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# Translanguaging and multilingual society of Macau: past, present and future

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## Abstract

This paper aims to explore the development and evolution of multilingual languages in Macau over the past 400 years, as well as the relationship and interaction of these languages with Macau society. The complex relationship between translation and society in multilingual societies is also discussed. By doing so, this study attempts to fill the current research gap by investigating the formation and evolution of multilingualism in a multicultural context from a historical perspective. To understand the evolving changes in Macau's languages and the relationship with society at large, this paper provides a review of the evolution of the multilingual society in Macau from a historical perspective while analyzing the features of Macau's multiple languages in different historical periods and revealing the influence of multilingualism on Macau's development. This review argues that there are three stages in the formation of a multilingual society and culture in Macau: Chinese as the predominant language in Macau (ancient times-1553), the early introduction of foreign languages and the official status of Portuguese languages in Macau (1553–1987), and Chinese, Portuguese, and English as the three mainstream languages in Macau (1987-present). Through a review of the past for insights into the formation of the multilingual society in Macau, the paper sheds light on the long history of Macau's Chinese and Portuguese cultures and their main linguistic influence on Macau's society and culture. Findings reveal that Macau could utilize its Portuguese characteristics and play an influential role in world communications, bridging the gap between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

**Keywords:** Multilingualism, Translanguaging, Multilingual society, Language politics, Macau

## Introduction

Language is an intrinsic part of culture, as it plays a communicating role. Brown (2006) suggests that language and culture are intricately intertwined such that language is inseparable from culture. Without its counterpart, the other loses its significance. Language and culture are deeply rooted, given their interactive influence over each other. Every language comprises cultural differences and influences, especially in multicultural and multilingual societies. With globalization, there are growing trends toward multilingualism. Maher (2017) defines multilingualism as languages crossing national, continental, and cultural boundaries where people from diverse groups and/or communities can communicate and demonstrate different levels of proficiency in more than one language.

While multilingualism is seen as the co-existence of two or more languages in a society or an individual speaker, translation can be seen as one language's substitution for another one instead (Grutman, 2009). As Meylaerts (2010) argues, there is a deep connection between translation and multilingualism, and at the core of multilingualism lies translation.

In the context of multilingual societies, translation and translanguaging have a complementary and natural character (Laviosa, 2018). Indeed, they can critically shed light on the world and oneself through the lens of another language and culture. Han and Wen (2022) claim that the lens of translanguaging can provide insights into decolonizing language policy and planning problems. Li (2022, p. 4) defines translanguaging as “reconstitutive of power relations between groups of language users with differentiated access to symbolic capital through entitlement/non-entitlement to claims of the native speakership of colonizing languages”. Li and García (2022) advocate that translanguaging as a decolonizing project in education can open up a translanguaging space for learners to use their language and semiotic repertoire to construct their own understandings. Li and Kelly Holmes (2021, p. 15) state that one of the toughest policy problems is “Diversity from Within” in minoritised communities because of their different languages, religious affiliation, and tribal membership. Li and García (2022) argue that language, race, and gender cannot keep creating barriers of differentiation that ultimately affect access to education. Nevertheless, translanguaging can break down the boundaries between named languages, which are political constructs, and “historico-ideological products of the nation-state boundaries” (Li, 2022, p. 2). Translanguaging, as a political stance, advocates the adoption of multiple languages in language teaching and learning, helping learners maximize their multilingual potential (Li, 2022). As British linguist Halliday (2002, p. 6) states, “language is the creature and creator of human society”. In other words, language plays a fundamental role in shaping societies and social structures.

Macau has been a multilingual and multicultural society over the past four centuries. In addition to the dominant Chinese language, Portuguese and English are also common languages in Macau. Portuguese and Chinese are both official languages, while English is widely used in commerce and tourism. Concerning the spoken languages of Chinese, Cantonese, Putonghua, and Hokkien are dialects of Chinese languages commonly spoken in Macau (Sheng, 2004). Other than Chinese, Portuguese, and English, there are some minority languages, such as Patuá languages, spoken by a minority of the population, such as Filipinos, Vietnamese and Burmese. The history of multilingualism in Macau can be traced back to the Portuguese, who first settled in Macau around the year of 1553. Since then, Macau has gradually developed as a trading center in the Far East. Many foreign languages and cultures have been introduced and intermingled with the Chinese language and culture. Portuguese was adopted as an official and colonial language in the colonization period of Macau and one of the official languages after China resumed its sovereignty over Macau in 1999. Maher (2017) opines that multilingualism is a consequence of small and large influences: the forces of society, economy, religion and languages spreading from one speech community to another. Likewise, the evolution of Macau's multilingualism is a consequence of social, economic and religious changes. According to Li (2022), a language being labeled is a political decision; indeed, different languages being assigned varying socio-political statuses are the result

of political naming and labeling. By extension, the users of varied languages are categorized into different social categories and endowed with specific statuses for their respective categories. Multilingualism and the interactive influences between Macau's Chinese, Portuguese, and English languages regarding language styles and linguistic features have been explored extensively alongside the development of the various languages and translation policies in Macau (Moody, 2021; Sheng, 2004; Wong, 2007; Wong et al., 1998; Yan, 2017; Zhang, 2001, 2010). Evidently, there is a close connection between multilingualism, language policy and translation policy in Macau.

Several studies have also suggested that Macau enjoys an economic advantage, as it has linguistic diversity aiding the building of trade relations. Zhang (2001) points out that Macau can serve as a bridge for international communications between China and the rest of the world through its multilingual advantage. Sheng (2004) also states that Macau can be a crossroad between Eastern and Western cultures and a bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking countries and regions because of its unique geographic and historical conditions.

Although these studies have contributed significantly to the extant literature, they share the commonalities of not reviewing Macau's multilingual development from a historical perspective. This study attempts to fill this research gap by investigating the formation and evolution of multilingualism in a multicultural context from a historical perspective. Finally, this paper will also examine the role of multilinguistic Macau and how this contributes to the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

### **Chinese as the predominant language in Macau (ancient times—1553)**

Macau has been part of China since ancient times (ADLBM, 2013; Lau, 2009; Yang, 1998). Lau (2009) claims that the Chinese have always formed the majority of Macau's population and that Chinese traditions are an integral part of the culture and education of Macau. The relationship between China and Macau can be traced back to ancient times when Macau was a small village on the shore of the South China Sea. Archaeological evidence has proven that the islands in Macau and the Pearl River Delta region, especially Zhuhai, Zhongshan, and the neighboring districts, share the same pre-historic cultural system (Yang, 1998). The analysis of the excavated Hac Sa ruins reveals that ancient inhabitants earned their living through fishing and hunting activities from the middle to the late Neolithic Age. These inhabitants not only created various decorations on encaustic pottery with the rich characteristics of the Delta region, including waves, ripples, and stripes 5000 years ago, but they also made a wide variety of rings using crystals and quartz 3000–4000 years ago. Macau was officially incorporated into Chinese territory and became part of Nanhai, or Panyu County, during the first unification of China in the Qin Dynasty under Qin Shi Huang. During the Jin Dynasty, it was part of Dong Guan County; in the Sui Dynasty, it was part of Nanhai County; in the Tang Dynasty, it was part of Dong Guan County; and in 1152, when the Southern Song Dynasty established Xiangshan County, Macau came under its jurisdiction (Sheng, 2004; Wong, 2007).

Before the Portuguese settled in Macau in 1553, Macau was a predominantly Chinese society, given its proximity to mainland China and being part of China's territory since the Qin Dynasty. As Macau is also geographically near Guangdong Province, many

Macau residents have assimilated to speak Cantonese, Guangdong Province's primary language, over time. Apart from Cantonese, various other Chinese dialect communities have also dwelt in Macau as a result of immigration. For instance, the stone tablet at the A-Ma Temple in Macau recorded that the Fujianese have been in Macau since the Ming Dynasty (Yang, 1998); therefore, Minnan is also commonly spoken in Macau. In a nutshell, it is clear that the history and culture of Macau and mainland China have a long and connected history through Chinese dialects such as Cantonese and Minnan.

### **The early introduction of foreign languages and the official status of Portuguese languages in Macau (1553–1987)**

When the Portuguese rented Macau from China and settled in Macau in 1553, they attempted to expand direct trade between Macau and the islands and peninsulas of Southeast Asia. Portugal used Macau as a trading base between Lisbon, Goa, Malacca, Nagasaki, and Manila. Macau's foreign trade developed rapidly from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century, becoming a transit port for Eastern and Western trade and a meeting point for Eastern and Western cultures. As a result, the small village of Macau grew rapidly to become an emergent international trade port. The Portuguese also founded a worldwide international commercial network in Macau as a result of Macau's direct contact between Europe and Asia. As a result, global trade and exchange flourished. Meanwhile, this small city became a dwelling place for people from the East and the West with significant progress in commercial activities. During this period, there were Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, British, German, Swedish, Latin American, Filipino, Japanese, Indian, Malaysian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and African peoples residing in Macau (Tang, 2016). These people originated mainly from Europe, Asia, and Africa and were of different races and skin colors. The diverse population profoundly influenced Macau's social and cultural structures and gradually transformed Macau into a multicultural, multireligious, multiethnic, and multilingual society (Tang, 2016). The following section illustrates the early introduction of foreign languages and the official status of Portuguese languages in Macau from 1553 to 1987.

### **Foreign languages being introduced to Macau by Catholic missionaries**

From the 16th to the nineteenth century, Western missionaries such as Alexander Valignano, Michele de Ruggieri, and Matteo Ricci played a significant role in the language and cultural exchanges between the East and the West. They proactively learned the Chinese language with the purpose of spreading Catholicism and strengthening communication with the then-Chinese authorities by using the native Chinese language. These missionaries also set up a general office in Macau. Being different from other ports, Macau provided them with ideal conditions to spread their religion and conduct cultural activities. In 1578, the Italian Father of the Jesuit Society Alexander Valignano visited Macau for an inspection tour. He realized that the spread of Catholicism in China relied on the missionaries having spoken and written Chinese fluently as well as being acquainted with Chinese customs. Subsequently, he suggested that Jesuit society send missionaries with Chinese knowledge to China. After Father Michele de Ruggieri came to Macau, he mastered Chinese and learned about Chinese customs during his two years of study at St. Paul's College, founded by the Jesuit Society. In 1582, he was approved to preach

Catholicism in Zhaoqing city in Guangdong Province. In the same year, another Italian priest of the Jesuit Society, Matteo Ricci, was invited by Alexander Valignano to come to Macau, where he “learned the Chinese language and read Chinese books” and equipped himself to do missionary work in mainland China. To train more missionaries to go to mainland China and other regions in the Far East, Alexander Valignano suggested to the Jesuit Society that the former St. Paul’s College be expanded to a university. On December 1, 1594, St. Paul’s College was officially founded. St. Paul’s College became the first Western university in China and the Far East. The college offered courses in Latin language, rhetoric, philosophy, theology, mathematics, astronomy, physics, and medicine. Lau (2009) suggests that by introducing Chinese as a compulsory language subject in teaching and learning, St Paul’s College established a multilingual education model in Macau. In addition, the language course also played a significant role at St. Paul’s College for their Asian students, including young Japanese and Chinese students who intended to go into religious service (Lau, 2009). For example, Yajiro was a Japanese missionary studying Latin and Portuguese at St. Paul’s College. At that time, St. Paul’s College was the cradle for producing missionary sinologists; their missionaries have made many contributions to the spread of language and culture in Macau. In fact, the Jesuit priests brought many Western inventions, equipment, and assorted items such as books, maps, paintings, medicines, clocks, watches and telescopes to Macau between the sixteenth century and the nineteenth century. For example, in 1620, when the priest Nicolas Trigault came to Macau, he brought 7,000 books with him. Of these 7000 books, 500 are now kept in the National Library of Beijing. The Jesuit priests also introduced Western technology and culture to Macau through teaching, oral instruction, writing, and translation.

#### **Foreign languages being introduced to Macau by Protestant missionaries**

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Protestantism started spreading in Macau. To carry out missionary work, the Protestants also launched many cultural and linguistic activities spreading the English language in Macau. After Robert Morrison was chosen to preach in China by the London Sermon Society, he began to learn Chinese. He continued studying Chinese after he reached Guangzhou and imitated the Chinese lifestyle. After his move to Macau from Guangzhou in 1807, he translated the New Testament of the Bible into Chinese and had it published in Guangzhou (Tang, 2016). Subsequently, William Milne and Robert Morrison translated the whole Bible into Chinese and published it in Malacca in 1823. Robert Morrison made outstanding achievements in Chinese studies. From 1811 to 1828, he wrote four books in Chinese, which systematically explained Chinese grammar, dialogs, phrases, and words (Wu, 2002). In addition, he compiled a Chinese-English dictionary and an English-Chinese dictionary. His remarkable linguistic accomplishments deeply affected the progress of the Chinese language and cultivated the cultural exchange between the East and the West in the nineteenth century.

The Protestants also ran a newspaper and some schools to initiate cultural movements. The American Elijah Coleman Bridgman reached Guangzhou and wrote the Chinese Repository in 1832. It was subsequently published in Macau in 1839. In September 1836, the British opium merchant William Jardine and others founded the Morrison

Educational Association. They collected funds from British and American merchants and donated 15 pounds to sponsor a girls' school, the School of Wanstall. They also set up a boys' school, which subsequently became the Morrison School of Macau. These Wanstall schools mainly preached Protestantism with some emphasis on teaching the English language. In November 1839, after the schools of Wanstall were closed, the American missionary and educator Samuel Robbins Brown founded the Morrison School of Macau. This school offered many courses, such as English, Chinese, algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, music, and art. The Morrison School was a Western school run by Protestants in China. This school was historically significant to the history of the Eastern and Western cultural exchange. Many modern thinkers and artists, including the reformation thinker Rong Hong and the first Chinese doctor to practice Western medicine Huang Kuan, were cultivated in this school. They were also top students in the school then. In short, the rise of Protestant missionaries from the United States and Britain, represented by Robert Morrison, who lived in Macau and the Chinese mainland, helped to bring the English language to Macau and catalyzed the growth of the English language in Macau.

#### **Portuguese as an official language in Macau**

Since the Portuguese landed in Macau in 1553, the Portuguese language was introduced to Macau. Initially, the sovereignty of Macau was Chinese, with government documents written in Chinese; in other words, there was no official status for the Portuguese language until the nineteenth century (Wong, 2007). During the mid-nineteenth century, the Opium War changed the relationships between China and other countries. It also highly influenced the development of Macau's history. After the fall of China in the Opium War, the Portuguese started to expand their colonial power in Macau. After the Portuguese gained control of Macau, the Portuguese government actively promoted Portuguese language education only to protect their interests in Macau. Thereafter, Portuguese became the only official language in Macau for a long time.

The proportion of Portuguese speakers in the population has remained small since the pre-founding period of Macau. Although its population has never exceeded 5% of the total population, the Portuguese language has remained an influential language in the administration and justice of Macau (Lee, 2014). For example, before the 1980s, the telegraphs placed in the Macau Post Office were only in Portuguese but not in Chinese; in addition, contracts written in Chinese had to be translated into Portuguese by a government-appointed department before they could be validated (Wong, 2007). Wong (2007) claims that the language policy at that time was likely one of linguistic hegemony. After the 1980s, the Chinese started a campaign to legalize Chinese because of the growth of the Chinese community, opposing the Portuguese language as the only official language. Gradually, the Portuguese colonial government switched to a "bilingual policy" (Wong, 2007). Although the sovereignty of Macau was eventually transferred back to China in 1999 after 442 years of Portuguese rule, the Portuguese language continues to exert a profound influence on the legislative, judicial, and administrative spheres of Macau.

In summary, the monolingual society that existed prior to the pre-founding period of Macau was transformed, and gradually, a bilingual and multilingual society speaking mainly in Chinese and Portuguese was established (Zhang, 2010). Following the

expansion of Portuguese colonial power in Macau, the Portuguese language naturally became an official and colonial language used in the spheres of administration and law. Despite such official changes, the Chinese language has always remained the first language choice of everyday communication among the Macau Chinese because of the majority population residing in Macau.

### **Chinese, Portuguese, and english as the three mainstream languages in Macau (1987—now)**

#### **The official status of the Chinese language**

The majority of Macau's population has always been Chinese, with the Chinese language as the preferred primary medium of communication among the people. However, the Chinese language was not conferred any official status for a long time. On the eve of the handover to Chinese rule on December 19, 1999, the Chinese language finally conferred an official status in Macau. Historically, the proliferation of the Chinese language has been a long and laborious process. In the 1980s, the Chinese people in Macau embarked on a campaign to legalize the Chinese language, which meant contesting for the language to be made an official language and used for government, courts, and public affairs. Mi et al. (1994) highlight that the written language of Macau law has long been Portuguese. As part of the Macau Chinese campaign, they made a comparison between the Portuguese and the Chinese languages and demonstrated that most of the people in Macau speak Chinese rather than Portuguese, resulting in difficulties for ordinary Macau residents in understanding Macau's laws and raising the awkward possibility that perhaps some residents were unaware of Macau's laws despite it being their place of residence (Mi et al., 1994). For the Chinese language to gain official status, three significant tasks need to be resolved during the transition period (before the handover), including localization of the civil service, localization of the law, and legalization of the Chinese language (Lee, 2014). The localization of the civil service requires Macau's civil servants to conduct local affairs in Chinese; the localization of laws involves the translation of Portuguese legal texts into Chinese, gradually moving toward bilingual legislation (Su et al., 2014). Han and Wen (2022) claim that the legalization of Chinese as an official language has motivated a strong enthusiasm among Macau's residents to use and learn Putonghua; this change in the socio-political context has had a fundamental impact on the multilingual practice and translation policy in Macau. According to Su et al. (2014), although the government has moved from a monolingual (Portuguese as the only official language) to a bilingual language policy (both Portuguese and Chinese as official languages) since the handover, this has resulted in a bilingual problem that has been affecting the efficiency of Macau's legal process. Given that many legal texts were drafted in Portuguese, with the Chinese texts serving as translation of the original texts, the Portuguese version of the legal texts prevails in any cases of ambiguity (Su et al., 2014).

Both China and Portugal negotiated Macau's status throughout the transitional period prior to the Macau Handover in 1999. Eventually, both sides signed the "Joint Declaration of China and Portugal" in 1987. This declaration became effective after both sides exchanged the documents in 1988, and subsequently, Macau entered a transformation period. The status of Chinese as an official language was strengthened after some of the decrees were issued by the Portuguese Government of Macau. For example, "The Joint

Declaration of China and Portugal” stated that in addition to the Chinese language, the Portuguese language should also be used in the governmental bodies, legislature, and courts of the Macau Special Administrative Region (Macau Government, 1988). In 1989, the government issued Decreto-Lei n.º 11/89/M, which cemented the official status of the Chinese language in Macau with Article 3 of this document declaring that the equal official status of the Portuguese and Chinese languages in the territory of Macau shall be achieved gradually and progressively, following existing conditions (Macau Government, 1989). In December 1991, the Portuguese government adopted and promulgated a decree on the official status of the Chinese language in Macau, which was subsequently published in the Macau Government Gazette in 1992 (Wong, 2007).<sup>1</sup> As Decreto-Lei n.º 455/91 demonstrates, the Chinese language in Macau has official status and the same legal force as the Portuguese language (Macau Government, 1992).

Consequently, the legislative process for Chinese as the official language of Macau was finalised. In 1993, the Basic Law of Macau was promulgated, and Macau entered the post-transitional period. After the Macau Handover in 1999, the official status of the Chinese language was confirmed and consistently strengthened thereafter. Article 9 of the Basic Law of Macau documented that “in addition to the Chinese language, Portuguese may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the Macau Special Administrative Region” (ADLBM, 2013, p. 4).

In summary, during the transitional period, the official status of the Chinese language was finally cemented in 1992 at the request of the Chinese government and the Chinese community in Macau. Following this, Chinese language education in Macau has become more relevant than ever before. After Macau returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1999, Chinese became the official first language and was given full political status. Meanwhile, with the global strengthening of China’s political and economic power, the internationalization of the Chinese language is gaining momentum, and there is a general consensus among Macau residents, whether Chinese, Macanese, or foreigners, to learn Chinese. However, the Portuguese language remains the dominant language in specific areas, such as law. Therefore, the status of the Chinese language in the legal and judicial systems of Macau still needs time to be improved. In other words, Macau’s current situation is unlike the earlier days of Portuguese rule, where the Portuguese language was the only political language, with the exclusion of the Chinese language. Considering the dominance of the Chinese language in Macau, it becomes important to protect and promote the Portuguese language, given its special status in Macau’s history. Therefore, the Macau Special Administrative Region Government has the responsibility to safeguard the presence of the Portuguese language in Macau, given the provisions of Macau’s Basic Laws and that the Portuguese language is part of Macau’s cultural and linguistic policy. In fact, since the handover, Macau has placed greater emphasis than ever on the education and promotion of Portuguese, with the University of Macau and the Macao Polytechnic University providing degree courses in Portuguese and the City University of Macau offering an Institute of Languages of Portuguese-speaking Countries, as well as optional or compulsory courses in Portuguese at the basic education level. Additionally, under China’s new strategic positioning, Macau is given the role of a platform for trade and commerce between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, which benefits Macau as it can fully utilize its strengths to serve the needs of China. In this context, the



**Table 1** Population aged three and above and their primary language choice in Macau (1991–2016). *Source:* Adapted from (DSEC, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017)

	1991 (%)	1996 (%)	2001 (%)	2006 (%)	2011 (%)	2016 (%)
Cantonese	85.8	87.1	87.9	85.7	83.3	80.1
Putonghua	1.2	1.2	1.6	3.2	5	5.5
Other Chinese dialects (including Hokkien/Minnan)	9.6	7.8	7.6	6.7	5.7	5.3
Portuguese	1.8	1.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6
English	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.5	2.3	2.8
Others	1.1	1.3	1.7	2.3	3	5.8

protection of the Portuguese language has been generally recognized by the Macau community as an essential part of preserving Macau's cultural identity.

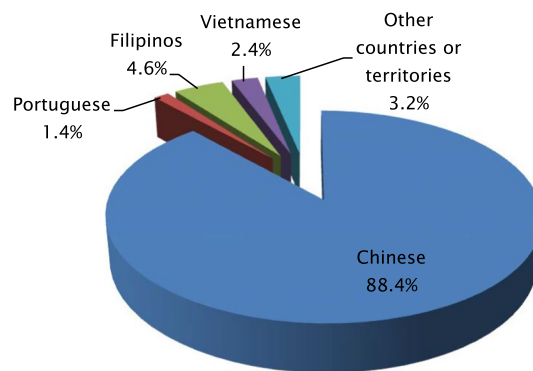
### The three mainstream languages in Macau

Chinese, English, and Portuguese are now the mainstream languages in Macau society. However, alongside political changes and economic development, these languages have undergone different changes in Macau's history. Based on the data from the Census between 1991 and 2016 (see Table 1), over 80% of the total population aged three and above used Cantonese as their language of choice from 1991 to 2016. Obviously, Cantonese is the most commonly used dialect of the Chinese language by the Macau population. Since 2002, with the opening of the gambling industry, many workers from mainland China, the Philippines, and other Asian countries have immigrated to Macau. As a consequence of the increase in immigration, the percentage of Putonghua grew from 1.6% in 2001 to 3.2% in 2006. Likewise, the proportion of English increased from 0.7% in 2001 to 1.5% in 2006. Although the proportion of Cantonese showed a downward pattern, Putonghua, English, and others instead displayed an upward trend. In contrast, the percentage of Portuguese witnessed a significant fall from 1.8% in 1996 to merely 0.7% in 2001; thereafter, it remained fairly constant, ranging between 0.6 and 0.7% over the past two decades.

The Chinese language is the primary language of communication in Macau, used by both Chinese and Macanese. During the transition period, the Chinese language gradually gained official status and became the official language of the Macau Special Administrative Region after the return of Macau to China in 1999. English is used in finance, modern technology, international trade, and university education, as it is an essential modern language for conducting business and connecting with the world. As Macau is an international city, English also plays a vital role in society and school education.

### Language mixing in minority groups

Macau is a multilingual society. In addition to the mainstream languages of Chinese, Portuguese, and English, there are some languages spoken by minority groups in Macau. With regard to the minority groups in Macau, the 2016 census (see Fig. 1) indicates that the total population of Macau was 650,834 (DSEC, 2017). While the majority of the population was of Chinese nationality (88.4%,  $N=575,585$ ), 11.6% of the total population



**Fig. 1** The Chinese and non-Chinese population of Macau in 2016 (DSEC, 2017)

**Table 2** Length of residence in Macau and the non-Macau-born land-based population. *Source:* Adapted from DSEC (2017)

	Total	Length of residence in Macau (%)				
		< 5 years	5–14 years	15–24 years	25–34 years	≥35 years
Total	384,855	29.6	22.5	9.6	15.7	22.6
The mainland China	283,271	23.2	20.5	10.6	19.3	26.3
Philippines	28,848	60.5	29.8	6.9	2.6	0.1
Hong Kong	21,439	28.7	27.4	10.3	12.9	20.6
Vietnam	16,296	64.2	33.5	0.6	0.5	1.1
Burma (Myanmar)	6,958	20.8	3.9	2.9	8.8	63.6
Indonesia	5,918	37.3	31.2	2.5	8.0	21.0
Other Asian countries or territories	14,373	52.7	28.6	5.7	3.4	9.6
Portugal	2,011	34.4	25.2	19.4	13.9	7.1
Other countries or territories	5,741	40.1	32.9	13.5	5.1	8.4

was non-Chinese. In terms of the non-Chinese population, Filipinos had the largest proportion, accounting for 4.6%; Vietnamese and Portuguese accounted for 2.4% and 1.4%, respectively (DSEC, 2017). As seen, the Filipinos, Vietnamese, Portuguese, and other minority nationalities are among the minority groups living in Macau, with Chinese people constituting the majority of the population. The growth of these minority groups living in Macau is obviously related to Macau’s modern economic growth and development. Since the Macau SAR Government opened the gaming industry in 2002, the gaming industry has developed rapidly. To satisfy the great demand for labor, there was an increase in the number of foreign workers moving into Macau. Consequently, these foreign workers have become a special minority group of people living in Macau for a long time.

Table 2 shows data about the non-Macau-born land-based population in 2016. Aside from the majority born in mainland China, the people born in the Philippines and Vietnam and residing in Macau for less than five years constitute 60.5% and 64.2% of the population, respectively. Although Macau’s Burmese population is only approximately 6958 in total, over 63.6% of them have been residing in Macau for 35 years or more. Similarly, there is also a significant proportion of Indonesians (21%) residing in Macau for over 35 years. It is apparent that Filipinos, Vietnamese, Burmese, and Indonesians are

significant minority racial groups making up an essential part of modern Macau's social demographics. The languages and cultures of these countries and regions have also been brought into Macau with them. For example, Wong (2007) found that Filipinos in Macau usually speak Filipino and English; when communicating with their compatriots, they usually use Filipino; with foreigners, they use English; some Filipinos can speak Cantonese as well because of their work environment.

Macanese are Portuguese born in Macau, and they play an essential role in contributing to Macau society even though they have become a minority group. Macanese may also be defined as mixed-race descendants of the Portuguese living in Macau who intermarried with different races or ethnicities, such as Chinese, Malaysian, and Indian. According to the 2016 census, the population of Portuguese nationality was 9024 (DSEC, 2017), with some Macanese. They are fluent in Portuguese and Cantonese. Macanese families speak and write both Portuguese and Chinese. They grow up with a Portuguese education, culture, and Catholicism and maintain a European lifestyle. However, they regard Macau as their hometown and are highly influenced by Chinese culture and traditions. Macanese and Macau residents have made outstanding contributions to Macau's society together for many years.

The Macanese language, known as Patuá, is a creole language of Macau and a Portuguese-based language integrating Malay, English, Cantonese, and Spanish (Maher, 2017). Patuá was formed by ancient Portuguese who immigrated to Macau over four hundred years ago (Cultural Affairs Bureau, n.d.). Initially, Patuá emerged because of the need for commercial communication with people from various countries or regions. When Macau was a port of transit and commerce in southern China, there was an uptick in people speaking Patuá (Zhang, 2020). Hence, Patuá is arguably one of the earliest communication languages between the East and the West. Patuá Theatre is a performance using Patuá and was listed in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage of China in 2021. It would be beneficial for Macau to continue preserving the Patuá-language and the cultural heritage of the Macanese community, as they are an important part of Macau's cultural identity.

### **The advantages and opportunities of Macau's multiple languages and cultures in the great bay area**

The Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA) was promulgated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on February 18, 2019. The bay area comprises the Macau SAR, Hong Kong SAR, and nine cities in Guangdong Province, including Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, and Zhaoqing (The State Council, 2019). The Outline Development Plan ("the Plan") contains 11 chapters and 41 sections and provides a comprehensive institutional plan for the future industrial system, infrastructure, quality living area, and development platform of the Greater Bay Area.

According to the Plan, Macau is positioned "to develop into a world-class tourism and leisure center and a commerce and trade cooperation service platform between China and Lusophone countries, promote an appropriate level of diversified economic development and develop into a base for exchange and cooperation where Chinese culture

is the mainstream and diverse cultures coexist” (Constitutional & Mainland Affairs Bureau, 2018, p. 12). In terms of culture, apart from its rich historical and architectural characteristics, the Portuguese language is one of the most distinctive features of Macau. Macau is the home of the Iberian Latin language family, which originated from the Hebrew language. This distinctive feature has shaped the service platform role of Macau between China and Lusophone countries. Furthermore, the Plan also elaborates on the role of Macau as “a commerce and trade cooperation service platform between China and Lusophone countries” with nine items related to the construction of this platform, for instance, the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, a Cultural Exchange Centre between China and Lusophone countries, a Training Base for Bilingual Talents Proficient in Chinese and Portuguese, and a Renminbi (RMB) clearing center for Lusophone countries (Constitutional & Mainland Affairs Bureau, 2018). Evidently, these initiatives recognized Macau’s special historical position, unique cultural heritage, and rich and successful multicultural society. The long history of Portuguese culture in Macau also influences the close relationships between Macau and Portuguese-speaking countries.

As a bridge between the East and the West, with the help of Chinese and Portuguese bilingual talents, Macau is able to connect mainland China with Portuguese-speaking countries and the European Union, promote bilateral and multilateral trade and investment, and collaborate with mainland China to explore the markets of Portuguese-speaking and other Latin American and African countries. For example, in its cooperation with Zhuhai city, a China-Portuguese-speaking Countries (PSCs) International Trade Centre will be established in the Guangdong-Macau area. In the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and PSCs on April 10, 2022, it was mentioned that the in-depth Cooperation Zone on Hengqin Island, Zhuhai city, is to further strengthen economic and trade cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries (Zhuhai Municipal Government, 2022). Apparently, Macau can capitalise on its linguistic and cultural advantages, assume the role of a cultural hub, and play an influential role in communication and bridging the gap between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. Portuguese is a language unique to Macau and is based on the European Portuguese language with elements of Macau’s own. Whether in terms of preserving Macau’s cultural identity, respecting the diversity of its communities, or fully realizing Macau’s role as a commerce and trade cooperation service platform between China and Lusophone countries, Macau needs to cultivate more Chinese-Portuguese translators to achieve the above-mentioned goals through translation. Therefore, Macau could actively cultivate Chinese and Portuguese-speaking talent, promote Portuguese culture both internally and externally, and make good use of its linguistic advantages to develop and establish a better service platform for commerce and trade cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries.

## Conclusions

In a nutshell, Macau is a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual society. History has revealed that the formation of a multilingual society and culture in Macau can be divided roughly into three periods. In the first period, from ancient times to 1553, archaeological evidence showed that the history and culture of Macau and mainland

China have a long history and are closely related to each other. Naturally, Chinese was probably the first predominant language in Macau. Macau has also adopted the use of Cantonese given its proximity to Guangdong Province, where Cantonese is the dominant language. The Chinese dialect of Minnan is also used in Macau because many immigrants from mainland China and the neighboring areas also lived in Macau at that time.

The second period illustrates the early introduction of foreign languages and the official status of Portuguese languages in Macau from 1553 to 1987. Latin languages and English were introduced with the arrival of the Portuguese in Macau in the mid-sixteenth century, changing the monolingual society that existed prior to the establishment of Macau and gradually forming a bilingual and multilingual community in Chinese and Portuguese. Nevertheless, Chinese has always been the first language of communication among the Chinese in Macau because of its vast majority of the Chinese population.

The third period describes that Chinese, Portuguese, and English have become the three mainstream languages, and there was an increased presence of foreign languages in Macau from 1987 onward. The status of Chinese as an official language was cemented when China and Portugal signed “The Joint Declaration of China and Portugal” in 1987. After the handover to Chinese sovereignty, the Chinese language became the first official language and was given full political status. Meanwhile, Portuguese is still functioning as an official language in Macau. Following the economic development of Macau, English has become an essential tool for communicating and connecting with the world in Macau. Since the Macau SAR Government opened the gaming market in 2002, an increase in foreign workers has moved into Macau to satisfy labor demand. Their languages and cultures have come along with them to Macau, making up a multilingual and multicultural society.

Through a review of the evolution of the multilingual society in Macau over the past 400 years, it is evident that Macau is a diverse and inclusive society that has been accepting multiple cultures and languages within a single community. Multilingualism is a vibrant characteristic in Macau’s society, contributing to preserving its multiple religious, ethnic, historical, and social cultures, which is, in turn, highly beneficial to the synergetic development and projection of Macau in the GBA area. In addition, Macau can utilize its Portuguese traditions and resources to strengthen its special positioning as a platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries by reconstructing the power relationships of multiple languages through the lens of translanguaging.

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#### **Author contributions**

Prof. Lam conceived of the study, decided on research questions, and helped draft and finalise the manuscript. Ms leong drafted, revised and edited the manuscript. Both are equally accountable for all aspects of the work. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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