

A tale of two Special Administrative Regions: The state of multilingualism in Hong Kong and Macau

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1. Introduction

Under the unprecedented ‘one country, two systems’ postcolonial arrangement, Hong Kong and Macau¹ were renationalized as Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of the People’s Republic of China in the late 1990s. The two SARs are rather different in terms of their principal economic activities and primary sources of revenue, which in turn explain their priorities in the development of human resources, including their respective language-in-education policies to meet local needs for specialist skills. With a population of over 7.4 million inhabiting a land area of about 1,100 square kilometers, Hong Kong ranks among the most densely populated cities in the world. With a much smaller land mass of barely 30.8 square kilometers, Macau is comparatively tiny, and yet in 2015 its population stood at 663,400, including 186,332 or 28% being non-resident workers (Macau Statistics and Census Service, DSEC 2015).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the former British colony literally made a name worldwide through its manufactured products that invariably carried the etiquette ‘Made in Hong Kong’. From the mid-1980s onwards, the manufacturing sector was gradually re-located north of the border with Mainland China to different parts of the Pearl River Delta. Since then, the lifeline of Hong Kong has shifted to a few other sectors which are more characteristic of a knowledge-based economy, the most vibrant of which are banking, investment and finance, imports/exports, telecommunications, transport and logistics, tourism, hotels, restaurants, insurance, wholesale/retail trade, and real estate services. Changing manpower needs and growth areas are actively monitored by the Hong Kong Government. Publicly funded universities, eight at present, are tasked by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to churn out employable graduates to meet these needs (e.g., healthcare workers).

Despite being the most international of Chinese metropolises, there is some indication that the self-styled *Asia’s World City* is slowly losing its edge as the economic

¹ The spelling ‘Macao’ is English, while ‘Macau’ is Portuguese (see Moody 2008:13). The same territory is referred to as Ou Mun in Cantonese, and Àomén in Putonghua or Mandarin.

proress it has enjoyed for decades is slowly being undermined by sister cities in the region. According to the *Blue Book on Urban Competitiveness* released by the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in mid-May 2015, for the first time since the index was created in 2005, Hong Kong has lost its top spot to Shēnzhèn 深圳, a hi-tech hub which is ranked as the most innovative city nation-wide thanks to six emerging industries: biotechnology, the internet, new energy, new materials, information technology and cultural and creative industries (the third- to fifth-ranked cities being Shanghai, Taipei and Guangzhou). The measures of competitiveness are based on multiple performance indicators covering business environment, municipal harmony, efficiency, suitability for living and sustainability, among others. Macau, on the other hand ranked ninth, rising one position compared to 2014 (He 2015; Lai & Nip 2015).

Macau has traditionally relied on its robust gaming and tourism industries, which have undergone considerable expansion since the 1990s. With 35 casinos, thousands of table games and slot machines, Macau's reputation as a world-class gaming capital may be gauged by the titles it has earned from international travelers and tourists, from the more archaic-sounding 'Monte Carlo of the Orient' to the more contemporary 'Las Vegas of the Far East'. Annual revenues from gambling taxes amounted to over 80 percent at around US\$45 billion – seven times the amount generated by the casinos on Las Vegas Strip (Fensom 2015). Since 2013, however, big drops in casino revenues caused a great deal of societal concern and prompted the former Chief Executive of Macau, Fernando Chui (崔世安), to call for the pace of economic diversification to be accelerated (Fensom 2015). According to Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, gross gaming revenue growth in 2018 reportedly rebounded to 300 billion patacas (ca. 37 billion US dollars). Such an upward trend was reportedly matched by optimism in the performance of casino stocks of "the gambling hub of not just China, but all of Asia Pacific" (Wood 2018). Whether that rebound was linked to increasing numbers of mainland visitors after the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge in October 2018 remains to be seen. What is clear is that for economic growth to be sustainable, the Macau SAR government's priority for future development is a more broadly-based economic structure founded upon industrial diversification.

2. Historical language contact in the two SAR's

Contact between European languages and Chinese language varieties in Macau is closely related to the history of maritime trading activities and commerce since the arrival of Portuguese traders along the south China coast in the 16th century (van Dyke 2005, 2011). In 1557, the Ming Emperor granted the Portuguese request to rent a settlement area in Macau in part to reward their active role in keeping pirates off the south China coast. Since then, commercial activities thrived, and Macau gradually developed into a Portuguese outpost for their trading activities in the Far East, especially with China and Japan, at a time when direct trading between these two countries was banned. The local agents – mainly traders and service personnel who spoke Cantonese or a Yue dialect of Guangdong province as their vernacular – gradually picked up some 'broken Portuguese' to do business with and meet the practical needs of Portuguese merchants and sailors. Over time, their broken Portuguese evolved into Macau Portuguese Pidgin (MPP). For about a hundred years

until the 1830s, MPP served as the lingua franca within the Chinese-Portuguese trading community, including in Canton:

Macau had a significant impact on the environment in Canton, because much of the trade there was a direct extension of the market upriver. When the Portuguese ships arrived in Macau, Chinese merchants from Canton came downriver to buy their goods. (van Dyke 2005: 143)

Based on European travelers’ anecdotal accounts and linguistic evidence such as Chinese-Portuguese glossaries, the earliest being *Aomen Jilüe* (澳門記略, ‘The Monograph of Macau’, 1751) and the *Compendium of Assorted Phrases in Macau Pidgin* (printed in the late nineteenth century), Li and Matthews (2016: 143) postulate “a continuum of varieties from Portuguese via Macanese spoken natively to pidgin Portuguese spoken by Chinese traders”, as in Figure 1. In general, the creolized variety spoken by the Macanese is also known as Macau Creole Portuguese (MCP); in popular parlance their speakers would call it Patuá, or ‘Macanese’ in English:

Portuguese	Macanese <i>Patuá</i>	(Pidgin) Macanese
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as spoken by Portuguese-born or Portuguese-educated residents	as spoken by the Macau population of mixed ancestry	as spoken by the Chinese internally with Portuguese speakers

Figure 1: ‘Varieties of Portuguese in Macau’ (source: Li and Matthews 2016: 143)

By the mid-nineteenth century, the trading monopoly of the Portuguese was increasingly challenged by the British at sea. After the signing of the Treaty of Nanking at the end of the first Anglo-Chinese War (also known as the First Opium War) in 1842, the cession of the island of Hong Kong to the British Empire and the forced opening of four treaty ports greatly facilitated trading activities in south China for ships flying the Union Jack (Zhang 2009). Gradually an English-based pidgin – Chinese Pidgin English (CPE, also known as China Coast Pidgin, CCP) – arose under similar circumstances to MPP. With maritime trade in the region gradually gravitating away from Macau toward Hong Kong and elsewhere along the coast in south China, CPE proved to have greater vitality and currency among the agents actively involved in trading activities as well as services provided to English-speaking merchants and sailors. This led to the gradual decline of MPP as a preferred regional lingua franca between non-Chinese business partners and Chinese traders and service personnel. As observed by Li and Matthews (2016: 149), “The diminishing role of Portuguese and pidgin Portuguese in China trade gives rise to CPE as a trade pidgin used from the eighteenth century onwards” (cf. Van Dyke 2005: 77).

3. Governance in colonial Hong Kong and Macau

Compared with other former colonies like India and elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and Africa, the colonial history of both Hong Kong and Macau is untypical in many ways. Where plundering, enslavement and slaughter were the order of the day in many former colonies, such brutalities were uncommon in Hong Kong and Macau which were not as rich in natural resources and which from the outset were intended to be trading outposts for merchants from the west. As

Bolton (2003: 192) has noted: “In spite of the virtual colonization of treaty ports by western powers, led by Britain and America, there was no direct equivalent to the ‘Anglicist’ policy promoted by Macaulay’s (1835) Minute of Indian Education”.

This notwithstanding, in Hong Kong the British colonial government could not afford not to cultivate a class of elite bilinguals to serve as middlemen to facilitate governance, hoping that some of these would somehow take care of the education of the masses conducted in their local vernacular. In colonial Hong Kong, as in other British colonies, the grooming and presence of a small English-educated elite in the colonial government and civil service was instrumental in ensuring that the will of the colonizers was accurately and effectively conveyed to the colonized. The language situation in colonial Macau was very different (Hao 2011; Wu and Chan 2000). The beginning of colonial rule may be traced back to 1846, when Governor Ferreira do Amaral displaced Qing government officials and formally asserted Portuguese jurisdiction in Macau. But it was not until 1887, after the signing of the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Peking, that the colonial government started exercising Portuguese sovereignty there. For nearly a century, however, Macau was a colony more in name than in practice, because successive governments in Portugal were preoccupied with political instability at home, from the monarchy giving way to the First Republic in 1910 to the struggle against dictatorship in the 1930s through the two World Wars until the Carnation Revolution in 1974. It was only in 1976, after the Organic Statute of Macau was passed and implemented, that legally binding governance of the colony of Macau and the identity, rights and obligations of its colonial subjects were formally established.

For well over a century since 1846, therefore, the Chinese and Portuguese communities in Macau, including the ruling class, lived more or less in harmony, each tending to their own business, including education. Most of the schools were operated by the Catholic churches and Chinese groups, with Chinese being the main target language and medium of instruction, supplemented by the teaching of some subjects in English. These schools were attended by children from more affluent families. Portuguese children and children from less well-off families, on the other hand, would attend Government-operated schools. Thanks to its regional lingua franca status, English was widely perceived as being more useful and important than Portuguese. From the mid-1970s onwards, however, to facilitate colonial governance, a good knowledge of Portuguese was upheld as a requirement for joining the civil service. Beneficiaries of this preferential language policy included native speakers of Portuguese as well as bilingual Macanese, the latter being looked upon as the bridge or nexus between the non-Chinese-speaking rulers from Portugal and the local Chinese population (see also Xu & Lin, this volume).

Unlike Hong Kong, therefore, for historical reasons there was less pressure in Macau to cultivate a group of Portuguese-speaking local elite, not until the mid-1970s, when governance in colonial Macau was increasingly characterized by bilingualism in Chinese and Portuguese. The term Macanese refers to a small ethnolinguistic group with distinctive identity. Born to parents of mixed marriage with Portuguese lineage, they grew up trilingual in Portuguese, Cantonese and Macanese, the latter being a Portuguese-based creole enriched with vocabulary from Cantonese and substratum influence from other languages brought to Macau such as Malay.

4. Pidginization and creolization: Linguistic features

In terms of linguistic features, both MPP and CPE are characterized by radical simplification of the respective European languages and considerable substrate influence from Cantonese. While Portuguese and English were the main lexifier languages respectively, lexical sources from other languages such as Malay and Indian languages are also identifiable and attested. From the point of view of historical data, the research community of pidgins and creoles is fortunate in that valuable documentation can be found, in English and Chinese, among other European languages (van Dyke 2005). Most of the MPP and CPE data contained in English and Portuguese sources are mainly anecdotes extracted from the personal narratives of merchants or from travelogues written by adventurers. By contrast, there is a sizable body of data in Chinese consisting of phrase books which were written with the explicit purpose of providing instruction to Cantonese-speaking readers on how to imitate and make sense of MPP or CPE.

Just as the linguistic ecology leading to pidginization and the emergence of MPP and CPE was very similar, so the main factors leading to depidginization and its gradual demise were by and large the same. Of these, the key factor was related to the introduction of standard European languages in the education system – English in Hong Kong and Portuguese in Macau. As Bolton (2003) observes regarding the gradual disappearance of CPE:

From the late nineteenth century onwards, in Hong Kong, as well as in the other parts of China, the key factor in shifting the acquisition and use of English from a pidgin form towards a more ‘standard’ variety of English was access to instruction, and access to schools where English was taught. With access to the English of the classroom, the process of depidginization could then occur. (Bolton 2003: 191-192)

In terms of language contact phenomena, lexical borrowing and translanguaging (i.e. code-switching and code-mixing) are very common among Cantonese-English bilinguals in Hong Kong and Macau (Matthews 2013). In Hong Kong, lexical borrowing from English into Cantonese has been documented since the early 1980s (e.g. *kaang1 taa3* ‘counter’ and *tel1 laa3* ‘teller’ in the banking context). Conversely, quite a number of colloquial Cantonese expressions have also found their way into ‘Hong Kong English’, mostly nouns such as *char siew* (variant *cha siu*: 叉燒 *caal siu1* ‘barbecue pork’), *dai pai dong* (大排檔 *daai6 pai4 dong3* ‘street cafe’) (Cummings & Wolf 2011; Bolton 2003: 212-213). A similar trend has also been found in Macau, where vernacular Cantonese is characterized by the presence of many loanwords from Portuguese (Sun 2015; Tong 2015). This is especially evident in common nouns denoting food and beverage items, for example, *aa3 dung1 jyu2* 阿東魚 (from Portuguese *átum* ‘tuna fish’), *guk1 gu2* 咯咕 (*cacao* ‘cocoa’), *so1 ba2* 梳巴 (*sopa* ‘soup’), *daai6 mal di4* 大孖弟 (*tomate*, ‘tomato’), *gaa3 fe1* 咖啡 (*café*, ‘coffee’), *maa5 gaai3 jau1* 馬介休 (*bacalhau*, ‘Portuguese style salted fish’), and loan blends like *but1 zau2* 砵酒 (*Porto*, literally ‘Port wine’).

Other borrowings include cultural loans from Portuguese such as *laa1 daa2* 喇打 (*lata*, a kind of food container), *laang1* 呤 (*lã*, ‘laine wool’), *faat3 do1* 法多 (*fado*,

a melancholic Portuguese singing style or genre), *saa1 baa4 dou4* 沙巴度 (*sapato* ‘leather shoes’), *gam1 baa1 laa1* 金巴喇 (*câmara* ‘city hall’), *si1 sa4* 司沙 (*sisá* ‘property transfer tax’) and *adeus* (‘goodbye’). Different from the tendency of English verbs and adjectives borrowed into Hong Kong Cantonese, more everyday Portuguese verbs and adjectives are commonly mixed into Macau Cantonese, resulting in translanguaging. For example, *bom* ‘good’, *mau*, ‘bad’, *moderno* ‘modern’, *falar* ‘speak’, *falta* ‘absent’, *não tem* ‘not have’, *pouco* ‘a little’ and *tudo* ‘total’.

Whereas English words in Roman script are commonly mixed into informal sections of Hong Kong Chinese print and digital media, Portuguese words rarely appear in the Macau Chinese equivalents, which tend to be more conservative and adhere to Putonghua-based standard written Chinese, occasionally mixed with vernacular Cantonese elements. Given that individual Portuguese words – in Roman script or Sinicized – tend to be mixed into spoken Cantonese but rarely written, plus the fact that since the handover in December 1999, written norms in Macau Chinese media generally adhere to Putonghua-based standards, the visibility of Portuguese loanwords in writing is low compared with its relative vitality in spoken Cantonese of Macau (on loanwords resulting from contact between English and Mandarin, see Wasserfall, this volume).

5. Demographics, functions and status of local languages

Speakers of Cantonese make up the absolute majority in Hong Kong and Macau. In both SARs the numbers and percentages of bilingual speakers of Putonghua (Mandarin) and English have been gradually on the rise. This is partly due to the steady immigration set for ‘family reunion’ quotas. In Macau, this trend is further accentuated by the daily presence of a large contingent of non-resident, Putonghua-dominant cross-border laborers. Concerning English, during the first decade of the new millennium until 2011, both SARs have witnessed a considerable increase in the number of speakers self-reporting an ability to use this international language: an increase of 3.1 percentage points (from 43.0% to 46.1%) in Hong Kong and 7.6 (from 13.5% to 21.1%) in Macau. As for other Chinese varieties, their speakers in both SARs have been declining in numbers except for Hokkien (i.e. the regional language of Fújiàn, including Southern Min spoken in Taiwan), which appears to have remained more or less stable during that period.

The principal languages of multilingual Hong Kong are neatly captured by the language-in-education policy goal of the HKSAR government, which came to be known as ‘biliteracy and trilingualism’ (兩文三語, *loeng5 man4 saam1 jyu5*): the ability to read and write Chinese and English, and to speak and understand Cantonese, English and Putonghua (Li 2009, 2017). The same languages are also widely used in Macau SAR, except that Portuguese and the Portuguese-creole-based Macanese may also be encountered in society. Macanese (or Patuá) has no place in the local curricula, however. Since the colonial era, students in Macau are expected to learn standard Portuguese, a curricular choice that the MSAR government has inherited. According to Young (2009), in the education system of postcolonial Macau, three written languages (Chinese, Portuguese, and English) and four spoken languages (Cantonese, Putonghua, Portuguese, and English) are represented.

From the 1960s onwards, Cantonese-L1 speakers make up the majority of the population in Hong Kong and Macau, which is why Cantonese has been used as the regional lingua franca since then. Speakers of other Chinese ‘dialects’ have always found it useful to learn at least some Cantonese, which is the most prestigious of Yuè ‘dialects’ in Guangdong province. Other Yuè dialects are widely spoken in Sìyì 四邑, Zhōngshān 中山, ‘three districts’ (comprising Nánhǎi 南海, Pānyú 番禺, and Shùndé 順德), and Dōngguǎn 東莞. Among Yue ‘dialect’ speakers, the variety spoken in the provincial capital Guǎngzhōu (*Guǎngzhōuhuà*) is generally held to be the standard, as Anne Yue (2016) explains:²

The modern Yue language is spoken in central and western Guangdong as well as eastern Guangxi, concentrating especially in the Pearl River Delta region and along the West River and the North River valleys. (...) Linguistically speaking, “Cantonese” designates the dialect spoken in the city of Guangzhou or Canton while “Yue” refers to a Han language composed of many varieties with Cantonese as their prestige dialect. There are also a sizeable number of Yue speakers in Southeast Asia and North America. (Anne Yue 2016: 174)

Language shift patterned along the classic three-generation span has been reported (e.g. from Hakka to Cantonese, Lee 2008). Today, Cantonese is not only widely used in the home and on the street in Hong Kong and Macau, but also in school (as the medium of instruction) and broadcast media. In social interaction, Cantonese is the unmarked or default language of meetings among Chinese government officials and debates among Legislative Councilors, provided no non-Cantonese speakers are present (in which case English would be used). This is nicely illustrated by Dr. Sales Marques, the Macanese mayor of Macau before the handover, who was quoted as saying that “[w]ithin the [legislative] council, most of the business is done in Cantonese now, and I speak it pretty well. It’s too late for me to learn how to read and write Chinese properly” (McGivering 1999: 33).

In both SARs, the Basic Law stipulates that the language of the former colonizers will continue to function as a co-official language alongside Chinese: English in Hong Kong, Portuguese in Macau. The term ‘Chinese’ is vague, in that no mention is made which Chinese variety it refers to. It is generally understood that whereas in speech, Chinese refers to the vernacular Cantonese in Hong Kong SAR and Portuguese in Macau SAR, in writing it refers in both SARs to Putonghua-based Standard Written Chinese (SWC). As for orthography, unlike mainland China and Singapore where the simplified script is used for writing Chinese, both SARs continue to employ the traditional Chinese character script (e.g. simplified 灵魂 vs. traditional 靈魂 *líng hún* ‘soul’). Although not widely used in society, the former colonial language in Macau SAR, Portuguese, continues to occupy an important position in the domains of government and law. After the handover, however, the number of Portuguese-speaking civil servants has declined, with the majority working in the bureaus and offices under the Secretariat for Administration and Justice, such as the Legal Affairs Bureau, International Law Office, and Judicial Reform Office.

² For a more detailed subcategorization of seven Yue subdialects – Guangfu (including Hong Kong and Macao), Siyi, Gao-Yang, Wu-Hua, Gou-Lou, Yong-Xun, and Qin-Lian (including Hainan, Guangxi) – see Kwok et al. (2016: 112-114).

Putonghua, the national language of China, has been promoted in both SARs for over two decades, since the handover mainly through education from primary school onwards, either as a subject (e.g., several 35- to 40-minute lessons per week) or teaching Chinese in Putonghua (Chan 2016; Li 2017). In postcolonial Hong Kong as in Macau, the function of Putonghua in society remains largely symbolic. For example, it is used after Cantonese but before English during the trilingual flag-raising ceremonies of the Special Administrative Region Establishment Day (July 1 in HKSAR, December 20 in MSAR) and National Day (October 1) (Li 2017; Xi & Moody 2010; on the status of local vernaculars vis-à-vis the standard language(s) elsewhere in the sinophone world, see Chen; Goh & Fong; Klöter; Meierkord; Siemund & Li; Snow; Wasserfall; and Xu & Lin, this volume).

In both SARs, communication between ethnolinguistic groups has not always been smooth and, in some cases, not even feasible. In Hong Kong, students of South Asian descent reportedly have difficulty learning Standard Written Chinese and, to a lesser extent, spoken Cantonese (Li, 2017; Li & Chuk 2015). According to Hong Kong population 2016 by-census (2017), within a decade (non-Chinese) ethnic minorities increased 70 percent to 584,383. Of these, people of South Asian descent (excluding Filipinos and Indonesians, who were employed mainly as domestic helpers) accounted for about 14.5 percent, of which the biggest groups were Indian (6.2%), Nepalese (4.4%), and Pakistani (3.1%). For young South Asians growing up in Hong Kong, integration into mainstream society is expected of them but difficult; the language barrier is the most often cited problem – indeed a perennial impediment – to social mobility. With little knowledge of the community language Cantonese, learning written Chinese side by side with their same-age Cantonese-dominant peers is simply out of the question. Apart from educational opportunities, inequality is also felt in terms of access to healthcare and different social assistance schemes, for which basic knowledge in the vernacular and literacy in Standard Chinese is needed (Erni and Leung 2014). Their linguistic plight and the discrimination they face have attracted a lot of media attention thanks to dedicated NGOs like Unison. In their sociological study of the plight of Hong Kong South Asian ethnic minorities (EMs) through the lens of ‘critical multiculturalism’, Erni and Leung give the following summary after reviewing nearly two dozen NGO reports (2014: 198):

Perhaps the most central sociological idea developed by these NGO reports is that there always exists a dominant-minority relation that is shaped by a pervasive social neglect and discrimination. To understand the evolution of Hong Kong’s EM cultures is to understand the history of an assumed value of superiority among the Chinese majority (...). The values, beliefs, and attitudes of racial and economic superiority have left their imprint on a social structure that has been built to be generally exclusivist and neglectful of minorities’ needs, particularly in areas of education, employment, and health care.

Some of the inequalities identified by the Equal Opportunities Commission have been addressed. In two recent surveys (Bacon-Shone and Bolton 2015; Chan 2019), roughly half of the South Asian youths are able to communicate in Cantonese with different degrees of fluency. From 2008 onward, the threshold Chinese language requirement for admission into Hong Kong tertiary institutions has been relaxed, in that alternative qualifications like General Certificate of Education (GCE) and

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) are also accepted. That said, many ethnic minority students still struggle when learning written Chinese, which is required in many job-related settings.

Similar communication problems were also found in Macau. For example, for a long time, Portuguese-L1 speakers had difficulty communicating with Cantonese speakers, partly because they were reluctant to learn the local vernacular (e.g. Dr. Sales Marques, the last Macanese mayor of Macau cited above). Until the handover in 1999, therefore, there was a huge language barrier between the two groups, as Sir Roger Lobo, a “successful son of the enclave” (McGivering 1999: 71) remarked: “there was always a divide between the Chinese and the non-Chinese.... It was almost like two separate worlds” (p. 73). Communication between them was mediated by the Macanese, which is at the same time a label for inhabitants of mixed Chinese and Portuguese descent in Macau, as well as a creolized variety based on Portuguese but heavily influenced by different Chinese ‘dialects’ and Malay. Thanks to their plurilingual repertoire in Portuguese, Patois or Macanese (a Portuguese-based creole), English and Cantonese, the Macanese were in an ideal and privileged position to serve as middle persons or go-betweens that linked the two communities.

6. Vernacular literacy, medium-of-learning effect, and translanguaging

Unlike elsewhere in the sinophone world, in both SARs vernacular Cantonese is used as the medium of instruction in CMI (Chinese Medium-of-Instruction) classes, whereas literacy education comprises Standard Written Chinese written in tradition characters. These practices bring with them two pedagogical problems. First, Cantonese-L1 students do not write the way they speak, for Standard Written Chinese (SWC) is based on Putonghua or Mandarin. Second, the traditional script generally contains more strokes and therefore takes longer to write, and, probably for that reason, tends to be easier to forget (compare, e.g., 听 and 聽, tīng, ‘to hear/listen’; 龙 and 龍, lóng, ‘dragon’).³ Although Cantonese is not part of school literacy, in literacy-focused activities, Cantonese elements tend to crop up due to the natural tendency to write the way one speaks. One of the goals of Chinese literacy training is to weed out students’ ‘dialect’ elements in writing and to replace them with Putonghua-based equivalents. This being a laborious process, primary school education (P1 – P6) is looked upon as the curriculum space to consolidate students’ school literacy in Chinese by age 11-12.

Beyond the education domain, in terms of literacy practices in society, it is very common for vernacular elements, including Cantonese-English code-mixing, to surface in ‘soft’ genres or informal sections of the media, print or electronic. Colloquial written Cantonese may not have a standard orthography, but this does little to deter eager writers from writing in Cantonese (Snow 2004). Where no known Chinese characters are found to represent the Cantonese morphe-syllables, Roman-

³ While this seems intuitively appealing, there has been no rigorous research on its empirical validity. Further, what is true of productive competence (writing) may not be true of receptive competence (reading and recognition). There is some evidence in cognitive psychology research suggesting other intervening factors in addition to the number of strokes: (i) in general, characters exceeding ten strokes tend to be more difficult and take longer to recognize; (ii) those characters whose shape is composed of identifiable structural components (e.g. 關, 罪) seem to require cognitively less processing time compared with those with a more unitary structure (e.g. 龜, 疑); (iii) low-frequency characters may take longer to recognize than high-frequency characters (Wan 2012: 203-207).

based Cantonese words are sometimes improvised, for example, *hea* (*he3* ‘laid-back’ or ‘tardy’), *chok* (*cok3* ‘suffocating’) and *chur* (*coe2* ‘hard pressed for time’) (Li et al. 2016; on vernacular literacy elsewhere in the sinophone world, see Chen; Snow; and Su, this volume). In Hong Kong, the popularity of written Cantonese elements in soft genres of various public and social media, print or digital, suggests that there is a strong market for them. This in turn explains why they are picked up almost effortlessly by Cantonese speakers despite their ‘non-school literacy’ status. By contrast, in Macau such informal written Cantonese elements are less visible, partly because print media tend to adhere to more conservative written Chinese standards.

7. Language attitudes toward English, Portuguese and Putonghua

In Hong Kong, language attitude research conducted in the early 1980s shows that Cantonese-dominant students in Hong Kong tended to be reluctant to use English for fear of undermining their Chinese identity (Fu 1975; Pierson, Fu & Lee 1980). Similar language attitude surveys were conducted around the time of the handover; the findings suggest that the earlier trend was reversed, in that students in the 1990s were no longer so wary of appearing less Chinese when using English (e.g. Hyland 1997; Lin & Detaramani 1998). These findings suggest that English is widely seen by children born during the post-1980s and post-1990s as a form of linguistic capital, which is instrumental in facilitating upward and outward mobility. This is succinctly captured by Lai’s (2009) language attitudes study, namely, ‘I love Cantonese but I want English’ (on attitudes toward English in Macau and Taiwan, see Chen; Wasserfall; and Xu & Lin, this volume).

Lai (2009) collected quantitative and qualitative data in 2003 from the first cohort of students to come under the mother tongue education policy in secondary education since September 1998 (on what ‘mother tongue’ means to Cantonese speakers in China, see Liang, this volume). Statistical analyses of the 1048 valid questionnaires showed that the student respondents loved Cantonese most, valued English the most highly, and gave the lowest rating to Putonghua (p.80). The findings from the matched-guise test were very similar: on traits that index competence such as ‘intelligent’, ‘competent’, ‘industrious’, and ‘educated’, and personal attractiveness like ‘wealthy’ and ‘trendy’, the English voice was rated the highest. By contrast, on traits of solidarity (e.g., ‘friendly’, ‘sincere’, ‘considerate’), the Cantonese voice was rated the highest (p.81). Again, the Putonghua voice was given the lowest rating. The quantitative findings were supplemented with a qualitative analysis of ten group interviews collected from 40 students selected through purposive sampling. Lai (2009) found strong evidence of integrative orientation toward Cantonese, which was perceived as the language of the home for expressing personal affections. Regarding English and Putonghua, many interviewees reported a stronger liking for English: whereas Putonghua did not evoke any special feeling despite their awareness of its national language status, English as an international language was seen as more prestigious and useful, more powerful than Cantonese, and so most students found English more desirable to use but regrettably more difficult to learn.

More recently, Leung (2017) adduced findings from two language use surveys in 2009 and 2014, each based on over 1,000 valid questionnaires completed by a majority of Cantonese-L1 respondents (97.4% and 95.8% respectively). Using a 5-point scale (5 being ‘most frequently used’, 1 being ‘least frequently used’), Leung

found that Cantonese continued to be rated as the most often used language in both ‘workplace’ and ‘beyond workplace’ contexts, followed by English and Putonghua (Leung and Li 2020). According to the 2014 data, the most widely reported use of Putonghua occurred in four contexts: talking to customers (1.73), talking to clients (1.28), participating in corporate or cultural activities (1.27), and watching TV or listening to radio broadcasts (1.29), with level of education being the most salient factor or correlate: the higher the respondent’s educational attainment, the more likely Putonghua would be used, especially in the workplace (Leung 2017: 86). Leung attributes this trend to the increasing presence of native speakers of Putonghua, thanks to the SAR government’s *Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals* (輸入內地人才計畫, 83,685 successful cases by 2016), the ‘Individual Visit Scheme’ (個人遊計劃), as well as thousands of mainland students admitted into Hong Kong university programs (Leung 2017: 86; cf. Chan 2016: 197).

In Macau, during the colonial era, the motivation to learn Portuguese as an additional language was very low. Instead, English was looked upon as a useful asset, and so the people’s attitude toward English has always been more positive compared with Portuguese. A gradual shift in attitude was observable in January 1992, when it was made known that by law Chinese and Portuguese would function as co-official languages with immediate effect. Consequently, speakers of Portuguese working in the civil service, the Macanese included, would need to learn Putonghua and Standard Written Chinese (Lei 2001), while existing and aspiring Chinese civil servants would need to learn Portuguese, a de facto language requirement for joining the civil service. That is the background against which the learning of Portuguese became more and more popular, as shown in evening classes attended by many young people (Gary Ngai, cited in McGivering 1999: 158). Two later developments separated by a decade gave Portuguese-learning a still greater boost: Beijing’s decision to set up ‘The Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macau)’ in 2003;⁴ and China’s Belt and Road initiative formally rolled out in late 2013, whereby MSAR is positioned as the platform connecting China and the rest of the Lusophone countries in the world. These developments have been instrumental in turning Portuguese into a form of language capital. All this explains why, from both the points of view of language policy and practice, Macau has gradually evolved into a triliterate (Chinese, English and Portuguese) and quadrilingual (Cantonese, English, Putonghua and Portuguese) society since the 1990s (compare language planning and language policy implementation in Taiwan, Chen, this volume).

As regards attitudes toward Putonghua and China, in Macau, it is in general less of a problem than in Hong Kong, probably because nearly half (45-50%) of the population were born on the mainland (about 40% Macau-born). Furthermore, from the 1980s onwards, when study abroad became a popular option for secondary school-leavers, quite a few chose to pursue higher education on the mainland or Taiwan. One consequence of this study-abroad experience is that most if not all of the returnees would have become fluent speakers of Mandarin/Putonghua. This notwithstanding, there are signs of popular concern about the future of Cantonese as a result of the MSAR government’s recent plan to quicken the pace of improving the quality of teaching and learning of Putonghua in the school sector (see § 9).

⁴ See Permanent Secretariat of The Forum: <https://www.gov.mo/en/entity-page/entity-335/>.

8. Language planning and language-in-education policy in the two SARs

Poon (2010) makes the point that while the colonial Hong Kong government had a language-in-education policy that may be traced back to the late 1980s, strictly speaking, it did not have any language planning. The language-in-education policy was triggered by societal concern about the high school failure rate due to the fact that most Cantonese-L1 students lacked the ability to learn through the medium of English. While English is looked upon by various stakeholders as an indispensable form of linguistic capital for upward and outward mobility, it is not easy to learn (Li 2010). The ‘mother tongue education’ policy, implemented in September 1998, was largely a compromise and, by design, an attempt to get the best of two possible worlds: those who have demonstrated an ability to study through English-medium instruction (EMI) are assigned to EMI schools (about 30% of 400+ schools, Li 2017), while those who do not have this ability will go on to secondary schools where Chinese (i.e. spoken Cantonese and Standard Written Chinese) is used as the medium of instruction (CMI). As warned by many critics in education circles, one major problem engendered by this policy is an unwanted but unavoidable labeling effect, with CMI students being widely perceived as failures or second best. Those who found a place in an EMI school are pedagogically not necessarily better off, for research shows that many S1 (Grade 7) students are not ready to learn through the medium of English, suggesting that the quality of learning is compromised compared with learning through one’s L1. In some cases, EMI students may have to repeat a year to keep up with the EMI curriculum. Amidst strong criticism, in 2009, the Education Bureau of the SAR government agreed to fine-tune the mother tongue education policy by allowing for more flexibility within CMI schools, such that principals may set up English-medium classes, by level or subject, for students who have met certain threshold conditions for learning through EMI.

Regarding language policy and language planning in Macau, Bray and Koo (2004) noted that successive colonial administrations in Macau appeared to have a *laissez-faire* or indifferent attitude toward language policy. There is little evidence of the colonial government promoting the teaching and learning of the Portuguese language, which is why few local people had any knowledge of Portuguese. This is partly evidenced by the childhood memories of contributors to the collection of 26 first-person narratives by Jill McGivering (1999) in his book *Macau remembers* (Liang & Li 2011). For instance, Gary Ngai, an experienced Chinese promoter of local culture, was quoted as saying:

When I first came here [from mainland China] twenty years ago, almost no Chinese, beyond a handful of civil servants, spoke Portuguese.... The attitude used to be: ‘Why should I bother to learn Portuguese? It’s useless’. (McGivering: 158)

As a second language, English was much more popular, largely due to the influence of Hong Kong. As Bray and Koo (2004) observed, from an economic point of view, Macau was less of a colony than Hong Kong, for the latter’s economic success “contributed to a stronger role for Hong Kong’s colonial language (English) than Macau’s colonial language (Portuguese)” (Bray & Koo 2004: 233; cf. Xi & Moody 2010: 314).

Xi and Moody (2010) reviewed a number of studies on the language-in-education policy of Macau during the colonial era, and found that school principals were given a free hand to choose the medium of instruction (MoI). This practice remained unchanged after the handover. According to Sou (2000), primary and secondary schools may be divided into three categories depending on their medium of instruction, which may be Chinese, Portuguese or English. ‘Official schools’ may choose one of the official languages – Chinese or Portuguese – as the principal MoI, but the other language must be taught as a second language. Private schools, on the other hand, have the option of choosing Chinese, Portuguese or English as the principal MoI, but a second language, to be taught as a subject, must be selected from the other two languages in the curriculum. Such a policy is enshrined in law as follows:

Under Law No. 9/2006, the latest law which outlines the non-tertiary education system in post-colonial Macao, all government educational institutions may adopt one official language (Portuguese or Chinese) as medium of instruction while private educational institutions may choose the medium of instruction according to the needs of their students. In addition, both government and private educational institutions are suggested to provide students with an opportunity to learn at least one official language that is not used as the medium of instruction (Young 2009: 416).

The most recent statistics in the school sector are based on the 2017/18 school year (Macao SAR, Education and Youth Affairs Bureau 2017). Of the 74 schools, 10 are public and 64 are private. The student population in public schools accounts for only 3.5% (n = 2,707). Only four schools – one public and three private – have adopted Portuguese as the medium of instruction (1.3%, 956 students). 56 of the schools are Chinese-medium (84.1%, 64,236 students), and the remaining 14 are English-medium (14.6%, 11,154 students). Portuguese has been actively promoted by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ in Portuguese), supporting the teaching of Portuguese in public and private schools alike, but also organizing extra-curricular activities for students (n = 6,548). While by law schools are given the freedom to use Cantonese or Putonghua as the medium for teaching the Chinese subject, about a quarter (24%) of the CMI schools and the majority of the EMI and PMI schools have adopted Putonghua as the MOI (i.e. teaching Chinese in Putonghua, 普教中). Additional measures to boost MSAR’s Putonghua level include providing subsidies for Chinese language teachers to attend courses to improve their Putonghua, and inviting leading Putonghua teacher trainers from the mainland to visit Macau. Finally, to enhance the standard of the target languages Putonghua, English and Portuguese, from 2013/14 onwards, the MSAR government started subsidizing secondary language teachers and students to sit for internationally recognized language tests. Elsewhere in the sinophone world, the choice of MOI in the education sector is no less a contentious issue (see Goh & Fong; Klöter; Meierkord; Siemund & Li; Xu & Lin, this volume).

9. The future of Cantonese

Just before Hong Kong was renationalized as part of China, several predictions and recommendations were made regarding the language situation in the former British

colony. Snow (1991) pointed to the widespread use of written Cantonese as an indicator of Hongkongers' cultural autonomy. Pierson (1998) likewise emphasized the symbolic value of Cantonese for Hongkongers, and suggested that Cantonese could well be seen as a symbol of freedom, democracy, and independence. Yau (1992) also sounded a warning that Cantonese could eventually yield its place to Putonghua as the principal vernacular in post-1997 Hong Kong, should nothing be done to disambiguate the term 'Chinese' (中文 *zung⁵⁵ man²¹*, *Zhōngwén*) in the Basic Law. Bauer (1995: 290) echoed Yau's concern and believed that the absence of any mention of "the potentially contentious issue of the relationship between Putonghua and Cantonese" in the Basic Law might be a foreboding that Putonghua might be imposed on Hong Kong, probably beginning with the domains of government, education and mass media. In this case, the mother-tongue education policy implemented from September 1998 and the promotion of Putonghua in Hong Kong (and Macau) have also spawned speculation that the Beijing government was adamant in its agenda to replace Cantonese with Putonghua over time. Critics who subscribed to this theory would point to the fate of Cantonese in Guangzhou and elsewhere in Guangdong province (Li 2000: 226).

By contrast, Erbaugh (1995: 82) was more optimistic in regard to the future of Cantonese in Hong Kong. Her judgment was based on the PRC government's long-standing policy of 'dialect bilingualism' which, in her view, would most likely be extended to Hong Kong (and Macau) given that "language tolerance offers a low-cost, low-risk token of goodwill". As for the critics' concern about the ambiguity of the exact referent(s) of the term 'Chinese' in the Basic Law, Erbaugh (1995) interpreted that differently, contending that Cantonese would probably be tacitly allowed as a regional vernacular. Based on these observations, Erbaugh (1995) believed that the status quo of Hong Kong's language situation would more likely remain unchanged (cf. Bradley 1992).

Until today, two decades after the handover, none of the above predictions has come true. Quite the contrary, Cantonese elements in the Hong Kong Chinese press are alive and well, suggesting that Erbaugh's (1995) prediction is more in line with post-handover socio-political development. Thus, the burden of proof seems to rest with those who see a threat to the sustained vitality of Cantonese in Hong Kong SAR. Crucial to this up-beat prognosis is community-wide critical awareness of Cantonese being endangered (compare Liang, this volume). This is corroborated by news events in the Pearl River Delta during the past decade. In July and August 2010, several months before the China-hosted Asian Games in November, a proposal by a municipal government official in Guangzhou, apparently to make visitors feel welcome, to switch the language of some programs on local television from Cantonese to Putonghua, sparked social protest leading to the arrest of about two dozen demonstrators, including some Hong Kong journalists. Such street rallies in the provincial capital were echoed by like-minded protesters in Hong Kong, who objected strongly to Cantonese being relegated to a dialect of the home and the street similar to what their brethren across the border have to put up with (see, e.g., Ramzy 2010). As one would expect, much more heated discussions and commentaries could be found online (see, e.g., the Chinese version of a hashtag like 'Cantonese is not a dialect', Gao 2012).

Identity concerns, much more pervasive in Hong Kong than in Macau, are also evidenced by Cantonese-dominant university students' (passive) resistance to using Putonghua for teaching Chinese language courses (e.g. the HKBU "occupy Language Center" incident in early 2018; see Cheung 2018). Such student sentiments are indicative of an ethnolinguistic fault line between 'them', Putonghua-speaking Mainlanders from across the border, and 'us' Cantonese Hongkongers, which is deep in the psyche of the new millennial generation in HKSAR. This 'us vs. them' mindset has been intricately embedded in various social campaigns and movements, big and small. From mass protests such as the 'umbrella movement' in the 79-day 'Occupy Central' saga in 2014 and the worst riot in decades on the eve of the second Lunar New Year day in February 2016, to wild-cat flash mobs chanting *kau1 wu1* (written Cantonese 鳩鳴, punning on Putonghua *gòuwù* 購物, 'shopping') in mockery of Chief Executive C.Y. Leung's appeal for shopping and doing business in riot-hit Mongkok, that Cantonese-Putonghua fault line has increasingly morphed into and coincided with a 'friend or foe' divide. Such a worrying trend is further evidenced in the spontaneous outrage expressed by young people in the street against the 'onslaught' of Putonghua speakers, be they disruptive parallel traders of baby formula, shopaholic mainlanders loaded with bags and boxes braving their way through narrow streets, or 'dancing aunties' (middle-aged mainland Chinese women commonly referred to as 大媽 *dà mā*) singing to amplified karaoke music in crowded public spaces or tourist spots like Mongkok and Tsim Sha Tsui (Dapiran 2017). In Macau, by contrast, the future of Cantonese was not a matter of concern across society until recently thanks to the relatively stable political situation after the handover in December 1999.

10. Coda

Hong Kong is often cited as a quintessential example of an economic miracle. From a 'barren rock' to a financial center rivaling New York, London and Tokyo, Hong Kong has come a long way. Its economic well-being and prosperity today could hardly be imagined without several generations of hard-working people, mostly migrants-turned settlers, contributing their talents and physical labor each in their own way. The presence of English – the language of the colonial masters – has played a facilitating if not instrumental role, in that it has enabled part of the local workforce to benefit from and participate in many of the processes of globalization that turned metropolitan Hong Kong into a glittering *Pearl of the Orient* (東方之珠) some 40 years ago (etiquette earned based on an aerial picture of Hong Kong taken by night), and a self-styled *Asia's World City* (亞洲國際都會) more recently.

Macau, tiny though it is, made a mark on history first through its role as a Portuguese colonial enclave, before emerging as the world's third-largest gaming capital rivaling Monte Carlo and Las Vegas, even though the widely acclaimed etiquette it was once famous for – The Monte Carlo of the East (東方蒙特卡羅) – has faded into oblivion. Historically, it should be remembered that Macau was where the earliest European traders and adventurers settled in the mid-sixteenth century, and the site where the first university built after a western model was established in south China. Founded by the Jesuits, the mission of University College of St. Paul was "to cultivate missionaries for the region" (Young 2009: 412). For centuries, however, Macau's Cantonese-dominant residents continued to look to English rather than Portuguese as

a springboard for gaining access to lucrative work opportunities and a better life, possibly in Hong Kong.

Thus is a tale of China's two Special Administrative Regions. To better understand their past is arguably a key to understanding the present. One question concerning their respective state of multilingualism is: What is the connection between the plurilinguality of their people and their differential? economic prowess? This question awaits fine-grained research, which will be the substance of another tale.

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