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**An Exploration of Intergenerational Hakka
Maintenance and Shift in Guangdong**



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An Exploration of Intergenerational Hakka Maintenance and Shift in Guangdong

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Abstract

Hakka, as one of the major eight Chinese dialects, is fast declining in mainland China. The Hakka spoken by a new generation shows signs of influence from Mandarin and other regional dialects. This dissertation focuses upon the language used across a four-generation Guangdong located Hakka family. We will explore how they learnt their languages, their language choices in different environments, and their attitudes towards Hakka and Mandarin. This dissertation will also investigate the factors that contribute to the decline in use and quality of Hakka, outlining the languages used by different generations and exploring how this affects their identity. The methodology of this dissertation is a combination of semi-structured individual interviews and an extensive study of relevant literature. The discussion chapter will further analyse the reasons driving Hakka language shift, the difficulties in Hakka language maintenance, and potential approaches to help Hakka survive and thrive.

Key Words: Hakka, language maintenance and shift, intergenerational language transmission



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Dedication and Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Hakka is one of the eight major Chinese dialects in mainland China, and it is the only dialect that is not named by geographical distribution. Hakka, “客家” (kè jiā) in Chinese characters, means “guest families”, indicating the migration history of Hakka people. Hakka is spoken in many provinces in mainland China as well as other parts of the world. It is also one of the three official languages in Taiwan. In this dissertation, to be consistent, Hakka will be referred to as a language. Considered as the “living fossil” of Chinese language, Hakka has preserved many syntactic and phonetic elements of ancient Chinese dating back to 600 AD. It has a large variety of slangs, idioms and proverbs representing Hakka people’s habitat, lifestyle, traditions, values, and ideologies. Being able to speak the language is the important symbol of Hakka ethnicity as well as a name card of a Hakka identity.

However, there has been a decline in the number of Hakka speakers and the quality of Hakka spoken by the younger generation since Mandarin was designated as the formal lingua franca in China (Li 2009). Mandarin, also referred as “Putonghua” (普通话 in Chinese, meaning common speech) is the standard variety of Chinese in mainland China. It is the same language as what is called “Guoyu” (国语 in Chinese, meaning national language) in Taiwan. There is also possible influence from other dialects or languages, such as Cantonese and English (Lau, 2005). Cantonese is the most widely spoken regional dialect in Guangdong while English is one of the compulsory subjects taught at school. Many young Hakka migrants who live and study in big cities, such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen, have learnt Cantonese and use it with their local friends. Parents sign up English tutoring classes for their children after school to be more competitive in their academic performance. Young generation tends to use and value the dominant language more because it leads them to better educational and economic opportunities. This has caught my attention and will be explored in this dissertation.

This dissertation will study the language use in a Guangdong Hakka-origin family throughout different generations, including what languages have been consistently learnt and what has changed. It will also examine the factors that contribute to the decline in the use and quality of Hakka, as well as how much Hakka has been challenged by influential languages. First, I will seek to outline the language use in different generations. Then, I will also explore what is different in the Hakka spoken by the new generation. I will also investigate the potential factors that caused this and what impacts they have on Hakka culture and identity. Finally, I will discuss what we can do to preserve and protect Hakka.

It is anticipated that this research will help to identify the elements that contribute to the precariousness of Hakka language maintenance. It will help to understand the current situation of the Hakka language maintenance and shift in this Hakka family and explore the potential approaches to revive this language.



As a native Hakka speaker, I grew up speaking Hakka with my family. However, I have noticed a decline of this language among the younger members of my family. For example, my younger brother and cousins are speaking Mandarin to me or would switch to Mandarin when they struggled to find the equivalent word in Hakka. I realised something has been influencing the younger generation in a silent but salient way, so it is a meaningful and important study for me, and this is a great opportunity for me to explore the issue and learn more about my mother tongue.

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What languages (Mandarin, Hakka, Cantonese or English) do the different generations of a Guangdong Hakka-origin family use at home, at school and in public? What is the proportion of each language spoken in different occasions?
2. How did they acquire their languages?
3. Is the Hakka spoken by different generation the same? What is different and what caused the difference?
4. What language environment is Hakka faced with in Guangdong Province?

To answer these questions, first I need to understand the recent language policies and language planning in mainland China and analyse how these policies have affected the language adopted in education, work, or social environment. Secondly, I need to find out the participants' preferences of language use in different occasions and which language serves their best interests. Finally, it is essential to review the previous empirical studies in the related area.

This dissertation will endeavour to seek answers to these research questions by an implementation of an extensive study of relevant literature and practical research. The literature review has covered language endangerment, language maintenance and shift, the current situation of the Hakka dialect and language policies in mainland China. I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of four generations within a Guangdong Hakka family and examined the language use and shift within generations. For example, I have designed questions about their language preferences in different occasions and their attitudes towards using Hakka. I have also included a mini test: to show my participants pictures indicating common objects or daily used verbs, ask them to say the words illustrated by the pictures in Hakka and compare the vocabulary choices of different generations.

The plan of the following chapters includes literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion.



Chapter 2: Literature Review

It is essential to get a fundamental understanding of some key terms and concepts related to the topic at the start of this research to analyse the language practice of the participants. The related literature that I have reviewed covers language endangerment, language maintenance and shift, language and identity, and Hakka language maintenance. I have also studied some previous Hakka language retention cases in Taiwan, where the literature is relatively abundant and relevant approaches to preserve Hakka language and culture have been taken ahead of mainland China.

2.1 Language endangerment

Hakka is not a listed endangered language, but it has been precarious in the face of the massive power of other dominant languages in recent years. It is a matter of time for it to become endangered if no measures are taken to study and preserve it. Thus, understanding the theories of language endangerment is crucial for the preservation of Hakka.

According to Language Vitality and Endangerment, a language is endangered “when its speakers cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next” (UNESCO, 2003a, p.2, cited from McCarty, Skutnabb-Kangas and Magga). Moribund languages are those which no longer being learned by children; endangered languages are those which, though still being learned by children, will, if present trends continue, cease to be learned by children during the coming century; and safe languages are those which are neither moribund nor endangered (Krauss, 1992, pp.5–7).

Crystal (2004) noted that the impact of dominant languages on minority languages is a matter of universal concern. The issue of language endangerment was recognised by the Foundation for Endangerment Languages which established in the UK in 1995. In its second newsletter, it pointed out:

“There is agreement among linguists who have considered the situation that over half of the world’s languages are moribund, i.e., not effectively being passed on to the next generation. We and our children, then, are living at the point in human history where, within perhaps two generations, most languages in the world will die out” (Cited from Crystal, 2000, p.viii).

Although language death is inevitable, it is essential to make conscious effort to save endangered languages, actively protect languages from becoming endangered. Approaches and methods of how to record, preserve and pass down a language, especially a minority language or endangered language, are also invaluable to this research.



2.2 Language maintenance and shift

Language shift is “the replacement of one language by another as the primary means of communication and socialization within a community” (Potowski, 2013, pp.321). Language maintenance refers to the situation where a speaker, a group of speakers or a speech community continues to use their language in the same or all spheres of life, despite competition with the dominant or major language (Potowski, 2013). Language maintenance must involve intergenerational transmission of the language (Fishman, 1991), which means parents must pass on the mother tongue to children over generation. Fishman (1967) has also set out a three-generation theory in his widely accepted model of immigrant language shift: the first generation of immigrants added knowledge of the new environmental language to their home variety, the second generation grew up bilingual and the third was commonly monolingual in the dominant local language with little if any knowledge of the heritage language.

The factors contributing to language shift range from individual level, family level to community level. Individuals’ lack of proficiency and negative attitudes is the basic factor. Parents play a critical role in teaching and passing down the minority language to their children (Pauwels, 2005) and multigenerational households with grandparents or other relatives help to maintain the minority language, too (Sofu, 2009). Kamada’s (1997) study also indicates that mothers tend to have a more salient impact on children’s language acquisition.

Moreover, the loss of heritage language, home language or mother tongue, can “create feelings of linguistic insecurity and identity loss” (Potowski, 2013, p.323). Some studies have revealed that the loss of heritage language and identity can result in students’ delinquent behaviour at school, seem as seeking a new identity (Zhou and Bankston, 2000), as well as the weakening of family in the form of parents losing authority and the failure of transmitting family and ethnic values (Tse, 2001). The important reasons of language maintenance include: “1) we need diversity, 2) languages express identity, 3) languages are repositories of history, 4) languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge, 5) languages are interesting in themselves” (Crystal, 2000, pp.32-54).

2.3 Language identity and family language policy

Edwards (2009, p.5) pointed out in *Language and Identity* that the symbolic charge that language carries makes it such an important component in individual and group identity. Language use is one of the important dimensions to measure the ethnic identity and the three conceptionally distinctive dimensions are “language use in family, language use in media consumption and language use while shopping” (Laroche, 2009). Hakka language plays a key role in maintaining a distinct Hakka identity (Wang, 2004). In terms of the relationship between language, identity and education, the requirement of speaking the national language (usually the dominant and majority language of the country) should



not be at the expense of, or in addition to, the maintenance of other language (non-dominant or minority languages) in the country (May, 2012). The loss of 'natural intergenerational transmission' which occurred within the family was recognised as the key marker of language loss by Spolsky (2012). Thus, family is considered as a domain relevant to language policy in addition to the state. Language policy includes practice, ideology, and management (Spolsky, 2012) while language ideology is language policy without a manager while family language ideology decides what value parents apply for the language and the daily language choice to communicate within the family (Spolsky, 2004).

2.4 Hakka language maintenance

Among Hakka language and culture studies, there is more current literature from Taiwan than that from mainland China. Hakka is the largest ethno-linguistic minority group in Taiwan. Taiwanese scholars have realised the severe consequence of promoting a single national language as well as the urgency to slow down the decline of Hakka. It is indicated that the Mandarin Only Movement in Taiwan has resulted in the invisibility of the Hakka ethnic group in a multilingual and multi-ethnic Taiwan society (Lai, 2017). It is also reported that "among the young interviewees linguistic and cultural loss is still regarded as the most urgent Hakka issue in Taiwan" (Chang, 2013). The first scholars to study the diminishment of Hakka language retention in Taiwan were Jan, Kuan and Lomeli, who revealed that marriage outside of the Hakka community has been the major reason for the decrease, based on data collected by the Taiwan Education Panel Survey and Beyond in 2010 (Jan *et al.*, 2016)

Zou's (2020) study of "Inter-generational language shift and maintenance: language practice observed in Guangzhou Hakka families" has tackled a similar topic of my dissertation. It is a valuable resource to understand what has been done in terms of the intergenerational Hakka language maintenance within Hakka families in mainland China. Zou identified that the factors contributing to the decline of Hakka speaking include "language management at home by parents and grandparents, exogamy marriage, and language environment of the community". She also pointed out the dilemma of Hakka dialect maintenance – the massive power of Mandarin leaves little room for the development of Hakka language which is only spoken, heard and used at home although the fluency of Hakka dialect does not compromise the proficiency of Mandarin, Cantonese or English (Zou, 2020). Another study investigated Hakka teenagers in Guangxi Province indicated that these teenagers were proficient in both Mandarin and Hakka, but their mother tongue (Hakka) was not as good as Mandarin (Huang and Li, 2017). They also found out that as mothers' education level rises, the use of Hakka with their children declines (Huang and Li, 2017).

Moreover, it is critical to understand the language policy and ideology in China. Mainland China, officially referred as People's Republic of China (P.R.C.), saw a "widely perceived need to modernise the country" (Zhang, 2013) after its several defeats by the west and its ten-year civil war. Language was identified as a key target for reform so that a modernized and unified language could serve as a



tool for building a modern and unified country (DeFrancis, 1950; Chen, 1999). In 1949 when P.R.C. was established, the focus of the national language policy was to unify the spoken language and reform the writing system which was to use the simplified Chinese characters instead of “wenyan” (文言 in Chinese, meaning the traditional characters). It was a top-down approach with legislation and agenda. A promulgation of Mandarin (Putonghua) was legalised as the standard spoken Chinese in China. In 1982, Mandarin received the constitutional support for the first time and was stipulated to be promoted nationwide. In 1986, Promotion of Mandarin was made “the top priority of the language and script work in the new era” (Rohsenow 2004:31), with the following goals:

- 1) Mandarin to become the language of instruction in all schools nationwide.
- 2) Mandarin to become the working language of government at all levels.
- 3) Mandarin to be the language used in radio and television broadcasting, and in cinema and theatres.
- 4) Mandarin to become the common language used among speakers of various local dialects.

(Rohsenow, 2004, p.31)

Moreover, Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script of the P.R.C., the most important language legislation in 2000, affirms that “Mandarin should be the language used for government business, in schools and other educational organisations, in Chinese publications, in radio and television broadcasting and as the language of service in the public sector” (National Common Language Law, Article 9-13). Measures, such as the “Putonghua Proficiency Test” and “National Putonghua Promotion Publicity Week”, also reinforced to promulgate the national language, which “puts the speakers of southern and non-Mandarin varieties at a disadvantaged” (Zhang, 2013). This is also guided by the current political agenda which is to build a harmonious socialist society.



Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology Description and Rationale

The methodology chosen to carry out this research is a combination of literature study and semi-structured individual interviews, aiming to find out the participants' language preferences and the factors that influence Hakka language maintenance. The research process consists of four stages, including identifying participants, preparation, interview, and data process.

At Stage One, I identified the suitable candidates for interviews, and confirmed their participation. The criteria of participant include: 1) they must speak Hakka as their mother tongue, 2) they must live in Guangdong Province, 3) they must be from different generations of the same family, 4) they must be able to be interviewed online.

Stage Two was a one-week preparation. I communicated schedules with participants and designed the interview questions, information sheet and consent form (see samples in Appendices), which were sent to the confirmed participants by email at least 48 hours before the interviews. One exception was Yun, who preferred the information and questions to be read out in Hakka for her during the interview. Participants were also asked to give their background information, including age, education level, occupation, mobility, and habitat environment, in the form of questionnaire. Information sheets along with consent forms were verbally explained to and signed by the participants before the interviews.

Stage Three was online interviews that took place in the forms of Zoom meetings or WeChat video calls. Each of them lasted from 45 minutes to one hour and all interviews were done within a week. Participants were given the same questions with differed personalised follow-up questions separately during the interviews considering different generations might provide various but valuable insights into the research topic. The interviews consist of 12 general open-ended questions and 4 pictures of objects or action for participants to describe. Questions were written down and sent to the participants before interviews so that they could read them thoroughly, spend some time thinking about them and understand them better. This has possibly improved the quality of responses since the participants have had the opportunity to familiarise themselves to the questions and organise their thoughts beforehand.

Stage Four was data processing and analysis.

3.2 Transcript Process

The pre-interview communication and interviews were all carried out in Hakka because this is the only language that all my participants are fluent in. Interview questions were originally written in English, then translated into Chinese and sent to the participants in advance. Having done so has enabled me



to work more efficiently and effectively as the answers were written down in Chinese already when they were sent back to me. It has saved me plenty of time working on the transcript of responses. I was able to read through the answers and then decided which answer from which participant could be explored further to gain more insights from the following interview. It also allowed me to ask my participants for clarification about their answers in the interview if there was anything ambiguous or unclear. More importantly, I intended to carry out the interview in as neutral a way as possible because Soukup (2012) argued in her study that participants might be affected by the ethnicity of, and language used by the interviewer. Hakka shares the same Chinese characters as Mandarin, so it was a little more neutral if the questions were written down.

I recorded the interviews but also typed the responses down during the interview. I used the recordings to review and revise my notes afterwards, which has largely improved my work efficiency. Then, I translated my participants' answers from Chinese to English, ensuring the tones and styles were consistent with the original Chinese responses. However, some expressions in Hakka don't have equivalences in English, so my solution was to use literal translation to create a better understanding for readers.

3.3 Data Coding

Most of the questions are open-ended, which encourage the participants to speak more about their experience and thoughts and not to be limited by the questions. Some require the participants to explain the reasons for their answers in depth. However, I did notice that some questions did not apply to the senior participant who is not multilingual. Thus, I introduced some more questions regarding the participant's opinion towards the next generation's Hakka speaking because I am more interested in what is said rather than keeping the mere formality.

To transform the collected information into a set of meaningful groups I categorised the questions into affective, evaluative, action and cognitive aspects, and then summarised the answers. The first two questions aim to find out the participants' language acquisition and language preferences. Question 3 and 4 aim to explore their attitudes toward the language(s). Question 5 through 9 aim to understand how they use their language(s). Question 10 and 11 are about their evaluation of their language(s). Question 12 and the mini picture description test were designed to have a quick test on their language capability. I grouped the answers from the participants and then analysed the similarity and differences, what was agreed among the participants and what varied.

3.4 Participants

All the participants are family contacts who volunteered to take part in this dissertation project. There are no material incentives, just the promise to explore the current Hakka speaking situation within the family. The constraint to using this qualitative method which is having limited samples. The result of this research only speaks for the situation of this specific family and does not represent all the cases of Hakka speaking families.



There were five participants in total who took part in this research (see Table 1). Participants are from the same big Hakka family originally from Meizhou, which is considered the centre for Hakka dialect. They stay anonymous in this dissertation and pseudonyms are used. I have also been given the consent from all participants to use the information they provided for this dissertation.

Table 1 Background information of participants

Gener-ation	Name	Age	Language	Spouse	Education	Occupation	Relation	Habitat environment
1 st	Yun	76	Hakka	Hakka	Secondary school	Retired	The eldest member of the family	Meizhou/Shenzhen, among Hakka speakers
2 nd	Ming	55	Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese, Teochew	Hakka	Secondary school	Senior Manager of the family business	Son of Yun	Shenzhen/Meizhou/Guangzhou, among Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese and Teochew speakers.
3 rd	Rui	30	Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese, English	Teochew	Post-graduate degree	Government employee	Grand-daughter of Yun	Meizhou/Shenzhen, among Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese and Teochew speakers.
	Rong	26	Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese, English, Teochew.	Teochew (proficient in Hakka)	Junior college diploma	Manager of the family business	Grandson of Yun	Meizhou/Shenzhen/Guangzhou among Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese and Teochew speakers.
	Yan	21	Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese, English	None	Current undergraduate	Student	Grandson of Yun, son of Ming	Meizhou/Shenzhen/Haikou, among Hakka, Mandarin and Cantonese speakers.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, I will analyse the data collected from the interviews and explore the interpretation related to Hakka language and identity, language maintenance and shift, and how language use or preferences vary in different generations.

4.1 Maintenance of Hakka as a significant family bond



All participants have learnt Hakka as their mother tongue at home from their parents who are all original Hakka speakers themselves. They have been immersed in Hakka since childhood, being taught from Hakka words, phrases, dialogues to chants by their parents, as Rong said in the interview:

I learnt Hakka by gradually being influenced by what I saw and heard from my parents or grandparents.

Ming, Rui, Rong, and Yan kept speaking Hakka with their family and relatives after they moved to Shenzhen or Guangzhou. It is Hakka tradition that people travel back to their Meizhou hometown and spend festivals and major holidays with their families. Whenever students have a school holiday, they will go back to Meizhou to stay with their grandparents and meet other relatives, because their parents have to work and are not able to look after them. When asked what Hakka means to you, the participants gave various answers as followed.

Yun: *Hakka is most important to me because I can make conversations with Hakka people here in Meizhou and it is convenient to communicate with them.*

Ming: *I am Hakka, and my ancestors all spoke Hakka. The significance of Hakka is that I use it to communicate with my elder family members because they can only speak Hakka and don't speak other languages.*

Rui: *It is my connection with my hometown, and it makes it easy for me to communicate with my family and relatives.*

Rong: *First, Hakka means legacy for me. It is a language that has preserved the Chinese pronunciation of thousands of years ago and you can find many traces of history from it. I think that each generation should pass this heritage language down. This is one of the charms of Chinese culture which cannot be lost due to the development of the information age. This is also why I teach my children Hakka. The significance of Hakka is to enhance the family bond. Many Hakka people are migrants who leave their hometowns to work in cities. A greeting or a conversation in Hakka can make us feel at home. I believe this is also true for many other people who speak their own languages.*

Yan: *Hakka gives me a sense of belonging and makes me understand where I am from. The significance of Hakka is that this is the bond connecting my family and clan, which not only biologically and geographically but also linguistically.*

For Yun, Hakka is more a practical means to communicate with people, which she valued as the "most important". For Ming, Rui, Rong and Yan, who are bilingual or multilingual, it is more a symbol of cultural



identity. Ming defined himself as Hakka and must speak the language of his ancestors. He also emphasised that he used Hakka to accommodate communication with his family and relatives while Rui, Rong and Yan pointed out how this language formed their identity as Hakka. It reflects how family ideology (Spolsky 2012) decides what mother tongue is taught at home and how the mother tongue shapes people’s identity. There is an old saying in Hakka, “宁卖祖宗田，不卖祖宗言” meaning that one would rather to sell their ancestors’ lands than to give up their heritage language. Hakka people not only stick to the ancestral language, but also make effort to pass it down through generations. The words and phrases that my participants used to describe their relationship with Hakka, such as “connection” (Rui), “heritage” “bond” and “feels home” (Rong), “sense of belonging” and “understand where I am from” (Yan), have confirmed the significance of the mother tongue in their minds. Speaking a particular language means belonging to a particular speech community. Learning Hakka as a mother tongue has formed the fundamental identity of my participants and given them irreplaceable affection to it.





4.2 Decline in Hakka language quality in younger generations

The mini test requiring participants to say the Hakka names of the objects or actions was designed to evaluate the Hakka language authenticity of the participants. In this test, Rui and Yan used different vocabularies in their responses than Yun, Ming and Rong (see Table 2). Rui and Yan used the Mandarin expressions in Hakka pronunciation, while Yun, Ming and Rong used authentic Hakka phrases although it took Rong a while to think about the responses. For example, to the first picture of the sun, Rui and Yan responded “[tai] [yion]” which was the Hakka pronunciation of modern Chinese “太阳” (literal meaning “great sun”). The authentic Hakka expression should be “[ngit] [teu]” and the written form “日头” (literal meaning “sun head”). “日” is the ancient Chinese equivalence for “太阳”. Considered as the “living fossil of ancient Chinese”, Hakka has a large variety of slangs and old sayings preserving the ancient Chinese characters. This is one of the fascinating characteristics of Hakka, but there has been a risk that these old and traditional elements will be assimilated by a dominant language or replaced by modern forms. Although languages evolve with time and borrowing is one of the means to keep the language alive, Hakka will eventually lose its authenticity and uniqueness in the next generation if not taught and preserved properly. With the next generation not being able to use traditional Hakka, a large variety of cultural information stored in this language will gradually disappear with time.

Table 2 Participants’ description of pictures in Hakka and Mandarin

Picture	English	Mandarin	Hakka	Participants
	Sun		[ngit] [teu]	Yun, Ming, Rong



		tai yang ¹ 太 阳 ² great sun ³	日 ⁴ 头 sun head	Rui, Yan
			[tai] [yion] 太 阳 great sun	
	Earthworm	qiu yin 蚯 蚓 ⁵ earthworm	[xian] [gun], [fun] [xian] 螭 ⁶ 公, 红 螭 earthworm male, red earthworm	Yun, Ming, Rong
			[ts ^h iu] [yin] 蚯 蚓 earthworm	Rui, Yan
	Frog	qing wa 青 蛙 ⁷ green frog	[tien][guai], [guai] [yi] 田 蛎 ⁸ , 蛎 子 field frog, frog-gy	Yun, Ming, Rong
			[ts ^h ian] [va] 青 蛙 green frog	Rui, Yan
	Swimming	you yong 游 泳 ⁹ swimming	[sɛ] [sən] [i] 洗 身 子 wash body	Yun, Ming, Rong
			[yiu] [yiun] 游 泳 swimming	Rui, Yan

Yun, as the oldest member of the family, has noticed the challenges in Hakka language retention, too.

Interviewer: *Do you think your Hakka is more fluent than the other generations in your family?*

Yun: *Yes, I think I speak better Hakka than my grandchildren.*

¹ Chinese pinyin or pronunciation.

² Written form in Chinese.

³ Literal meaning.

⁴ 日 means “sun” in ancient Chinese.

⁵ 蚯蚓 is the fixed term for “earthworm” in modern Chinese.

⁶ 螭 means “earthworm” in ancient Chinese.

⁷ 青蛙 is the modern Chinese for “frog”.

⁸ 蛎 is the ancient Chinese for “frog”.

⁹ 游泳 is a fixed term for swimming in modern Chinese.



Interviewer: *Which generation in your family do you think speak the most proficient Hakka?*

Yun: *I think we the elderly speak the most authentic and standard Hakka. My son's generation speaks good Hakka, too.*

Interviewer: *How do you evaluate your grandchildren's Hakka?*

Yun: *Just okay. They will switch to Mandarin unconsciously while speaking Hakka. Sometimes they mix Hakka with Mandarin. There are things that they don't even know how to describe in Hakka.*

Interviewer: *What do you think has caused this?*

Yun: *They always speak Mandarin at school, with teachers and classmates.*

Interviewer: *Do you teach them to speak Hakka?*

Yun: *Yes. It is not because we didn't teach them well enough at home, but Hakka is not taught or used at school at all. No one else teaches them or uses Hakka with them. They mainly receive their education at school and what we can do to teach them Hakka is limited.*

In Yun's opinion, the quality of Hakka spoken in her family has been declining as the generation gets younger. The younger generation also agreed that the older generation spoke better Hakka than they do. One of the reasons for this is that the younger generation's Hakka was learnt and used in a limited family setting. As Zou found in her study, "[i]f a language is only used at home, it may not have enough resources to develop continually, for example, some words simply do not exist in the dialect, and in long term, dialects would become barren without supplement of resources, such as vocabulary" (Zou, 2020, p.12). The vocabulary they have acquired is only sufficient for communication within a family setting but not enough to engage in a discussion of more sophisticated topics, for example, an academic subject. When they realise that it is difficult to find equivalences, terminologies, or appropriate expressions in Hakka, they will shift to Mandarin which has been learnt and used at school. However, although knowledge of an ethnic language is significantly less by the third and fourth generation, members of some groups maintain a strong ethnic identity independent of language usage (Phinney *et al.*, 2001). This explains why the third-generation participants still have a strong Hakka identity, even though they cannot give any examples of Hakka slangs or idioms or use the authentic Hakka expressions. Home and parents are "the primary site for language transmission", but school, as another primary institution "where many youths spend a third of their waking hours" (Potowski, 2014), is equally important. With the absence of school, Hakka retention will become a burden on families and parents that can hardly take on alone.



4.3 Mandarin as lingua franca: a consequence of national language policy

Table 3 indicates the language preferences of the participants. Interestingly, the most spoken language is the same one as participants considered the most valuable or useful language for them while the language they wish to speak most proficiently is usually different than the one they use or value the most, with only one exception, Ming, who is the transitional generation of pre and post China's Reform and Opening-up.

Table 3 Language preferences

Questions Participants	Which one do you speak the most often and why?	Which language do you think is most valuable to you and why?	From a social, cultural and economic perspective, which language do you wish to speak most proficiently?
Yun	Hakka	Hakka	Mandarin
Ming	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin
Rui	Mandarin	Mandarin	English
Rong	Mandarin	Mandarin	English
Yan	Mandarin	Mandarin	English

The establishment of Mandarin as a lingua franca can be dated back to 1949 when P.R.C. was founded. People in China speaking Mandarin is the result of a top-down national language policy which worked to facilitate the unification of the country (Zhou and Ross, 2004, p.19). Mandarin has been taught at school and served as the language of instructions since Ming's generation.

Interviewer: *Which language do you speak the most often and why?*

Ming: *Mandarin because basically we all use Mandarin in China and I use it most to communicate with others.*

Rui: *Mandarin because I use it frequently for daily communication.*



Rong: *I of course speak Mandarin most often because I live in mainland China where Mandarin is the first language.*

Yan: *Mandarin, I use it most with friends.*

Interviewer: *Which language do you think is most valuable to you and why?*

Ming: *Mandarin because it is the national language, and I can use it wherever in China which is most practical.*

Rui: *Mandarin because it is the national language.*

Rong: *The first is Mandarin and then English because in my daily work and life in China Mandarin is the lingua franca. Besides, as a Chinese citizen I must learn to speak Mandarin. Otherwise, life would be difficult. Mandarin is also the standard Chinese language that foreigners learn so as to live and work in China or communicate with Chinese people in a foreign country.*

Yan: *Mandarin because it is the most popular language in my life, and it is convenient to use it to communicate with others.*

Ming, Rui, Rong and Yan chose Mandarin to be their most valuable language although they grew up speaking Hakka and valued Hakka as the symbol of their identity. This implies that practicality is the top priority for participants. There is also trend that Mandarin has been taking over Hakka since the second generation, and English is having more influence than Mandarin in the third generation.

Born in 1966, Ming is the first generation that Mandarin was taught in primary school. Before this, he used Hakka at home with his family where Mandarin was not spoken. It was after 1955 when the National Chinese Character Reform Conference was held, formally designating Mandarin as the lingua franca for the whole country. The language of instructions at school started to change from Hakka to Mandarin at that time. Ming, Rui, Rong, and Yan grew up speaking Hakka at home but started to learn and speak Mandarin after they went to school where they expanded their social circles and interacted with people outside of their family. They had to opt to Mandarin because Hakka could no longer meet their communication needs. This situation continued until they left school and started to work. For example, Ming left his hometown after he graduated from middle school and went to Shenzhen for work in 1984, not long after China's Reform and Opening-up in 1979. As he said:

Mandarin is the language popularized by the nation and can be used anywhere in China, so I have learnt it well since I was a child.



Shenzhen is the first special economic zone that has attracted millions of migrants from different parts of the country. Living in a cosmopolitan city requires people to be more versatile, including in language competency. Thus, being able to speak the lingua franca is an essential repertoire for communication needs. Mandarin has become Ming, Rui, Rong and Yan's first choice of language as part of their personal development.

4.4 Hakka vs Mandarin: identity vs practicality

Yun is the only participant who speaks Hakka the most. She is also the only one who used to speak Hakka at school where the language of instruction was Hakka back then.

Yun: *When I went to school, all teachers spoke Hakka and all classes were taught in Hakka, too. After class, I spoke Hakka with classmates and friends. We seldom used Mandarin because Hakka people speak Hakka.*

Yun defined in her response that people should use the language that belongs to their ethnicity, implying a strong identity. She was born in a rural village in Meizhou in the 1940s before the establishment of P.R.C. The popularisation of Mandarin had not influenced the rural area by the time she went to school. Hakka, as the local dialect, was widely used for most of the local communication in every aspect of life, so there was no urgent need for Yun to learn Mandarin. Yun seldom travelled out of Meizhou and mostly socialised with Hakka speakers. However, surprisingly, the language Yun wished to speak the most proficiently was Mandarin even though Hakka was the most useful language for her. Her reason was that she could "communicate with people no matter where they are from". In addition, Yun sometimes watches Mandarin television programmes, such as news or sports, with subtitles, although what she watches every evening is Hakka news.

Interviewer: *What language do you speak at home, at work or in a social setting?*

Yun: *I speak Hakka all the time.*

Interviewer: *How about the television programmes you watch?*

Yun: *Most of them are in Hakka, some in Mandarin. Most of those Mandarin programmes have subtitles. Otherwise, I will struggle to understand.*

This is an example where a dominant language can influence people even though they do not travel out of their hometown and an influential language can stoke a desire in people to learn it even though they do not have many opportunities to use it at that moment. The convenience of communication in lingua franca is the reason why Yun wished to be proficient in Mandarin. In this age of information, people get influenced by media, such as internet and television, and stay connected to the world without leaving their house. Thus, a grandmother like Yun also wanted to enjoy being able to speak Mandarin



so as to access information. Practicality and identity are “the inevitability of a split between the communicative and the symbolic functions of language” (Edward, 2009, p.255).

4.5 Language choice: a consequence of personal pursuits

Language can also be a personal choice, for example, to do better in academic study or to open up more job opportunities. Living in a diverse language environment, almost all participants are multilingual except Yun, who can understand some Mandarin but is far from fluent. Table 4 indicates the language choices of participants in different settings, including home, school, work, social and an unknown or mixed environment. All participants used Hakka at home. Apart from Yun, who uses Hakka on all occasions, the rest of the participants use Mandarin at school, work and in a societal context or a mixed language environment.

Table 4 Language choices on different occasions

Occasion Participants	Home	School	Work	Social	Think	Mixed or unknown
Yun	Hakka	Hakka	Hakka	Hakka	Hakka	Hakka/ no talking
Ming	Hakka	Mandarin	Mandarin/ Cantonese/ Teochew	Mandarin	Hakka	Mandarin
Rui	Hakka/ Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Hakka	Mandarin
Rong	Hakka	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin/ Cantonese/ Teochew	Mandarin	Mandarin
Yan	Hakka	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin

All participants have some migration experience, moving from Meizhou to Shenzhen which is a typical immigrant city with more than 80% of its population immigrants. Its indigenous languages include Hakka and Cantonese, but the indigenous population only takes up a very small percentage of the total. Mandarin is without doubt the most widely used language. From the interview, Ming’s Mandarin had a noticeable Hakka accent. However, among those who grew up in Shenzhen, little accent could be noticed in their Mandarin. They speak Mandarin more proficiently than their mother tongue, Hakka.

In addition, both Rong and Yan said that they think in Mandarin, and they read Mandarin in their minds, too. Even so, speaking more than one language may lead to different patterns of self-presentation but



it does not imply separate personalities or identities (Edwards, 2009). Portes and Rumbaut (1996, p.229) pointed out that a “concentration of speakers who live in the immediate neighbourhood” is one of the first factors of language maintenance, which assumes that the greater concentration equals a higher likelihood of becoming fluent in the language. Surrounded by mostly Mandarin speakers, the participants would think that speaking the lingua franca helps them blend in with the community, which is a voluntary personal choice. On one hand, speaking good Mandarin is a bonus for study and work because one has to pass a certain level of proficiency in order to work as a civil servant or a school-teacher. On the other hand, the majority of migrants are from an agricultural background in rural areas before they come to fast developing urban areas. Speaking a dialect or having a strong accent in their Mandarin is often considered to make people sound boorish and inferior in cities where speaking standard Mandarin is considered superior and well-educated. Thus, immigrants try their best to speak the same language as their new neighbours do, also making sure their children speak Mandarin well. Migrants moving from countryside to a cosmopolitan city for work with the chance of a higher income would be viewed in their hometown as successful, while their opting to speak Mandarin would be considered to be modern.

4.6 The influence of other regional dialects and exogamy

Hakka in Guangdong exists in a mixed language environment where Mandarin, Cantonese, and Teochew are spoken. Cantonese and Teochew are another two influential dialects in Guangdong. After Reform and Opening-up, Shenzhen was one of the cities in Guangdong where Hong Kong television programmes in Cantonese could be received in every household. These programmes, ranging from news, soap operas, cartoons to variety shows, were very popular at that time, as well as Hong Kong films and songs. Cantonese, as a carrier of Hong Kong’s popular culture, were considered the most fashionable at that time. Being able to speak Cantonese was linked with a better-off economic status. Many people in Shenzhen picked up Cantonese by watching these programmes day after day and listening to Cantonese popular songs regularly as some of the participants said in the interview:

Rui: *I learnt (Cantonese) by listening to music.*

Rong: *I grew up in Shenzhen where there were many Cantonese speaking neighbours and friends who spoke Cantonese to me. In the meantime, I also learnt Cantonese by watching Hong Kong television programmes.*

Moreover, Cantonese is trendy among students in Shenzhen. Local students from a wealthy family background and those who are considered stylish would speak Cantonese when hanging out after school. Meanwhile, migrant students from the north or rural areas who cannot speak Cantonese are taken as peasants or rednecks.



Teochew is another dialect spoken in some regions neighbouring the Hakka hometown, Meizhou, in Guangdong. Ming has colleagues and clients who are Teochew people. Speaking Cantonese or Teochew helps them to connect with their business partners and language serves as a means to form the ties with their new community in the host city. Moreover, both Rui's and Rong's spouses are Teochew, and they met their spouses at university or school where they spoke Mandarin with each other. Since they formed a family, the lingua franca has remained Mandarin. Their children might have picked up some Hakka and Teochew at home, but they are not capable to make conversation in either dialect. Rui has already undertaken a language shift in her family setting since her marriage.

Interviewer: *What language do you speak at home, at work or in a social setting?*

Rui: *I used to speak Hakka at home, but now I speak Mandarin. I also speak Mandarin at work or in a social setting.*

Interviewer: *What language do you speak with your children? Do they speak Hakka or Teochew?*

Rui: *Mandarin. They can understand Hakka but cannot speak. They cannot speak Teochew and can understand little.*

It is difficult for Rui to invest the considerable time and effort to teach her children Hakka especially when she communicates with her husband in Mandarin. Although she has a positive attitude towards her mother tongue, the language shift would eventually result in the loss of her mother tongue's "natural intergenerational transmission" (Spolsky, 2008). When there is a diversity in the language environment, where one language is more influential or has dominance, there may be a risk that some languages lose their chance to be passed down to the next generation if one of the languages is more influential or has a dominant status. Language speaking follows the economic principles. Participants have shown a tendency to speak the more widely used language or the language that would lead to better economic opportunities, especially if there is no incentives or advantages to speaking a heritage language that represents their cultural identity.

4.7 The influence of English

Interviewer: *From a social, cultural and economic perspective, which language do you wish to speak most proficiently?*

Rui: *English, so I practise English words and phrases with my elder son after he returns home from his kindergarten.*



Rong: *English because is the international lingua franca. The whole world is learning English which is an essential language for communication...English is taught at school as one of the compulsory modules in China's nine-year compulsory education. I did some extra-curriculum English study after graduated from university.*

Yan: *English because enables me to have more communication opportunities in the international market.*

The third generation, including Rui, Rong, Yan, have learnt English as one of their compulsory subjects since primary school, but they did not claim they were proficient in English. Although English was the subject that they had to learn and learn well enough to pass the exams, there are not many occasions for them to use it in their daily life where they are not engaged in any English related work. That is the reason why some people claim that the English they have learnt is “dumb English” meaning they understand it without being able to speak well. However, it does not necessarily mean they do not value the significance of English. Surprisingly, English was the language that all participants from the third generation wished to speak most proficiently from a social, cultural, and economic perspective. Rui has placed great expectations on the next generation, hoping an early start can assist her son in a better position to obtain more opportunities in the future. At the early stage, children do not get to choose the language to learn but take on what they are exposed to. Instead, they learn the language taught by their parents according to their parents' ideology. Being able to speak good English is the new symbol of being modern and well educated. This is also the reason why parents like Rui wanted her children to have an early start. Rong, like many other Chinese students, had also spent extra effort on his English considering its value of international lingua franca. Yan pointed out the being able to speak English can help him go further. This implies that language preference changes with time and English as a carrier of internationalisation has influenced the language preference of the new generation. In the new age, participants have consciously or unconsciously considered being fluent in English as a bonus for their personal development.



Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Hakka maintenance under pressure

Hakka may not be an endangered language now but a language with a large number of speakers still has the risk of rapid decline in the face of a legalised dominant language. Mandarin, a national lingua franca and instruction language at school, has squeezed the room for dialects in terms of “communicative scope, frequency and development” (Zou, 2020, p.12) although it has brought a lot of convenience to Hakka speakers, enabling them to engage in more sophisticated conversations. In addition, Mandarin has also put Hakka intergenerational transmission under pressure. Whereas knowing the majority language may bring prestige and acceptance, speaking another language, especially a low-status language, can do the opposite (Tse, 2001, p.33). The policies to promote the diversity of dialects in China and television programmes in regional dialects cannot beat the massive influence of Mandarin being used at school, work and in a social environment.

In recent years, the development of English education in China has also created a wave of English learning among the young generation in urban areas. Immigrants abandon their heritage language due to “peer pressure”, “lack of opportunity to use the language”, and “fear that it will interfere with their ability to learn English or get ahead in mainstream society” (Potowski, 2013, p.323).

Between the communicative and symbolic aspects of Hakka language, Hakka is more a symbol of identity and a bond to family than a tool of communication to the younger generation. China has promoted Mandarin as the national lingua franca for the purpose of uniting the country as a whole – no mean feat when the population spans 56 ethnic groups. The progress of new generations acquiring more language competence is a sign of adaptation and evolution, which results in individuals’ multiple identities. The Chinese identity and Hakka identity can be compatible with each other. However, there is a clear hierarchy between Mandarin, with its status as official national language, and Hakka which is learnt as a heritage language with cultural bonds significantly older than the China Communist Party itself. The language pedagogy of these two languages varies too. Mandarin is a compulsory subject at school, but Hakka does not even have a proper notional phonetic alphabet. It is a simple yet profound truth that being able to speak Mandarin has been the priority since China’s Reform and Opening-up, coming to represent the global identity of Chinese citizens. A common language is an essential part of the policy to drive the country out of poverty and into economic prosperity.

5.2 Survive or thrive

As one of the most developed provinces, Guangdong has a diverse language environment. However, the loss rate of the minority language is highest where a mixed language community exists (Romaine, 1995). This is the dilemma that people face when picking up a new dialect or language as different



cultures and practices encounter each other, which also makes it difficult to maintain heritage languages especially those not economically superior ones. The national language policy does not necessarily take direct responsibility for the decline of minority languages or dialects, but it does create a nationwide environment where people are encouraged to speak Mandarin and learn to speak well so as to unlock more educational or occupational advantages and opportunities. By contrast, there will be less incentives to learn a heritage language which is considered less useful, especially by the younger generation. As Crystal (2004, pp.54-55) noted, if one culture is influenced by a more dominant culture, it will lose its character because of its members adopting new behaviours. This process of “cultural assimilation” will usually go through three broad stages: people are pressured into learning the dominant language, either it is ‘top-down’, ‘bottom-up’ or no specific direction; then they become bilingual; finally, the bilingualism starts to decline, resulting in semi-lingualism and eventually monolingualism (Crystal, 2004, pp.56-57). This is the precarious situation that Hakka is facing.

Intergenerational language transmission is critical in language maintenance. Families and parents play an important role in this process. Endogamy used to be a Hakka tradition during mobilisation for the convenience of communication and cultural customs and practices maintenance within the community. However, there are more and more out marriage with the development of urbanisation and migration in recent years, which makes Hakka intergenerational maintenance and transmission more challenging. In the long term, people tend to become more versatile in language capability, but multilingual parents might not be sufficiently competent to pass the heritage language on to the next generation, especially when the burden of intergenerational language transmission is not shared by school or community.

On one hand, the decline of Hakka may result in the linguistic loss that the vivid expressions of ancient Chinese will not be used as slangs in daily life. On the other hand, the consequence of language loss comes with the loss of ethnic identity, traditional customs, folk culture, and other knowledge and information stored in the language. Young children will no longer be aware of these cultural treasures and this loss is unmeasurable and irreversible.

5.3 A lesson from Taiwan

Taiwan has seen the decline of Hakka, one of the widely spoken dialects on the island, in the face of the dominant language, Mandarin. In 2018, Taipei passed the law appointing Hakka and Teochew, another regional dialect, as the three national languages together with Mandarin. Since then, there has been a boom in movies, music and other cultural products produced in these two dialects. Moreover, in 2015, Taiwan has established the Hakka Affair Council, the world’s first and biggest Hakka language and culture conservation organisation. These practices are valuable for the Hakka preservation and promotion in mainland China. However, the implementation of legalising dialects as national official languages is not realistic in China due to the country’s large variety of ethnicity and population. Instead,



it would be more achievable to encourage the regional use of Hakka in Guangdong where the majority of Hakka inhabit.

5.4 Actions needed

As the development of modernisation and urbanisation brings along the overwhelming influence of dominant languages, it is critical to study what we should do and what we can do to protect and preserve minority languages before it is too late. The maintenance of Hakka language will benefit greatly from group-based legal protection. Measures should be taken to encourage the speech of Hakka and promote Hakka culture by encouraging the production of songs, movies, and opera in this language. Language institutes should make effort to record the language systematically and design Hakka traditional tales and learning materials for children. As Max Weinreich put it, “a language is a dialect that has an army and navy”. Hakka has been armed with the official title of “national language” in Taiwan, which will be granted the power and resources that secure its status and preservation. It still needs to find or fight its way through the many more influential languages in China, which will be a long-term battle that requires the joint effort of Hakka community, sociolinguists and policy makers.



Chapter 6: Conclusion

Overall, the study has explored the language landscape of a Guangdong Hakka family with investigation into their language choices, preferences and attitudes. Hakka, taught as a mother tongue, is an important symbol of identity. All participants agreed that it was of great significance to them and would maintain the language and pass down to their next generation as the bond of family between different generations. However, there is a trend in this Guangdong family that the proficiency of Hakka declines as the generation gets younger and there has been a language shift from Hakka to Mandarin as well as a rush of English learning in the new generation. Language choice changes along with living and language environment. It also changes with the national language policy, such as what language is taught at school, and family ideology. Mandarin is spoken more than Hakka and considered the most useful language by the second and third generations because Mandarin as a lingua franca makes it more convenient to communicate with people in all types of occasions. It is also helpful to gain information and have more academic and occupational opportunities. Other regional dialects, such as Cantonese and Teochew, have played a significant role in the spread of language in the form of popular culture and exogamy. In addition, English, as the lingua France of the world or international business, has also attracted much attention in the younger generation.

The research has indicated that a language shift is happening in this Hakka family as a consequence of Mandarin being more frequently used in academic, professional and social contexts while Hakka has a limited use in a family setting. Mandarin is not the younger generation's mother tongue, but it has become their first choice of language. Migration, modernisation and internationalisation have also contributed to Hakka people's language shift.



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Appendices

Transcript of the interview with Yun

Date: 7 July 2021, 14:00 – 14:26; 8 July 2021, 14:30 – 14: 45

Via WeChat video call

Participant introduction

Yun is the most elderly participant in this research. She is the mother of Ming, grandmother of Rui, Rong and Yan. Born and raised in Meizhou, Yun has spent most of her life in this Hakka speaking town, only went to Shenzhen for looking after her grandchildren, including Rong, for approximately five years. Yun is now living in Meizhou with her youngest daughter after her husband passed away seven years ago. She plays mah-jong with friends and watches news from television every day.

Question 1: What languages (dialects) can you speak? How fluent are you in these languages?

你能说哪几种语言或方言？流利程度如何？

Yun: 客家话，能听懂部分普通话，如果说得慢一点。

Hakka, and part of Mandarin if you speak slowly.

Question 2: Which one do you speak the most often and why?

在这些语言或方言中，你最常用的是哪个？为什么？

Yun: 客家话，每天使用。

Hakka. I use it every day.

Question 3: Where and how did you learn this language? When you went to school, what language is spoken at school and taught at school?

你是在哪里通过什么方式学习这个语言的？（例如学校、家中）

Yun: 家中和学校，那时学校老师全都讲客家话，教书也用客家话教。

At home and at school. When I went to school, all teachers spoke Hakka and all classes were taught in Hakka, too. After class, I spoke Hakka with classmates and friends. We seldom used Mandarin because Hakka people speak Hakka.

Question 4: How did needing to learn more than one language or dialect impact or challenge your informal and formal educational experiences?

需要学习超过一种语言或方言对你的正式和非正式教育有什么影响或挑战？



Yun: 没有什么影响。

Not much.

Question 5: Which language do you think is most valuable to you and why?

哪一种语言或方言对你而言最有用？为什么？

Yun: 客家话。因为我也不去其他地方，这里大家都讲客家话，所以我也讲客家话。

Hakka, because I am not going any other places where Mandarin is dominant. Here everyone speaks Hakka, so I speak Hakka too.

Question 6: From a social, cultural and economic perspective, which language do you wish to speak most proficiently?

从经济、文化和社会的角度看，你最希望能熟练掌握哪种语言？

Yun: 普通话，因为这样的话，我可以和不论从哪里来的人，我都可以和他沟通。

Mandarin, because I can communicate with people no matter where they are from.

Question 7: What language do you speak at home, at work or in a social setting?

在以下场合，你会讲哪种语言或方言：家里，工作，社交活动？

Yun:客家话。

I speak Hakka all the time.

Interviewer: How about the television programmes you watch?

看电视的话呢？

Yun: 看电视会看普通话节目，基本上大部分都是有字幕的。没有字幕的话，就不能完全听懂。

Most of them are in Hakka, some in Mandarin. Most of those Mandarin programmes have subtitles. Otherwise, I will struggle to understand.

Question 8: Have you ever been in a situation where you were made to feel as if you were speaking the wrong language? For example, if you have an incoming call to answer, what language will you choose to speak in your first instinct without looking at the call identification?

你是否有过以下经历，感觉自己在某个场合选用错了语言或方言？

Yun:没有。

No.



Question 9: In a circumstance where you are with a Hakka speaker amongst a wider group who do not speak Hakka, what language do you speak and why?

当你和另一个客家人在一群不会讲客家话的人一起时，你会用什么语言与大家交谈？为什么？

Yun: 客家话，没有交流。

Hakka, otherwise, there will be no communication.

Question 10: Do you think your Hakka is more fluent than the other generations in your family?

你认为你的客家话比你其他代际（例祖辈、父辈、子女等）的家人讲得更好吗？

Yun: 我觉得比孙子辈可能要讲得更好。

I think I speak better Hakka than my grandchildren.

Interviewer: Which generation in your family do you think speak the most proficient Hakka? 你认为家里哪代人的客家话讲得最好？

Yun: 老人家的最标准，儿子辈讲得还可以。

I think the elderly speak the most authentic and standard Hakka. My son's generation speaks good Hakka, too.

Interviewer: How do you evaluate your grandchildren's Hakka? 你觉得孙子辈的客家话讲得怎样？

Yun: 还可以。因为他们的客家话讲着讲着就会变成普通话，会客家话掺着普通话一起讲，甚至有些事物不知道如何用客家话描述。

Just okay. They will switch to Mandarin unconsciously while speaking Hakka. Sometimes they mix Hakka with Mandarin. There are things that they don't even know how to describe in Hakka.

Interviewer: What do you think has caused this? 那你觉得为什么会这样呢？

Yun: 因为他们在学校一直都是讲普通话，和老师同学都讲。

They always speak Mandarin at school, with teachers and classmates.

Interviewer: Do you teach them to speak Hakka? 那你有教他们吗？



Yun: 有教，但不是我们在家教不好，而是他们学校里没教的原因。没人教他们。没办法教，他们受教育主要是在学校，我们想教也很有限。

Yes. It is not because we don't teach them well enough at home, but Hakka is not taught or used at school at all. No one else teaches them or uses Hakka with them. They mainly receive their education at school and what we can do to teach them Hakka is limited.

Question 11: What does Hakka mean to you? (or) What is the significance of Hakka in your life? 客家话对你的意义是什么？客家话在你生活中的重要性是什么？

Yun: 客家话对我来讲最有用处，与客家人相处的时候能顺利通话，交流方便。

Hakka is most important to me, because I can make conversations with Hakka people here and it is convenient to communicate.

Question 12: Do you know any Hakka slangs, idioms or proverb? If so, can you give us any examples?

你知道哪些客家俗语、谚语或歇后语吗？如果知道，请举例。

Yun: 很多，年轻人很多不知道了。

Many. Young people don't know much now because they are not taught enough and don't use them.

Interviewer: What is the subject below in Hakka?

请用客家话说出以下物体。



Yun: 日头. Sun head.



Yun: 蠔公. Earthworm male.



Yun: 田 蛙. Field frog.



Yun: 洗 身 子. Wash body.



Transcript of the interview with Ming

Date: 7 July 2021

Time: 15:00 – 15:45

Via WeChat video call

Participant Introduction

Ming is one of the four children Yun's. He was born and raised in Meizhou and went to Shenzhen for work when he left school at 18 years old. Ming's wife is also from the same town and speaks Hakka. They have lived Shenzhen for over 20 years and have two sons, one of who is Yan. Ming is now managing a pharmaceutical company in Guangzhou after working for an insurance company for over fifteen years in Shenzhen.

Question 1: What languages (dialects) can you speak? How fluent are you in these languages?

你能说哪几种语言或方言？流利程度如何？

Ming: 客家话，普通话，粤语，潮汕话。可以直接与人交流，流利程度以此类推。

Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese and Teochew. I am able to communicate with others in these languages. My Hakka is most fluent, then Mandarin and Cantonese, Teochew the least fluent.

Question 2: Which one do you speak the most often and why?

在这些语言或方言中，你最常用的是哪个？为什么？

Ming: 普通话，在中国基本使用普通话，因为平时与人交流用得最多，客家话次之。

Mandarin because basically we all use Mandarin in China and I use it most to communicate with others. The second is Hakka.

Question 3: Where and how did you learn this language?

你是在哪里通过什么方式学习这个语言的？

Ming: 从小就学习普通话，自从上小学就接受普通话学习，老师用普通话讲课。在家没学过普通话，都是讲客家话。

I started to learn Mandarin as a child at school...when I went to primary school. Teachers used Mandarin to teach. I did not learn any Mandarin at home. We spoke Hakka at home.



Question 4: How did needing to learn more than one language or dialect impact or challenge your informal and formal educational experiences?

需要学习超过一种语言或方言对你的正式和非正式教育有什么影响或挑战?

Ming:客家话是与生俱来讲的话，与父老乡亲都使用；去工作讲普通话，因为在广东工作，需要学会用粤语去融入同事。是通过粤语电视频道自学的。

Hakka is what I have been speaking since I was born, and I use it to communicate with my relatives in my hometown. I speak Mandarin when I go to work. I also needed to learn Cantonese to get along with my colleagues because I work in Guangdong. I learnt my Cantonese by watching Cantonese television programmes by myself.

Question 5: Which language do you think is most valuable to you and why?

哪一种语言或方言对你而言最有用？为什么？

Ming:普通话，因为是国语，最实用，不论去到全国各地都可以流通使用。

Mandarin because it is the national language and I can use it wherever in China which is most practical.

Question 6: From a social, cultural and economic perspective, which language do you wish to speak most proficiently?

从经济、文化和社会的角度看，你最希望能熟练掌握哪种语言？为什么？

Ming:普通话。

Mandarin.

Question 7: What language do you speak at home, at work or in a social setting?

在以下场合，你会讲哪种语言或方言：家里，工作，社交活动？

Ming:家里：客家话，工作时都是讲普通话，但是有时也和一些来自广东的同事讲粤语，去到潮汕地区也会和潮汕地区的人讲潮汕话。社交：普通话为主。

I speak Hakka at home, and Mandarin at work or in a social setting. Sometimes I also speak Cantonese with some Cantonese colleagues and speak Teochew when I went to that region. In general, I speak Mandarin in a social setting.

Question 8: Have you ever been in a situation where you were made to feel as if you were speaking the wrong language? For example, if you have an incoming call to answer, what language will you choose to speak in your first instinct without looking at the call identification?



你是否有过以下经历，感觉自己在某个场合选用错了语言或方言？

Ming: 有，当别人跟我讲普通话时，我听出了他的客家方音，然后就会转而与他用客家话，但一般会先问对方是哪里人。

Yes, when I recognise people who are talking to me have a Hakka accent, I will speak Hakka with them instead. Usually, I will ask where they are from at the beginning of a conversation.

Question 9: In a circumstance where you are with a Hakka speaker amongst a wider group who do not speak Hakka, what language do you speak and why?

当你和另一个客家人在一群不会讲客家话的人一起时，你会用什么语言与大家交谈？为什么？

Ming: 普通话，因为在中国国内每个场合都能使用普通话。

Mandarin, because in China you can speak Mandarin in almost any occasion.

Question 10: Do you think your Hakka is more fluent than the other generations in your family? Which generation in your family do you think speak the most proficient Hakka?

你认为你的客家话比你其他代际的家人讲得更好吗？你认为家里哪代人的客家话讲得最好？

Ming: 没有长辈那么好，但比子女更好。我母亲那一代，因为他们那代人没有出门打工，长期呆在客家地方。

Not as good as my parents and grandparents but better than my children. My mother's generation speak good Hakka because they did not leave their hometown for cities to work and have been staying in Hakka area in a long time.

Question 11: What does Hakka mean to you? (or) What is the significance of Hakka in your life?

客家话对你的意义是什么？客家话在你生活中的重要性是什么？

Ming: 我是客家人，我的祖祖辈辈都讲客家话。主要跟长辈交流，因为他们不会讲普通话，只能用客家话沟通。

(I am Hakka, and my ancestors all spoke Hakka. The significance of Hakka is that I use it to communicate with my elder family members because they can only speak Hakka and don't speak other languages.)

Question 12: Do you know any Hakka slangs, idioms or proverb? If so, can you give us any examples?

你知道哪些客家俗语、谚语或歇后语吗？如果知道，请举例。

Ming: 知道。月光光，过莲塘，莲塘背，种韭菜。



Yes, I know quite a few. For example, ... (Ming performed a Hakka folk song.)

What is the subject below in Hakka?

请用客家话说出以下物体。



Ming: 太阳、日头
Sun, or sun head.



Ming: 红蠍. Red earthworm.



Ming: 蜉子. Froggy.



Ming: 洗身子. Wash body.



Transcript of the interview with Rui

Date: 5 July 2021

Time: 07:00 – 07:30

Via WeChat call

Participant introduction

Rui is the daughter of Yun's elder daughter. Rui grew up in Meizhou and went to Shenzhen for university where she met her husband, a Teochew man. She is now a mother of two young children and works for a public institution in Shenzhen. Rui used to speak Hakka at home but now she speaks Mandarin instead to communicate with her husband and children although they can both understand a little of each other's dialect.

Question 1: What languages (dialects) can you speak? How fluent are you in these languages?

你能说哪几种语言或方言？流利程度如何？

Rui: 普通话，客家话，粤语，英语。英语一般，其他很流利。

Mandarin, Hakka, Cantonese and English. My English is average, but the others are very fluent.

Question 2: Which one do you speak the most often and why?

在这些语言或方言中，你最常用的是哪个？为什么？

Rui: 普通话，日常交流经常使用。

Mandarin because I use it frequently for daily uses.

Question 3: Where and how did you learn this language?

你是在哪里通过什么方式学习这个语言的？

Rui: 家中和家人交谈，学校和同学交流，看电视，听歌。

At home by talking with family, at school by communicating with classmates and also by watching television and listening to songs.

Question 4: How did needing to learn more than one language or dialect impact or challenge your informal and formal educational experiences?

需要学习超过一种语言或方言对你的正式和非正式教育有什么影响或挑战？

Rui: 接受教育的时候更加便利，途径更多样。



It is more convenient for me to get education, and there will be more approaches.

Question 5: Which language do you think is most valuable to you and why?

哪一种语言或方言对你而言最有用？为什么？

Rui: 普通话，这是国语啊。

Mandarin, because this is national language.

Question 6: From a social, cultural and economic perspective, which language do you wish to speak most proficiently?

从经济、文化和社会的角度看，你最希望能熟练掌握哪种语言？

Rui: 英语。

English.

Question 7: What language do you speak at home, at work or in a social setting?

在以下场合，你会讲哪种语言或方言：家里，工作，社交活动？

Rui: 以前在家里讲客家话，现在讲普通话。工作和社交：普通话。

I used to speak Hakka at home, but now I speak Mandarin. I also Mandarin at work or in a social setting.

Interviewer: What language do you speak with your children? Do they speak Hakka or Teochew? 你跟你的小孩讲什么话？他们讲客家话或潮州话吗？

Rui: 普通话。会听客家话，但是不会讲，也不会潮州话，基本听不懂。

Mandarin. They can understand Hakka but cannot speak. They cannot speak Teochew and can understand little.

Question 8: Have you ever been in a situation where you were made to feel as if you were speaking the wrong language? For example, if you have an incoming call to answer, what language will you choose to speak in your first instinct without looking at the call identification?

你是否有过以下经历，感觉自己在某个场合选用错了语言或方言？

Rui: 暂时没有。

Not yet.



Question 9: In a circumstance where you are with a Hakka speaker amongst a wider group who do not speak Hakka, what language do you speak and why?

当你和另一个客家人在一群不会讲客家话的人一起时，你会用什么语言与大家交谈？为什么？

Rui: 普通话，尊重大家，易于和大家交流。

Mandarin, to respect everyone and to make it easy to communicate with others.

Question 10: Do you think your Hakka is more fluent than the other generations in your family? Which generation in your family do you think speak the most proficient Hakka?

你认为你的客家话比你其他代际的家人讲得更好吗？你认为家里哪代人的客家话讲得最好？

Rui: 比长辈差点，比子女好点。

Not as good as my parents and grandparents but better than my children.

Question 11: What does Hakka mean to you? (or) What is the significance of Hakka in your life?

客家话对你的意义是什么？客家话在你生活中的重要性是什么？

Rui: 故乡情结。易于和家人亲人沟通。

It is my connection with my hometown and it make it easy for me to communicate with my family and relatives.

Question 12: Do you know any Hakka slangs, idioms or proverb? If so, can you give us any examples?

你知道哪些客家俗语、谚语或歇后语吗？如果知道，请举例。

Rui: 要想一下。

Let me think a moment.

Interviewer: What is the subject below in Hakka?

请用客家话说出以下物体。



Rui: 太阳



Rui: 蚯蚓



Rui: 青蛙



Rui: 游泳



Transcript of the interview with Rong

Date: 8 July 2021

Time: 10:00 – 10:57

Via Zoom

Participant introduction

Rong is the son of the eldest son of Yun. His grew up in Shenzhen and his parents both speaks Hakka. He is now working with Ming in Guangzhou after graduated from a university in Shenzhen. He is married to a Teochew woman, who is fluent in Hakka, and has two young children. Rong commutes from Guangzhou and Meizhou very often because his wife is looking after their children in Meizhou where there is more childcare support from family.

Question 1: What languages (dialects) can you speak? How fluent are you in these languages?

你能说哪几种语言或方言？流利程度如何？

Rong: 语言有中文、日语、英语、印度尼西亚语。除中文外，英语、日语和印度尼西亚仅限于日常简单交流...方言有汉语普通话、粤语（广东话）、客家话及部分潮汕话。方言都可以流利交流，没有任何障碍。

Fluent Chinese mandarin, Cantonese and Hakka. Some simple Japanese, Indonesian and Teochew (a Chinese dialect).

Question 2: Which one do you speak the most often and why?

在这些语言或方言中，你最常用的是哪个？为什么？

Rong: 当然是汉语普通话，其次是客家话、最后是粤语广东话。英语和日语只有在遇到外国友人或者出国时才会用到。因为生活在中国大陆，汉语普通话是第一语言，然后在广东省内，又分为广东话、客家话、潮汕话三大民系方言，我是一个客家人，所以从小和我的家人、同乡好友都用客家话，大学毕业后来到了广州创业，身边接触到的广州人比较多，所以广东话使用次数也会比较多。

Of course, I speak Mandarin most often. And then it's Hakka and Cantonese. I only speak English and Japanese when I am travelling abroad or when I meet foreigners. I live in mainland China where Mandarin is the first language, but Cantonese, Hakka and Teochew are also spoken in Guangdong Province. I am a Hakka. I speak Hakka with my family, friends from the same hometown since I was little. I went to Guangzhou to work after I graduated from university and started to speak more Cantonese because there are more Cantonese around.

Question 3: Where and how did you learn this language?



你是在哪里通过什么方式学习这个语言的？（例如学校、家中）

Rong: 汉语普通话是国家普及语言，中国所到之处都会用到，所以从小就熟练。客家话是我从小通过父母亲戚朋友的耳濡目染，逐渐学会的，而我长大的环境在深圳，身边有很多说广东话的邻居朋友对我说广东话，而且通过长期收看香港电视节目，也学会了广东话。英语则是中国九年义务教育必学课程，大学以后有课外学习。日语则是高中时期参加的语言学校，学习了 2 年。印度尼西亚语则是 2011-2012 年间在印尼生活，与当地华侨（客家人）学习的成果。

Mandarin is the language popularized by the nation and can be used anywhere in China, so I have learnt it well since I was little. I learnt Hakka by gradually influenced by what I saw and heard from my parents or grandparents. I grew up in Shenzhen where there were many Cantonese speaking neighbours and friends spoke Cantonese to me and in the meantime, I also learnt Cantonese by watching Hong Kong television programmes. English is taught at school as one of the compulsory modules in China's nine-year compulsory education. I did some extra-curriculum English study after graduated from university. I learnt Japanese from language school when I was in middle school. I picked up some Indonesian from the local overseas Chinese Hakka when I lived in Indonesia from 2011 to 2012.

Question 4: How did needing to learn more than one language or dialect impact or challenge your informal and formal educational experiences?

需要学习超过一种语言或方言对你的正式和非正式教育有什么影响或挑战？

Rong: 并没有什么影响，因为我所学习的语言方言多是不经意、顺其自然中学会的，学习和生活中有很多应用场景，所以可以很轻松从中进行切换。但是单独学习的外国语，在没有使用的环境下，就需要花更多的时间去背诵单词、学习语法和发音。

Not much, because I learnt most of my languages gradually by hearing or seeing without paying too much attention. There are many occasions in life or at school to use, so it was easy to learn and to switch. In terms of learning a foreign language, it took me longer to memorise vocabulary and learn pronunciation and grammar in an environment where the language is not used frequently.

Question 5: Which language do you think is most valuable to you and why?

哪一种语言或方言对你而言最有用？为什么？

Rong: 第一是汉语普通话，其次是英语。因为在日常工作和生活中，普通话是国内和国际通用交流的汉语，身为一个中国人肯定要会使用普通话，不会普通话可以说是寸步难行。而且外国人学习的中文也是普通话，学会了普通话，才能在中国正常工作生活，甚至在国外也是如此。

The first is Mandarin and then English because in my daily work and life in China Mandarin is the lingua franca. Besides, as a Chinese I must learn to speak Mandarin. Otherwise, life would



be difficult. Besides, Mandarin is the standard Chinese that foreigners learn so as to live and work in China or communicate with Chinese in a foreign country.

Question 6: From a social, cultural and economic perspective, which language do you wish to speak most proficiently?

从经济、文化和社会的角度看，你最希望能熟练掌握哪种语言？

Rong: 汉语普通话和英语。首先，英语是国际公认通用语言，全世界的人们都在学习英语，英语是必要的交流语言。其次，随着中国的改革开放，中国在世界当中的影响力越来越大，越来越多的外国人学习中文，这是世界对中国文化的包容和认可，作为一个中国人，不仅自己要会中文，也希望将中文带向世界，让更多的人体会到中文的魅力。

English and Mandarin. First, English is the international lingua franca. The whole world is learning English which is an essential language for communication. Besides, since China's reform and opening-up the influence of China has been increasing and more and more foreigners are learning Mandarin. It is a sign that the world is accepting Chinese culture. As a Chinese, I not only need to speak Chinese, but also hope to bring the language to the world and let more people admire its beauty.

Question 7: What language do you speak at home, at work or in a social setting?

在以下场合，你会讲哪种语言或方言：家里，工作，社交活动？

Rong: 在家中说客家话，工作中用汉语普通话，社交活动视人群来切换语言。

I speak Hakka at home and Mandarin at work. I will choose which language to speak depending on what people in the social context.

Question 8: Have you ever been in a situation where you were made to feel as if you were speaking the wrong language? 你是否有过以下经历，感觉自己在某个场合选用错了语言或方言？

Rong: 有，在工作中，因为公司有同乡的同事，不经意间就会说起客家话，而当时正是在工作交流当中。

Yes. There are some colleagues who are from my hometown. Sometimes we speak Hakka at work by accident when we are talking about work.

Question 9: In a circumstance where you are with a Hakka speaker amongst a wider group who do not speak Hakka, what language do you speak and why?

当你和另一个客家人在一群不会讲客家话的人一起时，你会用什么语言与大家交谈？为什么？



Rong: 用汉语普通话，因为这种场景用客家话的话，首先别人听不懂我和另一个客家人在说什么，再就是其他不会说客家话的人会觉得有被冒犯的感觉，应当尊重多数人的感受，包括一群客家人当中有一个不会说客家话的人，我认为也应当使用汉语普通话。

Mandarin, because others will not understand if two of us speak Hakka. Besides, others who don't speak Hakka might feel offensive, so I think we should speak Mandarin to show respect to the majority or even when there is only one who doesn't speak Hakka in a group of Hakkas.

Question 10: Do you think your Hakka is more fluent than the other generations in your family?

Which generation in your family do you think speak the most proficient Hakka?

你认为你的客家话比你其他代际（例祖辈、父辈、子女等）的家人讲得更好吗？你认为家里哪代人的客家话讲得最好？

Rong: 我的客家话讲得并不太好，祖辈的客家话才是原汁原味的。因为祖辈始终都是生活在客家地区，而从父辈这一代开始，恰逢中国改革开放，父辈一代人很多在上世纪 80 年代去了香港旁的移民城市深圳市，他们当时正值壮年，与中国国内各地的文化和语言产生碰撞和影响，由此开始客家话的传承力逐渐减弱，我作为在深圳长大的 90 后，对传统客家话的发音及俚语已经产生不少偏差了。

My Hakka is not very good, and the Hakka spoken by my grandparents' generation. It is because my grandparents' generation live in Hakka area throughout their life. However, my father's generation encountered China's Reform and Opening-up. Many of them went to the immigrant city, Shenzhen, which back then was a small fishery village near Hong Kong. They were in their twentieth and started to encounter the languages and cultures of other areas, which possibly started to weaken the heritage of Hakka. I was born in the 1900s in Shenzhen and my Hakka pronunciation and the ability to use slangs have started to show differences.

Question 11: What is the significance of Hakka in your life?

客家话对你的意义是什么？客家话在你生活中的重要性是什么？

Rong: 客家话对我的意义首当其冲是传承，客家话作为一个保留了数千年前古汉语发音的方言，从语言当中能发现许多历史的痕迹。我认为我们每一代人都应当将其传承下去，这是中华文化的一种魅力，而不能因为信息时代网络的发达，而将这份古老的传承丢失了，这也是我向我的孩子传授客家话的意义。客家话在生活中的重要性，我觉得可能更多的是促进家人的亲情，客家人大多出门在远方，一句客家话的问候，一段客家话的对话，就会让客家人有种家的感觉。这一点相信不只是客家人，很多地方人都是如此。

First, Hakka means legacy for me. It is a language that has preserved the Chinese pronunciation of thousands of years ago and you can find many traces of history from it. I think that each generation should pass this heritage language down. This is one of the charms of



Chinese culture which cannot be lost due to the development of the information age. This is also why I teach my children Hakka. The significance of Hakka is to enhance the family bond. Many Hakka people are migrants who leave their hometowns to work in cities. A greeting or a conversation in Hakka can make us feel at home. I believe this is also true for many other people who speak their own languages.

12. Do you know any Hakka slangs, idioms or proverb? If so, can you give us any examples?

你知道哪些客家俗语、谚语或歇后语吗？如果知道，请举例。

Rong: 一下想不出来。我因为成长环境的原因，很多歇后语都不知道。

Cannot think of any at the moment. I don't know many of them due to the environment of my growth.

13. What is the subject below in Hakka?

请用客家话说出以下物体。



Rong: 日头。Sun head.



Rong: 红螭。Red earthworm.



Rong: 拐子。Froggy.



Rong: 洗身子。Wash body.



Transcript of the interview with Yan

Date: 8 July 2021

Time: 14:00 – 14:38

Via Zoom

Participant introduction

Yan is the younger son of Ming's. He went to kindergarten in Meizhou, primary school and middle school in Shenzhen, where he lived with his family. He was a boarder student when he went to high school in Meizhou. He is now studying at a university in Hainan Province, staying at a student hall.

Question 1: What languages (dialects) can you speak? How fluent are you in these languages?

你能说哪几种语言或方言？流利程度如何？

Yan: 会英语，普通话，粤语，客家话，能日常沟通。

English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Hakka. Fluent and can be used for daily communication.

Question 2: Which one do you speak the most often and why?

在这些语言或方言中，你最常用的是哪个？为什么？

Yan: 普通话，然后是客家话。在生活中与和朋友多用普通话，然后在家都说客家话。

Mandarin, I use it most with friends. And then Hakka with family.

Question 3: Where and how did you learn this language?

你是在哪里通过什么方式学习这个语言的？（例如学校、家中）

Yan: 普通话在学校学的，客家话是家中。

I learnt Mandarin at school and at home. Hakka at home.

Question 4: How did needing to learn more than one language or dialect impact or challenge your informal and formal educational experiences?

需要学习超过一种语言或方言对你的正式和非正式教育有什么影响或挑战？

Yan: 没有什么影响。

Not much.

Question 5: Which language do you think is most valuable to you and why?

哪一种语言或方言对你而言最有用？为什么？



Yan: 普通话，因为在我生活当中普通话是最普及的语言，能方便人与人的沟通。

Mandarin, because Mandarin is the most popular language in my life, and it is convenient to use it to communicate with others.

Question 6: From a social, cultural and economic perspective, which language do you wish to speak most proficiently?

从经济、文化和社会的角度看，你最希望能熟练掌握哪种语言？

Yan: 英语，因为他能让我获得更多的与国外市场交流的机会。

English, because it can help me to get more opportunities to communicate with foreign market.

Question 7: What language do you speak at home, at work or in a social setting?

在以下场合，你会讲哪种语言或方言：家里，工作，社交活动？

Yan: 家里讲客家话，工作讲普通话，社交活动讲普通话。

Hakka at home, mandarin at work and in a social setting.

Question 8: Have you ever been in a situation where you were made to feel as if you were speaking the wrong language? For example, if you have an incoming call to answer, what language will you choose to speak in your first instinct without looking at the call identification?

你是否有过以下经历，感觉自己在某个场合选用错了语言或方言？

Yan: 没有。

No.

Question 9: In a circumstance where you are with a Hakka speaker amongst a wider group who do not speak Hakka, what language do you speak and why?

当你和另一个客家人在一群不会讲客家话的人一起时，你会用什么语言与大家交谈？为什么？

Yan: 普通话，为了使得我们的沟通更加高效和理解。

Mandarin, in order to make it more efficient to communicate and easy to understand.

Question 10: Do you think your Hakka is more fluent than the other generations in your family? Which generation in your family do you think speak the most proficient Hakka?

你认为你的客家话比你其他代际（例祖辈、父辈、子女等）的家人讲得更好吗？你认为家里哪代人的客家话讲得最好？



Yan: 没有讲的更好，祖辈。

No, my grandparents' generation speak the most proficient.

Question 11: What does Hakka mean to you? (or) What is the significance of Hakka in your life? 客家话对你的意义是什么？客家话在你生活中的重要性是什么？

Yan: 对我的意义是能让我有归属感明白自己来自何方。重要性在于它是连接我们家庭和家族的纽带，让我们不仅在血缘和地域上有连接更在语言上有共鸣。

Hakka gives me a sense of belonging and makes me understand where I am from. The significance of Hakka is that this is the bond connecting my family and clan, which not only biologically and geographically but also linguistically.

Question 12: Do you know any Hakka slangs, idioms or proverb? If so, can you give us any examples?

你知道哪些客家俗语、谚语或歇后语吗？如果知道，请举例。

Yan: 不知道，想一下。

I don't know. I have to think.

Interviewer: What is the subject below in Hakka?

请用客家话说出以下物体或动作。



Yan: 太阳。Sun.



Yan: 蚯蚓。Earthworm



Yan: 青蛙。Frog.



Yan: 游泳。Swim.



Participant Information Sheet (Sample)

You are being invited to take part in the research project with the title of “An Exploration of Intergenerational Hakka Maintenance and Shift in Guangdong”. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the project?

The project is the researcher’s dissertation for MA Professional Language and Intercultural Studies. The topic of this project is the generational language maintenance and language shift in a Hakka family. The duration of the project will be two months (from the time you participate in the interview to the time when the dissertation is finished). The interview itself will last one hour.

Why have I been chosen?

You are chosen to be the participant of my interview because you are:

- 1) a Hakka speaker,
- 2) a migrant who moved from a Hakka city to a metropolis,
- 3) of different generation amongst my interview participants.

There are four other participants who have been recruited in this project, too.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You do not have to give a reason. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

What do I have to do?

You will be invited to do a semi-structured interview with the researcher which last one hour. The interview will be carried out online via Zoom or WeChat video calls. The researcher will make appointments with you and organise the meeting. The link to join the Zoom call will be sent to you at least 24 hours before the interview. The interview audio will be recorded, and you should give your consent to recording by signing the consent form. You may switch your camera off during the interview.

The research will last until 25 August 2021, and you may be asked some follow-up questions or to clarify your responses after the interview. The interview will be in Hakka or Mandarin according to your preference. The interview questions will be translated from English to Chinese for you, and you will be given the questions to preview at least 48 hours before the interview starts. The interview questions will mostly be open questions which you need to give your answers according to your authentic personal experience and real thoughts. The questions will be related to your language use, your Hakka dialect



acquisition and your attitude towards different dialects or languages. You should be able to discuss these questions in-depth. You may provide your answers in a written form and return them to the researcher via email or answer them vocally during the online. Your answers will be translated into English and the final dissertation will be in English. It is the participant's responsibilities to guarantee the authenticity and credibility of the answers.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those who participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will contribute to the understanding of Hakka language maintenance and shift in mainland China as well as the protection of this language.

Use, dissemination and storage of research data

The information collected via the interview will be later analysed by the researcher and used in the dissertation, which will be submitted, viewed and stored at the University of Leeds. There is also possibility that the interview content will be cited or used in other research or study.

What will happen to my personal information?

Your personal information will be anonymous, and pseudonym will be used throughout the dissertation. All the data will only be used in this dissertation for research purpose.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

All the contact information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will stored separately from the research data. The researcher will take steps wherever possible to anonymise the research data so that you will not be identified in any reports or publications.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The following information will be collected for the project:

- 1) You age,
- 2) Your level of education,
- 3) Occupation,
- 4) Your relations with other participants,
- 5) Habitat environment,
- 6) Your language uses,
- 7) Your experience, opinions and attitude about these language uses.

Who is organising the research?

The researcher alone is organising the research as the dissertation for MA Professional Languages and Intercultural Studies at the University of Leeds.



Contact for further information

Researcher's name: [REDACTED]

Address: University of Leeds.

Email: m2021@leeds.ac.uk

You will be given a copy of this information sheet together with a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you very much for taking your time to read through the information and participate in my dissertation project!

<i>Project title</i>	<i>Document type</i>	<i>Version #</i>	<i>Date</i>
	Information sheet	1	

**Participant Consent Form (Sample)**

Consent to take part in “An Exploration of Intergenerational Hakka Maintenance and Shift in Guangdong”.	Please tick if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 1 July 2021 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason until 14 July 2021 and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. If so, please contact the researcher via ml2012l@leeds.ac.uk and your data will not be used in the project.	
I understand that members of the research team may have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I understand that the data collected from me may be stored and used in relevant future research in an anonymised form and the data I provide may be archived at the University of Leeds.	
I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of person taking consent	



Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

Research Privacy Notice is attached after this document.



Research Participant Privacy Notice

Purpose of this Notice

This Notice explains how and why the University uses personal data for research; what individual rights are afforded under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and who to contact with any queries or concerns.

All research projects are different. This information is intended to supplement the specific information you will have been provided with when asked to participate in one of our research projects. The project specific information will provide details on how and why we will process your personal data, who will have access to it, any automated decision-making that affects you and for how long we will retain your personal data.

Why do we process personal data?

As a publicly funded organisation we undertake scientific research which is in the public interest. This includes processing personal data to develop new data analysis techniques and tools, and investigate factors that affect the treatment and trajectories of different diseases. The categories of personal data included are names, addresses, date of birth, mental and physical health data, ethnic origin and sex life, and this is usually analysed at the level of data pertaining to an individual. The types of organisations we receive data from include health related organisations such as the NHS, data held by government departments (with appropriate permission), private organisations and charitable organisations. The recipients of this personal data are researchers. The DPA requires us to have a legal basis for this processing; we rely upon “the performance of a task carried out in the public interest” as our lawful basis for processing personal data, and on “archiving in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes, or statistical purposes” as our additional lawful basis for processing special category personal data (that which reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic or biometric data, and data concerning health, sex life or sexual orientation).

How do we follow data protection principles?

- We have lawful bases for processing personal and special category data.
- Data are used fairly and transparently; we will make it clear to individuals what their data will be used for, how it will be handled and what their rights are.
- We only collect and use personal data for our research, for research in the public interest, or to support the work of our organisation.
- We only collect the minimum amount of personal data which we need for our purposes.
- We take steps to ensure that the personal data we hold is accurate.
- We keep your personal data in an identifiable format for the minimum time required.
- We take steps to ensure that your data is held securely.



- We keep a record of our processing activities.

What do we do with personal data?

Research data can be a very valuable resource for improving public services and our understanding of the societies we live in. One way we can get the most benefit from this work is to make the data available, usually when the research has finished, to other researchers. In some cases we will share data with other parties during the research, but if this is the case your project specific information will detail why and how this happens. Sometimes these researchers will be based outside the European Union. We will only ever share research data with organisations that can guarantee to store it securely.

We will never sell your personal data, and any data shared cannot be used to contact individuals. We do not conduct automated decision making with the data.

The project specific information will include more detail about how your data will be used.

Your rights as a data subject

Because we use personal data to support scientific research on the public interest, individuals participating in research do not have the same rights regarding their personal data as they would in other situations. This means that the following rights are limited for individuals who participate, or have participated in, a research project:

- The right to access the data we hold about you.
- The right to rectify the data we hold about you.
- The right to have the data we hold about you erased.
- The right to restrict how we process your data.
- The right to data portability.
- The right to object to us processing the data we hold about you.

Data security

We have put in place security measures to prevent your personal data from being accidentally lost, used or accessed in an unauthorised way and will notify you and any applicable regulator of a suspected breach where we are legally required to do so.

Retention periods

We will only retain your identifiable personal information for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for; we may then retain your data in anonymised or pseudonymised format.



To determine the appropriate retention period for personal data we consider the amount, nature, and sensitivity of the personal data, the potential risk of harm from unauthorised use or disclosure, the purposes for which we process your personal data and whether we can achieve those purposes through other means, and the applicable legal requirements. Some of the organisations we get your data from specify when the data must be deleted in which case we will ensure we comply with their requirements.

Additional notices and guidance/policies

The University has also published separate policies and guidance which may be applicable to you in addition to other privacy notices:

[Current staff privacy notice](#)

[Current students privacy notice](#)

The Research and Innovation Service website has [other relevant policies and guidance](#).

Communication

In the first instance please contact the researcher who your initial contact was with.

You may also contact the Data Protection Officer for further information (see contact details below).

The University is the Data Controller for your data.

Please see the [Information Commissioner's website](#) for further information on the law.

You have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) about the way in which we process your personal data. Please see the [ICO's website](#) or contact 0303 123 1113.

Concerns and contact details

If you have any concerns with regard to the way your personal data is being processed or have a query with regard to this Notice, please contact our Data Protection Officer ([REDACTED]).

Our general postal address is University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK.

Our postal address for data protection issues is University of Leeds Secretariat, Room 11.72 EC Stoner Building, Leeds, LS2 9JT.

Our telephone number is +44 (0)113 2431751.

Our data controller registration number provided by the Information Commissioner's Office is Z553814X.

This notice was last updated on 28 September 2020.



Declaration of Academic Integrity

I am aware that the University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work, in whole or in part, as your own. Work means any intellectual output, and typically includes text, data, images, sound or performance. I promise that in the attached submission I have not presented anyone else's work, in whole or in part, as my own and I have not colluded with others in the preparation of this work. Where I have taken advantage of the work of others, I have given full acknowledgement. I have not resubmitted my own work or part thereof without specific written permission to do so from the University staff concerned when any of this work has been or is being submitted for marks or credits even if in a different module or for a different qualification or completed prior to entry to the University. I have read and understood the University's published rules on plagiarism and also any more detailed rules specified at School or module level. I know that if I commit plagiarism, I can be expelled from the University and that it is my responsibility to be aware of the University's regulations on plagiarism and their importance. I re-confirm my consent to the University copying and distributing any or all of my work in any form and using third parties (who may be based outside the EU/EEA) to monitor breaches of regulations, to verify whether my work contains plagiarised material, and for quality assurance purposes. I confirm that I have declared all mitigating circumstances that may be relevant to the assessment of this piece of work and that I wish to have taken into account. I am aware of the University's policy on mitigation and the School's procedures for the submission of statements and evidence of mitigation. I am aware of the penalties imposed for the late submission of coursework.

SIGNED: [REDACTED] DATE: 24 August 2021

Word Count: 9,995