**China Coast Pidgin: texts and contexts**

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## Abstract

In this paper we revisit some long-standing questions regarding the origins and structure of China Coast Pidgin (CCP), also known as Chinese Pidgin English. We first review the historical context of the China Trade which formed the ecology for the development of CCP. We then review the available sources, focusing on newly transcribed data from Chinese-language instructional materials. These sources provide fresh evidence for grammatical structure in CCP, and demonstrate strong influence from Cantonese as the major substrate language. Comparison with English-language sources shows systematic contrasts which point to likely variation between Anglophone and Sinophone lects, as in the case of wh-questions which show regular wh-fronting in English sources and pervasive use of wh-in-situ in Chinese sources. This conclusion helps to resolve the debate over the Sinitic features of CCP.

**Keywords:** pidgin, substrate influence, Cantonese, Sinitic, English

## 1. Introduction

China Coast Pidgin, also known as Chinese Pidgin English, has been called the 'mother of all pidgins' for a number of reasons (Li, Matthews & Smith 2005:79). **[INSERT FOOTNOTE 1 HERE]** In particular, it seems to have given the name 'pidgin' to functionally restricted codes that arise in predominantly bilingual communities (Reinecke 1937). China Coast Pidgin (CCP) has also been associated with the expansion of English-lexifier pidgins in the Pacific (Siegel 1990; Tryon, Mühlhäusler & Baker 1996:485). While typically stereotyped and ridiculed in the popular British imagination and literature, it functioned as a lingua franca in the communities of Western traders found in the ports of the China Coast (and some inland markets). An unusual feature of CCP, particularly important for linguistic scholarship and the study of pidgins, is that it was available in written sources for the purpose of transmission among the Chinese (Shi 1993).

This paper offers a historical discussion of the context of formation of CCP, and a structural description of the language as represented in marginalia in *The Chinese-English Instructor*, the largest single source of credible CCP texts, and one rich in grammatical data. Our aim is to add to our knowledge of the evolution of CCP, on which relatively little has been written. In previous scholarship, there has been a tension between substratist analysis (Shi 1991) and claims of English influence and universals of pidginization (Baker & Mühlhäusler 1990) in accounting for the evolution of the pidgin. We will show that both analyses are likely to be valid if CCP existed in a variety of forms. The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 is a historical introduction to the Western presence in Southern China and an in-depth look at the ecology of the Pearl River Delta, where CCP was born. Section 3 describes the sources for CCP available to date and summarizes previous scholarship on the topic. Section 4 is a grammatical analysis of the *Instructor* data. Section 5 discusses the findings in relation to previous studies on CCP and draws our conclusions.

## 2. History of CCP

The history of Macau and the Pearl River Delta constitutes probably the most fundamental chapter in the development of East-West contacts in China and the linguistic ecology that resulted from these encounters. As a consequence of these East-West encounters, at least two new varieties emerged between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries: (1) Makista, an Asian-Portuguese vernacular with Sinitic elements that became the idiom of the mixed Portuguese-Asian community of Macau (see Ansaldo & Matthews 2004; Ansaldo, Matthews & Smith 2009) and (2) China Coast Pidgin (CCP), the trade jargon that developed around the Canton (Guangzhou) area during British colonial rule, and later spread to other ports of China and even into the Pacific. **[INSERT FOOTNOTE 2 HERE]**

### *2.1 The British and Portuguese presence in Southern China*

The British arrived in Southern China over a century after the Portuguese. Although there were sporadic contacts with the Ming and Southern Ming Dynasties, most of the early interaction was in the period 1644-1684, at which time several problems affected the newly installed Qing dynasty. Besides the usual border wars against Altaic tribes in the northwest, Chinese authorities were busy dealing with the uprising of the Taiwanese under the 'pirate' Koxinga, which among other things contributed to the ban on maritime commerce. Chinese authorities were thus unconcerned with the new traders, and happy to use the Macanese – Macau residents mainly of Portuguese ancestry – as mediators in the initial contacts. Macanese authorities were interested in protecting their monopoly on trade with China and attempted to confine and control the activities of the British as much as possible. The British resented Portuguese mediation and tried hard to trade directly with Chinese authorities. In 1685 an imperial decree determined that Canton would be opened for trade, and in 1699 the British were allowed to establish a 'factory' in which to conduct business (Gunn 1996:27); this is a term derived from Portuguese *feitor,* an agent dedicated to the trade in goods under royal monopoly, a central figure in Portuguese mercantile history since the early fifteenth century (Paviot 2005:24). From this period come the comments of Mundy (1637) who noted the difficulties encountered when trying to use English to communicate with the locals. Other travelers reported the use of a mixture of English and Portuguese in the interaction with local Chinese well into the middle of the eighteenth century (Noble 1762). Obviously Macau played an important role in the early trade between Western merchants and China. Among the sons of the Macanese (or *casados*), a class of interpreters grew over time, specialized in mediating between the Chinese authorities and Portuguese officials. They were fluent in written and spoken Chinese, most likely both Cantonese and Mandarin as they were dealing with local authorities, who would require the former, as well as court officials from the capital, for whom only the latter would be acceptable (Boxer 1973). This linguistic expertise positioned them at the center of the East-West trade as interpreters and mediators, a role that they held on to even after the establishment of Dutch and British trading houses led to a decline of Portuguese economic power. Not only was a form of vernacular Asian-Portuguese the lingua franca for Western traders, it was also the best means of communication with Chinese parties until the late eighteenth century. Moreover, the Portuguese were regarded as the best source of information on Chinese (as well as Japanese) culture and manners, because it was in Macau that the only schools for the study of Chinese language and culture could be found, especially linked to missionary activity (Martino 2003; Tamburello 1983). As stated in the *Chinese Repository* (1833, cited in Martino 2003:21), 'for over a century from 1517 the only European ships to visit China were Portuguese, and their language became, to some extent, the lingua franca of the coast'. Finally, even after the

opening of Canton, Macau remained a periodic residence of Western traders, in particular each summer and autumn, when the city would fill up with traders waiting for their boats to be measured or papers to be issued (Gunn 1996:28).

It is only from the latter part of the seventeenth century that British presence started growing in Southern China, as a result of (a) the refusal by Japan to trade with the British, which led to a growing interest in the China trade, (b) the recognition by other Western trading powers of the East India Company, and (c) the resolution of the conflict between China and Taiwan, which opened up maritime routes once more (Martino 2003). For these reasons, in the first phase of British-Chinese relations the role of English would have been irrelevant (Martino 2003: 24); not only was Portuguese mediation central in this phase, but British presence in the region was also severely limited and lacked constant presence, as the British were still very focused on India and North America until the end of the seventeenth century. Though it is impossible to rule out British-Chinese linguistic contacts in this early phase, it is much more likely that the trade jargon known as China Coast Pidgin evolved in a later period, following the 'Flint case' and the development of the 'Canton System' discussed in the following section.

### *2.2 The Canton System*

Already in the early days of the Canton Trade, commerce was regulated by Chinese authorities and was confined to a number of limited ports where Western merchants carried out business through local Chinese merchants, among whom corruption abounded. In an attempt to liberalize and improve commerce, James Flint, who resided in China between 1736 and 1762, traveled to Tianjin to address the emperor on the question of corruption of the local Cantonese authorities (Martino 2003:32; Soothill 1925). He obtained help in translating a petition on corruption in the Canton Trade and presented it to the emperor. The consequences of this interference were drastic: Flint was imprisoned in Macau for three years and then expelled from China; all ports except Canton were closed to foreigners; the translator of the petition was beheaded; and it was forbidden to teach foreigners the Chinese language, on penalty of death. This also led to the formalization of the 'Canton System' and resulted in the fact that, until 1842, all power was virtually in Chinese hands, with the movements of Westerners heavily restricted, contact with the local population was prohibited except through officially appointed mediators, and an official position of inferiority was accepted by Western traders for the sake of economic profit. It should be acknowledged that many missionaries did manage an impressive command of the language, and presumably the banning of teaching could be circumvented where necessary. Nevertheless, with such official measures in place, the British generally never gained any knowledge of the Chinese language, nor did they set up institutions to study Chinese culture.

The ‘Canton System’, which actually evolved during the first sixty years of the eighteenth century, is well-known to historians, thanks to the wealth of records left behind by the European trading companies as well as Chinese official documents (Van Dyke 2005). The Canton System developed in order to gain better control of the activities of Westerners and local officials in the Pearl River Delta. While it was difficult and potentially expensive for the Chinese to exert total control over the comings and goings of boats in the open sea off Macau and its islands, as this would have required extensive patrolling, forcing boats to sail up the Pearl River into Canton provided the authorities with an ideal passage which was easy to control (Van Dyke 2005). It was organized along typical Chinese lines (Fairbank & Goldman 1998:195): Chinese merchant families were appointed by the government to act as brokers and superintendents of the foreign traders. Each foreign ship was the responsibility of one Chinese family-firm. These ‘security’ merchants formed a guild, the *Cohong,* at the command of a customs superintendent, the *Hoppo*, who answered directly to the Emperor. The *Cohong* and the *Hoppo* assisted, controlled and taxed the foreign cargoes. This proceeded in three steps: (1) foreign boats were required to call at Macau and were then escorted up the river to Canton; (2) at the harbor of Whampoa (Huangpu), 20 km from Canton, the boats stopped and the cargo was unloaded onto smaller vessels; (3) from Whampoa, the chief trader of the foreign firm (the *taipan* or *supercargo*) and the cargo moved to Canton, while the ship and crew were left at Whampoa.

During the eighteenth century there were no more than 20 *supercargoes*, and very few of them visited the foreign quarter at Canton, typically only once every three years due to prohibition or time spent at sea (Li et al. 2005; Shi 1986). Until the end of the eighteenth century, ships’ crews had to remain in the port of Whampoa for three months during winter; there could be up to 2,000 British sailors at a time as well as other foreign crew, and we know that interaction with the locals, in terms of prostitution, street fights, etc. was common (Bolton 2003:157; Martino 2003:51). One of the most notorious sentences in early CCP, in which a rare mixture of Portuguese and English elements is found, certainly comes from this type of environment: *carei glandi hola pickenini hola?*, ‘you want the big whore or the small whore?’ (Noble 1762:240). In the mid nineteenth century, it was reported that in Whampoa the Chinese could speak better English than in Canton (Nicol 1822; Williams 1836). This implies that, notwithstanding the tight official control, an underworld of material and human smuggling allowed contacts between Westerners and Chinese to take place.

### *2.3 The nature of Chinese-Western contacts*

In order to appreciate the history of East-West encounters in general, it is important to realize that Western arrivals in Southern China were not always

seen as intrepid adventurers, lucrative business-partners or bearers of higher knowledge. China's relations to non-Chinese, in particular towards populations of the Western borders (and beyond) has always been clear: outsiders were barbarians, a potentially polluting element for the superior Chinese culture, to be kept at bay at all costs. Chinese authorities had been intent on limiting and controlling interactions between Chinese and outsiders since the fifteenth century. The same treatment was applied to the Portuguese, the Dutch and especially the British, as revealed in historical accounts of East-West relations between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In his historical analysis of East-West contacts in the nineteenth century, Fairbank (1953) makes it clear that, from the Chinese point of view, Westerners were inferior in terms of culture:

> The decadent, part half-caste community of Macau remained walled off on its peninsula; the thirteen Factories at Canton were outside the city walls, from which foreigners were excluded. All contact with foreign merchants was mediated through a special class of compradors, linguists, shroffs and Chinese merchants, as well as through *a special language.* (Fairbank 1953:13, our emphasis)

Western men were depicted in Chinese sources as '…violent and tyrannical and skilled in the use of weapons… They wear disheveled hair which hangs over their eyebrows' (Chen 1939:347). Western missionaries and adventurers since the fifteenth century had described China as a rich and impressive country, where material wealth, architectural wonders and advanced scientific knowledge were to be found (Boxer 1953). The feeling of superiority that the Chinese displayed towards Europeans was well captured by Thomas Taylor Meadows, a British interpreter and student of China, who in 1852 wrote:

> The Chinese do habitually call and consider Europeans 'barbarians', meaning by that term 'peoples in a rude, uncivilized state, morally and intellectually uncultivated'… Those Chinese who have had direct opportunities of learning something of our customs and culture – they may amount, taking all Five Ports, to some five or six thousand out of the three hundred and sixty millions – mostly consider us beneath their nation in moral and intellectual cultivation. As to those who have had no such opportunities, I do not recollect conversing with one… They are always surprised, not to say astonished, to learn that we have surnames, and understand the family distinctions of father, brother, wife, sister, etc.; in short, that we live otherwise than as a herd of cattle.

The only Western group that had managed to break through the iron curtain that the Chinese had put up against foreigners throughout their history were missionaries, in particular the Jesuits, but even they were eventually dismissed.

This occurred after they lost the 'controversy over rites', a public debate between scholars of different religious traditions held by the imperial court in 1725, and they became virtually powerless after the rejection by the 'Son of Heaven' of the Pope's ecumenical claims (Fairbank 1953:14).

As a result of such attitudes, Chinese-British relations in the Canton System were in fact not symmetrical. In contrast to what has been suggested in Stoller (1979) and followed up in Tryon et al. (1996), British-Chinese communication in this phase may not constitute an example of 'high-high' exchange. Until the first Opium war of 1842, the British (and other Western traders) were most certainly in a lower cultural position, due to the general contempt that Chinese had of foreigners, and the superior status of the Portuguese in linguistic and cultural matters. Since the British were in a politically and economically disadvantaged position, limited by the Canton System which was designed to favor Chinese authorities, we can hardly speak of mutually beneficial exchanges: British and other foreign merchants needed China much more than China needed them, since the revenues from the trade with the West were marginal to the Chinese when compared to the revenues of their Asian trade (Fairbank 1953). In fact, it was exactly because of this overall position of inferiority that the British challenged Chinese authority on such a shady issue as the Opium Trade, and used it as an excuse to fight the first of a series of wars leading to the 'unequal treaties' that forced China to negotiate terms of trade favorable to Western powers. Considering the overall inferior position of the British in this phase, if a pidgin English had already started developing, it makes sense to revisit Hall's (1944) suggestion that the Europeans played a significant role in 'pidginizing' their own language, desperate as they were to engage in trade with a superior power which held them in contempt and was only marginally interested in their trade (Chinese trade with the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Japan being far more profitable). In addition, considering that it was not only the British but also other Western traders who used English among each other as well as in their contacts with the local populations, in an attempt to escape Portuguese control, the theory of Westerners pidginizing English in their interactions with Chinese makes sense, and lends further credibility to the hypothesis of European agency in the development of a pidgin variety (Hall 1944).

Clearly the Canton Trade would have offered opportunities for some degree of language contact between Asian-Portuguese, English, Cantonese and perhaps official Chinese (*guanhua* or Mandarin). Interaction between pilots and the crew would have offered a setting for Makista and English to come into contact. The compradors, despite the limitations imposed on the factories, were a point of contact between English and Cantonese; moreover, they could provide, in unofficial ways, further opportunities for local Chinese to come into contact with Western traders. Interpreters ('linguists') clearly played a significant communicative role, potentially bringing Chinese, Makista and English into

further contact, though they were few in number and acted in very limited contexts (Van Dyke 2005:81).

We should however not think of the Canton Trade as the only locus of contact: the Opium trade, which involved a great deal of smuggling, put Western traders and local interpreters, buyers and dealers into contact in various coastal areas of China (Fairbank 1953). Other aspects of illicit commerce would have had the same effect; Chinese parties also engaged in illegal trade as this would result in much higher profits for themselves. Corruption was indeed so high that eventually it brought the Canton system to a halt (Fairbank & Goldman 1998).

The complexity of interactions in the early phase of East-West encounters emphasizes the importance of historically-nuanced approaches to contact ecologies, as advocated among others by Faraclas et al. (2007) and their notion of 'co-habitation societies', in which micro-ecologies of informal contacts are given serious consideration. While contact between English and Cantonese must have taken place, it is clear from the above that such contacts were neither frequent nor prolonged in time until the late eighteenth century. The contacts between English and Makista, it seems, must have been just as superficial, short-lived and infrequent (for this see the discussion in Ansaldo et al. 2009).

### *2.4 Development and decay of CCP*

Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, several political and economic changes took place that resulted in a great influx of trade. The First Opium War (1839-42), fought in order to force Chinese authorities to release monopoly on commerce and to liberalize the Opium Trade under British control, saw the British emerging as victors who forced China to open a total of five 'Treaty Ports' (Canton, Amoy, Fuchow, Shanghai and Ningpo), where the British were free to trade with any Chinese party. It also resulted in Hong Kong becoming part of the British Empire. With further concessions resulting from the second Opium war (1856-1860), Western trade expanded along the China coast as well as inland.

The role and function of the East-India Company had already been increasing since the late eighteenth century, due to an expansion of trade and further recognition of its key role by the international community. This was one of the three main contexts of English usage in Southern China at the beginning of the nineteenth century identified by Bolton (2003), the other two being the activities of country traders and Americans. As a consequence of such expansion, the community of the factories based in the foreign quarter of Canton started growing and social relations increased in complexity. Martino (2003:62) captures the contacts between Westerners and Chinese in the Canton area as seen in Table 1 (see also Bolton 2003:157).

**@@ INSERT TABLE 1 HERE**

In 1836 the Anglophone community in Canton comprised approximately 200 individuals, the majority of them males – Western women tended to reside in Macau **[INSERT FOOTNOTE 3 HERE]** – with a further 100 individuals, over half of them of Indian/Persian origin, and the rest Western European, predominantly Portuguese, living in the foreign quarter (Morse 1926). In 1827 the first English periodical appeared, which is often taken as an indication of an expansion of the foreign community. In 1836-7 two articles published by Wells report that CCP booklets, as discussed in the next section, were in circulation among the Chinese population. The existence of such manuals testifies to the importance of CCP, as well as to the high level of education and the importance of instruction in the Chinese community. In the late eighteenth century, as a consequence of the Opium Wars and certainly also with the help of such booklets, CCP spread to other parts of China (e.g. Shanghai). CCP was reportedly used also among Chinese of different linguistic backgrounds and of course within the non-English speaking Western community.

It is clear that despite official controls there was interaction between Western and local Chinese in and around the foreign quarter of Canton in this phase (Hunter 1885). For example, within the factories, merchant-servants interaction would have brought Chinese and English into contact. As noted in Selby and Selby (1995), inside the trading houses the relationship between merchants and their employees was quite varied; there were not only cooks and cleaners but also what might be seen as apprentices, assistants, often related to the Chinese compradors, who were in the service of the foreigners for the purpose of learning and acquiring wealth through their own trade. These were often of higher social extraction and well educated. It is indeed to one of these key figures that the compilation of a CCP glossary is assigned. Outside the factories, interaction with shopkeepers and coolies would have taken place. With commerce intensifying, in the port of Whampoa informal relations between crews and locals must have sustained a multilingual ecology.

CCP started declining in the twentieth century. This is usually attributed to the impact of English-medium instruction becoming available in missionary schools (Bolton 2003:191). However, another factor should be taken into account, namely the dissolution of CCP's ecology. First, there was the decline of the Canton trade around 1830, as a result of the East India Company closing their activities there (Van Dyke 2005:175); CCP nonetheless continued to be spoken in other trading enclaves, including Hong Kong and Shanghai. Secondly, World War II and the Japanese occupation caused a dramatic change in the ecology of Chinese coastal areas, in particular Hong Kong (Mühlhäusler & Baker 1996:518). While in the twentieth century, CCP could be found in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Macau spoken amongst shopkeepers, domestic servants and sailors (Mühlhäusler & Baker 1996:517), after the Japanese occupation a new

wave of expatriates replaced the community that had been displaced during World War II. Even if knowledge of CCP had survived among shopkeepers and domestic servants, the new expatriates had no knowledge of CCP and this would have led to its decline. After World War II, Hong Kong rapidly moved towards a modern and cosmopolitan society. The complex, informal ecologies of the Canton system, the illegal trades run by merchants of varying social extraction and with different educational backgrounds, the interaction of different European vernaculars and Chinese languages, and the mediation of more or less competent middlemen all came to an end then. From the 1960s, the population of Hong Kong increasingly shifted towards an Anglo-Chinese bilingual (and bicultural) identity. The new expatriate contingent spoke various English varieties, all more or less in standardized form, which also served as the target of teaching in local schools. The ecology of CCP had therefore de facto dissolved, and with it the *raison d'etre* of CCP.

## 3. CCP sources and previous scholarship

An annotated corpus of all currently known attestations of CCP from English language sources was assembled by Philip Baker in the 1980s, and although this remains unpublished (see Baker 1987:164 for details), it has been made available to other researchers, and this has been our main point of reference for sources in English. This corpus of around 15,000 words contains data varying in quality, as it was often recorded incidentally, for example when illustrating humorous stories of encounters between Chinese and trading partners or travelers. During the expansion of CCP use, a series of booklets appeared, written by Chinese in Chinese characters for the purpose of teaching and learning CCP. In contrast to the attitude of many English speakers, the Chinese do not appear to have regarded the language as a source of humor, and these publications suggest the serious purpose of achieving upward mobility through knowledge of the linguistic medium required for trade. Among the many sources, two are known to us today: (1) *Hùhng mòuh tùng yuhng fàan wá* (紅毛通用番話) 'The Language of the Redhaired Foreigners' (henceforth *Redhaired Glossary*) (Anon c. 1835) published in Canton around

the fourth decade of the 19th century, and (2) *Yìng yúh jaahp chyùhn* (英語集全), the much less widely available six volume work *Chinese and English Instructor* (henceforth *Instructor*) (Tong 1862), written by Tong King-sing around 1862 (see also Leland 1892; Selby & Selby 1995; Williams 1836). CCP was reportedly used not only in East-West encounters and within Western circles but also among Chinese of different linguistic backgrounds (Whinnom 1971:104). We must therefore recognize a fourth group of CCP users next to the three mentioned above for the nineteenth century: Chinese traders, merchants and servants.

### *3.1 The Redhaired Glossary*

Two minimally different versions of a booklet with this title can be found in the British Library. 紅毛通用番話 (*hùhng mòuh tùng yuhng fàan wá*) literally means 'the language of the redhaired foreigners', i.e. Europeans. An earlier version had a slightly less complimentary title with 鬼 *gwái* 'ghost, devil' in place of 番 *fàan* 'foreign'. It appears that several versions of the booklet appeared, and that similar booklets giving guidance in speaking basic Macau Portuguese were produced as early as the 1750s (Baker 1989:3). The British Library booklet, probably dating from around 1835-50 is the source of the examples given here. It has 16 pages of words or short phrases dealing with numerals, occupational vocabulary, etc. For each entry, the term is given in Chinese, and beneath it and slightly offset to the right, the CCP pronunciation is given as closely as possible in Chinese characters. A section of the booklet is reproduced in Figure 1.

**@@ INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE**

Two examples from these pages are presented here, with the translation of the Chinese, the Yale transcription of the pronunciation and the approximate (pidgin) English equivalent added in parentheses.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 水 | 老 | |
| 手 (séui sáu = sailor) | 婆 | (lóuh pòh = wife) |
| 些 | 威 | |
| 利 | 父 | (wài fuh i.e. wife) |
| 文 (sè leih màhn = sailorman) | | |

The booklet contained a total of nearly 400 entries, all single words or formulaic expressions. Thus, while this is a valuable source with respect to the lexicon and phonology, it says little about the grammar of the language.

A number of analyses of the *Redhaired Glossary* have appeared. Shi (1993) gives some useful phonological correspondences, while a more thorough analysis of the content was made in Baker (1989) with a detailed translation and suggestions for the etymology of most of the entries as well as further discussion of phonological equivalents. The Yale transcription of the pronouncing characters and target English or pidgin forms for the entire 372 entries are listed as an appendix to Bolton (2003) who produces some further suggestions regarding the source of certain items in a set of footnotes, including a few possible derivations from Swedish. As noted by Shi (1993), learning a pidgin language through written characters is highly unusual in the context of how Pidgin and Creole languages are normally acquired.

### *3.2 The Instructor*

A much more substantial work was produced, probably in 1862 (Selby & Selby 1995:123) by Tong King-sing, also confusingly known as Tong Ting-ku or Tang Tingshu (唐景星). Tong appears to have been an accomplished English speaker with a linguistic insight far ahead of his time. He produced a monumental six-volume work, the *Chinese-English Instructor* (英語集全 *yìng yúh jaahp chyùhn*), hereafter *The Instructor*, which attempted to make Standard English comprehensible to Chinese speakers. Each of the six volumes deals with a different subject area. In addition to single words and phrases, more extended sentences and chunks of dialogue are featured in volumes 4 and 6. In addition to its undoubted linguistic value, the snatches of dialogue also serve as an interesting insight into the everyday life of traders in both camps during the period. The pronunciation of the English forms is indicated not only by the nearest equivalent Chinese character, but also by a series of diacritics, which appear to use conventions developed in describing minority languages within China (Selby & Selby 1995:125). A sample page is shown in Figure 2.

**@@ INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE**

Each entry consists of four parts. On the bottom right hand side is the term in English, while on the bottom left is an indication of the pronunciation in English as far as is possible using Chinese characters. The constraints of Cantonese phonology do present considerable difficulties, but Tong had devised some special symbols, such as a small triangle to indicate inter-dental fricatives, which are not present the Cantonese phoneme inventory, seen in Figure 3.

**@@ INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE**

In the top left hand area of each column is the term in Chinese, while at the top right is a Romanized equivalent to indicate the pronunciation in Cantonese, as in Figure 4.

**@@ INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE**

However, the item of greatest interest to scholars of CCP is the collection of hand-written marginalia, apparently representing the featured item in pidgin, or as Tong terms it **廣東番話** *gwóng dòng fàan wá* 'Canton foreign language'. Two of the items on the right hand page above are shown in close-up in Figure 5.

**@@ INSERT FIGURE 5 HERE**

These right hand entries can be analyzed as follows:

How many dollars is that

**咁 申 得 幾 多 員 呢**

(gam sàn dàk géi dò yùhn nè)

**口 乜 治 打 鏽**

(háu màt jih dá làh)

CCP: how muchee dollar

A full account of *The Instructor* has yet to be written, and there is a great deal of valuable information awaiting analysis. The Romanized Cantonese, for example, is a significant resource for considering phonological change in Cantonese over the last 150 years. With regard to the CCP marginalia, a start was made by Li et al. (2005), who assembled all the entries for a preliminary analysis (see also Ansaldo 2009 to appear; Ansaldo et al. 2009). A total of just over 1,000 CCP entries were recorded. This represents a corpus of some 5,000 words, which is the largest reliable source of CCP texts in existence. **[INSERT FOOTNOTE 4 HERE]** For each expression gleaned from the margins, four pieces of information were extracted:

1. The standard English text, exactly as it is presented in the original book (top left);
2. The Chinese characters used to represent the equivalent phrase in pidgin (top right): again this is presented as in the original as far as typography allows;
3. A transcription of these characters as read in Cantonese, using the Yale romanization (bottom right);
4. A representation of the pidgin in English orthography as used in English-language sources (bottom left).

A sample entry is given in Table 2 as an illustration.

**@@ INSERT TABLE 2 HERE**

While this represents a very valuable source of data, many questions remain. It is not clear whether Tong or someone else added the marginalia, and, crucially, how representative it is of the language spoken at the time is not known. It is also unclear how closely the Chinese characters are intended to represent the actual pronunciation of items, as opposed to the best estimate using the Cantonese sounds available. Be that as it may, if investigating CCP is like studying dinosaurs (Selby & Selby 1995:113), decoding the *Instructor* is tantamount to unearthing a complete skeleton:

> …what a goldmine this source is: we have extensive recordings of pidgin dialogues set down by a talented linguist, together with their colloquial English and Cantonese equivalents. (Selby & Selby 1995:125)

> the written *fāanwáa* texts in the *Instructor* are probably the largest single source for Chinese pidgin English available to any Pidgin and Creole scholar. (Bolton 2003:176)

Whereas the better known *Redhaired Glossary* is largely a list of words, the *Chinese-English Instructor* provides extended dialogues on themes reflecting the mercantile functions of the language: law suits, selling tea, chartering ships, etc. Consequently, it provides rich insights into the grammar of CCP as spoken by a fluent Chinese bilingual.

### *3.3 Previous views on CCP*

Typically two somewhat divergent positions can be identified in relation to the origin of CCP grammar: (i) a substantial number of CCP features can be traced back to Chinese, especially Cantonese grammar (Bisang 1985; Selby & Selby 1995; Shi 1986, 1991) and (ii) CCP shows little Chinese influence, but 'universals of pidginization' can be detected (Baker & Mühlhäusler 1990; Tryon et al. 1996). In fact, both Chinese and English influence can be found, due in part to variation between attested samples of CCP, especially between those in the booklets by Chinese authors, and Anglophone CCP, as represented in the Western literature. In addition, it has been noted that if pidginization involves loss of morphology, then it becomes indistinguishable from the effect of feature transfer of isolating typology in the contact situation, in our case influence of Chinese grammar (Ansaldo 2007). A related issue is that of agency in the genesis of CCP. While Hall (1944) claims that CCP was the result of foreigner-talk strategies, Baker & Mühlhäusler (1990) suggest that it was the product of a 'high-high' encounter and was stable in its 'expanded' version. This claim may been called into question based on two observations: (1) Western traders were not generally regarded as representatives of 'high' culture in the eyes of the Chinese and mostly held in

contempt (Chen 1939; Fairbank 1953); and (2) the different sources reveal the existence of significant variation within CCP (Bolton 2003:161; Shi 1991).

## 4. Grammar

The 'Chinese' character of CCP has been noted in previous work. In the *Instructor*, for example, 'Much of the syntactic structure of Pidgin follows that of Cantonese' (Selby & Selby 1995:128). However, some of the more specific claims which have been put forward have proved to be controversial. Shi (1986, 1991) attributed several features of CCP to structural influence from Cantonese, which is assumed to be the mother tongue of most non-European users of the pidgin. The features discussed by Shi include topic-comment structure, the use of *piece*(e) as a classifier, the interrogative pronoun *what fashion* meaning 'how?' (Cantonese *dím yéuhng*), compounds with 'man' as in *tailorman* and the distribution of *belong* as copula, which (as in Chinese) is not used before predicative adjectives. Baker & Mühlhäusler (1990) call a number of these features into question, in some cases based on the occurrence of parallel features in other pidgins: for example, Tok Pisin has compounds with *-man* which are comparable to CCP *tailorman*, etc. They nevertheless acknowledge that some expressions appear to be calqued on Cantonese; in particular, the use of *piece(e)* as a classifier between the numeral and the noun is distinctively Chinese.

### *4.1 Words and sounds*

CCP words are derived mostly from English, with some Portuguese, Malay, Hindi and, as would be expected, Cantonese influences. Some examples given by Martino (2003) include: *pidgin* < business (E.); *catchee* < *catch* 'fetch' (E.); *two muchy* < *too much* 'extremely' (E.); *Joss* < *Deus* (P. 'God'); *sabbee* < *saber* (P. 'to know'); *chop* < *chapa* (M. 'chop'); well-known Cantonese words are: *taipan* (C. 'supercargo', lit. 'big class') and *fankuei* (C. 'Westerner', lit. 'foreign devil'). Words of clear Portuguese origin are less common than one would expect considering the potential influence that Macao could have had in the early days of the Canton Trade: Bolton (2003:286) identifies 20-22 Portuguese words out of 372 in the *Redhaired Glossary*.

It is difficult to present a definitive account of the phonology of CCP for a number of reasons. In the English sources, sounds are likely to have been heavily Anglicized, while in the Chinese sources there are a number of other problems: (i) different dialectal readings of the characters yield different sounds, and in some cases it is clear that a character was not used in the Cantonese but rather in the Mandarin reading (Li et al. 2005:83; Shi 1991),

and (ii) the transcription system makes it difficult to know what the actual pronunciation of words was, as the Chinese characters in the texts may have served to provide an approximation of the sound. The actual local pronunciation of the characters may well have become the target by users of the booklets, though this is difficult to establish (Shi 1993:461). One of the most robust features was replacement of [r] by [l]; the former does not exist in Cantonese and is thus replaced by the only non-nasal sonorant of Cantonese (Shi 1991:14): *rice* > *lice*. Another widespread feature is deletion of final consonants, again a clear influence of Cantonese phonology where syllable final consonants are restricted to nasals and unreleased stops. Baker & Mühlhäusler (1990) find no significant influence of Cantonese in the vowel system but heavy restructuring of syllable structure due to influence of Cantonese so that CCV > CVCV, e.g.: *stop* > *sitap* (Bolton, 2003:162). **[INSERT FOOTNOTE 5 HERE]**

*4.2 Nouns and NPs*

The structure of the NP reveals variation between Sinitic and non-Sinitic constituent order, as well as typical Sinitic features such as the use of the classifier *piecee*. The patterns [NUM-CL-N] and [DEM-CL-N] are typically Sinitic, as in Cantonese:

(1) *Yāt go yàhn* *Nī go yàhn*
1 CL man DEM CL man
'One man' 'This man'

This pattern is very frequent in CCP:

(2) You wantchee catchee one piecee lawyer (*Instructor* IV.32)
**[INSERT FOOTNOTE 6 HERE]**
'You will have to engage a lawyer'

Apart from *piecee*, one other item, *chop*, appears to be used as a classifier in the [DEM-CL-N] position in the *Instructor*:

(3) Thisee chop tea what name (*Instructor* VI. 15)
'What is the name of this tea?'

The fact that a single classifier accounts for the vast majority of cases does not necessarily imply 'reduction' of the classifier system of Cantonese. It is true that many more classifiers are technically available in the language, but in discourse there is an overwhelmingly frequent one of generic use (*go* in Cantonese, *ge* in Mandarin; see Erbaugh & Yang 2006 for other Sinitic

languages) while the others are more specialized. CCP takes this tendency a step further by reducing the system to virtually one classifier which is not obligatory (see (19) below where no classifier appears in the context [DEM-(CL)-N]).

The pronouns of CCP have attracted some attention in the literature. In particular, besides what appear to be regular English forms, Baker & Mühlhäusler (1990:104) and Tryon et al. (1996:488) note that in a first phase three 1st person singular forms were found, *I*, *my* and *me*. All three of them could be found in subject position, while *my* and *me* were used in object position. Eventually, only *my* emerged in both functions, and this could be taken as evidence of stabilization in the grammatical system of CCP. Smith (2008) shows that while second and third person forms were almost invariant in the *Instructor*, there was considerable variation in first person forms, with some differentiation of subject and object forms. The emergence of 'my' as the canonical first person form is somewhat surprising considering the almost universal adoption of 'mi' in pidgins and creoles worldwide. Baker & Mühlhäusler (1990) note that this took place rather rapidly only after the 1830s, before which 'I' and 'me' were normally encountered. They hypothesize that the change was brought about by the introduction of written instructional materials and while the timing strongly suggests this, hard evidence is difficult to pin down. It is possible that the character 米 which is pronounced *máih* in Cantonese was entered in the booklets by someone with the Mandarin pronunciation [mi] in mind. Another confusing factor is the superficial similarity in appearance between the character 米 and 未 (*mi* in nineteenth-century Cantonese), which could have been confused during the printing process.

Compounding is frequently found in CCP, particularly in reference to people and functions. A compound with the form *man* ('man', calqued on Cantonese *yàhn*) is found: *ba ba man*, 'barber'; *se lei man*, 'sailor'; *guk man*, 'cook' (from Martino 2003:86). Other compounds of the type Modifier-N can also occur, e.g.: *Joss pidgin*, 'religion' (lit. God business); *Joss house*, 'temple'. Another calque of a Cantonese word is found in the term 'fashion', rendered as *fasi* (Cantonese *yéuhng*, 'manner', as in *dím yéuhng*, 'what manner' or 'how', (Shi 1986), e.g.: *wat fa si*, 'what fashion or what way'; *niu fa si*, 'new fashion or new way' (Martino 2003:87). In the *Instructor*, *how fashion* (5) is used in a way parallel to *dím yéuhng* (5) in Cantonese:

(4) My savvy how fashion do (*Instructor* IV.33)
'I will know how to act'

(5) *Ngóh jī dím yéuhng jouh* (Cantonese)
I know how fashion do
I know how to do it

*4.3 Copulas, zeros and existence*

Baker & Mühlhäusler (1990) report at least two different types of copula: 'have', as in (5), usually realized as *hab* (as in (6), this can also be used as a possessive verb as well as an aspectual marker); and *belong* (7-8). According to Baker & Mühlhäusler (1990:103) *belong* took over as a copula while the aspectual usage of *hab* increased. Eventually, *hab* and *habgot* were used in possessive constructions.

(6) Chinese man very great rogue truly, but have fashion, no can help

'Chinese men are real rogues but that's how it is, can't help it' (Anon 1748, in Baker & Mühlhäusler 1990:103).

(7) My hap go court one time (*Instructor* IV.4)

'I have been to court once'

Note that copula constructions are relatively rare, as more often than not CCP is zero-copula, like Sinitic languages in general, as in (8) (this was already noted in Hall 1944):

(8) Englishman very good talkee; all heart bad, - no talkee true - too much a proudy (Selby & Selby 1995:138)

The verb *got* is likewise used in phrases such as (9), and very similar to the Cantonese verb *yáuh* (10), which can indicate location, possession and existence (Matthews & Yip 1994):

(9) You got how muchee piecee children (*Instructor* IV.55)

'How many children have you?'

(10) *Léih yáuh géi dō go saimānjái?* (Cantonese)

you have how many CL children

'How many children do you have?'

In example (6) above, the second phrase *but have fashion, no can help* is difficult to interpret, because *fashion* can mean many things in CCP and is difficult to translate. For example, in the following: *so fashion you buy some beefoo*, 'well, you better buy some beef' (*Instructor* VI.26), the item 'fashion' clearly has no literal meaning, as is often the case in CCP, but is calqued on Cantonese *gám yéuhng* 'so, in that case'. Therefore the phrase *but have fashion* in the example above could just mean 'well', as in Cantonese *haih gám yéuhng* 'that's the way it is'. In the *Instructor*, most occurrences of *hap*, many of which occur together with *got*, follow the Sinitic existential pattern 'there is', and are thus not clear cut copulas. The same was found already in Hall's data (1944) and strongly suggests that CCP is predominantly zero

copula. As far as *belong* is concerned, it is worth noting that in most occurrences in the *Instructor*, it is used in its lexical function, 'to belong to', as in (11) and (12):

(11) These belong you? (*Instructor* IV.53)
'Is this yours?'

(12) The tea belong first crop (*Instructor* VI.14)
'This is first crop tea'

It is unclear to what extent *belong* really represents a copula or whether a sentence with *belong* can be read as attributing a relation between two phrases (see Shi 1991:24) as in the following examples:

(13) You belong honest man (Selby & Selby 1995:136)
'you are an honest man'

(14) This belong my plum cashee (*Instructor* VI.3)
'that is what I paid for it'

In terms of negation, *no* (sometimes realized as *lo*) or *no got* are used in CCP:

(15) Missy ___ no got houso (*Instructor* VI.38)
'Miss__ is not home'

(16) No got suchee thing (*Instructor* IV.51)
'there is no such thing'

The negative existential expression *no got* is typical of Sinitic (Cantonese *móuh*, Mandarin *meiyou*). Another reason to be cautious about the status of the copula in CCP is the fact that adjectival and adverbial phrases behave like verbs when used as predicates, a feature that usually correlates typologically with zero-copula, and which is typical of Sinitic (e.g., Cantonese *léih hóu faai*, [you very fast], 'you are (very) fast'). This property is attested frequently in the *Instructor*:

(17) Court expensee too muchee; (*Instructor* IV.32)
the court fees are very heavy

(18) My too muchee trouble (*Instructor* IV.32)
I was very much bothered

(19) Thisee wine glassee no clean (*Instructor* VI.47).
this wine glass is not clean.

*4.4 Placement of adverbs and prepositional phrases*

Another area showing clear influence of Chinese syntax is adverbial modification. Selby & Selby (1995:128) claim that time and place adverbs follow English syntax, and indeed we find such examples as in:

(20) My talkee you tomorrow (*Instructor* VI.9)

'I will let you know tomorrow'

The place of *tomorrow* here is not legitimate in Chinese. However, the *Instructor* also offers many examples of sentential adverbs appearing between the subject and verb (21-22). This is illegitimate in English but in line with Cantonese syntax, as in *Ngóhdeih tīngyaht būn* [we tomorrow move] 'we move tomorrow' (see Matthews & Yip 1994:187):

(21) We tomorrow makee move (*Instructor* IV.49)

'We move tomorrow'

(22) He every day tipsy (*Instructor* IV.55)

'he gets drunk every day'

From a typological point of view, one of the clearest Sinitic features is the preverbal PP as can be seen in the patterns (23-25) with *long* below:

(23) My no long you buy anymore (*Instructor* VI.26)

'I won't have anymore to do with you'

(24) You can long my catchee one piecee good boy (*Instructor* VI.51)

'You can get a good boy for me'

(25) My long you takee alla (*Instructor* VI.8)

'I will buy the whole from you'

The preposition *long*, derived from English 'along (with)', appears in preverbal position like its Cantonese counterpart *tùhng* 'with', and covers a similar range of relational functions, including comitative (26), benefactive (27) and ablative (28): **[INSERT FOOTNOTE 7 HERE]**

(26) *Kéuih tùhng yāt go pàhngyáuh góng* (Cantonese)

S/he with one CL friend talk

'He's talking with a friend'

(27) *Ngóh tùhng léih ló yāt go* (Cantonese)

I with you take one CL

'I'll get one for you.'

(28) *Ngóh tùhng léih máaih yéh* (Cantonese)

I with you buy things

'I buy things from you'

With regard to the structure [PP-V-NP] as in (23-28), it should be borne in mind that this is a typologically rare word order combination (Dryer 2003), leaving little doubt as to the Sinitic origins of this feature in CCP. At the same time, prepositional phrases with *long* are also found following the verb, especially in English-language sources:

(29) I like werry much, do littee pidgeon long you. (Downing 1838)

'I would very much like do to a bit of business with you.'

Another locative expression calqued on Cantonese is the construction with *side*, as in:

(30) bring that egg come thisee side (*Instructor* VI: 40)

'bring the eggs here'

(31) come Sydney side (*Instructor* VI: 32)

'(she) comes from Sydney'

Indeed the use of 'side' in this way is still commonly heard in Hong Kong English, as in *Kowloon side* 'over in Kowloon'. This is one of the few cases in which CCP expressions have found their way into the present-day Hong Kong variety of English.

Serial verb constructions are frequent in CCP and follow a number of patterns (see Escure to appear). A well-known example is *look see* (calqued on Cantonese *tái gin*, 'look-see' = 'look'):

(32) My wantchee look see counta (*Instructor* VI.56)

'I want to check the accounts'

(33) You look see dog no bitee you (*Instructor* VI.58)

'Don't let the dog bite you'

Escure (to appear) also notes the frequency of directional serial verbs (34-36) based in particular on *come* and *go*. Directional serial verbs are also a feature of Sinitic languages, e.g.: *daap fóchē làih*, [take train come], 'come by train'. SVCs can denote single as well as multiple events in CCP, e.g.:

(34) Bring come here (*Instructor* IV.43)

'Bring it here'

(35) What time you sendee tea come (*Instructor* VI.16)

'When are you going to send the tea?'

(36) Catchee one piece man go (*Instructor* IV.66)

'Engage a man to go'

*4.5 Tense and aspect*

There seems to be only one tense/aspect marker in CCP, the perfective marker *hap* (or *hab*), as in:

(37) my hap go court one time (*Instructor* IV.32)

'I have been to Court once'

(38) Coolie hap shutee alla window (*Instructor* VI.53)

'Has the coolie shut all windows?'

The use of *hab* has a basis in Cantonese as well as English grammar. In interrogative sentences comparable to (37), Cantonese uses the existential verb *yáuh* 'have' as in (38):

(39) *Yáuh móuh sāan saai chēung a?* (Cantonese)

have not.have close all window SFP

'Have you closed all the windows?'

Also seen in (38) is the quantifier *alla*. In CCP *alla* can be used as a resumptive marker following a list of items (40-41), just like the equivalent Cantonese *dōu* (42):

(40) Green tea black tea alla hap got

'I have both green and black tea'

(41) Two man alla same

'we are both alike'

(42) *Léuhng go yàhn dōu yāt yeuhng* (Cantonese)

two CL person all one same

'They are both the same.'

*4.6 Wh-interrogatives in Chinese and Western sources*

Interrogative sentences are especially revealing with regard to differences between Chinese and Western sources. English-language sources typically show wh-phrases fronted as in English:

(43) What thing that Poo-Saat do? (Morrison 1807)

'What does Poo-Saat do?' [Poo-Saat is a Chinese deity.]

By contrast, the *Instructor* data show frequent use of wh-in situ following the Chinese syntax:

(44) You give what price (*Instructor* VI.18)

'What price do you give?'

The *Instructor* shows variation between wh-in-situ (43) and wh-movement (44) which suggests that wh-movement is optional. In alternative pidgin renderings, the same wh-phrase appears variably in situ or fronted, even within the same dialogue:

(45) You wantchee how muchee? (*Instructor* IV.54)

'How much do you want?'

(46) How muchee more you wantchee? (*Instructor* IV.54)

'What more do you want?'

The contrast between English-language sources (with consistent wh-fronting) and the Chinese phrasebook (with variation between wh-fronting and wh-in-situ) suggests that the CCP spoken by Chinese speakers differed systematically from CCP as used by native speakers of English and European languages.

### *4.7 Topic-comment and discourse structure*

Another area where substrate influence can be discerned, as suggested by Shi (1991), involves topic-comment discourse structure. The *Instructor* dialogues provide just enough context for this feature to be observed. In the examples below, the topic, shown in square brackets, is the part that is being spoken of in the comment:

(47) [Good cargo] how can sellum cheap (*Instructor* VI.11)

'How can good things sell cheap?'

(48) [that pricee] he no sellum (*Instructor* IV.77)

'He won't sell at that price'

As in Chinese, two kinds of topic can be distinguished: some are understood as arguments of the verb, like the object *good cargo* in (47); others are more loosely related to the predicate, like *that pricee* in (48) which is neither the subject nor object of *sellum* 'sell'.

### *4.8 The verb* makee

A stereotypical feature of CCP is the use of *makee* (< *make*) before another verb:

(49) Go makee findee (*Instructor* IV.45)
'Go find it'

(50) makee catchee he (*Instructor* IV.77)
'Seize hold of him'

The use of *makee* is a prominent feature of CCP which does *not* seem to reflect substrate influence, since there is no apparent model for it in Cantonese. In these cases, *makee* merely indicates an action verb. The phrase *go makee findee* (49) therefore represents a serial verb construction, in which directional *go* combines with the verb *makee findee*. In some cases, *makee* serves to create a verb from a noun, as in (51) where it combines with the Portuguese word *conta* 'account':

(51) my wantchee makee conta (*Instructor* VI.11)
'I have to count them'

(52) you hap long nother houso makee contract tea (*Instructor* VI.19)
'Do you ever contract tea for anyone?'

This feature appears to be consistent across the various sources for CCP.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the historical discussion and the grammatical data presented above, we can address some of the interpretations that have been offered about the formation of CCP. The seeds of CCP were most likely sown in the early days of the Canton Trade in the eighteenth century along the Pearl River Delta, in particular in two settings: the harbor of Whampoa (Huangpu), which functioned as a sort of customs for the foreign merchandise, and the 'factories' of Canton (Guangzhou), i.e. the places of residence of the commercial representative of Western trading companies (Bolton 2003:156; Martino 2003:24; Van Dyke 2005).

Considering the structural parallels shown between Cantonese and CCP, it is safe to say that the CCP of *The Instructor* exhibits substantial Cantonese influence. The grammar of CCP can thus be accounted for first and foremost in terms of syntactic and semantic feature transfer from Cantonese. Since Cantonese is the dominant influence in the CCP of *The Instructor* data, this could also explain why CCP is mostly isolating in morphology, without necessarily involving simplification as a cognitive strategy. For example, zero-

copula patterns may not be the result of faulty reproduction of English patterns, but rather an expression of Sinitic feature transfer. It is likely that further in-depth analysis of *The Instructor* will reveal deeper aspects of CCP grammar, together with more evidence of Sinitic substrate influence. The features above should nonetheless suffice to support the claims that the dominant features of CCP are Sinitic, including (i) noun classifiers in the context [NUM/DEM-CL-NP]; (ii) zero copula; (iii) existential verbs; (iv) property verbs; (v) preverbal adverbs and PPs; (vi) serial verb constructions; (vii) topic-comment structure.

We have shown that in some features, the Chinese data contrast systematically with evidence from English-language sources, as in the case of wh-interrogatives where *wh*-in situ appears only in the Chinese sources. Such data raise the question of variability between CCP as spoken by English-speaking and Cantonese-speaking users. Although the current analysis can not give a conclusive answer, the existence of a continuum of forms influenced by English or Cantonese grammar is considered likely, and the co-existence of more or less distinct lects whose poles were represented by a British and a Chinese register cannot be ruled out. If we think it unlikely that any stable pidgin was developed in the early days of the Canton Trade (for this view see Ansaldo 2009; Martino 2003), then we would tend to favour the latter interpretation. Be that as it may, the existence of the written Chinese language sources and the spread of CCP among Chinese clearly resulted in significant influence of Sinitic grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Variation is likely to have been present all along, as suggested in Bolton (2003). Considering the limited number of speakers and the relatively short life-span of the ecologies in which it was spoken (Tryon et al. 1996), it seems unlikely that any great stability was ever achieved. We can thus envisage the evolution of CCP as follows:

In the earlier period, the position of inferiority the British found themselves in led them to simplify their language in order to try to communicate with the Chinese. Whether they did so intuitively or with the help of some perceived 'knowledge' of Chinese is unclear, but since the latter would have been difficult to obtain, the former is more likely. In this phase, agency for CCP must also be attributed to other Western traders since pidgin-evolution typically (but not invariably) involves third parties who use the language but are not speakers of the varieties that contribute to it. This phase is related to the period of the Canton Trade.

As the British rose to power, their jargon increasingly became an attractive target for the Chinese. The Chinese therefore set out to learn it and probably expanded it but it remained a clear trading jargon as is typical of ecologies where there is a strong desire to maintain social distance. This phase most likely started in the factories and continued in other comparable environments.

It is thus possible to suggest that CCP was not the product of an encounter between two 'high' cultures: this has been supported by sociohistorical observations about the inferiority of the British until the mid-nineteenth century, and could explain why there is a body of CCP that looks more influenced by English than the data of *The Instructor*. The reason why we have stressed the segregation imposed, and partly achieved, by Chinese authorities, is not meant to suggest that contacts between Chinese and Western merchants were not significant. But it is quite clear that, in an early phase, distance was kept between the parties, and that the Chinese were much less interested in the Western redhaired barbarians than the barbarians were in China. Therefore, the idea of CCP as initially pidginized by English speakers (and other foreigners) is a distinct possibility, as envisaged in Hall (1944). Van Dyke (2005:80) reports at least one attestation of CCP being used by Western merchants in Canton as early as 1715, which according to him suggests that it was through merchants' needs, rather than through the activities of linguists, that pidgin English developed. It was most likely developed by sailors and merchants who were not capable nor allowed to acquire Chinese mostly for informal trade (formal exchanges were most often taken care of by interpreters, but see Benson (2005) for an alternative view that direct contact between trading partners may have been more common than formerly thought).

However, CCP really grew in use compared with Portuguese only from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, a time that we believe is more realistic for CCP to really come into being, as also argued in Martino (2003). Not only were Macau – and Makista – still dominant until that point, but commerce in the first half of the eighteenth century was still very restricted. Considering the superficial and short-lived contacts between British and Chinese, further limited by the social distance imposed by the latter, CCP in the early years must have been very limited. After the Opium wars however, the situation changed dramatically: there was a great increase in commerce, in particular tea and silk; the contacts between Westerners and Chinese were no longer restricted to the Canton factories and Whampoa, but took place in several city-ports of the coast; and foreign merchants became appointed as custom officers, while foreign companies appointed their own Chinese compradors (Fairbank & Goldman 1998:203). In other words, the networks became more diverse, and as they increased in number and complexity, they favored the spread of CCP across China and, eventually, as far as Australia and the West Coast of the United States (Mühlhäusler & Baker 1996).

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**Notes**

[1] We term the contact language at issue 'China Coast Pidgin' to specify its coastal origin and to avoid the implication that it is a variety of English.
[2] One indication of this is the word *kaukau* in Hawaiian Creole English, derived from CCP *chow-chow* 'food'.
[3] The British had a limited presence in Macau which lasted until the British took over control of Hong Kong in 1842 (Coates 1966; Tryon, Mühlhäusler & Baker 1996).
[4] Leland (1892) is comparable in size but notoriously unreliable, not least because the author does not seem to have travelled as far as China (Selby & Selby 1995:123).
[5] Considering the methodological difficulties in analyzing Romanization, as well as the inherent variability to be expected in pidgin phonology, we do not attempt to discuss phonological characteristics of CCP here.
[6] References to the *Instructor* refer to the volume and page in the original Chinese text, which are also given in Li et al.'s (2005) transcription. The example sentences are presented as transcribed in Li et al. (2005), with some minor modifications for ease of reading. The translations are those given in the original text; more precisely, the standard English translations are the original English examples for which pidgin equivalents are provided in the margin of the text.
[7] There are intriguing similarities between CCP and Tok Pisin *long* (see Smith 2002), which could result from a historical relationship and/or common grammaticalization paths.

| Factories | | | Whampoa | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formal relations | Foreigners | Informal relations | Formal relations | Foreigners | Informal relations |
| Traders<br>Compradors<br>Interpreters | Supercargo<br>Interpreters<br>Missionaries | Servants<br>Compradors<br>Shopkeepers<br>Coolies | Compradors | Sailors | Local sailors<br>Prostitutes<br>Other locals |

**Table 1.**
Contacts in the Canton region (adapted from Martino 2003:62)

| **p.32** | **Law Suit (官訟)** |
|---|---|
| It is a bad thing to go to law | **哥羅必剪威黎必** |
| **go law pidgin velly bad** | *gò lòh bìt jín wài làih bìt* |

**Table 2.**
Organization of the CCP corpus (from Li et al. 2005)

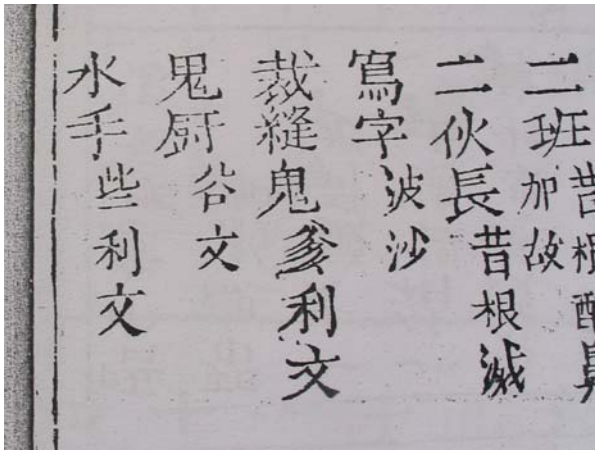


**Figure 1.**
Title

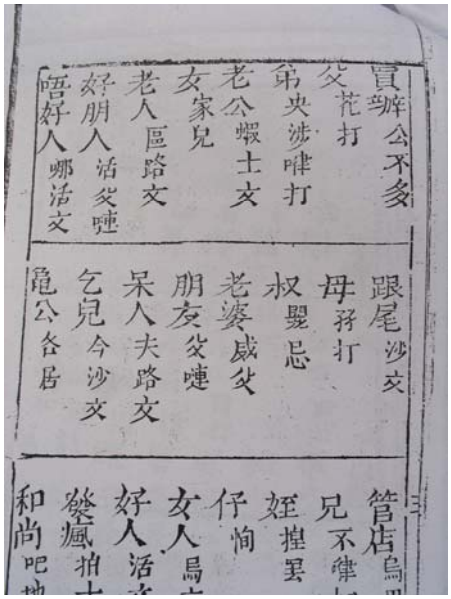


**Figure 2.**
*The Redhaired Glossary*

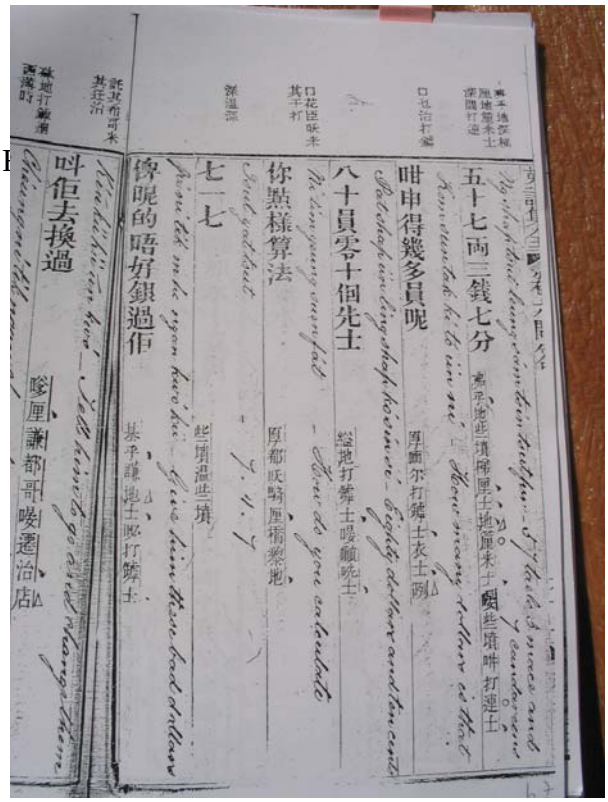


**Figure 3.**
A page from the *Chinese-English Instructor*
***Check if correct***

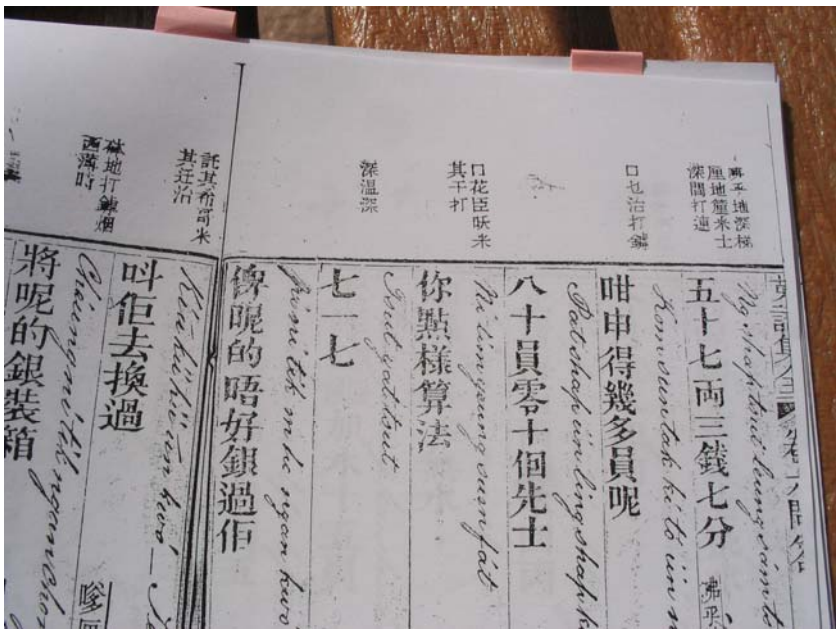


**Figure 4.**
Title

**Figure 5.**
Title