Development of the *Lingua Franca* of China Proper in the Past Millennium

By Sam WONG, Tak Sum 黃得森
HUMA, HKUST
LSHK ARF 2007
Introduction

- China
  - Long History
  - Chinese Language
  - Various dialects existing at Present
  - *Lingua Franca* (Common language)
    - Communication between people living in different regions of the China proper.
    - Now in China: Modern Mandarin
    - Overseas: Cantonese (NY), Sze Yup dialects (NAm)
    - Modern Mandarin as LF: not very long
This Section

- Existence of *Lingua Franca* in the Past
- Development of *Lingua Franca*
  - The Dark Ages
  - Nanking Mandarin
  - The Rise of Péking Mandarin
  - Péking Mandarin as the Ultimate Champion
- Conclusion
Did *Lingua Franca* Exist Historically?

- *Standard Language* from the West?
- Practically, it did exist!
- Any historical documents?
Book VII:
What the Master used the *elegant language* for: the *Odes*, the *Book of History* and the performance of the rites.

孔穎達疏：“孔曰：雅言，正言也。”

*Elegant language* refers to the correct language

阮元《與郝懿行論〈爾雅〉書》
正言者，猶今官話也。
The *correct language* is similar to the Mandarin at present.”

*Elegant Language* 雅言
A language, or dialect rather, with high prestige
Standard language in north China’s central plain in that era
Did *Lingua Franca* Exist Historically?

- **Elegant Language 雅言**
  - Dialect used in the area around the capital city during the West Zhōu Dynasty.
  - Archaic Yellow River-Luòyì phonological system
  - 李葆嘉：上古河洛音系（Li 2003: 180）

- **Common Language 通語**
  - 揚雄《方言》

- **History of lingua franca traced back to the era of Confucius.**

- **National Language ≠ Lingua Franca**
  - Language used by the *ruling class*
  - Yuán 元: Mongolian; North Wèi 北魏: Sien-pi 鮫卑
  - Now: Chinese 漢語
The Development in the Past Millennium

- The Dark Ages
- The Nanking Mandarin
- The Rise of Péking Mandarin
- Péking Mandarin as the Ultimate Champion
The Dark Ages

- Not much documentation at around 11th c.
- Rhyming dictionaries
  - Standard of rhyming for composing poems in Civil Service Examination System
- Luòyáng Dialect 洛陽
  - Pronunciation enthusiastically learnt by the literati
  - Cultural centre since Táng Dynasty
Luòyáng Dialect 洛陽

陆游《老學庵筆記》卷六

陆游 (1125-1209)
“中原，惟洛陽得天地之中，語音最正。”
The pronunciation is the most correct at that time.

Alternative readings in modern dialects

Pékinese

literal reading (learnt from PD)    colloquial reading
薄弱 bó    [bɔ˧˥]    薄紙 báo    [bɔu˩]
血型 xuè    [çye˥]    流血 xiě    [ciɛ˧]

C.f. skirt (layer of Old Norse)    shirt

Small amount of alternative reading in Luòyáng Dialect
Ming Dynasty

Quonhoa

- Quoted by 魯國堯
- *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas Suscepta ab Societate Jesu*: a missionary diary of China written by Trigrault Nicolas
- There was a general language called Quonhoa used in the court and forensic court in all provinces through the empire.
- Used among the gentry class and understood even by women
- *lingua franca* exists!
Nanking Mandarin

杨福绵 (1995)
- First European-Chinese dictionary: *Dizionairo Portoghese-Cinese*
- A dialect in the Jiānghuái 江淮 region

鲁国尧 (1985)
- Nanking dialect
- From mid-16th c. (or earlier)
- A eunuch had given a little boy bought from Nanking as a gift to teach Father Didaco the purity of the Nanking dialect on the way to Péking to have an audience with the Ming emperor.
The First Record Ever Found

- *Arte de la Lengua Mandarin*
  - Literally, *Grammar of the Mandarin Language*
  - Published in 1703 by Francisco Varo
  - Natural gift of speaking Mandarin well
    - Natives in Nanking
    - Others from Mandarin-spoken region
  - 鰲國堯 (2007)
Nanking Dialect

- Jiānghuái  江淮 Mandarin
  - Some features from the dictionaries and textbooks not found in modern Nanking dialect

- Why Jiānghuái Mandarin?
  - 李葆嘉 (1996)
  - Culturally correct pronunciation
  - Formed by immigrants during south migration from central plain 靖康南渡
  - Dialect chosen for reading classics
The Rise of Péking Mandarin

- Some scholars think that Pékinese has been the *lingua franca* for six hundred years.
  - Contradict with the evidence shown above
- How and when did Péking Mandarin rise?
The Rise of Péking Mandarin

In 1874, the first envoy of Japan staying in China reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan:

“滿清建國後，苦於漢人吱唔不規則，另定北京話，使滿漢官吏一體遵用……始以官吏能京話方能上堂。"

Péking Mandarin was promulgated by the Manchurian government.

Not Agreed by literacy with "barbarian" government.

Not yet seized any position from Nanking Mandarin.

Wade and Hiller 2002: 5
College of the Correct Pronunciation

1728 A.D. (Regime of Yongzheng 雍正)

- 
  - Yeung 正燮《癸已存稿》: "雍正六年，奉旨以廣東、福建人
多不諳官話，著地方官訓導，廷臣議以八年為限，舉人、
生貢、貢、監、童生不諳官話者，不准送試。"

- Students without the ability of speaking Mandarin were not
allowed to participate in the civil service examinations.

- Main purpose: Eradicate malpractice by the clerk (legal
executives) due to the inability of communication between the
officials (non-local) and the public. (Yeung 2000)

- Initial achievement not so effective → not support by 乾隆

- Make positive contribution but failed to reach the aim
The Rise of Péking Mandarin

- 語言自通集  Yü Yen Tzǔ Èrh Chi
  - By Wade and Hillier written in 1886
  - The First textbook for teaching Pékinese
  - Preface: Envoy found that southern Mandarin was too out-dated to be used to communication with the court
  - Improve diplomacy: learn the language of the court, which is important than any other languages in China

- Education of Chinese language in Japan turned to northern Mandarin from 1874
- In mid-19th c., northern Mandarin became the lingua franca among the officials
Péking Mandarin as the Ultimate Champion

“Cantonese was beaten by Pékinese by only one vote (Dr Sun Yat-Sin 孫逸僑) when deciding by ballot, which dialect was to be the national language in the parliament.”

- Tiny amount of Cantonese literature
- Written language
- A beautiful hearsay…
Péking Mandarin as the Ultimate Champion

- **Manchurian government**
  - Declared Péking Mandarin as national language in June 1991
  - Set up this subject in schools in 1916
  - National Revolution in 1911

- **After the National government was set up**
  - Ministry of Education
  - Pronunciation of 6,500 Chinese characters was standardised by voting
  - This dialect was spoken by nobody in life!
  - Old Mandarin Reading 老国音 – doomed to failure

LSHK ARF 2007
## Mandarin as the Ultimate Champion

### Seeking a Spoken Dialect to Be the Standard

#### Argument between Mandarin and the Capital

- **京国之爭**

**Mandarin** – *General Mandarin*

- "blue-cyan"

- Literal reading of Pékinese

- Distinct maintained:
  - Dental sibilants and velars in Middle Chinese before high front vowels (a.k.a. sharp and rounded sounds)
  - The Lax tone and the famous entering tone

**Capital Reading**

- Spoken by citizens in Péking with higher education

- Standard easily to be obtained

### Chart of Pinyin and Chinese Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>ㄅ</th>
<th>ㄆ</th>
<th>ㄇ</th>
<th>ㄈ</th>
<th>ㄉ</th>
<th>ㄊ</th>
<th>ㄋ</th>
<th>ㄌ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>ㄈ</td>
<td>ㄉ</td>
<td>ㄊ</td>
<td>ㄋ</td>
<td>ㄌ</td>
<td>ㄕ</td>
<td>ㄖ</td>
<td>ㄗ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>ㄅ</td>
<td>ㄆ</td>
<td>ㄇ</td>
<td>ㄈ</td>
<td>ㄉ</td>
<td>ㄊ</td>
<td>ㄋ</td>
<td>ㄌ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin n</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>g</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>ʃ</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final</th>
<th>ㄅ</th>
<th>ㄆ</th>
<th>ㄇ</th>
<th>ㄈ</th>
<th>ㄉ</th>
<th>ㄊ</th>
<th>ㄋ</th>
<th>ㄌ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Ligatures**

- *ba*  
- *ka*  
- *be*  
- *bi*  
- *ki*  
- *bu*  
- *gu*

**Letters used for writing Chinese sounds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>ㄅ</th>
<th>ㄆ</th>
<th>ㄇ</th>
<th>ㄈ</th>
<th>ㄉ</th>
<th>ㄊ</th>
<th>ㄋ</th>
<th>ㄌ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>ㄅ</td>
<td>ㄆ</td>
<td>ㄇ</td>
<td>ㄈ</td>
<td>ㄉ</td>
<td>ㄊ</td>
<td>ㄋ</td>
<td>ㄌ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>ü</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ı</td>
<td>ı́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ı́</td>
<td>ı́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ı́</td>
<td>ı́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ı́</td>
<td>ı́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ı́</td>
<td>ı́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Péking Mandarin as the Ultimate Champion

- Colloquial Pékinese was chosen as the standard
- Péking Mandarin/Pǔtōnghuà was promoted in China proper
- Certain level of competence
Conclusion

- The *lingua franca* of China proper is always “mandarin”
  - Influence of huge economic and political power established for a long time

- Reference point moved
  - Warfare, or replacement of dynasty
  - Luòyáng ➔ Nanking ➔ Péking
Thank you!

Q&A

Contact:
cswts@ust.hk
cs04wts@alumni.ust.hk
wong_taksum@hotmail.com
...

...
More than that...

A Grammar of the Chinese Language

By Morrison 1815

The Chinese define the phrase kwan-hwé thus,

正音 yín pronunciation 言 use 之通 各省份

i.e. 'The proper and general language of the empire.'

amongst themselves. The dialect of Macao is different from that of Canton, and the mandarin dialect of Nanking is different from that of Peking; hence any one orthography must of necessity be imperfect.