

लपतौलिंग्वा MANCHESTER

**Report
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The Maintenance of Cantonese among Second Generation in Manchester

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Introduction

The profound Cantonese immigration history significantly contributes to the increase of Cantonese-speaking population in Manchester. As is presented by Anita Lo, the author of 'History of Chinese immigrants in the UK', that:

[...] During the 1950s, thousands of farmers from Hong Kong immigrated to England to seek for jobs. [...] Towards the end of 1997, a small number of well-educated Hong Kong government civil servants were granted British citizenship, thus they were allowed to live in the UK.

Such rapid and massive immigration results in the fact that many children were born and brought up in Manchester with the Cantonese descent, who are thereby defined as 'the second generation of the Cantonese community' and as well labeled as the 'BBC', which is short for the 'British-Born-Chinese'.

Therefore, the sufficient tokens underlying in this community enlarge the flexibility and feasibility of our titled research. This was our primary reason to choose Cantonese as the target language community.

Moreover, previous studies have raised our awareness of the use of Cantonese in Manchester. As is argued in Dubuis-Welch (2010: 2), Cantonese community has become one of the core researching subjects for linguists in recent years. Nevertheless, previous studies of Cantonese community in Manchester have revealed little about Cantonese maintenance among the second generation. Additionally, a study on home language maintenance of American-born-Chinese by Donghui Zhang (2004) also provided us an excellent reference with basic methods to be applied in our research and relevant issues to be explored regarding the language maintenance among the second generation.

In our research, we looked into the current situation of the maintenance of Cantonese among the second generation and how they maintain Cantonese speaking in an external English-speaking environment. There are three initial hypotheses. First, almost all the second generation can speak Cantonese and would use Cantonese at home more than in public. Next, when acquiring the language, family, especially the parents' attitudes to Cantonese maintenance play an important part – the positive attitudes from parents would promote their children's maintenance of Cantonese. Last, institutions (i.e. language training school, etc.) and media also contribute a lot to the maintenance of Cantonese among the second generation.

We carried out our investigation mainly in Chinatown, a local Cantonese supplementary school and university campus. In order to figure out our research questions, we sent questionnaires in the Cantonese supplementary school and university campus while doing individual interviews in Chinatown.

Methodology

In our preliminary report, we planned to carry out research in Chinatown and Manchester Alliance Church in plan A. Unfortunately, due to the UK's Child Protection Policy, the priest would not allow us to collect data in church. Thus, we shifted to our plan B: Manchester Chinatown and university campus. However, during the research, we encountered the problem that it is hard to find enough British-Born-Chinese informants on campus. Therefore we included the Cantonese supplementary school which is easier to find informants. So, there are some changes in our schedule (see Appendix 1). Finally, we found 21 valid informants in these three areas: 4 informants in Chinatown, 4 informants in university campus and 13 informants in Cantonese supplementary school.

Choice of research areas

Chinatown

Chinatown in Manchester, a large number of Cantonese speakers residing in, is second largest Chinatown in the United Kingdom and the third largest in Europe (Christiansen, 2003: 202). Chinatown is of great importance to the maintenance the ethnic culture and identity in foreign countries. Most of the residents here emigrated from Hong Kong and Guangdong province. In addition, Chinatown is not only a residential area but also an important commerce center here. There are a lot of businesses run by families which immigrated to the United Kingdom long time ago, which means we have more opportunity to approach to the local-born second generation Cantonese speakers. It is obviously that Chinatown is one of the most expected places to carry out our research about Cantonese maintenance among the second generation.

University campus

University campus is the most favourable place to find second generation, for

most of the college students are younger generation. Also, it is easy to notice that there are many Chinese faces among the college students in Manchester, which provides us great resources for our research on the Cantonese maintenance in Manchester. As we are students in Manchester, it provides us convenience to get resource on university campus. However, what out of our expectation is most of Cantonese speakers we found are not local born, they just pursue their study in the United Kingdom but not born here. Therefore, we just found four informants in university campus.

Cantonese supplementary school

As is the fact that many Cantonese families have settled in Manchester for several generations, they have developed various cultural activities, among which the most prominent is the Cantonese supplementary school, which is considered as 'the heart of the Cantonese Community' (Manchester Chinese Archive, 2010), because it plays a significant role on personal and social development of the Cantonese community. Thereby, we have chosen the Cantonese Sunday school of Manchester Fo Guan Shan Temple based in Old Trafford as our target research area. For one thing, the teachers there are all native Cantonese speakers and most people who participate in the Sunday service speak Cantonese. Moreover, notably, the teaching language of the lower level is largely English, while students at a higher level acquire language skills in a pure Cantonese speaking environment, which has aroused our interests and made our research more flexible and feasible.

Data collection

We have targeted three main areas for investigation: Chinatown, university campus and Cantonese supplementary school. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview are the primary methods for our research.

We have created a detailed questionnaire in both Cantonese (see Appendix 2) and English (see Appendix 3) with some basic issues regarding the use of

Cantonese. The informants could choose from these two versions according to their preference, which is also an efficient and effective approach to observe which language the second generation Cantonese would prefer. These questionnaires mainly used in the university campus and Cantonese supplementary school. As mentioned before, we encountered problem of finding British-Born-Chinese in university campus, we only got 4 informants. However, in Cantonese Sunday school of Manchester, we found 13 informants who contribute a lot to our investigation. Our major concern is to examine the different domains of the home language maintenance of the local born Cantonese students, with special attention on the negative and positive factors that might have a significant influence on it, such as the frequency of their use of Cantonese, their attitudes towards learning Cantonese as a second language. Detailed analysis of findings will be presented in results part.

Interview is the other significant method for our research and we did detailed interviews only in Chinatown. Our main target of interview is to test their attitudes to Cantonese maintenance and how their attitudes affect Cantonese maintenance among the second generation. In this area, we approached to 4 informants successfully. They provided us a lot of useful information and their own viewpoint of the maintenance of Cantonese. Additionally, we have used a digital camera to document the use of Cantonese through pictures (See Appendix 4).

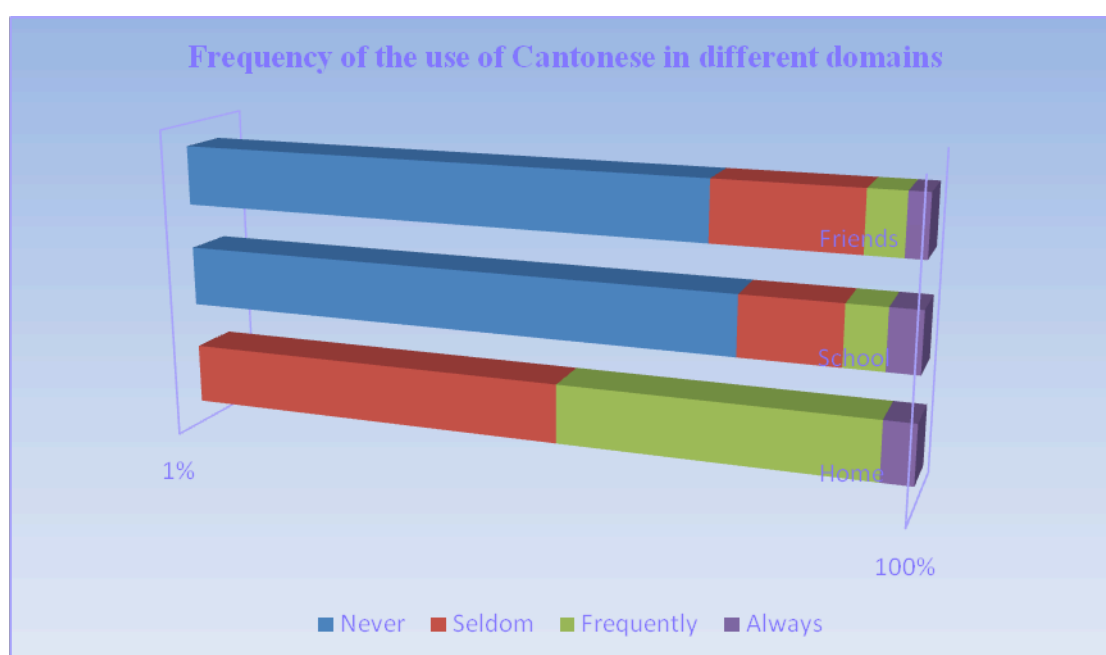
Results

Data from questionnaires

Of all 17 valid pieces, there are 11 males and 6 females, with age ranging from 4 to 20. Four people choose to use the Cantonese version while others prefer the English one. Their preference is possibly due to their capability of reading. 3 out of the 17 informants cannot speak Cantonese fluently. But the number of incapability of writing doubles to 6. This is not a surprising result as we assume that the use of Cantonese of British-born Chinese is limited to the

conversational level. As for the question of how they acquire Cantonese, all but one boy who cannot speak Cantonese fluently chose 'family'. What is unexpected is that all of the three informants who can neither speak fluently nor write Cantonese are all boys while the 6 girls are all at least capable of speaking it. This might partly due to the reason of their young age with one being 4 and another being 7, but the fact that their parents do not speak Cantonese to them might be the main reason.

The next questions are aimed to find out the frequency of the use of Cantonese in the domains of home, school and between friends.



From chart 1 we can conclude that all of the informants use Cantonese at home with approximately half of them using it frequently or always. However, Cantonese are not so popular in the domain of school and between friends. Over a half of them will not choose Cantonese when talking to classmates or friends. This verifies our presumption that the most frequent use of Cantonese lies in the private domain of home between family members while in public domains, they may not use Cantonese because the choice of language is largely dependent on the people they are talking to.

Although family is the dominant factor that influences the maintenance of

Cantonese, the impact of mass media may well be consequential. The following pie charts (chart 2 & chart 3) indicate that Cantonese television program is the most popular media while newspaper is the least popular. Eight people choose to watch Cantonese television program on a daily basis. On the contrary, no one read Cantonese newspaper on daily basis and eleven people say that they never read Cantonese newspaper. This supports the previous findings of the importance of Cantonese as a communicating tool for the British-born Chinese and the insignificance of writing or reading proficiency. However, we also ask about the English language media. The result turns out that the influence of British media overweighs that of Cantonese. Twelve people choose to watch British TV program or explore English website while the corresponding number for Cantonese program and websites are eight and five.

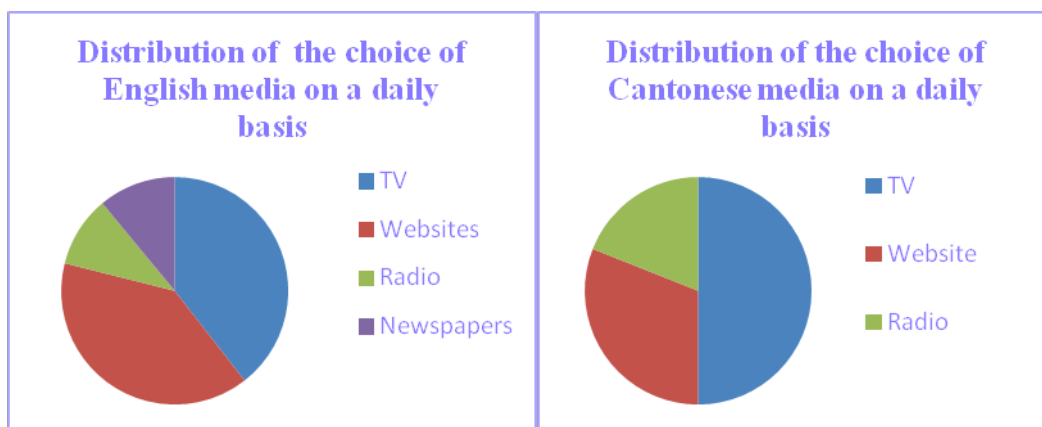


Chart 2

Chart 3

At last we look at their attitude towards Cantonese. All of the informants show positive attitudes towards Cantonese. There are two main reasons provided by them. On the one hand, it is useful to be bilingual because one can communicate with more people. On the other hand, by speaking Cantonese, it is an approach to recognize with their culture. However, there is an underlying gender difference within their attitudes. 7 of the 11 boys consider the ability of speak Cantonese is useful as a tool to communicate, while 4 girls out of the 6 share the pride of either being a Cantonese or the status of Cantonese being

mother tongue or as is quoted by one of the girls, 'it is the most spoken language in the world.' The tendency is that boys' attitudes towards Cantonese are more pragmatic while girls are more likely to associate it with their cultural identity.

Interviews in Chinatown

We did interviews which mainly focus on our research questions in Chinatown. Overall, there are four effective interviews done in China Town: three of them are interviews to the second generation directly; one is an interview to a first generation whose children were born in Britain

Regarding our first research question, we explored the current situation of the maintenance of Cantonese. Among the three second generation informants, all of them can speak Cantonese frequently. However, one of them mentioned that he is incapable of writing Cantonese. As for the using of Cantonese, all these three informants confirmed that they speak Cantonese frequently at home, while, they seldom use Cantonese outside home or it depends on the people they are talking to. Since the three second-generation informants all work in the service trades, two of them would communicate with the customers according to their language.

Generally speaking, the information we got from interviews attests our initial hypothesis: almost all the second generation could speak Cantonese and they speak Cantonese more frequently at home with their family members than in public. Meanwhile, it is also in accordance with the results from questionnaires. As for how they maintain Cantonese speaking, in the hypotheses, there are several accesses that we consider as effective for people to maintain the use of Cantonese in Manchester, such as institutions, the mass media, and the family. In the following part, we will analyze the information we got from the interviews to see if these three accesses promote the maintenance of Cantonese among the second generation or not.

The first one is the Cantonese institutions. When asking what they are going to

do if they hope their children can learn Cantonese, the answers we have got show no sign that they will send their children to Cantonese language school, which is beyond our expectation. However, the first generation we interviewed, says that he used to send his children to a language school but it did not last long – his children do not like going to school to learn a language which is seldom used in their social life.

The second way which we assumed to be used to maintain Cantonese is the mass media. In overall three second generation interviews, all the interviewees mentioned watching Cantonese television programs. Also, they said they will let their children do this as a way to grasp Cantonese for listening and watching. The television station given most here is TVB (Television Broadcast Limited); furthermore, a sub-channel of TVB called TVBJ (Jade Satellite Channel) is also mentioned by one interviewee.

The third access that helps maintain Cantonese is expected to be family. This is proved to be true according to their answers. Their answers to how to let their children acquire Cantonese was “to talk to them at home” or “to teach them at home”. Moreover, the first generation we interviewed also shed light on the point of the attitudes towards identity. That is to say, for the parents, cognitively they think they are 100% Cantonese; while for the second generation, this percentage reduces gradually since they hold British passport and thus have weaker or even have no conception about their Cantonese origins. In this case, to maintain Cantonese would be far more difficult than those who consider themselves as Cantonese, even if their parents hold positive attitude to Cantonese acquisition.

To summarize, family, especially parents’ attitudes and the recognition of identity, is the dominant way to maintain Cantonese. This is also shown in the answers in the questionnaire—almost all the informants acquired Cantonese from their family while attending Cantonese language school is the secondary choice. While, watching Cantonese television program, rather than reading Cantonese newspapers or surfing Cantonese website, is the main access.

This agrees with the results of the questionnaires. Additionally, the informants we interviewed do not show any preference to send their children to institutions such as Cantonese language schools to learn Cantonese.

Conclusion

To conclude, our research on Cantonese maintenance among second generation is conducted based on 4 aspects: (1) speaking, reading and writing proficiency, (2) the use of Cantonese in different domains, (3) the influence of family and media, and (4) informants' attitudes towards language maintenance.

The findings support our initial hypotheses, that the use of Cantonese of British-Born-Chinese is limited to conversational level and Cantonese is largely used at home and among family members. One obvious fact to note is that 13 out of 17 returned questionnaires are in English versions, while only 4 Chinese versions were collected.

As is argued above, family and media have played a crucial role on the maintenance of Cantonese. The majority of our informants are able to speak Cantonese fluently, but about 1/3 of them couldn't write in Chinese. Cantonese are used frequently in private domains rather than public domains such as at school or among friends due to the lack of supportive language environment. As for the media, the results show that the preference on English media has outweighed its counterpart. Half of our informants would watch Cantonese TV programs daily; less than 1/3 would browse Chinese websites. 2/3 of our informants prefer browsing English website and watching local TV program; and strikingly, 2/3 of them have never read Chinese newspaper. This might explain the lack of reading and writing proficiency in Chinese.

There is something interesting about gender's differences in their attitudes towards Cantonese maintenance. Our findings show that our male informants tend to regard being bilingual as a tool of communicating in a practical way. By contrast, female informants tend to associate bilingual with cultural identity.

Nonetheless, most of our informants show their language preference is English according to the choice of versions of questionnaire and the preference on English media, and as the first generation we interviewed in Chinatown suggested, all of our informants show relatively lower identity awareness as a Chinese than their parents. Prediction is that the maintenance of Cantonese may well be affected if this trend continues. From that point of view, further researches target on the third generation are suggested.

There are some areas where improvements are necessary. Despite the fact that limited access to up-to-date official figures such as census and language policy has made it difficult to arrange any form of contact, which might as well block our background research, we have made full use of the existing facts, figures and findings, and broadly consult various resources, to reduce obsolete data and to avoid ideology stereotype. Notwithstanding, the time constraint could also result in limited informants, who might not be representatives of the whole Cantonese community. By and large, given larger samples, better funding, more time and plenty enough man-power, we would be able to carry the study even further and forward more precise and convincing findings.

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Appendix

Appendix1. Schedule

Time	Task
Feb.1 st	Find group members
Feb.8 th	Discuss project topic
Feb.15 th	Confirm project topic
Feb.22 nd	Discuss methodology
Mar.8 th	Divide tasks
Mar.15 th	Revise the plan
Mar,18 th	Hand in the plan
Apr.5 th	Receive feedback; modify the plan
Apr.7 th -8 th	Data Collection 1 One group head for the university campus The other group go to Chinatown
Apr.16 th -17 th	Data Collection 2 Go to Cantonese supplementary school

Apr.25 th -29 th	Analyze data, draw conclusions
May. 20 th	Hand in the final report

Appendix. 2 Questionnaire (Chinese version)

年齡_____

性別 男 女

1. 由於你在英國出身，你是透過什麼途徑來了解到廣東話？

家人 語言訓練學校 與朋友溝通

其他方法_____

2. 你是否講得一口流利的廣東話？

是 否

3. 你能夠寫廣東話嗎？

能 不能

4. 你平常跟家人交談過程中使用廣東話交談的次數

從不 偶然一次半次 經常

5. 你的父母會用廣東話跟你交談嗎？

會 不會

6. 你的父母會用英語跟你交談嗎？

會 不會

7. 你平常與同事/同學交談過程中使用廣東話的次數

從不 偶然一次半次 經常

8. 你平常跟朋友交談過程中使用廣東話的次數

從不 偶然一次半次 經常

9. 你常常看英國電視嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

10. 你常常看廣東話電視嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

請註明你最喜歡的一或兩個： _____

11. 你常常看英語網頁嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

12. 你常常看廣東話網頁嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

請註明你最喜歡的一或兩個： _____

13. 你常常閱讀英文報紙嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

14. 你常常閱讀廣東話報紙嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

請註明你最喜歡的一或兩個： _____

15. 你常常聆聽英語電台節目嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

16. 你常常聆聽廣東話電台節目嗎？

每天 一星期一次 每月一兩次 數個月一次 從不

請註明你最喜歡的一或兩個： _____

17. 對你來說，懂得說廣東話是十分重要的

是 否

若回答是,原因是？

若回答否原因是?

Appendix. 3 Questionnaire (English version)

Age_____ Male Female

1. How did you acquire Cantonese since you are born in the UK?
Family Language training school communication with friend
Other _____
2. Can you speak Cantonese fluently?
Yes No
3. Can you write Cantonese?
Yes No
4. How often do you speak Cantonese to your family member?
Never Seldom Frequently Always
5. Do your parents speak Cantonese to you?
Yes No
6. Do your parents speak English to you?
Yes No
7. How often do you speak Cantonese to your classmates/colleagues?
Never Seldom Frequently Always
8. How often do you speak Cantonese to your friends?
Never Seldom Frequently Always
9. How often do you watch British TV?
Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never
10. How often do you watch Cantonese TV?
Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never
11. How often do you explore English websites?
Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never
12. How often do you explore Cantonese websites?
Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never

13. How often do you read English newspapers?

Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never

14. How often do you read Cantonese newspapers?

Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never

15. How often do you listen to English radio program?

Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never

16. How often do you listen to Cantonese radio program?

Daily once a week once or twice a month every few months never

17. Do you think it is important to be able to speak Cantonese?

Yes No

If 'yes', what is your reasons?

If 'no', why not?

Appendix. 4 Documentary of Cantonese community in Manchester







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