On the Mainlandisation of Cantonese: Language and Identity

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Abstract: Throughout Hong Kong's dynamic history, the relationship, balance, power, and symbolism between the languages of Cantonese, English, and Putonghua has constantly been changing at different times. Many scholars were especially interested studying the sociocultural reactions to these three primary languages spoken in the territory before and after the transfer of sovereignty in 1997. However, in recent years, a new trend has been emerging within the Cantonese language. Foreign vocabularies, especially those of Mainland Putonghua origins, were noted to have entered the daily speech of the Cantonese langauge and perhaps even replaced Cantonese vocabularies. As Hong Kong maintains a culture and identity different from that of Mainland China's, the phenomenon of the so-called "mainlandisation" of Cantonese was seen by some to be blurring the cultural difference between Hong Kong and China, thereby assimilating the local identity into the Chinese identity. Thus, this study on the changing Cantonese language and its relationship with the Hong Kong identity offers some insights into this relatively new linguistic trend, at a time when there is an increase in social movements and awareness aimed at maintaining Hong Kong's autonomy and drawing distance from China politically and culturally.

Introduction

It was September of 2017 when I came back to Hong Kong for my higher education. Prior, I had studied in Hong Kong for my middle school, but I had then left to study abroad for my high school. Upon my return, I noticed there was something slightly different about the way Cantonese—the de facto official language of Hong Kong—was spoken, whereby some words or grammatical structures that were not present during my middle school years became prominently used. I remember thinking that it was natural for me to feel unaccustomed to the slightly different language environment, because language—similar to culture—change all the time, so I should simply try to adjust to the changing language environment in Hong Kong, because I had lost touch with it during with my three years of high school abroad. However, apparently, I was not the only one feeling unacquainted with the change. I have found that many of my local friends at university, as well as articles published online and in special columns in publications have expressed dissatisfaction towards the changing Cantonese language, and in particular its spoken form. In particular, they denounced how the newly added vocabularies into Cantonese—some perhaps even replacing the original expressions—came from mainland China, because they considered it an intentional act of cultural invasion, whereby mainland Chinese words were gradually replacing the original Cantonese vocabulary.

In addition, as language is often used as a tool to promote certain ideologies, Cantonese is also considered by many in Hong Kong as a crucial marker of local identity (Chan 2019). As a result, some Hong Kong people consider this trend of mainland Chinese words being more and more spoken to be diminishing the originality and locality of Cantonese, and thus undermining the local identity in order to promote the Chinese identity (Lowe and Tsang 2017). Indeed, these are just some of the views on the current linguistic trend. There are most

certainly people who do not think this is an issue or are in fact in favour of such changes. Thus, being a native of Hong Kong myself, I want to ask – via this project – how do the people of Hong Kong feel about the recent vocabulary changes in the Cantonese language where the usage of Putonghua vocabularies is on the rise, and what do their opinions convey about the relationship between the Cantonese language and the identity of Hong Kong people?

Research Significance

This research topic is of special importance because of the recent political situation in Hong Kong which has escalated tensions to an unprecedented level between those who support and those who are against the government of Hong Kong (and the government of China to a certain extent) and the opinions of the locals on the future of the city, which has profoundly impacted and altered the local cultural identity (Purbrick 2019). Although tensions have always existed between the two camps ever since the transfer of sovereignty in 1997 from the United Kingdom to China, the situation had never been polarised to a breaking point, whereby the government refused to concede to the demands of the majority, and instead opted to implement more policies deemed detrimental to the special status of Hong Kong as an autonomous territory (Purbrick 2019). Due to the historical past of the territory being a colony under the United Kingdom throughout much of the 20th Century, when the city was developed to the modern city day we now know of today, a separate identity and culture were also fostered as a result of having developed differently than China, which went through a different format of development (Tsang 2003).

One of the primary differences is the prominence of Cantonese as the territory's de facto official language, as nearly 90 per cent of the population considers it their mother tongue

(Chan 2018). Although various other forms of Chinese co-existed in the earlier days of the colonial era, the influx of primarily Cantonese immigrants after World War II to escape from the Chinese communist regime enabled Cantonese to become the most widely spoken language in Hong Kong. Besides, thanks to the relatively liberal forms of expression and the rapid economic developments in the latter half British colonial rule, many cultural aspects were built on the Cantonese language, such as cinema, music, and other arts that promoted a unique identity different from that of the mainland Chinese identity (Tsang 2003). And, as Cantonese was constantly exported via Hong Kong's vibrant cinema and popular music to the rest world from the 1970s to the 1990s, both the local and international communities have long considered the language and its influences as a crucial marker in defining Hong Kong's local identity (Chan 2019).

However, ever since the handover, the new government of Hong Kong has made repeated attempts to sinicise the territory (Yuen and Chung 2018). At first, policies were orientated towards promoting Cantonese over English, such as changing the medium of instruction in secondary schools. Yet, further into the 21st Century, the government began to diminish the importance of Cantonese and instead opted for Putonghua to take precedence, by changing once again the medium of instruction at schools. Moreover, government officials began to make controversial statements such as stating Cantonese is a mere dialect of Chinese and is not the official language of Hong Kong (Cheng 2018). These controversial stances by the government, coupled with the rising prominence of both soft and hard power of China in Hong Kong, have led to many in Hong Kong to question whether the authorities wish to diminish the importance of Cantonese in favour of Putonghua (Yuen and Chung 2018). And because Cantonese is linked so intimately with the cultural identity of Hong Kong, they have also raised questions as to whether the growing influence of Putonghua is a deliberate act to

hinder the growth of the local identity in favour of the Chinese identity (Yuen and Chung 2018). Despite the Cantonese language being inseparable from the Hong Kong identity, it has been noted by Chu (2018) that the social movements in the territory against the influence of Putonghua have been inconsistently minimal when compared to other movements such as fighting for greater autonomy. A big reason as to why there is a comparatively minimal attention to the Cantonese language is because of how the people of Hong Kong "(mis)lead by government officials, have bought into the idea that the use of [Putonghua] …will enable students to… [be] more fluent in the language, but also with better writing Chinese skills (Chu 2018)." Thus, after approximately a decade of Putonghua as the medium of instruction in many schools, and with yet another wave of widespread protests spanning between 2019 and 2020, this research can serve as an indicator of how the people of Hong Kong have reconsidered their positions owing to the recent developments.

Methodology

As this paper is based upon the usage of Cantonese, one of the ways to conduct research has been via participant observation. As Hong Kong is already a predominantly Cantonese speaking city, it is very easy to find, listen, and observe others on their usage of the language. From television shows, to radio channels, to my friends chatting whilst hanging out, I have been listening from the summer of 2019 onwards to hear if there were any differentiations in terms of words or grammatical usage by different people when speaking, so as to gather data on which areas of Cantonese have changed in recent years. I then used these examples to ask questions to informants during interviews to find out about their opinions on the change. Furthermore, 70 people were also interviewed in both online and in-person sessions to explore their ideas and viewpoints on the recent trends of Cantonese, with each interview lasting in general about 20 to 40 minutes depending on how many thoughts they had with

regards to the language. The informants were separated into two different groups with different questions asked with reference to their cultural origins. The first group consisted of 60 informants who were native Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong or had lived in the territory for most of their lives, whilst the second group consisted of ten Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants to Hong Kong, with Putonghua as their mother tongue. Although this research primarily focuses on Cantonese as used by native speakers in the city, I believed it would be insightful to also acknowledge the points of view surrounding the usage of Cantonese by immigrants, especially when the immigrants' mother tongue is Putonghua, a language deemed to be affecting and changing Cantonese.

For the first group, comprising native Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong or having lived in the territory for most of their lives (hereinafter known simply as the first group), the interview consisted firstly of a table of twenty words that I believed to be popularly used by Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong, and asking them to guess which ones originated from Hong Kong and which ones did not, before asking them in-depth on their daily usage of Cantonese and how they feel about the recent changes. In an effort to generalise these 60 people's opinions to represent the majority of the people of Hong Kong, the informants were chosen to vary greatly in terms of age, profession, gender, and backgrounds. All informants were either born in Hong Kong or have been exposed to the culture of Hong Kong for most of their lives and considered Cantonese as their mother tongue. Below is a table summarising the demographics of the informants.

Age	*10-19:* 10; *20-29:* 22*; 30-39:* 4*; 40-49:* 6*; 50-59:*10; 60+: 8
Gender	Female: 34; Male: 26
Family Income	Very high: 1; High: 10; Medium: 20; Low: 17; Very low: 12

Highest Educational level (or pursuing right now)	High School or lower: 8; Associates or Vocational: 11; Bachelors: 36; Masters or above: 5

<div align="center">Table 1</div>

For the second group of Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants to Hong Kong with Putonghua as their mother tongue (hereinafter known simply as the second group), the interview consisted of questions concerning their experience of using Putonghua in Hong Kong, and their opinions on both Putonghua and Cantonese and their relation to the socio-cultural-economic and political context of greater China. In an effort to gather different voices and opinions, the duration of the immigrants' stays ranges from 4 years to more than 30 years. Below is a table summarising the demographics of the informants.

Age	*10-19:* 1; *20-29:* 3*; 30-39:* 3*; 40-49:* 2*; 50-59:*1
Gender	Female: 5; Male: 5
Family Income	Very high: 0; High: 3; Medium: 5; Low: 2; Very low: 0
Highest Educational level (or pursuing right now)	High School or lower: 0; Associates or Vocational: 2; Bachelors: 7; Masters or above: 1

<div align="center">Table 2</div>

Literature Review

In this review, I consider four components to be of relevance to my study. The first part is to define what constitutes Cantonese vocabulary. The second part is to analyse how code-switching, and loanwords are related in this research, and summarising former studies on

code-switching in Hong Kong. The third part makes note of the origins of the Hong Kong identity and its relation to the Cantonese language. The fourth part summaries past studies conducted on the relationship between Cantonese and Putonghua.

Cantonese Vocabulary

The relationship between Cantonese and Putonghua is the result of peculiar circumstances. At their most fundamental aspect, Cantonese and Putonghua are based on Chinese, meaning that they are variants from the Chinese language family, and they share shares multiple similar traits such as the formation of characters and syntax (Matthews and Yip 1994). Yet, as noted by Snow, "The main difference between…Cantonese and Putonghua lies in their vocabulary systems (2004)." Although many vocabularies are derived from old or classical Chinese, he estimated that approximately thirty to fifty per cent of the vocabulary found in Cantonese is exclusive to the language, and is not found in Putonghua (Snow 2004). In another study, Tsang (2010) mentions how there exist three primary categories for the formation of Cantonese vocabulary: from historical contexts, from recent sociocultural contexts, and loanwords from foreign languages. Also, Tsang (2010) notes that although Hong Kong Cantonese stems from the Cantonese spoken in neighbouring areas, due to historical and political differences, numerous vocabularies have been invented during the latter half of the 21st Century, the period when much of Hong Kong's development toward the city we now know took place. Besides, Hong Kong Cantonese maintains some old Chinese vocabularies that are no longer found in Putonghua; thus, he identifies these vocabularies as Hong Kong vocabularies as well (Tsang 2010). Furthermore, he has also crafted a list of the vocabulary invented in Hong Kong, or old Chinese vocabulary only used in Hong Kong based on his and other linguists' research. Thus, this paper shall also apply Tsang's definition of what constitutes a Hong Kong Cantonese vocabulary when performing relevant research.

Code Switching or Loanwords

Because this study focuses on how Hong Kong Cantonese speakers might opt to use Putonghua words when speaking in certain scenarios, the term code-switching could apply. This term, as defined by multiple scholars, indicates when speakers alternate between two or more languages (or language varieties) within a single conversation (Chan 2018). However, as a former study shows, most Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong enounce Putonghua words with a Cantonese pronunciation within their daily conversations (Chan 2018; 2019). Unlike between English and Cantonese, where most Hong Kong people would code-switch between these two and know the difference between the two languages, Cantonese speakers often show no knowledge or realisation that the vocabularies they are using are in fact Putonghua terms, as this study will show. Thus, I believe the definition of loanword applies more to this study, whereby a word is adopted from a foreign language into the native language of the speaker with adjustments to its pronunciation or orthography so as to assimilate it into the native language (Stanlaw, Adachi and Salzmann 2019).

Former studies on Cantonese speakers using Putonghua words in their daily speech are relatively limited, for this is a fairly recent phenomenon deriving from factors such as the introduction of Putonghua in education in Hong Kong and the rise of Chinese soft power (Chan 2019). The closest applicable studies performed concerning this study were conducted by Chan (2018; 2019), who has performed two ethnolinguistic studies in Hong Kong with regards to code-switching between Cantonese, English, and Putonghua. Both of his research indicated that most people in Hong Kong code-switch between English and Cantonese, but do not code-switch between Cantonese and Putonghua (Chan 2019). One of the reasons he cited on his findings was that, because vocabularies in Putonghua can be easily pronounced

in Cantonese, his informants would simply say those words in Cantonese rather than in Putonghua (Chan 2019). Thus, this study would instead focus on Putonghua vocabularies directedly said in Cantonese rather than code-switching between the two Chinese variants. Another research, by Tsz (2018), mentions the increased awareness concerning transcription of foreign names into Chinese, in particular the use of Cantonese or Putonghua pronunciation when transcribing the names in Hong Kong. As an example, Tsz (2018) mentions the controversy in 2016 surrounding the name of a famous anime character—Pikachu—being transcribed using Putonghua rather than Cantonese pronunciation in Hong Kong, which was seen as an encroachment on the uniqueness of the Cantonese language, and thus undermining the identity of Hong Kong Cantonese speakers as a distinct and separate entity from mainland Chinese people. As stated by Tsz (2018):

> By examining how factors such as language, translation, collective memory, and cultural pride are related to identity, it is not difficult to see why the Pikachu Protest might not be as isolated a response as it first seems, but the product of a widening struggle of the Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong in the face of the growing influence of Mandarin and the soft power of China.

As such, the changes within a language, such as the choice of vocabularies used, can be a reflection of the current socio-cultural and political changes, as this research project will show.

Historical Background of the Hong Kong Identity and Relation to Cantonese

In order to conceptualise the Hong Kong identity and tie it with the language of Cantonese, one must revise past studies on its origins of how it came to be. The creation of the Hong Kong identity can be traced back to the 1960s and the 1970s, in the aftermath of the 1967 riots (Mathews et al. 2008). At the time, the local Chinese population were dissatisfied with the colonial rule of Britain, which was marked by rampant corruption and the market economy that continuously made the rich richer and the poor poorer (Carrol 2007). That, in

turn, led to local riots in the colony in support of the cultural revolution in China, in an attempt to overthrow the colonial government (Carrol 2007). However, due to the overwhelming destruction and fear caused by the rioters, public opinion switched sides in support of the authorities, who eventually cracked down on the riots (Mathews et al. 2008). After reviewing the incident, the colonial administration initiated a series of social reforms to foster stability and a sense of belonging for the local population (Scott 1989). After a period of economic growth and an increase in living standards, a renewed tide in illegal immigration provided an opportunity for the locals in Hong Kong to distance themselves—for the first time—from the new arrivals, though they were also immigrants themselves. As mentioned by Mathews et al. (2008):

> …the more critical factor contributing to the formation of a Hong Kong identity was apparent threats from without…Hong Kong people, perhaps for the first time in the post-war decades, saw themselves as locals; there emerged a distinction between "we" (the locals) and "them" (the new immigrants), with the former seen as working hard to earn a decent living and the latter seen as coming to Hong Kong to reap the benefits of economic development.

At the same time, in the early 1960s, it was noted that communities were segregated by their primary language. Therefore, although Cantonese was predominantly spoken in the territory, the language had yet to become the de facto common language of all residents, because it had yet to penetrate communities that spoke other Chinese variants (Mathews et al. 2008). After the 1967 riots, the extensive social and welfare programme that gave rise to public housing, coupled with the rise of mass media and the entertainment industry, successfully allowed for Cantonese to become the common language of all local residents (Mathews et al. 2008).

However, it is worth noting that during the colonial era, Cantonese was often referred to simply as Chinese (Lai 2011). The status of Cantonese as the de facto official spoken language in Hong Kong was undermined by its ambiguity in both the social and legal

context, whereas after the transfer of sovereignty, the word "Chinese" had incorporated a new meaning, being defined as Putonghua, rather than Cantonese, due to the overarching policy of "Putonghua first" mandated by China (Lai 2011). As such, there was little resistance when the government of the newly established Special Administrative Region (SAR) carried that policy in Hong Kong just one year after the handover, in promoting the use of Putonghua over Cantonese in the educational systems (Chu 2018). In fact, Chow et al. (2020) mentioned that—as a higher percentage of the population considered themselves as both Hong Kong and Chinese in the early years of SAR rule—this led to a friendlier environment for Putonghua, as opposed to the lower percentages of acceptance in the late 2010s. Therefore, this research project can provide further evidence on the relationship between the Chinese languages, the cultural identities of the Hong Kong people, and the historical and political context.

Former Studies on Language Attitudes in Hong Kong

Previous studies and interviews conducted with regards to linguistic attitudes in Hong Kong have largely centred around the three most spoken languages, Cantonese, English, and Mandarin, as a whole. They did not account for subtle changes within the vocabularies of a certain language, but rather looked at each language system: their relationships with other languages, and their application within the Hong Kong society at large. Nonetheless, those studies serve as an important indicator of the approximate percentage of Hong Kong Cantonese speakers who supported or disagreed with certain linguistic ideologies at the time, which enables me to reference those statistics to see if there are any changes in opinions in the present day. The implementation of large quotas on mainland Chinese immigration and tourists and Putonghua as the medium of instruction in schools were the two biggest factors that would eventually lead to the increase of Putonghua usage (Chu 2018). As noted by Chu (2018), the effects of these policies were largely unfelt by the public until the social unrests

from the 2010s onwards. Nonetheless, research made with regards to the language attitudes in the early 2000s have indicated a correlation between their identities and their linguistic preferences. A study conducted by Lai on language preferences of secondary school students showed that:

> 'Hongkongers' is the group that demonstrates the strongest integrative inclination towards Cantonese and English, while that towards [Putonghua] is comparatively the weakest. By contrast, the 'Chinese' group has shown the weakest integrative orientation towards Cantonese and English, yet the strongest positive inclination towards [Putonghua]. (Lai 2011)

However, the researcher pointed out that it was not uncommon for those who identified as Hong Kongers to have an appreciation for China and a sense of Chinese national pride (Lai 2011). Moreover, they would also support a more intensive Putonghua education in schools (Lai 2011).

These findings, however, would not appear in the research performed later on. Following the unprecedented tensions between different parties in Hong Kong from the 2014 protests onwards, multiple researchers came to focus on the linguistic trends in Hong Kong to analyse the underlying ideologies at stake. Some of the most recent and most relevant studies includes Hansen Edwards' two studies performed in 2017, both focusing on the relationships between the three primary languages in Hong Kong and their relations to the increasing political tensions with China (2019; 2020). Those studies indicated an increase in opposites between cultural identifications and language attitudes. Unlike previous findings by Lai (2002; 2011), latter research shows that respondents are increasingly reluctant to find a common ground between the two Chinese languages. Respondents became aware of the linguistic trends and even purported that the Cantonese language was on the verge of extinction, describing the Putonghua language as invasive to the culture of Hong Kong (Hansen Edwards 2019). Consequently, this research project builds on these former

researches in an attempt to identify if the trend in alienating and stigmatising Putonghua

continues to be on the rise with the heightened tensions deriving from the 2019 protests.

Findings of the First Group

In the following sections, I shall present what I have gathered from my informants during the

interviews, before analysing the trends of using Putonghua words in Cantonese by the people

of Hong Kong and how this relates to the local cultural identity. The interview consisted of

primarily two parts. In the first part I showed a list of twenty words that I believe to be in

very common usage right now by Hong Kong people, and I asked the informants to point out

whether they knew which vocabulary originated from Hong Kong and which ones did not

and asked them questions regarding their daily speech in Cantonese, of whether they used

Putonghua words or not. The second part consisted of more open-ended questions, ranging

from asking how they feel about the recent trend of Hong Kong Cantonese speakers using

more and more Putonghua vocabularies, and whether they wish the current linguistic

situation to change or not.

For the first part of my interview with informants, I have referenced the vocabularies from a

book named "A Study of Idiomatic Expressions in Hong Kong Cantonese" published by

Tsang (2010). He had given a list of the words he researched to be Cantonese words that had

been invented or originated from Hong Kong due primarily to the three scenarios mentioned

in the previous section. Furthermore, I have also chosen several words that I observed to be

of Putonghua origins, although I must admit the difficulty of clearly defining which

vocabulary is from Putonghua and which are not. Because these vocabularies are of very

recent inventions (or at least I believe them to be so), they lack sources as to indicate where

those words actually come from. Yet, I have employed those vocabularies in my interview as

well, as it would be interesting to observe whether my informants who use such terms would consider them as of foreign origin or not. Although those terms are more recent than the publications mentioned above, I believe their relevancy and relatability would be better suited for my informants to see just how much of their daily speech is influenced by vocabularies that are from abroad. Below is the list of twenty words used, their translation, and how many people use them on a daily basis and whether they think those vocabularies are from Hong Kong or not. Following Tsang's (2010) categorisation, the definition of vocabularies is classified into three groups: historical, sociocultural, and loanwords. In addition, Hong Kong Cantonese words applied in this research are vocabularies that are either invented in Hong Kong (sociocultural), or vocabularies from old or classical Chinese that are not used in Putonghua (historical), or loanwords (especially of English origin) that are modelled exclusively under Cantonese pronunciation. Jyutping, or the Cantonese romanisation system developed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong, will be used in this paper.

Vocabularies	Definition	Cantonese or Putonghua? I. historical context II. sociocultural context III. loanword	Do informants think the word is in their vocabulary and will use it? (out of 60)	Do informants think the word is Hong Kong Cantonese? (out of 60)
1)捉伊人 (n.) /zuk1 ji1 jan4/	hide and seek	Cantonese, I	40	60

2)顏值 (n.) /ngaan4 zik6/	level of facial attractiveness	Putonghua, III, possibly from Japanese	17	0
3)戴綠帽 (v.) /daai3 luk6 mou6/	to be a cuckhold (lit. wear a green hat)	Cantonese, I, ancient prostitutes had to wear green	48	45
4)學霸 (n.) /hok6 baa3/	a straight-A student	Putonghua, II,	33	7
5)手機 (n.) (sau2 gei1)	mobile phone	Putonghua, II, from Taiwan	46	23
6)的士 (n.) /dik1 si6/	taxi	Cantonese, III, transliteration of taxi in English	60	60
7)打造 (v.) /daa2 zou6/	to build, make, create	Putonghua, II	7	5
8)萌 (adj.) /mang4/	cute	Putonghua, III, from Japanese	9	0
9)浸過鹹水 (v.) /zam3 gwo3 haam4 seoi2/	to have been abroad	Cantonese, II	30	60

	(lit. to be soaked in saltwater)			
10)小三 (n.) /siu2 saam1/	the other man/woman, homewrecker	Putonghua, II	22	8
11)優化 (v.) /jau1 faa3/	to optimise	Putonghua, II	11	2
12)睇水 (v.) /tai2 seoi2/	to keep a lookout (lit. to watch water)	Cantonese, II, originally a mafia jargon (water means money)	37	50
13)人氣 (n.) /jan4 hei3/	popularity	Putonghua, III, from Japanese	29	13
14)閨蜜 (n.) /gwai1 mat6/	best friends (females)	Putonghua, II	24	0
15)搞掂 (v.) /gaau2 dim6/	Done! (exclamatory phrase)	Cantonese, II	60	60
16)性價比 (n.) /sing3 gaa3 bei2/	price–performance ratio	Putonghua, II	30	9

17)爆冷 (adv.) /baau3 laang5/	unexpectedly	Putonghua, II	32	27
18)埋單 (v.) /maai4 daan1/	to check the bill	Cantonese, II	60	60
19)小鮮肉 (n.) /siu2 sin1 juk6/	twink (lit. young fresh meat)	Putonghua, II	12	0
20)氛圍 (n.) /fan1 wai4/	atmosphere, ambience, vibe	Putonghua, II	16	0

Table 3

As we can see from the results, it is evident that all informants have the approximate knowledge of which vocabulary is Hong Kong Cantonese and which ones are not, as shown from the high number of informants who correctly identified the Hong Kong Cantonese words. In addition, most of the Putonghua words are not spoken by more than half of the informants, which means that my assumption is correct in that the entrance of Putonghua words into Cantonese is a recent phenomenon. We can also see that all Putonghua words are used by at least some informants, although some vocabularies have a much higher rate of usage than others. There is a slight correlation between the number of speakers who believe the word to be Hong Kong Cantonese and those who will use it in their daily speech. Indeed, in large data, it is very hard to analyse whether there is a correlation between the usage of Cantonese and Putonghua words and the demographic of the person. However, I have found that there is a strong correlation between the self-identity of the informant and their opinion on language usage in Hong Kong. Thus, from the pool of 60 informants, I have divided them

up into two groups—either Hongkonger or Chinese, representing the two most popular identity in Hong Kong as of the current moment—in order to further analyse the data above in the following paragraphs. Within the category of Hongkongers, I have also found that I can approximately separate them into two subgroups, those who identify themselves as "dark yellow" and those who identify as "light yellow" in terms of their political views. A summary of the questions asked, and most common answers received within the interview will be given for all the groups before analysing them all together.

"Dark Yellow" Hongkongers

The five people who identify as dark yellow are all younger than 29 years old. This group of informants are the most reluctant to use Putonghua terms in their speech and have very strong opinions on the trend of Putonghua terms entering the Cantonese language. Dark yellow, at large, are those who advocates for the independence of Hong Kong, and support the use of violence by protestors in order to achieve political goals (Purbrick 2019). All five of the informants only use Hong Kong Cantonese terms and have correctly identified the terms from Hong Kong and those that are not from the territory. When asked why they do not use the Putonghua words, their answers presented a common theme, in that they consider the Putonghua words to be inferior to their Cantonese counterparts, and that, rather than being a result of multiculturalism and cultural exchange in Hong Kong, the presence of Putonghua is a cultural invasion. In particular, one informant said:

> The new Chinese [Putonghua] words just sounds very ugly and makes no sense at all. Like, what does it mean by 'little fresh meat (小鮮肉)'? Are twinks pieces of meat waiting to be butchered and sold in a farmer's market? Or 'face value (顏值)', why are we ranking people's attractiveness with numbers now? If a person is good looking, then just say he's good looking, if not, then he's normal or ugly, you can't commodify a face with an exact numeric value. We [Cantonese] have all the vocabulary necessary to explain all things, we don't need additional Putonghua ones.

All of them have said that they realised this trend was happening in the aftermath of the umbrella movement back in 2016, when teenagers in Hong Kong began to consume mainland Chinese drama and variety shows, in addition to travelling across the border to Shenzhen to enjoy the weekends rather than staying in Hong Kong. These 5 informants were very displeased with that trend, because they considered it a loss for the original Hong Kong lifestyle and a symptom of the adoption of a mainland Chinese lifestyle by the Hong Kong youth. In addition, all of the 5 informants admitted to being very annoyed if others surrounding them used Putonghua vocabularies while speaking Cantonese. Some informants would even remind the person of the correct Cantonese equivalent. Indeed, I mentioned that some Putonghua vocabularies have no Cantonese counterparts, some of the terms are new additions to the Cantonese language. However, the informants would then say that new vocabularies are not necessary, because there are other ways of describing the same thing or event without the need to use a new terminology. As such, the informants belonging to this particular political group are very conservative when it comes to the linguistic changes in Cantonese. Yet, when I mentioned how several of the words, although seemingly from Putonghua, may not necessarily originate from mainland China, as they could be from Taiwan or even Japan, some of the informant's hostility towards several of the Putonghua words disappeared, although all of them maintains that they will not use those words because it would make the Cantonese language even more similar to the Putonghua language.

When asked if there is a relationship between Cantonese vocabularies and the cultural identity of Hong Kong, all of them replied in affirmation. They consider it so because of how different the many Cantonese vocabularies can be when compared to their Putonghua versions, and how predominantly only Hong Kong Cantonese speakers use them, so it is a very defining criterion for the Hong Kong local identity. Furthermore, because they consider

the Cantonese spoken in areas such as Macao and Guangdong to be different than the one spoken in Hong Kong, the Cantonese variant in Hong Kong appeared even more distinctive as a direct result of historical differences. When I asked them on why they would consider the recent trends as a cultural invasion rather than a cultural exchange, they said that it was because any exchange should be on equal terms, but they are not seeing any Chinese provincial or national government promoting the use of other Chinese variants other than Putonghua. Moreover, the Hong Kong government is shown to be keener on promoting Putonghua rather than protecting Cantonese no matter in the public domain or education systems. Out of curiosity, I asked if they consider the constant code-switching between Cantonese and English to be as equally invasive as Putonghua vocabularies appearing more and more often. Yet, all of them said that the appearance of English in Cantonese is absolutely fine, because it is a part of Hong Kong culture. When I asked them how they think the Cantonese vocabulary should be protected or promoted, and whether the government or the media should be more involved in advocating for Cantonese vocabularies, two of the informants said that the best way is to simply talk more and hope for the best, as the political reality is that the government and the media are of no help at all even though they are great factors in influencing out daily speech. The other three further commented on the need to separate from China, both politically and socially, because the daily quota for 150 mainland immigrants to enter and reside in Hong Kong is already leading to the assimilation of Hong Kong into China socially and culturally. One particular informant also said:

> I used to intern at a major televisional channel in Hong Kong and was working in the news department working as a translator to transcribe speeches made in English into Chinese for subtitles especially during news segments. However, the explicit rule for transliterating certain words such as foreign names or places is that I have to use the mainland Chinese version or using Putonghua pronunciations rather than Cantonese, which was a very weird thing in my opinion because this channel's main audience are the people of Hong Kong whose mother tongue is Cantonese, and yet we are forced to transliterate the words into Chinese using Putonghua pronunciations even though the words will be spoken in Cantonese, so the word sounds nothing like the original English word.

The replies from the five informants show just how pessimistic their thought is with regards to the current linguistic situation in Hong Kong and that they see no option but to politically separate from China in order for Cantonese to thrive without influences from Putonghua.

"Light yellow" Hongkongers

The next group of informants are composed of nearly all of the informants aged 39 and below (except the five who identified as dark yellow) and includes half of the informants aged 40 and above. As such, they are the largest group of people in this interview. These informants who identify as Hongkongers and politically belonging to light yellow can be generalised as people who advocate for stronger or greater autonomy of Hong Kong, but without the use of violence during the course of demanding such rights (Purbrick 2019). At large, although some may support a referendum of Hong Kong's future, or some may prefer to remain as a Special Administrative Region of China, all of them are dissatisfied with the current government and authorities and their way of handling recent movements. When asked about their usage of Putonghua words while speaking Cantonese, I realised within this categorisation, they can be further separated into approximately into two groups. The first group consists of eight informants, who tend to think that the trend of Putonghua vocabularies entering Cantonese is a product of cultural invasion. They made few errors when deciding which vocabulary belongs to which language in Table 3 and consider just a few Putonghua terms to be also in their vocabulary. Although, this was primarily due to the fact that they thought that those Putonghua words are originally Cantonese. Upon discovering the origin of several of the words to be from mainland China, some of them immediately said that they will try to no longer use them.

The other twenty-five informants form the other subgroup, who believes that the appearance of Putonghua vocabularies in Cantonese is mostly the result of constant cultural exchange. These twenty-five informants have a larger tendency to use several of the Putonghua vocabularies and, when asked about their usage, they admitted to using words based on whether they think the word sounds normal to them, or if the word can be read smoothly and appeasing to the ears. This, in my opinion, is a particularly interesting phenomenon, because the different informants had different interpretations as to what is considered to be smooth, or normal. Most of them said that upon hearing a word, they can instantly judge if the word comes from Putonghua, because the vocabularies usually sound "lame". When I further questioned what constitutes as sounding "lame", most people could not give a concrete definition, citing that the second they hear the word they instantly just think it is lame. However, one informant did come up with some sort of elaborate reason of why he considered most vocabularies of Putonghua "lame":

> You know how mainland China entered a period of dismantling their own culture back in like the 60s? With the cultural revolution, they seemed to have forgotten all the traditional Chinese splendour, and up until now I still think their revolution shook the values to its core that they are still recovering from it. And also, they arbitrarily simplified the Chinese characters and made them look unappealing to the eyes, which is why I think the newer words or terms they came up with recently also have less of an actual cultural foundation, when compared to Hong Kong that never lost touch with traditional Chinese cultures or the language.

As we can see, it is not only a matter of how a language itself is perceived but the culture related to the language can also have a big influence on its perception (I will further explain this in the analysis part below). Moreover, when asked about when they realised such a trend of Putonghua penetrating into Cantonese was happening, most of them concurred with the five informants belonging to the dark yellow group, in that it was after the umbrella movement, when there was a shift of lifestyle by Hongkongers in consuming mainland Chinese media and culture. Besides, informants in the light-yellow category also showed

biased tendencies towards foreign words, as especially those of mainland Chinese origin are treated with negative perceptions. However, the hostility towards those Putonghua words is lessened when compared to that of the former category, because some informants in the "light-yellow" category actually acknowledged that some of the words are fine to use because they fill in gaps where there are no applicable Cantonese vocabulary equivalents. But, if the new Putonghua vocabulary replaces an existing Cantonese counterpart, then most informants indicated they have a problem with the new term.

When asked about the relationship between Cantonese vocabularies and the cultural identity of Hong Kong, all of them replied that they were strongly correlated. They all considered the language and its extensive terminologies to be an inseparable part of the culture of this city, and thus linked to the local identity as well. When I asked them if they would consider the recent trends of language changes as culturally invasive or simply exchanging, most considered it to be both ways. The general consensus was that there are words that are trending in Putonghua, which are also coming into the Cantonese language, because it is very easy to access mainland Chinese trends and all sorts of entertainment. And most of the informants agreed that content produced in Hong Kong is not as well-received as the entertainment produced in mainland China. Therefore, it is only natural for Hongkongers to adopt words originating from China. However, they have also expressed dissatisfaction towards the eagerness of the government of Hong Kong to promote and further integrate the territory into China, which made most of the informants reluctant to follow the trend and use those words in their daily speech. In particular, one of the informants who used to work in public relations said:

> This new government is refusing to stand for the culture of the land they govern, like one time they openly ridiculed Cantonese as a mere dialect and not the official language of Hong Kong?! If that's the case, then my mother is not a woman… This government is continuously adopting the vocabularies of the Chinese government

because unfortunately half of the time they make a speech it isn't meant for us but for the Chinese authorities – which in my opinion sounds hideous because those terms are not from Cantonese or traditional Chinese. And because the media has to report news as it is, those vocabularies start to circulate around Hong Kong and soon they are stuck in our heads. This is not good for the language because those new terms from Putonghua are so general, they can fit into any scenario, which makes them very easy to remember and be used. Yet, they would make the Cantonese very monotone because we now forget how the colourful our words can be with each Cantonese vocabulary designed to suit a particular scenario.

So, when I asked whether there is a need to protect it or promote it, all of them replied in affirmation. The primary answers I received was that more entertainment needs to be made in Cantonese, so as to counterbalance the entertainment industry of mainland China. Several of the informants also commented on the need to make programmes focused on exploring the Cantonese language. All of them said there is no need for government intervention in manipulating the usage of either of the languages. Thus, from this group, I can conclude that although they do wish for the Cantonese language to employ less usage of Putonghua vocabulary, they do not totally reject the trend, for most of them would use what they consider to be normal or smooth words.

Chinese, or Chinese Hongkonger

This last group of people consists of the remaining twenty-one informants who identify as either purely Chinese, or Chinese Hongkonger. All of them are aged forty and above. Politically, they identify as either neutral or blue, meaning they tend to support the government and are rarely unsatisfied with the actions of the authorities (Purbrick 2019). Of the twenty-one informants, seven identified themselves as neutral, twelve have no political affiliation, and two identified as blue. This group of informants are subdivided in that the informants aged below sixty are the ones who use the most Putonghua terms and know that they are Putonghua vocabulary so, on average, they would use more than half of the Putonghua vocabularies presented there in the table shown (Table 3). Yet, the informants

aged sixty and above rarely use the Putonghua in Table 3, and often questioned if those words are made up or not because they could not understand them. This could be attributed to the fact that the vocabularies I chose are often transmitted over the internet, realms where informants aged sixty and above (all of which only had secondary education or lower) are often unfamiliar with. Although all of them agreed that the Cantonese vocabulary is fairly important, they also said that the appearance of Putonghua terms into Cantonese is an inevitable event due to the proximity between the two regions. One of the informants even went as far as saying:

> This is a good thing for both Hong Kong and China, because [with Putonghua vocabularies entering Cantonese] now the entire country are on the pathway of being unified linguistically. It is only natural for a dialect such as Cantonese to begin following the footsteps of the official language – Putonghua – because Hong Kong has returned to China. Especially when the Chinese government is actively promoting the Greater Bay Area for employment opportunities for the people of Hong Kong, it is crucial that we understand the Cantonese spoken in those regions that are already under heavy Putonghua influence. Thus, it is good that Putonghua is starting to influence the Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong, it would be easier to facilitate communication between Cantonese speakers all across the country.

When I asked the informants on whether they have a criterion on which Putonghua words to use or not when speaking Cantonese. All of them simply said that as long as they can understand the word and know how to use it, they will use it. Unlike previous informants, they do not consider certain words to sound "lame". When I asked if Cantonese vocabularies have anything to do with the identity of Hong Kong, some of them replied yes, but explained how even within Cantonese, the vocabularies are constantly changing all the time, so it is hard to define which terminology is more Cantonese than others. Others simply said that Putonghua add-ons to Cantonese become part of the Hong Kong identity, those words do not diminish the original identity of the Hong Kong people. As such, when I asked if the recent trend of Putonghua words entering Cantonese is culturally invasive or a mere result from the constant exchange, some of them acknowledged the hegemony of Putonghua which made

Cantonese vulnerable to such influences, whilst the rest replied that it is simply cultural exchange. One informant also mentioned:

> Back in the 1980s, the Hong Kong entertainment industry was so influential, many Chinese adopted to our vocabulary and used Cantonese terms in their Putonghua speech. Now that the tide has turned with the Chinese entertainment industry being more influential, it is only natural that we start adopting to their culture, I see nothing wrong with that.

Thus, when I asked if the Cantonese words need to be protected or promoted, none of them replied affirmatively. Although some mentioned that they would feel slightly disappointed if the next generation does not know or use certain Cantonese vocabularies, they agreed with others in this category that language constantly changes so there is no point in trying to prevent any change from happening. When I asked how they would consider the long-standing trend of Hongkongers code-switching between Cantonese and English, to my surprise, some of them said it is not recommended to do so because it decreases the ability for one to communicate purely in Cantonese. They consider English to be linguistically invasive to the Cantonese language, and although they noted how many in Hong Kong use code-switch, they try not to do so in their daily speech. Thus, we can see this group of people are the most tolerant toward using Putonghua out of all three groups of informants.

Findings of the Second Group

In an attempt to better understand how the language of Cantonese correlates with the cultural identity of Hong Kong, I thought it would be insightful to ask Putonghua speakers who immigrated from neighbouring states on their perception of language use in Hong Kong.

There are primarily two reasons as to why I believe interviews with immigrants who are not of Hong Kong origins can assist this project. Firstly, people often fail to notice certain aspects of their own culture. That is, the majority of people who are not immigrants or does not have

long exposures of foreign cultures often view the world through their own cultures and traditions. Also known as ethnocentrism, this may result in biased viewpoints for some when identifying certain aspects of local or foreign culture. As immigrants experience foreign cultures first-hand, they are more capable of commenting on other cultures from a different and less biased angle, which is why I think interviewing immigrants in Hong Kong would help in assessing the possible differences in opinions on language and culture in this territory.

Secondly, the reason why I chose only Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants for this project, but not other immigrants is because of the cultural proximity between Hong Kong and these two Chinese states. With these regions also collectively known as Greater China, it could be said that each regional Chinese community understands, to a certain extent, each other's aspects of life such as culture, language, and politics. In addition, as mentioned by many of my native Hong Kong informants as written in previous sections, the use of Putonghua in the city is generally negatively received, because many of them claimed that the mainland Chinese culture (which includes the language of Putonghua) is undermining the local culture of Hong Kong and Cantonese. As such, I have also interviewed ten informants from both Mainland China and Taiwan, whose mother tongue is Putonghua, and have been living in Hong Kong for at least more than three years, which I think is an acceptable timeframe for adequate exposure of the culture and climate in Hong Kong and its changes due to the recent 2019 protests, if any. The questions asked generally concern their usage of Putonghua and their experience in Hong Kong, if they ever felt alienated or welcomed because of their speech patterns and how they felt about it. Please refer to the second table on page 7 (Table 2) for the demographics of the informants.

In the following paragraphs, I shall present what I have gathered from my informants during the interviews, before analysing the trend of using Putonghua words in Cantonese by the people of Hong Kong and how this relates to the local cultural identity. The interview consisted of primarily two parts, the first part comprised general questions such as when and why they reallocated to Hong Kong, and their level of competence in Cantonese. The second part consisted of more open-ended questions, ranging from asking how they felt about the general attitudes of Hong Kong people towards Putonghua speakers, and whether they had experienced any particular scenarios when conversing in different languages, to their own thoughts of the linguistic changes in both Hong Kong and their places of origin.

The informants consisted of six Taiwanese and four mainland Chinese. The duration of their residency in Hong Kong ranges from before the transfer of sovereignty in the 1990s, to as recent as in the late 2010s in the aftermath of the 2014 protests. Most of them came to Hong Kong to study and stayed to work or had immigrated to Hong Kong as children with their parents. Seven of the ten informants described their proficiency in Cantonese as advanced, two described themselves as intermediate, and one being novice. All of them had only begun to learn Cantonese after reallocating to Hong Kong and mentioned that the primary reason to do so was to communicate with the rest of the population. The political affiliation of the informants ranges from neutrality to highly critical of the Chinese communist government. But, as described in the following paragraphs, there does not seem to be a correlation between one's political stance and his opinions.

When I asked if they had any memorable experiences when speaking in Putonghua in Hong Kong, predictably, all informants said that they had had negative experiences when trying to converse in Putonghua with other native speakers. All of them mentioned how Hong Kongers

automatically ascribe a certain negative stereotype upon hearing Putonghua, which made the informants reluctant to speak it anymore in front of strangers. Some of them opted to use English instead, whilst others tried to use their limited Cantonese. One Taiwanese informant, however, noted that when Cantonese speakers are able to distinguish between Taiwanese and mainland Chinese accents of Putonghua, or when they know that the person is from Taiwan, they would readjust their attitudes to a more positive tone. Other informants who have lived in Hong Kong from before the transfer of sovereignty mentioned that the level of negative attitudes towards Putonghua speakers fluctuated with time:

> When I first came to Hong Kong in 1992 for undergraduate studies, I was particularly exposed to the cultural superiority that many Hong Kongers seem to feel when communicating with mainlanders such as myself, since my identity was apparent because I only spoke Putonghua. And then sometime after the handover, this negativity subsided when Hong Kong people are actually excited to speak in Putonghua when given the opportunity. I guess it is because at that time, it coincided with the Beijing Olympics when everyone was proud to be Chinese? And then things went south once again in the 2010s when the mass demonstrations happened and the side-effects of the mass immigration of new [Chinese] immigrants became apparent. The people became hostile towards Putonghua.

Despite the fact that all of the informants had negative experiences when speaking in Putonghua in Hong Kong, a majority of them deems the hostility understandable due to the socio-economic and political tensions between the local population and the governments of both Hong Kong and China. To my surprise, most of the informants actually commented on the use of Putonghua in Hong Kong saying that they criticise those who think it is acceptable to speak in Putonghua and expect local Hong Kongers to understand and comply also in Putonghua. To those informants, it is well noted that the de facto official spoken language of the territory is either Cantonese or English. Therefore, they deem it detestable for Putonghua speaking tourists or immigrants to continue to speak in Putonghua in Hong Kong whilst neglecting the fact that the Cantonese language takes precedence within the city. Also, when I asked about how they feel when words in their respective dialects of Putonghua are replaced with foreign words (similar to how Putonghua words are entering the Cantonese language),

all Taiwanese informants remarked that, like Hong Kongers, they disliked the introduction of many mainland Chinese words into the Taiwanese Putonghua, seeing it as a foreign influence attempting to undermine the unique Taiwanese culture. In particular, one informant from Taiwan mentioned:

> I see that many social media pages and commentaries deem it as an act of cultural invasion. But personally, I would not necessarily call it an act of cultural invasion, but rather cultural dominance. It is because it is apparent that more and more people are consuming mainland Chinese entertainment whilst the local entertainment industries are shrinking, so it is inevitable that people subconsciously take in the mainland Chinese way of speaking. But at the same time, language can also be used as a method to indoctrinate certain ideas, and China does have a political agenda to subjugate Taiwan to "reunify" the country. So, it is hard to differentiate whether mainland Chinese words are innocent or have an agenda behind, so we simply try to reject them all.

Mainland Chinese informants, on the other hand, are not as critical as their Taiwanese counterparts when it comes to using vocabularies from other places. Although they do think each culture should maintain their own uniqueness, the present level of foreign vocabularies in mainland Chinese, in their opinion, is not enough to negatively affect the language as a whole. Therefore, as we can see, informants from both mainland China and Taiwan are also sympathetic towards most Cantonese speakers of Hong Kong in matters relating to language use, as they themselves also dislike having their own cultures subjugated by other cultures.

Analysis

In this section, the findings and data in the previous sections will be discussed with relation to how the interviews reflect on the relationship between identity, language ideology, and language used by the Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong.

Language Ideology and Identity

We can see from the data presented in previous sections that how an informant identifies himself culturally has big implications for how he perceives the Putonghua words entering

the Cantonese language. Especially, nearly all of the informants considered Cantonese to be crucial in the make-up of the Hong Kong culture and its people. This finding is also in line with previous studies across time, where participants also agreed that Cantonese is a very important aspect of what it means to be a Hongkonger (Bacon-Shone 2015; Chan 2019; Lai 2011). In particular, linguist Paul Kroskrity mentioned in his essay called *Language Ideologies: Emergence, Elaboration, and Application* that language ideologies are "beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use, which often index the political-economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation-states" (Kroskrity 2010). This means that sociocultural contexts matter when considering and analysing languages. When placed in the context of my interviews, we can see how the language ideology behind Cantonese is that it is an inseparable part of the local identity. Thus, we can understand how most informants who identify as a Hongkonger are reluctant to accept the trend of increased Putonghua penetration, because they see the Putonghua influences as a threat to diminishing the unique local identity of the Hong Kong people. This is also why they consider Putonghua terms as culturally invading or dominating Cantonese.

On the contrary, those who identify themselves as Chinese or Chinese Hongkonger would see no harm in the changes in Cantonese, because their ideology of the Cantonese language is that it is a part of the Chinese culture, rather than uniquely Hong Kong's. In addition, many of those who identified as Chinese, rather than Hong Konger, made references to the fact that Cantonese is officially classified as a mere dialect of Chinese. Putonghua, however, is not a dialect, but the official language of China. Thus, in their minds, it is acceptable for Putonghua to take precedence over Cantonese, and have all regional dialects influenced by Putonghua. This could be attributed to the result of being influenced by Chinese propaganda, in accepting the fact that dialects have less importance as opposed to languages that are official and thus

enjoy more prestige (Cheng 2018). Yet, it is well noted within the academia of linguistics that there are no differences in superiority and inferiority between languages and dialects. As a famous aphorism attributed to French linguist Antoine Meillet goes, "A language is a dialect with an army and navy" (Bright 1997). Therefore, in researches that concern the language and its application in a society, such as this one, it is important to recognise the ideologies and socio-cultural and political circumstances that are at play.

Also in the research, I have observed that another aspect of the use of Putonghua in Cantonese is tied to the perception of mainland China as a whole. Many of my informants— especially those who identify themselves as Hongkongers—considered several or all of the Putonghua vocabularies as "lame", unsmooth, or abnormal, so that they would not use it in their daily speech. On a purely linguistic level, this may seem arbitrary, but when looking at the broader social and cultural context between Hong Kong and China, this arbitrariness to be actually could be understood because of the generally negative perceptions of mainland China most by of the informants. Also, as noted in other social researches such as by Qin and Fang (2019) and Lowe and Tsang (2017), the idea of mainland China and its social, cultural, and political values are not well received in Hong Kong. The thought of China by many "conjures up notions of Communism, corruption, stealth and human rights abuses" (Lowe and Tsang 2017). In addition, the social attitudes and norms that are considered correct or wrong are very different between Hong Kong and China, causing dismay and controversies when mainland Chinese tourists visit Hong Kong but act in mannerisms that are considered socially unacceptable or even appalling by many Hongkongers (Qin and Fang 2019). Because of how a language is intimately tied to a culture (Stanlaw, Adachi, and Salzmann 2019), just as Cantonese is considered by many to be a crucial part of Hong Kong culture, Putonghua is also considered part of the mainland Chinese culture. And thus, when the current Chinese

culture presented by some mainland Chinese is not well received by the people of Hong Kong, their language—Putonghua—is also not as accepted. Especially, when the highly regarded language of Cantonese is shown to be mixing with Putonghua vocabularies, it will draw rejections and criticisms, as how most of my informants considered it to be "lame". However, the informants who have shown negative impressions towards Putonghua show no hostility towards the Putonghua variant used in Taiwan. In fact, many of the Taiwanese in group two of my interviews have pointed out that in recent years, the attitudes of Hong Kong people upon hearing Putonghua are becoming more negative, but upon knowing it is of the Taiwanese variant, attitudes change to become overwhelmingly positive. Due to Taiwan being a place positively regarded by most people of Hong Kong, the Chinese variant tied to the region is also positively regarded (Lai 2011). Thus, we can see how the perception of a language can change due to the ideologies and the culture that is tied to a certain language.

In addition, we can also see a repetition in the way identity in Hong Kong is characterised, as the notion of otherness is often used to describe what it means to be a Hong Konger. In particular, it is more apparent to distinguish entities that do not conform to the definition of the Hong Kong local culture, than to point out the things that actually make up the local culture. As told by many informants in group one, it is usually quicker to assume certain characteristics that do not conform to the idea of being a Hong Konger. In fact, since the inception of the notion of a local identity, a major part was built upon identifying "the other" in order to establish "the self". "The other" is employed in anthropology to describe how a dominant in-group (the self) constructs out-groups (the other) by stigmatizing differences, be it real or imagined (Mathews et al. 2008). In this aspect, the notion of "self" first appeared in Hong Kong due to the new wave of immigration in the late 1970s, whereby the local population deemed the new arrivals not as "'Chinese relatives following in [their] footsteps,'

but strangers to be scorned…[which] emerged a distinction between 'we' (the locals) and 'them' (the new immigrants), with the former seen as working hard to earn a decent living and the latter seen as coming to Hong Kong to reap the benefits of economic development" (Mathews et al. 2008). This idea of identifying "the other"—in order to strengthen the distinct and separate notion of "self"—was echoed in many researches conducted in the years both before and after the transfer of sovereignty, in which interviewees were quicker to identify what characteristics are not part of the Hong Kong identity, such as not speaking Cantonese, not understanding English, not embracing the idea of the rule of law (Lai 2005; Chow et al. 2020). In fact, as the assimilation process became more apparent and the city was losing its special status and distinctiveness from 2010 onwards, more characteristics—real or unreal—were added into the list of what is not part of the Hong Kong identity in an attempt to further distinguish between the two identities. Notions such as being uncivilised, being corrupt, being unethical are increasingly attributed to "the other", to the Chinese immigrants and tourists alike, so as to widen the distinction between the local population and those who are not (Chow et al. 2020; Yuen and Cheung 2018). At present, as described by informants in my research, the most radicals of those who identifies as Hong Kongers belonging in the "dark yellow" category would even consider those who speak Cantonese but use words of Putonghua origins to not be true Hong Kongers, because those words are "bandit vocabularies (匪語)" that is destroying the integrity of Cantonese. Therefore, the trend of using "the other" to reinforce "the self" is especially apparent when analysing the cultural identity of Hong Kong.

Language Ideology and Positionality

The difference in the perception of the ideologies of Cantonese by different informants can be explained by positionality, an attribute of language ideology that is defined as how

language is often used to promote the interests or ideals "of an economically positioned social or cultural group" (Kroskrity 2010). The majority of the informants who wish to remain culturally and socially separate from mainland China uses Cantonese as a defence or a barrier between Hong Kong and Chinese identity (Chu 2018). They would even consider code-switching between Cantonese and English acceptable because most other Chinese languages do not employ large amounts of code-switching in their daily speech. Besides, some of the informants would even remind others not to use the newly trending Putonghua words in Cantonese, to promote and maintain the idea that there exists a difference between Hong Kong and China. As for those who identify as Chinese, their position is that by introducing Putonghua into Cantonese, it will help with the people identifying more as a Chinese culturally. Thus, the existence of the constant code-switch between English and Cantonese threatens their position, because it creates distinction rather than the similarity between the two Chinese languages.

In anthropological terms, it could be said that the informants who identify as Chinese wish for the people of Hong Kong and their culture to shift from being Hong Konger to become Chinese or embrace Chinese values, in a process called cultural assimilation. The term is defined as where a minority culture (in this case, Hong Kong's local culture and identity) to resemble or be closer to a majority culture or another culture (the overarching Chinese culture and identity) (Tang 2020). By assimilating the vocabulary differences and making society use the Putonghua terms more than its Cantonese counterparts, the Cantonese language would then be shifting towards being under the influence of the hegemonic Putonghua. As explained by Tsang (2010), the primary difference between the Cantonese spoken in Guangdong and Hong Kong is that in Guangdong, many of the vocabularies are already from Putonghua as a result of "Putonghua-first" language policies, and because of the

province being more exposed to the Chinese entertainment and culture than Hong Kong. Thus, as already mentioned, in order to prevent the assimilation of Hong Kong culturally, the informants who identify as Hongkonger are comparably reluctant or altogether opposing to any alteration of the Hong Kong Cantonese language.

Language Ideology and the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

The fact that many of the informants stated that to they do not notice the differences between using Putonghua and Cantonese vocabularies while speaking Cantonese until the late 2010s—when social unrest against the alleged interference of Chinese agendas in Hong Kong became more and more frequent—can also be attributed to a theory known as the optimal distinctiveness theory that was coined by Brewer. Similar to positionality whereby languages are used to position or maintain certain ideologies, the optimal distinctiveness theory is a social theory stating that people have a desire to achieve an optimal balance of inclusion and distinctiveness within and between social groups and situations under different circumstances (Brewer 2003). In the context of results derived from this project's interviews, we can see a correlation between the socio-cultural and political situation of Hong Kong and the distinctiveness of the Hong Kong identity.

As noted by the immigrant informants in group two, the hostility and proximity towards mainland Chinese people, or people who speak Putonghua in general, have fluctuated to different degrees at different times. The informants who lived in Hong Kong from the 2000s stated that at that period of time, when the political tension between Hong Kong and China were minimal with sporadic social unrests, Hong Kong Cantonese speakers had little to no antagonism towards Putonghua speakers within the territory. This coincided with statistics by the University of Hong Kong showing that the percentage of Hong Kongers identifying as

Chinese rose to an all-time high to 40 percent of interviewees in August of 2008, whilst those who solely identified as Hong Konger (not mixed identity such as Hong Kong Chinese or vice versa) dropped to a historic low of just under 20 percent (HKU POP 2019). The friendliness towards Putonghua speakers was also echoed in the research performed by Lai (2011). However, when political tensions arise—especially those that seem to undermine the autonomy of the city and the distinctiveness of its culture—informants mentioned that the animosity towards entities connected to China would rise depending on how large the tension is. As shown in the polls, during the beginning 2019 protests in June, those who identified as Chinese dropped to an unprecedented low with just 10 percent of the interviewees in agreement, whilst those who identified only as Hong Kongers rose to a record high of 53 percent (HKU POP, 2019). As we can draw from the informants and statistics, there is a certain correlation between the percentage of the general public who identify as only Hong Konger and their attitudes towards Cantonese and Putonghua. In particular, whenever political situations that seemingly threaten the local identity arise, this will result in more positive attitudes to Cantonese (and/or more negative sentiments towards Putonghua) to establish or maintain optimal distinctiveness from mainland China. The more repression from China is felt by Hong Kong Cantonese speakers, the more distance they would put themselves between Hong Kong and China in terms of culture, which in turn puts more distance between the two Chinese languages, with even Cantonese vocabularies being scrutinised to confirm their origins are not from Putonghua.

Further analysis of the optimal distinctiveness theory can be found within the interviews, as we can also see that many of the informants said that they only realised the trend of Putonghua influencing Cantonese after 2016, or after the umbrella movement. As noted by Tsz (2016), while there was little to no attention paid towards the influx of Putonghua

vocabularies into Cantonese before 2010, the rise of attention towards the mainlandisation of Cantonese went hand in hand with the increased awareness of the rise of mainland Chinese culture as a soft power and political tensions in the latter half of the 2010s. The majority of the informants have also expressed that they expect Putonghua to continue to be on the rise in Hong Kong, and see that they themselves cannot do much to protect Cantonese besides continuing to speak it themselves.

This concurred with the findings presented by Chu (2018), who deemed that the special situation of Cantonese as a mere spoken language in Hong Kong is detrimental to maintaining its status as a language and not a dialect. The long established norm of speakers of Cantonese in Hong Kong is that they alternate between writing in standard modern Chinese and speaking in Cantonese, which provided a very convenient method for the government—ever since the handover—to justify the increase usage of Putonghua over Cantonese in academic and official settings, because Putonghua is grammatically more similar to the written standard modern Chinese (Chu 2018). The numerous slangs, idioms, and jargon in Cantonese that are seemingly unwritable in Chinese and have no counterpart in Putonghua also adds to the ideology—in which the government wants the people of Hong Kong to believe—in that the Cantonese language is not formal or should be treated as being on a subordinate level to Putonghua. Coupled with the exponential economic growth of China since the late 20th century, the result was that many of the people in Hong Kong did see the need to learn Putonghua and its importance, which led to minimal reactions or realisations in the early 21st century when Putonghua became more and more prominent in Hong Kong (Chu 2018).

However, in light of the recent social unrest in Hong Kong and the unprecedented duration and escalation of the protests that is seen by some as the final straw of Hong Kong's autonomy, more attention has been given to Cantonese and its status as part of Hong Kong's cultural identity, whereby more and more initiatives have been made by non-governmental organisations and people to protect the Cantonese language. In fact, several of the informants have mentioned that in order to protect Cantonese, the spoken language must also be written and be accepted as an adequate form of writing system rather than standard modern Chinese, a thought that had never been given any serious consideration (except by a few scholars) prior to the 2019 protests (Chu 2018). Now, there exists publications dedicated to research on Cantonese as a written language and its literature, and only print in Cantonese rather than standard modern Chinese, and has received massive public support and donations since its inception in early 2020 (Resonate 2020). Thus, while the social norm of writing in Chinese persists in Hong Kong, the 2019 protests did allow for many in Hong Kong to realise and reconsider their position, giving more attention on matters concerning the use of the Cantonese language (and Putonghua to a lesser extent) in the territory. In addition, the very recent consideration of Cantonese as a written language reinforces the optimal distinctiveness theory, whereby the identities of being Chinese and being a Hong Konger are increasingly becoming defined in opposition with each other; when there is too much of one motive, the other must increase in order to counterbalance it and vice versa. Therefore, the consideration of Cantonese as a written language is the result of the intense assertiveness by the authorities to forcefully make Hong Kongers accept the hegemony of the Chinese identity, which sparked a more radical approach in an attempt to recover the uniqueness of the Hong Kong identity via language.

Language Ideology and Memory

Also, as explained by Kroskrity (2010), another component of a language and its ideology is multiplicity, which is about how even within a single language, there can be different ideologies depending on the socio-cultural contexts that are stratified, such as but not limited to age, class, or ethnicity. From the interviews I conducted, there exists a correlation between the age of the informants, their self-identification, and their view of the Cantonese language. Most if not all of the informants aged 39 and below identified themselves as only Hongkonger, and this was shown in the interview through being hostile to various extents towards Putonghua vocabulary in Cantonese speech. On the contrary, those aged 40 and above predominantly identified themselves as either Chinese Hongkonger or Chinese and in general welcome the trend of increased Putonghua influence into Cantonese. I attribute this phenomenon to be related to the language ideology they have in mind for Cantonese, in particular to the language's historical role in the development in Hong Kong.

As explained in the history of Hong Kong by Tsang (2003), Cantonese did not become the official Chinese variant in Hong Kong until the mass immigration of Cantonese people during and after the Communist takeover. As a result of such massive immigration, Hong Kong gained the manpower to industrialise itself from an entrepôt to a major financial centre, with Cantonese becoming the predominant language in the territory (Chan 2019). In the meantime, the relatively liberal society when compared to neighbouring states enabled the rise of Cantopop and the Cantonese cinema, which, by the 1980s, Hong Kong became a powerhouse in exporting Cantonese music and cinema (Tsang 2003). However, after the transfer of sovereignty in 1997, Hong Kong no longer was a major power in exporting culture, and China was seen to be constantly meddling with Hong Kong affairs (Yuen and Chung 2018). The informants aged 39 and below are mostly born after what was considered Hong Kong's golden age in the 1980s, being born around the time of the handover. Thus, the

Hong Kong youth grew up at a time when the city is becoming less and less significant, both culturally and economically, as China begins to rapidly industrialise. The youth are also born at a time of steadily increasing living costs—resulting into Hong Kong becoming one of the most unaffordable cities on the planet, of constant political disputes between those in support and those against the government, and of the influx of both mainland tourists and immigrants causing social controversies (Yuen and Chung 2018). Because the younger generation in Hong Kong has never lived through the golden age during the 1980s, the perception of Hong Kong's seemingly glorious past begins to be fictionalised and fantasised, with incoherent negative historical events removed and exaggerations how influential Hong Kong was culturally and economically. Thus, in order to prevent Hong Kong from straying further away from the so-called golden age, these younger members are more eager to protect what they can. And because language and intimately related to culture, the younger generation wish for the Cantonese language to remain as it was back in the golden age of Hong Kong, without influences from Putonghua. Because most of the informants aged 39 and below did not live through the 1980s, their memory of the past is not based upon history, but rather a narrative of retelling the past.

As coined by Pierre Nora, the fictional memory of the past is called "Histoire-mémoire (historical memory)" of the place (Nora 1989). Unlike collective memory, which means a commonly shared memory and knowledge of the past of a society, "histoire-mémoire" is the altered memory or imagination of a place's history by its people (Nora 1989). By constructing a narrative based upon selected historical events while ignoring others, it is very easy for people who do not truly understand history to be manipulated and misled into having a biased point of view on historical and current events. In particular, to further the narrative, certain places—both physical and non-material—can act as embodiments of the "histoire-mémoire".

This, as explained by Nora (1989), is a "lieu de mémoire (site of memory)", which was defined by him as "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community." When put in the context of this research, we can see how many informants thought of Cantonese as the "lieu de mémoire" for not only the actual collective memory of Hong Kong's colonial past, but also the fabricated narrative of Hong Kong's glorious past. This is especially evident in the fact that the most radical of the informants wished for Cantonese to stay completely unchanged, because they want the Cantonese language to remain as it was before the transfer of sovereignty. Thus, we can see how the Cantonese language is not only representing the present culture of Hong Kong, but is also an embodiment of Hong Kong's history and development.

To further analyse the "lieu de mémoire" as idealised by many young informants, another theory that can be used to describe their strong inclination to maintain the status quo of Cantonese and its vocabularies is the idea of authenticity. This concept has been described as how a language or its variety is "rooted in and directly expresses the essential nature of a community or speaker," and we can see from multiple researches performed that the Cantonese language is widely accepted as "the language of Hong Kongers" (Hansen Edwards 2019; 2020; Lai 2011). Despite the fact that Cantonese, especially the variant that is spoken in Hong Kong, is considered by many to be a mixed language rather than pure, my interview for group one shows that people who identify as Hong Kongers are becoming increasingly reluctant to accept certain foreign influences or vocabularies into Cantonese. As an example, most informants who identify as "dark yellow or yellow" considered the constant code-switch between speaking Cantonese and employing English vocabularies to be an authentic and integral part of the Hong Kong identity, citing the fact that it was only natural to

incorporate English words as part of being under British administration. However, when asked about Putonghua vocabularies in Cantonese, many of them did not consider it to be natural change and described the recent changes as inauthentic, despite the fact that Hong Kong is now under Chinese sovereignty. On the other hand, those who identified as "neutral or blue" had a largely friendly attitude towards the usage of Putonghua words in Cantonese, citing that the change in hegemony from Britain to China would eventually lead to cultural changes in Hong Kong to assimilate cultural influences from its Chinese counterpart. The localists consider Cantonese under the framework of when the culture of Hong Kong was consolidated at its highest point during the 1980s, whilst nationalists perceive it as a variant within the larger context of the Chinese language. As such, there is a dispute on the idea of authenticity between those who largely identifies as localists, and those who identify as nationalists, which subsequently leads to differences in opinions between most younger informants and older informants on the Cantonese language, for their self-identification is different.

On the other hand, the oldest generation who have been under British colonial rule through much of the 20th century often regarded the Hong Kong identity as being under the hegemony of the Chinese identity. As mentioned by the older informants in group one, they do not regard the Hong Kong identity as a totally separate and distinct identity from the Chinese one. Rather, they coexist side by side and most importantly, without the Chinese identity, there would be no Hong Kong identity. As mentioned by Mathews et al. (2008), this could be attributed to the fact that most of the older generation who left mainland China and took refuge in Hong Kong maintained their identity as Chinese, despite living under a system and culture that were considerably different than their mainland counterparts. In a sense, their idea of "self" versus "other" are not so distinct as opposed to that of the younger generation

who was brought up entirely in Hong Kong. To the older generation, both themselves living in Hong Kong and their mainland counterparts are Chinese, who just happened to be living under different political systems and experiencing divergent mainstream cultures. Consequently, after the transfer of sovereignty, they are amongst the most supportive of government policies in establishing closer relations with China. At the same time, as the oldest of my informants had little formal education (most of which did not graduate high school), they were also the easiest to be manipulated by government propaganda in establishing the predominance of Putonghua, and the lesser importance of Cantonese as a mere dialect. As a result, the disparity in opinions on language attitudes between the ages could be also attributed to the different upbringings of the informants.

Language Ideology and Power

Another element to explain the differences in opinions between Cantonese and Putonghua is the power that lies behind the respective languages. As described by Bourdieu, in addition to one's economic situation, there exist three other types of capital that determine one's social class: cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Economic capital refers to the most basic value of material wealth; cultural capital comprises of the different aspects of a person—such as education, intellect, styles of speech and dress and behaviour—that allow for social mobility; social capital is about the networking of relationships; and symbolic capital consists of the more intangible aspects of social recognition, prestige, and honour (Bourdieu 1986; 1991). These various forms of capital can be converted into one another. In particular, language also acts as a sign or symbol that can be converted as capital because "at the individual level, acquiring and using the 'correct' language bestows distinction on the speaker… At the collective level, having a united linguistic market—an agreed on notion of what can or cannot be said—is both an end and a means of nation building" (Chan 2002). In this aspect, it is

apparent that English has long enjoyed the status as the most important language for determining social class throughout the history of Hong Kong. English acted as the symbolic and cultural capital in allowing its speakers to climb further up the social ladder, both locally and in the international setting (Chan 2002). Cantonese, however, despite being the de facto spoken language in the territory, is overshadowed by English as the primary language in official, commercial, and legal contexts. Thus, the capital associated with Cantonese is considerably less than English, but Cantonese still managed to position itself higher than Putonghua, as Hong Kong remained an important centre for trade, commerce, and culture in the latter half of the 20th century.

However, at the turn of the century, China began its economic boom. Coupled with the handover, the dynamic between Cantonese and Putonghua changed as China became increasingly important. As studies show, despite the fact that Cantonese continues to be regarded as the native language of Hong Kong, it is not Cantonese but English and Putonghua that are regarded as languages essential to succeed in work (Lai 2011). As such, the capital associated with Putonghua for social mobility is increasing, whilst the capital of Cantonese is dwindling. But because Cantonese remains the only language considered to be a crucial marker linked to city's identity, the overpowering Putonghua language and the entities associated with it begin to be attacked by opponents to reverse the trend, which is why Putonghua vocabularies in Cantonese are increasingly targeted as unwanted entities that are undermining the power of Cantonese. The increasing resentment upon hearing Putonghua within the city as noted by informants are also the result of realising the power of Putonghua that is growing stronger within the territory day by day. What is different about Putonghua and English is that the former is attached to an external influence, whilst the latter is considered part of the Hong Kong identity by many as shown in studies throughout the

decades (Hansen Edwards 2019; Lai 2005; 2011). In addition, since there is a clear distinction between the domains in which English and Cantonese have more power, the two languages are not seen as being in competition with one another for total domination in all aspects of Hong Kong identity. As such, English is not viewed in the same antagonistic way as Putonghua, which is perceived to be influencing and threatening multiple aspects of the local identity. Consequently, it is evident that the stronger the power Putonghua holds, the stronger the resistance many Hong Kongers will put up to prevent the dominance of the new Chinese language.

Follow up of the Interviews

During my interviews, a very striking point of view from a few informants had surprised me, in that they advocate for Cantonese to become the official written script as well, an argument which bewilders even me, as a Hong Konger. According to those informants, this would be the only way—in the long run—to maintain the uniqueness of Cantonese and for it to be well established as a language and not as a dialect. As mentioned by Chu, the Cantonese language is of a peculiar circumstance because it is only spoken, not written officially (Chu 2018). Instead, modern standard Chinese is used in official settings and educational institutions as the only acceptable written form. Critics of such an arrangement, such as Hong Kong linguist Auyeung Wai-Ho, describe that on one hand, the lack of officially recognised written form of Cantonese makes it easier for officials or policy makers to degrade Cantonese as a dialect, on the other hand, spoken forms of any language are more susceptible to change, as opposed to the written forms that are regulated more extensively by language authorities (Auyeung 2015). At the time of his publication on written vernacular Cantonese, Snow (2004) mentioned that virtually no one in Hong Kong supported the idea of writing in Cantonese in all forms of publications, in both official and non-official situations. As such, as a follow up

of my interview, I asked my group one informants if they supported the idea that Cantonese should be made as an official written script as well and whether they thought this would help preserve the language. As in the previous section of my analysis, my argument was that as the Hong Kong identity becomes increasingly under threat, more radical or previously not conceived ideas would be brought forth to try and preserve the identity. As such, I believe there would be a substantial increase in support of vernacular written Cantonese. As the results of my interview with group one indicated a correlation between the informants' opinions and their identities, the results summarised below are also separated by the same categories as in the group one findings.

Do you support the idea of written vernacular Cantonese in all sectors of Hong Kong to have equal status as written English and standard Chinese?

	Dark Yellow Hong Kongers (out of 5)	Light Yellow Hong Kongers (out of 34)	Chinese or Chinese Hong Konger (out of 21)
Yes, with no reservations	3	9	/
Yes, with reservations	2	12	/
Neutral/ No opinion	/	6	3
No, with exceptions	/	7	10
No, with no exceptions	/	/	8

Table 4

As hypothesised, those who are more radical in approaching the Hong Kong identity are more willing to include vernacular written Cantonese as an official script in Hong Kong. They cited the long standing norm of writing in Cantonese is preventing the language from

being seen as a full-fledged linguistic system, and see no reason for objection for the written version of Cantonese to have the same official status. The more moderate Hong Kongers are also inclined to accept Cantonese as a written form, although many raised concerns over the fact that a large number of Hong Kong people do not know the accurate corresponding written characters for vocabularies in Cantonese, they only know how to pronounce them, which is why there is reservation in the application of written vernacular Cantonese. Those who do disagree, however, primarily argued that they would be unaccustomed to the change, and that they see no reason for the change because Chinese and Cantonese have coexisted side by side without much problems. Yet, they fully support written Cantonese in unofficial uses and would support the increase of teaching the written form of Cantonese in educational institutions. In contrast, those who identified as more Chinese than Hong Konger mainly disagreed with the idea, because of the breakage it would bring between Cantonese and Chinese. In most of their opinions, due to Cantonese being derived from Chinese, the foundation—such as in writing—should remain solely in Chinese, for it is seen as "unnatural" for Cantonese to be used in official written settings. From this simple follow up question, one could hypothesise that the attitudes in perceiving Cantonese have changed since Snow's research (2004), as previous attitudes towards a written standard of Cantonese have changed among the population in Hong Kong. As explained by the theories mentioned in the previous analysis section, such as the optimal distinctiveness theory and positionality of Cantonese, the ideologies associated with the Cantonese language have become increasingly far-reaching as the power attached to Putonghua grows within the territory. In fact, with the current statistics showing that the percentage of those who identify as only Hong Kongers remains above 50 percent and continues on an upward trend, it would not be surprising if other linguistic behaviours in addition to the official status of Cantonese are also politicised. As mentioned by several of the more radical informants, it came as a surprise to me that they

would also consider the Pinyin method of entering Chinese on an electronic device to be un-Hong Konger, due to the fact that the system was devised by mainland China, as opposed to other existing methods of inputting Chinese such as Changjie and Sucheng (Snow 2004). As such, it could be asserted that should Putonghua vocabularies be further mixed into the Cantonese language, more and more local Cantonese speakers will turn increasingly hostile towards Putonghua, and adjust their opinions on both languages accordingly. In fact, even more people might support the idea of accepting written vernacular Cantonese to further distinguish the two languages and the respective identities those languages are linked to.

Conclusion

From this research, we can see just how the identification of a Cantonese speaker can have a big impact on his perception of the Cantonese and Putonghua. Although the number of informants as interviewed are not large enough to be statistically relevant to be applied to the general public of Hong Kong, one can nonetheless derive from the data that long standing theories on how the Cantonese language is correlated to the Hong Kong identity are mainly true, as findings in this project conformed to the findings of former projects performed by other researchers. In this project, the results of the interviews with those who identify as Hongkongers showed that they mainly have two positions. The first group of people who identifies as Hongkongers holds the viewpoint of complete refusal for Cantonese to be influenced by Putonghua in any way, because they deemed it to be inferior to Cantonese due to the culture and ideology associated with Putonghua. The second group who also identifies as Hongkongers are also mostly reluctant to see changes in Cantonese with the trend of Putonghua words entering the language, because they see that increasing Putonghua vocabularies as factors undermining their unique local identity, although they have admitted to having arbitrarily chosen certain terms to use and dismissed others depending on how

smooth or "lame" the word sounds. The last group who identifies as Chinese or Chinese Hongkonger are the most welcoming to the recent changes, citing the change is expected with the increasing exposure of China's culture into Hong Kong, and the need for Hong Kong people to embrace Chinese values. Immigrants who speak Putonghua as their mother tongue were also interviewed to provide a secondary point of view on the linguistic situation in Hong Kong. The results show that they perceived an increase in hostility towards Putonghua speakers as time passes. From the findings, we can analyse how different language ideologies, and the way in which a language is tied to a certain culture or the past, can change the acceptance rate of a language shift. All the informants agree that language does change over time, just perhaps not in the manner that is favourable to their standpoints. With multiple theories suggesting an increasing opposition between Cantonese and Putonghua, and the increasing political instability within the territory, this project argues that not only there is a strong correlation between the language attitudes and cultural identities in Hong Kong, but also that the people who identify as Hong Kongers will become increasingly radical in their approach towards both Cantonese and Putonghua.

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