

# Chapter 3

## Historical Contexts of Multilingualism: Chinese Languages of Macau (1500–1999)



### 3.1 Introduction

Macau was established as a trading outpost in the earliest days of Western colonial expansion into Asia. Indeed, Macau was the first European trading outpost established in China and was the last colonial outpost to remain under administration by a European country until the return of the territory to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1999. Much of the history of colonialism in East and Southeast Asia is symbolised and recorded within the changing landscapes of power and domination over the past five centuries of Macau's history. The arrival of Portuguese traders in the sixteenth century heralded the short-lived but significant rise of Portuguese influence in the region. Later centuries would see the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines and rivalry with Dutch, French and English traders and entrepreneurs throughout South East Asia and China. And the influence of each of these colonial languages can be measured within Macau's history. Macau's history of Western colonisation is the longest within Asia, and that history has played a crucial role in framing the traditions of multilingualism that persist until today. Any European language that was used as a colonial language in Asia also had a presence within Macau's linguistic ecology. But there is also a history of Chinese varieties that have flooded into the region, as well as various other languages from Southeast Asia, and these should not be overlooked.

This chapter and Chap. 4 will attempt to account for the full range of the linguistic diversity that developed in Macau over the period since the establishment of the trading outpost in 1557 until the handover of the territory's administration to China on 20 December 1999. Chapter 4 will examine the presence of European languages of colonialism in Macau's history—most notably Portuguese and English—and the regional non-Chinese languages that have been brought to the territory by merchants, labourers, sailors and many others while Macau served as a centre for economic activity in China and the greater South East Asian region. In addition, Chapter 4 will examine two contact varieties that developed in Macau as a result of contact with European speakers. This chapter, however, will focus on the complex relationships

between the various Chinese languages that have found a place within Macau's complex linguistic ecology.

## 3.2 The Official Status of Chinese in Macau

After passing southward through Guangzhou, the metropolitan capital of Guangdong Province, the Pearl River splinters into a number of tributaries that define the Pearl River Delta (PRD). At the eastern corner of the delta is the former British colony of Hong Kong, and Macau sits at the western corner of the delta. These three cities, Guangzhou (or Canton, as it was once known in English), Hong Kong and Macau, form the cultural and linguistic boundaries of the Pearl River Delta. The linguistic ecology of the delta region is dominated by Cantonese varieties of Chinese, although other notable varieties of Chinese have had historic and enduring influence in the region generally, and in Macau especially.

On 13 January 1991, a mere nine years before the anticipated handover of Macau sovereignty from Portuguese to PRC administration, Chinese was made an official language in Macau by Decree-Law no. 455/91 (Casabona 2012, p. 231). This is substantially later than the promotion of Chinese as an official language in Hong Kong, where Chinese was given legal status as an official language in 1974 (So 1996, p. 41). Chinese was made official in Hong Kong after a number of bitter riots that protested, among other things, a language policy that allowed only the use of English in government services and education.<sup>1</sup> In 1963, 11 years before the establishment of Chinese as an official language of Hong Kong, the colony's Legislative Council approved the Chinese University of Hong Kong's charter, which stipulates Chinese as the principle language of instruction and operation of the university (Communication and Public Relations Office, CUHK 2013). Although it is not clearly defined in its English name, the Chinese name of the university (中文大學 *Jungman Daaihok / Zhongwen Daxue*) clearly identifies itself as the 'Chinese language' university. But these changes in language policy took place nearly three decades before Chinese was given corresponding status as an official language in Macau. The Portuguese administration of Macau did not, in this regard, follow the example of Hong Kong and Macau did not give Chinese the status of an official language until 1990—a full 17 years after Hong Kong had recognised the official status of Chinese. Moreover, the institutionalisation of Chinese as an official language in Macau came three years *after* the signing in late 1987 of Portugal's agreement to return Macau to PRC sovereignty in 1999. It is not entirely clear why Macau did not recognise Chinese as an official language of the territory earlier. The lack of recognition certainly benefitted Portuguese-speaking interests that sought to maintain dominance within the government during the period of transition (Clayton 2001) and this alone may explain a

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<sup>1</sup>Ironically, it is this language policy that provided much of the original motivation to establish the University of East Asia in Macau in 1981 (Mellor 1988; University of Macau 2015). See discussion in 8.6.1 of the history of the University of East Asia, which later became the University of Macau.

reluctance to recognise Chinese as an official language. But the lack of an articulated language policy is also consistent with much of Macau's history of a *laissez-faire* 'hand-off' treatment of language and culture throughout its colonial history, and this is precisely the approach that allowed multilingualism to flourish within the territory.

Macau's current official language law, which is codified inside the Basic Law of the SAR, does not specify a variety of spoken language to be made official (Chinese Government 1993). In fact, the Basic Law—the constitutional documents that have legally defined Macau since the 1999 handover to Chinese administration—does not clearly and unequivocally state what the official language of Macau *is*; instead, it simply designates that, in addition to Chinese, Portuguese may be used as an official language.<sup>2</sup> Like the Hong Kong law, the only reference is that 'in addition to the Chinese language, Portuguese may also be used as an official language' (Chapter 1, Article 9). This is, however, in sharp contrast to the PRC's statement of the official status of the Chinese language, where the official spoken variety of Chinese for China is specified as Putonghua (Chinese Government 2000). Given the number of mutually unintelligible dialects of Chinese that are available in Macau to be promoted as an official variety, this may, at first appear to be a terrible oversight. Without specifying which variety of Chinese is to be used as the official language, official speeches may use Cantonese, Putonghua or any of the other numerous mutually unintelligible varieties that are used in Macau. On the other hand, another way to interpret this apparent oversight is that the predominance of Cantonese was so unquestionable at the time when the Basic Law was drafted that it was not necessary to specify a variety. This, however, is not entirely consistent with the historical record in either Hong Kong or Macau. Bolton (2003) describes the degree of Chinese multilingualism in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 60s when a number of new immigrants flooded into the territory from all over China (see, for example, Li 2006) and this type of immigration from China also occurred in Macau (Pina-Cabral 2002, pg. 26). At that time Cantonese was transitioning from a lingua franca—i.e., a variety of Chinese used by Chinese speakers who did not necessarily know each other's native language—to become the first or usual language that it is today. Shipp (1997) describes a similar expansion of Macau's population during the 1940s and 50s. During this time refugees flooded into Macau from various places in China and brought with them their various Chinese languages. In both Hong Kong and Macau Cantonese emerged as the lingua franca to eventually develop into the standard language of the two territories. But it is from this context of Chinese multilingualism that Hong Kong and Macau's official language laws were drafted, and these laws demonstrate a clear flexibility in *not* defining the variety of Chinese that is to be official. The result of this flexibility is the legally sanctioned possibility of plurality within the two societies. Macau's official language law does not specify one variety at the expense of any other, and, as will be argued throughout this volume, this has become an important feature of language policy in the southern end of the PRD (i.e., Hong Kong and Macau) and a feature that is in sharp contrast with the rest of China.

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<sup>2</sup>Chapter 5 will discuss in greater detail the designation of official languages within the Basic Law, as this is more directly related to the development of Macau since the 1999 handover.

The designation of Chinese, then, as an official language of Macau demands special attention to how the standard language ideology (SLI) is likely to affect the perception and preservation of diversity. Chinese is a language that is comprised of a number of historical and geographical variants (Norman 1988) and many of the contemporary variants are, in fact, mutually unintelligible. To say, then, that ‘Chinese’ dominates within the linguistic ecology of Macau may be true, but the statement misses much of the interesting and important diversity that is represented within the Chinese languages spoken in Macau. Instead, this chapter will examine the diverse Chinese languages that have an historical presence within the Macau linguistic ecology in an attempt to understand how the SLI and the processes of standardisation affecting several of these languages have likely come to affect the perception and evaluation of the varieties.

### 3.3 Cantonese

Cantonese is a member of the Yue family of Chinese languages. Yue is one of the primary dialect groups of Chinese and is popularly known as Cantonese, especially in the standardising form that is widely used in Hong Kong. According to Ethnologue (Lewis et al. 2015) there are more than 60 million speakers of Cantonese worldwide, and the variety can be found in overseas Chinese communities throughout South East Asia and North and South America. Despite occasional disputes about where *true Cantonese* is spoken, Cantonese dominates as a standardising language in Hong Kong, and there may be good reason to consider that Macau Cantonese is based upon a slightly different variety of Cantonese than are the varieties that are dominant in either Guangzhou or Hong Kong (Sousa 2011; Lo 2013).

Differences between the varieties of Cantonese spoken in the three dominant cities of the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Macau, do not usually affect the mutual intelligibility of the varieties, and there are strong tendencies for dialect levelling to occur between the varieties (Xu & Situ 2006, p. 501). This levelling in turn produces convergence toward the standardising variety of Hong Kong Cantonese. There may very well have been variational differences between Macau Cantonese and Hong Kong Cantonese in recent history, but the processes related to the standardisation of Cantonese have functioned to limit the variability of the language while, at the same time, increasing the range of functions where the language is used.

Given the understanding of the processes of standardisation outlined in Chap. 1, we can examine the standardising variety of Hong Kong Cantonese (HKC) and draw some generalisations about the degree to which HKC has also developed as a standard language in Macau. HKC is based upon the variety of the language that is spoken in Guangzhou, although the usual processes of standardisation and dialect levelling have functioned to produce a variety that is distinct to the Hong Kong media (Zhang 2001; Deng 2009). This variety of HKC is a media variety and it is most closely associated with a number of highly successful spoken media in Hong Kong, including Hong Kong movies, radio and television broadcasts and popular music

(Xu and Situ 2006; Zhao 2008) As will be argued in greater detail below, this media variety is standardising and it is used simultaneously with other non-standardised varieties in Hong Kong and throughout the PRD region. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the inherent variation that currently exists within Cantonese. While much of this variation develops from natural divergence of varieties, immigration into the region has driven much of the dialect levelling of Cantonese in Hong Kong and Macau and resulted in the widespread adoption of varieties that approximate the media standard.

To say that Hong Kong Cantonese is a *standardising language* means that the variety is currently undergoing all of the processes of standardisation described in 1.2.3, although these processes are not fully completed. As mentioned above, HKC is *selected* from the variety of Cantonese that is spoken in the area around Guangzhou (traditionally known as *Canton*), the capitol city of the Chinese province of Guangdong. The Cantonese language, however, is spoken within a much larger region that includes most of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces in the PRC. This broader use of Cantonese is acknowledged within the Chinese name of the language in a way that it is not acknowledged in the English name. While the English name suggests that use of the language might be restricted to Canton, in Chinese the language is usually named *Gwongdungwa* (Putonghua *Guangdonghua*), literally meaning the ‘language of Guangdong [province]’. Another Chinese name for Cantonese, *Yutyu* (Putonghua *Yueyu*), refers more to the dialect group (and, perhaps to a grouping of people) rather than to a specific region. The range of diverse Cantonese-speaking communities in China is enhanced by a number of overseas Chinese communities that also speak Cantonese, such as those in Singapore, Malaysia or North America, where Cantonese was for a long period of history the dominant Chinese language. Immigrants to those places did not necessarily come from Guangzhou, but from the regions that are actually closer to the coastal cities of Hong Kong and Macau, and the Cantonese varieties that were taken abroad were slightly different from the variety that developed into HKC. For example, Coe (2014) notes that Chinese immigrants to North America in the nineteenth century predominantly came from the Cantonese-speaking town of Toisan (臺山 Putonghua *Taishan*). Many of the culinary and cultural tradition of Cantonese speakers in North America originate in Toisan and, therefore, these traditions sometimes contrast with the Cantonese customs that we currently associate with Hong Kong. Similarly, the variety of Chinese that was taken to North America in the nineteenth century differs somewhat from the variety that developed into standardising HKC in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, these potentially fossilised variational differences in Cantonese overseas communities are today considerably difficult to measure among contemporary overseas speakers of Cantonese because of the influence of HKC as the emerging standard for all Cantonese speakers. Nevertheless, Berlie (1999b) notes that there are two distinct dialect groups of Cantonese speakers in Macau: speakers from the Pearl River Delta’s southern region (e.g., Zhongshan, Shunde and Panyu) and speakers from the Toisan, Foshan and Guangzhou region of Guangdong Province. He estimates that, at the time of the 1999 handover, the territory was host to 280,000 speakers of the South PRD dialect of Cantonese and another 80,000 speakers of what he calls ‘Guangzhou Cantonese’.

*Restriction* and *elaboration* have also taken place within the development of spoken and written HKC, and discussion of these phases of standardization will treat spoken Cantonese and written Cantonese separately. The restriction of variation in pronunciation has defined a relatively broad range of Cantonese spoken features as acceptable to production of standard Cantonese. There were even attempts, as described by Bolton and Hutton (1995, 2000) to ‘ban’ the language of criminal secret societies in Hong Kong (called *Haksewui* or ‘triads’), although these attempts were finally circumvented by the use of banned language in popular culture. The functions of spoken HKC have also been elaborated to all possible official uses within Hong Kong and Macau, including, but not limited to, uses in the legislative and judicial branches of government, all broadcast media and in a vibrant popular culture that is especially known for producing films, television dramas and pop music in Cantonese. These elaborated functions sharply contrast with other overseas Cantonese-speaking Chinese communities (e.g., Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, etc.), where Cantonese is not used across the full range of possible functions. Similarly, in Guangzhou, where Cantonese is spoken as a native language and the place where the source dialect of HKC was selected, spoken Cantonese is rarely used in media or educational contexts, and never in governmental functions (He 2004; Li 2012; Peng and Zhong 2012).

While each of the four stages of standardisation (see Leith 1983 and discussion in 1.2.3) are observable within the standardisation of Cantonese, there is strong evidence that the process is not fully completed and that the language should be regarded as a *standardising* language. Evidence for the *codification* of Cantonese mostly clearly suggests that the standardisation process has only begun to define the standard. For example, both Putonghua and Cantonese are tonal languages, as are *all* varieties of Chinese (Norman 1988). While there is widespread agreement, reinforced by standardisation, that there are four lexical tones in Putonghua, there is widespread disagreement about the number of tones in Cantonese. Most linguists and many contemporary textbooks work with six tones in Hong Kong Cantonese (see Matthews and Yip 1994; Yip and Matthews 2000; Quora 2020). However, older textbooks (e.g., Lau 1972) instruct Cantonese with nine lexical tones and there is widespread popular agreement in Macau among native speakers that Cantonese has 9 tones. Shih (2018) addresses the question of how many tones there are in Cantonese (her native language) and cites popular notions about the question:

One major source of frustration [with learning Cantonese] centers on the number of tones. In an informal and highly unscientific survey also filed by Victor Mair, 12 respondents (mostly native speakers of Cantonese) thought that the number of tones ranged anywhere from five to 11. (Shih 2018).

Shih correctly attributes the widespread disparity in answers to the degree of standardisation that the language has experienced:

One reason why Cantonese can’t seem to agree on the number of tones is because they aren’t emphasized in schools the way that mainland China does for pinyin or Taiwan with zhuyin. Astonishingly, the Jyutping romanization system for Cantonese wasn’t developed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong until 1993. To my knowledge it’s mainly used for computer input and teaching non-Cantonese natives. Even then, there are separate textbooks

for students who either want to learn how to write Cantonese characters or speak the tones; very rarely are they encouraged to begin with both. (Shih 2018).

Textbooks for native and non-native speakers, standardised (and widely used) transcription systems and a common understanding of the language's phonology (including agreement on how many tones are in the language) are all features of highly standardised languages, and Cantonese has not yet fully moved to codify a standardised variety. Although Cantonese is the most widely-spoken language in Macau, because the language is not yet highly standardised, speakers will not usually have much explicit knowledge about the language. Native speakers will, of course, have competence in the language that gives them knowledge to use the language in well-formed utterances, but they may not know how to describe the linguistic features of Cantonese.

The role of Cantonese within the life and vitality of Macau cannot be underestimated. It is a standardising language—not a fully recognised standard language—and as such its status as a medium of education, media or as an official language is subject to challenges from more highly standardised languages like Putonghua (a.k.a. Mandarin Chinese, see 3.6). Although the prestige and official status of Cantonese in Hong Kong is frequently taken as affirmation of Macau's policies that also privilege the official use of Cantonese, it does not codify Cantonese as the official language of Macau, nor does it guarantee its continued use as the dominant medium of instruction within the territory.

As the purpose of these chapters (i.e., this chapter and Chap. 4) is to develop and understanding of Macau's linguistic ecology at the time of the handover, attention will be paid to the official census data reporting languages used in the 1991 census, the 1996 by-census and the 2001 census. These represent the two censuses' procedures conducted before the 1999 handover to Chinese administration and the results of the first census after the handover.<sup>3</sup> There are a number of inconsistencies in the way that data are presented within these three documents. First, the 2001 census distinguishes between usual and additional languages, but the other two documents do not. Second, the treatment of language used is not the same in all three of the census/by-census procedures: the 1991 census and the 1996 by-census lump all Chinese languages other than Cantonese and Putonghua into a category of 'Other Chinese languages', although the 2001 census reports Hokkien as a separate language. Third, figures related to the use of multiple languages are reported in the 2001 census report as types of bi-, tri- or multi-lingualism, not as raw figures of additional languages used. Therefore, the data have been analysed in an attempt to separate the use of multiple other languages into a single figure of how many individuals speak those languages. For example, the Macau censuses will report the number of individuals who speak three languages, such as Cantonese, Putonghua and English, or two languages such as Portuguese and English, but the report will not simply report how many people speak Cantonese, Putonghua, English or Portuguese as an additional language. Instead, the 1991 census and the 1996 by-census only reports the number of individuals who

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<sup>3</sup>The 1981 census does not include questions on language use and has not been consulted in this survey. The by-census was not conducted between censuses until 1996.



**Table 3.1** Number of Cantonese Speakers in Hong Kong and Macau, 1991–2001

	Hong Kong		Macau	
	Usual language	Language ability <sup>a</sup>	Usual language	Language Ability <sup>a</sup>
<b>1991</b>	4,583,322 (88.7%)	95.8%	289,297 (85.8%)	–
<b>1996</b>	5,196,240 (88.7%)	95.2%	346,082 (87.1%)	–
<b>2001</b>	5,726,972 (89.2%)	96.1%	372,697 (87.9%)	395,888 (93.3%)

Sources Census and Statistics Department (2001), DSEC (1993, 1997, 2002)

<sup>a</sup>Language ability is the combined proportion of speakers who use the language as usual and additional language

speak a language as a usual language, not an additional language. Since the Macau censuses and by-censuses are performed in the same years as the Hong Kong census and by-censuses, the Hong Kong and Macau data are easily compared in the tables below. Finally, it should be noted that data regarding language in the Macau censuses and by-censuses only survey residents (i.e., individuals legally residing in Macau as ‘normal residents’) of 3-years of age and older and that the Hong Kong censuses and by-censuses survey residents of 5-year of age and older (Table 3.1).

The 2001 Macau census—taken just two years after the 1999 handover—records that 372,697 (87.9%) residents identified themselves as usual speakers of Cantonese and that at least another 23,191 residents spoke Cantonese as an additional language. Hence, 93.3% of Macau’s population spoke Cantonese as either a usual or additional language. As discussed in Chap. 1, there is a likely tendency for respondents to under-report the degree of bilingualism/multilingualism that they are actually capable of performing, and this is closely related to the standard language ideology’s (SLI) myth of purity and what I have termed a discourse of purity (see discussion in 1.3). The myth of purity rejects the notion that standard or standardising languages are selected from varieties that may be considered non-standard and the discourse of purity disables speakers of these non-standard varieties from acknowledging that multiple Cantonese varieties exist and are used within a society. With regard to census responses about a standardising language like Cantonese, the SLI and the discourse of purity may compel respondents to report somewhat inflated rates of Cantonese use because respondents may not easily identify or acknowledge varieties that diverge from the standard or standardising variety. Nevertheless, the census data are the most consistent and reliable measure of language use within the territory, and much will be made of these official data in this volume.

Perhaps as an unintended consequence of the close similarity and relationship between the Hong Kong SAR and the Macao SAR is the fact that Macau’s language census questions—indeed, most of the census questions—are nearly identical to those on the Hong Kong census. The Hong Kong census has included questions about usual and additional language since their inclusion in 1961 (Bacon-Shone and Bolton 1998) and, because of the similarity of the two censuses, the data from Hong Kong and Macau are easily comparable. By examining the data from the two SARs, especially in relation to any reliable data available from the PRC, it is possible to



**Table 3.2** Number of Hokkien Speakers in Hong Kong and Macau, 1991–2001

	Hong Kong		Macau	
	Usual language	Language ability	Usual language	Language ability
<b>1991</b>	1.9%	3.6%	–	–
<b>1996</b>	1.9%	3.9%	–	–
<b>2001</b>	1.7%	3.9%	18,868 (4.4%)	28,664 (6.8%)

Sources Census and Statistics Department (2001), DSEC (1993, 1997, 2002)

examine some of the unique features that differentiate language use in Macau from its neighbouring cities.

Cantonese, at the time of the 1999 handover to Chinese administration, was reported as more widely spoken in Hong Kong (i.e., by 96.1% of the population) than it was in Macau, where only 93.3% of the population spoke Cantonese.<sup>4</sup> In both populations there was a noticeable increase in the proportion of Cantonese speakers in the decade marked by the two censuses, and this is to be expected, in part, by the standardisation of Cantonese in the region and its widespread use in education, media, government, etc. in the two cities. Nevertheless, the difference in the number of speakers in the two cities suggests that other languages—other Chinese or non-Chinese languages in Macau—have more widespread use in Macau than in Hong Kong.

### 3.4 Hokkien

Hokkien is a member of Min family of Chinese languages. Min is one of the larger and more internationally prominent dialect groups of Chinese and goes by a number of different names: Hokkien, Fukien, Min Nan or Southern Min are the most common of the names. Hokkien is the dominant language in the island of Taiwan and, as a result of recent political movements on the island, the language has also come to be known as *Taiwanese* (Wu 2011; Dupré 2014). For this reason, Hokkien is currently undergoing some of the same measures of standardisation that have influenced speakers of the Cantonese language. According to Ethnologue (Lewis, Simon & Fennig 2015) there are more than 46 million speakers of Hokkien worldwide, and, like Cantonese, the variety can be found in overseas Chinese communities throughout South East Asia, North and South America. Table 3.2 reports the proportion of the respective populations of Hong Kong and Macau who claimed an ability to use Hokkien as either a usual or additional language in 2001 (and, in the case of Hong Kong, the decade preceding the 2001 census).

<sup>4</sup>Comparison of the proportions of Cantonese speakers for the two populations suggests that the difference is significant (z score = 27.9587,  $p < 0.00001$ ).

Both Hong Kong and Macau have sizable populations of Hokkien speakers. The Hong Kong 2001 census lists that 1.7% of residents self-identify as speakers of Hokkien as a usual language and another 2.3% of the population use the language as an additional language. During the decade from the 1991 to the 2001 census, the proportion of speakers of Hokkien as a usual language decreased slightly in Hong Kong, but the proportion of speakers who spoke Hokkien as an additional language increased by about the same amount. This suggests that the Hokkien community in Hong Kong was experiencing a slight and subtle shift from Hokkien as a first (or, in the language of the census, *usual*) language toward a status as a second (or *additional*) language. The proportion of Hokkien speakers in Macau in 2001 was considerably larger, with 18,868 individuals (4.4%) claiming to use the language as a usual language and another 9,796 individuals claiming to use Hokkien as an additional language.<sup>5</sup> Altogether, 6.8% of residents claimed to use Hokkien as either a usual or additional language in the 2001 Macau census.

Berlie (2012), however, suggests that there is a much larger community of Hokkien speakers than what is reported within the official census documents and that the Hokkien community is both more affluent and wields greater political power in Macau than it does in Hong Kong. Whereas Hokkien speakers came to Hong Kong primarily in waves of immigration in the late-1940s and 1950s (Barnett 1962)—a time when speakers of minority Chinese ‘dialects’ flooded into Hong Kong in the aftermath of the Communist People’s Liberation Army (PLA) victory over Nationalist *Kuomintang* (KMT) forces—Macau’s Hokkien community was already established within the territory and as such, remains a much older and more thoroughly indigenised language community (Pina-Cabral 2002). Austin Coates, writing in 1978 about the Hokkien heritage of the city, observes that:

Symptomatic of how little anything changes, the descendants of the [Hokkien] community still live in this southern part of Macao, in which Fukienese [Hokkien] is widely spoken, with Cantonese of course as the *lingua franca*. (Coates 1978, p. 37).

But Macau’s traditional Hokkien-speaking community has been strengthened by recent immigration of Hokkien speakers from the PRC. Berlie (2012) notes that in 1999 (i.e., the year of Macau’s handover to Chinese administration) legal immigrants mostly from Fujian Province, the primary Hokkien-speaking province, made up 45% of all legal immigrants and that in December 2011, 20% of Macau’s population were speakers of Hokkien. Because many of these individuals also speak Cantonese, it is, therefore, easy to see how the numbers of Hokkien speakers can be misrepresented in the census data.

And it is also important to note that the presence and predominance of Hokkien in Macau is not a modern phenomenon. Porter (1996) and Lamas (1999) both recount the most popular hypothesis related to the origin on the name of *Macau* and the belief that Portuguese traders who settled in the territory encountered the Chinese names *Ah-Ma Gang* literally ‘Ah-Ma Harbour’ or *Ah-Ma Gau* literally ‘Ah-Ma Port’.

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<sup>5</sup>Comparison of the proportions of Hokkien speakers in the two populations suggests that the difference is significant (z score = 125.8133,  $p < 0.00001$ ).

Since *Ah-Ma* is a form of address to the ‘Ma’ deity, it is easy to imagine that the name was shortened to *Ma Gang* or *Ma Gau* and rendered in Portuguese as *Macão* (see discussion in 2.2.1). The Ah-Ma (a.k.a. A-Ma) deity is a traditional Hokkien goddess who protects sailors and fishers. Temples devoted to worship of the deity are, of course, quite common in the coastal areas of Fujian province, but can also be found to extend south along the Chinese coast beyond Fujian and into Guangdong. The prominence of the Ah-Ma deity with the port suggests that Hokkien fishers were the original settlers of the region that became Macau, a point echoed by Gunn (2005). What is significant in the two possible sources of the name *Macau*, however, is the focus on ‘Ma’ (from the more conventional title ‘Ah-Ma’). ‘Ah-Ma’ is the familiar or affection name given to the Hokkien deity by adding ‘Ah’ before the actual name, ‘Ma’. Although worship of Ah-Ma is common throughout coastal Hokkien-speaking regions where communities either live on the water or derive their livelihood from fishing, Ah-Ma is especially important to the cultural history of Macau. The current Ah-Ma temple in Macau (see Fig. 2.1) was built during the Wan-li reign of the Ming dynasty (i.e. 1572–1620) and is one of the oldest structures in Macau (Lamas 1999, pp. 21–22). Although there is no definitive proof that this story provides a satisfactory origin for the source of the territory’s name, it does highlight the importance of Hokkien-speaking fishing communities along the South China coast and as an enduring community within Macau’s linguistic ecology.<sup>6</sup> This version of the founding of Macau, then, would suggest that many of the Cantonese speakers arrived as settlers only *after* the Portuguese trading outpost was established (Pina-Cabral 2002). Indeed, Shipp (1997) acknowledges that only a small number of fishing families were living in the area that was originally founded as Macau and that there was virtually no agriculture in the area.

Berlie (1999a) estimates that in 1998, the year before the handover of Macau to PRC administration, there were 110,000 members of the Hokkien community, a number much larger than the number suggested by the 2001 census. Although the vitality of the Hokkien language in Macau is still strong, it has also been affected by shift to other languages, most notably to Cantonese. Community members still identify intergenerationally with the Hokkien language—and perhaps they also maintain a fair degree of passive bilingualism in the language—after the younger generations have quit using Hokkien and shifted to Cantonese.

Like Cantonese, Hokkien is a standardising language and this may contribute, to some degree, to the preservation of the language within Macau. For many years the official policy of the ruling KMT party in Taiwan was to promote the use of *Kuoyü* (or *Guoyu*, the preferred name for Mandarin within the Republic of China), as the primary working and sole official language of the ROC. Hokkien, however, is the language of the region of China that Taiwan is most proximate to and it is the Chinese language that has been continuously used on the island for the longest period

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<sup>6</sup>Unfortunately the current Chinese name of the territory, 澳門 Cantonese *Oumun*, Putonghua *Aomen*, does not share much, if any, phonetic similarity to the Portuguese/English name of the territory. The Chinese name, therefore, is not informative of what Chinese language may have served as a source or transmission language for the Portuguese name *Macau*. See further discussion in 2.2.1 about the naming of Macau.

of time. Recent years have witnessed challenges to the monolithic authority of the KMT as the governing party of Taiwan and, as this power to govern exclusively has been challenged, so too has the official preference for *Kuoyü* also been challenged (Scott and Tiun 2007; Wu 2011). More frequently Hokkien is promoted alongside of the *Kuoyü* as a medium of instruction, language of media and a symbol of a Taiwan that is not dominated exclusively by the single-party rule of the KMT. This recent development of Hokkien as a language of national communication within the Taiwanese Republic of China has driven the need and desire to standardise the language, and there is no clear evidence that the motivation to standardise Hokkien is shared anywhere outside of Taiwan. Nevertheless, media and educational materials from Taiwan are readily available in Macau and it is likely that the standardisation of Hokkien in Taiwan—both a prerequisite for internationalisation of the media and a sign of the degree of standardisation—may have helped to forestall the loss of Hokkien as a language of Macau.

As is frequently the case when including non-standard or standardising languages as a self-report option in language or dialect surveys, the name of the variety is an important factor that can ultimately affect the rate of identified use of the language. Unfortunately, the Macau census refers to Hokkien as 福建話 (i.e., Cantonese *Fukginwa* or Putonghua *Fujianhua*). The standardised variety of Hokkien, however, is usually referred to as either Taiwanese or *Minnanhua* ‘language of Southern Min’. While linguists may note that all the terms refer to essentially the same language, the possible associations with each term are different and these associations can easily influence the way that speakers self-identify themselves as speakers of the language variety. Whereas the Macau term specifically makes reference to the Fujian Province in China, it may also imply to speakers that residents of the province speak the language primarily, if not exclusively. In this way, the terminology used in the Macau census survey may further limit the number of valid responses by speakers of the language who are not really *from* Fujian, but nevertheless speak Hokkien.

### 3.5 Other Chinese Languages

Despite the similarities between Hong Kong and Macau as linguistic ecologies, it is difficult to compare census and by-census data from the period before the 1999 handover. While the Hong Kong census lists the proportional number of Chiu Chau and Hakka speakers in the census and by-census figures, Macau simply lists them as speakers of ‘other dialects’ of Chinese (which sometimes includes, but sometimes does not include, Hokkien speakers in that category). Table 3.3 lists all speakers of Chinese languages other than Cantonese and Mandarin in the Hong Kong and Macau censuses and by-census for the decade preceding Macau’s 1999 handover (i.e., 1991–2001).

Both communities, Hong Kong and Macau, exhibit a greater degree of multilingualism in varieties of Chinese than what is usually described about either territory. Both communities also appear to be moving through stages of shift, where

**Table 3.3** Number of Speakers of Other Chinese Languages (i.e., other than Cantonese and Putonghua) in Hong Kong and Macau, 1991–2001

	Hong Kong		Macau	
	Usual language	Language ability	Usual language	Language ability
<b>1991</b>	364,694 (7.0%)	16.1%	32,217 (9.6%)	–
<b>1996</b>	340,222 (5.8%)	15.4%	30,848 (7.8%)	–
<b>2001</b>	352,562 (5.5%)	15.3%	32,125 (7.8%)	61,367 (14.5%)

Sources: Census and Statistics Department (2001), DSEC (1993, 1997, 2002)

communities that do not speak Cantonese as a usual language are diminishing (at nearly the same rate) over the decade and shifting to Cantonese. First, if we look at the number and proportion of residents who use a Chinese language other than Cantonese or Putonghua as a usual language, the innate degree of multilingualism in Chinese languages is significantly higher in Macau.<sup>7</sup> However, the overall prevalence of Chinese multilingualism in the two communities, measured by the total ability to use another Chinese language as either a usual or additional language, was somewhat lower in Macau, where only 14.5% of residents used a Chinese language other than Cantonese or Putonghua, compared to 16.5% of Hong Kong residents.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that, while there might be more Chinese multilingualism in Hong Kong as either a usual or additional language, there also a greater tendency to retain this multilingualism and *not* shift to a standard language as the usual language in Macau. If we further consider that these data include the 6.8% of residents who use Hokkien in Macau, only 7.7% of Macau's population uses other Chinese dialects (i.e., varieties other than Cantonese, Putonghua or Hokkien), as compared to 12.6% in Hong Kong. Table 3.4 below lists the different languages used in Hong Kong in the decade before Macau's handover. While the Hong Kong census reports three languages other than Cantonese, Putonghua or Hokkien, namely Chiu Chau, Hakka and Shanghainese, the Macau census does not offer such detailed description of Chinese multilingualism.

### 3.5.1 *Chiu Chau*

Chiu Chau is a member of the Southern Min family of Chinese languages. Chiu Chau—also written as Teochew, Chaozhou or Choushan—is the dialect spoken in the Guangdong Prefecture city of Chaoshan, and it is one of the more prominent dialects of Chinese spoken in Hong Kong. Ethnologue (Lewis, Simons & Fennig 2015) notes that intelligibility between Chiu Chau and Amoy (the prestige dialect of the Southern

<sup>7</sup>Comparison of the proportions of speakers who use another Chinese language as a usual language for the two populations suggests that the difference is significant ( $z$  score = 62.8765,  $p < 0.00001$ ).

<sup>8</sup>Comparison of the proportions of all speakers who use another Chinese language as either a usual or additional language for the two populations suggests that the difference is significant ( $z$  score = 14.3118,  $p < 0.00001$ ).

**Table 3.4** Number of Speakers of Other Chinese Languages (i.e., other than Cantonese, Putonghua and Hokkien) in Hong Kong and Macau, 1991–2001

		Hong Kong			Macau <sup>a</sup>		
		Usual language	Additional language	Language ability	Usual language	Additional language	Language ability
1991	Chiu Chau	1.4%	4.0%	5.4%	–	–	–
	Hakka	1.6%	3.7%	5.3%	–	–	–
	Shanghainese	0.7%	1.2%	1.8%	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>			
1996	Chiu Chau	1.1%	3.9%	5.0%	–	–	–
	Hakka	1.2%	3.6%	4.9%	–	–	–
	Shanghainese	0.5%	1.1%	1.6%	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>			
2001	Chiu Chau	1.0%	3.8%	4.8%	–	–	–
	Hakka	1.3%	3.8%	5.1%	–	–	–
	Shanghainese	0.4%	1.1%	1.5%	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>13,257</b> <b>(3.1%)</b>	<b>19,446</b> <b>(4.6%)</b>	<b>7.7%</b>

Sources Census and Statistics Department (2001), DSEC (1993, 1997, 2002)

<sup>a</sup>Macau Census documents only report totals figures for ‘other Chinese languages’ in 2001 and later

Min language that is named after the city of Amoy, Putonghua *Xiamen*) is somewhat difficult. Tsoi (2005) reports that there are 10 million speakers of Chiu Chau in the PRC (mostly within the area of Chaoshan) and another 2–5 million speakers outside of China, most notably in Thailand, as well as a number of other overseas Chinese communities in South East Asia (e.g., Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, etc.) and North America. Chiu Chau was an especially important language in Hong Kong and associations of Chiu Chau merchants and businessmen have a special history in Hong Kong (see Zanzanaini 2017). The Hong Kong 2001 census reports that 4.8% of residents (roughly 248,000 individuals) used Chiu Chau as either a usual or additional language (although this proportion is in decline from 5.0% in 1996 and 5.4% in 1991). There is no report of the number of speakers of Chiu Chau in any Macau census report before or after the 1999 handover, which suggest that in Macau the language has neither a significant proportion of speakers nor the prestige and political power that the language has in Hong Kong. Indeed, decisions such as which languages will be given as optional responses on the census (e.g., whether respondents are given the option to choose ‘Chiu Chau’ or ‘other’, in this case) is an ideological choice by the census bureau, as is the decision of which languages to list individually in the census report. While the language is not accounted for within the Macau census, it is nevertheless reasonable to assume that the power and prestige of the language in Hong Kong would have also found some expression in Macau, too.

### 3.5.2 *Hakka*

Hakka is a member of the Gan family of Chinese languages and, like Hokkien, one of the most widely spoken varieties of Chinese outside of China. The home of the language is in Meizhou, roughly 485 km away from Macau. According to Ethnologue (Lewis et al. 2015) there are more than 30 million speakers of the Hakka dialect worldwide, especially in overseas Chinese communities throughout South East Asia. Hakka is frequently taken as a somewhat stigmatised variety in most overseas Chinese communities, and Hakka speakers frequently face prejudice and discriminatory practices (Constable 2005). It is, therefore, not difficult to imagine that a number of individuals who have some knowledge of the language are likely to under-report use of the language in the census. Nevertheless, the 2001 Hong Kong census reports that 5.1% of residents (roughly 264,000 individuals) use Hakka as either a usual or additional language (although this proportion is a slight decline from 5.3% in 1991). While there is an old and rich heritage of Hakka farmers and fishers residing in Hong Kong (see, for example, Knott 2020), the language and the culture have been in decline for some time. There is no report of the number of speakers of Hakka in any Macau census report before or after the 1999 handover, but, given the prevalence of the language in the region, Hakka has likely had some presence in the language ecology at the end of the colonial administration at the end of the previous century.

## 3.6 Putonghua

Mandarin Chinese goes by a number of different names. In Taiwan the variety is called *Kuoyü* (or *Guoyü*), literally ‘national language’. The term used in this volume, *Putonghua*, literally ‘ordinary speech’, is the term that has been most widely adopted in the PRC. Interestingly, some overseas Chinese communities like Singapore prefer to avoid the political dimensions of these names and instead refer to the language as *Mandarin* or *Huayu*, lit. ‘Chinese language’. While individuals may feel that there is an important difference between the varieties described by each of these different names, most linguists agree that the varieties are mutually intelligible and that the differences between the varieties result from sociolinguistic or dialectal variation.

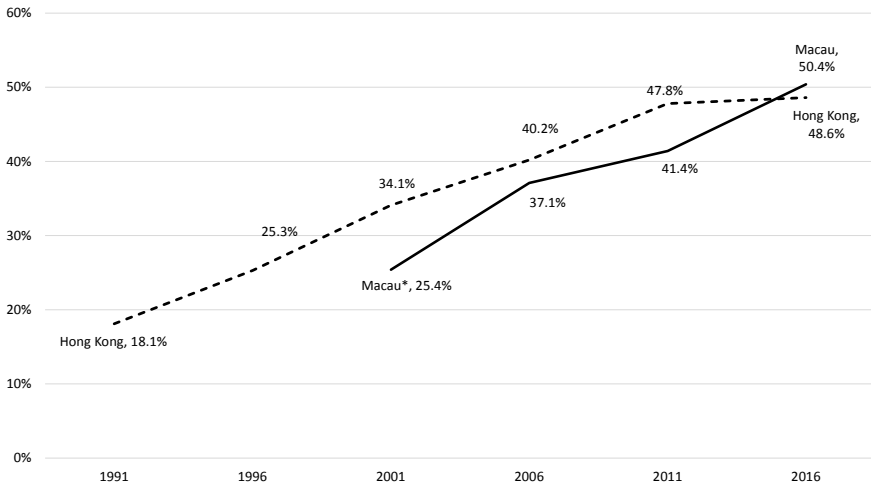
According to Ethnologue (Lewis et al. 2015) there are more than 847 million speakers of Putonghua worldwide and the language retains a very special status as the official language of the People’s Republic of China (Chinese Government 2000). Although the language is not widely spoken as a usual language in either Hong Kong or Macau, the status of both territories as Special Administrative Regions (SAR) of the PRC means that Putonghua is also the official language of both SARs. While the number of residents who spoke Putonghua as a usual language was small in both territories in the decade before Macau’s handover to Chinese administration (i.e., ranging between 0.9 and 1.6%), the language was used as an additional language by



**Table 3.5** Number of Putonghua Speakers in Hong Kong and Macau, 1991–2001

	Hong Kong		Macau	
	Usual language	Language ability	Usual language	Language ability
<b>1991</b>	51,577 (1.1%)	18.1%	4,016 (1.2%)	–
<b>1996</b>	65,892 (1.1%)	25.3%	4,955 (1.2%)	–
<b>2001</b>	55,410 (0.9%)	34.1%	6,660 (1.6%)	107,853 (25.4%)

Sources Census and Statistics Department (2001), DSEC (1993, 1997, 2002)



\*Data regarding the number of Putonghua speakers is not available on the Macau census or by-census before 2001.

**Fig. 3.1** Proportion of Population with Ability to Use Putonghua (Usual and Additional Language) in Hong Kong and Macau, 1991–2016. Sources Census and Statistics Department (2001, 2017), DSEC (2002, 2007, 2012, 2016)

an increasing number of users in Hong Kong during the decade. Table 3.5 reports on the data from the census reports of the decade leading up to the 1999 handover of Macau administration to the PRC.

In the 2001 Hong Kong and Macau censuses a greater proportion of residents in Hong Kong (i.e., 33.2%) claimed to use Putonghua as an additional language than in Macau (i.e. 23.8%).<sup>9</sup> And this occurred despite the fact that a larger proportion of residents in Macau speak Putonghua as a usual language than in Hong Kong.<sup>10</sup> Figure 3.1 shows the increase in the number of Putonghua speakers (as both a usual and an additional language) in both SARs since the handovers to Chinese administration. While familiarity with Putonghua increased in both Hong Kong and Macau,

<sup>9</sup>Comparison of the proportions of speakers who use Putonghua as an additional language for the two populations suggests that the difference is significant (z score = 126.4789,  $p < 0.00001$ ).

<sup>10</sup>Comparison of the proportions of speakers who use Putonghua as a usual language for the two populations suggests that the difference is significant (z score = 45.6769,  $p < 0.00001$ ).

the proportion of residents claiming to use Putonghua in Macau surpassed the proportion in Hong Kong in the 2016 by-censuses. In that census, more than half of Macau residents (i.e., 50.4%) claimed to use Putonghua, whereas 48.6% of Hong Kong residents made the same claim.<sup>11</sup>

Putonghua is not only taken as the standard language of the PRC, but it is also the most widely learnt variety of Chinese outside of China. The principle power of the variety results from a high level of standardisation and codification of both the spoken and the written varieties of the language, and these two measures of standardisation have had a profound influence on all Chinese language communities that use non-standard or standardising varieties of Chinese. I will, therefore, discuss the effects of standardisation of Putonghua and the complex relationship that it shares to Standard Written Chinese (SWC) in Macau, Hong Kong and, indeed, the entire country of China.

### 3.6.1 *Standardisation of Putonghua (Spoken Standard)*

The variety of Chinese that was selected to become standard Chinese is spoken in the northeast region of China, specifically the provinces of Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang, as well as portions of Inner Mongolia. This region is formally known as the *Northeast China* and comprises the historical region of Manchuria. The Symposium on the Standardization of Modern Chinese formally defined Putonghua as taking ‘the Beijing phonological system as its norm of pronunciation, and Northern dialects as its base dialect’ (Wang 1995, translated and quoted in Chen 1999). Although particular phonological and lexical features that are unique to the Beijing dialect are used to justify claims that *Beijingshuar* ‘Beijing dialect’ is distinctive from Putonghua, according to PRC law Putonghua is based upon the Beijing dialect (Chinese Government 2000). As expected within the process of standardisation, various vernacular regional features of the variety have been restricted from inclusion in standardised Putonghua, and the functions of the variety have been expanded to all public and private domains for use of the language. In terms of the last step in standardisation, *codification*, Putonghua’s pronunciation, lexis and grammar are all highly standardised with very little variability allowed in the language, especially when used in state-owned media (Chen 1999).

Putonghua is distinguished as one of the world’s best examples of how languages may be codified quickly (from the top down) and promoted at the expense of other language varieties. A number of scholarly examinations of north-eastern varieties of Chinese contributed to the eventual codification of the phonetic forms of the language: four contrastive lexical tones and an inventory of 404 contrastive syllables that may appear with any of the four tones. In particular, the adoption of the *pinyin* romanisation system clarified several important contrasts in Putonghua that do not

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<sup>11</sup> Comparison of the proportions of speakers who use Putonghua as a usual and additional language for the two populations suggests that the difference is significant ( $z$  score = 27.2532,  $p < 0.00001$ ).

exist in other varieties of Chinese. While the pinyin romanisation system was widely taught and encouraged since its adoption by the PRC in 1958, the system has become even more important as an input method for writing Chinese on electronic devices. Anecdotally speaking, Chinese university students thirty years ago made frequent transcription errors in their use of pinyin, and these kinds of errors are now quite rare. Contemporary university students are now highly proficient users of the pinyin transcription system because it is essential to the writing of Chinese on a computer.

Before 1979 and the formal adoption of a policy of opening up in the PRC, Putonghua was primarily used as a type of lingua franca, that is, a variety of Chinese used between speakers who do not speak the same Chinese language. It was quite common in the early days of the PRC for Chinese citizens to hear their leaders speak Putonghua with strong regional accents. Chairman Mao Zedeng's pronunciation was heavily influenced by his native variety of Chinese from Hunan (a Xiang variety of Chinese) and Chairman Deng Xiaoping's strong Sichuan accent (a Mandarin variety of Chinese) frequently led citizens to remark that his spoken Putonghua was largely unintelligible (Friedman 1994; Wertime 2012). More recently, however, Chinese leaders have placed a great deal of importance on speaking Putonghua without clearly identifiable regional accents or pronunciations (Wertime 2012).

One may argue, therefore, that the tolerance afforded to variation within Putonghua has changed within Chinese society. In terms of the process of standardisation, the change is realised as a reduction in the amount of structural variation within the language. But what is the driving motivation for this more recent change in the degree of standardisation of Putonghua? The most likely answer is that the dominant forces of standardisation have changed from top-down forces into bottom-up forces, and that this change is closely related to the change in political and economic policies within the PRC. Before the institutionalisation of the 1979 opening up policy—a policy that began to experiment with various forms of capitalism—the primary motivation for using Putonghua without local accents came from the PRC government. While there may have been small advantages afforded to speakers who were able to use Putonghua without an identifiable accent, these advantages were negligible. The reason for this was that power and prestige were primarily obtained through participation in the communist party. There were few chances to amass wealth outside of that political structure, and the political structure showed a clear preference for individuals from meagre, usually rural, backgrounds. In that political climate there were no imperatives and few advantages afforded to using Putonghua. In fact, precise use of Putonghua (without a discernible accent) might even have undermined an individual's attempt to assert their privileged status as a member of the rural poor class of society.

Experimentation with a capitalist economy over the past 40 years, however, has produced a significantly different type of motivation to the use of Putonghua without an accent. The advantages that individuals now find to using Putonghua are more easily quantifiable: better jobs, faster career advancement and other socio-economic benefits. These bottom-up pressures to adopt the standardised spoken variety of Putonghua have proven much more effective than the older top-down pressures. Parents increasingly promote the use of Putonghua at home with their children as

a measure to help them succeed in the more commercially-oriented economy. This predominance of Putonghua reached a new high in 1986 when the PRC government declared that *only* Putonghua should be used as a language medium of instruction (MOI) in all but the China's official ethnic minority schools.<sup>12</sup> With these official and economic developments in China, it is no surprise that a number of scholars have suggested that Putonghua will soon replace other varieties of Chinese as the sole spoken variety with the People's Republic of China (Cao 2001, 2006; Qian 2005).

### 3.6.2 *Standardisation of Standard Written Chinese*

The standardisation of Standard Written Chinese (SWC) and the standardisation of Putonghua are intimately connected to one another, although the stories of how these two were standardised are somewhat different. Whereas the overt top-down measures to standardise Putonghua were adopted in 1958 in the PRC, the standardisation of SWC began with the political movement called the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement of 1919. Although the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement was a student-led political action that eventually led to the establishment of the Republic of China (ROC), it began as a movement to simplify the way that Chinese was written and to adopt a written standard that more formally resembled the spoken language (Chang 2011). Before the development of SWC, Chinese was written in a style called *Wenyanwen*, literally 'literary style'.<sup>13</sup> This style was highly economical and required a great deal of learning to use effectively, and it was, in a sense, representative of the feudal class system that had prevented the majority of Chinese people from developing literacy skills. The May 4th Movement promoted an alternative style called *Baihuawen*, literally 'plain speech style'. *Baihuawen* allowed individuals to write Chinese word-for-word with the same vocabulary and grammar as spoken Chinese; this had not been possible in *Wenyanwen* and the adoption of *Baihuawen* promoted an increase in Chinese literacy. The spoken language that was adopted to form the basis for SWC was Putonghua (although the variety was not known by that name at that time). After the establishment of the PRC in 1949 the connection between the spoken and written standard was more fully formalised so that today SWC is essentially Putonghua, with very few divergences between written and spoken forms.

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<sup>12</sup>Wangdu (2012) notes that Article 12 of the 1995 Chinese Education Law provides that 'schools and other educational institutions primarily for "minority" nationalities may use the spoken or written language in common use among the ethnic group or in the locality as the language of instruction'. Members of the officially recognized 'minority nationalities' represent about 8.4% of the Chinese population. There are a number of complicated issues related to the ability to teach in these minority languages: Pei (2013) notes that only 60% of minorities can actually speak their languages; Ma (2006) observes that only 12 of the 55 minority groups have a written script for their language. Most importantly, however, is Tsung's (2009) argument that the same social forces that threaten the Chinese dialects have also made minority language education less attractive to those groups who are eligible for it.

<sup>13</sup>*Wenyanwen* is also sometimes called 'Classical Chinese' and it still has a limited place in the curricula of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

While the development of SWC has clearly aided in the widespread development of literacy across China and within Greater Chinese communities like Hong Kong and Macau, it also represents something of a threat to Chinese languages (i.e., dialects) other than Putonghua. There is a great deal of lexical correspondence between spoken Cantonese and SWC, with the exception of some high frequency Cantonese function words (e.g., pronouns, the linking verb, basic verbs like those for ‘eat’, ‘see’, ‘sleep’, ‘go’, etc.) that cannot be used in SWC. In fact, for many of these words there is no way to write them in SWC and Written Cantonese (WC) has had to develop unique forms for many of these words. While the lexicon of Cantonese largely corresponds to the lexicon of SWC, these high frequency divergences between Cantonese and SWC are nevertheless great enough that there is still a gap between the way one says something in Cantonese and the way that it is written in SWC. Since SWC is used in a relatively specified number of functional domains, Cantonese-speaking regions like Hong Kong and Macau have developed a type of diglossia in which the functions of Spoken Cantonese are not perfectly mirrored in SWC. For example, when a formal speech is delivered in a public venue, like a university graduation, the speech is written in SWC, but delivered in Cantonese. The sentence structure, as much as SWC differs from Cantonese, will represent Putonghua structures and words that are not normally used in Cantonese are used because they have been written into the SWC text. These ‘written to be read’ genres, therefore, represent an interesting kind of diglossia (or, more accurately digraphia) where SWC is read with Cantonese pronunciations. In other spoken genres, however, Cantonese words and sentence structure would prevail.

This means that Cantonese speakers, in order to become proficient users of SWC, must learn the vocabulary and grammar of Putonghua. They may continue to use Cantonese pronunciations of the SWC vocabulary without fully acquiring Putonghua pronunciation, but there will always be a discernible gap between the way something is written in Chinese (i.e., SWC) and said in Cantonese. One might argue, in fact, that the acquisition of SWC for a Cantonese speaker is instruction in a non-native dialect, or a non-native language. Granted, few Cantonese speakers see it this way, but that is, in part, because of the complementarity of written and spoken genres: there are relatively few genres where a text is written to be read, or where faithful transcription from spoken Cantonese is required.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.7 Conclusion

Chinese is, without doubt, the single most important language within Macau’s linguistic ecology. However, Chinese is not a single language, and any attempt to

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<sup>14</sup>There are increasingly frequent examples of written texts that attempt to use uniquely Cantonese terms and sentence structure. This use of Written Cantonese, however, only appears in a small number of highly specified domains and it may represent a kind of emerging digraphia (Moody and Hashim 2009).

understand language in Macau without properly accounting for the degree of multi-lingualism that exists *within* Chinese varieties will fail to fully understand Macau's linguistic ecology. While Putonghua is the official language of the People's Republic of China and, as a Special Administrative Region of the PRC, the official language of Macau, less than one-quarter of the population used the language as either a usual or additional language before the 1999 handover to Chinese administration. The proportion of the population using Putonghua since that time, however, has grown to more than half. While Cantonese remains as the dominant usual language in Macau, it is spoken as a *standardising* language—one that has not yet developed the full range of codification that Putonghua (and Standard Written Chinese) has undergone. And Hokkien most clearly defines much of the unique character of Macau's linguistic ecology. While there is good evidence that Macau was a Hokkien fishing village when Portuguese traders first arrived in the sixteenth century, only a small number of residents have retained Hokkien as their usual language as the community has undergone shift toward Cantonese. Chapter 4 will continue to examine the linguistic ecology of Macau before the 1999 handover in terms of the non-Chinese languages that have been brought to the territory as a result of nearly 500 years of colonial domination.

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