

Cantonese-Portuguese Lexical Fusion: Pragmatic Insights from Cantonese-Portuguese Dictionaries

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of foreign trade during the Ming and Qing dynasties and increasing cultural exchanges between China and the West, heterogeneous language blending became an observable linguistic phenomenon. The unique geographical and historical conditions of the Pearl River Delta region facilitated the emergence of Cantonese-Portuguese (Cantão Português), widely regarded as China's earliest mixed language. Characterized by distinct pragmatic norms, this hybrid language also played a formative role in the early development of Pidgin English. Through the analysis of phonetic transliteration, lexical choice, and semantic transfer in historical bilingual dictionaries—particularly the *Dicionário Português-Chinês* and *Chronicles of Macao*—this study identifies systematic patterns of phonetic adaptation, syntactic calquing, and semantic blending. These findings suggest that Cantonese-Portuguese functioned not merely as a contact vernacular, but as a pragmatically resilient communicative medium that supported sustained intercultural interaction in southern China.

Keywords: Guangdong Portuguese, Cantonese, Portuguese, Lexical Fusion, Pragmatic Features

1. Introduction

Guangdong's geographical position, facing the South China Sea, has long shaped its role as a major center for overseas trade. Following the founding of the Ming Dynasty in 1368, southeastern coastal regions soon faced frequent raids by Japanese pirates, which disrupted local livelihoods and contributed to the persistent instability along the coastline. In response, the imperial court issued the first maritime prohibition (海禁) policy in 1371, marking the beginning of a long-standing system of state-imposed restrictions on maritime trade and private contact with foreign powers, which defined the diplomatic and commercial strategies of both the Ming and Qing dynasties.

In 1514, Portuguese merchant ships first appeared off the coast of China. Portuguese envoys sought permission from the Ming court to offer tribute, marking the beginning of formal contact. One historical record notes that, the Franks were stationed near Malacca, having seized control of the region and its ruler between 1505 and 1521. In the thirteenth year, they dispatched envoys to offer tribute and request formal recognition from the Ming court, thereby disclosing their identity (Zhang, 2011: 8430). In 1529, Lin Fu (林富) submitted a memorial to the imperial court, advocating for the relaxation of maritime prohibitions and the resumption of open trade. He (ibid., 8432) argued that due to Guangdong's dependence on customs duties and commercial levies, the lack of foreign vessels posed economic difficulties for both governmental

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revenues and private enterprises. Granting the Franks access to reciprocal trade was therefore seen as a policy offering four distinct advantages. As a result, several ports—such as Langbai (浪白), Shizimen (十字门), and Haojing (蠓镜, later known as Macau)—were designated for foreign trade. Eight years later, the Franks were granted access to Xiangshan Bay (香山澳) for commercial activity. Following the opening of new maritime routes by European powers in the sixteenth century and the expansion of Sino-Western exchanges, Portuguese became the first Western language to come into sustained contact with oriental languages (Zhou, 2005: 117).

In 1554, the Portuguese occupied Langbai Ao (浪白澳), off the coast of Guangdong, and Haojing, where they established settlements that persisted for over three centuries. Following the death of Zhu Wan (朱纨), maritime prohibitions were relaxed, enabling the Franks to navigate regional waters with minimal restrictions. They constructed buildings and developed urban infrastructure in both Xiangshan Bay and Macau, exerting de facto control over the coastline (Zhang, 2011: 8432-8433). That same year, Portuguese captain Serrão reached an agreement with the Deputy Maritime Commissioner, granting commercial access to merchants from various countries—including Portugal—across multiple ports, including Guangzhou and Macau. As a result, 1554 is commonly regarded as the official beginning of Portuguese presence in Macau. It is worth noting that the opening of Macau was not solely driven by Portuguese efforts, but also by merchant networks from Southeast Asia, Japan, and other Western powers. According to *The Biography of the Franks in the Ming Dynasty*, over time the Portuguese increased in number, and people from various countries feared and avoided them, allowing them to establish dominance (Zhang, 2011: 8433). In 1557, with tacit approval from the Chinese authorities, the Portuguese formally relocated from Langbai to Macau and established permanent residency. As Macau evolved into a central hub for Portuguese trade in East Asia, it gradually became a predominantly Portuguese-inhabited city within Chinese territory. By the end of the Jiajing era (1566), the sociolinguistic landscape of Macau had begun to reflect this deepened foreign presence, giving rise to what would later be known as Guangdong Portuguese, a unique product of linguistic and cultural fusion.

Grounded in the above historical overview and synthesis of primary sources, it can be observed that Macau was gradually transformed into a key hub of Sino-Western interaction. This process also fostered sustained contact between Portuguese and Cantonese speakers in a highly localized context. It is within this multilingual and multicultural environment that Cantonese-Portuguese emerged as a functional medium of communication. This study seeks to address the current lack of macro-level analysis on Cantonese-Portuguese by investigating how it functioned as a mixed contact language shaped by sustained linguistic and cultural exchange.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study investigates Cantonese-Portuguese as a historically embedded contact language by combining macro-level contextual analysis with micro-level examination. The specific objectives are:

(1) To investigate the phonological, semantic, and syntactic features of Cantonese-Portuguese as reflected in key historical lexicographic sources, with a focus on patterns of transliteration, calquing, and meaning extension.

(2) To identify the pragmatic conventions governing the use and circulation of lexical items in Cantonese-Portuguese, including social deixis, negation structures, and culturally embedded expressions. Therefore, the research explores how Cantonese-Portuguese encoded meaning, negotiated social interaction, and adapted foreign lexical items within a Cantonese framework.

(3) To compare lexicon entries across time periods and sources, such as the *Dicionário Português-Chinês* (1583-1588), the “Aoyi” glossary in *Chronicles of Macao* (1751), and *Glossário do Dialecto Macaense* (1988), in order to trace changes in contact dynamics and functional usage.

In conclusion, this study examines the development of Cantonese-Portuguese and its potential influence on subsequent contact varieties, with particular attention to lexical inheritance, structural borrowing, and the continuity of cross-linguistic practices. It also seeks to reconstruct the practical dynamics of Cantonese-Portuguese as a historically embedded contact language, which plays a role in shaping early Pidgin English.

1.2. Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in historical linguistics and lexicographic analysis. Lexical items are selected based on their frequency, phonetic correspondence with Cantonese, and pragmatic relevance in context. Through comparative analysis across multiple time periods, the research identifies consistent patterns of phonetic transliteration, semantic shift, and language contact, offering insight into the mechanisms of creolization and linguistic hybridization in southern China.

Lexical items were selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria: (1) phonetic transliteration traceable to Cantonese syllables; (2) semantic or syntactic divergence from standard Portuguese or Cantonese usage; (3) evidence of pragmatic function in everyday speech, such as kinship terms, action verbs, or trade-related expressions.

Furthermore, the analysis follows a two-stage method. First, a comparative lexical analysis was conducted to identify regular patterns of phonetic adaptation, semantic borrowing, and syntactic calquing across different dictionaries. Second, qualitative content coding was applied to categorize the selected items into functional groups (e.g., nouns, fixed expressions, interrogative forms) and pragmatic categories (e.g., politeness, negation, repetition, hybrid affixation). Through integrated analytical approach, the study reconstructs the pragmatic mechanisms that governed the formation and circulation of Cantonese-Portuguese and evaluates its influence on subsequent contact varieties such as Pidgin English.

2. Linguistic Genesis and Dissemination of Cantonese-Portuguese

Cantonese-Portuguese, also referred to as Macanese Portuguese (*Cantão Português*) or Pidgin Portuguese, is a mixed language comprising elements from Portuguese, English, Indian, Malay, and Cantonese (Hunter, 1992: 170). It emerged during the late Ming Dynasty in the context of Portuguese colonization in Macau, and later became widespread in the Guangzhou port area following the establishment of the Canton Trade system in the early Qing Dynasty. This variety remained in active use until the Qianlong era (乾隆年间, 1736 – 1796), a period when most foreign merchant vessels entered China through Guangdong customs, including Macau. As a result of expanding overseas commerce, Cantonese-Portuguese evolved into the lingua franca of trade in the Guangzhou region (Zhou, 2005: 119), serving as a functional medium for multilingual communication.

The prosperity of overseas trade gave rise to a specialized class of interpreters known as *Tong shi* (通事), who served as linguistic intermediaries. Proficient in the hybrid language known as Cantonese-Portuguese, they played a pivotal role in facilitating communication between Chinese authorities and foreign merchants. This non-standard, newly-formed contact language became the primary medium for commercial transactions between the *Tong shi* and the officials overseeing the Portuguese trade monopoly. At its peak, Cantonese-Portuguese even functioned as a regional lingua franca across the trading networks of East Asia. Foreign merchants conducting business in China were often compelled to rely on these intermediaries, whose fluency in Cantonese-Portuguese was essential to navigating the complex commercial landscape. According to American trader H.B. Morse, proficiency in Portuguese was the first requirement for captains of British merchant ships trading with China (Morse, 1991: 65). Macau-based scholar Tereza Sena describes Cantonese-Portuguese as a simplified, informal vernacular widely used in communication. This extensive use resulted in mutual lexical transfer, with Portuguese words entering

Eastern languages, and vice versa (Sena, 1998: 129). Following the Portuguese colonization of Macau in the sixteenth century, Cantonese-Portuguese gradually became the common communicative medium between Chinese and Portuguese residents in Macau, shaping a unique linguistic environment in the city.

Located at the southern tip of China's coastline in the southwest of the Pearl River Delta, Macao has long served as a pivotal hub in the development of the Greater Bay Area. Its complex social and linguistic environment has fostered a rich phenomenon of multilingual coexistence and hybridization, earning it the reputation of a "kaleidoscope of languages". Over the course of five centuries, Macao has undergone profound transformations: from being part of Xiangshan County (香山县) during the Ming Dynasty, to becoming a Portuguese colony, and ultimately returning to Chinese sovereignty in 1999. During the Opium War, Portugal capitalized on the weakening of the Qing Dynasty and participated in the broader partitioning of China by foreign powers. In 1849, it gained administrative control of Macao, expanded Portuguese judicial authority across the territory, and established Portuguese as an official language. Given the geopolitical complexity of the time, cultural and linguistic tensions persisted and often proved irreconcilable. Portuguese officials found themselves compelled not only to master their native language for local governance, but also to acquire Mandarin in order to engage with the imperial Chinese court. As a result, linguistic blending between Portuguese and Chinese became inevitable—extending from everyday interactions to diplomatic discourse. As Zhang Rulin (张汝霖) observed, after a long stay in Macao, the influence gradually deepens, language habits slowly assimilate, and gradually transform (Fang, 2008: 665).

In the multicultural context of Macao, where Chinese and foreign residents have long coexisted, a variety of linguistic forms—including Portuguese, Cantonese, English, and several hybrid dialects—have developed and circulated across society. As early as 1751, evidence suggests that Portuguese and Cantonese had already begun to merge and were in widespread use. Linguistic traces of this contact era persist in contemporary Macao. For example, the term “司打”, meaning “Senate”, derives from the Portuguese word “Senado”. Its legacy is still visible today in place names such as Senado Square (议事亭前地). Additional evidence from Qing Dynasty archival documents preserved in the Portuguese East Porta Archive records instances of early Macanese Creole. One such example is “咧咁婆” (Li-de Pó), where “咧咁” phonetically represents the Portuguese name “Rita”, and “婆”, meaning “woman” or “madam” in Cantonese, serves as a semantic classifier. Together, the phrase referred to a local woman named Rita (Cheng, 2008: 89 - 90). By that time, Macao had already formed a distinctive sociolinguistic environment characterized by the coexistence of Chinese and foreign residents and the pervasive intermingling of languages and dialects (Huang, 2007: 48).

Despite the long-standing presence of regional linguistic variation in Macao, its academic significance has historically received limited attention. Existing research on the convergence of Cantonese and Portuguese has predominantly focused on micro-level linguistic phenomena, particularly within the context of Macao. Representative works include *The Trilingual Communication in Macau and the Health of Chinese* (Cheng & Liu, 1990), *The Cantonese Components in Macanese Portuguese* (Zheng, 1999), and *A Study of Portuguese Loanwords in Macanese Cantonese* (Sun, 2014), all of which explore lexical and phonological interactions between the two languages.

In contrast, studies adopting a broader, macro-level perspective remain relatively scarce. One notable exception is *Language Life in Macau Society* (Cheng, 2002), which examines language policy and sociolinguistic planning, offering significant insights into the development and dissemination of the Macanese language. Nevertheless, contemporary scholarship continues to prioritize localized, descriptive analyses over structural integration models. As a result, there is a notable gap in research concerning the systemic convergence of Cantonese and Portuguese in areas such as vocabulary formation, syntactic usage, and patterns of linguistic transmission—particularly in relation to the historical development of Guangdong Portuguese. Innovative approaches to this subject remain limited.

Drawing on the historical trajectory of the Portuguese arrival in China and the evolution of Cantonese Portuguese, this paper employs Cantonese Portuguese dictionaries to analyze the pragmatic norms governing the amalgamation of Cantonese and Portuguese. The aim is to uncover the pragmatic dynamics underlying the formation and dissemination of Cantonese Portuguese, shedding light on its linguistic significance. This study also contributes to research on the fusion of Chinese and Western languages during the Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as the overseas dissemination of Cantonese.

3. Pragmatic Characteristics of Cantonese-Portuguese Language Fusion

Building on the historical trajectory and spread of Cantonese-Portuguese, the following section turns to an examination of its internal pragmatic features. By analyzing historical glossaries and bilingual dictionaries, it explores how pragmatic mechanisms—such as phonetic approximation, syntactic borrowing, and semantic convergence—contributed to the formation and circulation of lexical items within this hybrid linguistic system. This perspective provides deeper insight into the functional dynamics of Cantonese-Portuguese as a contact language shaped by sustained intercultural interaction.

In the Guangdong region, the Cantonese, Hakka, and Hokkienese (Southern Fujian Dialect, 闽南语) languages have been passed down through the generations since ancient times. Following the turmoil caused by the Five Northern Minorities in Central China, nomadic tribes from the north ruled the Central Plains for over 270 years, resulting in significant historical changes to the Chinese language. In contrast, the linguistic development of the Han people in Lingnan (South China) remained relatively stable, preserving many “ancient and elegant” features and styles. As a result, Cantonese evolved into a distinctive and prominent branch within the broader spectrum of Chinese dialects (Guangdong Provincial Chorography Compile Committee, 2004: 1-2). By the Song Dynasty, the differences between Cantonese and the language spoken in the Central Plains had become quite marked, and at this point, the Cantonese dialect had already developed characteristics closely resembling modern Cantonese (Zhan, 2004: 5).

Interaction among different ethnic groups promotes cross-border linguistic contact and fusion, leading to interference and migration, which in turn drives facilitates language change. In this process, language interference caused by borrowing and adaptation occurs (Yang, 2015:33). In the reflection of the broader social context, vocabulary serves as the vanguard of interaction, broadly active on the surface of language. Lexicography depicts linguistic realities and usage, with their compilation relying on the support of natural language instances. The functional and pragmatic features of words require the support of examples from natural discourse (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 106). The Cantonese-Portuguese dictionary documents the historical evolution of Cantonese and Portuguese integration, focusing on the lexical level of heterogeneous language fusion. This approach helps vividly portray the characteristics of Cantonese-Portuguese language and reveal its pragmatic value.

3.1. Bilingual Fusion and Significance in the *Dicionário Português-Chinês*

Currently, *Dicionário Português-Chinês*, a Portuguese-Chinese dictionary, is considered the earliest European-Chinese bilingual dictionary, compiled by Jesuit missionaries Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci between 1583 and 1588. Pages 32 to 165 of the manuscript consist of a Portuguese-Chinese vocabulary list, comprising over six thousand Portuguese words arranged alphabetically. The compilation follows European reading and writing conventions, employing a right-to-left writing style. Due to the difficulty in finding morphological similarities between Chinese and foreign languages, morphological borrowing is often used when encountering expressions from foreign languages. Among these borrowing methods, phonetic imitation is the most common. Thus, pronunciation becomes the sole criterion for translating such words (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 323).

In the Dictionary, the Chinese translations of Portuguese words reflect the characteristics of Guangdong Portuguese as a blend of Cantonese and Portuguese, with pronunciation based on Cantonese. For example, the translation of Portuguese word “Enfermar” (to fall ill) accompanied above by the corresponding Cantonese phonetic transcription “pin”, which corresponds to the Cantonese pronunciation of “bing” (病); Similarly, after translation of “Porta” (door) into Chinese, the pronunciation guide above the Chinese characters indicates the Cantonese pronunciation “mue”. Dialects possess their own characteristics, allowing identification of their respective regions and eras (Landau, 2005: 240). The use of Cantonese pronunciation in phonetic representation illustrates that Guangdong Portuguese, as a regional variant, originates from the Cantonese-Portuguese linguistic community. Additionally, *Dicionário Português-Chinês* includes a number of fixed expressions or collocations, such as “De maa mente” translated into Cantonese as “mo nai ho”, meaning “reluctantly”; and the entry for “Cousa” is excerpted as “Cousa: si-tu’si; 事-东西”, which means “thing” in Chinese. The translations of these fixed expressions are all done in Cantonese pronunciation. The study of language usage should not be limited to the study of language itself; it should also examine its contextual usage and human behavioral patterns (Landau, 2005: 237). This aspect is reflected in the glossary, where if there is more than one corresponding Chinese term for a Portuguese word, colloquial terms are provided first, followed by formal terms, to facilitate the use by beginner Chinese learners. For instance, the entry record of the Portuguese word “Algun” is “Algun sim me gin; 什么人 谁人 (who)”, with the first Chinese interpretation “什么人” being colloquial and commonly used, which is more informal compared to the formal “谁人”. Moreover, the dictionary features expanded entries, explaining terms through synonyms, phrases, or sentences. The Portuguese word “Lauatorio” (bathhouse) is followed by a short sentence explanation “lugar onde se lauar”, meaning a place where one bathes, and then the Cantonese phonetic annotation “tan si” with the meaning “湯子 (tang zi, bathroom)” (Yao, 2014:441).

3.2. *The Chronicles of Macau and its Macanese Translation*

The Chronicles of Macau (澳门纪略), completed by scholars Yin Guangren (印光任) and Zhang Rulin (张汝霖) in 1751 during the Qing Dynasty, is the first systematic work introducing Macau in China and the earliest known Portuguese-language translation glossary of Guangdong Portuguese to date (Zhang, 2008: 13-14). The book’s appendix, titled “Aoyi (Macanese Translation, 澳译)”, collects 395 commonly used words in Macau, categorized into sections such as celestial phenomena, people, clothing and food, numerology, and general items. Through the phonetic transcription of Chinese characters, it provides annotations of Portuguese pronunciation, facilitating the correct understanding of Portuguese nouns at the time (Fang, 2008: 666). The clues in the glossary entries indicate that the represented language is Macanese Creole Portuguese and/or Pidgin Portuguese, rather than European Portuguese (Michelle & Matthews, 2016: 144). Some scholars suggest that the “Aoyi” was written in the vernacular Cantonese of the time, rather than the phonetic system of written Cantonese. The maritime trade jargon of Fujian people had already entered the port of Macau, influencing the ambiguous style of Macanese Pidgin Portuguese (Liu, 2004: 117).

In terms of pronunciation, the annotations of Portuguese words in “Aoyi” are based on Cantonese pronunciation. Most of the Portuguese words in the book cannot be pronounced in Mandarin but only in the phonetics of the Cantonese dialect (Zhang, 1999: 17). For example, the original Portuguese word “homem (man)”, corresponds to the Chinese word 男人. The pronunciation annotation of it is given as “可微” (kě wēi) rather than “男人 (nán rén, meaning “man”)” in Madarin. Besides, the transliteration of “homem” into Mandarin should be pronounced as “哦明 (o míng). Similarly, the Chinese word “夜” (yè, meaning “night”) corresponds to the Portuguese “a noite”, with the breakdown being “亚—a, 内的—noi”, which is pronounced as “yà nèi dì” in Cantonese, not in the manner of Mandarin pronunciation as “阿内特 (a nèi tè)”. Therefore, If other dialects are used for pronunciation, it would deviate from the approximate

pronunciation of Portuguese. Phonetic annotation, as the use of specific symbols to determine the phonetic or phonetic combinations of words, is one of the main forms of representations of words (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 220). The phonetic features of Cantonese dialect are incorporated into the phonetic annotations of Portuguese translation into Chinese, highlighting Cantonese as part of Guangdong Portuguese.

In the context of Cantonese-Portuguese translation in *Aoyi*, the influence of Cantonese on the Portuguese-Chinese hybrid language is evident through various lexical choices. For example, the phonetic annotation of the Portuguese phrase *vento grande* (strong wind) is transcribed as “挽度架阑地”, which corresponds to the Cantonese expression “风大” (strong wind), rather than the standard Mandarin 大风 or 风很大. Similarly, Cantonese usage is reflected in the translation of verbs, such as “食” (eat) replacing the Mandarin “吃”, as seen in phrases like “食水果: (eat fruit) and “食糕点” (eat pastries). Other Cantonese terms like “企” (stand) for “站” and “落水” (rain) for “下雨” are used in place of their Mandarin counterparts. These examples, summarized in Table 1, highlight the distinctive use of Cantonese in *Aoyi* and demonstrate how the dictionary reflects local linguistic practices. The entries provide insight into the hybridization of languages and offer a clear view of how Portuguese and Cantonese influenced each other in the context of trade and daily interactions. The glossary serves as a valuable resource for understanding the evolution of Macanese Creole, where Cantonese linguistic features have played a pivotal role.

Table 1. Examples of Cantonese Usage in the *Aoyi* Glossary

Portuguese Phrase	Glossary Entry	Entry Translation	Remarks / Features
<i>vento grande</i> (strong wind)	挽度架阑地	风大	Reflects Cantonese structure “风大” instead of “风很大” or “大风”, the phrase adapts Portuguese phonetics to Cantonese structure.
<i>andar</i> (walk)	晏打	行路	“行” (hang) is the preferred Cantonese term for walking, showing the divergence from Mandarin “走路”.
<i>chuva pequena</i> (drizzle/light rain)	庇记呢奴租华	细雨	In Cantonese, “细” (sai) is preferred over Mandarin “小” (xiǎo) to describe light rain, which reflects demonstrating localized lexical selection in the Portuguese-Cantonese contact context.
<i>sogra</i> (mother-in-law)	疏架喇	外母	The use of “外母” instead of the Mandarin “岳母” reflects the influence of Cantonese in Macau’s Portuguese-Cantonese hybrid.
<i>comer</i> (eat)	故未	食	“食” (sik) is used in place of Mandarin “吃” (chi) to reflect Cantonese linguistic norms in everyday expressions.

In the 6th volume, 6th issue of the *Chinese Repository* in 1837, Samuel Wells Williams (1812-1884) mentioned a manual compiled in Pidgin Portuguese, named *A complete collection of the miscellaneous words used in the foreign language of Macao*. It begins with “Macao Pidgin (澳门番语)”, with “Pidgin” referring to a variant of Pidgin Portuguese. The existing manual is incomplete, currently comprising seven sections, and the total number of entries is not yet clear. According to the manual’s index, the vocabulary is divided into 16 sections, totaling 531 entries, with an additional nine lost parts, estimating around 1200 Portuguese-Chinese entries. The manual contains 395 entries from *the Chronicles of Macao*. Each section begins with entries excerpted from it, followed by additional new entries. It is inferred that this manual was compiled and expanded based on this earlier vocabulary list, with Cantonese as the pronunciation basis. Samuel pointed out that these transliterated Portuguese words are mostly spelled phonetically based on single Chinese syllables, resulting in a rough and obscure pronunciation. He found it difficult to imagine

how locals could communicate effectively using such language. He provided examples to illustrate. Portuguese “Agora” equivalent to “now (现在)”, is phonetically transliterated in Cantonese as “a-ko-lǎp”; “Casa”, meaning “home (家)”, is pronounced “kak-tsze” by locals; “Dentro”, meaning “interior, inside”, is phonetically transliterated in Cantonese as “teen-too-loo”. By comparing the pronunciation of certain loanwords with their corresponding original pronunciations in foreign languages, it can be observed in which dialect they were initially popularized and standardized (Zhou & You, 1986: 235). This reveals that Cantonese Pidgin Portuguese primarily circulated in the Cantonese-speaking regions of Guangdong.

Establishing the entries is the substantive first step in compiling a dictionary, and phonetic annotation is the most basic information, falling within the category of lexical formal expression (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 219). The entries in *the Chronicles of Macao* and *Dicionário Português-Chinês* are transliterated from Portuguese into Cantonese pronunciation, rather than being spelled out using Mandarin or other dialects. The expression style also adheres to Cantonese language habits, reflecting the nature of “Sino-Portuguese translation”, and further indicating the depth of Cantonese-Portuguese integration at that time. The compilation of dictionaries at that time also served as reference books for cultural exchange, laying the foundation for further mutual development in Cantonese-Portuguese interaction.

3.3. Integration of Cantonese and Portuguese in *Glossario do Dialecto Macaense, Instituto Cultural de Macau*

After the emergency since the 16th century, Cantonese-Portuguese underwent refinement through the ages, leading to the development of Macanese Creole (澳门土生土语). In his report to the queen in 1775, royal teacher José dos Santos Baptista e Lima, mentioned that he was teaching Portuguese, but the Macanese citizens couldn't understand it. However, they could instead speak a mixed language of Portuguese and Chinese, and He had to rely on translation to understand what the students were saying (Silva, 1995: 171). This highlights the predominance of Cantonese-Portuguese fusion in Macau.

Portuguese linguist Graciete Nogueira Batalha's seminal work, a glossary of the Macanese Dialect, *Glossario do Dialecto Macaense, Instituto Cultural de Macau*, was published in 1988. It covers the evolution of Macanese Portuguese over four centuries and its absorption of Cantonese dialects. The microstructure of the dictionary refers to the internal organization of information within each entry, presenting the entire or main information contained in the entries in a certain format (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 59). The explanations provided in the entries largely reflect the cultural status. In the preface of the *Glossario do Dialecto Macaense*, it is stated that the majority of vocabulary in Macau is Portuguese, while some entries are annotated in Cantonese, indicating underscores the significant role of Cantonese-Portuguese cultural integration in Macau.

Firstly, it's common for Portuguese to undergo phonetic and semantic mimicry based on Cantonese. In Cantonese, “仔”(châi) is often used to express affection. “Amorzinho” in Portuguese means “darling” or “beloved”, conveying affection towards someone (Batalha, 1988: 42). Through cultural exchange, Macanese Portuguese has introduced expressions like “amochai”, combining “amo” from Portuguese with the Cantonese phonetic “chai”, to mean “handsome guy”. Similarly, “Lanchai” phonetically mirrors “lân châi” in Cantonese, meaning “a tramp or street kid”.

In Macanese Portuguese, there is also an adoption of the Cantonese prefix “亚(yà)” to denote intimacy or familiarity, as seen in “amui (亚妹)” for a young Chinese girl, often referring to low-status female workers or servants; and “apó (亚婆)” for an elderly woman (Batalha, 1988: 48). These words demonstrate the involvement of phonetic and semantic elements from both the source and target languages in matching and transmission (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 324), showcasing the mutual influence and intricate fusion of phonetics and semantics between Cantonese and Portuguese.

Furthermore, *Glossario do Dialecto Macaense* reflects the characteristic of directly creating words based on Cantonese. Firstly, words are created based on the meanings in Cantonese. “白饭(rice)” should be “arroz”

in Portuguese, while “arroz branco” is a word-for-word translation. Under the influence of its Cantonese pronunciation “pák fân”, it gave rise to the “pó branco”, an expression of Macanese Creole. In Cantonese, a person who consumes heroin or other drugs is referred to as “白粉仔 (pák fân chái, drug user)”, literally meaning “white powder lad”. This term has been adapted in Macanese Creole from the Portuguese expression. The original “white powder” in Portuguese is its literal meaning, but influenced by the Cantonese context, it also conveys the potential meaning of “drug user”. The term “tom-tom” is used in Macanese Creole to refer to something sweet, especially in the context of children. This expression has its roots in Cantonese, where “fóng fóng” means “sugar granules” or “sugar balls”, with a generalized meaning of sweetness. In the process of mixing Cantonese and Portuguese, Macanese Creole adopted this meaning, so when someone asks a child “Qué tom-tom?”, they are actually asking if it’s sweet (Batalha, 1988: 283). Other examples include *chau fân* (炒饭, fried rice) is rendered as “arroz chau-chau” in Macanese Creole, combining the Portuguese word *arroz* (rice) with a phonetic transliteration of the Cantonese *chau* (炒). Similarly, *soū béng* (酥饼, flaky pastry) appears as “bolo supiao”, where *bolo* (cake) serves as a generic category for pastries. These examples illustrate how Macanese Portuguese adopts Cantonese semantics and phonology in everyday vocabulary, highlighting the deep influence of Cantonese in the creole lexicon.

In addition to listing the etymology of newly coined words, Batalha provides examples in its definitions. Examples play a crucial role in dictionaries as they showcase word usage, social and cultural contexts. Their arrangement principles depend on the dictionary’s purpose and target audience (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 63). In explaining the term “chintó”, the lexicographer provides a dialogue as an example, where one of the speakers says, “Cuidado com nosso testa / de chintóe de camarão”, whose direct translation is “Be careful with our forehead / from the forehead to the crown”. In reality, this compares the protruding foreheads of Macanese people to “chintó”, derived from the Cantonese “chin tui (煎堆)”, meaning a round-shaped lump, used to describe the large foreheads of Macanese individuals (Batalha, 1988: 131).

The linguistic evolution in Macau, from Cantonese-Portuguese transliteration to mutual borrowing and creation of new words, exhibits a unique expression in its vocabulary. The blending of Cantonese and Portuguese languages not only expresses identity and belonging but also influences the language users, laying the foundation for the integration of two heterogeneous cultures.

3.4. The Records in *Maquista chapado: vocabulary and expressions in Macao’s Portuguese creole*

The usage and study of Macanese Portuguese have continued to the present day. Playwright and president of the local Creole theater company, Miguel de Senna Fernandes, along with linguist Alan Norman Baxter, authored “*Maquista chapado: Vocabulary and Expressions in Macao’s Portuguese Creole*” in 2004, serving as a dictionary of Macanese Creole Portuguese.

The most fundamental principle of dictionary compilation is the principle of word inclusion, which requires compilers to adhere to the principle of realism, namely, facing linguistic realities squarely. The emergence and circulation of a word have their necessary conditions and rationality, and certain linguistic phenomena cannot be subjectively ignored (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 214). The dictionary includes a large number of vocabulary items related to the fusion of Cantonese and Portuguese, providing their etymologies. For example, “Achi-môco”, where “Achi” originates from the Cantonese term “阿痴”, meaning “foolish person (Miguel, Baxter, 2004: 3). The absence of etymological information in a dictionary is akin to forcibly disconnecting a language from its past. Through the word origins provided in this book, we can discern the historical continuity of Cantonese and Portuguese. The dictionary lists numerous Cantonese-derived etymologies, illustrating the evolution of language in terms of word usage and meaning, allowing us to understand the process of linguistic change in Cantonese-Portuguese interaction (Landau, 2005: 142-143). It includes commonly used terms such as “Foqwi (伙计, buddy)”, “Ouachi (瓜子, melon seeds)”, “Fo-chai (火柴, match)”, “Chuchai (猪仔, piglet)” and so on. In addition to etymologies, the dictionary also records

Portuguese expressions that adopt Cantonese usage habits, such as the Portuguese term “Ano (year)” with the phrase “Abri ano (to start the year)”, originating from the Cantonese expression “celebrate the New Year” (Miguel, Baxter, 2004: 8). Universality is an important principle in compiling a dictionary. Entries should encompass terms widely disseminated and recognized within a language community, as words in a language are products of collective socio-cultural activities. The emergence of new words or meanings is a collective endeavor (Zhang & Yong, 2007: 214).

Even in modern times, Macanese language, which reflects the fusion of Cantonese and Portuguese, continues to be documented. This reflects its enduring universality, vitality, and value as a testament to cross-cultural interaction.

3.5. The dissemination of Cantonese Portuguese and Pidgin English

Before and after the Opium Wars, with the increasing trade, military conflicts, and civilian interactions between Britain, the United States, and China, the people of Guangdong inherited the tradition of mixing Cantonese with Portuguese in Cantonese Portuguese. They once again attempted to phonetically spell English words using Cantonese vocabulary, thus merging Cantonese vocabulary with English words to form Cantonese English. In the 1860s, Shanghai emerged as a major center for foreign trade, surpassing Guangzhou, Macau, and Hong Kong as the hub of activity for foreigners in China. With this shift in focus, there arose a greater need among Chinese and foreign merchants for a hybrid form of English for commercial communication, known as Pidgin English.

Pidgin English originated from Guangdong Portuguese. Hunter once stated that Guangdong Portuguese was an invention of the Chinese and had roots even before the British appeared in Guangzhou (Hunter, 1993: 44-45). Evidence of Portuguese influence in Pidgin English can be found in the “Yiyan Shuyu (逸言殊语)”, concerning the “Pidgin bamboo branch song (别琴竹枝词)”. In the phrase “煞味道 (知, know)”, “煞味道” is the transliteration of “Savvy (know)”, which originates from Portuguese “saber”. Due to the high frequency of use, this term’s influence is unbreakable. Another example is “辣里龙号”, where “辣里龙 (la li long, thief)” likely originates from the Portuguese “ladrones”, meaning pirates. Additionally, words like “maskee” for “it doesn't matter” and “padre” for “monk” also come from Portuguese.

In the 1880s, Shanghai's Pidgin English reached its peak, with English words phonetically transliterated into Shanghai dialect incorporated into poetic compositions for further elaboration. As colonial powers from Britain and America extended their influence to coastal and inland regions of China, Pidgin English entered its heyday, spreading and proliferating to Hong Kong, inland areas, and the Pacific region. By the end of the 19th century, formal English education had been established in Hong Kong, yet Pidgin English still found a market there. The unique geographical and linguistic environment allowed it to persist and develop in Cantonese-speaking regions to this day. Languages undergo historical evolution through people's communicative activities, with formal English incorporating some reasonable Cantonese and Chinese words. Guangdong Portuguese, as the foundation of Pidgin English, has provided significant linguistic value.

4. Pragmatic Traits of Cantonese-Portuguese Integration as a Social Language

Guangdong Portuguese not only converges at the linguistic level but also spreads widely in social and cultural interactions. Its pragmatic features are not only reflected in static dictionary records but also manifested in the dynamic macro environment of social language. Due to its unique historical background, Macau has formed a multicultural society where Cantonese has penetrated Portuguese, and Portuguese has subtly influenced Chinese. Against this backdrop, Guangdong Portuguese, as a unique language adapting to both cultures, possesses distinctive pragmatic features and high pragmatic value.

Firstly, Guangdong Portuguese influences the expression of Macanese Creole. From a grammatical perspective, there is a phenomenon of mutual borrowing of affixes between Cantonese and Portuguese. For

example, “avo-gong” where “avo” is Portuguese for “grandfather”, and “gong” is Cantonese for “grandfather”, here used as a suffix for word formation. Similarly, there's “avo-po” where “po” is Cantonese for “grandmother”. From a syntactic perspective, Cantonese influences the sentence structure of Macanese Creole.

Secondly, Macanese Creole employs alternating affirmative and negative questioning patterns. For the expression “Is it or not”, Cantonese uses “係唔係 (it is or it is not)”, a dual questioning pattern; under the impact of Cantonese expression, Guangdong Portuguese also uses this pattern to say “É não é?” as a substitute for the standard Portuguese “Sim ou não?”. Similar influences can be observed in expressions like “Are you coming or not”. In standard Portuguese, the expression would be “vem (Are you coming?)”, whereas in Macanese Creole, it would be expressed as “vem nunca? (Are you coming or not coming?)”, reflecting the influence of Cantonese on the syntax and phrasing (Cheng & Liu, 1990: 226). In addition, Creole expressions tend to directly translate the Cantonese negative sentence structure “唔好 + verb (not good + verb)”. For instance, the Mandarin expression “不要买 (do not buy)” is rendered in Cantonese as “唔好买 (not good buy)”. In standard Portuguese, this would be expressed as “não compre”, but in Macanese Creole, it becomes “ne-bom compa”, where “ne” serves as the negation particle in Portuguese, and “bom” means “good”. This showcases how Macanese Creole integrates elements from both Cantonese and Portuguese in its sentence structure and vocabulary. From the perspective of native Portuguese speakers born in Macau, their language system is influenced by Cantonese dialects, resulting in a mixture of their native Portuguese and Cantonese. This fusion is evident in vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, leading to an alternative form of Portuguese that is similar to standard Portuguese but with notable differences.

Thirdly, the fusion of Cantonese and Portuguese gave rise to a style of Chinese known as “Portuguese-style Chinese”. After the First Opium War, Portuguese became the official language of Macau, and until 1992, the local government of Macau prioritized Portuguese, greatly influencing the style of Chinese writing. Chinese writing often mimicked the format of Portuguese, with drafts initially written in Portuguese and then translated into Chinese, thus forming Portuguese-style Chinese. An example can be seen in the signage at Macau’s Da Tan Mountain Country Park (大潭山郊野公园), which reads, “Chinese: 宠物主人不即时清理 被所陪同的宠物的排泄物污染的公共地方, 可被罚款澳门币600元”. In Chinese, “陪同 (accompany)” should refer to the person accompanying the pet, not the person being accompanied. In English, the direct translation can be “The owner accompanied by the pet can be fined 600 Macau Patacas for not promptly cleaning up the excrement”; while the correct version should be “The owner of a pet can be fined 600 Macau Patacas for not promptly cleaning up the excrement left by the pet accompanying them”. This example indicates a stiff translation from Portuguese and exhibiting distinct characteristics of Portuguese-style writing (Huang, 2007: 193-194)

Fourthly, the integration of Portuguese into everyday Cantonese expressions is a widespread phenomenon in Macao. For instance, the Portuguese word folga (rest) is commonly used in sentences like “今日我folga” (I'm off today), where the semantic overlap and phonetic similarity between folga and the Cantonese 放假 (fông gâ) facilitated its natural incorporation into local speech. Similarly, tudo (all or everything) appears in phrases such as “tudo来玩啊” (everyone come and play), blending seamlessly into Cantonese syntax (Cheng & Liu, 1990: 225-226). In addition to daily expressions, Portuguese words have also influenced place names and lexical items. The term Camara, referring to the Portuguese self-governing body, is translated as “议事亭” in Chinese but is colloquially known as “金巴喇”, a phonetic rendering of its Portuguese pronunciation (Luo, 2018: 86). Likewise, older generations still refer to tomatoes as “大孖地,” a Cantonese approximation of the Portuguese word tomate (ibid, 2018: 87). In 1996, Ferreir published a series of Macanese Creole works, Volume 2 of which, “*Papiacam di Macau*”, focuses on drama scripts, novels, and related grammar and vocabulary explanations in Macanese Creole. In the script, phrases

like “Non quero vai assi azinha... Títi queré tomtóm?” (“I don't want to go like this... Does Títi want some candy?”) and “Avó-cóng nunca si olá su neta quirida assi contente” (Grandpa has never seen his beloved granddaughter so happy) demonstrate the fusion of Cantonese and Portuguese language usage. (Ferreira, 1996: 52-89).

Finally, the place names in Macau reflect the mutual influence between Cantonese and Portuguese cultures. On one hand, the traces of Portuguese are evident. “foreland (前地)” and “roundabout (圆形地)” are unique street names in Macau. “roundabout” refers to a place where multiple roads intersect, originating from the Portuguese word “Rotunda”. There are a total of 25 roundabouts in Macau, including “Rotunda de Praça do Desporto” (Huang, 2007: 233). Additionally, many streets in Macau are named after Portuguese figures, with the number of main streets named after Portuguese individuals being five times more than those named after Chinese individuals. Before the return of Macau, street signs were bilingual, with Portuguese on the left and Chinese characters on the right. After the return of Macau to Chinese sovereignty in 1999, new street signs were introduced with Chinese characters at the top and Portuguese at the bottom, with some street signs displaying all three languages—Chinese, Portuguese, and English.

Cantonese cultural nuances subtly influence translation in the Cantonese-speaking region. The Portuguese name for Macau’s oldest casino, “Casino Lisbon”, translates to “葡京娱乐场 (Portugal-Lisbon Casino)”, with “葡” referring to Portugal and “京” to the capital, indicating Lisbon. Originally, its translation should be “里斯本娱乐场 (Lisbon Casino)”. Due to the phonetic resemblance of “里斯本 (Lisbon)” to “你舍本 (lose money)” in Cantonese, which implies losing money or facing financial loss, and considering the casino's primary focus on gambling, the name “葡京娱乐场” was eventually chosen over “里斯本娱乐场” to accommodate customer sensitivities and linguistic taboos (Song, 2019: 163). In the song “O Cantar de Macau” the lyrics “Sua mãe tancareira” incorporate the Cantonese cultural term “tancareira” (盞家妈妈, Tanka mum) (Instituto Internacional de Macau, 2016: 19).

From the remnants of Portuguese-style Chinese in government documents and signs, as well as the colloquial expressions of Cantonese-Portuguese interaction in daily life, one can sense the deep penetration of Portuguese into society. The street names in Macau carry special poetic and historical significance, serving as evidence of the profound influence of Cantonese Portuguese on language. They are not only witnesses to urban development but also symbols of Sino-Portuguese cultural exchange, constituting part of social memory. Moreover, they provide opportunities for cultural exchange and the development of cultural diversity, thereby holding significant pragmatic value for understanding local history, culture, and social development processes.

5. Conclusion

Portuguese ventured across the oceans, seeking a foothold in foreign lands. Amidst diverse and heterogeneous cultures and linguistic influences, it gradually took root and intertwined with Cantonese dialects, absorbing nutrients and characteristics from each other. While preserving its fundamental traits, it unexpectedly bore the fruit of a unique language, a result both surprising and natural. Cantonese, through localized blending with Portuguese elements, simultaneously enriched and expanded Portuguese, leaving traces in each other’s linguistic domains. Cantonese-Portuguese dictionaries stand as powerful evidence of this linguistic exchange. Dictionaries bear the responsibility of recording and documenting the vocabulary of human language, which cannot exist without culture (Chen & Zhao, 2014: 192). The formation of mixed languages during the Ming and Qing dynasties was a product of linguistic blending in diverse cultural backgrounds, representing a cultural integration phenomenon of that historical period. They were not only linguistic tools but also products of cultural exchange.

Despite the publication of a series of works studying Macanese Portuguese and the inclusion of Macanese Portuguese drama in the intangible cultural heritage list of Macau in 2012, the language remains endangered

today. The younger generation tends to use simplified language in their social networks, incorporating elements of “simplified” grammar blending Portuguese and Cantonese (Noronha & Chaplin, 2012: 5). Many young people in Macau may be proficient in Cantonese and may be reluctant to communicate in Portuguese (Yee, 2001: 137).

Through the exploration of the formation, development, and transmission of Macanese Portuguese based on Cantonese-Portuguese dictionaries, as well as the discovery of borrowed words from Cantonese and the westward spread of Cantonese culture, the significant social and linguistic value of Cantonese-Portuguese can be discerned. Not only does it facilitate communication and exchange, but it also injects fresh vitality and vigor into the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. Therefore, Cantonese-Portuguese serves as a practical example for China to engage with the world and embrace external cultures.

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