1 jin4 ci4 din2 by Rao et al (2009),《香港話詞典》hoeng1 gong2 waa6/2 ci4 din2 by Wu (1997),《廣州話、普通話速查字典 *Sucha Zidian*》gwong2 zau1 waa6/2, pou2 tung1 waa6/2 cuk1 caa4 zi6 din2 by Zeng and Wen (2003),《港式廣州話詞典》gong2 sik1 gwong2 zau1 waa6/2 ci4 din2 by Zhang and Ni (1999),《香港粵語詞典》hoeng1 gong2 jyut6 jyu5 ci4 din2 by Zheng (1997),《香港話普通話對照詞典》hoeng1 gong2 waa6/2 pou2 tung1 waa6/2 deoi3 ziu3 ci4 din2 by Zhu (1997). We observe that the titles of four of these Cantonese-Putonghua dictionaries have made specific reference to either Hong Kong Cantonese or simply Hong Kong language. As for an exclusively Cantonese-English dictionary, at present we have only one that is still available on the market in Hong Kong in the author's experience, viz., *A Practical Cantonese-English Dictionary* by Lau (1977); and, as for English-Cantonese, there is《*English-Cantonese Dictionary* 英粵字典》jing1 jyut6 zi6 din2 by Kwan et al (2008) but for some reason it omitted the Chinese characters.

Dictionaries with both Cantonese-English and English-Cantonese include *A Pocket Dictionary of Cantonese* (Cantonese-English with English word-finder index) by Cowles (1987); *Cantonese Dictionary: Cantonese English, English Cantonese* by Huang (1970); and *Pocket Cantonese Dictionary, Cantonese-English, English- Cantonese* by Lee (2003). Chishima's Cantonese-Japanese dictionary《東方広東話辞典 *Dungfong Gwongdungwa Chidin*》(2005) comprises 1,242 pages of lexical items and is one of the longest, most comprehensive bilingual Cantonese dictionary ever published. Among all the Cantonese-Putonghua dictionaries with which I am familiar there is only one, viz.,《實用廣州話分類詞典》sat6 jung6 gwong2 zau1 waa6/2 fan1 leoi6 ci4 din2 by Mai and Tan (2011), which has arranged its lexical items by broad and specific semantic categories, e. g., people, natural

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world, manmade things, time and space, movement, abstract things, numbers and quantities, idiomatic expression, etc. As for trilingual dictionaries, we have the recently-published *Putonghua Cantonese English Converter* compiled by Kataoka and Lee (2014); it has ordered words by their Putonghua pinyin forms followed by their Cantonese and English lexical equivalents on each page and should make learning Cantonese by speakers of Putonghua and English relatively easier (English-speakers will also appreciate the English word-finder index that is included as an appendix). *Colloquial Cantonese and Putonghua Equivalents* by Zeng (1996) is not a dictionary, but it has also arranged its trilingual (Cantonese, Putonghua, and English) lexical items by general semantic categories, such as food and drink, daily life and housework, dress and daily necessities, nature and environment, animals and plants, walking, time, etc.; in addition, following each of these sections there is a trilingual set of conversational sentences transcribed in Cantonese and Putonghua with Chinese characters and romanization (IPA for Cantonese and Pinyin for Putonghua) plus their corresponding English translations.

In addition to the codification of the Cantonese language through dictionaries, the compilation and publication of Cantonese grammars (although far fewer in number) have also contributed to this process by identifying and describing the syntactic structures and morphological features that distinguish Cantonese from standard Chinese; major reference works include *Cantonese Primer* by Y.R. Chao (1947), 《香港粵語語法的研究, *A Grammar of Cantonese as Spoken in Hong Kong*》 by Zhang (2007), and *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar* by Matthews and Yip (2011). In addition, numerous textbooks for foreign students learning the language have been published since the early 19th century, and so they have also contributed to the process of codifying standard Cantonese; some recent, noteworthy publications include Baker and Ho (2011), Lee and Kataoka (2001, 2010, 2013), Yip and Matthews (2000), and Yoshikawa (for Japanese-speaking students, 2012).

3 Hong Kong community's contradictory attitudes toward Cantonese

To gain a glimpse into how Hong Kong's reintegration into and assimilation with China have been impacting the community's attitudes toward its three major languages in recent years, all we need do is look at the Letters-to-the-Editor's page of the *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong's leading English-language newspaper. What we observe in the sampling below is that writers' sentiments cover a wide range and are contradictory: from denigrating Hong Kong's Cantonese language as "a coarse, vulgar relic" that should be replaced by the

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national language of Putonghua (Mandarin) to praising its preservation of ancient rimes and extolling its expression of the social, political, and cultural differences that set Hong Kong apart from mainland China:

> *... Cantonese is an appropriate medium of folk culture only... the way that it is used in Hong Kong, it is merely a coarse, vulgar relic of China's feudal past. It is fine to use a dialect like Cantonese in the home or wet market, but it is completely inappropriate in a modern city to use it for education and formal communication in the way that Hong Kong people stubbornly do. Hongkongers should be ashamed. Thirteen years after returning to the motherland, the great majority of this city's residents are unable to speak Putonghua well and our children continue to learn a corrupt form of Chinese in schools.* From Mr. Clark Li's letter to editor of *South China Morning Post*, 5 August 2010.

> *It is evident when you recite poetry from the Tang dynasty that the rhyming of each phrase is perfect in Cantonese, and will be broken if you do it in Putonghua. Cantonese is often referred to as "Tang Hua"* [i.e. language of the Tang people during the Tang dynasty which has been regarded as the apex of Chinese civilization)... [Cantonese] *is a far cry from a "vulgar relic". I hope people will do more linguistic research before judging the status of a language, in particular Cantonese.* From Ms. Virginia Yue's letter to editor, *South China Morning Post*, 9 August 2010.

> *I did not know whether to laugh out loud, or to cry out loud when I read the letter by Clark Li... It is an absurdity and gross condescension that Cantonese should only be used at home or the wet market. What is the basis that Cantonese has been inappropriate for education when we in Hong Kong have produced, at least through the Chinese University and the University of Hong Kong, some excellent Chinese scholars? Why should Cantonese people, who make up most of the residents of Hong Kong, be ashamed to speak their own tongue? Why should we have to substitute Cantonese with Mandarin?* From Sir David Tang's letter to editor of *South China Morning Post*, 10 August 2010.

> *... that Mandarin (not "Putonghua", which is an artificially-invented word)* [is] *being used throughout the mainland was a decision enforced by Mao Zedong in order to ensure political control of the country, and has got nothing to do with any literary consideration. In Hong Kong, we would fare much better politically if we had our language which the northerners did not understand.* From Sir David Tang's letter to editor of *South China Morning Post*, 23 August 2010.

4 What are the future prospects for Hong Kong Cantonese?

4.1 Some early predictions on its fate

By this point the reader most likely senses that, generally speaking, Cantonese in Hong Kong seems to be in a healthy state with little significant difference between now and 1997. Nonetheless, given the difference in the relative

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positions of Cantonese in Hong Kong and Guangzhou (which is discussed in some detail below), we are justified in raising the question, what does the future hold for the Hong Kong Cantonese language? Over the past 30 years this writer has been asking and then attempting to answer this same question. The first prognostication in 1984 had pessimistically expected that Hong Kong's increasing use of Putonghua would come at the expense of Cantonese:

> "The importance of Putonghua can be expected to soar in the years to come and eventually eclipse Cantonese which will be reduced to the regional dialect status it now has in the PRC. While the Cantonese language itself will not vanish from Hong Kong, what will be the fate of the pop song with Cantonese lyrics, the Cantonese television soap opera, live state drama performed in Cantonese, the Cantonese-speaker's knowledge of Cantonese reading pronunciation, and written Cantonese? These linguistic traditions may not suddenly and completely fade from the community, but in the Hong Kong of the 21st century dominated by Putonghua they will not be able to flourish as they do now" (Bauer 1984: 309).

The author's second prediction a few years later painted a rather gloomy picture, but it also proposed that the community could make the "optimistic choice that favors the continued development of spoken and written Cantonese out of the shadow of Putonghua" (Bauer 1988a: 290). One recommendation was that written Cantonese should be standardized; but he recognized that making Cantonese Hong Kong's official, standard language would be a development dependent on Hong Kong's democratization. In addition, mainland authorities were urged to acknowledge that Hong Kong Cantonese is quite different from Cantonese in Guangdong and Guangxi (Lo 2014, 2015) because it has "achieved a unique position within Hong Kong as the result of a congeries of historical factors which has permitted its separate development from China", and to "confer upon it the status of a language, a step which would not be unprecedented within the broad context of how languages have been officially recognized in China" (Bauer 1988a: 291). The language policy to be applied in Hong Kong should be modeled on the one that has been followed for China's ethnic minorities who are encouraged to use and develop their own languages.

Finally and most recently in 2000 the author (Bauer 2000: 37) made the following observations about the then current state of Cantonese in Hong Kong which were far more optimistic:

> "… Cantonese has achieved in Hong Kong a unique and very special status in comparison to any other Chinese dialects wherever they are spoken. I would go so far as to say that Cantonese is now enjoying its Golden Age in Hong Kong. Where else in China, or the world for that matter, can one witness Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performed in

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Cantonese; read a newspaper article, novel, or adult comic book written in Cantonese; watch a movie in which the dialogue has been originally recorded in Cantonese; attend a university lecture delivered in Cantonese; listen to a radio play or international news program broadcast in Cantonese; or hear legislative councilors [somewhat comparable to elected representatives in a parliament] and the Chief Executive [who is the head of Hong Kong's government] vigorously debate proposed laws in Cantonese? The answer is obvious, and most Cantonese speakers take all these things for granted because they perceive no threat to the language and feel there is nothing to get excited about. Their attitude reflects the healthy state of the language, but it also makes me wonder that if we now live in the Golden Age of Cantonese, how much longer can it continue?"

4.2 Current healthy state of Hong Kong Cantonese: Its "Golden Age"?

Today, some three decades after the first of the above predictions was penned, what can we say about how the spoken and written forms of Cantonese fare in Hong Kong? Well, in just one word they *thrive*: For 89.5 % of Hong Kong's ethnic Chinese population of about 6.5 million Cantonese is the usual, daily language, and this number still far exceeds the 1.4 % for Putonghua (although the percentage has been increasing in recent years due to immigration from the mainland; see Table 2 in Bauer 2015: 35). Written Cantonese continues its pervasive use in popular magazines, comic books, newspapers, Internet chatrooms, and even the government's public service announcements, as evidenced by the following message which is written in colloquial Cantonese, was produced by the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department urging people not to waste food, and was observed as the text of a large colorful poster next to a bus stop (Bauer 2013):

"食唔晒都唔好嘥"
sik6 m4 saai3 dou1 m4 hou2 saai1
'If you can't completely eat all your food, don't waste it',
咪做大嘥鬼
mai5 zou6 daai6 saai1 gwai2
'Don't be a big waster"

In this short text there are four characters that can be classified as typically Cantonese, namely, 唔 m4 'no, not', 咪 mai5 'don't', 晒 saai3 'finish completely', and 嘥 saai1 'waste' (however, it should be noted that the first three are actually standard, since they appear in dictionaries of standard Chinese, but the fourth one is a nonstandard, Cantonese character). The text shows that the Hong Kong government recognizes the practical value of reaching out to the general public via its Cantonese language; yet it is the writer's judgment that

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the written form of Cantonese still does not seem to be perceived by the Hong Kong community as an overt threat to standard written Chinese. Simply based on Hong Kong's predominant number of Cantonese speakers, the writer believes it is accurate to say that in Hong Kong today there is more Cantonese being spoken and written by more people in more domains than at any other time.

Is the current era still the "Golden Age" of Cantonese? If so, how much longer can it continue? What may be the language's future prospects? Just as the moon moves through its phases, so too can a language wax and wane: All we need do to remind ourselves of this simple fact is to consider the radical shift in the language situation in rural areas of Hong Kong's New Territories before the 1950s when they were largely Hakka-speaking, and today when only a few very old people still speak Hakka fluently, but young children do not acquire Hakka. In the mid-1970s when the writer lived in a Hakka village, he observed first-hand back then that the children only spoke Cantonese, but the landlord spoke Hakka with his wife. The loss of Hakka in Hong Kong (linguicide or language murder, according to Lau 2005) occurred because youngsters abandoned their parents' Hakka in favor of learning the community's predominant and more useful Cantonese. In view of the success of the promotion of Putonghua in Guangzhou and the retreat of Cantonese there, the question that easily comes to mind is: Will Hong Kong Cantonese eventually meet the same fate as Hakka when Putonghua has become widely spoken throughout the community and is promoted as the medium of instruction in classrooms?

4.3 Decline of Cantonese in Guangzhou: Harbinger for Hong Kong?

Although Guangzhou was once a predominantly Cantonese-speaking city like Hong Kong, the situation there has changed dramatically due to the large numbers of non-Cantonese-speaking immigrants coming from outside Guangdong province, along with government policy that promotes Putonghua in the broadcast media and all schools; some observers in Guangzhou have estimated that up to half the city's population does not speak Cantonese (Lai 2009: 12 Agenda). Since Hong Kong and Guangzhou now differ quite significantly in terms of their language demographics, it is quite reasonable for observers to look at Guangzhou as a possible harbinger of things to come for Hong Kong, to feel concerned about the future of Hong Kong Cantonese, and so make proposals about how to preserve it alongside the Putonghua juggernaut.

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What can or should be done to help Hong Kong Cantonese avoid the dismal fate met by Guangzhou Cantonese? One possible solution is for schools to promote a policy of “live-and-let-live multilingualism” (Bauer 2000: 56) whereby school-children would not be made to feel that learning to speak Putonghua required them to abandon Cantonese, and that the two varieties could coexist. However, such an accommodative approach now seems to be unrealistic to the writer, since this kind of thinking has never been associated with the mainland’s promotion of Putonghua, the success of which appears to have required abandoning local varieties (at least their loss seems never to have concerned the people responsible for pushing along the Putonghua juggernaut). In this regard, what we observe in Hong Kong is that more and more children are learning to speak Putonghua in schools, but no concurrent, concerted effort is being made to encourage them to continue speaking Cantonese, treasuring its beauty (on this point cf. Bauer 2000: 55), and to understand that acquiring Putonghua does not mean they must give up speaking Cantonese.

In Guangzhou the successful promotion of Putonghua over the past few decades has resulted in the retreat of Cantonese to the family domain, but even there it is anecdotally reported to be in sharp decline among young children who have stopped speaking Cantonese in favor of Putonghua. The process of supplanting Cantonese with Putonghua in children begins in primary school where the students learn from their teachers that speaking Putonghua is required in order to be a proper, civilized, and patriotic citizen of China; they are expressly told not to speak “dialects”, and are threatened with receiving demerits as a kind of punishment if they do. As Vines (2010: A11) has noted: “… in schools, every effort is made to denigrate and downplay local languages”. Children are exhorted to speak Putonghua by a wide range of slogans printed on red banners hanging in their primary schools, such as “愛國旗，唱國歌，説普通話”*ai guoqi, chang guoge, shuo Putonghua* ‘Love the national flag, Sing the national anthem, Speak Putonghua; “説普通話，寫規範字，做個文明人” *shuo Putonghua, xie guifan zi, zuo ge wenmingren* ‘Speak Putonghua, Write standardized characters, Be a civilized person’; “不講方言，不講髒話，做個合格小公民” *bu jiang fangyan, bu jiang zang hua, zuo ge hege xiao gongmin* ‘Don’t speak dialect, Don’t speak obscene (vulgar) language, Be a qualified little citizen’; “我是中國娃，愛説普通話” *wo shi zhongguo wa, ai shuo Putonghua* ‘I am a Chinese child, [I] love to speak Putonghua’ (Lai 2009: 12 Agenda; Chinese Wikipedia 2014a). This writer wonders with some trepidation if these same heavy-handed aspects that attend the program of promoting Putonghua on the mainland will be introduced into Hong Kong schools someday down the road.

As for the declining state of Cantonese in Guangzhou, residents there have expressed their support for people speaking and the media broadcasting in

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Cantonese through public demonstrations; in July and August 2010 groups of people who were estimated to have numbered in their thousands gathered several times in Guangzhou to protest the Guangzhou government's decision to eliminate Cantonese-language television programming and only broadcast in Putonghua during the period the Asian Games were to be held there (Chinese Wikipedia 2014b). Large numbers of police repeatedly dispersed the protestors who had voiced their fears that the ultimate purpose was to abolish speaking Cantonese altogether, although this was repeatedly denied by government officials. As for why the police responded as they did, Vines (2010: A11) has observed that "... Cantonese enhances a sense of identity. It is this that scares the rulers in Beijing; officials across the border are already accusing the defenders of Cantonese of having 'ulterior motives'". As Crystal (2012: 125) has pointed out, "[p]eople have a natural wish to use their own mother tongue, to see it survive and grow, and they do not take kindly when the language of another culture is imposed upon them". On August 1, 2010 a relatively smaller group of about two hundred people gathered in Hong Kong to show their support for the demonstrations in Guangzhou and for the Cantonese language; that the public gathering in Hong Kong was much smaller may simply have reflected Hongkongers' perception that Cantonese was not under any serious threat here (Chinese Wikipedia 2014b).

4.4 Recent survey findings on Hong Kong's languages: Is Cantonese endangered?

As should be clear by now, the Cantonese language seems to be doing relatively well in Hong Kong following the handover to China in 1997. Recent survey findings on the use of languages in Hong Kong (Bacon-Shone et al. 2015: 7) have confirmed that Cantonese continues to function as "the key language for oral communication in many settings in Hong Kong". This survey has also found that the Hong Kong government's efforts of making the society trilingual are bearing fruit, especially among young people who report some degree of proficiency in all three of Hong Kong's principal languages. At the same time, however, there is no question that the increasing use of Putonghua as the medium of instruction coincides with and is the cause of declining numbers of schoolchildren learning to read and write the Chinese characters with Cantonese pronunciation. It has been estimated that about 70 % of Hong Kong's primary schools and 40 % of its secondary schools have switched over to teaching in Putonghua; viewing such numbers with alarm, a member of the Putonghua as Medium of Instruction Student Concern Group was quoted as saying, "It's

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ridiculous that we cannot use our mother tongue to learn in our own place" (Yau and Yung 2014: C5).

Ironically, the fact Cantonese has been recognized by the Hong Kong government as a part of Hong Kong's intangible cultural heritage has had the effect of making some people fear for the language's future survival (Chow 2014: 2–3), and so encourage its study and even advocate its protection. There is now some worry within the Hong Kong community that Cantonese has become so endangered by the increasing use of Putonghua that it needs to be protected by law and preserved:

> *"Although there is no determined campaign to eliminate Cantonese, Hong Kong gives little encouragement for children to study Cantonese when Putonghua is seen as one of the main languages of business today The city's laws provide scant protection for Cantonese... Cantonese is an important part of the intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong and vital for the preservation of its cultural identity. Hopefully, the [Hong Kong government's cultural heritage] survey will identify Cantonese as worthy of protection, not just as a vehicle for communication of other elements such as Cantonese opera, local festivals and rituals, but as an element in its own right."* From Steven Gallagher's regular commentary Letter of the Law, *Both city and nation must preserve Cantonese language*", *South China Morning Post*, April 24, 2014, Page C2.

A good many people in Hong Kong feel quite concerned about the current state of Cantonese as discovered by the community-wide telephone survey referred to above. Participants were asked the question, *How seriously endangered is Cantonese at present?* A little under a quarter of respondents, or 23.1 %, replied *Not at all*. However, a total of 77 % replied that it was seriously endangered to some degree – either *A little* (31.8 %), *Moderately* (30.1 %), *A lot* (11.7 %), or *Critically* (3.4 %)" (Bacon-Shone et al. 2015: 27).

As it turns out, however, Cantonese is now perceived as not just being endangered. In July 2015 the Hong Kong-based magazine *Timeout* published an article provocatively entitled, *The Death of Cantonese?*, with this phrase prominently displayed on the magazine's black cover (Tam and Cummins 2015). In the following statement the authors boldly raised the politically-sensitive issue of Hong Kong's relationship with mainland China and how Hong Kong's cultural identity is tied up with its Cantonese language, thus distinguishing Hong Kong from the mainland:

> Language is the tongue that gives a nation its voice. And Hong Kong's voice has never been as intrinsically linked to its identity as it is right now. Cantonese isn't just the city's language; it's one of the many yardsticks by which Hongkongers measure their cultural and political differences from the rest of the Mainland. (Tam and Cummins 2015: 20)

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Although Hong Kong is obviously not a nation, but just a so-called Special Administrative Region of China, nonetheless, it has been promised a "high degree of autonomy" (but that is only for 50 years with the clock's ticking beginning back in 1997). Some people would like to assume Hong Kong's autonomy should include speaking Cantonese and so maintaining Hong Kong's linguistic difference from the mainland. While this may currently appear to be the case, at the same time, however, we must also recognize that the linguistic gap has been narrowing and can be predicted to eventually close with Putonghua replacing Cantonese in formal settings and Cantonese being relegated to the home and wet market.

5 Conclusion

Language is intimately bound up with a person's sociocultural identity, that is, the languages we speak help define who we are and distinguish us from others. Hongkongers' preference for speaking Cantonese instead of Putonghua could be perceived by the authorities as symbolizing their reluctance (or recalcitrance) to being integrated into and assimilated by the mainland (this process has been termed *mainlandization* in English and 大陸化 daai6 luk6 faa3 in Cantonese). In this writer's view, the pressures and strains that Hongkongers have been feeling as a result of Hong Kong's ever closer assimilation with the mainland on various fronts since 1997 seem to be having the effect of making ordinary people more aware of how precious their Hong Kong identity is to them, and that they do not want to give it up or even compromise it. Three cases of public reaction can be cited in support of this observation: The first is about Cantonese and is rather humorous in a way; while neither the second which occurred 4 years ago, nor the third which ended in late 2014 is directly related to the Hong Kong Cantonese language, but each is quite poignant, politically motivated, and does have implications for Cantonese.

In early January 2014 the management of Hong Kong Airlines (which is actually a mainland-controlled company based in Hainan province) notified its in-flight staff that Cantonese was no longer to be used when making in-flight announcements and only Putonghua and English were to be used (AppleNextMedia 20140107). However, within less than a day this notice had to be withdrawn due to the strong indignation expressed by the frontline staff, some of whom pointed out that the airline could hardly call itself "Hong Kong" if it didn't speak Cantonese!

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In 2012 mainland pressure (albeit indirect) provoked Hongkongers' into successfully pushing back in a show of resistance to losing their local identity; this was the failure of the Hong Kong government's scheme to introduce the so-called 德育及國民教育 dak1 juk6 kap6 gwok3 man4 gaau3 juk6 "moral and national education" which was a school curriculum designed to promote patriotism and a deeper understanding of China among local schoolchildren and instigated by mainland authorities. In late summer 2012 the numbers of ordinary people, including parents and students, who publicly gathered to denounce national education as a blatant attempt at 洗腦 sai2 nou5 "brainwashing" were so massive and their opposition so strident that the government had no choice but to back down and essentially withdraw this curriculum (English Wikipedia 2014); however, to save face the government declared its content and implementation would be decided by individual schools.

In fall 2014 many Hongkongers, as well as people around the world, were stunned by the scale and intensity of the pro-democracy movement which had originally begun with university students boycotting their classes due to dissatisfaction with the central government's restrictive plan for electing the leader of the Hong Kong government in 2017. The Umbrella Movement 雨傘運動 jyu5 saan3 wan6 dung6, as it has come to be called (the umbrella, especially a yellow one, became its symbol because it was used by the protesters to shield themselves not only from the sun and rain, but also the police's pepper spray and tear gas), then mushroomed into the occupation by thousands of people of long stretches of roads in various districts on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon over a period of 79 days. While neither of these mass protests had anything to do with the community's Cantonese language, they clearly demonstrate that Hongkongers do not hesitate to stand up for their own interests when they feel the government is pushing something unpalatable down their throats: When they are under threat, they do indeed act. Were fear for the continued survival of Hong Kong Cantonese ever to arise through its competition with Putonghua, then maybe Hongkongers' courageous spirit can save it, for at the end of the day it is they who ultimately hold the fate of their Cantonese language not only in their hands but also on their tongues!

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Appendix 1: Inventory of 60 Cantonese Rimes.

Nuclear Vowel: Final Vowel or Consonant:

	0	-i	-u	-m	-n	-ng	-p	-t	-k
i	i	–	iu	im	in	ing	ip	it	ik
yu	yu	–	–	–	yun	–	–	yut	–
e	e	ei	[c]eu	[c]em	[+]en	eng	[c]ep	[c]et	ek
oe	oe	–	–	[+]oem	–	oeng	–	[c]oet	oek
eo	–	eoi	–	–	eon	–	–	eot	–
a	–	ai	au	am	an	ang	ap	at	ak
aa	aa	aai	aau	aam	aan	aang	aap	aat	aak
u	u	ui	–	–	un	ung	–	ut	uk
o	o	oi	ou	[+]om	on	ong	[+]op	ot	ok

[c] Rime only occurs in colloquial syllables: beu6 'to jostle with the hips', lem2 'to lick', gep6 'to clasp under the arm', pet6 'mass of soft stuff', daa2 oet6 'to belch'.

[+] Rime only occurs in phonetically-transliterated English loanwords; e. g. ben1 < *band*, toem1 < *term*, wom1 < *warm*, zop1 < *job*.

Appendix 2: 粵語拼音 jyut6 jyu5 ping3 jam1 'Jyutping (Cantonese romanization)' with Corresponding IPA Symbols [enclosed in brackets].

1. Initial Consonants:

b = [p], p = [p^{h}], d = [t], t = [t^{h}], g = [k], k = [k^{h}], gw = [k^{w}], kw = [k^{hw}], m = [m], n = [n], ng = [ŋ], f = [f], s = [s], h = [h], dz = [ts, tɕ], c = [ts^{h}, tɕ^{h}], w = [w], l = [l], j = [j], O = [ʔ].

2. Final Consonants:

m = [m], n = [n], ng = [ŋ], p = [p̚], t = [t̚], k = [k̚].

3. Vowels:

i = [iː], ing = [e^{j}ŋ], ik = [e^{j}k]
yu = [yː], yun = [yːn], yut = [yːt]
e = [ɛː], ei = [e^{j}j], eu = [ɛːw], em = [ɛːm], en = [ɛːn], eng = [ɛːŋ], ek = [ɛːk]
oe = [œː], oem = [œːm], oeng = [œːŋ], oek = [œːk]
eoi = [ɵɥ], eon = [ɵn], eot [ɵt]
ai = [ɐj], au = [ɐw], am = [ɐm], an = [ɐn], ang = [ɐŋ], ak = [ɐk]

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aa = [a:], aai = [a:j], aau = [a:w], aam = [a:m], aan = [a:n], aang = [a:ŋ], aap = [a:p], aat = [a:t], aak = [a:k]

u = [u], ui = [u:j], un = [u:n], ung = [oŋ], ut = [u:t], uk = [ok]

o = [ɔ:], oi = [ɔ:j], ou = [ow], om = [ɔ:m], on = [ɔ:n], ong = [ɔ:ŋ], op = [ɔ:p], ot = [ɔ:t], ok = [ɔ:k].

4. Jyutping Tone Numbers [with Chao tone letters and tone values]:

1 陰平 = [˥55], 上陰入 [˥5]; 2 陰上 = [˧˥25]; 3 陰去 = [˧33], 下陰入 [˧33]; 4 陽平 = [˨˩21]; 5 陽上 = [˨˧23]; 6 陽去 = [˨22], 陽入 [˨2], [˨22].

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