CANTONESE AND PUTONGHUA IN HONG KONG:
TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND PERSPECTIVES OF COEXISTENCE

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1. Introduction

Hong Kong Cantonese, a variety of the Chinese southern dialect group Yue, enjoys a formal status which is not common for a Chinese vernacular: together with Putonghua and English, it is official language of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The city of Hong Kong, located on the south-east coast of China and bordering with the Guangdong province in the north, also has a particular status and history which differentiate it from the rest of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Hong Kong, in fact, has been part of Great Britain for one and a half century, ceded to the British Crown by the Heavenly Empire after the First Opium War in 1842 and returned to socialist China in 1997. Over 150 years of separation from the mainland have deeply influenced Hong Kong which, for this reason, has been made a Special Administrative Region of the PRC and therefore enjoys a higher degree of autonomy from Beijing, in the context of the policy called 'One country, two systems' (Carroll 2007).

One of the main differences between Hong Kong and the rest of the PRC lies in the language situation: as politically absent from China, Hong Kong has not been invested by the vast promotion of Putonghua, official language of the PRC, which has been carried out in the second half of the last century, and has thus retained strong vernacular features (Bauer 1984). Cantonese, in fact, is the mother tongue of the vast majority of the inhabitants of Hong Kong and an important symbol of its identity. Hong Kong, on the other hand, is a new frontier for Putonghua, which has officially entered it at the moment of the reversion to the PRC in 1997, when it was made official language together with Cantonese and English (the language of the ex-colonizers, which played a relevant role in the territory). The new, multilingual identity of Hong Kong as part of the PRC has been expressed by the launch of the policy of 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism', which aims at making Hong Kong residents biliterate in Standard Chinese (basically, the written form of Putonghua) and English and trilingual in Cantonese, Putonghua and English (Zhang & Yang 2004).

At and before the handover times, many scholars (Bauer 1984, Johnson 1994, Lord 1983, Pierson 1998, among others) expressed concerned views which portrayed a future of linguistic dominance of Putonghua over Cantonese. Despite such expectations of language

shift triggered by political change, however, in the last years Cantonese has come to expand even more than before in Hong Kong society, dominating to varying degrees in all domains and used for high functions previously reserved to English, experiencing what Bauer (2000: 37) called a 'golden age'.

In the meantime, pushed by the political reunion and by the increasing, multiple economic ties between the PRC and Hong Kong, Putonghua has started putting down roots in the territory. Also the 2006 Beijing-edited report 'Language Situation in China' observed the growing degree of coexistence of Putonghua and Cantonese in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (H. Wang 2007).

It is exactly on the complex relationship between Cantonese and Putonghua in Hong Kong that this work will focus, aiming at delivering a sociolinguistic overview on their status and development from the past to the current situation. A second goal will be to attempt to cast some light on the perspectives of equal coexistence of Cantonese and Putonghua in future Hong Kong, where the increasing political, demographic, and economic role of Putonghua as official language of China would not result in compromising the vitality of Cantonese in the local community. This challenging topic will be analyzed from different points of view.

The first part (2) will start form the origins and provide an introduction on Cantonese. After a general outline on Cantonese and Yue dialects, the focus will begin in mainland China and observe the development of the Cantonese-Putonghua relationship in Guangdong. Then, the linguistic features of Hong Kong Cantonese will be illustrated by means of contrastive analysis with Putonghua. Phonology, lexicon, morphology, and syntax of Cantonese will therefore be analyzed by highlighting their existing differences with Putonghua. The written form of Cantonese will be illustrated in the following chapter, again by focusing on the features it does not share with Standard Chinese. The extent to which a strong and vital variety like Hong Kong Cantonese can be considered a standard language or rather a dialect will be finally discussed.

The second part (3) will move the attention uniquely on Hong Kong and provide firstly a view on its history, followed by a small case study on the cinema of Hong Kong, an important part of local culture in which the dialectic relation of Cantonese and Putonghua is well visible. An illustration of the main languages of Hong Kong and the language censuses

carried out in the territory until present days will follow, in order to show the way historic developments have shaped the territory's language composition and made it become the new headquarters of Cantonese. Finally, to take the situation from a theoretical point of view, the evolving patterns of diglossia in the territory will be identified and illustrated.

The following part (4), then, will focus exclusively on the post-handover times in Hong Kong and on how the language policies implemented in the new Special Administrative Region have influenced language use, language attitudes, and matters of identity. An overview of the policy of 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' and the first stages of Putonghua promotion in Hong Kong will give way to a highlight of the position of Cantonese and Putonghua in the current education system, especially as mediums of instruction in the local schools' curricula. Finally, the future chances of expansion of Putonghua in Hong Kong will be explored with an analysis based on different kinds of motivations for language learning, identity, and language attitudes.

In the concluding part, the knowledge collected throughout the work will be put together to develop a discussion on the future perspectives of Cantonese and Putonghua to coexist and flourish simultaneously in Hong Kong.

1.1. Terminology

Since this work will often touch concepts which can be interpreted in many different ways, it may be necessary to explain the main terms used in it before the start.

This work and its bibliography mainly refer to and describe Hong Kong Cantonese, the prestige and influence of which have been sensibly growing in the last decades to the point of making Hong Kong the new center of Cantonese. The term 'Yue' (粤 *yuè*) will be used for talking more generally.

'Putonghua' (普通话 *pǔtōnghuà*) is meant as the official language of the People's Republic of China. It is also named 'Mandarin' and its counterpart in Taiwan is known as 'Guoyu' (国 *guóyǔ*, national language). 'Standard Chinese' indicates the standard written form of Chinese based on Mandarin (Snow 2004: 11-12).

The terms proposed by DeFrancis (1984: 53-58) will be adopted to achieve a clear denomination of Yue and Cantonese and for identifying them precisely in respect of Putonghua. DeFrancis suggests to adopt the designation 'regionalect' for mutually unintelligible forms of Chinese spoken in rather big areas, thereby reserving the term 'dialect' uniquely for the mutually intelligible, local varieties of regionalects. According to this, 'regionalect' is here used for talking about Yue as a *group* within Chinese (as much as the other Chinese groups of Wu, Hakka, Min, etc.). As a consequence, 'Cantonese' will be referred to as 'dialect' since it is the local variety of Yue mainly spoken in the areas of Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Macao; as a more neutral term, 'variety' (as in Swann, Deumert, Lillis, & Mesthrie 2004: 163) will also be interchanged with 'dialect'.

Finally, a small remark: as important actor in Hong Kong, English will also be taken into consideration, when necessary for giving a more complete outline on the local language situation.

2. The features of Cantonese in Hong Kong and mainland China

The Chinese dialect group Yue (粤 Putonghua *yuè*, Cantonese *jyut6[1]*) is the most widely known and influential variety of Chinese after Putonghua and is generally considered the only one which can match Putonghua in term of both geographical and social strength (P. Chen 1999: 58-59, among others). Yue dialects (粤语 Putonghua *yuèyǔ*, Cantonese *jyut6jyu5*) are spoken in Guangdong and Guangxi, two southern provinces of the People's Republic of China. The whole group is sometimes called Cantonese (广州话 Putonghua *guǎngzhōuhuà*, Cantonese *gwong2zau1waa6/2*, more often 广东话 *guǎngdōnghuà; gwong2dung1waa6/2*) although, in its narrow sense, Cantonese indicates the variety of Yue spoken in Guangzhou (Canton), the capital city of Guangdong, as well as in the ex-colonies and now China's Special Administrative Regions Hong Kong and Macao (Matthews & Yip 1994, 3; Norman 1988: 215). In Hong Kong, Cantonese is sometimes also referred to as 香港话 *xiānggǎnghuà; hoeng1gong2waa6/2*.

The Cantonese language, its speakers and history are rich of relevant traits which contribute to its importance within China's context. Cantonese and Yue keep holding a strong position in their areas: it seems that, especially after the economic boom of the Yue-speaking regions in the last decades of the 20th century, a sort of interrelation has started developing between Cantonese and Putonghua. On the one hand, students from all over China started learning Cantonese in order to do business in Hong Kong and in Guangdong (Zhan 1993); on the other hand, Hong Kong people have come to increasingly consider fluency in Putonghua an important tool for developing a successful career and for gaining access to the enormous market of the mainland (M-L. Lai 2005, 2012).

In relatively recent times, Hong Kong took the place of Guangzhou as headquarters and strongest center of Cantonese. For a number of reasons which will be analyzed later in this work, the prestige of Hong Kong Cantonese has grown especially in the last decades, helped,

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[1] This paper adopts the Cantonese Romanization Scheme – Jyutping for transcriptions; the entries have been checked on the dictionary CantoDict (http://www.cantonese.sheik.co.uk/scripts/wordsearch.php). For the morphosyllables presenting two tones, see the section on Chinese phonology in this work.

for instance, by the broad popularity of Hong Kong Cantonese movies, television programs, and 'Canto-pop' music (Matthews & Yip 1994). While Putonghua, although with alternate fortunes, was promoted at the expenses of Cantonese in Guangdong and Guangxi (part of the PRC since 1949), the astounding economic success reached by Hong Kong strengthened Cantonese and attached a local identity value to it, also influencing and giving new life to its written form.

As already mentioned in the introduction, after a general outline on Yue and Cantonese and an overview on the experience of Cantonese and Putonghua interaction in the mainland, this part of the work will devote its attention to the linguistic peculiarities of Hong Kong Cantonese in comparison to Putonghua, the written form of Cantonese, and the extent to which Cantonese can be considered a standard language.

2.1. A linguistic and historical outline of Yue and Cantonese

Yue dialects are spoken over wide areas of Guangdong (广东 *guǎngdōng*) and Guangxi (广西 *guǎngxī*) provinces of the People's Republic of China. Predominating in the deltas of the Pearl River (珠江 *zhūjiāng*) and the West River (西江 *xījiāng*), they spread westward throughout the history, reaching most of southern Guangdong and Guangxi (Norman 1988: 215). Although it is the prevalent variety spoken in these provinces, Yue has always been coexisting with a number of other distinct southern groups, such as Hakka and Min, but also with languages spoken by minorities as Miao (苗 *miáo*), Yao (瑶 *yáo*), or Zhuang (壮 *zhuàng*), especially in Guangxi (Hashimoto 1972: 9).

Yue is also spoken by the majority of people in the ex-colonies and current China's Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao, as well as in Chinese communities formed by migrants from Guangdong and Hong Kong in South-East Asia (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia) and in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Worldwide, Yue dialects are spoken by over 70 million people (Matthews & Yip 1994: 2-3, Chow 2009: 3).
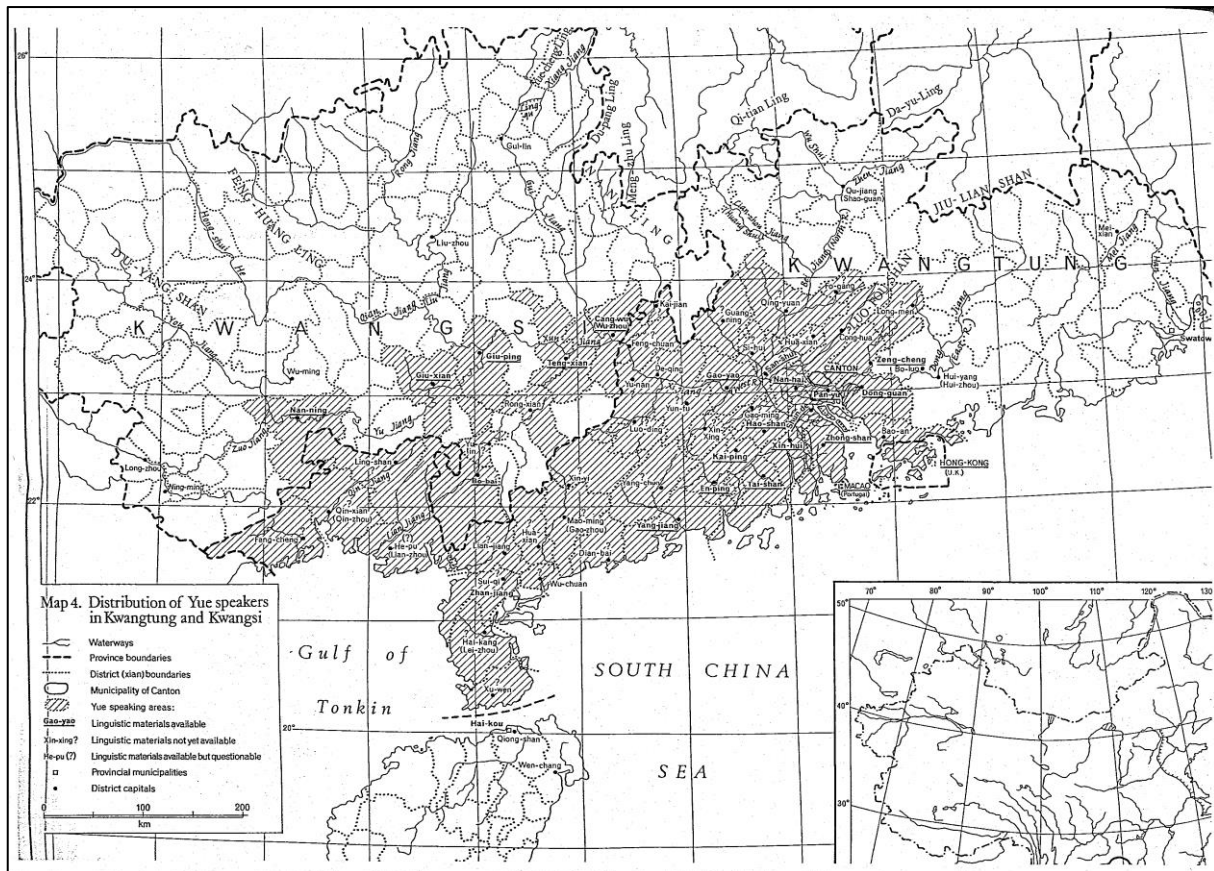
Figure 1: Distribution of Yue speakers in Guangdong and Guangxi (the darker parts corresponding to Yue-speaking areas) (Source: Hashimoto 1972).

In their history, the Yue-speaking regions went through interchanging periods of relative isolation and times of large exchanges and communication, a factor which brought both linguistic and cultural consequences. Because of that, Yue developed multiple layers of distinctiveness in comparison to not only Putonghua, but also to other southern groups within Chinese; such unique features got then mixed with other characteristics coming especially from Mandarin, Zhuang, and Yao (J. Li 1990: 56-60).

Yue's assimilation and mixes with northern China on cultural, ethnic, and linguistic levels, took place especially with the migrations in Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) eras[2]: even now, Yue people refer to themselves as 'Tang people' 唐人 (Cantonese *tong4 jan4*, Putonghua *táng rén*). Norman (1988: 211), after defining Yue dialects "a well differentiated subvariety of Southern Chinese with a strong overlay of Northern Chinese elements",

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[2] All the dates of the Chinese dynasties mentioned in this work are taken from Sabattini & Santangelo (2008).

highlights that the phonology of Yue is remarkably similar to that of Late Middle Chinese, the literary variety in the middle to late Tang dynasty. According to You (1992), it is likely that the final stage of formation of Yue was influenced by northern Chinese refugees fleeing to the area in the Song dynasty period, after the attacks of the inner Asian population Liao and Jin.

Cantonese, the variety of Yue spoken in Guangzhou, traditionally holds the status of prestige or standard among Yue speakers as well as among Min and Kejia speakers from Guangzhou. A rich folk literature is to be found in this variety, which led to the development of a Cantonese writing system with peculiar Cantonese characters (Norman 1988; see the focus on written Cantonese further in this work).

Although rather distant from Guangzhou from a geographical point of view (especially in comparison with other centers in which different varieties of Yue are spoken), Hong Kong and Macao also predominantly speak the Cantonese dialect, since the core of Yue speakers which migrated to these ex colonies in the last century came from the Guangzhou area (Hashimoto 1972: 70). The current features of Hong Kong Cantonese slightly differ from Guangzhou's and more extensively from other Yue dialects spoken in Guangdong and Guangxi. The influence of Putonghua on Yue, for instance, is rather moderate in Hong Kong but more evident in mainland China: for example, the first tone is pronounced with a high level contour in Hong Kong but high falling in Guangzhou (Matthews & Yip 2001).

2.1.1. Historical background

Throughout history, Cantonese people have been described by other Chinese, as well as by Westerners, as enterprising and open to new ideas, but also stubborn, aggressive, clannish and very proud of their identity and language (Moser 1985, Wakeman 1966, Wilson 1990). Conscious of their distinctiveness, indeed, Yue speakers generally tend to have a strong sense of group identity, shown for instance by the general belief of being 'different' from other Chinese people and the pride shown for Yue, often described by its speakers as more ancient, therefore "purer", than Putonghua (Snow 2004: 75-77).

A historical outline of the Yue regions can be useful to show where these feelings come from.

According to Hashimoto (1972: 1-3), the term 'Yue' or 'Bai-Yue' (百粤 *bǎiyuè* 'hundred Yue') was used for the first times in Han and pre-Han documents and identified coastal peoples settled south of the Central Plains. More closely related to Malays, Vietnamese, or Polynesian than to Han Chinese, Yue people occupied a vast area from the coast in the south of Hangzhou to the northern part of Vietnam and were mainly seafarer, less technologically advanced than Han Chinese (Carroll 2007 9-10, Snow 2004: 69). In the Tang dynasty, the area corresponding to present-day Guangdong, Guangxi and northern Vietnam formed an administrative district called Ling-nan-dao (岭南道 *lǐngnándào,* a term which is still used); the division between Guangdong and Guangxi was made in the Qing dynasty (Hashimoto 1972: 2).

Large-scale exchanges and emigration (from military and government personnel to political refugees and exiled scholars and officials) from the Central Plains to the Yue area started in Qin times (221-206 B.C.) and intensified at the end of Han dynasty (Western Han 206 B.C.-9A.D.; Eastern Han 25-220 A.D.). However, even after Qin took complete power in the area by defeating the Yue resistance, Han Chinese settled just in few cities and therefore culturally influenced the aboriginals in a relatively minor way (Snow 2004: 69).

The end of the Han dynasty was followed by centuries of relative isolation from the central Chinese authorities, which ended with the Tang regaining control over Guangdong. It was then that Guangzhou, which started its development from the Han era on, flourished into one of China's major ports and trading centers. Communication and trading were facilitated by a new road through the mountains which separated Guangdong from its northern neighbor regions. Migration increased as well, although the region was still plagued by malaria and scholars and officials from northern China generally came just because of exile and banishment. It was the crisis of the Song dynasty and the Mongol invasions, however, which changed things and made many Chinese flee to the south, bringing major waves of Han migration to the area (Snow 2004: 70-71).

The Ming period (1368-1644) was a time of continuous growth and of cultural assimilation between Han and Yue. During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Guangdong established its power as an industrial, agricultural and especially trading center: in 1757 Guangzhou became the only Chinese port open to foreign trade. As a consequence of that, in the 19th century the Pearl River area became theater of the two Opium Wars (after the first Opium War, in 1842,

Hong Kong was ceded to England) and other conflicts. Towards the end of the Qing period, then, Guangdong gave birth to reformers and political leaders who provided unique contribution to the birth of modern China, such as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and the 'father of the nation' Sun Yat-Sen (Snow 2004: 71-73).

From the mid-1970s on, the reforms launched in the People's Republic of China for restructuring the country's economy and opening up to the world invested the Yue-speaking areas with an astounding economic boom. In fact, many of the Special Economic Zones and Coastal Development Areas (exclusive areas where foreign companies were permitted to invest) created with such reforms were located in Guangdong and Guangxi (that is, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, Guangzhou, Zhanjiang, Beihai) (Gallagher 2005: 30-42). In the meantime, the wealth of the British colony, Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong, the 'Pearl of Orient', was growing and establishing itself globally. Nowadays, the Yue areas are considered among the most economically developed of China.

2.1.2. Yue and Cantonese studies

Probably the strongest variety of Chinese because of the high number of speakers and their attachment to the language, its linguistic vivacity, and the strength of its areas among others, in the last centuries Cantonese has also enjoyed comparatively high scholar attention. The following points are an overview on the linguistic literature on Cantonese and a look at its status in the area of foreign language learning.

- *Dictionaries*: the earliest records describing Cantonese are local gazetteers of the 16th century, which introduced the vernacular and its vocabulary. Since the early 19th century, missionaries residing in Guangzhou and surroundings contributed significantly to the appearance of dictionaries and textbook on Cantonese: *A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect,* apparently the first Cantonese lexicon ever published, has been compiled by Robert Morrison in 1828, followed by many others (Hashimoto 1972: 70-72). Mainly oriented towards vocabulary functional to commerce (it was printed by the East India Company at a time when Guangzhou was the only Chinese port open to foreign trade), Morrison's work introduced 'Chinese words and phrases' divided in a wide range of sections, from 'affairs of the world' to 'quarrelling and railing', 'trade' and even 'wicked banditti' (Morrison, 1828).

One of the last century's most widely accepted dictionaries is Wong's (1940), accurately edited in Chinese. In Hong Kong, Sidney Lau's work included a Cantonese-English dictionary (1977) as well as a Romanization system for Cantonese and a number of Cantonese textbooks (Hashimoto 1972: 74-75; Matthews & Yip 1994: 11). Parker Huang, the co-developer of the Yale Romanization system for Cantonese, also published a Cantonese-English dictionary in 1970 and 1976.

The publication of Cantonese vocabularies undoubtedly increased in more recent years, but did not result in a more extensive standardization of Cantonese: that is, nowadays dictionaries can still differ from each other in a number of ways, such as the choice of characters used for representing a given word. As will be explained later, the production of Chinese manuals and textbooks contrasting Cantonese to Putonghua has flourished in the last decades, aiming at comparing and giving correspondence between Cantonese and Putonghua, but also for concretely promoting Putonghua in the non-standard speaking regions of the PRC (Guo 2004: 48). Among such works, Snow (2004: 170-171) mentions the 1999 *Hong Kong Style Cantonese Dictionary* (港式广州话词典, Jyutping *Gongsik Gwongzauwaa Cidin*, Pinyin *Gangshi Guangzhouhua Cidian*), a dictionary of spoken Hong Kong Cantonese which focuses on the words Cantonese does not share with Putonghua. Other examples of Cantonese-Putonghua dictionaries are Bai (1998), Mai & Tan (1997), Rao et al (1981, 1997), Wu (1997) and Zheng (1997).

In 2005, Hutton and Bolton compiled a dictionary of Hong Kong Cantonese slang, which is particularly rich. Finally, Cheung & Bauer's *The Representation of Cantonese with Chinese Characters* (2002) is a comprehensive reference with a focus on written Cantonese, listing 1095 characters which are used to write down uniquely Cantonese linguistic items.

-   *Grammars*: the first outline description of Cantonese phonology has been given by Li Chen (1892), who also compared Cantonese with other dialects and to ancient Chinese (Hashimoto 1972: 71). A prominent work in the same field is Hashimoto's *Studies in Yue Dialects 1: Phonology of Cantonese* (1972), which also discusses important grammar points (Matthews & Yip 1994: 11). Aiming at raising international attention on Cantonese at the time of the economic boom of the Yue area and noticing the absence of any major linguistic publications on the topic since, Bauer and Benedict published *Modern Cantonese Phonology* in 1997.

Two fundamental works on Cantonese of the early last century have been Jones & Woo (1912) and, in particular, the notable linguist Chao Yuen Ren's *Cantonese Primer* (1947). In his book based on a summer course in Cantonese given some years before at Harvard University, Chao gives a thorough phonetic description and, for the first time for Cantonese, an outline of its grammar in the descriptive linguistic tradition. Yuan et al. (1960) contains an accurately written chapter on Yue, giving a comprehensive description of Cantonese phonology, vocabulary, and grammar (Hashimoto 1972: 72-74).

However, what satisfied the needs for a complete Cantonese grammar and is today known as the standard reference is Matthews & Yip's *Cantonese Comprehensive Grammar*, published in 1994 and republished as a second edition in 2011. Based on Hong Kong Cantonese, it has been largely recognized as a milestone of Cantonese grammars for both learners and linguists, providing accurate descriptions of phonology, world structure, syntactic structures, language particles, and idioms, often drawing parallels with Putonghua for facilitating the users who are familiar with it.

- *Cantonese as a foreign language*: as for Cantonese textbooks, the most popular works of the past decades used to be Huang & Kok 1960 (Huang and Kok are the developers of the Yale Romanization system) and Sidney Lau's textbooks for Cantonese (1975, 1977), edited in Hong Kong (Matthews & Yip 1994: 12). Nowadays, a wide range of textbooks for foreigners who wish to learn Cantonese is available, especially in Hong Kong, which has become the established center for Cantonese studies.

Nowadays, many Hong Kong schools and universities offer Cantonese language courses. Of particular relevance is the Yale-China Chinese Language Centre (CLC), founded in 1963 and now part of the Hong Kong Chinese University. The CLC offers Cantonese courses in two different series of learners that is, for non-native speakers (e.g. international students, expats) and for native speakers of Putonghua. The courses are tailored for different levels of proficiency and are offered to university students as well as for the public, as full time intensive programs (summer schools) or as part-time courses (The Chinese University of Hong Kong). Cantonese courses for students, also divided into non-native and native Putonghua speakers, are offered also at the University of Hong Kong and at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, among others. There does not seem to be a standard exam of Cantonese as a foreign language comparable to HSK for Putonghua, probably because of the

low demand for such an exam, but also because of the relative lack of standardization of Cantonese as a language system.

-   *Romanization*: considerations on the study of Cantonese as a foreign language and the degree of standardization of Cantonese lead to the remark that there is no strong standard Cantonese Romanization system which can be comparable to Putonghua's *Hanyu Pinyin* yet. A wide range of different systems have been proposed throughout the years, such as the Romanization system of Hong Kong government, which is in use for local street names, place names and personal names in telephone directories, birth certificates etc. Among all of them, the Yale System and the Jyutping system are the most relevant.

The Yale System has been developed at Yale University by Parker Huang and Gerald Kok. Resembling the International Phonetic Alphabet and the Chinese Pinyin Romanization in many of its features, it counts seven tones, later reduced to six by Matthews and Yip (1994). Rising and falling tones, as in Pinyin, are displayed by rising and falling accents on letters, while the mid-level tone has no accent and an *h* is added to low-register tones (low rising, low level and low falling). As in most of the Cantonese Romanization systems, long vowels and diphthongs are represented by double letters (Matthews & Yip 1994: 7-9).

Introduced in 1993 by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong (LSHK), the Cantonese Romanization Scheme – Jyutping (粤拼 *jyut6ping3*) has been largely adopted and is probably the most used Romanization system nowadays used for Cantonese, especially in Hong Kong. Promoted as a way for systematically representing the Cantonese phonetic system and helping students learning an accurate Cantonese pronunciation, it marks the tone of the syllable with Arabic numerals rather than with diacritic marks and can be used as a computer input method, for Cantonese transcriptions and word searching (The Linguistic Society of Hong Kong; CityU News Centre). Jyutping has nine tones which are marked in six tone contours with numerals from 1 to 6 (the other three tones belong exclusively to syllables ending with /p/, /t/, /k/). The alphabetic transcriptions of Cantonese words in this work all follow Jyutping.

Before shifting the focus to the variety of Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong and to its specific sociolinguistic situation, let us now have a brief look on how the relation between Putonghua and Cantonese has been developing in mainland China. This will be useful not only for

completing our present overview, but also for better understanding the unique linguistic situation Hong Kong, as a Cantonese-speaking area, has been experiencing.

2.2. Cantonese and Putonghua in Guangdong: the experience in the mainland

In the mid-19th century, China started a long process of language reforms which culminated around one century later, with the official implementation and promotion of Putonghua as standard language to be spoken throughout the whole country. As already part of the British Crown, Hong Kong remained out of the games and went through different linguistic paths. Therefore, looking at the relation between Putonghua and Cantonese in the People's Republic of China, especially in Guangdong, becomes interesting not only for having a more complete view on the status of Cantonese in the context of our previous discussion on Chinese dialects, but also for better understanding the reasons why the role of headquarter of Cantonese has shifted from Guangzhou to Hong Kong.

2.2.1. The birth of a unified Chinese language

The traumatic defeats suffered by China in the Opium Wars forced the Middle Kingdom to admit its weakness in front of the Western powers and their Industrial Revolution. From then on, both government and intelligentsia put enormous efforts in the quest for modernizing and renewing the country. A modern nation, it was believed, should have a unified language which can be spoken by everybody and in each corner of the country. This was not the case of China which, although having a unified writing system since the Qin era, was characterized by the presence of often mutual unintelligible dialects and by the lack of a standardized oral language. Language reform, in particular the establishment of a unified oral language and the reform of Chinese written language, emerged as one of the most essential measures to be taken for achieving a modern China (P. Chen 1999: 13-14).

Throughout the following decades and in particular after the 1910s, a process of debates and elaborations promoted by the National Language Movement (*Guóyǔ Yùndòng* 国语运动)

overcame the classical literary tradition and proposed a national language based entirely upon the contemporary Beijing dialect for its standard pronunciation and upon a vernacular literary style (*báihuà* 白话) for its writing form. The choice of Beijing dialect as phonological basis was motivated by the fact that Beijing had been the capital of China, center of politics, culture and economy since the Yuan dynasty (1271 - 1368). In those centuries, China was governed by non-Han ethnic groups twice (the Mongolian Yuan and the Manchu Qing), but in both the cases the rulers gradually absorbed the Han language and culture rather than imposing theirs (P. Chen 1999: 13-22, Gao 1993: 11-18, D. Li 2006: 156).

The momentum gained by the National Language Movement was brought to a halt by the Japanese invasion of 1937 and had little achievements in the years of the civil war between Nationalists and Communists (1945-1949). After the victory of the latter and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the new government proceeded with the previous efforts on language reform. At the National Conference of Script Reform of 1955, the new standard Modern Chinese was named *pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 (common speech); in 1956, at the Symposium on the Standardization of Modern Chinese, it was defined as based upon Northern dialects with Beijing dialect as norm of pronunciation, looking at modern works in *báihuà* for the grammar. As basically no difference of substance was to be found between the two, the previous term *guóyǔ* (national language) was changed in favor of *pǔtōnghuà* (common speech) to milder the Han-centered, bureaucratic connotation of the first and become the language of the masses and the different Chinese ethnicities. After 1955, Putonghua started being widely promoted across the land, becoming medium of instruction in schools and language of mass media. *Hànyǔ pīnyīn* 汉语拼音, a new phonetic scheme indicating the correct pronunciation of Modern Standard Chinese, was introduced in 1958 and became a useful tool for spreading and teaching Putonghua, especially in the Southern dialect areas (such as the Cantonese-speaking ones), where the differences of pronunciation with Beijing dialect were remarkable (P. Chen 1999: 23-26, DeFrancis 1984: 223-239, D. Li 2006: 154, Norman 1988: 133-135; for an analysis of the nomenclatures, see Norman 1988: 135-138).

2.2.2. Relationship between Putonghua and dialects in the PRC language planning

In China's language planning, Beijing dialect has been chosen among others as the dominant and has been given higher status and broader functions, becoming what we know as Putonghua. Since its introduction, its relation with the other Chinese dialects has been going through different stages, reflecting the social and political changes happening in the PRC throughout the decades.

In the 1950s, at the launch of Putonghua as official language of China, Chinese dialects were thought to be progressively replaced by the 'common language' in each domain of use. Excessive use of mutually unintelligible dialects hindered the communication between people from different areas and was thus to be avoided in order to let Putonghua, the language of the people of the whole country, expand and be the vehicle for China's socialist construction. Dictionaries and manuals would help reach this goal: the first linguistic works on Putonghua and dialects include the *Hanyu Fangyan Zihui* 汉语方言字汇 (Dialect syllabary of Chinese; 1962) edited by the Beijing University, which compared syllables of seventeen Chinese dialects, among which Cantonese, to Putonghua syllables classes; its follower *Hanyu Fangyan Cihui* 汉语方言词汇 (Chinese Dialects Dictionary; 1964) embodied 905 words and phrases of eighteen dialects. Early strategies to promote Putonghua didactic in Cantonese-speaking areas are exemplified by L. Wang's 1955 work, *Guangdongren zenyang xuexi Putonghua* 广东人怎样学习普通话 (How should Cantonese speakers learn Putonghua) (Hashimoto 1972: 75-77).

This early view of gradual though global replacement of dialects by Putonghua did not result in artificial eradication or prohibition of dialects. Besides, lacks in effective communication, research, and didactic hindered the achievement of significant results until the 1980s: as Beijing failed in showing the value of Putonghua as a communication tool for the whole country, the 'common language' was rather viewed as a bureaucratic, top-down language policy move which distanced the masses from their origins (Guo 2004: 45-48).

Things started changing in the late 1970s, with the introduction and further development of the reforms. At that point, Chinese linguistic circles began appreciating the diversity of

language use and finally devoted more attention to the interactions between Putonghua and dialects. With the goal of facilitating the promotion of Putonghua, research on dialects and production of manuals and dictionaries comparing and contrasting them with the standard flourished from then on[3] (Guo 2004: 48). A good example of works focusing on Cantonese-Putonghua contrastive analysis is Ouyang (1993), *Putonghua Guangzhouhua de bijiao yu xuexi* 普通话广州话的比较与学习 (Comparing and studying Putonghua and Cantonese). Written for Putonghua speakers, it first presents a description of the peculiarities of Cantonese, then compares Cantonese and Putonghua and gives examples of their differences on phonological, lexical, and syntactical levels.

Although firmly pushing for Putonghua to cover a more dominant role and highlighting its function to overcome dialect barriers, scholars did not discard the value of dialects in local and intimate domains, suggesting that the relation between Putonghua and dialects to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Citizens were asked and supposed to speak Putonghua conscientiously, but the value of dialects as important sources of Chinese regional culture was recognized. The social and political changes brought to China by the reforms of those years obviously had a big role in stimulating these reconsiderations. The elaboration of policies such as the Special Economic Zones and 'One country, two systems' allowed diversity to exist in a society where uniformity had been synonym of utmost virtue before (Guo 2004: 48-51). Chinese legislators kept this attitude in mind while elaborating the 2001 Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script of the PRC (中华人民共和国国家通用语言文字法 *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guojia tongyong yuyan wenzi fa*): the preeminent status of Putonghua as language of the whole country is legally reaffirmed together with the goal of continuing promoting its standardization and regularization. The increased use of Putonghua is welcome and encouraged but does not have to be unrealistically ad harshly enforced; the use of dialects is permitted in private domains and also in public and official occasions, when necessary and previously authorized (Rohsenow 2004: 35-38).

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[3] Since 1992, many of these productions have been published by Hanxue Press in the book series *Shuangyu Shuang Fangyan* 双语双方言 (Bilingualism and Bidialectalism).

2.2.3. Putonghua and Cantonese interactions: language promotion and language attitudes in Guangdong

The reforms and their effects on China's development resulted in an increased access to the media and an improved education system, which benefited the spread of Putonghua as language of both national media and education. The creation of trade-focused and industrialized centers in specific parts of the country was followed by massive migration to those regions. Far from their native area and having to communicate with people with different linguistic backgrounds, migrants used Putonghua as lingua franca[4]. Center of the economic reforms, the Cantonese areas were undoubtedly influenced by these developments; nevertheless, the strength and prestige of Yue and Cantonese maintained a high degree of resistance to Putonghua expansion. The strong status of Cantonese in Guangdong made it become an alternative lingua franca for migrant workers (P. Chen 1999: 27-30). In turn, Cantonese-speaking people in Guangzhou seemed to recognize that using Putonghua could give them social advantages, but retained a high level of respect, affection and empathy to Cantonese and its speakers (Kalmar, Zhong, & Xiao 1987). The persistence of Cantonese's covert prestige at the expense of Putonghua is one of the reasons why, in 1990, Guangdong was designated as area where more efforts for promoting Putonghua were needed: according to local authorities, the lacking expansion of the 'common language' did not benefit the province's economical, educational, technical, and cultural progress (Liu 1993: 64).

Zhan (1997) proposed three fundamental points for facilitating Cantonese speakers' successful and conscious acquisition of Putonghua. First, the identification of the most occurring Putonghua learning difficulties for Cantonese speakers is to be achieved through in-depth contrastive analysis and directed to the production of improved didactic strategies. The realization of a predominantly Putonghua-speaking environment (a task where broadcast media obviously play a big role) follows. The last proposal consists in the promotion of Putonghua through competitions and social happenings[5]. Basically, these proposals summarize the core of the recent efforts by the Chinese authorities to boost the population's

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[4] Putonghua was adopted as lingua franca also by people living in places historically populated by communities with mutually unintelligible dialects (P. Chen 1999: 27-30).

[5] A major example of this last point is the nationwide "Putonghua Promotion Week" (*Tui pu zhou* 推普周) which has been held on the third week of September since 1998 (People's Daily Online 2000).

Putonghua proficiency. Further strategies for achieving wider promotion of Putonghua in Cantonese-speaking environments involve the establishment of special Putonghua areas, specialized courses, agencies, and laws, as suggested by Zhu & Ma (2006).

As seen before, although challenged by Cantonese, the use of Putonghua in Guangdong increased with the growing presence of migrants, especially in the 1990s. Anyway, Z. Zhang (2001) stresses that the wealth Cantonese areas reached with the economic reforms noticeably strengthened its local identity and language: ironically, it was said that "全国推广普通话，广东推广粤方言" (*quánguó tuīguǎng pútōnghuà, guǎngdōng tuīguǎng yuè fāngyǎn* – the whole country promotes Putonghua, Guangdong promotes Yue dialect). Before the reforms, the 'common speech' was seen by the non-Putonghua speaking majority of Guangdong as the language of the political elite or of well-educated, important and wealthy people. A dramatic reversion took place after the reforms, when thousands of non-Cantonese migrant laborers moved to Guangdong and substituted the elites as most common example of Putonghua speakers. At the one hand, communication needs gradually expanded Putonghua use in the region and drastically increased the locals' proficiency in it. On the other hand, since the reforms made Guangdong into one of the wealthiest areas of China, Cantonese became prestigious symbol of belonging to its progress and economic success, while the reputation of Putonghua sank by being linked to migrant workers and the prejudices they were subject to (coarse, dirty, impolite, thieves, prostitutes, etc.). That, Z. Zhang observes, is the reason why people in Guangdong generally do speak good Putonghua and do accept its role of official language for the whole country, but tend to underestimate its function in normal life and somehow downplay their own proficiency in it (Z. Zhang 2001).

However, such sharp distinctions between varieties in terms of social status and solidarity might be changing with time, as a research carried by M. Zhou (2001) among college students in Guangzhou suggested. Moreover, language attitudes obviously depend on time and on location, as Miao & Li (2006) comparing the migrants' use of Cantonese and Putonghua in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, show. In Guangzhou, a culturally advanced city with a long history and a stable local population, the residents tend to strongly identify themselves with Cantonese, which exerts a bigger pressure on immigrants to use the local language for purposes of integration and socioeconomic advancement. There, Cantonese and the official

language Putonghua enjoy comparable power. On the other hand, the Guangdong city of Shenzhen, bordering with Hong Kong and formally set up in 1979 for experimenting with the country's economic reforms, has a majority of highly mobile population consisting of people with diverse regional and linguistic backgrounds. In this variable setting, migrants are less motivated to acquire Cantonese and Putonghua functions as dominant language[6].

2.2.4. The 2010 Guangzhou Television Cantonese controversy

The intricate changes in the relationship between Putonghua and Cantonese in Guangdong which have taken place in the last decades have not been devoid of controversies. The most significant and recent one started in 2010 and consisted in an issue on languages of TV broadcasts in Guangdong, where programs in Cantonese are numerous and more followed by those in Putonghua. In July 2010, the Guangzhou Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (Guangzhou CPPCC- 广州市政协 *Guangzhoushi zhengxie*) issued a written proposal suggesting Guangzhou Television (广州电视台 *Guangzhou dianshitai*) to increase the use of Putonghua over Cantonese in its programs – officially, in order for them to be broadcasted nationwide and in occasion of the Asian Games to be held in the city in November. Guangzhou Television had been using Cantonese for most of its broadcasts since the end of the 1980s, after obtaining the necessary political authorization (which is likely to have been given for reducing the illegal following of Hong Kong television in the Pearl River Delta). A first reversion to Putonghua in 2009 resulted in such a loss of rating that many programs went back to Cantonese in the next year (Nanfang dushibao 2010; People's Daily Online 2010).

Many residents of Guangzhou saw the formal suggestion to switch to Putonghua as an attempt to eliminate Cantonese by administrative means and dilute regional identity and culture. The proposal was fiercely criticized and, in the following weeks, thousands demonstrated on the streets of Guangzhou (joined by debates and protests in Hong Kong), calling for protection of Cantonese as essential part of southern China identity. Such wide opposition, however, mostly was not an anti-Putonghua movement, but rather an act of

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[6] See W. Zhang 2005 for a focus on the flexible bilingualism of Shenzhen and the high status Putonghua enjoys in it.

resistance to its promotion at the direct expenses of Cantonese. The protesters, many of them young people in their twenties or early thirties, stood for the maintenance of Cantonese together with Putonghua as sign of China's multilingual and pluralistic society, however expressed uncertainty about the willingness of the policy makers (many of them not even from Guangdong, thus less sensible to the Cantonese instance) to implement that (Bayron 2010, Apple Daily 2010, Radio Free Asia 2010, Spegele 2010, South China Morning Post 2010, July 10, 2010, July 29).

The authorities tried to cool down the protests by declaring the proposal was a mere suggestion and not an administrative order to weaken Cantonese by replacing it with Putonghua. Although recognizing that locals should improve their Putonghua, they nevertheless reaffirmed the need to preserve Cantonese as carrier of the ancient south Chinese culture (People's Daily Online 2010, Zhai 2010). Guangzhou TV rejected the proposal by stating that history and present reality imply the coexistence of Cantonese and Putonghua in Guangzhou (Qin 2010).

In December 2011, however, Guangdong authorities passed a new order to come into effect on March 2012, which established that radio, movies and television must get official authorization for broadcasting in dialect, as Putonghua should be the main language of the media. In addition, those who work in the public sector are required to speak Putonghua during working hours and all public documents, signs, websites etc. are not to use traditional Chinese or non-standard characters. The order also introduced penalties for those who contravene it. Although very similar to existing national regulations and although broadcasts are already under the authorities' control, such move generated unease and complaints which pushed local authorities to declare that the order did not imply any restriction of or ban on Cantonese (BBC China 2011, Shenzhen Daily 2011, S. Wang 2011). More recently, the Guangzhou Deputy Mayor has invited the city's young civil servants to embrace Cantonese as a tool to understand and experience the uniqueness of Guangzhou culture (M. Lau 2012).

The overview given in this chapter presents a complex, sometimes controversial path of Putonghua-Cantonese interaction in Guangdong, which, as we will see in details in the next parts of this work, is historically and culturally quite different from that of Hong Kong.

To begin with, the very start of the process of language reforms in China took place after the loss of Hong Kong and, as a matter of fact, the ex-colony returned to China after over forty years of promotion of Putonghua in the mainland.

Moreover, as part three will reveal, while Cantonese-speaking Guangdong was invested by pushes for Putonghua expansion, no specific language policy was implemented in Hong Kong and no variety of Chinese was strong enough to challenge Cantonese. In concomitance with the economic successes and the vitality of the ethnic Chinese community, Hong Kong Cantonese grew and attracted the attention of scholars. In this way, the center of gravity for Cantonese shifted from Guangzhou to Hong Kong.

However, despite the different fate of the last century or more, Guangdong and Hong Kong share not only the same language, but also the same ancient history and traditions. Therefore, some points can be highlighted as examples for further considerations. As we will see later on, the strong feelings of loyalty Cantonese speakers have towards their local language and the proud regional identity of Guangdong can be compared with the important role Cantonese holds as a symbol of Hong Kong's local identity; the participation of young people of both Guangdong and Hong Kong societies to movements to preserve and defend Cantonese, moreover, is an important sign that feelings of affection for Cantonese are present also in the new generations.

The official, tolerant attitude shown by the PRC authorities towards Cantonese in Guangdong has not been devoid of ambiguities. The constant push for the promotion of Putonghua in public life together with the attempt to relegate Cantonese to the more private sphere of the individuals can be easily noticed, as the above-described tentative to give Cantonese a smaller place in Guangdong media, together with the stress put on Putonghua as medium of instruction in schools, show. Such contrasts have been interpreted by many as a concrete menace for the very survival of local language and traditions in the long run.

Finally, relegated to specific zones such as the coast of Guangdong during the reform and opening period, business in China now involves the whole country, in a globalized context. It is thus not likely that the phenomenon of Cantonese as language for business observed in the past decades (Zhan 1993) will keep flourishing out of local scenarios, which in turn gives room to Putonghua as channel for Chinese business on the inner and international stage.

After this introduction, let us now have a more linguistics-oriented look at the features of Cantonese, from now on keeping the variety spoken in Hong Kong as a reference. Since this work focuses on both Cantonese and Putonghua, the highlight will be cast on the characteristics which distinguish the first from the second: the linguistic features of Cantonese will thus be introduced by comparing and contrasting them with Putonghua.

2.3. A contrastive analysis of Cantonese and Putonghua

It is commonly held that Cantonese's and Putonghua's grammatical structures are similar in most major respects, whereas great differences lie in phonology and to a medium extent in lexicon (J. Li 1990, DeFrancis 1984, etc.). Although they cannot be considered mutual intelligible, Cantonese and Putonghua are part of the same language family (Sino-Tibetan) and knowledge of Putonghua can thus be an important asset for learning Cantonese. The linguistic distance between Cantonese and Putonghua can be compared to that among distinct languages in the Indo-European groups, like French and Spanish, Swedish and German (Matthews & Yip, 1997: 5), or between Dutch and English, French and Italian (Chao 1976: 24, 87, 97, 105). On the other hand, as Bruche-Schulz (1997: 299) puts it, the degree of mutual intelligibility which can be observed among Scandinavian languages described by Haugen (1987: 71-81) cannot be reached by Cantonese and Putonghua.

The following analysis will show these differences through a comparison of Hong Kong Cantonese and Putonghua on the levels of the main components of a language: phonology, lexicon, morphology, and syntax.

2.3.1. Phonology

Phonology is the area where the biggest contrasts between Cantonese and Putonghua can be found. Even though Cantonese and Putonghua might have many words in common, their pronunciation is often very different: for instance, 学习 (traditional Chinese 學習, 'learn, study') comes from the same phonetic ancestor and is written in the same way in both Cantonese and Putonghua, but is pronounced *hok6zaap6* in Cantonese and *xuéxí* in

Putonghua; on the other hand, the Cantonese and Putonghua pronunciation of 好 ('good') is similar, *hou5* and *hǎo* respectively (Snow 2004: 48).

According to Beijing University's *Hanyu Fangyan Cihui* 汉语方言词汇 (1964), a major source for comparative studies in the area of Chinese dialects, Putonghua has twenty-two initials and thirty-eight finals, while Cantonese has twenty initials and fifty-three finals. The fact Cantonese has a wider inventory of finals increases the possible combination of syllables (which are 645 in Cantonese vs. 405 in Putonghua). Such difference in the number of finals can be partly explained by noticing that Putonghua has lost more final stops than Cantonese throughout its evolution. The two do not present very big differences in the inventory of sounds: however, Cantonese lacks the Putonghua features of retroflexion and strong palatalization; on the other hand, Cantonese distinguishes between long and short vowels, whereas Putonghua does not (Browning 1974: 43-58).

The most evident phonologic difference between Putonghua and Cantonese is the number of tones. Putonghua has four main tones (high and level; high and rising; falling, then rising; high falling) and an unstressed one, the 'neutral' tone. Cantonese is more complex, with a set of six tones becoming nine if one considers also the three belonging to syllables which end in a stop, i.e., /p/, /t/, /k/ (which are high level, mid level, and low level) (Bruche-Schulz 1997). The six Cantonese tones are:

1. High level: 三 *saam1* 'three'; 花 *faa1* 'flower'

2. High rising: 九 *gau2* 'nine'; 水 *seoi2* 'water'

3. Mid level: 四 *sei3* 'four'; 細 *sai3* 'small'

4. Low falling: 零 *ling4* 'zero'; 紅 *hung4* 'red'

5. Low rising: 五 *ng5* 'five'; 米 *mai5* 'rice'

6. Low level: 二 *ji6* 'two'; 飯 *faan6* 'cooked rice - meal'

(Chow 2009: 17-21; examples by the author of the present work)

1. high level	2. high rising	3. mid level	4. low falling	5. low rising	6. low level	
						High
						Middle
						Low
si¹	si²	si³	si⁴	si⁵	si⁶	
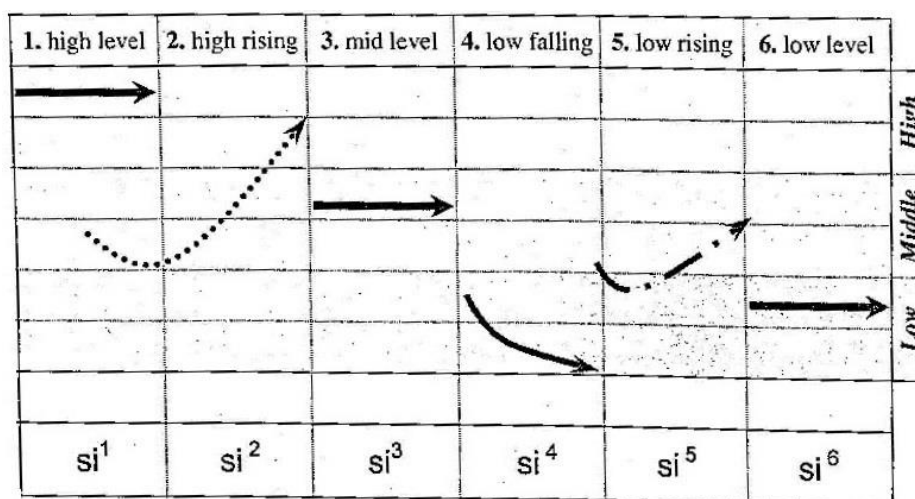
Table 1: Pitch curve of the six Cantonese tones and Jyutping transcription of the Cantonese syllable *si* (Source: Chow 2009: 18).

As Putonghua, Cantonese knows the phenomenon of changed tone (變音 *bin3jam1*). In the morphologically-conditioned Cantonese tone change, the original tone switches to high level tone 1 or high rising tone 2 (and to low falling tone 4 in some onomatopoeic phrases and certain words) to deliver the sense that something is familiar, concrete, or common. In this work, the changed tone will be marked by first signaling the morphosyllable's original tone, then giving the changed tone number after a slash, as in 甲曱 *gaat6zaat6/2* 'cockroach', where the original tone of the second morphosyllable is low level 6, changing to high rising 2 when becoming part of lexical items. Hong Kong Cantonese is also characterized by widespread phonetic variation among speakers, a phenomenon called 懶音 *laan5jam1* 'lazy pronunciation' and common especially among young native speakers. Initial consonant [l], for instance, sometimes substitutes the original [n] at the syllable onset, as in /nej/ [lej] (你 *nei5/lei5* 'you'). In the same way, the velar nasal [ŋ] varies with the so-called zero-initial, with many young speakers choosing the second, e.g. 我 /ŋɔ/ [ɔ] (*ngo5* 'I'). Moreover, velar plosives lose the labialization, as in /gwɔ/ becoming [gɔ] (果 *gwo2* 'fruit'); the velars [g] and [ŋ] change to alveolars [t] and [n] respectively, see /goŋ/ [gon] (講 *gong2* 'to speak'; bilabials [p] and [m] change to alveolars at the syllable coda, e.g. /sɐp/ [sɐt] (濕 *sap1* 'wet') (Cheung & Bauer 2002: 32, Bauer & Benedict 1997, Ding 2010: 203).

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2.3.2. Lexicon

Many scholars, observing from various perspectives, have carried out researches to determine the extent of the differences between Cantonese and Putonghua from a lexical point of view: for instance, DeFrancis (1984, 63) follows Xu's estimate (1982), which provides a rate of non-cognate vocabulary among Chinese regionalects of 40%. J. Li (1990) rejects the term dialect and advocates that Cantonese should be considered an independent language in the Sinitic language group by giving a difference rate of 76.9%. Ouyang (1993: 23, 80-82), suggests that about one-third of the lexical items used in Cantonese speech are not present in Putonghua. Nevertheless, he also observes that the rate of lexical difference drops considerably in formal registers, since the formal speech is far more exposed to the influence of the standard than the colloquial form. Following Ouyang's analysis and focusing on written Cantonese, Snow (2004, 49-51) analyzes two formal Cantonese news broadcasts and one colloquial Cantonese radio talk show concluding that, in formal written Cantonese, marked Cantonese characters account for around 10 to 15 percent of the total characters, whereas in informal written Cantonese, between 25 and 40 percent of the characters are marked Cantonese.

Generally speaking, there are two ways in which Cantonese can lexically differ from Putonghua (Snow 1994: 128-129), i.e.:

a. *Marked Cantonese words*: words which exist in Cantonese but not in Putonghua.

For instance, Cantonese shares with other southern Chinese regionalects the tendency to diverge from the northern forms in lexical items for personal pronouns, deictics, negative forms, question words, etc. (Hashimoto 1972: 15). Some common Cantonese function words and high frequency words which lexically differ from Putonghua are the following:[7]

- (possessive marker): C 嘅 *ge3* vs. P 的 *de*

- (pluralizing suffix): C 哋 *dei6* vs. P 们 *men*

- 'no, not' (negator): C 唔 *m4* vs. P 不 *bù*

- 'is' (copula): C 係 hai6 vs. P 是 *shì*

- 'in, on, at' (locative): C 喺 *hai2* vs. P 在 *zài*

- 'this': C 呢 *ni1* vs. P 这 *zhè*

- 'he/she': C 佢 *keoi5* vs. P 他/她 *tā*

- 'now': C 而家 *ji4gaa1* vs. P 现在 *xiànzài*

- 'to look': C 睇 *tai2* vs. P 看 *kàn*

- 'to like': C 鍾意 *zung1ji3* vs. P 喜欢 *xǐhuan*

  (Snow 2004: 49)

b. *Marked Cantonese usages*: words and characters used in both Cantonese and Putoghua, but the way they are used in Cantonese would not be acceptable in Putonghua.

A common example is Cantonese 食 *sik6*, 'to eat'. The same character, pronounced *shí* in Putonghua, also means 'to eat', but has a literary connotation and is not used in daily speech, where 吃 *chī* is preferred (Bauer 1984: 69-70). The same mechanism works for Cantonese 飲 *jam2* 'to drink' (Putonghua *yǐn*): in Putonghua it is only combined with other characters as a rather formal term for 'beverage', where the common used term for 'to drink' is *hē* 喝; it can be used as a verb just in Classical Chinese (Snow 1994: 129).

The influence English language has exerted on Hong Kong Cantonese throughout more than 150 years of coexistence (Hong Kong has been an English colony from 1842 to 1997) also provided it with lexical peculiarities. The most evident examples of such legacy can be found in the numerous English borrowings established in the local Cantonese vocabulary, such as 巴士 *baa1si6/2* 'bus', 的士 *dik1si6/2* 'taxi', 冧把 *lam1baa2* 'number', 多士 *do1si6/2* 'toast', 士多啤梨 *si6do1be1lei4/2* 'strawberry'[8].

Moreover, written Cantonese has borrowed English alphabet letters which pronunciation sound like Cantonese morphemes to substitute Standard Chinese or Cantonese characters. For example, the letter D is sometimes used to represent the Cantonese morphemes 啲 *di1*, a

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[8] For a complete list, see the online database of English Loanwords in Hong Kong Cantonese (http://funstuff.engl.polyu.edu.hk/loanwords/) started in 2006 by Robert Bauer and Cathy Wong at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

marker for comparative degree or plural (also written as 尐) (Bauer 1984: 64-65, Bruche-Schulz 1996: 301, Snow 2004: 53; example by the author of the present work):

1.   Cantonese

快 D 啦 'go faster (please)' instead of 快啲啦 *faai3 di1 laa1*

2.   呢 D 'these' instead of 呢啲 *ni1di1*

As can already be noticed, Cantonese lexical peculiarities in the oral language are often represented with peculiar or non-standard characters in the written sphere. This phenomenon will be more widely observed in the chapter regarding written Cantonese.

2.3.3. Morphology

The morphological differences between Cantonese and Putonghua are not many and the two do not present great diversity in terms of word formation.

The most significant and highlighted characteristic of Cantonese morphology to be opposed to Putonghua is the reverse order of components in some compound words. In Putonghua, the usual pattern is qualifying element + qualified element, whereas the order appears to be the contrary in Cantonese (Hashimoto 1972: 20):

3.   a. Cantonese

人客 *yan4haak3* 'guest'

(human + guest) qualified element + qualifying element

b. Putonghua

客人 *kèrén* 'guest'

(guest + human) qualifying element + qualified element

4.   a. Cantonese

雞嫲 *gai1naa2* 'hen'

(chicken + female) qualified element + qualifying element

b. Putonghua

母鸡 *mǔjī* 'hen'

(female + chicken) qualifying element + qualified element

5.   a. Cantonese

雞公 *gai1gung1* 'cock'

(chicken + male) qualified element + qualifying element

b. Putonghua

公鸡 *gōngjī* 'cock'

(male + chicken) qualifying element + qualified element

Interestingly, this reverse order is considered to be an influence of Thai languages, in which the order qualified element + qualifying element is indeed the norm. Lack of relevant information on Archaic Chinese morphology does not make it possible to infer on this feature to be a vestige of Archaic Chinese rather than a Thai borrowing. It is to be pointed out, however, that the suffixation instead of prefixation of the gender markers of examples 4.a. and 5.a. is a feature not limited to Cantonese and Yue, but is common in most of the Chinese southern groups, such as Min and Hakka, and sometimes even in the Gan and Xiang groups (Hashimoto 1972: 20).

To conclude this section on morphology, it is actually possible to take advantage of the example 4.a. above for highlighting a morphological peculiarity of Cantonese which is not to be seen in Putonghua: the suffix 嫲 *naa2* used for female animals, as seen in Norman (1988: 219).

2.3.4. Syntax

Cantonese and Putonghua do share many of their syntactic structures, but of course there are some exceptions. The following are some of the most common syntactic features of Cantonese which are not to be found in Putonghua (Bruche-Schulz 1996: 301-303; Matthews & Yip 1994: 5; Norman 1988: 221; Snow 2004: 47; examples by the author of the present work):

- The position of common adverbs such as 多 and 先:

6.   a. Cantonese

飲多啲 *yam2 do1di1*

*drink more a bit

Drink a little bit more

b. Putonghua

多喝一点儿 *duō hē yīdiǎnr*

*more drink a bit

Drink a little bit more

7.   a. Cantonese

我去郵局先 *ngo5 heoi3 jau4guk6/2 sin1*

*I go post first

 I go to the post first

b. Putonghua

我先去邮局 *wǒ xiān qù yóujú*

*I first go post

I go to the post first

- Word order in comparative structures:[9]

8.   a. Cantonese

今日凍過尋日 *gam1yat6 dung3gwo3 can4yat6*

A+ Adj. + CM + B

Today cold CM yesterday

Today is colder than yesterday

b. Putonghua

今天比昨天冷 *jīntiān bǐ zuótiān lěng*

A + CM + B + Adj.

Today CM yesterday cold

Today is colder than yesterday

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[9] A and B=terms of comparison; CM=comparative marker

- <u>The characteristics of classifiers</u>

Classifiers are obligatory after demonstratives in Cantonese, whereas the Putonghua *zhè* can be used as a subject without classifier:[10]

9.   a. Cantonese

呢個係我嘅男朋友 *ni1 go3 hai6 ngo5 ge3 naaam4pang4yau5*

This CL be I LW boyfriend

This is my boyfriend

b. Putonghua

这是我的男朋友 *zhè shì wǒ de nán péngyou*

This be I LW boyfriend

This is my boyfriend

Besides, unlike in Putonghua, in Cantonese a classifier can be used with a noun without being necessarily preceded by a demonstrative or a number.

10.   Cantonese

本字典喺枱上 *bun2 zi6din2 hai2 toi4 soeng6*

CL dictionary at table on

The dictionary is on the table

- <u>Deletion of relative marker:</u>

Sometimes Cantonese allows the deletion of the relative marker in constructions where it would be required in Putonghua. In the example below, the Cantonese relative marker *ge3* is optional, whereas the Putonghua equivalent *de* cannot be deleted from the sentence:[11]

11.   a. Cantonese

你買(嘅)嗰本書 *nei5 maai5 (ge3) go2 bun2 syu1*

You buy (POS) that CL book

That book you bought

b. Putonghua

你买的那本书 *nǐ mǎi de nà běn shū*

You buy POS that CL book

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[10] CL=classifier; LW=linking word
[11] POS= possessive

That book you bought

- <u>Position of direct and indirect objects in the double object construction</u>

Cantonese follows the order direct object-indirect object, Putonghua does the contrary:

12.   (notebook: direct object; me: indirect object)

   a. Cantonese

   俾本子我 *bei2 bun2zi2 ngo5*

   *give notebook me

   Give me the notebook

   b. Putonghua

   给我本子 *gěi wǒ běnzi*

   *give me notebook

   Give me the notebook

 - <u>The passive construction</u>

The structure of the passive construction of Cantonese and Putonghua is similar; however, in Cantonese, the agent can never been omitted, whereas Putonghua allows it.[12]

13.   a. Cantonese

   我被人打咗 *ngo5 bei6 yan4 daa2zo2*

   I by person beat PFV

   I have been beaten

   b. Putonghua

   我被(人)打了 *wǒ bèi (rén) dǎ le*

   I by (person) beat PFV

   I have been beaten

- <u>Aspect markers</u>

As Table 2 below shows, Cantonese aspect markers are different than Putonghua aspect markers, but cover approximately the same functions. The only exception is 開 *hoi1*, used in Cantonese for habitual actions, which has no counterpart in Putonghua:[13]

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[12] PFV= perfective aspect
[13] HAB= habitual aspect marker

14. Cantonese

我食開白飯 *ngo5 sik6 hoi1 baak6faan6*

I eat HAB plain rice

I usually eat plain rice

	Mandarin	Cantonese
Perfective	VERB — le	VERB — jó
Experiential	VERB — guò	VERB — gwo
Progressive	zài VERB	VERB — gán
Continuous	VERB — zhe	VERB — jyuh
Delimitative	VERB — yī — VERB	VERB — háh
Habitual		VERB — hōi

Table 2: Putonghua and Cantonese aspect markers (Source: Matthews & Yip 1994: 198)

The outline on the differences between Cantonese and Putonghua which has just been given is mainly based on the spoken language; differences between languages, however, often lie also in their written forms and our case is not an exception. Cantonese, in fact, has been developing important distinct features also in its written form, which is in use and can be easily spotted especially in Hong Kong. The next chapter will focus on this interesting phenomenon.

2.4. The written Cantonese of Hong Kong

In the recent decades, the linguistic phenomenon of written Cantonese in Hong Kong has been freely growing and spreading as a rare case of a vernacular which written form has gained positions throughout the years. In present Hong Kong, written Cantonese is to be found in such a high number of contexts, from advertisements to subtitles and music lyrics, from novels to play scripts, from public notices to political slogans, from local newspapers,

magazines and comic books to internet messaging and blogs, and so on, that ignoring the relevant role it covers in the local linguistic environment is impossible. Although Cantonese is not the only dialect in the Chinese context which has a written form (written Wu, for instance, also has a long history), it is the only one which is so widespread, especially in Hong Kong.

As Cheung & Bauer (2002: 2) and Snow (2004: 1-9) claim, Hong Kong can now be considered the only place where the use of a form of written Chinese which is strongly influenced by the local variety is so generalized and can be observed so extensively (written Cantonese is more difficult to encounter in Guangzhou). The various forms of written Chinese present in Hong Kong create a highly complex continuum, ranging from texts which completely adopt Cantonese unique characters and syntactic structures to fully Standard Chinese ones, joined by varieties mixing written Cantonese and Standard Chinese placed in the middle of this spectrum (Shi 2006: 299-300).

Figure 2: Written Cantonese in the Hong Kong MTR - "Don't eat me so soon!" (Source: Written Cantonese Wiki)

Therefore, the way Cantonese differs with Putonghua in its written form is not limited to the fact that the first (as well as Standard Chinese in Hong Kong) has conserved the use of traditional characters and not picked the simplified ones adopted in the rest of the PRC. Presenting a mix of standard, nonstandard Chinese characters and also letters of the English alphabet, a text of written Cantonese might give big challenges of intelligibility to non-Cantonese readers who are used to deal uniquely with Standard Chinese (which substantially is the written form of Putonghua). Throughout its long evolution, written Cantonese has been making peculiar use of Chinese characters as well as developing new ones which cannot be found in current Standard Chinese (such as 冇 *mou5*, the Cantonese equivalent to Standard

Chinese 没有 *méi yǒu* 'not have') and are informally picked up by writers in Hong Kong, Macao and, to a lesser extent, Guangzhou.

Although its use is still somehow limited to light, informal and unofficial settings (Standard Chinese dominating in formal contexts), in the last decades Hong Kong written Cantonese has come to considerably raise its prestige in concomitance with the city's massive economic growth and the strengthening of its local culture and identity. The rather neutral political environment regarding language use can be identified as one of the factors which helped its expansion. In colonial times, the British government gave a treatment of indifference to Cantonese, which could therefore develop rather freely while, in mainland China, the usage of written forms different than Standard Chinese was discouraged. The relatively simple system of phonetic borrowing, the most important and productive for putting Cantonese words into characters, together with a certain difficulty for Cantonese mother tongue speakers to write in Standard Chinese, also helped the spread of written Cantonese, not to mention the role Cantonese media and publishing industry have played and still play (Snow 2004: 3-10). Such a growth did not fail to attract the attention of scholars, who have been researching the different aspects and manifestations of written Cantonese from around the 1980s on, such as Bauer (1982, 1984, 1988), Cheung & Bauer (2002), Y.S. Cheung (1990), Chin (1997), Li (2001), Luke (1995), Snow (1993, 1994, 2004, 2008), etc.

Indeed, in the current Cantonese-Putonghua landscape of Hong Kong, the dichotomy written Cantonese-Standard Chinese is a factor which deserves attention. The following sections will be an outline of the phenomenon of written Cantonese, from its linguistic description to a historical overview and a discussion of its role in present Hong Kong.

2.4.1. Characteristics of written Cantonese

As already highlighted, many frequent vocabulary items of Cantonese, especially grammatical forms, are often etymologically unrelated to their functional and semantic counterparts used in Standard Chinese. Such phenomenon is consequently reflected in their written forms, which in Cantonese are transcribed in various ways, sometimes adopting Standard Chinese characters, sometimes making a different use of them, sometimes using specially created characters which have no representation in current Standard Chinese, etc. It has also been

found that, because of language contact, the nonstandard use of some graphs, such as 乜 *mat1*, 佢 *koei5*, 唔 *m4*, and 佬 *lou2* (Cantonese pronunciation), is shared by Cantonese with the written forms of Kejia, Zhuang, and Min of South China (Cheung & Bauer 2002: 12; 18-20).

This situation is further complicated by the fact that Cantonese has never gone through a comprehensive process of formal standardization. However, throughout its evolution, written Cantonese has developed some informal principles which have been regulating the transcription of its morphosyllables. That is, the creation and use of written Cantonese characters follows recognizable and informally fixed tendencies. Summarizing their researches on that, Cheung & Bauer (2002: 12-15) identify the following set of ten conventions[14]:

1. Written Cantonese uses the same standard Chinese character to represent shared vocabulary items

SC 应该 *yīnggāi* – C 應該 *jing1goi1* 'should, ought to'

SC 有 *yǒu* – C 有 *yau5* 'to have'

2. The morphosyllable is etymologically related and has the same meaning in both varieties, but is written with a nonstandard graph in Cantonese

SC 韭菜 *jiǔcài* – C 韮菜 *gau2coi3* 'Chinese chives'

SC 裤 (traditional Chinese 褲) *kù* – C 袴 *fu3* 'trousers'

In the writing process of this principle, however, the author of the present work has faced some difficulties in finding the abovementioned Cantonese nonstandard characters, in the *jyutping* input software used for typing (Cantonese Phonetic IME) as well as on online dictionaries or Cantonese websites. Some Hong Kong Cantonese native speakers were then asked and indicated that, while the 韮 character usually substitutes 韭 in Cantonese 韮菜 *gau2coi3*, the Standard Chinese character 褲 for *fu3* is normally preferred to 袴, which is rarely chosen. Furthermore, according to the author's Cantonese acquaintances, the Standard Chinese characters in 芒果 (C *mong4gwo2,* SC *mángguǒ*, 'mango') are commonly used also for Cantonese, rather than the variant suggested by Cheung & Bauer (2002: 13), consisting in

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[14] SC= Standard Chinese, C= Cantonese; examples by Cheung & Bauer (2002) and the author.

a tree radical 木 on the left substituting the grass radical 艹 on top of 芒 and in the grass radical 艹 on top of 果 (木+亡, 艹+果 *mong4gwo2*).

An extensive research, overcoming the scope of the present work, would be needed in order to try to further clarify this point. Anyway, given the present difficulties in finding such Cantonese variant graphs and considering the fact that Cheung & Bauer's research was published in 2002, it is possible to question whether the dominance of such nonstandard characters has diminished with time, so that Cantonese writers now tend to choose the SC graphic representation.

3. <u>Written Cantonese makes use of standard Chinese characters with similar meanings but different usages and collocations</u>

SC 说 *shuō* 'to say' – C 話 *waa6* (SC 话 *huà* 'language; to speak')

SC 衣服 *yīfu* 'clothes' – C 衫 *saam1* (SC 衫 *shān* 'upper garment, shirt')

The examples 食 *sik6* 'to eat' and 飲 *jam2* 'to drink' in the previous chapter's section on the lexical differences between Putonghua and Cantonese are also to be listed in this category.

4. <u>Standard Chinese characters are borrowed in order to transcribe homophonous but semantically unrelated Cantonese morphosyllables; they are used for their pronunciation but their meanings are ignored</u>

C 呢度 *ni1dou6* 'here' – SC 呢 *ní* 'heavy woolen material'/ *ne* (sentence final particle); 度 *dù* 'degree, pass' (here = 这儿 *zhè'er*; 这里 *zhèli*)

C 唔 *m4* 'no, not' – SC 唔 *wú* 'oh' (exclamation particle of agreement or surprise)
(no, not = 不 *bù*)

Bauer (1988) and D. Li (2001) among others, describe this convention as 'principle of phoneticity', the most followed and productive for Cantonese to choose and develop its written forms. When no widely accepted written form of a Cantonese word is available, the writer borrows existing Standard Chinese characters which, pronounced in Cantonese, sound like the morphosyllables to represent and therefore will be understood by the reader. Such practical method, however, might be the reason why many Cantonese characters can be found written in two or more different forms, such as:

- *ji4gaa1* 'now' 而家, 依家
- *je5* 'thing' 嘢, 野

- *bei2* 'to give' 俾, 畀

- *zung6* 'still' 仲, 重

  (examples by Snow, 2008: 196-197)

Defining which one of the alternative forms is the 'most correct' might become a difficult task, since even different dictionaries can list different forms as a consequence of the lack of proper standardization of written Cantonese (see Snow 2008).

5. Standard Chinese characters are borrowed in order to transcribe semantically equivalent colloquial Cantonese morphosyllables; the standard Cantonese reading of the Standard Chinese character is ignored

C 歪 *me1* 'slanting, askew, crooked', Standard Cantonese *waai1* – SC 歪 *wāi*

C 孖 *maa1* (twin), Standard Cantonese *zi1* – SC 孖 *zī*

6. Peculiar Cantonese characters are created to transcribe morphosyllables which are semantically and functionally unrelated to their equivalents in Standard Chinese

The formation of new characters can be made by following two different methods:

a. Combining a radical with relevant phonetic, as in C 佢 *keoi5* 'he, she' – SC 他/她 *tā*

b. Graphically showing the meaning of the morphosyllable, as in C 冇 *mou5* 'not have' – SC 没有 *méi yǒu*, where 冇 represents a 有 with some missing parts, expressing the idea of 'not have'.

7. Letters of the English alphabet are borrowed for their pronunciation to substitute homophonous or semi-homophonous Cantonese morphosyllables or for substituting obscene morphosyllables

E 家 for 而家 *ji4gaa1* 'now'

X 你老母 *diu2 nei5 lou5mou5/2* for 閉你老母 'f**k your mother!'; notice that 閉 *diu2* is another peculiar Cantonese character.

8. English loanwords are transliterated in written Cantonese with Standard Chinese characters

士多 *si6do1* 'store'

天拿水 *tin1naa4seoi2* 'thinner'

9. Letters of the English alphabet and Standard Chinese characters are mixed together to transcribe English loanwords

T 恤 *ti1seot1* 'T-shirt'

BB 女 *bi4bi1 neoi5* 'baby girl'

10. <u>English loanwords are transcribed in the regular English orthography but are pronounced in Cantonese</u>

啊 SIR *aa3 soe4* 'sir' (address term commonly used for teachers and policemen)

CALL *kho1* 'call'

Let us now see how such peculiar characteristics of written Cantonese are used in Hong Kong daily life. The text which follows is an article which has been retrieved from Apple Daily, a popular Hong Kong newspaper known for making large use of written Cantonese, on May 4, 2013. The theme of the article is the damages caused by the crowd on small facsimile of the big Rubber Duck artwork which entered Hong Kong harbor on May 2[15]. The Cantonese characters and the Chinese characters with marked Cantonese usage have been highlighted.

睇 Duck 唔顧公德　遊人喪踩黃鴨影相

【本報訊】為全港市民帶來歡樂的巨鴨 Rubber Duck，昨日終於「歸位」游到海運大廈露天廣場對開，與鴨迷們近距離接觸。陪伴巨鴨展出的 24 隻橡皮鴨也成為風頭躉，但不少人無視請勿攀爬的警告字句， 又騎又踩在小鴨身上拍照，黃鴨身上即時滿佈腳印。負責替鴨仔清潔的職員則希望市民自律有公德心，讓鴨鴨保持潔淨完整之身。

昨日時晴時雨，卻無阻一眾鴨鴨狂迷的追鴨決心，海運大廈露天廣場整日人山人海，鴨迷們爭相在岸上一睹巨鴨風采。在岸上的 24 隻橡皮鴨亦深受歡迎，市民又攬又抱零距離接觸，但不少人未有理會請勿攀爬字句，違規騎上甚至踩在鴨鴨身上合照。

鴨鴨唔踩 duck！負責替 24 隻鴨仔清潔的海港城職員余先生感嘆，展區開放公眾「埋身」合照後，黃色鴨鴨身上即時滿佈污迹，「好多鞋印，啲人好冇公德心」。余先生惟有密密做， 一見無人與小鴨合照， 就上前以濕布為鴨鴨洗身。余先生表示，踩 duck 的不只小朋友，成年人一樣照踩，更曾有操普通話女子，腳穿高踭鞋想「踩 duck」，幸獲保安員及時發現即時喝止。他說：「如果佢踩上去，成個踭

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[15] See http://www.scmp.com/topics/rubber-duck

踩<mark>咪</mark>落去隻鴨實凹。」昨日現場所見，「踩 duck」的多為小孩，不少更是大人抱上去以便合照。

網友盛讚清潔職員

網上近日瘋傳余先生為鴨鴨淨身的相片，網民更讚揚他是無名英雄，余先生則稱「只<mark>係</mark>做好份工」。他又說，現時清潔崗位人手不足，一天要返「<mark>更</mark>半」，即朝早 8 時至晚上 11 時，希望大家自律有公德心，讓鴨鴨保持潔淨之身，繼續帶歡樂給香港市民。理工大學應用社會科學系助理教授鍾劍華表示，港人的公德心一向不錯，出現此反常情況相信是「忘形<mark>得滯</mark>」，不能就單一事件指港人公德心下降，「可能<mark>係</mark>有人帶頭<mark>企喺</mark>隻鴨影相，其他人<mark>唔</mark>執輸跟風」。他又強調，站在鴨上拍 照的欠公德人士，未必全是港人，不排除部份是遊客如內地人士。

(Apple Daily 2013)

The following list provides an explanation of the characters highlighted in the text:

- 睇 *tai2* 'to see', SC 看 *kàn*

- 唔 *m4* 'no, not', SC 不 *bù*

- 喪 *song3* Cantonese slang for 'crazy, insane, stupid'. Its other meanings 'to be in mourning' or 'to lose' correspond with Standard Chinese 喪 *sāng*; *sàng*

- 歸位 *gwai1wai6* 'homing; getting back on a known position', SC 归航 *guīháng*

- 風頭躉 *fung1tau4dan2* 'popular, fashionable/someone who enjoys being in the public eye', SC 时兴 *shíxīng*, 流行 *liúxíng*

- 埋身 *maai4san1* 'get closer, crowd'

- 啲 *di1* plural prefix 'a few, some' – Cantonese marker for plural or comparative

- 冇 *mou5* 'to have not' SC 没有 *méi yǒu*

- 睜 *zaang1* 'heel' (in 高睜鞋 *gou1zaang1haai4* 'high-heeled shoes'), SC 脚跟 *jiǎogēn*

- 佢 *keoi5* 'he, she', SC 他/她 *tā*. Notice, however, the compresence of 佢 and 他 in the text: 佢 is present exclusively in the direct discourse, probably to better adhere to

spoken Cantonese, and is substitued by the more formal Standard Chinese 他 *taa1* in the narration

- 咪 *mai6* 'then, as a result' – in, SC 咪 *mī* is used for indicating the sound of a cat: 'meow' (also used in Cantonese: *mai1*)

- 係 *hai6* 'to be', SC 是 *shì*

- 更 *gaang1* 'shift' (in 更半 *gaang1bun3* 'one and a half shift'), SC 班 *bàn*. A 更 was one of the five two-hour periods in which the night was formally divided in China.

- 得滯 *dak1zai6* 'too much, excessive', SC 太, 过分 *tài, guòfèn*

- 企 *kei5* 'to stand', SC 站 *zhàn*

- 喺 *hai2* 'at', SC 在 *zài*

Moreover, two other particular cases can be discussed:

- 仔 *zai2* in 鴨仔 *aap3zai2* 'duckling, little duck'. Here, 仔 stands for a suffix for small animals, but it means also 'son/child/kid/boy'. 仔 *zǐ* is used for young animals also in Standard Chinese, although less often than in Cantonese. However, the SC version of 'duckling' is 仔鴨 *zǐyā*, 仔 functioning in SC as prefix and not as suffix, as explained in the morphology part of the Cantonese/Putonghua contrastive analys (Putonghua: qualifying element + qualified element; Cantonese: qualified element + qualifying element).

- 攬 *laam2* 'embrace, hug' is the first meaning of Cantonese 攬. The same character in Standard chinese 揽 *lǎn* (simplified character), means take/pull into one's arm/fasten, while 拥抱 *yōngbào* is more appropriate for delivering the meaning of 'embrace, hug'.

2.4.2. Historical developments

Written Cantonese is likely to have made its first appearances in the late Ming period (1368-1644), a time when the Guangzhou area was one of China's most prosperous, where indigenous art forms were pushed by growing literacy, publishing activities, entertainment industry, and so on. The first evidences of written Cantonese are the 'wooden fish books' (*muk6jyu4syu1* 木鱼書), popular and inexpensive woodblock print books which contained the lyrics of various kinds of narrative songs, such as Buddhist stories. Buddhist movements, in

fact, were known for preferring vernaculars to official languages as more reliable and direct ways for delivering the revelations of the Buddha (Snow 1994: 130; Snow 2004: 77-79).

Through the Qing dynasty and until the Second World War, the use of written Cantonese gradually increased and a variety of Cantonese literature genres gained popularity. However, written Cantonese did not hold a dominating role in the regional publishing industry, since its contexts of use tended to be informal or limited to light entertainment settings for low classes, such as texts for oral performances. Moreover, Cantonese features were generally introduced in Standard Chinese structures, thus following their norms rather than adhering to spoken Cantonese (Snow 2004: 79-99). Nevertheless, the fact that the Holy Bible had been translated in Cantonese since the arrival of foreign missionaries in South China (second half of the 19th century) testifies the importance that written Cantonese could reach among the readers in the region (Cheung & Bauer 2002: 5, 49).

In the 20th century, written Cantonese started being used in political environments for the same reason why it was been adopted by religious groups, that is, to be better understood and reach as many people as possible. Leftist and communist movements, which generally favored vernacular to make educated writers get closer to the masses in a way Standard Chinese could not provide, were those who adopted this attitude the most. In the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, dialect works were part of the leftist propaganda against Japan in Guangdong as well as in many other parts of China. However, the most important example of such vernacular writing tendencies was the short-lived yet significant Hong Kong Dialect Literature Movement of the late 40s. The texts it published, in fact, constituted a rare case of works coherent with the spoken norms, where much of the material was written in pure colloquial Cantonese. More generally, the period from the late 40s to the 60s in Hong Kong consisted in some sort of transition phase, where Cantonese vernacular literature increased in both amount and in adherence to the spoken language, which nevertheless was not total. A new style called *saam kap dai* (*saam1kap6dai6* 三及第), featuring a combination of Classical Chinese, Cantonese, and Standard Chinese, started growing in local fictions and entertainment press, helping written Cantonese establishing a contact with modern urban Hong Kong life (Snow 1994: 134-139; Snow 2004: 101-136).

The 70s and the 80s were decades of growth for Hong Kong: the city got wealthier and the education standards became considerably higher than before. The better economic status (also

and especially in comparison to mainland China) and the more homogeneous linguistic population than in the past were important factors of the rise and development of Hong Kong's indigenous identity and popular culture. At that time the media (Hong Kong's TV channel TVB was established in 1967) started focusing more on the local dimension and adopted Cantonese instead of Putonghua for their broadcasts, while the success of Hong Kong music and movie industry further spread the popularity of Cantonese as genuine language of the city (Snow 2004: 136-148). These developments affected also written Cantonese, its connotation gradually switching from rather low-class to local, belonging to the whole community. *Saam kap dai* got replaced by a written style closer to spoken Cantonese and written Cantonese gradually gained more prestige and a more ample range of use in publications, embracing genres such as sport, economy, and comic books. From the 1980s on, scholars devoted increasing attention to Hong Kong Cantonese while its written form increased its presence in local newspapers, such as *Tin Tin Daily* (which found its successor in *Apple Daily* from the 90s on) and *Oriental Daily*. Paperback books written entirely in Cantonese, such as "Diary of the Little Man" (*siu2 naam4jan4 zau1gei3* 小男人周记) by A Foon, achieved great popularity and impressive sales. Cantonese characters gave writers and readers a sense of authenticity and intimacy, a phenomenon which made written Cantonese appealing for marketing use. In fact, Cantonese started to be seen on advertisements as well as on public notices posted on walls and public transportations all over the city, while the percentage of newspaper articles written entirely in Cantonese rose steadily (Snow 2004: 148-162).

2.4.3. Written Cantonese in present Hong Kong

In spite of the fears of many about a 21st century of linguistic domination of Putonghua and loss of ground for Cantonese in Hong Kong, written Cantonese is nowadays more widely used than in the 80s. It not only presents a bigger extent of consistency in adhering with spoken Cantonese, but it also seems to be gradually ceasing being associated with low class contexts, its status being now linked to the middle class and, importantly, to young people. More and more Hongkongers are proficient in written Cantonese and its use is strongly intertwined with local identity.

Some points can be looked at as conditions which have influenced and can still influence the development of written Cantonese in Hong Kong:

- Government policies: Hong Kong written Cantonese developed in a spontaneous way, in the absence of state support. Generally speaking, no institutional role was given to Cantonese in colonial Hong Kong until 1974, when Chinese became co-official language together with English. Then, the vague term 'Chinese' consisted in Modern Standard Chinese as the written form and Cantonese as the spoken variety in the local context. After the handover to China, the language policy of 'bi-literacy and trilingualism', involving Chinese and English as written forms and Cantonese, Putonghua and English as spoken varieties, was launched by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government (Lee & Leung 2012: 1-2). It is thus clear that Hong Kong gives no official recognition to written Cantonese, while Standard Chinese dominates official and formal writing. Anyway, the indifference given by Hong Kong institutions to written Cantonese has permitted it to develop freely, without constraints or bans; nevertheless, it is to be noticed that such freedom from the involvement of official bodies and authorities resulted in a certain (but not total, especially in recent times) lack of standardization of written Cantonese. In the mainland, on the contrary, written Cantonese has been taken to decline from the policies of the Nationalists first and the Communists after, especially before the 1980s (Snow 1993: 18).

- Readability of the written language and its role in the education system: since Standard Chinese has been adopted as written language to be taught in schools, written Cantonese is excluded from the education. Given the already analyzed differences between Cantonese and Putonghua, the degree of discontinuity between spoken (Cantonese) and written (Standard Chinese) language in Hong Kong is rather high: as Snow (2004: 2) puts it, to Cantonese people writing and reading Standard Chinese presents the same difficulty Dutch people would face if they had to learn how to read and write in German. However, most of the times Standard Chinese in Hong Kong schools is not read with Putonghua pronunciation, but in Cantonese, often used as spoken language of instruction[16]. Moreover, the lack of standardization of Hong Kong Cantonese can lead to the compresence of different written

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[16] This is actually a habit which traces back to the pan-Chinese, pre-modern tradition of reading the old Standard Chinese *wényán* 文言 in the local vernacular: not invested by the promulgation of Putonghua in the PRC era, Hong Kong has retained this use (Cheung & Bauer 2002: 1).

forms of the same morphosyllables and thus hinder its degree of readability. On the other hand, the principle of phoneticity, the most adopted for Cantonese characters, can make it easier for a native Cantonese speaker to read and understand written Cantonese rather than the more distant Standard Chinese (Cheung & Bauer 2002: 1, Snow 1993: 20-21, Snow 2004: 56-57).

- Appeal of the materials written in dialect and affective factors: since its beginnings, written Cantonese has been developing predominantly in popular, followed genres with limited literary complexity and therefore easy to read and to sell, from Cantonese opera scripts to sport news, pocket and comic books, gangsters and adult stories, etc. The recent situation in the Hong Kong market also looks favorable, since not only Cantonese-written products are popular, securing a large size of audience, but also their profit margin is rather high, especially in comparison to the publishing industry structure in mainland China. Sensing the growing popularity and acceptance of written Cantonese among Hongkongers, publishers and advertisers have been steadily increasing their output of material in written Cantonese. Summarized by the saying 我手寫我口 *ngo5 sau2 se2 ngo5 hau5* 'my hand writes my mouth', authenticity is an important factor of the popularity of written Cantonese. In the last years, the use of written Cantonese has been increasingly appreciated for its power to convey the writer's message with a higher degree of intimacy, directness, friendliness: a true record of what the Cantonese speaker would say and not a sort of translation of it in Standard Chinese. However, some Hongkongers still hold that written Cantonese should not be used since it not only is vulgar and lower than Standard Chinese, but also undermines the standard of written Chinese, decreases the students' familiarity with it, may lead to communication issues with people from the rest of China, etc. On the other hand, the popularity and expansion of written Cantonese in a wide range of contexts undoubtedly indicates the approval of the community. It seems that the status of Hong Kong written Cantonese has not completely overcome a certain ambiguity, somehow lying between overt disapproval and covert acceptance (Cheung & Bauer 2002: 2-4, Snow 1993: 20-24).

The basic cause of the growing role of written (and spoken) Cantonese in Hong Kong, however, is to be found in the economic prosperity which invested Hong Kong from the 1970s on. Wealth had the effect to boost the self-confidence of Hongkongers with several

major effects: the media (newspaper, magazines, reports, film, television, radio, music, etc.) started concentrating on the local dimension and increased the use of Cantonese in scripts and broadcasts. Moreover, the increasing cultural confidence led more and more people to identify more closely with Hong Kong than with China, adopting Cantonese as a symbol of such in-group identity (Snow 1993: 25, Snow 1994: 143-144, Snow 2004: 194-206).

The success and expansion of written Cantonese Hong Kong has witnessed in the last decades, however, does not mean that it now challenges Standard Chinese in formal and official writing, since its association with and use in light, informal, and entertaining contexts still is rather strong. Besides, the influence Putonghua can achieve as new actor in shaping the Hong Kong language environment can never be underestimated. Nevertheless, the current trends of development of written Cantonese seem to give good hopes for its less strict consideration in the future (Snow 2004: 172-211). In the strong context of Hong Kong local identity, the gradual establishment of written Cantonese from low-class to middle class contexts and its wide use among educated young people (for example for emails, messages and on social networks, as a brief look on the internet can reveal) is remarkable, especially if one considers that the same young people are those who study Putonghua more extensively. The affective attachment to and competence in written Cantonese of the Hong Kong youth could suggest that they will keep using, developing and transmitting it in the future, maybe even by achieving its more extensive standardization within a hypothetical Cantonese-Mandarin semidiglossic frame.

2.5. Possibilities and limits for Cantonese as a standard language for Hong Kong

As the introduction given above has shown, Cantonese holds a great deal of importance for its users in both Hong Kong and the mainland: in fact, the Yue-speaking areas are considered major representatives of regional identity, a force which cannot be ignored in the Chinese context and is mainly expressed through dialect use (P. Chen 1999: 56-57). The linguistic peculiarities of the Yue varieties, their areas' past of isolation mixed with openness, the mobility of Cantonese communities all over the world, the astounding economic development

of the recent years, the international relevance of Hong Kong, and so on, are factors that contribute to the strength of Cantonese also in present days and make the enduring goal of Chinese authorities to implement Putonghua at dialects' expenses a task more difficult than in other parts of China, as the last chapter of this part of the work will illustrate.

Looking at this complex landscape, it becomes spontaneous to question how Cantonese, especially its 'strong' variety in Hong Kong, is to be considered. Is Hong Kong Cantonese really just a dialect or is there presence of a development leading to its gradual standardization? If the second hypothesis can be taken into consideration, to what extent is it possible to consider Hong Kong Cantonese as owner of characteristics belonging to standard languages?

The varieties of spoken Chinese, Yue and Cantonese included, are often referred to as 'dialects'. In general western linguistics as well as in common usage, dialects are defined as local forms of speech belonging to a group in which the differences are relatively small and do not hamper intelligibility; intelligibility between discreet varieties is an important criterion for determining their dialectal relationship. Moreover, dialects are not governed by prescriptive and codified norms (Ammon 2004, Berruto 2004: 189, DeFrancis 1984: 55, Graffi & Scalise 2002, Swann, Deumert, Lillis, & Mesthrie 2004: 76, Trudgill 1974: 17). Nevertheless, in the Chinese linguistic environment, the term 'dialect' is also used to refer to varieties which can differ significantly from Putonghua (Snow 2004: 1), as already seen in the case of Cantonese, a 'dialect' the linguistic distance with Putonghua of which presents degrees of unintelligibility comparable to those between different distinct languages in the Indo-European groups. Explaining that, Kratochvíl (1968: 15-16) observes that a linguistic situation similar to China's would be present in Europe if Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Italian (all part of the Romance group of the Indo-European language family) were part of a single political unit and French as spoken in Paris were chosen as the most proper form of communication. By claiming that Chinese dialects are not different languages and that foreigners who say that are wrong, Z. Zhou (1981: 3) indirectly confirms the previous position by highlighting that Chinese varieties share more or less the same grammar, their phonological system is comparable to that of Ancient Chinese, and the basic vocabulary is the same. However, this definition seems to fit also to the abovementioned languages of the Indo-European family. Bloomfield (1933: 44), in fact, describes Chinese as a language family

rather than a single language, expressing the view of many linguists that mutual unintelligible forms of speech are to be considered languages, not dialects.

Although the term 'dialect' might be misleading, to consider the Chinese linguistic situation as composed by different, distinct languages could present the risk of neglecting the uniqueness of its long history of political unity and coexistence without substantial conflicts. Moreover, the terminology issue seems to be present more in English than in Chinese, since the official Chinese designation for the major forms of speech is 方言 *fāngyán* 'regional speech' and some scholars also talk about 地方话 *dìfanghuà* 'local speech' for mutually intelligible lesser form of speech within the unintelligible *fāngyán* groups, among others. Observing this, DeFrancis (1984: 56-57) proposes to adopt the term 'regionalect' [17] for designating the mutually unintelligible forms of Chinese and to reserve 'dialect' for mutually intelligible subvarieties of regionalects (DeFrancis 1984: 56-57).

Taking DeFrancis's solution as valid for mainland China, let us now look at the specific case of Hong Kong Cantonese. Cantonese's significant social role, its dominance as spoken variety of Hong Kong -and also of Macao, and the particular strength of its written form in comparison to those of other Chinese regionalects (an established written form is important feature of a standard language) seem to indicate that Cantonese might be serving as some kind of standard language, especially for Hong Kong.

Standard language is defined as a comparatively uniform variety of a language which is used in a wide range of communicative functions, has a written form and observes prescriptive and codified norms; moreover, it is agreed that the process of a variety becoming standard language is more social than strictly linguistic (Swann, Deumert, Lillis, & Mesthrie 2004: 295, Daneš 1988: 1510). As for mainland China, in the last century spoken Putonghua and written Standard Chinese underwent a long process of standardization and now fit well to this definition. Snow (2008: 194), analyzing the case of written Cantonese, highlights that the standard vs. non-standard definition is relative and that it is useful to consider the quantity and quality of single standard attributes a given language might or might not hold, rather than trying to establish if it is standard *in toto*. Adopting this view, he analyzes written Cantonese

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[17] Agreeing with DeFrancis's term, Mair (1991: 7) also offers 'topolect' as an alternative for 'regionalect'.

according to the definition of standard language provided by Downes (1998), which is partially followed also here.

A language can be defined standard when it is autonomous: autonomy is the extent to which a language is not corrected according to others, that is, when the users set their own norms rather than following those belonging to another, more authoritative language (Berruto 2004: 192, Snow 2008: 194). A further autonomy factor is the degree of influence the language exerts on others and how widely it is used by its own speakers/writers. It is possible to see that spoken Cantonese owns this attribute by looking at how deeply it is entrenched in Hong Kong's speech community. The economic rise of the Cantonese-speaking area and the popularity of Hong Kong movie and music industry have certainly played a big role in such linguistic confidence and vitality, which has led to an increase of popularity also in the mainland, where Cantonese words have even been accepted into Putonghua dictionaries. Written Cantonese, on the other hand, is still too subject to the influence of Standard Chinese for being considered completely autonomous; however, in the recent decades, Cantonese texts have been increasingly following the norms of spoken Cantonese rather than those of Standard Chinese (Snow 2008: 194-196).

Another attribute is the presence of codified norms which prescriptively govern the use of the language. Cantonese, written as well as spoken, is governed by agreements and conventions rather than clear norms, since there is no official body, institution, agency or academy[18] of Cantonese which has sufficient authority to fixate and regulate the language use in a prescriptive way, and no single dictionary has attained sufficient prestige for being used as standard reference yet. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that Cantonese, however often adopted as medium of instruction, is not taught in Hong Kong schools (Snow 2008: 196-198; Lee & Leung, 2012).

Functional elaboration (also called *Ausbau*) is the degree to which a language develops linguistic resources (especially vocabulary) sufficient to allow spoken and written discussion of the full range of topics the users need (Ammon 2004: 279, Berruto 2004: 192; Snow 2008: 198-199). No vocabulary is lacking in both written and spoken Cantonese, still it seems that

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[18] See Omdal (2004: 2387-2389) for an excursus on language academies and their roles they can play as language planners.

Hong Kong Cantonese users are not fully confident of its prestige and, for instance, prefer to rely on Standard Chinese in formal writing. This has much to do with the status of Cantonese in Hong Kong society: as a spoken language, it is widely used not only in daily talks, but also in TV news, formal talks, government speech etc. However, written Cantonese does not enjoy the same freedom of use of the spoken variety and tends to be avoided in serious and formal writing although, in the last years, this tendency has started becoming less rigid (Snow 2008: 196-201).

Prestige, that is, respect and admiration the users feel for the language, is the last basic attribute of a standard. Aestethically speaking, because of the lack of influence from mainland language policies in Hong Kong's past and a certain resistance to them in the Guangdong area, Putonghua is not considered the elegant language to be used for degrees of social sophistication, which cannot be reached by the local speech, as much as in other parts of China. On the contrary, it is not only in Hong Kong that many Cantonese speakers hold that the sound of their language is more gracious and smooth than Putonghua's[19] (Z. Zhang 2001: 64). However, its written form is still linked by many to the low-class contexts it belonged to until the 1960s, closely associated with colloquial speech (for some users, also with vulgar or even pornographic reading materials) and looked at as a debased form of Standard Chinese, inferior to its highness and long tradition (Lo & Wong 1990: 28-29, Snow 2008: 201-202). Historically speaking, written Cantonese looks at present trends rather than at a distant past, especially because of its tendency to adopt modern sound associations for its development (the principle of phoneticity listed in the previous chapter). On the other hand it is agreed that Cantonese, besides having strong ties with the southern Chinese civilization, is the closest variety to ancient Chinese, which can be noticed especially in pronunciation and grammar: Cantonese speakers like to point out that a Tang poem read aloud in Cantonese preserves much more of the original rhyme features than if read in Putonghua. Thanks to a longer history and a richer phonetic system, Cantonese, many believe, is therefore purer than Putonghua. Another story (although historically debated) proud Cantonese speakers like to tell is that Cantonese has been almost picked as the language of the new China at the time of

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[19] Zhang (2001: 65) mentions the popular pun for Putonghua in Cantonese-speaking areas: in Cantonese pronunciation, Putonghua sounds like 煲冬瓜 *bou1 dung1gwaa1* (P *bāo dōngguā*, 'pot of winter melon').

the foundation of the Republic. In 1912, a great debate started between the founders of the Republic to decide which language should be spoken in the whole country. Mandarin, spoken by the non-Han, Manchurian officials, was perceived by many as an 'impure form' of Chinese, whereas Cantonese was the language of China's land of new ideas and of many of the revolutionary leaders, Sun Yat-Sen included. In the formal vote which followed the debate, Cantonese lost by a small margin to Mandarin (Groves 2010: 536, He 2009, C. Lai 2012, Snow 2004: 75-77, Snow 2008: 202-203, South China Morning Post 2010). Speaking about literary tradition, although no work has come to establish the legitimacy and prestige of written Cantonese as a standard (as, for example, Dante's *Divina Commedia* did for Italian), a brief look at its history shows that written Cantonese is not lacking under this aspect (Snow 2008: 203).

This brief analysis shows that Cantonese, in particular its written form, lacks some of the attributes necessary to be considered a standard language, or rather does not complete them fully. Nevertheless, the fact that Hong Kong Cantonese has developed some of the basic features of standard languages, especially throughout the last decades, remains remarkable. It is questionable whether Cantonese will finally become a fully standard language, especially now that Hong Kong is part of the PRC and is therefore more subject to its influence, linguistic and not. A major factor which has to be taken into consideration as a strong point of Cantonese for the future, however, is its potential as a symbol of Hong Kong people's social identity and group solidarity in these times of changes and challenges. Symbolism, in fact, is another characteristic of standard languages: although Hong Kong Cantonese is not used as national symbol, to many of its speakers it is not only established as 'language of the heart', but also it represents their identification with Hong Kong rather than with Beijing (Snow 2008: 203-204). The degree of involvement of this last factor in the potential of establishment of Putonghua in Hong Kong's linguistic community will be taken in special consideration later in this work.

Overall, the first part of this work has attempted to give a complete introduction of Cantonese from a purely linguistic as well as sociolinguistic and historical point of view. After introducing the Yue history and cultures, an overview on the status of Cantonese in

Guangdong has shown how the promotion of Putonghua has influenced language use in the Yue-speaking mainland China, presenting a current mix of Cantonese resilience amidst linguistic pragmatism and constant attempts of Putonghua promotion by the authorities.

The light has then been cast on the linguistic features of Cantonese in both its spoken and written form, discovering the high traits of distinctiveness which distinguish it from Putonghua. Finally, a discussion on the status and the degree of standard language held by spoken and written Cantonese in Hong Kong has been concluded by suggesting a simultaneous presence of standard and non-standard characteristics, with some encouraging elements for future developments.

An as clear as possible outline of Cantonese being provided, it is now time to concentrate uniquely on Hong Kong, its most promising center, describing its history, identity and language composition.

3. Hong Kong, the headquarters of Cantonese

After the previous overview on Cantonese and its territory, we now focus on the specific setting of this work's analysis, Hong Kong, a place which, for historical, political, social, and linguistic reasons has overtaken the role of Guangzhou as headquarters of Cantonese in the last decades.

The next pages will go through its history, form the origins as a Yue area to its inclusion to the British Crown as a consequence of the First Opium War, from the last century's challenges and achievements of its multiethnic and multilingual society to the political return to China in 1997 and the changes it brought. A small case study on the development of cinema in Hong Kong will give an example of the interplay of Cantonese and Putonghua throughout the territory's history. Such developments will then be the key to understand the subsequent illustration of the language composition of Hong Kong society from the beginning of the last century to the present times: the changes within the dominance of English in matters of status and prestige, the growing, then established strength of Cantonese as for number of speakers and in comparison to the other Chinese varieties, the later emergence of Putonghua started in proximity to the handover and in constant growth in the most recent years. A corresponding analysis of the evolving patterns of diglossia in Hong Kong will be added to such picture to frame the language composition of the territory in terms of linguistics.

3.1. History of Hong Kong

Bordering with Guangdong in the north, Hong Kong is situated on the south-east coast of China, by the South China Sea. It is divided in three main parts: Hong Kong Island, which was obtained by Britain from China in 1842, the Kowloon Peninsula situated in front of it, which became British in 1860, and the New Territories in the north of Kowloon, a larger area leased from China to Britain for ninety-nine years, in 1898. Included in these areas are numerous islands, the most important being Lantau, Lamma, and Cheung Chau. Hong Kong

was returned to the People's Republic of China on July 1, 1997, becoming a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of it (Endacott 1958: 1-2; CIA - The World Factbook).

Hong Kong has a total area of 1.104 square kilometers and a coastline of 733 km. It lies within the tropics and has a monsoon type of climate, with dry and cool winters and hot and humid summers, occasionally threatened by typhoons. Its geographical position and features are favorable: the harbor, surrounded by deep waters and almost landlocked, is an ideal anchorage for shipping. Lying at the delta of the Pearl River, it is little more than 100 km distant from Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong; Shenzhen, one of the major cities of the same province, lies just across the border to the north (Endacott 1958: 1-2; CIA - The World Factbook).

Despite its hilly and mountainous terrains and its rather small surface, Hong Kong has a high population: the 2011 Census counted 7.071.576 residents[20]; in mid-2010, the density was 6.540 persons per square kilometer[21] (reaching 54.530 persons/square kilometer in the Kowloon district of Kwun Tong), which makes Hong Kong one of the most densely populated places in the world (Census and Statistics Department 2012, GovHK 2012a).

Before becoming the major financial and commercial center it is today, Hong Kong underwent a long and complex history which shaped its present identity and role in the region.

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[20] The 2014 updated statistic figures recorded a mid-year 2013 population of 7.187.500 residents (Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong 2014: 10).
[21] Updated to 6.650 of 2013 (Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong 2014: 11).
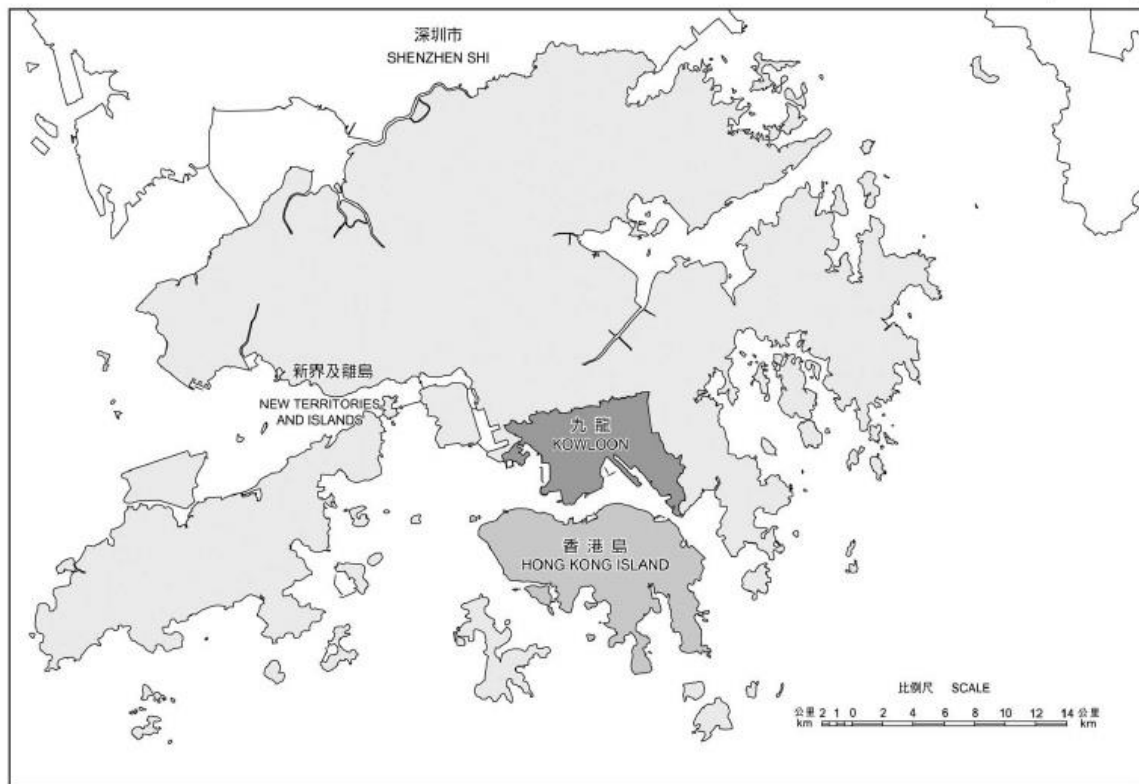
Figure 3: Map of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) (Source: Census and Statistics Department 2012b: M1).

3.1.1. From the origins to the British rule

Findings reveal the inhabitance of the Hong Kong area since primitive times. Like Guangdong, Hong Kong was originally populated by Yue tribes, which mixed with Han throughout the centuries. During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Hong Kong tightened its links with the rest of China and expanded the activities of its port. The area counted settlements where farming was the main activity, as well as coastal villages with markets and ports for fishing. Considering this, the description of Hong Kong as a 'barren island' with a 'handful of fishermen and pirates' often used by British historians, a place of scarce relevance before the British settlement, does not seem to be appropriate (Carroll 2007: 9-10). At the time of the settlement, the inhabitants of the area consisted in Cantonese people called Puntis,

then the Hakka, and the Hoklos, coming from the northern coast and speaking Fujian dialects (Endacott 1958: 2-4).

The origins of the history of Hong Kong under British rule lie in the trade relationships between European powers and China, which started with the opening of sea routes by the Portuguese and their settlement in Macao, in the sixteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, China was trading with Britain and western countries from Guangzhou (Canton), which worked as only open port of China. Mutual understanding between the parts was poor because of the high degree of limits and regulations in exchanges, prejudices and, from the Chinese side, scarce social consideration of merchants and lack of a diplomatic tradition on a level of equality (Endacott 1958: 4-7). Moreover, it was mainly the foreigners who were interested in Chinese export (silk, porcelain, tea, etc.), whereas China had no need for European products. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, Britain found a solution to that by introducing to China the opium produced in its Indian colonies. The rapid expansion of the opium market created enormous economic and social problems to China, corruption among those. By the end of the 1830s, the Chinese administration sent the Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu to Guangzhou for suppressing the opium trade. In March 1839, Lin ordered all the opium in possession of foreign merchants to be given up, and the British withdrew. The conflict which followed, the First Opium War, ended in 1842 with the British victory and the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing. More Chinese ports were opened to trade, a high indemnity was imposed on China and Hong Kong, the 'fragrant harbour' was ceded to Britain (Sabattini & Santangelo 2008: 531-533).

The British considered the war the ultimate move to achieve smooth commercial relations with the Heavenly Empire. The island of Hong Kong was occupied on January 26, 1841, but was declared a colony just on June 26, 1843, with Sir Henry Pottinger as first governor. The possession of an island on the Chinese coast had the advantage of making it possible for British citizens to continue trading in Guangzhou while living in its proximity and under the security of the national flag (Endacott 1958: 14-23).

3.1.2. Development as a colony

Soon after the occupation, Hong Kong was reached by many Europeans, western missionaries, and Chinese from Guangdong, who mixed with the local population. It cannot be said that the first years of British settlement in Hong Kong were easy: troubles for criminality and piracy, slowing down the trade flux, were common and many were the deaths for disease, especially malaria. By the end of the 1850s, further Sino-British issues brought to the Second Opium War, which ended in 1860 with the cession of peninsula of Kowloon, facing Hong Kong Island, to Britain. Even though antagonism and mutual suspicion between European and Chinese were common at those times, the city eventually expanded: foreign merchants were dealing with opium, tea, and silk, whereas Chinese served as contractors, laborers, servants, interpreters, and clerks. Trade and emigration defined the commercial features of the early decades of the new British colony. Because of Hong Kong's free market and political independence from China, many western firms chose it as headquarter in Asia; Chinese merchants escaped from the Taiping rebellion of the 1850s and settled in the colony, while other Chinese responded to the needs of cheap labor of United States, Canada, Australia, and the like, by emigrating and sending back their remittances through Hong Kong companies (Carroll 2007: 18-35).

Hong Kong society, which included especially Europeans, Chinese, Indians and Eurasians, was multiethnic yet divided since its very beginning. The colony was administered by a governor appointed by the British Crown, which made little resources available for social welfare or education, the goal being to run the colony without big expenditures. In the European community, the British tended to put most stress on social status, the top of which was represented by living on Victoria Peak, the highest point of the island, and being member of elite clubs. Most of the Chinese population was formed by people from the lower classes, but also comprised of merchants who gradually became part of the community's establishment. Since the colonial government did not take much interest in its Chinese subjects, the Chinese community organized itself independently and formed its own leadership. Coexistence was not easy and episodes of racism, especially from the European side, were not rare (Carroll 2007: 35-53).

In June 1898, Britain leased for 99 years the 'New Territories', a predominantly rural Chinese area between Kowloon and the Shenzhen River, approximately ten times bigger than Hong Kong Island and Kowloon together; other 230 outlying islands, some considerably big, were also leased. Widespread resistance was faced by the British in taking control of the New Territories, since the area was very tightly connected with Guangdong. Throughout the following decades, the New Territories played an increasingly important role in the dynamics of Hong Kong, nevertheless it preserved many Chinese traditional customs even longer than mainland China, especially after the advent of communism (Carroll 2007: 67-72).

At the beginning of the 20th century, in spite of declarations of neutrality, the colonial status of Hong Kong influenced the development of Chinese revolutionary ideas and the government passively supported them. China's leader Sun Yat-Sen, 'father of the nation', spent some years of his education in Hong Kong, where he developed his ideals for a new China by observing the order in the colony and contrasting it with the unhappy situation in the mainland. After the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911, former Qing officials moved to Hong Kong, followed by major waves of refugees escaping the post-republican troubles: by 1914, Hong Kong population reached half a million (Carroll 2007: 72-83).

In the years after the First World War, the power of the Chinese elite increased and some limited openings were made to include prominent exponent of the Chinese community in the administration. The numerous strikes which took place in the 1920s, echoing the May Fourth Movement and the communist activities in the mainland, showed the government that it needed to work more closely with the local Chinese leaders in order to keep the situation under control. The European and the Chinese communities, however, did not stop living largely separate lives and Chinese citizens kept facing enormous limitations for taking part in the colony's European-dominated public sector (Carroll 2007: 84-115).

In the second part of 1937, Japan invaded China and again Hong Kong became a shelter for refugees (around 250.000). In December 1941, however, British Hong Kong also fell and became a Japanese colony until August 1945, facing harsh times of food shortage and arbitrary violence by the Japanese military police, directed both to Europeans and Chinese (Carroll 2007: 116-129; Courtauld & Holdsworth: 52-57).

3.1.3. Growth, contrasts, and search for stability

Post-war Hong Kong recovered quickly thanks to a new spirit of unity between Europeans and Chinese and to new injections in economy given by Chinese entrepreneurs who escaped from the civil war between Nationalists and Communists in the mainland. Racial discrimination decreased and the prohibition for Chinese to live on Victoria Peak was finally abolished (Carroll 2007: 129-135). The newborn People's Republic of China seemed not to be interested in fueling political disorders in Hong Kong, not only because of the possibility that the British colony could turn to the enemy in Taiwan, but also because a 'capitalist' Hong Kong was useful for the PRC as an opening through which Chinese goods could be imported and exported. In order to defend its territory and safeguard its investments in the mainland, Britain acknowledged the PRC in 1950. Under the trade embargo on China posed by the United States and the UN embargo on strategic goods during the Korean War (1950-1953), an impressive amount of goods was smuggled through Hong Kong. Episodes of tension between Hong Kong, the PRC, and the United States in its fight against communism were not rare (Buckley 1997: 40-48, Carroll 2007: 135-143).

During the 1950s and 1960s, Hong Kong grew impressively especially in its Chinese-driven textile industry, pushed by readily available capital, the entrepreneurs' ambition and ingenuity, and the eagerness and flexibility of the workforce. Contrasting with this exciting picture was the persistence of housing problems, overcrowding, poor working conditions, and minimal welfare and education (Buckley 1997: 48-56, 73). From the 1950s to 1970, the population doubled from 2 to 4 million, while thousands of citizens could not afford proper housing and lived in wooden houses in squatter areas, constantly threatened by fire (Cheuk 2008: 29-30).

Although fearing that more extensive investments on welfare could drive even bigger waves of immigration from the mainland (in communist China, this was the famine period of the Great Leap Forward, 1958-61), the colonial government attempted to tackle the housing problem by developing new towns. Nevertheless, social tension exploded towards the end of the 1960s, initially with a protest on the increase of the Star Ferry fares (connecting Kowloon to Hong Kong Island) in 1966, then, more dangerously, in May 1967, when a dispute over wages and working hours escalated in six months of clashes, inspired by the Cultural

Revolution which was agitating China in the meantime. The protesters fought with the colonial police, set cars and buses on fire and planted bombs in the city; thousands of people were arrested and jailed (often without trial), others were secretly deported, while relations between Britain and China reached the lowest point since the birth of the PRC. These so-called 'disturbances' had multiple effects on Hong Kong. To most of the Chinese inhabitants, they showed how precious Hong Kong stability was, especially in comparison with the chaos in China (many Chinese in Hong Kong just escaped that by fleeing to the colony): a sense of belonging to a special, distinct community started growing. Besides, the administration finally admitted the need to improve the situation of the lower classes, especially in labor and education, and to foster better communication between government and citizens (Carroll 2007: 149-160).

The first governor chosen among diplomats and not among colonial officials, Murray MacLehose, governed from 1971 to 1982 and was the one who made the colony's administration shift from laissez-faire to a more interventionist attitude. Unlike his predecessors, he appreciated the concept of welfare and social assistance and promoted major changes in public housing, primary education, transport, labor legislation, social welfare, and the like. Old prewar structures were torn down and replaced by new towns; farmland or coastal swamps (especially in the New Territories) were turned into housing areas so that, by 1983, more than 40 percent of the population was living in government housing; the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) was developed; the education moved away from the elitist secondary and tertiary system of the 1960s and moved towards the mass education system which is in place today; schooling up to 15 years was made compulsive; around 40 percent of the territory was set for country parks, which prevented Hong Kong to become an urban sprawl; the serious problem of corruption in society was faced.

MacLehose's reforms were backed by economic growth, with the colony's gross domestic product growing at an average of 10 percent a year from the 1960s to the 1970s and then by five times until the early 1980s. The achievement of peaceful relations with China also helped. However, the flux of refugees from the mainland (and from Vietnam, after the war), a valuable pool of cheap labor yet an issue for Hong Kong resources, kept being a challenge for the administration. Despite his merits, MacLehose always rejected the proposals to introduce political reforms in the administration: at the beginning of the 1980s, Hong Kong was still run

in a colonial style, with basically no space for any form of democratic representation (Buckley 1997: 84-97; Carroll 2007: 160-164; Courtauld & Holdsworth 1997: 84). This shortcoming proved burdensome when Deng Xiaoping's China started claiming its rights on the territory.

3.1.4. Returning to China

After being disgraced during the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping returned to the leadership of the PRC and, towards the end of the 70s, launched an open door policy with the stress on markets, liberalization, and cooperation with other countries (with the CCP holding its control on the political field). The coastal Special Economic Zones, in proximity with Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, gave the lead. China's new attitude shaped trade relations with Hong Kong: business, tourism, finance, and new collaborations boomed, while Hong Kong started focusing on financial services rather than on manufacture (Kwok & Ames 1995, Buckley 1997: 98-103).

At that point, Britain also needed to negotiate with the PRC for the continuation of the lease of the New Territories, which lasted until 1997. However, holding a permanent seat at the UN and in the process of opening its markets, China now aimed at becoming a new world power and could not accept to be considered dependent on a colony for trade and exchange with the outside world anymore. The visit of Margaret Thatcher to Beijing in 1982 failed to come to a deal consisting in the sole cession of the New Territories, since such area was no longer neatly divided with Kowloon (with offices and factories not following the old border demarcation). The negotiations between Britain and China on the reversion of Hong Kong to the PRC lasted until 1984, when its result, the Sino-British Joint Declaration, was signed (Buckley 1997: 104-119).

The Joint Declaration and the Basic Law (Hong Kong's mini constitution, based on the Joint Declaration and promulgated by the PRC in 1990) determined that Hong Kong would be reverted to China on July 1, 1997; after that, Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region of the PRC, holding autonomous executive, legislative, and judicial power (Basic Law, Article 2), while China would be responsible for Hong Kong's defense and foreign affairs (Basic Law, Article 13, 14). Hong Kong's social and economic system

would remain unchanged, together with the rights of freedom of speech, assembly, and religion. The socialist system and policies would not be practiced (Basic Law, Article 5); Hong Kong would retain control of its own trade policies and remain a free port, with no taxes to be paid to Beijing. The one country, two systems arrangement would last for fifty years after the 1997 handover which, according to Deng Xiaoping, is a slot of time which was defined in light of China's developmental needs (Carroll 2007: 180-181, Courtauld & Holdsworth 1997: 94).

As regards Hong Kong's administration, it was established that the Chief Executive of Hong Kong (the new governor) is to be elected every five years (Basic Law, Article 46) by an Election Committee composed by 800 members representing the different sectors of the society (Basic Law, Annex I). The Executive Council (ExCo) is selected by the Chief Executive and has the task to assist him/her in policy making (Basic Law, Article 55). The Legislative Council (LegCo) is formed by 60 members, half of whom are directly elected in the SAR's geographical constituencies, the other half of whom are elected by the city's functional constituencies (groups of professionals). Before the Chief Executive and the LegCo elections in 2012, the members of the Election Committee have been raised to 1.200 and the LegCo members to 70 (GovHK 2009).

Hongkongers observed the Sino-British negotiation with mixed feelings: some actively followed the processes and became more involved in civil society, while others, worried about Hong Kong's future, decided to emigrate. Whereas old people, especially those coming from the mainland, feared a return to China, many younger citizens were optimistic and believed that that under Deng Xiaoping was a new, different China. The Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 1989, however, made the locals dramatically lose their faith in how the PRC would take care of Hong Kong's future. The PRC Standing Committee's ultimate authority to interpret and amend the Basic Law and to revoke any Hong Kong law which violates it made Hongkongers fear for their own autonomy. In 1991, attempting to safeguard Hong Kong's rights and keeping population's and markets' confidence in its future, Britain enacted the Bill of Rights for Hong Kong, which was promptly opposed by the Chinese government (Carroll 2007: 184-185, 191-193).

Chris Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong, started his mandate in 1992 and announced plans to widen the share of directly elected members of the Legislative Council and reduce the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen, which inevitably created other frictions with Beijing. Although many thought Patten introduced these and other political reforms merely in order to make Britain look better than China and therefore to maintain British influence after 1997, his actions made him conquer large popularity among Hong Kong civil society and local liberal politicians (Buckley 1997: 127-145; Carroll 2007: 203).

Finally, on the 1st of July, 1997, Hong Kong became part of the People's Republic of China, guided by Tung Chee-hwa (a former shipping magnate) as Chief Executive. Britain left the territory with new prestige and respect, portrayed by Western media as the promoter of democratization; the handover constituted a significant victory also for Beijing, which celebrated the end of the colonial shame imposed by the West on China in the 19th century. By that time, local population seemed to look at the return to China with some extent of confidence and optimism, driven in particular by the astounding rhythm of China's economic growth and by the tightened trade relations between Hong Kong and Guangdong. However, Hongkongers' concern that Beijing would hamper Hong Kong's freedom by intervening in its affairs did not disappear (Carroll 2007: 203-215).

3.1.5. Hong Kong after the handover

Hong Kong has faced many challenges after its return to China. Most of them, however, haven't been political, but rather economic and social, and have provoked a widespread sense of lack of confidence in the HKSAR. The Asian financial crisis, which exploded shortly after Hong Kong's reversion to the PRC, invested the newborn Special Administrative Region and precipitated it in large-scale bankruptcies and cost-cutting in enterprises, decline of the stock market and property values, and unemployment, which passed from 2.7 percent in 1997 to 6.3 percent in 2001 (M-L. Lai 2012: 2). In March 2003, before recovering from the economic crisis, Hong Kong was hit by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which infected around 1.800 people and killed almost three hundred, also harming the region's tourism industry. China's entry to WTO in 2001 challenged Hong Kong's competitiveness on international markets and diminished its status of window to and for the mainland (Carroll

2007: 218). The administration's repeated policy failures in addressing these crises, especially the SARS case, further ignited social discontent, which culminated with a demonstration of 500.000 on July 1, 2003 and the resignation of Tung Che-hwa in 2005 (Lee 2005: 11-12). In more recent times, the HKSAR was not spared by the 2008 financial crisis either (M-L. Lai 2012: 3).

In spite of that, today's Hong Kong maintains its status of major financial and service center: the majority of its population is ethnic Chinese, the rest comprises Indians, South Asians, and Westerners. The tourism sector has grown, especially because of the high influx of mainland visitors, who also boosted the Region's shopping industry. Hong Kong is internationally well known as a dynamic hybrid between East and West, reflected in its inhabitants' attitudes and in its architecture, cinema and cuisine (Carroll 2007: 218-219).

Before 2003, when the 'individual visit' scheme was introduced by the HKSAR for mainland visitors to reach Hong Kong, getting to Hong Kong from the mainland could be very hard. After the handover, however, Hong Kong and Guangdong have progressively expanded their ties and have become more and more integrated. Nevertheless, relations between Mainlanders and Hongkongers in the HKSAR are not simple. Researches showed that Hong Kong people (especially young people) tended to consider Mainlanders poor, uneducated and coarse, while Mainlanders found Hongkongers arrogant and unfriendly (Carroll 2007:235). These aspects and their influence on language in Hong Kong will be further analyzed later.

As regards social and political aspects, many Hong Kong citizens are dissatisfied with their administration, which is often accused to limit democracy by complying with Beijing's influence rather than serving Hong Kong people. Hong Kong's freedom of expression and press is enforced: the most important demonstrations and protests held every year are on the anniversary of the return to China, the 1st of July, and the commemoration of the Tiananmen Massacre on the 9th of June. However, many controversies have arisen throughout the post-handover years, in particular concerning the authorities' interpretation of the Article 23 of the Basic Law, which gives the HKSAR government the right to "prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government" and to prohibit political organizations to establish ties with foreign political organizations (Carroll 2007: 219-228).

Hong Kong's current Chief Executive is Chun-ying Leung, who has been elected in March 2012. The electoral campaign prior to the election and Leung's victory itself have been the center of tumultuous protests and debates about democracy in Hong Kong and Beijing's influence on the HKSAR's politics (BBC News China).

Looking at these ideological contrasts with the PRC, many Western observers often depict Hong Kong as it was under British rule as a place of democracy and freedom of expression. What is often overseen, however, is that liberal reforms were not launched by Britain before the countdown to 1997. By being so late in introducing democratic forms of administration, the colonial government actually made it possible for Beijing to oppose such political changes in the future. Hong Kong has been administered in the colonial way for the 150 years prior to the 1990s, which means that little or no possibilities were given to the local society for more ample forms of representation and democratic involvement. Senior positions in the public sector were generally dominated by Europeans on the ground that Chinese were not qualified or trustworthy enough. The identification of Hong Kong with laissez-faire and free market economy enabled the colonial government to run the territory by overlooking welfare, education, housing, and equality, letting Hong Kong become a place where deep poverty was faced by enormous wealth (Carroll 2007: 228-230).

During the colonial years, Hong Kong people have been traditionally considered as politically apathetic. It is true Hong Kong citizens could have pressed more the colonial government for representation and equality, as well as that political and social activists in the 1970s often encountered disapproval from the Chinese community on the ground that Hong Kong was already much better than China and that protests could make fall the territory into chaos. On the other hand, the interest in politics which rose in Hong Kong civil society in the 1980s and 1990s and signaled the presence of a local identity, manifested in particular at the time of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and of the reactions to the Tiananmen Massacre, cannot be denied (Carroll 2007: 230-231). At any rate, the present feeling of frustration and the sensation of many Hongkongers that they are not the makers of their own political future has a starting point: it is striking that broader sectors of Hong Kong civil society have not been involved in any of the stages of the Sino-British negotiations prior to the handover;

these, however, are points which deserve a room for discussion which would overcome the extent of this work.

The description of the socio-historic background of Hong Kong which has just been delivered can now give way to a look on how Hong Kong movies have reflected such evolutions, a small case study presenting an outline of the development of Hong Kong cinema. The topic of cinema has not been casually chosen: cinema in Hong Kong, in fact, has always presented dialectic patterns of interchanging relationship of the territory with the mainland, and Cantonese with Putonghua, the theme of the present work. Furthermore, cinema is one of the features which not only has made Hong Kong internationally well-known, but has also contributed to shape local identity and language attitudes in the last decades of the 20th century. It is thus hoped that the following overview, with its special focus of language, will constitute a further support to better understand the special Cantonese-Putonghua relationship of Hong Kong.

3.2. Cantonese and Putonghua, local and mainland dialectic in the evolution of the cinema of Hong Kong

Cinema is rooted in and part of Hong Kong's cultural tradition and identity. Because of the previous colonial status and of the peripheral location, the local movie industry has been elaborating peculiar and independent features since the origins, presenting a constant dialectic between local and Chinese identity, Cantonese and Putonghua productions, injecting them with western elements and innovation. Since the 1920s, Hong Kong developed as a major center for Cantonese filmmaking, exploring, portraying and nourishing Hong Kong's identity thanks to linguistic affinity and identification with the local audience. Additionally, the constant competition between Cantonese and Mandarin cinema, the cultural differences and conflicts between them, and their mutual artistic interchanges, primarily contributed to the uniqueness of Hong Kong cinema (Fu & Desser 2000: 1-2).

The origins of Hong Kong Cantonese cinema have much to do with mainland China. In the 1930s, in fact, the British colony was chosen by refined filmmakers and actors from Shanghai (which was known as the 'Hollywood of the East' since the 1920s) as a safe base for expanding the market and avoiding the social, political and economic turmoil agitating China. After that, The Sino-Japanese War, the civil war and the birth of the PRC created another wave of mainland cinema talents who joined the ranks of Hong Kong movie industry.

By the mid-30s, sound films replaced silent movies and the Cantonese movie industry of Hong Kong and Guangzhou grew to a level which challenged the technically superior Shanghai movies, played in Mandarin. Language was an advantage: in Guangdong, Guangxi, Hong Kong, but also in the Cantonese speaking Southeast Asia and North America, people loved to see films in their mother tongue. From then to the 1960s, Cantonese cinema developed under the influence of many forms of local theater, in particular Cantonese opera, integrating drama, music, singing and dance (Kar & Bren 2004: 113, 120, Yung 2005: 33-34).

However, the growth of Cantonese cinema in the mainland was challenged by its political happenings. Following Chiang Kai Shek's New Life Movement, in 1936 the Nanjing government banned Cantonese-dialect films in order to expand Mandarin and regain control of the separatist areas of Guangdong and Guangxi. The ban, however, was never really implemented because of the start of the Sino-Japanese war. Hong Kong Cantonese cinema could then survive and make a strong comeback after the Second World War, overcoming nationalist censorship in China by succeeding in the local and South Asian markets (Teo 2011: 104-107).

In the 1950s, the main categories of Cantonese movies were martial arts (*wuxia* 武侠) films, Cantonese opera films, and melodrama, with the Hong Kong proletariat and lower middle class as natural and loyal audience (Kar & Bren 2004: 174-176). The 1950s also marked the birth of Wong Fei-Hung movies, which featured fights with fists and legs rather than with the traditional sword of Mandarin style *wuxia*. Known as 'kung fu' movies, such new style films dominated the market in the 1950s and 1960s and paved the way for the international kung fu movies craze of the 1970s (Teo 2011: 108-109).

3.2.1. Challenges, success and innovation

The 1960s, a decade of social turmoil in Hong Kong, marked a steady loss of market for Cantonese movies to the advantage of the more cosmopolitan and better-financed Mandarin film studios (such as the famous Shaw Brothers Studio from Shanghai). According to the 1961 census, half of the total population of Hong Kong was under the age of 21. At a time when the local economy was booming but wealth was distributed unevenly, those Hong Kong-born young people joined the ranks of industrial labor: internationalization and wider job opportunities increased their independence as well as their differences with older generations, loosening gender hierarchies and traditional social values (Fu 2000: 71-76). Mandarin and Cantonese movie industries responded to this radically changing market in different ways. The Mandarin Shaw Brother Studio won the battle by investing in the new mass consumer economy, adopting a cosmopolitan and fashionable approach which had little connection with the local reality but made Mandarin movies join Hollywood movies as most popular entertainment in the colony. Such pragmatist attitude sharply contrasted with the conservatism of Cantonese movies, still dominated by social didacticism and traditional values of filial piety and community. Around the mid-1960s, Cantonese filmmakers finally attempted to appeal the younger, better educated, Cantonese-speaking generations, such as factory workers, young housewives, and high school students. The new movies portrayed scenes of daily life and issues, yet delivered the paternalistic discourse promoted by the colonial government and its Chinese advisors, who were trying to stabilize Hong Kong society after the alarming facts of 1966 and 1967 (Fu 2000: 76-87).

In the 1970s, it was the Mandarin industry which made Hong Kong movies famous worldwide by innovating the kung fu movies belonging the Cantonese tradition. Spearheaded by the astonishing success of Bruce Lee (and later Jackie Chan), kung fu movies conquered an unprecedented success all over the world (Dalla Gassa & Tomasi 2010: 303-306, Teo 2000: 97). The characters portrayed by Bruce Lee constantly engaged in fights for the humble and against the tyrannical, becoming cross-cultural heroes of all those victims of discrimination and exploitations, the opponents of the establishment, and the promoters of counterculture (P.T. Cheung 2008: 44, Kar & Bren 2004: 292).

By the end of the 1970s, the talent pool of Mandarin cinema diminished steadily and Cantonese came back as dominating language of entertainment for Hong Kong. To the younger generation of Hong Kong filmmakers, members of the so-called New Wave, the matter of identity and national cinema had to be addressed in a local way and by speaking the mother tongue, Cantonese (Teo 2000: 94, 108).

The Hong Kong New Wave is nowadays seen as a landmark in Hong Kong cinema, a transition from a culturally China-centered entity to a sophisticated and independent one. It reflected reality since, at that time, the psychological, cultural, and political distance of the modernized new generation with China was clear. Such new generations not only had no native memory of China, but also they had grown increasingly urban and international, as the boosting local economy made local consciousness develop. The stage of localization of Hong Kong cinema was completed in the late 1970s, when the booming television industry (e.g., TVB) entirely adopted Cantonese as medium of communication and TV drama series in Cantonese. TV series also featured Cantonese theme songs, which increased the popularity of Cantonese pop music, "Canto Pop". The New Wave emerged around 1978 and, in the following decade, locally produced movies dominated over imported ones in the local market (Cheuk 2008: 9-19, 42-43; Leung 2000: 236).

The New Wave was represented by a group of young directors (most notably Ann Ho, Yim Ho, Tsui Hark, etc.) who entered the movie industry after receiving film training overseas and in local TV productions. Their talent and open-mindedness raised the quality of Cantonese films and made them regain their foregrounding place in Hong Kong movie industry, gaining critical approval also on international stages. Covering a wide range of genres but mainly based on realistic topics and local concerns, the movies of the New Wave portrayed people of all classes and current local events, from stories of migrants to crime thrillers (Lee 2011: 131-138).

3.2.2. Current features of Hong Kong cinema

By the mid-1980s, the die was cast for Hong Kong's return to the Mainland and the sort of identity crisis Hong Kong society was going through was reflected in its movies. Feelings of loss of identity, order versus resistance, identification with the motherland versus refusal of it,

were to be seen in many kinds of productions, from martial arts films in historical settings (by Tsui Hark or Stephen Chiau) to ghost stories, cop-and-robber movies, or post-modern nostalgic ones (by Wong Kar-wai). Gangster movies, a very popular genre, often represented ambiguous conflicts between gang brotherhood and kin family, which seemed to echo the local versus Chinese identity issue; others, like *Days of Being Wild* (Wong Kar-wai 1990), involved the theme of a son searching for and subsequently rejecting, killing or escaping from his mother, an allegory of the ambiguous feelings for China, the motherland (Dai 2005: 82-91; Dalla Gassa & Tomasi 2010: 319-323; Ryan 1995: 61-76).

Curiously, although the movies of the late 1980s and early 90s narrated apprehension and rejection of China, they ended up taking over its market (which they were allowed to enter in the mid-80s), becoming part of the PRC's popular culture by responding to the feelings of estrangement and hopelessness which pervaded Chinese society after the facts of Tiananmen of June fourth, 1989 (Dai 2005: 92-93).

After the handover and the hard hit of the Asian crisis, the finances of the Hong Kong film industry diminished while its so-called post-nostalgic movies reflected local political, economic, social uncertainties and feelings of estrangement, abandoning the narrative of Hong Kong's strength and success. Hong Kong post-handover movies look for new beginnings, mediating between the persistent attachment to the local dimension and the need to internationalize and look at China to survive in the global market. The pragmatism and commercial-oriented features of Hong Kong cinema make this task easier, but the anxiety of losing local identity in the process remains a central theme in the picture (Lee 2009: 1-18).

In the recent couple of decades, in fact, the mainland factor has shaped the evolution of Hong Kong film industry as never before. In the mid-1980s, the Chinese government lifted its ban on foreign movies (Hong Kong, as British colony, included: Hong Kong movies could enter the PRC just through pirated copies or illegally installed antennas in the Pearl River Delta) and started allowing external studios to co-produce films with Mainland agencies. Still, such chances imply that Hong Kong movies have to negotiate their own nature: productions can no longer focus exclusively on local issues and use of Cantonese obviously does not dominate as much as before. Moreover, the scripts of co-produced movies are strictly scrutinized by PRC authorities in order to avoid 'corrupt' messages to be delivered to Chinese

audience (Dai 2005: 84-86, Morris 2005: 3; Pang 2002: 55-61). On the one hand, Hong Kong is eager to take the mainland market, where its exotic yet almost familiar cinema sells well; on the other hand, China takes advantage of the HKSAR movie industry's know-how and business expertise, shifting from ideology to commodity in its contents. However, this game could prove risky for the social, political, and cultural individuality of Hong Kong cinema. Despite its sense of cultural superiority over Chinese cinema thanks to its long history and international position, as a matter of fact Hong Kong movie industry has become economically dependent on China (Pang 2002: 61-66).

In the never-ending dynamics of interchange between Hong Kong and mainland cinema, and under increased tendencies of unification, it remains to be seen whether the fears that the identity and uniqueness of the first will be absorbed and flattened out by the latter will prove true.

Keeping in mind the complex historical and social background of Hong Kong which has just been provided, it is now time to further analyze the language compositions of the territory and take a closer look at the evolution of its three major players: Cantonese, Putonghua and English.

3.3. Languages in Hong Kong Society

The rich and complex history of Hong Kong illustrated before, made of transitions, exchanges, migrations, and blending, left its legacy in the local language landscape, a various and intricate mix of not only Cantonese, Putonghua, and English, but also of other Chinese varieties, such as Hakka (Kejia), Chaozhou, Hokkien (belonging to the Min group and including Taiwanese), Tanka (spoken by the Hong Kong boat people), Shanghainese, etc., not to mention other Asian and Western languages. Especially in the last decades, Hong Kong people and its administration have worked for taking maximal advantage of this peculiar status by adopting an attitude which Pennington (1998: 23) calls *linguistic entrepreneurship*. Resembling the inclinations of its society, in fact, the use of language in Hong Kong is characterized by pragmatic innovation and flexibility, as visible in the mix of English,

Cantonese and the introduction of Putonghua in language policy, as well as the alternation of Standard Chinese and Cantonese for the Chinese written form (Pennington 1998: 23, Li: 1998). Let us now illustrate these attitudes in an outline of Hong Kong's languages, where an overview on their statistical composition on pre- and post-handover stages will be examined together with a reflection on the role the major languages play for local speakers and in society.

3.3.1. Language Censuses and the roles of English and 'Chinese'

A look at some of the language censuses carried out in Hong Kong show how statistical data reflect the territory's historical developments and social composition, representing a situation dominated by Cantonese in numbers, the absence of Putonghua at the beginning and its recent expansion, and the last decades' increase of English competence brought by wider educational possibilities.

The 1911 Census was the first in the history of Hong Kong to include questions of language background of the colonial subject. Cantonese (then called 'Punti', from 本地 *bun2dei1* 'local') was the predominant language habitually spoken at home (81.1%), followed by Hakka (15.1%) and Hoklo, a category which incorporated the Chinese varieties of Chiu Chau and Fukien ('Hokkien', of the Min group) with 1.9%: today, after a century, all of these varieties are still present in Hong Kong. The absence of any reference to Putonghua is actually not surprising, taking into consideration that the first official attempts to promote a national language in mainland China did not take place before the 1920s.

After fifty years, the 1961 Census revealed that the majority of Hong Kong population (at that time, exceeding three millions), almost 80%, still considered Cantonese their 'usual language'. English was reported as usual language of 1.21% of the population. As for other Chinese varieties, Sze Yap varieties (spoken in the lower reaches of the West River in Guangdong and commonly included with Cantonese, but actually unintelligible to a Cantonese speaker) were also reported. Besides, Shanghainese (2.65%) and 'Kuo Yu'

(Putonghua/Mandarin, 0.99%) also appeared for the first time, reflecting changes in both the patterns of migration to Hong Kong and in the language situation in mainland China.

Before the immediate pre-handover times, Putonghua gained momentum in the 50s, when Putonghua-speaking refugees from all over China escaped the political and economic chaos of the mainland by fleeing to Hong Kong, and in the late 1960s, when Putonghua movies overtook the flourishing Hong Kong film industry. Thanks to Putonghua movies, Hong Kong population started growing a passive competence in the language, which was somehow interrupted when the Cantonese film industry retook the scene in the 1970s, as well as with the assimilation of the new generations of Putonghua speakers into Cantonese (Lord 1987: 8-9, Pierson 1998: 96-97). Lord (1987) adds language fatigue to the reasons of the end of such Putonghua revival: although Cantonese speakers were starting to understand Putonghua, the latter still remained a second language to them. However, according to Lord, the identification of Putonghua as a 'second' language for Hong Kong people does not imply that it was or is considered a 'foreign' language since, apart from the obvious historical and ethnic ties with China and Chinese, the Chinese written form officially used and taught in Hong Kong schools has always been Standard Chinese (Lord 1987: 8-9). Later on, Putonghua started emerging again, this time as a language for business, along with the PRC's 'open-door' policy of the late 1970s, which triggered commercial and political exchanges with provinces and cities of the mainland, and with the expansion of the city of Shenzhen on the northern border of Hong Kong, populated by a big community of Putonghua-speaking migrants (Pierson 1998: 92).

'Chinese', the language of the overwhelming majority of Hong Kong inhabitants, was only recognized as an official language by the local government in 1974, after ten years of debates. The option of implementing a bilingual policy for official communications was first raised in 1964, quickly dismissed by the authorities and then picked up by students of the Hong Kong University, who demanded forums and meetings at the university to be conducted in Chinese and English rather than just in English. Pushed by students' movements, the bilingual policy goal was brought to the Legislative Council in 1968. The government agreed to work on it but little progress was made until, after demonstrations were held by a number of pressure groups, an official Chinese Language Committee was formed in 1970 and made a series of

recommendations. Chinese was finally made official language in 1974, but not all the Committee's recommendations were adopted, maintaining a de facto hegemony of English, which remained unshaken until several years before the handover (Tsui 2007: 127-128). Besides, the term 'Chinese', did not designate any specific variety, as it could very well imply Cantonese or Putonghua, the written form Standard Chinese or the other Chinese varieties spoken in Hong Kong. Anyway, it was understood it was Cantonese it was referred to, at least for the spoken form, as most used variety not only in the Hong Kong Chinese community, but overall in Hong Kong (Pierson 1998: 95). Nevertheless, this simple imprecision in terminology alone is enough to indicate how institutionally neglected any variety of Chinese was in pre-handover Hong Kong, despite its dominance in term of number of speakers. Furthermore, even after Chinese was officialized in 1974 and basically until the handover to China, English kept being regarded as superior and the English version of documents was treated as the correct version when arguments arose (Poon 2004: 55).

In the 1991 Census, Japanese (spoken by the Japanese business community) and Filipino (mainly spoken by the imported 'domestic helpers') were registered for the first time. In this Census, interesting points appeared on the reports on languages spoken by the population as 'another language/dialect' (second language), since they presented surprising figures if added to the rates of 'usual language'. For instance, Cantonese constituted the usual language of 88.7% but reached a rate of 95.8% if put together with the rate of population able to speak Cantonese as a second language, a clear evidence that the overwhelming majority of Hong Kong population was Cantonese-speaking. In this way, English emerged as the most popular second language, spoken by 31.6% of the population, although representing the usual language of a mere 2.2%, followed by Putonghua, usual language of 1.1% of Hong Kong people, but spoken by 18.1% of the total (Bacon-Shone & Bolton 1998: 45-56). The 1996 By-census revealed that, while Cantonese remained stable, both English and Putonghua increased considerably, reaching 38.1% and 25.3% respectively (Census and Statistics Department 2007: 39).

The reasons for the spread of English seen above lie in the internationalization of Hong Kong and in the educational reforms of the 1970s; moreover, the increasing migration and exchange of Hong Kong people to various English-speaking countries (especially the UK,

Canada, USA, and Australia) also played a role. The entrance of Putonghua into school curricula, the growth of business exchanges with China, and the forthcoming return to Chinese sovereignty, in turn, can explain the increasing popularity of Putonghua (Bacon-Shone & Bolton 1998: 83-85).

Before the handover, E. Lau (1991) termed English in Hong Kong the 'language of success' which dominated business and administration as well as most secondary and postsecondary institutions and was the main language of written communication and textbooks. In the pre-handover education, the medium of instruction in primary schools was Cantonese (but exclusively English before the 1950s: it was not until then that the administration instituted Chinese primary schools), whereas English became medium of instruction and textbooks for most subjects in nearly all high schools[22] and universities. English proficiency was of capital importance in the examination system which determined the placement of students in high- or low-ranking schools, where employers would look for manpower to serve the international Hong Kong market. That is enough to perceive the high instrumental value of English in Hong Kong, where success in English could facilitate 'success in life' (Hirvela 1991: 123-124). In the Cantonese/English bilingual frame of the handover times, the use of English, as Pennington (1998: 25) described, symbolized 'Western', 'modern', 'academic', 'scientific' and 'technical' experience in the identity and reality of the Hong Kong speaker through metaphorical incorporation. Researches on language attitudes in Hong Kong showed the association of English with 'outer' values such as success, stylishness, achievement, competition, whereas Cantonese was paired with 'inner' values of cooperation, family, tradition, and solidarity (Gibbons 1987, Pierson 1987).

Furthermore, analyzing the linguistic landscape in the years prior to the handover of Hong Kong to China and attempting to cast predictions on future tendencies, Lord (1985, 1987) pointed out that in the previous couple of decades Hong Kong has transformed itself from a more typical colony to a colony-in-transition. Throughout the creation process of this sort of intricate business consortium, focal point of international trade, finance, and communication, from the 1970s on, English gained societal support by expanding from the elite to a bigger share of the population. With the internationalization of Hong Kong, the 'superposed

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[22] 90% at the beginning of the 1990s, according to Luk (1990).

bilingualism' produced by colonization gave way to a more natural form of bilingualism as people saw a genuine need to improve their English; previously superimposed in classrooms, English turned to be the most preferred language of instruction for students and their parents (Poon 2004: 54-55). Basically, its status shifted from that of a purely colonial language and only official language of Hong Kong, belonging to the power spheres of administration, high level business, law courts, and the elites, to a tool to conduct day-to-day operations for a wider and wider range of subjects, however functional to the identity of Hong Kong as an international business hub. Given that and a number of other factors such as expanded population, mass education, and the proximity of the handover to the PRC, Lord rightly predicted that English would probably hold a very important role in Hong Kong, but would cease to be the elite 'prestige norm' it used to be. Additionally, if future Hong Kong wanted to maintain its prosperity as an international trading and business center while strengthening its ties with Beijing, its language policies would have to keep the same standard of English or even improve it, together with putting a much greater emphasis on Putonghua (Lord 1985: 5-6, Lord 1987: 11, 17-18, Pierson 1998: 104).

Apart from its well-established instrumental role for business, in school and administration, and despite its large presence in society (shop names, street signs, textbooks, menus, etc.), English does not seem to have (or have had) much importance for Hong Kong speakers in non-instrumental domains. On the contrary, Cantonese has always been the dominating medium of everyday communication in Hong Kong, facilitated by the minority status of people with English as a first language in the ex-colony, where the rate of non-Chinese people has rarely exceeded 5%. Such lack of a conductive environment, that is, the absence of authentic opportunities for practicing English also because of the persisting divided Western/Chinese social structures in the city, sets apart Hong Kong Chinese people with, for instance, Singaporean Chinese, and can be easily seen as the root of the accuracy problems often spotted in the English spoken by Hong Kong people[23]. The double-identity of English in Hong Kong, an official language largely present in local key domains yet seldom

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[23] In postcolonial Singapore, English was widely promoted for not only commerce, but also racial harmony (Carroll 2007: 232). For an overview on local Hong Kong English, in particular its peculiar accent as marker of social identity, see Bolton & Kwok (1990).

used for intraethnic communications, gives an untypical status to it, somehow that of a second language, somehow that of a foreign one (D. Li 1999, 2009: 74-75).

However, in an interesting development, it appears that in the post-handover years there has been a growing sense of inclusion of English as marker of Hong Kong identity, especially to the eyes of young people (M-L. Lai 2005: 279). At any rate, one and a half decade after the handover and in a radically changed political, sociological, and sociolinguistic setting, with the additional presence of Putonghua on stage, not only English has not been stigmatized as language of the ex-colonizers (unlike in other ex-colonies), but also its importance in Hong Kong society and language policy frames is still undoubtedly stressed (Carroll 2007: 232, Zhang & Yang 2004: 148-149).

As for the Chinese varieties, an interesting tendency shown by the Censuses is the decrease of linguistic diversity within Chinese varieties other than Cantonese and Putonghua in comparison to the early, variegate situation. This phenomenon can be noticed in the tiny share held by such Chinese varieties, brought to Hong Kong in particular by refugees from mainland China, in the domain of 'usual language', together with the increase of Cantonese as 'additional language' from the 1960s on. It is matters of 'language shift' which are of special interest to explain this evolution. The growing social, ethnic and demographic dominance of Cantonese in Hong Kong society, together with its championing a sense of distinctive local identity, put pressure for conformity in the Hong Kong Chinese community of the last decades of the 20th century, making the speakers of other Chinese dialects acculturate themselves to Cantonese (Bacon-Shone & Bolton 1998: 57, Pierson 1994: 45-47, Pierson 1998: 95).

This picture again shows that Cantonese was, and still is, the dominant language of Hong Kong, in spite of the past British colonial rule and the present status as part of the People's Republic of China. Such vitality is to be partly explained by the fact that Hong Kong is populated by a majority of ethnic Cantonese people: the biggest share of Chinese migrants and refugees which moved to Hong Kong in the last decades came from the metropolitan region of Guangzhou (Pierson 1998: 91-92). It is of course to be also reminded that Cantonese people have always seen themselves as a distinctive subgroup, in part because of their relative isolation within China. Moreover, the position of the British colonial

government in language matters, or opportunistic lack of it thereof, played a role in shaping the rise of Cantonese as lingua franca of all Hong Kong ethnic Chinese groups. The absence of the colonial government's interest in preserving linguistic diversity and the cultural heritage of Chinese ethnic groups, together with the exclusion of Putonghua from the school curriculum and the expansion of educational opportunities carried in and through Cantonese, in fact, further facilitated assimilation and pushed the dominance of Cantonese among the other Chinese varieties (Tsui 2007: 131-132).

The last Census carried out in Hong Kong (2011) traces the changes the territory has undergone after its return to China and the economic, political, and social consequences it implied, in particular in terms of language policies. The Census registered 7.071.576 residents[24], among whom 94% declared to be of Chinese ethnicity, about 60% born in Hong Kong and 32% born in mainland China, Taiwan or Macao (Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong 2012b: 5-7). As the table below shows, in 2011 Cantonese was recorded as most spoken language of Hong Kong, with no substantial change in comparison to the previous Censuses: the overwhelming majority of the population, 90%, declared it to be their usual language at home, with an additional 6% claiming they could use it as an additional language. The proportion of population who could speak English either as usual language or as another language reached 46% in 2011, increasing from the 43% reported in 2001 (and the 31% of 1991).

   However, it is Putonghua which presents the most striking total figures: from the 18.1% of the 1991 Census, it reached 47.8% in 2011 with just a slight increase of the rate of those who use it as usual language (a mere 1.4% in 2011). This means that, in the 20 years between 1991 and 2011, competence in Putonghua as an additional language for Hong Kong people steadily increased from 17% to 46.5%: almost 30%.

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[24] The 2014 statistic figures recorded a mid-year 2013 population of 7.187.500 residents (Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong 2014: 10).

Table 12 Proportion of Population Aged 5 and Over Able to Speak Selected Languages/Dialects, 2001, 2006 and 2011

語言／方言 Language/Dialect	作為慣用語言 As the Usual Language			作為其他語言／方言 As Another Language/Dialect			總計 Total		
	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011
廣州話 Cantonese	89.2	90.8	89.5	6.8	5.7	6.3	96.1	96.5	95.8
普通話 Putonghua	0.9	0.9	1.4	33.3	39.2	46.5	34.1	40.2	47.8
英語 English	3.2	2.8	3.5	39.8	41.9	42.6	43.0	44.7	46.1

五歲及以上人口⁽¹⁾的比例（百分比）
Proportion of Population[1] Aged 5 and Over (%)

Table 3: Proportion of Population Aged 5 and Over Able to Speak Selected Languages/Dialects, 2001, 2006 and 2011 (Section) (Source: Census and Statistics Department 2012b: 40)

Such recent developments, direct result of decades of sociopolitical evolution transposed to the linguistic dimension, are of relevant importance to this work and deserve an extensive evaluation.

The present section had the goal of illustrating and explaining the complex dynamics of languages in Hong Kong from the beginning of the last century until present times: the institutional and instrumental role of English, the social dominance of Cantonese and its gradual overtaking other minor Chinese varieties, and the recent emergence of Putonghua as new big player in the local linguistic landscape. We will now conclude part 3 by taking such results into a theoretical framework, before giving way to a further explanation of the information here collected, deepening in particular the Cantonese-Putonghua relationship which characterizes present Hong Kong.

3.3.2. Patterns of diglossia in Hong Kong

The situation of Hong Kong has often been observed through the bilingual/multilingual model of *diglossia* formulated by Ferguson ([1959] 1972), according to which two or more languages can simultaneously be present in a community only when their functions and domains of use are different and complementary. In a classic diglossic setting, one language/variety (H) is used in 'high' domains such as education, government, and written language, while the other (L) adopts 'low' functions and is used for family, neighbourhood settings, daily conversations, and the like. The examples of diglossia given by Ferguson include premodern Europe (with Latin as H variety), the Arabic-speaking world, modern Greece, but also premodern China before the changes of the 20th century. In the Chinese case, the written language Classical Chinese covered the role of high, prestige variety thanks to its use in an enormous heritage of texts which stretched back for over two thousand years, as well as its major importance for reaching political power through the examinations system. Local Chinese vernaculars complemented the pattern as L varieties, the only languages spoken by the vast, uneducated masses (Ferguson [1959] 1972: 237-238). As H, Classical Chinese has functioned for centuries also in other diglossic societies of East Asia, namely in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, where local L varieties differed from Classical Chinese even more than in the Chinese case (Atsuji 1994, Snow 2010).

In diglossic terms, the relationship between English and Cantonese in colonial Hong Kong has been described with English labeled as H and Cantonese as L. However, such model has stopped fitting well the Hong Kong situation from around the 1960s on, when English started giving some ground to Cantonese in many of the traditionally 'high' domains, especially politics and education. A purely diglossic model is inappropriate for Hong Kong especially at present, first of all because Putonghua has entered the local sociolinguistic environment as part of a *triglossic* pattern made of English, Cantonese, and Putonghua, but also because the numerous other languages spoken in multilingual Hong Kong should not be overseen. The Hong Kong community, with its perpetually transitional, ever-changing and flexible political, cultural, and linguistic character, does not seem to let itself being easily categorized in a pure diglossic model, which notoriously requires rather static social and linguistic structures (Pennington 1998: 4-6).

Snow (2010b) re-elaborates the theory of diglossia in a way which can better fit to the current situation. First of all, he describes the English-Cantonese-Putonghua pattern of Hong Kong in terms of Fasold's 'double overlapping diglossia' (Fasold 1984: 44-46), a sort of triglossia constituted by the intersection between two developing diglossia patterns. In this way, English plays the H role to 'Chinese' while, in the local Chinese dimension, Standard Chinese plays an H role to Cantonese. The role of Cantonese as an L variety in Hong Kong society is clear, given that it is the first language of most of the components of the society and is the most used variety for daily speech. While its use expanded to some 'high' domains, its written form is mostly used for informal purposes. On the other hand, both English and Standard Chinese are learned in school and are superior in the domain of formal written language (Snow 2010b: 158).

In the Standard Chinese-Cantonese diglossic relation of Hong Kong proposed by Snow (2010b), Standard Chinese is a language with written rather than spoken functions, rarely used in in-group daily conversations between locals (its spoken form being Putonghua); it is the only written form of Chinese taught in Hong schools and is generally viewed as the proper language to use in serious writing. Unlike in mainland China, the last century's rise of Standard Chinese has not resulted in the disappearance of diglossia in Hong Kong, but rather in a modification of it. Classical Chinese, in fact, was gradually replaced by a new kind of H variety, Standard Chinese, a modern national language with a large and growing body of native speakers. The fact Hong Kong was not politically part of China, however, prevented Standard Chinese from spreading also in L domains, which remained dominated by Cantonese (Snow 2010b: 157-158, 161-162).

In recent decades, Hong Kong diglossia growingly acquired even more peculiar traits in comparison with premodern patterns, for instance, the community's increase of competence in Standard Chinese not only in its written, but also in its spoken form (Putonghua). Closely looking at these phenomena, Snow (2010b) proposes to define the Hong Kong Chinese dimension a prototype of 'modern diglossia', a quite rare pattern carrying features which are currently present just in Hong Kong and in the German-speaking regions of Switzerland.

Modern diglossia distinguishes itself from traditional diglossia in a number of important ways, i.e.: the high degree of modernization of its societies, characterized by mass education and literacy; the fact that H is a modern standard language with a substantial body of native speakers and a powerful society, thus carrying a strong utility value for the diglossic communities; the genetic relatedness between H and L and their proximity from not only a linguistic, but also a cultural point of view; the state of flux which characterizes such modern diglossic societies, opposed to the stability of traditional diglossic cases. Finally, the strong, identity-driven desire to preserve a role for L, although maintaining the diglossic pattern, is of capital importance.

It seems unlikely that Hong Kong modern diglossia will soon disappear. On the one hand, Cantonese is not likely to substitute Standard Chinese in the H domains, first of all because of the latter's prestige in the written form, but also for reasons of PRC-linked utility value and political factors. On the other hand, Standard Chinese/Putonghua is not likely to soon replace Cantonese in its L domain because of the high value given to it by the local community as a symbol of distinctiveness of the Hong Kong identity (Snow 2010b: 165-176).

To sum up, for picturing the ever-changing coexistence of multiple languages in Hong Kong and in particular Cantonese, Putonghua, and English, it seems appropriate to take the 'double overlapping diglossia' model elaborated by Fasold (1984), proposing different layers of diglossia for different languages and levels of language, and considering it within the 'modern diglossia' concept by Snow (2010b). Being the language status of Hong Kong in constant flux, however, even these categorizations are forced to be subject of a non-stop review.

Part 3 has followed the focus on Cantonese linguistics of the previous part by delivering a specific description of the complexity of language situation, society, and history of Hong Kong. The way social and political changes can have immediate consequences on language use in a given place has been exemplified by observing the Hong Kong language dimension after describing the territory's history and the evolution of language use in the specific case of local cinema. An analysis of Language Censuses in Hong Kong has shown such consequences in numbers; finally, the territory's multiple and ever-changing layers of diglossia have been overviewed.

The comprehensive view on Hong Kong and the evolution of its history, society and language provided by this part of the work give us now the tools for focusing on recent developments and understanding them. The attention will be devoted to the features of Hong Kong's language dimension in the years from its return to the PRC up to now. The implementation of language policies and their consequences for Cantonese and Putonghua will be illustrated, especially in the domain of medium of instruction in the local education system. Finally, the future perspectives for Putonghua to expand and integrate in Hong Kong society will be discussed.

4. 'One Country, Two Systems' for languages: Cantonese and Putonghua perspectives in current language policies and attitudes

At this point, it is obvious to recognize that Hong Kong is well-known for the abundance of changes, and sometimes even contrasts and contradictions, it went through in its history: the years after its return to the People's Republic of China in 1997 are not an exception.

Since the handover to China, Hong Kong has been striving to find a new position which can permit it to, at the one hand, keep track with the international trends and maintain a central role in such picture, on the other hand, to take advantage of its status of Special Administrative Region within China, which in the recent decades has been growing as a global power. In this frame of political, social, cultural, and economic adjustments, the right choice of language strategies matters, as the experience of many post-colonial countries all over the world shows.

Hong Kong's current language policies reflect the complexity of its language situation, where the task to find a setting for different needs and powers has been playing a highly challenging role for both policy makers and local community, especially after 1997. It is on the thorny issue of language policies in Hong Kong and their quest to find a balance in multilingualism to serve the new needs of the SAR at best, that this last part of the work will focus. It will devote most of the attention on two of the three major languages involved, Cantonese and Putonghua, with additional reference to the other, English. It will illustrate the challenges faced by Hong Kong policy makers to find a new balance between them, with Cantonese embodying the local culture and identity, Putonghua displaying a dedication to the PRC as much as a new dimension of economic ties, and English representing the maintenance of Hong Kong's status of 'Asia's world city' (Zhang & Yang 2004).

The outcomes of such choices will be observed especially in the domain of education, which has become a sort of battleground for language policy debates. The social tensions between Cantonese, Putonghua, and English and their competing roles within the Hong Kong community, in fact, can be clearly exemplified in the issue on the choice of the medium of instruction (MOI) of Hong Kong schools, where the main stakeholder groups, consisting in

the Hong Kong government, school principals, employers, teachers and scholars, students, parents, etc., have been debating throughout the last years.

4.1. Language policies shaping language distribution

According to Poon (2000: 166-119), 'language planning' and 'language policy' are two different concepts which yet share common characteristics. They are both top-down and intervene on language issues, however language planning must be government-led and deals with status planning and corpus planning only, whereas language policy does not necessarily have to be directed by government and covers a wider range of situations. One of the fields language policy intervenes in is acquisition planning, including policies of language-in-education, to which medium of instruction policies (that is, the language to be used in classroom) belong. Since the reunification of Hong Kong with the PRC, conspicuous efforts have been taken in these areas, which involved Cantonese and Putonghua and made their position on the local stage undergo significant changes.

Under the formula of 'One country, two systems', the PRC guarantees to Hong Kong a large autonomy in running matters of language policy, as an analysis of the Basic Law reveals. Such autonomy involves, for instance, the formulation of policies regarding education, its system and administration, as well as language of instruction, the examination system, etc. (Basic Law, Article 136); moreover, English may be used alongside Chinese in the administration of the HKSAR (Basic Law, Article 9). That means that the responsibility to elaborate policies which can not only reflect the composition of Hong Kong's languages in society, but also maintain and enhance the role of Hong Kong on the international as well as the Chinese stage, lie on the local government's shoulders.

After 1997, indeed, the Hong Kong government has been implementing its autonomy in language matters by launching different policies, which aimed at creating a new linguistic environment for a territory undergoing radical changes. Two of such language policies are of great importance for this work: 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' and 'Mother tongue Teaching'. Their main features, along with the impact they had and the discussions they raised in post-handover Hong Kong, will be explained and discussed here.

4.1.1. 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism': a new goal for the new Special Administrative Region

In language policy, the transition of Hong Kong to China consisted in a re-setting of the pre-handover, English-oriented equilibrium and the creation of a new, more balanced condition between English, Cantonese, and Putonghua. The new Hong Kong government proposed the 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' policy, aiming at training Hong Kong people to be biliterate in Standard Chinese and English and trilingual in Cantonese, Putonghua and English. English, Cantonese and Putonghua were made official languages. The policy was officially announced in the first Policy Address delivered by the Chief Executive of the SAR, Tung Chee-Hwa, in October 1997 and strongly asserted in official speeches and policy addresses since. No framework or concrete implementation plan was put forward, however the policy was followed by different ad hoc measures aiming at improving Hong Kong people's language proficiency, often promoted by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR), an organism established in 1996 to advise the government on language education issues. Although the 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' policy obviously represents Hong Kong's new political status as a region within the People's Republic of China, it appears that it is the economic rather than the cultural or identity value which tends to play the biggest role in language education. Such tendency is exemplified by SCOLAR's 2003 Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong, which adopts the employer's perspective rather than the government's, educators', or language experts' one for setting language policies (Poon 2004: 60-68, Tsui 2007: 135, Zhang & Yang 2004: 144-145).

4.1.2. The emergence of Putonghua under the 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' policy

The return to the PRC and the official entrance of Putonghua in Hong Kong through the policy of biliteracy and trilingualism, on the other hand, have legitimized and triggered its promotion in all sectors of the local society. In general, Putonghua has been promoted to the public in various ways and by a wide range of actors, the local government included.

Putonghua-centered happenings such as the "Putonghua day", the "Putonghua month", and the "Putonghua festival" have been numerous. The most relevant and successful of these is the Putonghua Festival (普通话节), which is carried on through various Putonghua-centered activities and games involving the public, like Putonghua competitions in schools and broadcasts. H. Wang reports that by 2006, after four editions, the festival has attracted around 280.000 participants (H. Wang 2007: 289-290). This model of Putonghua promotion by means of organization of happenings and festivals, with the goal of spreading the use of the language and making the speakers familiar with it, is not a Hong Kong invention but is used all over the PRC, as seen previously in this work.

As regards the use of Putonghua in the public sector, numerous projects have been launched to promote its proficiency among civil servants, such as the opening of Putonghua classes and the organization of collaborations with the mainland, often involving group visits and exchanges. The active use of Putonghua in administration, however, is limited, since the members of the Hong Kong government and administration generally use Cantonese or English for announcements or press conferences, and unofficial matters are normally carried on in Cantonese, the mother tongue of the majority (H. Wang 2007: 285).

The presence of Putonghua in Hong Kong's radio and TV broadcasts, typically dominated by Cantonese and English, has been increasing since the handover times, albeit it is still quite limited (H. Wang 2007: 286). Three months before the reunion of Hong Kong to China, the government-licensed Radio broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) launched a Putonghua language channel, heralding the changing perception and status of Putonghua in the local environment. The intent was to bring Hong Kong and China closer together by providing a service to the growing group of those who wanted to learn Putonghua, helping mainland immigrants to adjust to life in Hong Kong and fit in the new society, and being useful for Chinese visitors (Wilkinson & Lu 2001). TV channels also showed their wish to expand Putonghua programming in order to meet the society and market demands for the language (Zhang & Yang 2004: 157-158).

The role of Putonghua together with Cantonese in the key domain of education, the growth of the importance of Putonghua in economy, and the reasons underlying the growing interest of Hongkongers for achieving Putonghua proficiency, are factors which deserve thorough attention and will therefore be extensively illustrated in the next chapters.

4.2. Cantonese and Putonghua as Mediums of Instruction in Hong Kong schools

The return of Hong Kong to China introduced a change of orientation in Hong Kong language policy, which shifted from the dominance of English to a more balanced trilingual setting with a wider involvement of both Cantonese and Putonghua. However fascinating the Hong Kong trilingual idea is, the issues of recent years have shown that finding equilibrium between different languages in an effective and equitable way, for practical functions as well as for symbolizing identity and national values, is not an easy path. The much-debated, thorny issue of medium of instruction (MOI) in schools can exemplify such challenge at best, especially because of the capital importance given to education in Hong Kong: at present, education accounts for about one-fifth of total government expenditure (18.9% in 2012-13), covering the highest share of expenditure among all the policy areas (GovHK 2013b). In an ambitious trilingual context where language policy puts so much stress on language in education, the choice of the language to be used as medium of instruction in schools is of no little importance.

The Hong Kong school system has been defined as an amalgamation of Chinese and Western traditions evolving together: while the structure itself resembles the British example, the spirit which the actors of the education system (teachers, students, parents, etc.) bring to the school is essentially Chinese, as Luk (1989: 51) put it. Values of face, pragmatism, paternalism, and respect for scholars, for instance, can play very important roles in Hong Kong educational matters (Sweeting 1990: 68-71). Hong Kong public primary and secondary schools are entirely free since the academic year 2008-09 and education is compulsory for nine years. The primary school starts at around the age of six and lasts six years. After the completion of primary education, students are allocated to secondary schools through the Secondary School Places Allocation System, which can be influenced by admission criteria to specific schools, the student's allocation band, the choice of parents, etc. Secondary education consists in six years of school, three years of junior secondary ad three years of senior secondary. The final exam, called Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE, which replaced the former HKCEE), is taken at the end of Secondary 6. Higher education in Hong Kong is represented by 17 degree-awarding institutions (GovHK 2013a, 2013b).

This chapter will look at the paths Cantonese and Putonghua have been taking in the above-described system after the handover: the struggles of the 'Mother tongue Teaching' policy, which pushed Cantonese to a primary role in education, and the limits and possibilities of Putonghua to be implemented as medium of instruction for Chinese Language Education.

4.2.1. 'Mother tongue Teaching': the issues of Cantonese in Hong Kong education

In April 1997, on the eve of the reunification with China, the Hong Kong government suddenly issued the 'Firmly Guidance', a directive proposing a compulsory Chinese-medium[25] education policy for the future of Hong Kong schools. After strong opposition coming from not only schools, but also parents and students, some allowances were introduced and the revised 'Guidance' was forwarded two months after the handover. Such top-down directive consisted in the mandatory implementation of the 'Mother tongue Teaching' with spoken Cantonese, the majority of the students' mother tongue[26], and written Standard Chinese used as medium of instruction in junior secondary schools from the beginning of the academic year 1998-1999 on. In addition, Putonghua was introduced in primary and secondary school curriculum as a new core subject. In this way the previous situation, with 90% of the secondary schools using English as MOI for all subjects except Chinese and Chinese-related subjects (such as Chinese history and literature), was reverted by converting 70% of the secondary schools to Cantonese, with English used for English language and English-related subjects. The only schools which were allowed to be English-medium (EMI) were those which could prove that their students and staff were capable of effectively learning and teaching through English by satisfying a number of strict requirements (M-L. Lai 1999: 191, Poon 2004: 58-60, Zhang & Yang 2004: 150).

Officially, the 'mother tongue teaching' policy was meant to benefit students by helping them learning more effectively through their mother tongue, but its goal was also to mark the

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[25] As in the Hong Kong usage, the terms 'Chinese-medium' or 'Chinese schools' imply the use of Cantonese as spoken medium and Standard Chinese as written medium.
[26] Although the link was obvious, the authority has never explicitly mentioned 'Cantonese' as the 'mother tongue' indicated in the policy, but has given indirect pieces of evidence suggesting that (Lee & Leung 2012: 4-5). This resembles the approach used for the term 'Chinese' of the previous note.

political shift of the handover by playing down the dominance of English and giving room to Cantonese and Putonghua as a sign of decolonization and solidarity with China. In this context, introducing Putonghua in school curriculum suggested national integration, while using Cantonese as MOI indicated the autonomy of Hong Kong and its separate identity within the 'one country, two systems' framework (Johnson 1998: 272).

The mother tongue policy, however, has aroused unprecedentedly strong reactions from the community. Although few denied the benefits of mother tongue education for the students' learning, expressive and analytical skills and although it was positively evaluated by some for educational reasons[27] or on patriotic grounds, the policy was poorly received by the general public. Schools labeled the policy's strict requirements for keeping English MOI as socially divisive and a threat to their autonomy. In spite of the policy's intent to lift language barriers and raise the status of Chinese-medium (CMI) schools, which were considered inferior in the pre-handover times, the reduction of the number of English schools gave them an even higher and more elitist status than before and CMI became labeled as 'second class'. The students and their parents feared that not entering English-medium schools would impair their English proficiency and thus deny their access to higher education and well-paid jobs. The business sector warned that the Chinese-medium policy would lead to a decline of the English standards, which in turn would damage the competitiveness of Hong Kong in the international arena (Poon 2004: 59, Poon 2009: 221, Tsui, Shum, Wong, Tse, & Ki 1999: 196-197). The impression that there was a widening gap between the English proficiency demanded by society and the level which the education system could supply was widespread. In response to that, however, the government spent a considerable amount of money to enhance the students' English: for instance, in 2000 it supported a Hong Kong business sector federation in the launch of the 'Workplace English Campaign', a project which invested on English training and set up English benchmarks in work and education contexts (M-L. Lai 1999: 192, Poon 2004: 66-67). With a delay of two years, in 2005 the government issued a first review of the policy and again attracted severe criticism by announcing some further restrictions and review models for English-medium schools (Poon 2009: 204-205).

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[27] For a review on the reception of the mother tongue education policy by Hong Kong teachers, see Tse, Shum, Ki, & Wong (2001).

Finally, after twelve years of implementation and much controversy, in 2010 the 'mother tongue teaching' policy was replaced by the 'fine-tuning medium of instruction' policy, which overcame the traditional model of Chinese-medium schools vs. English-medium schools by giving them a number of alternative MOI arrangements. Under the new policy, welcomed as more flexible and equitable, schools are permitted to offer English-medium, partial English-medium, or Chinese-medium classes by following some criteria. For instance, an English-medium class can be created if at least 85% of the students are in the top 40% of the allocation system for secondary schools. The classes which do not meet these requirements have to adopt the Chinese medium, but are allowed to make use of a maximum of 25% of the curriculum time to teach in English, either by teaching a maximum of two subjects in English, or by incorporating English-medium units in various subjects (Poon, Lau, & Chu 2013: 946-947). Poon, Lau, & Chu (2013) investigated the first phase of the new policy: at the one hand, the majority of the students did not favor the use of English as MOI, especially because of the learning and comprehension difficulties it presented in content-based subjects; on the other hand, they welcomed the benefits of EMI for achieving proficiency, aware of the importance English has for climbing the social hierarchy of Hong Kong.

The twists and turns of the 'mother tongue teaching' policy are a good example of the attempts the HKSAR government has made to find a viable compromise between languages for the post-handover times. On the one hand, it had to raise the status of Chinese (both Cantonese and Putonghua) and enhance the sense of Chinese identity of Hong Kong people; on the other hand, it faced the issue of maintaining the international outlook of the city by keeping the high levels of English demanded by the markets. Therefore, it attempted to employ the potential of MOI as tool for identity and nation building by introducing the Chinese-medium policy, but in the meantime it kept investing in English and started pushing Putonghua. However, the wave of concerns and even vivid protests the Chinese-medium policy caused in the public clearly showed that Cantonese is not the preferred MOI. Poon, Lau, & Chu (2013: 946) mention three basic reasons for the persisting popularity of English in Hong Kong education, i.e., the colonial heritage of English dominance in schools, the high

demand of English in the internationalized Hong Kong society, and the better possibilities to access universities, which are EMI and represent a gateway to good jobs.

In Hong Kong, more than in many other places, multilingualism can be the key to a successful future. Its people seem to know it very well since, despite the dominance of the use of the mother tongue Cantonese in Hong Kong society, they prefer to adopt a language with higher instrumental value in education. Anyway, nowadays English is not the only language with high potential anymore: after 1997, as a result of increasing economic amalgamation with and growth of tourism from the mainland, the demand of Putonghua at work and in education increased in Hong Kong. The next section will observe the last years' path of Putonghua in Hong Kong, in particular as MOI in schools.

4.2.2. Putonghua as medium of instruction: implementation and limits

At the end of the 1980s, because of the increasing contacts between China and Hong Kong and the perspective of their reunion, the promotion of Putonghua in Hong Kong started with its introduction in school curricula as a non-core and optional subject, first in primary schools from the 4th to the 6th year (in 1986) and subsequently in secondary schools from the 1st to the 3rd year (in 1988). The allocation of resources and the efforts to promote Putonghua in schools, however, were modest when compared to the original task of making the language a full subject in the syllabus and to the official pronouncements of the Education Department.

It was not before September 1998 that Putonghua was made core subject for all the grades of primary and secondary school (by contrast, in the academic year 1995-96, Putonghua was offered as an independent and optional subject at around 60% of primary schools and 46% of secondary schools). In 2000, the importance of Putonghua as a subject was raised by making it a fully independent subject of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), the most important secondary school examination which determines the eligibility of the student to continue studies and thus access the matriculation examinations to university. Such trend of increasing presence of Putonghua in education has led to an increase of its teachers. The number of teachers trained in Putonghua and the Government's resources devoted to their formation have been increasing yearly, with a notable jump in the post-handover years: between 1997 and 2002, for instance, the number of trained Putonghua

teachers doubled in both primary and secondary schools, reaching a total of over 9.000. (Pierson 1998: 97-101, Zhang & Yang 2004: 146, H. Wang 2007: 284).

After the handover, Putonghua has also been proposed as MOI for Chinese Language Education, albeit its promotion has been rather confusing for the public. As seen before, in fact, in 1998 the government implemented the 'mother tongue teaching' policy, giving empirical evidence for convincing Hong Kong people that Cantonese is the best choice for learning subject content. Just one year after that, however, the Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council declared the long-term goal of implementing Putonghua, not Cantonese, as MOI in the Chinese Language Education[28]. Waiting for future studies, the Curriculum Development Council did not indicate any concrete action plan for Putonghua to be adopted in all schools, but invited schools to make the switch, provided that teachers satisfied the language proficiency requirements for teaching Putonghua (consisting in a language proficiency test). Such position has been supported and reiterated in 2003 by SCOLAR, which recommended that Putonghua be adopted on the basis that it would benefit the students' general Chinese competence, Chinese writing and Putonghua proficiency to a bigger extent than Cantonese. However, it provided no empirical evidence to support such claim and suggested that studies should be conducted to help schools successfully implement Putonghua as medium of instruction (PMI) and prevent negative outcomes (Tam 2011: 400-401, Tam 2012: 104, Zhang & Yang 2004: 146, 154-155).

Up to now, however, the countless debates on the effectiveness of Putonghua-medium education have not been followed by consistent and systematic studies (Tam 2011). In linguistic theory, the use of a second language as MOI is supported by the 'maximum exposure principle' by Cummins & Swain (1986) that students who are exposed to the second language as much as possible can attain higher levels of proficiency, as the example of the Canadian Immersion Programs have shown. In the Hong Kong case, many believe that a more extensive exposure to Putonghua will enhance the students' general language mastery, in particular its written form, since Putonghua is more consistent with Standard Chinese. Some pioneer studies commissioned by SCOLAR documented Putonghua oral and listening

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[28] Chinese Language Education consists in: the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), Chinese literature, Chinese culture, moral education, and critical thinking (Tam 2012).

improvement through PMI. The study led by Ho (2002: 4, 16), for example, showed that after a three-month period of adaptation most students were satisfied with their understanding of Putonghua, if the teacher instructed them step by step; besides, correct learning strategies and methodologies seemed to be more important than the teachers' Putonghua fluency. However, such researches did not provide consistent findings concerning the overall improvement of Chinese Language due to Putonghua instruction claimed by SCOLAR (Tam 2011: 104). Political and practical reasons have also been put forward by officers to favor PMI, such as the absurdity of using a dialect (Cantonese) as MOI, or the necessity to embrace Putonghua for building closer PRC ties. Others cautiously expressed the opinion that the proficiency of teachers as well as of students should be increased before extensively switching to PMI in an effective way (Zhang & Yang 2004: 152-153).

In spite of this somehow unstructured development, the number of PMI schools has grown in the last years, responding to both governmental and market demands. By the end of 1999, 27 primary and secondary schools had adopted Putonghua as MOI for some subjects; by July 2001, the total of PMI schools raised to 136 (Zhang & Yang 2004: 152); since 2007, PMI primary schools have increased three times and PMI secondary schools two times. Considering the Education Bureau's data providing 569 primary schools and 519 secondary schools in Hong Kong for the 2012/2013 academic year, in 2012 more than 350 primary schools and 200 secondary schools of Hong Kong chose to adopt PMI (Education Bureau 2012, Varsity 2012).

Anyway, because of the lack of a unified framework, the extent of implementation of PMI varies from institute to institute and results in the presence of a wide range of Putonghua program models. A mixed model includes a structured presence of Putonghua in Chinese Language, while Cantonese is retained as main MOI. Alternatively, Putonghua is adopted as only MOI for Chinese Language and additional lessons can be provided to strengthen oral skills or pronunciation. In other cases, PMI is extended to non-language subjects like Chinese History (partial immersion model) or even adopted as MOI for all the subjects, with the only exception of English. As an independent subject (thus not as MOI), finally, Putonghua is generally present 1-2 periods a week and is not linked with Chinese Language, which remains taught in Cantonese (Davison & Auyeung Lai 2007: 122-123). Moreover, as Davison & Auyeung Lai (2007) observe, the nature of Putonghua education itself is hybrid: on the one

hand, Putonghua-medium schools are chosen by socio-economically advanced parents who look at Putonghua as a marketable capital for their children to access the multilingual elite; on the other hand, PMI is often stigmatized by members of the working class, who associate it with the low status of mainland immigrants. In this context the Hong Kong government, trying to take the middle line between internationalization and nation-building, seems to be adopting a cautious attitude and avoids formulating concrete guidelines.

This uncertain situation does not help solving the issues of PMI, which range from problems of didactic to identity conflicts in sociopolitical contexts, such as shifting attitudes towards Putonghua and its increasing competition with English on the Hong Kong stage. From a didactic, school-centered point of view, researches have highlighted a number of shortcomings which hamper the effectiveness of these first years of PMI implementation, i.e.:

- *Poor Putonghua proficiency of teachers and students*: one of the main reasons for the inefficience of some PMI programmes is the inadequate Putonghua level of the (however qualified) instructors, especially with regards to vocabulary and pronunciation. The teachers' need to carefully prepare the lesson in order to avoid mistakes from their side implies a loss of spontaneity and an overreliance on facts and concepts rather than on inquiry learning and critical thinking (Tam 2012: 114-115). An additional problematic point is the low Putonghua proficiency of students: the excessively unfamiliar MOI can bring negative outcomes to their achievements and cognitive growth, but also on their self-confidence and ability to effectively participate to the didactic process (Tsui & Tollefson 2004). Shek-Kam Tse, director of the Centre of Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research at the University of Hong Kong, pointed out that PMI education is not to be adopted too early (like in Primary three or below) since the students would have no time to establish solid foundations of Cantonese before starting with Putonghua. He suggested schools should implement an integrated PMI teachig, allowing a transitional period and starting to use Putonghua as MOI just when students have acquired a sufficient level of it (Varsity 2012).

- *Limits in pedagogy and class interaction*: in order to be qualified to teach Putonghua, teachers have to satisfy the Education Bureau's guidelines by passing the Putonghua Language Proficiency Test. However, as Tam (2012: 117) points out, the test merely assesses the teacher's communicative skills, neglectig the fact that teaching is also a matter of

pedagogy. Many of the instructors who take and pass this test, for instance, have to revert to Putonghua teaching without knowing much about it, since they have been educated in English or have experience just in CMI teaching. A further issue is the scarce knowledge of the Hong Kong education system and teaching methodology of non-local Putonghua teachers (Davison & Auyeung Lai 2007: 127). As a result, it has been found that Putonghua-medium classes tend to be characterized by an overwhelmingly didactic approach and excessive focus on translation and pronunciation, with limited interaction between students and teacher. Compared with CMI classes, Putonghua-medium classrooms seem to be more tense and less lively, although it is well known that teaching in a second language should give as many possibilities of language output as possible (Davison & Auyeung Lai 2007: 128-129, Tam 2011: 412). In the Hong Kong context, an approach based on a mix between the deep understanding and memorization of the Chinese tradition and the critical inquiry of the more process-oriented Western didactic could be a good starting point, as suggested by Davison & Auyeung Lai (2007: 129).

- *Shortage of teaching material*: the lack of availabilty of appropriate teaching material designed for PMI in Hong Kong can have harmful effects on learning. Since PMI is not an attractive market for Hong Kong editors yet, for example, Putonghua-medium classes often have to use texts which are originally developed for Cantonese-medium classes (Tam 2012: 115, 117). Another limit lies in the choice of orthography and romanization system. The common choice for Putonghua in Hong Kong is traditional characters with Pinyin transcription, however Pinyin tends to be present in texts with simplified characters but not in those with traditional characters. Texts produced in mainland China are appreciated for the didactic of Putonghua, but make use of simplified characters; besides, there are concerns that their tendency to be politically oriented would not be suitable for Hong Kong (Davison & Auyeung Lai 2007: 127-128).

- *Inconsistent beliefs regarding Putonghua-medium education*: within schools, there is general disagreement between administrators and teachers as regards the effectiveness of PMI. On the one hand, school administrators tend to aim at expanding the student intake and attracting the most brilliant pupils. In order to do that, they satisfy the most important stakeholders, that is, the parents of the perspective students, who in turn want their children to attend PMI and EMI schools since they believe that mastery of Putonghua and English will

increase the academic and career opportunities of their children. On the other hand, teachers generally disagree with this view and recognize that didactic efficacy can be better achieved through the mother tongue, since the absence of language burdens can make the teacher-students interaction much richer and thereby allow collaborative production of knowledge. The validity of the general assumption that PMI leads to good writing by reducing written Cantonese interference on Standard Chinese is also questioned by many teachers, since other criteria such as content, relevance, organization, and clarity are used as basis to assess writing quality (Tam 2011: 409-411, Tam 2012: 108-112, 114). However, as seen before, the use of Cantonese as a medium of instruction has been underevaluated and labelled as a second-class language in both colonial and post-colonial Hong Kong.

- *Absence of relevant planning and support from the government*: the research carried out by Tam (2012: 115-116) showed that the Hong Kong government failed in giving teachers possibilities to receive substantial instruction and training in Putonghua education. Support was lacking also in terms of curriculum shaping, teaching material, research findings and, in general, on assistance to schools for experimenting with PMI. In 2008, SCOLAR launched a four-year subsidy scheme setting aside HK$200 million to assist primary and secondary schools which intended to carry out PMI education, consisting in on-site support by mainland experts and local consultants in training for Chinese teachers and teaching materials development (SCOLAR 2008, Varsity 2012). Apart of that, governmental support has been of limited extent and Hong Kong schools still have not been given a concrete action plan to implement PMI, so that they basically have to develop programs and material themselves. These facts reiterate the shortcomings of the governments' MOI policy administration already highlighted by others in previous years, such as the gap between policy rhetoric and its effective adoption and encouragement (Tsui 2004). Such absence of a definite implementation plan and the lack of clear and chronologically structured guidance (Tsui & Tollefson 2004) is perceived also by schools and teachers, which are left in uncertainty (Tse, Shun, Ki, & Wong 2001).

The points above show that effort is still needed in order to shape an effective and coherent PMI for Hong Kong schools, since changing MOI alone is not enough of an action for achieving the ambitious goal of biliteracy and trilingualism (Tam 2012: 119). In this context,

the contradictory attitude of the Hong Kong government in managing MOI policies seems to bear most of the responsibility (Tsui 2004). The absence of a formal language planning agency, for instance, has resulted in giving free hand to vested interests rather than structuring a proper language policy (Hopkins 2006). The formulation of a careful plan to find a balance between Cantonese, Putonghua and English as MOI, solve the issues which have arisen from language education and regularly check and review the state of language policy, has therefore been neglected (Tam 2011).

In the specific case of Putonghua education, the methods to improve the language standards of students and the ways by which PMI can benefit the learning process have never been consistently researched and addressed. Rhetoric encouragement of Putonghua education has not been followed by implementation guidelines and structured assistance; Putonghua curriculum and adequate instructional material have not been provided and scarce support has been given to teachers to redirect and enrich their pedagogic skills towards the new MOI. Moreover, the government's inability to solve the dilemma of triglossia (Cantonese, Putonghua, English) in Hong Kong MOI policy has created new tensions for schools and teachers, which are left alone in the highly competitive education market, trying to satisfy the Putonghua and English-oriented wishes of their most influential stakeholders, the pragmatic parents of future students (Davison & Auyeung Lai 2007, Tam 2012). In this context, Tam's (2012) suggestions of developing constant governmental support, professional formation and assistance for teachers, formulation of appropriate curricula and textbooks, creation of dynamic classroom interaction and student-centered activities, and effective teaching of Putonghua, before using it as a medium of instruction, sounds like a good starting point for further, fine-tuned progresses.

Since the implementation of PMI on a large scale in Hong Kong is to be considered at its first stage, it is hoped that time, together with more resources devoted to teachers' training, will also help gaining the knowledge and experience necessary for improving the situation. The fact that Hong Kong universities have launched programs focusing on formation of Putonghua teachers can be seen as a first step in this direction[29].

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[29] In the 2011-2012 academic year, the author of this work has attended the Master in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. In the first stage of the Master, the students attended classes such as Methodology of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, Chinese Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Learning, Intercultural Communication, etc., where the MOI was

This section has analyzed the present state and the didactic issues faced in the adoption of Putonghua in Hong Kong schools; the next chapter will proceed by expanding such view and attempting to illustrate status, challenges, and possibilities of Putonghua as a language to be generally and actively used in Hong Kong society.

4.3. Perspectives of Putonghua development in Hong Kong: driving forces, attitudes, and challenges

The previous overview of the limits in the implementation of a coherent PMI plan in Hong Kong education has highlighted the hesitating attitude of local language policy makers, which is unlikely to be driven by mere organizational problems. Zhang & Yang (2004), in fact, suggest that it is rather a matter of cultural hesitation which has prevented Putonghua to further develop in Hong Kong education. In the context of 'one country, two systems', on the one hand Hong Kong hopes to maintain its local Cantonese identity; on the other hand, it is expected to return to a broader Chinese culture, which is represented by Putonghua. Hong Kong policy makers seem to know that adopting strategies of Putonghua promotion at the expense of Cantonese would be looked at as a threat to local culture, but they also recognize the capital importance of Putonghua for the future of the territory.

In this chapter, the dilemma of Putonghua in Hong Kong will be explained through the two points proposed by Zhang & Yang (2004: 155-159) to explain the main drives of Putonghua promotion in the territory: the Cultural-Political and the Economic-Pragmatic values, as criteria which lead local language policy makers in dealing with this issue; such basis will be complemented by overviews on issues of identity and language attitudes in Hong Kong.

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either Putonghua or English. In the second stage of the Master, students could decide to either write a thesis or to do an internship by teaching Putonghua in a local school. The overwhelming majority of the students enrolled in the Master were native Putonghua speakers coming from all corners of mainland China.

4.3.1. The Cultural-Political value for Putonghua promotion

Hong Kong policy makers know the great potential language policies have for nation building, therefore understand that the promotion of Putonghua could deepen the sense of Chinese consciousness in the population. According to this view, by learning and becoming fluent in Putonghua, the national language of China, students would automatically enhance their Chinese cultural-political identity and their loyalty for the PRC.

However, the extent to which such a strategy could work for Hong Kong remains to be seen. It is debatable, in fact, whether the desire to merge with Chinese national identity can be used as a motivation for Hongkongers to learn Putonghua. On the contrary, it could even be that the identification of Putonghua with the PRC would function as an unappealing factor for the learning of the language.

The reasons for this contrast mainly lie into matters history, culture, and identity. On the one hand, most of the Hong Kong Chinese residents have origins of political or economic refugees from Guangdong province, who escaped from the last century's turmoil in China; their or their descendants' view of the PRC, in spite of the reunification, is still influenced by memories of sorrow. The sense of belonging to China is certainly not stronger in the younger generations, born and raised in a Hong Kong economically and ideologically far away from the mainland and to whom Beijing represents a place of limited political freedom and lower living conditions. The last years of effective belonging to the PRC do not seem to have enhanced the sense of Chinese national consciousness and loyalty in Hong Kong residents (Zhang & Yang 2004: 155-156).

Matters of national consciousness and local identity in Hong Kong are extremely complex and cannot be easily summarized. The next pages will attempt to offer a clarifying excursus on this delicate theme, first by bringing together the key points of development of the Hong Kong identity discourse within the territory's history, then by analyzing present evolutions and tendencies, always keeping in mind the tight link which lies between language and identity.

4.3.2. Construction and maintenance of Hong Kong local identity versus Chinese national consciousness

The history of Hong Kong distinctive identity is not long, but intense and multifaceted. As already seen, it is commonly held that the social noninterventionism of the British rule was one of the factors which facilitated the rise of the city's local identity in the 1970s and 1980s. Tsui (2007), however, suggests that the colonial government, far from being a passive actor in the picture, participated in sequencing the emergence of Hong Kong local consciousness in order to protect the colony's status quo. First, it ran a process of 'desinicization' (Ma 1999: 25), severing the ties between Hong Kong and China by means of linguistic hegemony, historical deprivation, deculturation, and depoliticization, especially until the end of the 1960s; then, it encouraged the population to develop of a sense of distinct belonging to British Hong Kong, rather than to China.

Linguistic hegemony of English in colonial times is of course shown by the already mentioned delays in introducing Chinese-medium education (first Chinese primary school in the early 1950s; first Chinese-medium University in 1964; debates on the increase of Chinese-medium education in the 1970s). The fear was essentially that a Chinese language policy could trigger nationalistic sentiments, English education being adopted also as a method for spreading and teaching Western, rather than Chinese, culture and history. From the end of the 1950s to 1997, for instance, the period covered in history school curriculum was revised and pushed back multiple times in order to skip topics which could arouse nationalistic feelings in the students, such as the Sino-Japanese war or the achievements of the reform and opening policies. Similarly, the curriculum for Chinese literature focused on classical Chinese literature and gave little room to modern national works of the 20th century. At the same time, the unjustified discursive construction of Hong Kong people as politically apathetic, utilitarian and pragmatic, on the basis of the submissive Chinese culture or by some sort of refugee mentality, was introduced. As a consequence of such tendencies, in the 1960s and 1970s many lamented the fate of Hong Kong as a city without history and culture; the severance from China left the young generations born in Hong Kong denationalized, without a narrative they could shape an identity on (Tsui 2007: 121-125).

The outbreaks of social unrest of the late 1960s and the fact that they were partly orchestrated by leftists and communists from the mainland, however, put the colonial government in front of the need to start constructing a sense of Hong Kong local identity which could not only justify the colonial status, but also genuinely distance the population from the PRC. Measures to stop people's discontent had to be implemented by showing the administration's commitment for the community, creating an environment for which its residents could feel a sense of belonging. That happened under governor MacLehose who, without making big changes in the political structure, improved housing conditions and education, fought against corruption, encouraged Chinese culture and the mobilization of young people, made compromises and openings to public participation.

Although the growing prominence of the PRC in the international arena (with the U.S. president Nixon's visit and China's accession to the United Nations in 1971) created a wave of resistance to denationalization, the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution soon led to a general disillusionment with the Chinese political system, letting the estrangement of Hong Kong community with China take the upper hand. In the 1970s and 1980s, the acceleration of Hong Kong economic growth, the increased affluence of its people and the improved social welfare further pushed the local sense of pride and belonging. The media, from the movie and TV industry to Canto-pop music, played of course a major role in constructing the local identity narrative, portraying Hong Kong as a lively city of opportunities, a vibrant crossroad of East and West where hard work was rewarded. Such discourse was reinforced through the stigmatization of mainland migrants, stereotyped as uneducated, ignorant, ill-mannered, unable to speak English and speaking Cantonese with Putonghua accent, the contrary of modern and proud Hongkongers: the term 香港人 *Hoeng1gong2jan4* 'Hongkonger' as opposed to 中國人 *Zung1gwok3jan4* 'Chinese person' started being used at that time. The popularity and covert prestige of spoken and written Cantonese grew as a mark of local identity and English became symbol of Hong Kong's cosmopolitism (Tsui 2007: 125-130). Hongkongers looked at themselves as of brokers of modernization, taking the best of Western achievements and mediating them with Chinese virtues, a construction which later became re-enforced by the 'one country, two systems' discourse (Bond 1987, Bond & Hewstone 1988).

Finally, the 'resinicization' process (Ma 1999: 45) took place in the 1990s, when Sino-Hong Kong exchanges intensified and Hong Kong rediscovered and reinvented its historical and cultural ties with China. The approach of the reunification to the PRC, however, also corresponded to a deep identity conflict for Hong Kong people, as shown in the movies shot at that time (see section 3.2.2.). The facts of Tiananmen Square in 1989 unsettled the population and vanished the hopes for a democratic China, deepened concerns for the post-1997 maintenance of freedom for Hong Kong and created a big wave of emigration of middle-class professionals, a sort of 'brain drain'.

Immediately after the handover, the efforts taken by the newborn Special Administrative Region to foster Chinese cultural heritage and communal identity were evident. In his first Policy Address in 1997, for instance, the first governor of the HKSAR Tung Chee-hwa invited Hong Kong people to abandon the psychological constraints of the colonial era and rewrite their own history with a new vision; elsewhere, he mentioned the achievements of the PRC, the importance of Chinese values, the intertwined identity of Hong Kong and China, and so on. The push for strengthening national consciousness, however, had to be balanced with the need to maintain an autonomous Hong Kong identity, as idealized in the 'one country, two systems' policy, which has been done by stressing the concept of Hong Kong's uniqueness in the public discourse. The corresponding tension between national Putonghua and local Cantonese was well exemplified by the heated debates on whether Tung's speech at the 1997 handover ceremony should have been given in Putonghua or Cantonese, which resulted in him trying to tackle the issue by giving the first speech in Putonghua but using Cantonese for his first Policy Address (Flowerdew 2004, Tsui 2007: 132-136).

The emergence and persistence of Hong Kong identity and its frequent contrast with the (mainland) Chinese national consciousness has been well documented. A sociolinguistic survey conducted in 1983 confirmed the presence of a defined Hong Kong identity, where 40.5% of the 1.200 residents interviewed claimed to be 'Hong Kong citizen', 29.7% chose 'Hong Kong Chinese' and only 20% 'Chinese'. Similar results were collected in further surveys carried out from 1985 to 1995 (Bolton & Luke 1999, S.K. Lau 1997). Both the concepts of Hongkonger/Hong Kong citizen and Hong Kong Chinese appeared defined by ethnic and regional distinctiveness, differentiated from mainland Chinese as well as from non-

Chinese Hong Kong residents (Brewer 1999: 192). Again, a research carried by Lam, Lau, Chiu, Hong & Peng (1999), highlighted that ¾ of the respondents identified themselves as either 'Hongkongers' or 'Hongkongers, only secondary Chinese'; Hong et al. (2006) found out that the respondents with a stronger Hong Kong identity showed more negative attitudes towards Mainlanders.

The dialectic relation of Hong Kong (Chinese) vs. (mainland) Chinese consciousness can be explained by Brewer's (1991) theory of optimal distinctiveness, i.e., social identity results from the opposition of needs of assimilation and inclusion and needs of differentiation from the other. Thus, the individual fits him/herself in a group which is inclusive enough to make him/her feel part of a larger collective but, on the same time, exclusive enough to provide some justification for distinctiveness. Such tendency in relation to mainland China increased after 1997 (Brewer 1999: 193).

Chan (2000) argued that, after the handover and whilst promoting identification with China on paper, the Hong Kong government itself became an actor of the division of Hong Kong and PRC communities. When nation building came into conflict with local economic interests, the latter took over the first, as in 1999, when the government overruled a Court decision which conceded the right of abode in Hong Kong to children of mainland parents without permanent residence. Fearing that a flood of mainland immigrants could put pressure on the existing resources, the government sought support in the public opinion by delivering surveys of unclear validity which prospected rise of the unemployment rate, increase of taxes, overcrowding of hospital, lack of housing, worsening of educational standards, and so on, as consequences of increased mainland immigration. Mainlanders were labeled as 'others' who threatened the well-being and the achievements of Hong Kong, were portrayed as lazy, unreliable, feeding on societal resources, a menace to law and order. This issue heightened the division between Hongkongers and Mainlanders, but also strengthened the sense of Hong Kong distinctiveness: according to the concept of 'significant other' by Triandafyllidou (1998), a group which is perceived as a threat for the nation which one belongs to can turn into a unifying factor for the nation itself, which can stick together to fight against the 'other'.

In recent times, researches conducted by Ladegaard (2011) and Ling Chen (2011) among young Hongkongers have shown that discussions on mainland Chinese people are still constructed by means of unequivocally prejudiced discourses, with the light cast on the

negative side of the Mainlanders, the positive side of Hong Kong people, and the enormous differences between the two. Ladegaard (2011) argues that, by negatively defining Mainlanders, the respondents intended to highlight the Hongkongers' different identity within the Chinese context, in accordance with Giles (1979), who describes the need felt by some to emphasize intergroup differences when the perceived differences between ingroups (Hongkongers, in our case) and outgroups (Mainlanders) are relatively minor (since Hongkongers and Mainlanders both ethnic Chinese).

At the moment, criticism of mainland China and its inhabitants and maintenance of a strong sense of local identity do not seem to be decreasing. In early June, 2013, none of the around 100 Hong Kong post-secondary students interviewed for a research chose 'Chinese' (over Hong Kong Chinese, Hong Kong person, or Chinese Hongkonger) as preferred identity[30]; shortly after, a poll involving around 1.000 people revealed that 37% and 36% of the respondents said they had negative feelings towards China's government and Mainlanders respectively (the rates are historical highs since 2006) (C.F. Cheung 2013, Stuart Lau 2013).

After this series of considerations it seems fair to say that, in Hong Kong, local identity still triumphs over national consciousness, strongly limiting the cultural-political value for Putonghua promotion.

The uniqueness and strength of Hong Kong identity is difficult to deny, so is its distinctiveness to mainland Chinese identity: although the two share ethnic sameness and some cultural practices, differences are still bigger than similarities. While tradition and biology would connect Hong Kong to the mainland, what is missing is a more intimate feeling or bonding. The greater internationalization, freedom, and well-being Hong Kong has achieved in the last century engendered a sense of superiority towards the mainland which is still hampering the construction of national consciousness. Interestingly, some also point out that this sense of superiority is rather a reaction to feelings of powerlessness and fear in front of the mainland's economic growth (see Lee 2013). At any rate, the examples of social development and wealth Hongkongers look at are not embodied by the PRC (Chan 2000,

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[30] On June 1, 2013 a news came out that a group of Hong Kong students are raising money to run a full-page advertisement against the 'mainlandisation' of Hong Kong universities (mainland students monopolizing local universities). One year before, the full page of a newspaper was bought to post an ad which pictured Mainlanders as 'locusts' which drained the city and its resources (South China Morning Post 2013, June 1).

Ling Chen 2011). The fact that linguistic barriers also play a role in this picture is easy to spot. In Chen's (2011) survey, some respondents said that mainland Chinese were as unfamiliar as foreigners to them also because of the lack of a common language: "The mainland Chinese and I are both Chinese, but we don't have a common language. This brings me a great shock" (Ling Chen 2011: 232).

In such context, it seems that cultural-political values or desires of integration with China do not have great potentials for becoming the driving force for Putonghua popularization in Hong Kong. Actually, in an extreme scenario, negative attitudes towards mainland China could even result in a disincentive for learning Putonghua. However, there is the possibility that the spread of Putonghua in Hong Kong for other reasons could enhance a Hong Kong-Chinese common identity. Let us now consider whether economic-pragmatic factors could better fulfill Putonghua popularization and the extent to which these factors influence Hong Kong students' attitudes towards Putonghua.

4.3.3. The Economic-Pragmatic value for Putonghua promotion

In the last decades, the ties between China and Hong Kong have not been strengthened from just a political or cultural point of view, but also under considerable economic aspects. The importance mainland China has gained for Hong Kong in economy has been gradually opening new possibilities for the HKSAR's market development and creating new job opportunities. This, in turn, has resulted in an increasing need for Hong Kong people to learn Putonghua as valuable career asset, a requirement for directly accessing the vast mainland market as well as mediating between it and international businesses (Lulu Chen 2012): this is the economic-pragmatic basis of Putonghua promotion Zhang & Yang (2004: 157) speak about.

An overview on Hong Kong business and tourism sectors can show the increasing degree to which the economy of Hong Kong has become dependent on China and suggest the possible linguistic implications of this state:

- *Business*: since the launch of the 'open-door' policy, the economic relationships between China and Hong Kong have been increasing year after year. In the context of China's economic boom and the handover of Hong Kong, the collaboration has been further

expanding with the PRC's entrance in the World Trade Organization (2001) and with the launch of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) in 2003, a package of reciprocal service liberalization and trade and investments facilitation measures. The results of this process on the current Hong Kong market are best shown by official statistics: in 2010, mainland China accounted for 45.5% of Hong Kong's imports, 44.9% of domestic exports, and 52.9% of re-exports, while the second-ranked partner (U.S. or Japan) held a share of around 10% (Census and Statistics Department 2012c, GovHK 2012b). These data well explain the importance the mainland market holds for Hong Kong and obviously constitutes an incentive for its people to learn Putonghua for business.

-   *Tourism*: together with financial services, trading and logistics, and professional and other producer services, tourism is one of the four key-industries of Hong Kong. The role mainland China covers in this sector has the same characteristics already seen for the HKSAR's business, since the increase of Chinese tourists visiting Hong Kong has tracked well with the PRC's economic growth. The Individual Visit Scheme, introduced in 2003, overcame the previous limitations for mainland visitors to enter Hong Kong (who could enter just in tourist groups or for business) by allowing PRC residents to apply for visas on an individual basis. The Scheme initially included only four cities of Guangdong, but has been gradually expanded and now covers 49 Chinese cities, for a total of 270 million eligible applicants (Tourism Commission 2006). The Individual Visit Scheme greatly benefited Hong Kong tourism industry, especially after the troubles caused by the outburst of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003. It not only helped Hong Kong tourism stay afloat amid the global financial crisis, but also made it grow considerably and facilitated the creation of new job opportunities. With mainland tourists currently accounting for 80% of their occupancy rate, Hong Kong's hotels have boasted an annual growth of 25% to 30% since 2004 (Want China Times 2012). The rate of mainland tourists visiting the HKSAR went from 40% of the total amount in 2002 to 70% in 2011, when more than 28 million visitors from the PRC entered Hong Kong, and is expected to maintain a yearly growth of 10% to 15% in the next years. Moreover, mainland tourists are also the biggest spenders in Hong Kong, taking advantage of its tax-free retail sales: in 2011 they spent on average over HK$ 8.000 per visit, 30% more than the visitors coming from other countries. In the same year, their

shopping expenditures accounted for almost 28% of Hong Kong's total retail sales, roughly 6% of the SAR's GDP (Census and Statistics Department 2012c, Yu 2012).

The astounding increase of mainland tourism, however, has generated countless debates on how it affected Hong Kong community's life. Many dissatisfied voices express the view that the economic benefits of tourism have not been enjoyed by local small businesses which, on the contrary, have been forced to shut down and give way to luxury stores which attract Mainlanders and are able to pay the increasingly high rents. Goods and services have disproportionally increased their price as local economy loses its diversity for chasing 'mainland dollars'. Earlier in 2013, numerous protests have arisen as mainland visitors strained local supplies of tax-free milk powder to resell it back home, which led the HKSAR government to impose a two-tin restriction at the border (South China Morning Post 2013, March 29, Yau 2013). Following debates on the infamous rudeness of Chinese tourists, the Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post has opened an online poll entitled "What makes some Hongkongers dislike mainland China and its people?": by June 14, 2013, the option 'Ill-behaved tourists' was chosen by 63% of the respondents (South China Morning Post 2013, June 5).

Such a complex picture of political unity and identity division, economic dependence and frustrated sense of superiority, raises a further question, i.e., the extent to which these ambiguous feelings are transferred to the learning process of Putonghua. The look at some researches on language attitudes in Hong Kong given in the next section can help us identify the factors at play.

4.3.4. Language attitudes and language learning motivations in Hong Kong

In social psychology, the concept of 'attitude' is defined as the tendency to react favorably or unfavorably to a class of objects, a process internal to a person which cannot be directly measured but can be inferred by eliciting responses (Eagly & Chaiken 1993, Edwards 1994). According to Giles & Johnson (1981), language attitude is an indicator of one's attitudes towards the associated culture and can point to identification to a given culture. The analysis

of studies on language attitudes can therefore deliver a more complete view on the status of Cantonese and Putonghua in the HKSAR.

Early studies on language attitudes were conducted in Hong Kong in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly focusing on Cantonese and English and leaving out Putonghua. The researches carried out at that time by Lykzak, Fu, & Ho (1976), Pierson, Fu, & Lee (1980), and Gibbons (1987), for instance, consistently portrayed a situation in which English was rated higher on traits of power, representing the language of status and attractiveness, while Cantonese dominated in traits of interpersonal relationship, suggesting in-group feelings of friendliness, honesty, humility and solidarity. Replicating the study of Pierson, Fu, & Lee (1980) after more than a decade, Pennington & Yue (1993) found that the status of English and Cantonese did not change. However, Pennington & Yue's respondents did not agree with the claim of Pierson, Fu, & Lee's subjects that using English would make them feel unpatriotic and less Chinese: that suggested that the Chinese-English antagonism of the 1980s had become outdated and that English better integrated in Hong Kong society by the 1990s.

From the 1990s on, more attention was turned to Putonghua due to the advent of the reunification with China and the perceived increase of its importance on the local stage. The researches carried on by Lung (1997, 1999) before the handover focused on Hong Kong people's attitudes towards Cantonese and Putonghua in relation to gender and social mobility. The results showed that females demonstrated significantly stronger feelings of solidarity towards Putonghua than males, who ascribed higher status to Putonghua but showed solidarity with Cantonese (Lung 1997). In the other research, the more socially mobile group (such as students and the working group) accorded Cantonese with significantly lower status than the socially less mobile group (e.g. retired and housewives) (Lung 1999). Investigating on links between identity and language attitudes, Tong, Hong, Lee, & Chiu (1999) found that, witnessing a situation in which a Hongkonger switched to Putonghua when talking to a Mainlander, the respondents who claimed a Hong Kong identity judged the Hong Kong code-switching speaker less favorably than those who claimed a Chinese identity did.

In 2004, B. Zhang (2006) directly focused on the attitudes towards Putonghua of around 500 secondary school students. The findings portrayed a complicated situation, since only about half of the students held clearly positive attitudes towards Putonghua learning, whereas the other half showed either ambiguous or negative attitudes. It resulted that the motivations

for learning Putonghua were largely pragmatic or political, whereas the biggest obstacles to the learning process lied in organizational issues, difficulty of the language, and lack of possibilities to practice it. Moreover, mainland students newly immigrated in Hong Kong held paradoxical attitudes towards Putonghua learning, hesitating in showing their Putonghua proficiency because of fear of discriminations.

M-L. Lai (2005, 2007, 2012) tracked down language attitudes of Hong Kong secondary school students (aged 15-17) towards Cantonese, Putonghua, and English by conducting a survey in 2001 and launching its follow-up study in 2009. The attitudes were researched especially in the domains of 'instrumental orientation' and 'integrative orientation' as defined by Gardner (1985): 'instrumental orientation' consists in a positive inclination for a language because of pragmatic reasons (a good job or educational opportunities), whereas 'integrative orientation' is the inclination towards a language in order to become a member of its community or cultural group. Instrumental and integrative orientation, in turn, could be linked to Zhang & Yang's (2004) economic-pragmatic and cultural-political basis for studying Putonghua respectively.

A comparison of the two researches reveals very interesting developments, especially regarding the views on Putonghua held by the respondents. In fact, although the overall patterns of 2001 and 2009 were the same, attitudes towards Putonghua resulted significantly more positive in 2009 than in 2001.

English retained its dominant role in the instrumental domain in both the researches: in 2001 and 2009, students were unanimous in giving English the role of key to social prosperity and a highly useful means for better academic and career advancement. Its scores in the integrative domain increased in 2009, showing the persistent view of fluent English speakers as educated and well-off and confirming that the tendency of English's wider inclusion as symbol of Hong Kong identity pictured above is still present (M-L. Lai 2005, 2007, 2012).

Consistent with the studies on language attitudes previously mentioned, Cantonese scored the highest in the domain of integrative orientation: as mother tongue of the majority and important part of local identity, it remains the dominant language as for affection showed by the respondents. As regards the instrumental domain, students participating to the 2001 research tended to agree quite strongly that Cantonese is a highly regarded language in Hong Kong, very useful for both their studies and their career. Although slightly declining,

Cantonese retained its position between English and Putonghua also in 2009. Its decrease can be explained by the fact that, at that time, the government just lifted the mandatory mother tongue education, somehow acknowledging that the role of Cantonese for increasing the competitive edge of Hong Kong was limited (M-L. Lai 2005, 2007, 2012).

The results for Putonghua are by far those which showed the greatest amount of change, especially in the domain of integrative orientation. In the 2001 study, 65% of the respondents called themselves Hongkongers and clearly disagreed with the statement that Hong Kong people should speak fluent Putonghua. Besides, the level of disagreement among the respondents appeared very high, indicating a lack of homogeneity in their attitudes towards Putonghua (M-L. Lai 2005, 2007). The 2009 group, on the contrary, agreed with the statement that Hongkongers should be fluent in Putonghua, a result which suggests that the policy of 'biliteracy and trilingualism' has started being effective and that the presence of Putonghua in Hong Kong society is increasingly accepted. That in turn shows good potential for Hong Kong to achieve a higher level of trilingualism in the future. Additionally, rates of identification of fluent Putonghua speakers with educated and well-off people also increased. The agreement on the statement that Putonghua should be used more in Hong Kong in order to integrate with the PRC, however, remained low. Anyway, students in 2009 showed to like Putonghua more than the 2001 group and also tended to believe more strongly that fluency in Putonghua can help them acquire better career and academic achievements. Although still ranked last among the three languages in both domains, in fact, Putonghua showed an evident increase in the instrumental domain, gaining a position comparable to that of Cantonese (M-L. Lai 2012). In the 2001 research, as well as in another one carried on by Lai in 1999 (M-L. Lai 2001), on the contrary, Putonghua rated well behind both English and Cantonese in terms of status and importance.

The research on Hong Kong identity carried on by Ling Chen (2011) also demonstrates the prominence of the instrumental value of Putonghua for Hongkongers over the integrative one, since, in the research, the push for identification with the PRC resulted hampered by the bad evaluation Hongkongers gave to Mainlanders and the Beijing government. The positive evaluation of Cantonese over Putonghua as a conspicuous marker of distinction from Mainlanders in the Chinese context is also to be linked to this last phenomenon. Chinese

language in general, however, appeared judged positively, probably because of its more general, less politicized connotation.

The evolution of the attitudes towards Putonghua illustrated above can be explained by many factors. First of all, the ambiguities and the high level of disagreement found among the students' responses in both M-L. Lai's (2001) and B. Zhang's (2006) researches can be understood by considering the immature development of Putonghua in the sociolinguistic scene of Hong Kong. At that time, for instance, not many years had passed after the return to China, the Hong Kong-PRC economic partnership was less developed than now, and there still was not much room for Putonghua in Hong Kong education, which was dominated by the Cantonese-English challenge in the 'mother tongue teaching' context. A wider integration of Putonghua in the Hong Kong language environment, showing the first achievements of the 'biliteracy and trilingualism' policy, is shown by the more stable results of M-L. Lai's 2009 study.

The reason for the noticeable growth of Putonghua in the domain of instrumental orientation, on the other hand, can be connected to the position China has gained as a global economic and political power; the data on the exchanges between Hong Kong and mainland China speak for themselves. Additionally, it is interesting to keep in mind that the role Hong Kong is aiming at maintaining and enhancing is not just the one of economic partner of China, but also of its mediator on the international stage, in accordance with the identity of subject blending the best of East and West that Hong Kong tailored itself in the last decades of the 20th century. The importance of Putonghua proficiency in this context is evident.

Finally, it is interesting to observe the research by Groves (2010), comparing language attitudes towards Hong Kong Cantonese held by three distinctive groups: Hong Kong Cantonese speakers, mainland Chinese Cantonese speakers, and mainland Chinese Putonghua speakers. Overall, Cantonese speakers challenged the traditional, pervasive definition of Cantonese as a mere 'dialect' held by Putonghua speakers, but showed interesting differences in their responses. The mainland speakers of Cantonese, in fact, displayed a more positive attitude towards Cantonese than their Hong Kong counterparts. Half of the mainland Cantonese speakers claimed to consider Cantonese a language and not a dialect, whereas just

a quarter of the Hong Kong respondents did that. The vitality of Cantonese in Hong Kong was confirmed and predicted to continue, with 40% of the mainland Cantonese respondents believing that Putonghua would never become an everyday language in Hong Kong. Just 15% of the Hong Kong group, on the other hand, believed the same; moreover, 15% of the same group agreed that Putonghua would eventually replace Cantonese in Hong Kong, whereas none of the mainlanders chose that option.

The surprising fact that mainland Cantonese speakers showed more optimist attitudes towards Cantonese than Hong Kong Cantonese did could be explained by the fact that the perceived stability of Cantonese as language of the majority on the Hong Kong stage gives its speakers the impression that it does not need to be elevated. That contrasts with the mainland (Guangdong) setting of Putonghua and Cantonese competition for status and range of use. Seeing Cantonese as endangered and needing preservation, the mainland speakers would then ideally raise its status in their mind (Groves 2010). This view conforms to the description of Cantonese as 'taken for granted' by its Hong Kong speakers illustrated in the previous chapters on language policy.

To conclude part 4, it can be said that the influence of Putonghua in the Hong Kong language situation has grown considerably in the years after its return to China thanks to language policies which have encouraged its integration in the local society, especially 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism'. A strong drive for Putonghua to further expand in Hong Kong, motivating local students to become proficient in it, is constituted by the economic-pragmatic rather than the cultural-political value. However, limits for such possibilities are present, consisting in the inadequate implementation of PMI education at the one hand and the Hongkongers' tendency of aversion for the mainland, together with their persisting sense of distinctive identity, on the other hand. The symbol of linguistic resistance to the mainland is obviously the use of Cantonese, although the attitude towards Cantonese held by Hong Kong people can be multifaceted and somewhat ambiguous.

All these elements will be brought to a larger context in the next, concluding part which, in light of the findings and considerations collected throughout this work, will construct a final discussion on the future perspectives of coexistence of Cantonese and Putonghua in the Hong Kong setting.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This work has given an overview of the status and relationship of Cantonese and Putonghua in Hong Kong under a range of different aspects, such as contrastive analysis, history, popular culture, language distribution, language policy, identity discourse, and language attitudes. Many considerations have been already collected and motivated. The aim of this conclusive part, therefore, will be to use the knowledge gained by the previous analysis for examining the second question of this work, that is, the degree of feasibility of a state of stable coexistence of Cantonese and Putonghua in the future of Hong Kong, where the growth of the second would not result in the endangerment of the first's vitality.

5.1. Putonghua as a threat to the vitality of Cantonese

In the past years, especially in the period of the passage to the PRC, many saw a future of Putonghua dominance over Cantonese and English for Hong Kong, while recent tendencies highlighted the growth of Putonghua in the Hong Kong linguistic landscape as a factor which could challenge such Cantonese vitality (D. Li 2006: 170). The widened presence of Putonghua in education, the tightened political links between the new Special Administrative Region and Beijing, the emphasis on multilingualism with Putonghua in the local language policies, and the importance of mainland business and tourism for present Hong Kong, constitute some of the multiple factors which could challenge Cantonese after the handover, as many predicted before it. In the years of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, scholars like Bauer (1984: 85-87) and Lord (1983) expressed the view that after 1997 Putonghua would not only substitute English as language of political power by taking over as official language in administration and education, but also eventually eclipse the unique role of Cantonese in the Hong Kong society of the 21st century.

Later on, Johnson (1994) suggested that Putonghua would emerge as language of administration, English would hold its status of language of commerce, and Cantonese would be relegated as language of family and intimacy. Similarly, Pierson (1998) predicted that Hong Kong would reach a situation of triglossia, where Putonghua and English would be the high varieties and one Cantonese would take the role of low variety.

More than fifteen years after the handover, these views seem to have proved only partly correct. Cantonese, as seen throughout this whole work, continues to thrive as both a marker of Hong Kong distinct identity and a politically neutral variety, between the colonial implications of English and the socialist connotation of PRC's Putonghua. Such upholding of Cantonese as symbol of Hong Kong identity as decolonized and autonomous subject within China can be called 'localization' (M-L. Lai 2012).

As a research by Lee & Leung (2012) shows, Cantonese neatly overcomes both Putonghua and English in workplace as well as in non-workplace situations and is used in politics, economics, culture, religion, and education. At present, Cantonese is not just a language used at home, but it pervades formal domains such as the Legislative Council, the government, and the legal system (M-L. Lai 2012: 18), where the use of Putonghua remains rather low (H. Wang 2007: 285). Cantonese is the preferred language also for electoral campaigns, since it corresponds to the mother tongue of most of the electors (D. Li 2006: 170).

However, there are also elements which suggest that the stability and the strength of Cantonese in Hong Kong could prove fragile. Although admitting the current robustness of Cantonese, Bauer (2000) fears that the establishment of Putonghua as medium of instruction in schools could start the decline of Cantonese: if students are not taught to read and pronounce Chinese texts in Cantonese anymore, the shift of the local community to Putonghua will be unstoppable. In 2012, the linguist Stephen Matthews (co-author of *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar*) expressed concerns regarding the potentially detrimental effect of PMI and international schools on Cantonese. Matthews explained the situation of children growing up speaking Cantonese but losing their fluency in it and arresting its development, becoming victims of language attrition by taking an education which does not involve Cantonese. Enormous communication problems between the new non-Cantonese speaking generations and the previous monolingual Cantonese generations could arise. Matthews did not adopt excessively alarming tones and underlined that language shift is a matter of generations; however, he pointed out that the turning point in which increasing numbers of children grow up with Cantonese not being their main language can be

considered the start of a language shift process, and has already arrived in Hong Kong (Parry 2012).

Ironically, it is also the present vitality of Cantonese on the local stage that seems to have caused a sense of undervaluation of Cantonese from both the speakers' and the government's side. Surprisingly, in fact, some Hong Kong people claim that it is not necessary to train in the use of Cantonese since it is their mother tongue, and believe that daily conversation is enough for preserving and improving their Cantonese (Lee & Leung 2010; see also Groves 2010). However, it is not to forget that the knowledge of a language does not lie in the mere ability of using it.

Comparing the researches on language attitudes conducted by M-L. Lai in 2001 and 2009, it is possible to notice that the positive attitude of the respondents towards Cantonese has not increased. It might be that, although Hongkongers are well aware of the usefulness of Cantonese in Hong Kong society, they take it for granted as a basic skill and cherish it for its local values of solidarity but not for its power for upward mobility, since Cantonese has no national or international status. Besides, government propaganda emphasizes the importance of Putonghua and English proficiency, never of Cantonese, and fluency in Cantonese is not considered a merit at school either (M-L. Lai 2012: 18-19). Such a lack of overt prestige of Cantonese explains well why Putonghua and English are preferred as MOI in Hong Kong schools and why the project of 'Mother tongue Teaching' has failed.

It also seems that, in spite of its inclusion in the 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' policy and of its status of most spoken language in Hong Kong, Cantonese is neglected by Hong Kong language policies, especially in comparison to the attention and efforts the Government devotes to Putonghua and English enhancement. The unbalance between Cantonese on the one side and Putonghua and English on the other side in terms of governmental resources, for instance, is striking. In Hong Kong, the biggest part of the governmental funding for language in education goes to SCOLAR, the committee established in 1996 to advise the government. From a review of the funding items of SCOLAR, however, it is evident that most of the resources invested have been devoted to English or to Putonghua and not to Cantonese (Lee & Leung 2012: 4-6).

On the educational level, the belief that English and Putonghua teaching are more important than Cantonese seems common, as the development of the 'Mother tongue

Teaching' policy showed. The only positive element for Cantonese in this area has been the promotion of activities and programs to contrast the 'lazy pronunciation' phenomenon of Cantonese phonetics since 2007. In general terms, however, the place of Cantonese in Hong Kong education is underrated. In schools where it is adopted as medium of instruction, for instance, Cantonese is regarded as language for teaching and learning but is not included in the curriculum as a subject. When Cantonese is taught, on the other hand, the main attention is cast only on listening and speaking and never on writing, given the low status of written Cantonese in formal settings (Lee & Leung 2012: 6-10).

The rise of Putonghua in Hong Kong, as illustrated in this work, has been more circumstantial than actively planned and has emerged together with the increased reliance of Hong Kong on the huge economic power of the PRC: a process of 'mainlandization', as Lo (2008) defined it.

After the change of sovereignty, Hong Kong fell into the worst economic downturn of its history, constituted by the Asian Crisis of the end of the 1990s, the SARS in 2003, and the influence of the global crisis of 2008. These factors attracted the pragmatic Hong Kong to the PRC market and to Putonghua: its businessmen and professionals felt the need of studying Putonghua to access the huge mainland market, the city welcomed more and more mainland tourists, the movie industry sought collaborations with mainland agencies, local universities opened their doors to mainland students, and so on. Increased contact with the PRC resulted in increased familiarity with Putonghua (Census and Statistics Department 2012b) as more and more students chose to learn it to improve their career and academic possibilities, thanks to its instrumental value (M-L. Lai 2012, Zhang & Yang 2004). This push towards Putonghua, on the other hand, is strongly contrasted by the resistance showed by Hongkongers to Putonghua, its speakers, and the PRC's government, in the name of the preservation of a sense of distinct, local identity.

It appears to be the persistent importance of English the factor which gives Hong Kong the possibility to escape the risks of the exasperation of a struggle between the sense of localization represented by Cantonese and the mainlandization brought by Putonghua. The urge to keep an international role is still present in Hong Kong, therefore English remains indispensable, although it lost some of the high functions it used to hold in colonial times.

Recent researches on language attitudes in Hong Kong have suggested the perspective of a narrowing of the gaps between the attitudes towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English. It might therefore be that, with time, the interplay of localization (Cantonese), mainlandization (Putonghua), and internationalization (English) will converge and make Hong Kong reach a status of pragmatic and elastic trilingualism, as the policy of 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' aims at (M-L. Lai 2012).

Such idea of a feasible, flexible trilingualism for Hong Kong and therefore the final realization of the 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism' goal is tempting. The rise of Putonghua on the Hong Kong trilingual scene, the persisting, necessary importance of English, and the undervaluation of Cantonese by its affectionate yet pragmatic speakers, however, put Cantonese in a position which could lead to the approach of a stage of slow but constant decay, denying the abovementioned value of localization.

Cantonese is undoubtedly robust in Hong Kong, yet it differs with its co-official languages in two potentially compromising ways: first of all, unlike Putonghua and English, it is not strong in national or international settings (M-L. Lai 2012); second, it lacks the protection given by a full status of standard language (Snow 2008). These two elements put Cantonese in a precarious state in spite of the famous vitality which characterizes it and has been described throughout this work, showing that it could become a sort of 'paper tiger' if challenged by English or Putonghua. Serving Hong Kong's needs of internationalization, English covers a domain which does not directly challenge Cantonese; on the contrary, as a Chinese variety like Cantonese and as official, established standard of the PRC, both 'motherland' and main commercial partner of Hong Kong, Putonghua could constitute a threat for the vitality of Cantonese in the medium-long term. As processes of language shift are made by gradual, subtle changes, it might happen that, by the end of the 'One country, two systems' stage in 2047, Hong Kong would find itself with a weakened Cantonese and, maybe, without the necessary political autonomy to restore it. This would be a loss for not only Hong Kong and its culture, but also for the whole Yue-speaking area and its rich heritage.

To sum up, although the current relevant role and stability of Cantonese are difficult to deny, some signals suggest that the further growth of Putonghua in the future could negatively affect Cantonese, which has the weak points of being limited to the local dimension and not completely standardized. The endangerment of Cantonese, in turn, could lead to social tensions, identity crisis, and the exasperation of the already delicate Cantonese-Putonghua, local-mainland dichotomy. Some measures could be taken in order to safeguard Cantonese and prevent this scenario to take place.

5.2. Conclusion: the achievement of stable coexistence between Cantonese and Putonghua

The unpleasant perspective of Cantonese-Putonghua clash described in the previous lines, however, is not necessarily doomed to take place. If managed carefully, in fact, an increase of the role of Putonghua in Hong Kong society could shift from a potential threat to an element of stable coexistence. A coherent and sequenced intervention of the Hong Kong government, however, is indispensable to make this perspective of coexistence of Cantonese and Putonghua come true.

First of all, the government should not keep a blind eye to Cantonese and should stop considering its status as mother tongue of most of the population a sufficient requirement to guarantee Cantonese a safe future. Cantonese should therefore be included in the allocation of resources devoted to the implementation of the biliteracy and trilingualism framework, which nowadays tends to be concentrated exclusively on English and Putonghua. The pushes for an increasing standardization of Cantonese, especially regarding the establishment of prescriptive norms, should be welcomed for allowing it to reach the degree of stability necessary to guarantee its longevity.

In order to avoid the phenomenon of language attrition to occur to local students who wish to gain proficiency in Putonghua and English, Cantonese should not be excluded from school curricula by following a counterproductive 'either-or' approach, but harmonized with the other two languages. Hong Kong people, who strongly appreciate the identity value of Cantonese but underestimate it under pragmatic aspects, should consider that the cultivation

of the mother tongue in educational settings does not necessarily hinder the achievement of profitable multilingualism. Moreover, Putonghua education should be gradually introduced by providing schools the necessary didactic training, teaching material, and pedagogical strategies for an optimal implementation, instead of letting them adopt PMI without any support or guideline.

Overall, the trilingual interactions in school curricula should be improved in order to solve the present state of market-driven incoherence, where schools, lacking governmental assistance, develop largely heterogeneous, often confusing programs which are highly likely not to improve the skills of any of the students' languages. More carefully planned and politically neutral language policies should be implemented, where the government, as a consultant, would sequence and follow the steps of local schools which aim at implementing the ambitious goal of biliteracy and trilingualism.

The suggestions listed above would not only be an important step for guaranteeing Cantonese a stable place in Hong Kong also in a future of bigger Putonghua influence, but also improve the current, poor introduction of Putonghua in the local schools' curriculum. In the admirable spirit of 'One country, two systems' and 'Biliteracy and Trilingualism', in fact, the improvement of the status of one language must not correspond to the exclusion of the other from the picture, but rather its contrary.

Last but not least, a better organization of the efforts to achieve a harmonious coexistence of Cantonese and Putonghua in Hong Kong, apart from improving the multilingual status of the territory and the competitive edge of its speakers, could contribute in reducing the alarming growth of the sense of rejection Hongkongers feel for mainland China and its residents, which flattens the use of Cantonese to an identity tool for distinguishing the Hongkonger from the mainland 'other' and pushes the attitudes towards Putonghua learning to a mere instrumental value, compromising the authenticity of the multilingual identity Hong Kong is, rightly, proud of.

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Eidesstattiche Erklärung

- Ich versichere an Eides Statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig ohne fremde Hilfe und nur mit den angegebenen Hilfsmitteln verfasst habe.

Berlin, den 15. Mai 2014   Isabella Valentini