

Hong Kong SAR government's 'trilingualism and biliteracy' language-in-education policy: Sizing up and meeting the challenge



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

Hong Kong SAR government's
'trilingualism and biliteracy'
language-in-education policy:
Sizing up and meeting the challenge



David C. S. Li (李楚成)

Professor & Head

Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies

中文及雙語學系

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

david.cs.li@polyu.edu.hk

Key questions

- 三語兩文政策 (trilingualism & biliteracy, TaB policy):
 - lofty goal / tall order for HKers
 - Cantonese-L1 and minority NCS speakers alike
 - Why?
 - Given what we know:
 - linguistic and sociolinguistic constraints
 - biological ‘golden window’ in language acquisition
- Can teaching effectiveness & learning outcomes in students’ TaB development be optimized, by rethinking / strengthening T&L support at earlier life stages (K1–P3, age 4–8)?**

Outline

- What makes TaB such a big challenge?
 - Linguistically
 - Socio-linguistically
 - Psycho-linguistically
 - Neuro-cognitively/neuro-linguistically
- Sizing up the TaB challenge
 - Trilingual development for Cantonese-L1 students
 - Biliteracy Development for Cantonese-L1 students
 - Non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) students to become trilingual & biliterate
- Social inequality: Impact of inequitable TaB development on students from low-income Cantonese-L1/NCS families
- Pedagogies and Curricula: Current policy
- Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic research
 - zoom in one instructive empirical study: Mayberry & Lock (2003)
- Recommendations for a TaB (三語兩文) roadmap
- Proposed 'sequential additive polylingualism' model

What makes TaB such a big challenge?

Multi-level analysis:

- Linguistic
- Sociolinguistic
- Psycholinguistic
- Neurocognitive / neurolinguistic

The TaB challenge: What makes TaB such a tall order linguistically and sociolinguistically?

Language learning goals

- (spoken) English (EFL/ESL)
- (spoken) Putonghua
- (spoken) Cantonese (esp. for NCS learners)
- (written) English (EAP)
- (written) Chinese (closely aligned with PTH)

Sociolinguistic conditions

- Identity-driven language choice and language use patterns

Linguistically, how useful is Cantonese when learning TLs ?

Cantonese-L1 HKers learning **English (spoken/written)**

- Knowledge of Cantonese: little or no use/relevance
- Positive transfer: negligible
- **EAP, written or spoken**: not at all obvious

Cantonese-L1 HKers Learning **SWC / Putonghua**

- Knowledge of Cantonese: some relevance / somewhat useful
- Positive transfer: moderate
- **SWC**: 3000+ characters needed for adult life; plenty of practice required
- **PTH**: taught as subject or MoI for Chinese (普教中) ~ major challenge

Sociolinguistically...

- Cantonese-dominant HKers (> 90% of 7.4m+ population)
 - Cantonese = language of identity; unmarked local lingua franca (共同語)
 - ENG-only/PTH-only interaction: uncommon, marked (except returnees)
- N.B. but ENG commonly inserted into Cantonese → result in ‘mixed code’
 - 1 reason: EMI medium-of-learning effect, ‘MOLE’ (e.g. *Apple, iPhone*)
 - unlike mainland China & Taiwan (e.g. 蘋果手機/苹果手机, *píngguǒ shǒujī*)

Psycho- and neuro-linguistically/neuro-cognitively: What's the challenge?

Psycholinguistically...

- L2 or FL learning conditions?
- ≠L1 acquisition: additional language learning from K1/P1 → 'interference'
- How feasible to overcome 'interference' through schooling (e.g. as Mol)?

Neurolinguistically/neurocognitively...

- At which life stage is language learning more fruitful/efficient/productive?

Instructive antithesis: two Chinese four-syllable idioms (四字格成語詞)

– 事半功倍: 'half the effort, twice the result'

OR

– 事倍功半: 'twice the effort, half the result'

Pedagogies & curricula (LiE policy): ‘No mixing’ & late immersion – how conducive to TaB development?

Pedagogically...

- Students’ home language(s): obstacle or resource?
- ‘No mixing guideline’ for teachers → Ss’ monolingual purity guaranteed?
- Greater synergy between language teachers & EMI/PMI subjects: How? (e.g., LAC / CLIL; bilingual instruction strategy like ‘think, pair, share’)

Curricula...

- Late immersion: dual Mol streaming from S1, age 12 (ca. 30% Ss EMI)
- How effective for CMI / EMI students?
- Curricula informed by subject-based monolingual instruction and practice: how conducive to TaB development?

Sizing up the TaB challenge

- Trilingual development for Cantonese-L1 students
- Biliteracy Development for Cantonese-L1 students
- Non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) Ss to become trilingual & biliterate

Trilingual development for Cantonese-L1 speakers

Cantonese-L1 speakers learning **EAL (EFL/ESL/EAP)**:

- Typological distance enormous: CHI and ENG belong to very different families

Indo-European > **Germanic** vs. Sino-Tibetan > **Sinitic**

- Very little in common: phonetically / lexico-grammatically / orthographically

e.g. 不喜歡 [bù xǐhuān]... (唔鍾意 [m²¹ zung⁵⁵ ji³³])...

[I] don't like / didn't like [it]... [ENG subject/object can't be dropped]

- **EAL: positive transfer** psycholinguistically negligible

- CLI unavoidable, mostly **negative transfer**

e.g., ENG pronunciation follows **stress-timed rhythm** (e.g. The match begins at seven)
Cantonese-L1 speakers more used to **syllable-timed rhythm**

Trilingual development for Cantonese-L1 speakers

Cantonese-L1 speakers learning **PAL** (Putonghua as an additional language)

- Phonological differences (**vowels** relatively less problematic):
 - **consonants**, especially...
 - alveolar /z-, c-, s-/ (舌尖前音)
 - palatal-alveolar /zh-, ch-, sh-, r-/ (舌尖後音)
 - palatal /j-, q-, x-/ (舌面音)
 - **tones** (esp. confusion between 1st & 4th tone; and neutral tone)
 - **tone sandhi** (連接變調, *liánjiē biàn diào*)
 - e.g., 很好 ('very good'), separately *hěnn hǎo*, but pronounced *hén hǎo*
 - **erhua** (兒化), e.g., 歌儿 (*gēr*, song), 花儿 (*huār*, flower), 事儿 (*shìr*, matter)
- In my view, more like **L2** than L1.5 (黎歐陽汝穎 [Lai-Au Yeung] 1997)

Trilingual development for Cantonese-L1 speakers

Cantonese-L1 speakers learning **Cantonese**

- problem-free?
- ‘lazy pronunciation’? (懶音, e.g., 我喺恆生銀行) – esp. youngsters

ngo²³ hai³⁵ hang²¹ sang³³ ngan²¹ hong²¹
 → o²³ hai³⁵ han²¹ san³³ ngan²¹ hon²¹

‘I’m in Hang Seng Bank’

- no school subject ‘Cantonese’, but used as Mol for learning 中文 – unique in HKSAR/MSAR
- Cantonese ‘interference’ – problem to be overcome when developing literacy in Standard Written Chinese (SWC)

Biliteracy development for Cantonese-L1 speakers

Cantonese-L1 speakers learning **SWC** (Standard Written Chinese)

- Logographic / non-alphabetic script:
 - VERY deep orthography
 - little phonetic cues, pronunciation cannot be deduced from written form
 - not easy to acquire, easy to forget (執筆忘字, ‘pen-ready but forget character’)
 - strokes must be followed (筆順), requiring lots of practice (練習)
- SWC more closely aligned with Putonghua than Cantonese
 - 我手寫我口 (‘write as one speaks’): natural tendency
 - unlike Mandarin speakers, ‘dialect’ speakers not write the way they speak
- HK SAR / Macao SAR: traditional script ~ more strokes (e.g. ‘dragon’: 龍 vs. 龙)
- Vernacular seen as interference, rather than resource
 - Cantonese elements targeted for eradication
 - even though ‘written Cantonese’ thrives in public & social media, following productive principle ‘phonetic borrowing’ (假借, e.g. 十蚊) & coinage in Roman script (e.g., *hea, chok, chur, pet pet*)

Biliteracy development for Cantonese-L1 speakers

Cantonese-L1 speakers learning **written English**

- Alphabetic, but ‘deep’ orthography (see, e.g., McBride 2016)
“the deeper the orthography, the more arbitrary is the spelling correspondence” (Tseng 2002, p. 4)
- Learner-unfriendly due to **inconsistent spelling-pronunciation**
e.g., *though* [əʊ], *through* [u:], *thought* [ɔ:], *thorough* [ə], *cough* [ɒ], *rough* [ʌ]
- **Silent letters**: e.g., *debt*, *mnemonic*, *psychology*, *wrestle*, etc.
- **Double consonants**: *accommodate*, *aggressive*, *committee*, *embarrass*...

etc.

Biliteracy development for Cantonese-L1 speakers

In sum...

- biliteracy development:
 - no simple feat for Cantonese-L1 students
- two learner-unfriendly writing systems:
 - major hurdles to overcome

Non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) students to become biliterate & trilingual (post-1997 policy)?

Linguistic challenge / learning problems for NCS students?

- **All** of the above:
 - Alphabetic English relatively easier than logographic Chinese
 - SWC most acute, largely due to lack of Cantonese
- Ethnic minorities' home & heritage languages (e.g. SA communities):
 - maintenance difficult without home and community support
- Biggest TaB problem:
 - Lack of home support for Cantonese & written Chinese

Social inequality: Impact of inequitable TaB development on students from low-income Cantonese-L1/NCS families

ENG/PTH:

- Homes with more resources ~ ENG / PTH learning conditions more like L2
- Homes with limited resources ~ ENG / PTH learning conditions more like FL

School literacy in CHI/ENG:

- crucial for social mobility by moving up the education ladder

Towards 三語兩文 (TaB):

- compulsory education (from 9- > 12- > 15-year):
schooling is almost the only means/support; % of Ss admitted into university

Additional language learning

- almost entirely through schooling
- great burden / tall order

Pedagogies and Curricula: Current policy

12-year compulsory education (mostly free / govt-subsidized):

- P1–S6, age 6–18

Kindergarten / preschool (private sector):

- K1–K3, age 4–6
- ENG invariably taught from K1
- PTH may (not) be – depend on K education provider
- Quality of language input unregulated
- K teacher qualifications/language proficiency: open to doubt

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

One particularly instructive empirical study by
Mayberry & Lock (2003):

Mayberry, R. I. & Lock, E. (2003). Age constraints on first versus second language acquisition: evidence for linguistic plasticity and epigenesis. *Brain and Language*, 87, 369-384.

(cf. Mayberry, R.I., Lock, E. & Kazmi, H. (2002). Linguistic ability and early language exposure. *Nature*, 417, 38.)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

- Contribution to **CPH** (Critical Period Hypothesis) debate

Research question: General

“...we ask whether the onset of language acquisition in early life is related to the subsequent ability to learn any other language for the remainder of life, independent of the sensory and motor modalities of the first or second languages (...).” (p. 370)

Research method:

“The most common method of investigating age constraints on the outcome of language acquisition has been to measure the grammatical ability of individuals who learned a second spoken language at varying ages.” (p. 370)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Research question: Specific

→ to examine the impact of linguistic experiences, spoken or signed, during early childhood on their English grammatical abilities

“We asked whether the acquisition of a signed language during early life enables the subsequent acquisition of a spoken language [and] whether a paucity of language acquisition during early life attenuates the ability to acquire language in later life.”

(p. 371)

Research method:

“we compared the grammatical skills of hearing and deaf individuals who learned English at similar ages but who had three contrasting types of language experience in early childhood:

- (a) early acquisition of a spoken language from birth;
- (b) early acquisition of a signed language from birth; and
- (c) little or no language acquisition during early childhood.” (pp. 371-372)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Methodology:

- to measure English grammatical abilities of deaf and hearing adults
- two tasks as instruments:
 - grammatical judgement (timed)
 - sentence to picture matching (untimed)

English grammaticality task: 5 sentence structures

- simple
- dative
- conjoined
- passive
- relative clause

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Table 2. Examples of the English syntactic structures and rule violations tested (p. 375)

Syntactic structure	Rule violation	Example
Simple	Auxiliary changed from “be” to “have”	The girl is playing in the water *The girl have playing in the water
Dative	Indirect object placed before the verb	The father is giving the girl an apple *The father an apple is giving the girl
Conjoined clauses	Conjunction placed at end of sentence	The girl is eating while the man is sleeping *The girl is eating the man is sleeping while
Non-reversible passive	Deletion of passive marker “by”	The girl was hit by the ball *The girl was hit the ball
Subject–subject relative clause	Incorrect relative clause marker	The boy who is chasing the girl is happy *The boy whose is chasing the girl is happy

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Participants:

- $n = 54$
- 4 groups from 4 Canadian cities
 - 2 groups normal hearing
 - 2 groups profoundly deaf
- good gender balance

Four groups:

- **14** Native English controls (normal hearing)
- **14** Early sign language (born profoundly deaf, acquired ASL as L1)
- **13** Early spoken language (normal hearing, acquired another L1 from birth)
 - Urdu (8), French (2), German (1), Italian (1), Greek (1)
- **13** No early language (born profoundly deaf, had normally hearing parents and siblings)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

‘No early language’ group (profoundly deaf, n = 13)

- 7 men, 6 women, aged 17-57, mean age 32.46
- **12 switched to ENG-medium sign language schools age 6-13, mean age at switch = 9.4**
(one had no preschool, but started with ‘sign language’ school at age 7)
- **Language input in family or preschool negligible due to deafness**
- two subgroups
 - some speech (English) input at preschool at age 3-5
 - ‘Early Sign’ group restricted to sign language at age 3-5

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

“After enrolling in a school where sign was used, the **No-Early Lang participants** were taught English in the same manner as the Early-Sign Lang participants, primarily through a combination of signs and spoken English (...). They were also taught English through lipreading, reading, and writing. Several of these participants attended the same schools as the Early-Sign Lang participants.

[age 23–70; mean age 35.23; mean length of time using English: 26 years, range = 11–64 years] (p. 373)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Three-way hypotheses / possible results:

“Finding **superior grammatical performance by the early language learners** compared to the learners who experienced sparse early language would support the hypothesis that accessible language input during human development is necessary for the capacity to learn language to develop fully.

“By contrast, finding **similar grammatical performance by the learners with and without early language experience** would provide counter-evidence to our hypothesis and suggest instead that maturation alone underlies age constraints on the capacity to learn language.

“Finally, finding **no performance differences between the hearing and deaf early language learners, whose first languages were spoken and signed,** respectively, would mean that development of the language learning capacity is plastic with respect to the sensory and motor form of the early experience and hence not a factor in the critical period phenomenon.” (pp. 371-372)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Data analysis

- controlled for
 - age of English exposure
 - length of English use

Findings

- No discernible differences were found regarding:
 - non-verbal IQ, age of preschool entry, method of English instruction, non-language cognitive test performance (p. 374)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

“...adults who had no early language experience performed at near chance levels on the complex structures of **passive** and **relative clause** sentences. (...)

“...the age of first-language experience also affected grammatical judgement response latency. Adults who had early language experience and began to learn English **before age 9** recognized English syntactic structures **more quickly** than those who had no early language, although more slowly than native English learners, independent of syntactic structure and regardless of whether the early language experience was **signed or spoken.**” (p. 380)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Table 5

Mean grammatical comprehension accuracy of the Early-Sign and Spkn-Lang and No-Early Lang participants subgrouped by age of accessible English exposure

Subgroup	Syntactic structure				
	Simple, mean (SD)	Dative, mean (SD)	Conjoined, mean (SD)	Passive, mean (SD)	Relative clause, mean (SD)
Early-Sign Lang					
4-7 years (n = 7)	1.00 (0)	0.96 (0.08)	1.00 (0)	1.00 (0)	0.90 (0.16)
Early-Spkn Lang					
6-8 years (n = 7)	1.00 (0)	1.00 (0)	0.94 (0.09)	0.96 (0.07)	1.00 (0)
9-13 years (n = 6)	0.92 (0.10)	1.00 (0)	0.96 (0.08)	0.80 (0.44)	0.84 (0.16)
No-Early Lang					
6-8 years (n = 8)	1.00 (0)	0.96 (0.07)	0.82 (0.18)	0.62 (0.33)*	0.42 (0.08)*
9-13 years (n = 5)	0.96 (0.08)	1.00 (0)	0.88 (0.10)	0.08 (0.10)*	0.36 (0.08)*

* $p < .01$.

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Findings:

“...Early experience with a spoken language led to near-native performance on a task involving complex ASL structures whereas a lack of such experience did not.

Together the results of our previous and present studies suggest that language experience during human development dramatically alters the capacity to learn language throughout life and that these effects are supramodal [i.e., signed or spoken] with respect to both the first and second language.”

(p. 380, cf. Mayberry, Lock & Kazmi 2002)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Findings (cont'd):

“...adults who acquired a language in early life performed at near-native levels on a second language [here, English] regardless of whether they were hearing or deaf or whether the early language was spoken or signed.

By contrast, deaf adults who experienced little or no accessible language in early life performed poorly. These results indicate that the **onset of language acquisition in early human development dramatically alters the capacity to learn language throughout life, independent of the sensory-motor form of the early experience.**”

(p. 369)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Findings (cont'd):

“The grammatical processing patterns of the group with scant early language experience were strikingly different from those of the groups who had early language.

These differences were clearly due to a paucity of accessible and detailed linguistic input in early life and not deafness.

This is shown by the high performance level of the early language group who was also born profoundly deaf but who experienced accessible language early; their performance was at near-native levels, like their hearing peers who also experienced language early.

(...) this was also true of the deaf participants in the Early-Sign Lang group who were first exposed to signed language by age 3. This suggests that **early childhood is a period of robust sensitivity to accessible linguistic input.** (p. 381)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Findings (cont'd):

“A lack of accessible language experience in early life appears to impede development of syntactic representations in any subsequently learned language, independent of sensory-motor modality.” (p. 381)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

Mayberry and Lock (2003)

Three-way hypotheses or possible results:

“Finding **superior grammatical performance by the early language learners** compared to the learners who experienced sparse early language would support the hypothesis that **accessible language input during human development is necessary for the capacity to learn language to develop fully.**”

“By contrast, finding **similar grammatical performance by the learners with and without early language experience** would provide counter-evidence to our hypothesis and suggest instead that maturation alone underlies age constraints on the capacity to learn language.”

“Finally, finding **no performance differences between the hearing and deaf early language learners, whose first languages were spoken and signed,** respectively, would mean that development of the language learning capacity is plastic with respect to the sensory and motor form of the early experience and hence not a factor in the critical period phenomenon.” (pp. 371-372)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic experiments

“Instead of being a phenomenon of diminishing ability to learn language caused by increasing brain growth, the critical period for language would instead be a **time-delimited window in early life** where the degree and complexity of neurocortical development underlying the language system is governed, in part, by linguistic stimulation from the environment which together with neurocortical development creates the capacity to learn language. (...) early language experience helps create the ability to learn language throughout life, independent of sensory-motor modality. Conversely, **a lack of language experience in early life seriously compromises development of the ability to learn any language throughout life.**” (p. 382)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic research

Other research...

“We are in a nascent stage of understanding the brain mechanisms underlying infants’ early flexibility with regard to the acquisition of language – their ability to acquire language by eye or by ear, and acquire one or multiple languages – and also the reduction in this initial flexibility that occurs with age, which dramatically decreases our capacity to acquire a new language as adults (...). The infant brain is exquisitely poised to ‘crack the speech code’ in a way that the adult brain cannot.” (Patricia Kuhl 2010, p. 715)

* * * * *

The scientist in the crib: What early learning tells us about the mind (Gopnik et al. 2000)

“The new research shows that babies and young children know and learn more about the world than we could ever have imagined. They think, draw conclusions, make predictions, look for explanations, and even do experiments. Scientists and children belong together because they are the best learners in the universe. And that means that ordinary adults also have more powerful learning abilities than we might have thought. Grown-ups, after all, are all ex-children and potential scientists.” (Gopnik et al. 2000, p. i; see also <http://ilabs.washington.edu/scientist-crib-preface>)

Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic research

Other research...

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Insights from brain science / neurolinguistic research

Important empirical findings in last two decades: A summary

- Crucial breakthroughs / great strides since Chomskyan ‘black box’ (LAD) in 1970s
- Infants’ language learning apparatus very sophisticated (Gopnik et al. 2000; Kuhl 2010; among many others)
- As an innate human capacity, language learning is at its prime and most sensitive at a life stage roughly from age 4–8, corresponding with preschool and lower primary (K1–P3) in the local curriculum
- children aged 4–8: language learning sensitivity and effectiveness
 - L1 / L2 / FL conditions, one language, multiple languages –
 - much higher compared with similar types / levels of language input at later life stages

→ 事半功倍: ‘half the effort, twice the result’

Recommendations for a TaB (三語兩文) roadmap

Pedagogies and Curricula

- For relative acquisitional ease:
 - provide *quality language input* (ENG/PTH) from K1 (age 4)
- Teacher education/training:
 - strengthen proficiency requirements at pre-primary & primary levels
 - ‘prestige planning’ for the teaching profession (emulate Finland?)
- Materials and teaching methods:
 - context- and image-rich texts, accompanied by melody (lyrics), are easier to learn by heart, recall and retain
 - poetic genres (nursery rhymes, riddles) containing linguistic features like rhyming and alliteration, etc., presented in melody with music

大熊貓//不是貓,	<i>dà xióng māo, // bú shì māo,</i>
	'big pandas are not cats'
黑色//白色//全身毛,	<i>hēi sè // bái sè // quán shēn máo,</i>
	'black and white, whole body covered in hair'
愛吃竹葉//不吃肉,	<i>ài chī zhú yè // bù chī ròu,</i>
	'like to eat bamboo leaves but not meat'
孩子見了//個個笑。	<i>hái zǐ jiàn le // ge ge xiào.</i>
	'children [who] see them will all laugh'
	(Tong and Mok 2000, p. 107, pausing at '//')

小獅子,過生日,	<i>xiǎo shī zi, guò shēng rì,</i>
	'little lion, have birthday'
好朋友,全到齊。	<i>hǎo péng yǒu, quán dào qí.</i>
	'good friends, all arrived'
吃蛋糕,喝果汁,	<i>chī dàn gāo, hē guǒ zhī,</i>
	'eat cake, drink juice'
慶生日,真歡喜。	<i>qìng shēng rì, zhēn huān xǐ.</i>
	'celebrate birthday, really happy'

(S.-M. Tse 2010, p. 179)

Recommendations for a TaB (三語兩文) roadmap

Pedagogies and Curricula (cont'd)

- Facilitate literacy & reading development in **SWC**
 - Teaching CHI characters: use children's **mental lexicon** as resource
 - 基本字帶字 to strengthen (grapho-)morphological awareness (Tse 2001, 2014)
 - e.g., 沙田河 → discover meanings and pronunciations of 可 何 荷 呵...
- Facilitate acquisition of **Putonghua** (fostering independent learning):
 - Sensitize pre-schoolers to Putonghua pronunciation through teaching basic vocab and words in their *mental lexicon* from K1 (age 4)
 - Teaching Chinese in Putonghua (普教中, P1–P3, age 6–8)
(Switch back to Cantonese-medium from P4, age 9-- [廣教中])
 - Teach pinyin systematically P1–P3 (~ mainland schools, age 6–8)
 - Gradually replace pinyin with unfamiliar characters – allow for a transitional, mixed-script stage (P1–P3, age 6–8)

Recommendations for a TaB (三語兩文) roadmap

Sociolinguistic intervention

- To create social space for English/Putonghua in formal settings:
 - government and HEIs to lead by example (bottom-up, not top-down)
- Current practice among proficient bilingual HKers at meetings:
 - English as working language ONLY when inconvenience is caused to non-Cantonese speaker(s) present
- Official status of ENG/PTH as L2's, and back it up with measures:
 - Government and HEIs to issue guidelines, encouraging and taking the lead in using English/Putonghua for formal functionse.g., formal meetings attended by polylingual civil servants, making press conferences bilingual/trilingual by default, etc.

Recommendations for a TaB (三語兩文) roadmap

To conclude...

Cantonese-dominant speakers

- to adjust the SAR's K-S curricula in such a way as to help Cantonese-dominant students gain greater mileage in their TL learning efforts...
- by significantly improving the quality of English and Putonghua input at the critical “time-delimited window in early life” from age 4–8 (Mayberry & Lock, 2003: 382)

Recommendations for a TaB (三語兩文) roadmap

To conclude...

Non-Cantonese-speakers

- Strengthen support for Cantonese & SWC (esp. enroll in Cantonese kindergartens)
- Promote CSL curriculum / practical learning outcomes to stakeholders & employers
- Phase in Putonghua at primary? → empirical research needed
- Award scholarship to gifted EM students, and train them up as CHI majors/teachers
- Empower linguistic minority groups by...
 - promoting linguistic and cultural diversity (e.g., enhance visibility of minorities by producing ETV programmes on their languages and cultural practices)
 - valorizing (individual) polylingualism and (societal) multilingualism
 - creating social space for minority language speakers to use their heritage languages
 - mobilizing resources (e.g. UG students' service-learning graduation requirement)
 - to help ethnic minority students and their parents to learn Cantonese & SWC
 - to help minority families to maintain their home language

Proposed ‘sequential additive polylingualism’ model

Summary

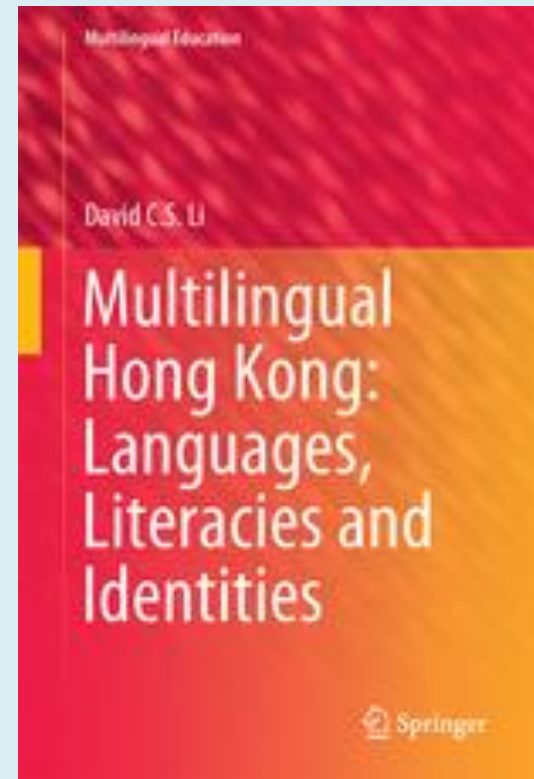
The ‘**sequential additive polylingualism**’ model outlined above is reminiscent of a visionary statement by **Lord and T’sou** some 30 years earlier (**1985**, p. 7; also cited in Lord 1987, p. 10):

What is needed is “...a sound **Chinese curriculum into the schools, based on Modern Chinese usage, and supported by a carefully phased introduction of Putonghua [such that effective bilingualism] will rest on the twin pillars of Modern Standard Chinese/Putonghua and English. If that happens the problem of literacy in standard Chinese will largely take care of itself. (...) We need a very careful and properly piloted planned and phased curriculum development, from kindergarten right through to tertiary level and beyond.”**

Proposed 'sequential additive polylingualism' model

For more details, see Li (2017).

[Http://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319441931](http://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319441931)



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Q & A

Thank you / 多謝大家 / 謝謝大家

Contact me at...

Office: AG503 (Core A)
Phone: (852) 2766 7440
Email: david.cs.li@polyu.edu.hk