



Learning Needs of Cantonese as a Second Language in Hong Kong Tertiary Education

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Abstract

This paper studies the learning needs of Cantonese as a second language at tertiary level in Hong Kong. A needs analysis is conducted at one university in Hong Kong in order to examine the language needs of students and the challenges they faced in learning Cantonese as a Second Language (CanSL). Literature in the field shows that learners of Cantonese as a Second Language generally thought that the target language was difficult to learn and a long learning time was needed. The research in this article elicits views from CanSL learners at tertiary level in Hong Kong. Questionnaire surveys and focus group study are used to investigate CanSL learners' learning needs and challenges they have come across while learning the language. The data shows that learning Cantonese is useful and help university students engage in daily activities. Some CanSL students in this study perceive that learning the language is helpful for them to integrate into the Cantonese speaking community. This paper presents data obtained from the needs analysis and discusses intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation of CanSL students at tertiary level as well as some challenges occurred while learning the language. Implications on teaching CanSL will be discussed and these implications will be useful for curriculum developers, teaching materials writers as well as teachers' trainers.

1 Introduction and background of teaching Cantonese as a second language

Since 19th century, Cantonese dictionaries and teaching guidebooks were produced and published by the Cantonese as a second language (CanSL) learners (Bolton, 2003; Lee, 2017). These materials served as an aid for CanSL learning at that period. The CanSL learners at that period included diplomats, missionaries, and traders. Nowadays, CanSL teaching has developed further in Hong Kong because Hong Kong has a large majority of Cantonese speakers among its population. It has been pointed out that the ratio of Cantonese speakers to speakers of other Chinese varieties (especially Putonghua/Mandarin) has diminished significantly (Bauer, 2016), however Cantonese has been and is still the major language variety used by people in daily life in Hong Kong (Cheung, 1984; Bacon-Shone, Bolton, & Luke, 2015). According to Hong Kong's 2011 Population Census and 2016 Population By-Census results, around 90 percent of Hong Kong's population use Cantonese as their usual spoken language (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2011, 2016).

From 19th to mid-20th century the CanSL learners learnt the language mainly for practical reasons and job-related reasons, such as for doing business, for doing clinical work, for working in government, for missionary work, and for diplomatic services. Purposes of CanSL learning, in general, have now become more complex. Some working professionals learn the language because of work-related reasons and practical needs. There are also heritage links, which encourage the overseas Cantonese descendants to learn Cantonese, and there are expatriates with Cantonese-speaking

spouses and in-laws. Furthermore, there are cultural reasons for the admirers of the Hong Kong local culture to learn the language (Lee, 2018a).

2 Official language policy and internationalization of universities in Hong Kong

The Basic Law and Official Language Ordinance in Hong Kong states that the official language policy of Hong Kong is “Trilingualism and Bilingualism”. Trilingualism focuses on the spoken languages used in Hong Kong, which includes Cantonese, Putonghua and English. Bilingualism refers to the use of written languages, including Standard Written Chinese and written English. To be in line with the “Trilingualism and Bilingualism” official language policy in Hong Kong, the universities in Hong Kong have visions to promote “multilingual and multicultural” abilities while fostering internationalization on campus. The universities on one hand have the mission to train both local and non-local students with speaking and writing abilities of English and Chinese for local students, and on the other hand, help the non-local students learn Cantonese, Mandarin, written Chinese, and English. There are 8 publicly funded universities in Hong Kong, and all the 8 universities are working under the “Trilingualism and Bilingualism” official language policy.¹ In recent years, all the public universities in Hong Kong promote internationalization by admitting Mandarin-speaking non-local students from Asian regions, and international students from Europe, United States of America, Canada, Japan, Korea, Russia, South East Asia, Australia, as well as African countries, etc. This study uses The Chinese University of Hong Kong as a case study to study the CanSL learning needs of these 2 groups of students. The Chinese University of Hong Kong has the biggest population of Mandarin-speaking non-local students, and international language speaking students as well as exchange students in Hong Kong. The university offers credit-bearing Cantonese courses for these 2 groups of students.

Previous research in CanSL literature broadly identifies two major groups of CanSL learners in Hong Kong (Lee, 2005, 2014, 2017) in terms of their language and cultural backgrounds. The first group of CanSL learners includes non-Chinese-speaking people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including learners from Asian and South(east) Asian countries, such as Japan, Korea, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma, Malaysia, etc., as well as learners from the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Canada, Australia, Britain, European countries, and African countries. The second group of CanSL learners speak Putonghua/Mandarin, and other Chinese varieties (Lee, 2014). The categorization is made based on the fact that the first group of learners not only needs to grasp linguistic knowledge together with pragmatic skills, but they also require cultural awareness to use the target language for communication (Lee, 2005). Although the second group of learners also needs to learn linguistic knowledge, such as pronunciation, syntactic structure, and the use of lexical items, their focuses and learning pace differ from the first group (Lee, 2014). In view of the complexity in the reasons of learning CanSL, it is worthy to study non-local and international university students’ CanSL learning needs and motivation. This paper discusses the learning needs and challenges of these two groups of CanSL students studying at tertiary level. The study attempts to answer the following two research questions:

1. What are the CanSL learning needs and challenges of these 2 groups of students?
2. What motivates these two groups of students to learn CanSL?

3 Research methodology

This paper uses needs analysis to study university students’ learning needs and challenges. Needs analysis is a tool used in educational field for understanding students’ needs, and for helping the implementation of educational policies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Munby, 1978; Richterich & Chancerel, 1980; Van Els & Orisouw, 1991). Needs analysis can provide information for future plans of the language programme, including curriculum design, teaching material preparation, and even expenditure for educational development. Needs analysis also helps learners to awaken their own awareness of what they need.

There are many research tools that gather information for needs analysis (Richterich & Chanceler, 1980). Using more than one research method can triangulate the data (Johnson & Ransom, 1994; Gillham, 2000a, 2000b). The primary data of this research rely on questionnaire surveys and focus group discussions.

In the literature of teaching CanSL, Li and Richards (1995) carry out a study of non-Chinese speaking Cantonese learners' needs in Hong Kong and evaluate Cantonese course books designed for non-Chinese speaking CanSL learners. Their research points out that there are three major groups of expatriates in Hong Kong with different attitudes towards learning Cantonese. The first group makes no attempt to learn Cantonese. The second group focuses on Mandarin, rather than Cantonese. The third group makes an effort to learn Cantonese but with varying degrees of success. This paper analyzes non-local university students' learning needs of the language. The current research has an instrumental purpose, which is to identify learners' learning needs and challenges so that curriculum designers and teachers can develop appropriate courses, teaching materials and learning activities with suitable teaching approaches for university education.

4 Data collection

The needs analysis in this study consists of two components, (1) a questionnaire survey and (2) focus group study, to research university students' needs for CanSL.²

(1) Questionnaire survey

A paper-based quantitative student survey questionnaire is designed and distributed to the non-local students at the university. The questionnaire consisting of 76 items was divided into 5 parts:

- Part I – Demographic information
- Part II – Language use: Domains and functions
- Part III – Self-evaluation: Language competence and lacks
- Part IV – Perceived future language needs
- Part V – Learning strategies and suggested support measures

The questionnaire focuses on three domains of use including 'Academic use', 'Non-academic use within university', and 'Non-academic use beyond university'. Wherever appropriate, 4-point, or 5-point Likert scale is adopted for participants to indicate frequency of use and self-evaluated level of competence/agreement. The whole set of questionnaire elicits students' learning needs by studying the functions and uses of the language. Part III of the questionnaire focuses on language lacks and learning challenges of the students. Part V asks about the learning strategies that the students are adopting while learning the language and suggestions that they have for the curriculum planners, textbook developers as well as the teachers. Part III and Part IV also relate to the motivation behind their language learning, i.e. whether it is the practical reasons, or the cultural reasons that drives students learning the language.

(2) Focus group study

Invitations were sent to Mandarin-speaking non-local, and international language speaking students of the university. Ten students accepted the invitation and join the focused group study. Three focused groups were set up in semi-formal settings. Each focused group meeting lasted about 1 hour. Meeting notes were taken during the focused group meeting. All the meeting notes were arranged for analysis. The 3 focused groups included:

- a. Mandarin-speaking non-local/international language speaking students with majors related to Hong Kong/China studies (3 students).
- b. Mandarin-speaking non-local/international language speaking students not learning CanSL (3 students).
- c. Mandarin-speaking non-local/international language speaking students learning CanSL (4 students).

The focused group meetings are conducted as semi-structured interviews. The following are the areas of discussion.

- What are your reasons of learning/not learning CanSL?
- Is there any expectation regarding your Cantonese proficiency? What is your expectation?
- What was your Cantonese proficiency level when you started your studies at the university?
- Have you improved on your Cantonese proficiency? How?
- How many Cantonese courses have you taken so far? Do you think they are useful in helping you learn the language?
- How often do you need to use Cantonese for academic purposes/non-academic purpose?
- What are the major challenges/difficulties when you are learning/using the language?
- Do you think the university has provided sufficient support for international students/non-Chinese speaking students to learn Cantonese? What suggestions would you make to the university regarding support measures for learning Cantonese?

5 Data analysis

5.1 Major findings from questionnaire survey

This part presents a summary of the major findings of the survey. Wherever appropriate, means of items and averages of section items are reported. As language backgrounds may determine language needs, it is informative to identify the needs of two groups of CanSL learners, namely Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speaking students, and international language speaking students.

A total of 800 questionnaires were distributed to non-local students of the university, and 619 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 77.3%. Twenty-five questionnaires were deleted from analysis in certain sections due to missing answers. 63% of the respondents were female students while 37.3% were male. The students surveyed were almost all undergraduate students (99%). Nearly 40% of the students surveyed were Year 1 students (38.1%) while the rest was evenly distributed across Years 2 (20.7%), Year 3 (21.7%), and Year 4 or above (19.5%). Of the 619 returned questionnaires, 78 questionnaires (12.6%) were from non-local students speaking Cantonese from Guangdong area, Macau, Canada, and United States. 212 questionnaires (34.2%) were from the Mandarin-speaking non-local student group, and 329 questionnaires (53.2%) were from international language speaking student group.

5.1.1 Domains and functions of use

Participants were asked to indicate on a Likert scale ranging from 4 (“All the time”) to 1 (“Never”) for the frequency of use of Cantonese for various functions under three domains common to university students. The three domains were academic use, non-academic use on university campus, and non-academic use beyond university. Table 1 provides the overall average frequency of use of Cantonese under the three domains. Overall, the use of Cantonese was between occasional and most of the time (mean = 2.63). Among the three domains of use, Cantonese was used more frequently for non-academic purposes both within and beyond campus.

Table 1. The overall average of the frequency of use of Cantonese under three domains

Domain of use	Mean (out of 4)
a. Academic purposes	2.36
b. Non-academic purposes at campus	2.71
c. Non-academic purposes beyond university	2.81
Average	2.63

Scale: 4 = All the time, 3 = Most of time, 2 = Occasionally/Sometimes, 1 = Never

To provide more details about the use of Cantonese for the different functions, Table 2 presents the top 5 language functions across the three domains of use in terms of the reported frequency of use. Cantonese, being the language of the community, is understandably used most frequently for non-academic functions like engaging in daily chores, leisure activities and student activities and acquiring service beyond and within the university campus.

Table 2. Top 5 most frequently used language functions across three domains

Rank	Language Functions	Mean	Academic purposes	Non-academic purposes on campus	Non-academic purposes beyond university
	Engaging in daily chores, e.g. shopping	2.88			✓
	Acquiring services	2.82			✓
	Engaging in leisure activities	2.79			✓
	Acquiring services at service units, e.g. Office of Student Affairs, clinic, canteen, etc.	2.77		✓	
	Engaging in student activities	2.76		✓	

Scale: 4 = All the time, 3 = Most of time, 2 = Occasionally/Sometimes, 1 = Never

Considering the language background being a determining factor of Cantonese use, further analysis on the frequency of language use of two learners group, Putonghua/Mandarin or other Chinese varieties speaking students, and international language speaking students has been conducted and the results are reported in Table 3. The results indicate that the Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers occasionally have to use the language for all three domains surveyed in the study (average = 2.29). In the case of international language speaking students, occasionally they have to use either Cantonese for academic purposes (1.54), for non-academic purposes (1.73) at university, or beyond university (1.82). Although both Putonghua and English are official language used in Hong Kong. The data showed Putonghua/Mandarin speaking students have a slightly higher frequency to use Cantonese (in addition to Putonghua) while international language speaking students have a tendency to use English.

Table 3. Average of the frequency of use of Cantonese in three domains

Domain of use	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers (N=287)	International language speakers (N=329)
	Mean (out of 4)	Mean (out of 4)
a. Academic purposes	2.16	1.54
b. Non-academic purposes at campus	2.32	1.73
c. Non-academic purposes beyond university	2.39	1.82
Average	2.29	1.70

Scale: 4 = All the time, 3 = Most of time, 2 = Occasionally/Sometimes, 1 = Never

5.1.2 Self-evaluation of competence and lack in Chinese

The second section of the questionnaire is designed to gauge participants' self-evaluation of their Cantonese competence, which has been operationalized in six dimensions, the skills of listening, students.

The second section of the questionnaire is designed to gauge participants' self-evaluation of their Cantonese competence, which has been operationalized in six dimensions, the skills of listening, speaking, reading, knowledge of grammar, vocabulary control, and knowledge of culture. Knowledge of culture is included as part of language competence as the understanding of culture, such as local slang, idioms, punch lines, has a special role in communication. The participants were asked to evaluate their language competence on a Likert scale ranging from 5 ("Excellent") to 1 ("Poor"). Table 4 summarizes the self-evaluation of their Chinese competence by the two groups of students.

Table 4. Rank of self-rating on the competencies of language skills and knowledge

Use of Cantonese	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers		International language speakers	
	Item	Mean (out of 5)	Item	Mean (out of 5)
	Listening	3.09	Listening	1.85
	Grammar	2.53	Culture	1.80
	Vocabulary	2.53	Speaking	1.74
	Culture	2.51	Vocabulary	1.69
	Speaking	2.50	Grammar	1.67
Average		2.63		1.75

Scale: 5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Satisfactory, 2 = Not very good, 1 = Poor

The results show that with respect to the different skills and knowledge, in general, the participants rated themselves more competent in the listening skill than their speaking skill. Putonghua/Mandarin speaking students' self-rated their Cantonese skills close to satisfactory (2.63). In the case of the international language speaking students, they did not rate their control of Cantonese as high (average = 1.75).

To capture the language lacks, participants rated on a Likert scale ranging from 4 ("No difficulty at all") to 1 ("Cannot manage at all") to indicate the level of difficulties they perceive when using Cantonese in academic and non-academic settings. Table 5 presents findings regarding how participants view the difficulties they have in using Cantonese for different purposes. Overall the results indicate that the difficulty across the three domains of use. Cantonese was ranging between 2.82 and 2.99 (some difficulty). Students reported that using Cantonese in non-academic setting beyond university was the most difficult (2.99) among the 3 domains.

Table 5. Overall rating on the difficulty of using Cantonese in the academic and non-academic settings

Domain of use	Mean (out of 4)
a. Academic setting at university	2.82
b. Non-academic setting at university	2.85
c. Non-academic setting beyond university	2.99
Average	2.89

Scale: 4 = No difficulty at all, 3 = Some difficulty, 2 = A lot of difficulty, 1 = Cannot manage at all

Table 6 presents the results of the two student groups. The international language speaking students, in general, indicated that they had more difficulty with Cantonese.

Table 6. Average rating of the difficulty of using Cantonese in academic and non-academic settings, distributed by language background

Setting of uses	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers	International language speakers
	Mean (out of 4)	Mean (out of 4)
a. Academic setting at university	2.60	1.78
b. Non-academic setting at university	2.61	1.81
c. Non-academic setting beyond university	2.59	1.78
Average	2.60	1.79

Scale: 4 = No difficulty at all, 3 = Some difficulty, 2 = A lot of difficulty, 1 = Cannot manage at all

Table 7 presents the top 5 ranking of the overall rating of Cantonese under academic and non-academic settings. The lower the score in the scale ranging from 4 (no difficulty at all) to 1 (cannot manage at all) represents greater difficulties encountered. The result shows that the participants encountered more difficulties in using Cantonese in academic than non-academic setting.

Table 7. Top 5 ranking of the lacks to use Cantonese skills and knowledge in acad./non-acad. settings

Rank	Item	Mean	Academic setting at university	Non-academic setting at the university	Non-academic setting beyond the university
1	Vocabulary	2.80	✓		
2	Grammar	2.80	✓		
3	Speaking	2.81	✓		
4	Culture	2.82	✓		
5	Vocabulary	2.85		✓	

Scale: 4 = No difficulty at all, 3 = Some difficulty, 2 = A lot of difficulty, 1 = Cannot manage at all

A closer look at the top 5 ranks and the settings of use (Table 8), the Putonghua/Mandarin speaking students reported that the most difficult occasions to use Cantonese were academic setting. For international language speaking students, the most difficult occasions were academic setting, and non-academic setting beyond university. Table 8 presents the results of the two groups. For the Putonghua/Mandarin speaking students, they perceived some difficulties in using Cantonese for both academic and non-academic settings (between 2.53 to 2.58). The international language speaking students reported having difficulties in Cantonese (1.76-1.77; a lot of difficulty) for both academic and non-academic settings.

Table 8. Top 5 ranking of the rating on the difficulty of using Cantonese in academic and non-academic settings, distributed by language background

Rank	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers			International language speakers				
	Item	Mean	Setting	Item	Mean	Setting	Setting	Setting
1	Speaking	2.53	✓	Vocabulary	1.76	✓		
2	Speaking	2.54		Grammar	1.76	✓		
3	Speaking	2.55		Grammar	1.76		✓	
4	Vocabulary	2.58		Speaking	1.77	✓		
5	Vocabulary	2.58	✓	Culture	1.77			✓

Scale: 4 = No difficulty at all, 3 = Some difficulty, 2 = A lot of difficulty, 1 = Cannot manage at all

3 Settings to use the Chinese languages, a: Academic setting at CUHK, b: Non-academic setting at CUHK, c: Non-academic setting beyond CUHK

5.1.3 Perceived future needs and priorities of learning Cantonese

The third section of the survey focuses on the perceived future needs and purposes of learning Cantonese. First, the participants were asked to rate on the Likert scale ranging from 4 (highly essential) to 1 (unnecessary) to indicate the usefulness of mastering Cantonese. Subsequently, they were invited to answer a polar question on the purposes of learning Chinese. Lastly, the participants were asked to rate on the Likert scale ranging from 4 (top priority) to 1 (not a priority) to show the priorities of learning the different language dimensions at university. The results presented in Table 9 show that the participants thought that it was essential to master the skills and knowledge of Cantonese (3.02-3.17; that was between highly essential and essential).

Table 9. Rank of overall rating on the usefulness of mastering the skills and knowledge of Cantonese

Rank	Item	Mean (out of 4)
1	Listening	3.17
2	Speaking	3.16
3	Culture	3.10
4	Vocabulary	3.07
5	Grammar	3.02
Average		3.10

Scale: 4 = Highly essential, 3 = Essential, 2 = Somewhat necessary, 1 = Unnecessary

Further analysis on the different student groups viewed the usefulness of Cantonese was conducted and the results are presented in Table 10. The Putonghua/Mandarin speaking students considered it essential to master Cantonese listening and speaking skills. The international language speaking students rated culture the most essential dimension to master in Cantonese. In comparison, grammar was not ranked as essential as culture by the two groups.

Table 10. Rank of rating on the usefulness of mastering the language skills and knowledge, distributed by language background

Use of Cantonese	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers			International language speakers	
	Rank	Item	Mean (out of 4)	Item	Mean (out of 4)
	1	Listening	3.19	Culture	2.48
	2	Speaking	3.15	Speaking	2.47
	3	Culture	3.04	Listening	2.46
	4	Vocabulary	3.03	Vocabulary	2.36
	5	Grammar	2.98	Grammar	2.28
Average			3.08		2.41

Scale: 4 = Highly essential, 1 = Unnecessary

With respect to the future needs of knowing Cantonese, the results presented in Table 11 indicate that more than 60% of the participants indicated that future needs of learning the language is a reason. In descending order, Cantonese was needed for social purposes (e.g. enhanced understanding of the culture, extended entertainment opportunities, travelling), for better integration into the community (more involved in university life, enhanced communication with teachers and peers) and for academic and career opportunities (future employment, present or future academic work).

Table 11. Rank of the perceived future needs of learning Cantonese

Use of Cantonese		
Rank	Item	%
1	Enhanced understanding of the culture	74.6
2	More involved in university life	74.5
3	Extended entertainment opportunities	73.3
4	Enhanced communication with teachers and peers	72.6
5	Future employment	70.5
6	Travelling	62.4
7	Present or future academic work	61.7

The purposes of learning Cantonese slightly varied between the two groups (Table 12). Results show that all participants in the survey commonly claimed that they needed Cantonese for social purposes. As the top priorities of learning Cantonese were for understanding culture, integration and entertainment. It explains why the international language speaking students ranked culture as the top essential skill and knowledge for learning Cantonese as discussed in previous section.

Table 12. Top 3 rank of the perceived future needs of learning Cantonese, distributed by language background

Rank	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers			International language speakers		
	Item	Prof. purposes	Social purposes	Item	Prof. purposes	Social purposes
1	More involved in university life		✓	Enhanced understanding of the culture		✓
2	Extended entertainment opportunities		✓	More involved in university life		✓
3	Enhanced understanding of the culture		✓	Extended entertainment opportunities		✓

5 Professional purposes: future academic or career focuses; Social purposes: social communication and leisure focuses.

In order to understand the language needs further, the participants were asked to rate the priority of learning Cantonese language skills and knowledge at university. Overall, Cantonese has a higher rate of learning priority from the Putonghua/Mandarin speaking students than the international language speaking students (Table 13). Table 13 indicates that the two student groups rated listening and speaking skills as the top learning priority. The international language speakers' rated learning Cantonese speaking skill and the Putonghua/Mandarin speaking students rated Cantonese listening skills higher as the top learning priority, respectively.

Table 13. Rank of rating on the priority of learning Cantonese skills and knowledge, distributed by language background

Use of Cantonese	Rank	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers		International language speakers	
		Item	Mean (out of 4)	Item	Mean (out of 4)
	1	Listening	3.32	Speaking	2.75
	2	Speaking	3.30	Listening	2.73
	3	Culture	3.08	Culture	2.46
	4	Vocabulary	2.98	Vocabulary	2.43
	5	Grammar	2.91	Grammar	2.35
Average			3.12		2.54

Scale: 4 = Top priority, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Low priority, 1 = Not a priority

5.1.4 Strategies and preferred support measures of learning the Chinese language

The last section of the questionnaire focuses on the language learning strategies and the preferred support measures. The participants were invited to choose from a list of strategies they have been using to learn Cantonese, and they may provide multiple answers for this question. Table 14 summarizes the reported learning strategies adopted by all the participants while Table 15 presents the learning strategies adopted by the two student groups.

Table 14. Ranking of overall count of adopted language learning strategies

Rank	Item	% (of all)
1	Enroll on language classes	75.0
2	Mass media, e.g. TV drama, songs	60.2
3	Interact with native speakers	55.7
4	Self-learn – Online learning materials	46.0
5	Social Media, e.g. mobile phones APPs	42.8
6	Interact with other learners	35.0
7	Other	1.3

The result shows that participants adopted more than one strategy in order to enhance their Cantonese competence with all the six learning strategies listed adopted to different extent. The most common strategy was enrolling on formal language classes, which was chosen by 75% of the participants. The next common strategy was making use of the mass media, which was indicated by 60% of the participants. Some participants chose to interact with the native speakers as a learning strategy (55.7%).

Table 15. Ranking of overall count of adopted language learning strategies of different learners' groups

Rank	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers			International language speakers		
	Item	Count	%	Item	Count	%
1	Enroll on language classes	154	72.6	Enroll on language classes	260	79.0

2	Mass media, e.g. TV drama, songs	121	57.1	Interact with native speakers	214	65.0
3	Interact with native speakers	118	55.7	Mass media, e.g. TV drama, songs	152	46.2
4	Social Media, e.g. mobile phones APPs	97	45.8	Self-learn – Online learning materials	141	42.9
5	Self-learn – Online learning materials	93	43.9	Interact with other learners	138	41.9
6	Interact with other learners	66	31.1	Social Media, e.g. mobile phones APPs	108	32.8
7	Other	2	0.9	Other	8	2.4

The results in Table 15 show that all the participants chose to enroll in the language classes. The second most common strategy for Mandarin-speaking group was making use of the mass media while the international language speakers have indicated that interacting with the native speakers as the second common strategy. The data showed that the two groups of students have adopted slightly different learning strategies.

To refine the preferred language support measures further, the participants were invited to choose from a list of the support measures. The results presented in Table 16 indicate that among all the listed measures, the credit bearing language courses was rated the most preferred by the two groups while making use of technology is chosen by the least number of participants. Compared with the language courses, the non-credit bearing courses were not rated as favorably as the credit bearing courses. The other two measures indicated by the Putonghua/Mandarin and international language speakers included coaching by native speakers and language exchange groups.

Table 16. Ranking of the count of preferred support measures of different learners' groups

Rank	Putonghua/Mandarin and other Chinese varieties speakers			International language speakers		
	Item	Count	%	Item	Count	%
1	Credit-bearing language courses/ Coaching by native speakers	97	45.8	Credit-bearing language courses	167	50.8
2	Language exchange groups	80	37.7	Coaching by native speakers	159	48.3
3	Group tutorials	66	31.1	Language exchange groups	153	46.5
4	Non-credit bearing courses/ Theme-based workshops	65	30.7	Peer tutoring schemes	99	30.1
5	Peer tutoring schemes	63	29.7	Non-credit bearing courses	79	24.0
6	Technological support, e.g. online learning resources, APPs	50	23.6	Theme-based workshops	78	23.7
7	Other	2	0.9	Group tutorials	75	22.8
8				Technological support, e.g. online learning resources, APPs	74	22.5
9				Other	7	2.1

5.2 Major findings from focus group study

The ten students who were present in the focused group meetings think that Cantonese was used every day for non-academic purposes. For examples, Cantonese was used in the dorm with the room-mates/friends and in the canteens to order food as well as in college activities and the university activities. They point out that the speaking skill was most important to them. They will be satisfied if they could speak and communicate orally in Cantonese. Reading and writing in Chinese was not of primary importance because most of the time English translations were available to students on campus and in the community. They think that all the non-local university students could benefit from learning Cantonese and they estimate about half of the exchange students were very devoted to learn Cantonese, especially when the students' studies were related to Hong Kong. They think that learning Cantonese could help them experience Hong Kong and communicate in daily situations. They pointed out that the university played an important role for the students to realize the actual linguistic situation and to help the students face challenges. All the university's Cantonese courses attendees in the focus group study found the courses useful. They iterated that their learning targets were to be able to use Cantonese in daily communication, and to communicate with local people without any hindrance. They think that they did not expect themselves to speak like the native speakers but hoped their use of Cantonese could help them to better integrate into the Hong Kong society.

As for the Cantonese learning support, they would appreciate if university could offer more varieties of Chinese classes and accept classes with less enrolment, such as less than 10 students. It would be especially helpful if the tutors and peer tutors organize fieldtrips and language activities outside formal classroom. They also thought that more non-credit bearing Cantonese courses with different levels and online learning materials would be helpful. They suggested that pass/fail option in grading system would be good. In addition, non-credit bearing courses, especially survival courses, would be less stressful and could motivate students to learn Cantonese.

6 Discussions

6.1 Learning needs of Cantonese as a second language in Hong Kong tertiary education

The needs analysis data show that the Mandarin-speaking non-local and the international language speaking university students learn CanSL for non-academic purposes within the campus, or beyond university life. They set a higher priority of learning for non-academic purposes than learning for career and academic purposes. They report that the use of Cantonese is mainly for daily activities in Hong Kong, engaging in student activities and leisure activities. The functions of Cantonese are mainly for cultural reasons and for integration into the community. The Mandarin-speaking non-local students have relatively more confidence in the listening skills while they need help on speaking and understanding the cultural aspect of the language. Grammar and vocabulary learning are not rated highly in the learning process. Although the two groups of students have similar suggestions on learning supports, such as the Cantonese courses (credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing), interact with native speakers (in the form of tutorials, peer tutoring and language exchange group), the data also show that the international language speaking students have different needs and difficulties when comparing with students speaking Putonghua/Mandarin, or other Chinese varieties. The international students think that learning the cultural aspects, listening and speaking skills are most important, and this group of students report more difficulties in learning Cantonese.

6.2 Motivation and second language learning

Motivation is a term frequently used in education. There is a general believe that motivation directly relates to the efforts put to the learning activity as well as successfulness in achieving the learning target. Gardner and Lambert (1959) start to discuss motivational variables in second lan-

guage learning. The socio-educational model developed by Gardner (1985, 2006) suggests that second language learning cannot be solely explained by the learners' aptitude, or ability to acquire a second language. The model suggests that "motivation" played an important role and drive learners to learn a second language. The socio-educational model attempts to explain motivational factors, such as integration, attitude toward learning situation, and motivational intensity. The model further develops to include both internal factors, which refer to motivational factors within the learner, as well as external factors, which include the social and cultural settings behind the second language. Cognitive psychologists (Dörnyei, 1998; Noels, 2001) agree that motivation is a primary driving force to sustain long and tedious learning process, and high motivation can make up for the deficiencies in learners' language aptitude and learning conditions. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1995) suggests that motivational orientations vary according to the extent to which the goal for performing an activity is of personal choice. The types of motivation that affect foreign language learning can be broadly classified as extrinsic, and intrinsic motivation as well as amotivation (Noels, Pelletier, & Vallerand, 2000; Noels, 2001; Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 2001). Extrinsic motivation comes from rewards and/or pressure that come from social environment. When a L2 learner is learning the target language because of career advancement, monetary reward, programme requirement, or a course credit; it is the extrinsic motivation that drives the L2 learner to engage in language learning activities. In the case when the reward and/or pressure are removed, the learner might stop putting effort into the learning activities.

Intrinsic motivation is the most self-determined form of motivation (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 2001). It is the inherent pleasure and enjoyment of the learning activity itself that drive the L2 learner to engage in the learning task. The reason of learning is not rooted from career or academic requirements but because the learner feels that the learning activity challenges the learner's ability, and the learning activity provide enjoyment. L2 learners' intrinsic motivation relates to self-efficacy, enjoyment of using the language and interest in the target culture. Intrinsically motivated learners are expected to maintain and sustain their effort and engagement in the L2 learning process even when no external rewards are provided, or when no external pressure is imposed. The engagement of the learning activity is voluntary, and highly self-determined. Noels, Clément and Pelletier's (1999) research further indicates that motivational subtypes correlate with different language learning outcomes, the intention to pursue language studies in the future as well as level of L2 competence (Noels, Pelletier, & Vallerand, 2000). According to Noels, Clément and Pelletier (2001), amotivation arises when the goals for learning the target language no longer exist. In such a case, the L2 learners have little reason to engage in language learning and they might quit engaging in the learning activity.

Following this line of thought, family members (Gardner, Masgoret, & Tremblay, 1999; Sung & Padilla, 1998), teachers (Noels, 2001), peers, and members of the L2 community (Genesee, Rogers, & Holobow, 1983; Leets & Giles, 1995) can affect L2 learners' motivation. In CanSL literature, very little research has been done on learning needs and motivation. Boyle's (1997) preliminary study touches the issues relating to motivation. He compares successful CanSL learners with the failure cases, and mentioned that a Cantonese-speaking girlfriend, or boyfriend *can definitely foster the learning of Cantonese*, and marrying into a Chinese family makes a big difference. However, Boyle (1997) does not further discuss and support this claim with empirical data. Looking at the historical study of CanSL (Lee, 2005, 2017), the learning of CanSL by diplomats, missionaries and traders in 19th century and early-20th century were mainly driven by extrinsic motivation, which was job-related, or career-related reasons. These learners tended to learn Cantonese to practice their missionary, diplomatic duties, or to engage in trade. Nowadays, the situation is becoming more complex. By observation, some non-local and international university students are still driven by extrinsic motivation and learn the language for rewards, or pressure from external environment, such as for academic-related or career-related reasons. Some are affected by intrinsic motivation, such as learning the language for better enjoyment of Cantonese culture, for better integration in university life, for talking with peers and family members as well as for heritage reasons.

6.3 *Intrinsic motivation: Learning for non-academic purposes on campus and beyond university life*

The data show that the Mandarin-speaking non-local and the international language speaking university students learn Cantonese mainly for non-academic purposes rather than academic ones, and the university students also report that the target language is mainly used in non-academic domain. Although they also think that learning Cantonese can help their future career for academic pursuit, their top priority of learning the language at university is for social purpose, that is to engage in student activities, broaden their entertainment opportunities, and integrate into the community. In this sense, the two groups of university students are relatively more driven by intrinsic orientation rather than extrinsic motivation. They learn or will learn the language in order to engage in students' activities on campus and leisure activities within or beyond university. Learning of Cantonese helps them obtain life enjoyment in Hong Kong. These students, both Putonghua/Mandarin-speaking and international language speaking, also report that they use Cantonese in non-academic domain to talk to Cantonese speakers in the community. It is the pleasure of learning and using the language that drives their CanSL learning. Other indicators that these students are intrinsically driven, include they suggest provision of non-credit bearing courses, implementation of tutoring/peer tutor system, offering of field trip and language activities. All these suggestions are relating to the enjoyment of the learning activities, and the pleasure in using the language.

The data indicate that these students are willing to communicate with native L2 speakers. Cantonese is used by these two groups of learners in non-academic domains, with peers, to seek leisure and entertainment opportunities, and cultural understanding of the language and the speech community. In relation to learning supports, they show interest in interacting with the native speakers and engaging in peer tutoring activities. However, they may lack self-confidence in using the L2 to communicate. The Putonghua/Mandarin-speaking students think that their competence of using Cantonese is satisfactory (2.63 out of 4). The international language speaking students rate themselves as not very good (1.75 out of 4). In terms of difficulties of learning and using the language, the Putonghua/Mandarin-speaking students report some difficulties (2.6 out of 4) and the international language speaking students express that they have a lot of difficulty in learning and using the L2 (1.79 out of 4).

6.4 *Amotivation*

It is interesting that the data present relatively high intrinsic motivation of learning the L2, and at the same time indicate that there are some difficulties (for the Putonghua/Mandarin-speaking students) to a lot of difficulties (for the international language speaking students) in learning and using the language. The intrinsic motivation and amotivation seem to affect these students L2 learning simultaneously. Lee (2019) studies adult CanSL learners and analyzes three main hurdles for CanSL learners, namely linguistic hurdle, psychological hurdle, and socio-cultural hurdle. These hurdles could affect students' L2 learning by reducing the pleasure of engaging in the L2 learning activities. Linguistic hurdle refers to the difficulty related to learning phonological, and grammatical structures of the target language. The psychological hurdle includes the pressure and anxiety created while learning the target language, such as the examination pressure, and the feeling of helplessness when the adult L2 learners can only express using vocabulary, syntactic and discourse structure of a child's proficiency level. Stress and pressure occur with most of the CanSL learners. Some studies (Hashemi, 2011; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) point out that stress and anxiety interfere with language learning. The sociocultural hurdle refers to the surrounding social environment, of which the speech community prefer not to use Cantonese to talk to the CanSL learners.

The linguistic hurdle may reduce the enjoyment and achievement of learning the L2, but this could be tackled by advancing linguistic studies of Cantonese structure (Cheung, 1968, 2007; Matthews & Yip, 2011), planning of curriculum according to the learning needs and difficulties, systematic teaching materials (Lee, 2019) as well as professional teaching teams. The psychological hurdle could be tackled by offering non-credit bearing courses, peer tutoring system, and language

activities such as fieldtrip and collaborative language activities (Harding-Smith, 1993; Jin, 2006; Lee & Chen, 2013; Meyers & Jones, 1993; Swain, 2009) in addition to the formal credit bearing courses so that the students could learn and practice the target language in less stressful situations. The most difficult hurdle is the sociocultural hurdle. The data in this study show that the non-local and the international university students are intrinsically motivated to learn and use the language to engage in social life. They expect that they could learn and practice the target language by talking with native speakers. However, Lee (2012, 2018a) points out that the CanSL learners have a hard time finding chances to practice the target language in the surrounding social environment when interact with native speakers using Cantonese. In Lee's (2018a) study, the CanSL learners complain that Hong Kong people prefer to use English to communicate with non-Chinese speaking interlocutors, and the sociocultural environment is not particularly supportive of their CanSL learning (Lee, 2018a, 2019). This explains why the international students report in this study that learning Cantonese is difficult and need learning support. There are several reasons for the Hong Kong people using English rather than Cantonese with the non-Chinese speakers. Firstly, most Cantonese L1 speakers do not expect non-Chinese speaking expatriates to learn Cantonese. Some educated Hong Kong people find it difficult to understand why expatriates would want to learn to speak Cantonese for anything beyond simple transactional purposes (Lee, 2018a). These Hongkongers think, though not necessarily correctly, that the expatriates can get along with English. Secondly, most Hongkongers in the professional field use English in the work environment since English has been and still is the lingua franca in the business and educational domains. There is a common belief that using English is more convenient for discussing work-related issues (Cheung, 1984; Bacon-shone, Bolton, & Luke, 2015). According to population census, over 90 percent of Hong Kong's residents use Cantonese as their usual spoken language therefore it seems straightforward to believe that the CanSL learners could easily find chances to practice the target language. However, Lee (2018a, 2019) shows that the actual situation is not that straightforward. It is always difficult for the CanSL learners (both the Putonghua/Mandarin speaking group and the international language speaking group) to get a chance to use the target language and to practice Cantonese in real life in the community, especially for the beginner-level learners. Although the CanSL learners may try to use the target language to communicate with native speakers, the native speakers act as teachers and correct the CanSL learners' mistakes rather than trying to engage in a natural conversation. Furthermore, even when the CanSL learners try their best to use the target language to communicate with the Hongkongers, the Cantonese spoken by the native speakers offered limited help to their language learning because the linguistic input from native speakers is always incomprehensible to the learners not until they have reached an advanced learning stage.

Some studies (Lee, 2018a; Li & Richards, 1995; Li et al., 2016) suggest that Hongkongers do not understand the non-Chinese speaking CanSL learners' reasons for learning Cantonese. English, historically, has had higher status in Hong Kong's diglossic situation (Luke & Richards, 1982) and has been used as an official language in the government, business, and education domains (Cheung, 1984). English has tended to be the first choice for Hong Kong people when communicating with the non-Chinese speaking expatriates (Lee, 2012; Li et al., 2016). The native speakers always question the CanSL learners' language-learning reasons. Positive support for the CanSL learners to learn Cantonese is lacking indeed. McDonough (1981) discusses the influence of social factors on effective language learning and mentions, *persistent failure may be explained by social factors rather than specific learning disabilities, or even in effective teaching* (McDonough, 1981, p. 94). Boyle (1997) points out that an out-going personality can help in learning a foreign language. He suggests that learners should not only use the target language with the fellow classmates and teachers, but also with the strangers outside the classroom. Boyle (1997) further suggests that spending more time with people speaking the target language benefits foreign language learning. On the contrary, the shy learners take relatively fewer opportunities to speak and practice the target language. Lee (2018a) presents longitudinal case studies of three adult CanSL learners and shows that the situation is not that straightforward. The study reports that migrants who enter Hong Kong with an enthusiastic pursuit of learning *the language of Hongkongers* and the willingness to assimilate into the local culture face challenges when they are in the process of learning Cantonese. When they try to use

Cantonese in their daily life, puzzlement and struggles in identity negotiation emerge while learning the language. The CanSL learners, in Lee's (2018a) study, try to culturally assimilate into the Hong Kong community through learning the language and engaging in sociocultural activities. Social pressure towards the expatriate learners of Cantonese, however, hinder or sometimes even refrain them from conversing in Cantonese. Further, Lee (2018a) shows Hong Kong people's attitude towards the CanSL learners can hardly be described as positive and encouraging. The lack of support from the native Cantonese-speaking Hongkongers definitely affects CanSL learners' degree of success in learning the language as well as in understanding the culture, and ultimately their efforts to socially integrate into the community. The sociocultural hurdle (Lee, 2018a, 2019) hinders the learners' exposure to real-life situations and creates an amotivation effect for CanSL learning.

7 Implications for teaching Cantonese as a second language

The sociocultural hurdle creates difficulties and demotivates the CanSL learners, especially the beginning learners. It is suggested that teaching activities, language tasks, and textbook design can be based on communicative situations so that the CanSL learners can at least practice real-life language situations inside the classroom. Teaching activities, on the one hand, should increase both linguistic and cultural input (Kramsch, 1993); and on the other hand, teachers can create authentic or semi-authentic language scenarios for the learners to practice the target language. Students could learn the linguistic knowledge and pragmatic skills in the formal classroom and practice with peers and tutors in semi-structured and semi-authentic situations both in and outside the classroom. This could help build up confidence for the CanSL learners. Advanced education technology can assist language learning (Xu, 2011; Lee, 2014, 2018b), and create multi-dimensional learning opportunities. Some consensus and principles set in the Chinese as a second language (CSL) field are applicable to CanSL teaching, such as the functional approach in building up CanSL syllabi (Liu, 2006; Zhao, 2008), in which linguistic structure is the foundation of CSL learning. Nonetheless, language functions are the learning target, and the target culture is the learning environment of the CanSL learners. The teaching of these three elements, namely linguistic structure, language functions and target culture are important and has been widely discussed since the 1990s in CSL literature. Based on this ideology, there have been an increasing number of CSL immersion programme in China since the late 20th century. These immersion programmes combine linguistic structure, language functions, and culture together reflecting the concept of *learning while using* (Wang, 2010). This type of programme brings learners to authentic, or semi-authentic language situations to practice the target language. In these immersion programmes, the language teachers and tutors can stimulate and encourage learners to use the target language, with guidance and control, to communicate with target language speakers in the community. There are very few CanSL courses/programmes using this approach, but there are some trial practices (Lee & Wongtip, 2013), and its effectiveness is worth studying in future research.

8 Conclusion

In this study, the questionnaire survey and focused group study of the non-local university students confirm that the two groups of CanSL learners, namely the Putonghua/Mandarin or other Chinese varieties speaking learners and the international language speaking learners, are having similar learning needs and motivation coupled with different types of perceived difficulties. Though they have similar motivations, such as learning the language mainly for non-academic and social purposes, the international language speaking students reported that they came across more difficulties. The results of this study shows that the CanSL learners at the tertiary level are predominantly intrinsically motivated by the inherent pleasure of the learning activities and life enjoyment on campus and beyond university life by using the target language. Teachers should make the lessons relevant to the CanSL learners' livelihood in order to raise the CanSL learners' interest and maintain their motivation.

The findings in this study show the language background plays a role in the language needs, and the support measures are much needed. The results provided valuable information for the university to consider a variety of measures and activities to cater for the needs of students from different language backgrounds. It is recommended that the future research to examine effectiveness of the related measures. Future research, on the design and implementation of supportive measures as well as teaching methodology, would be beneficial to the CanSL field as such research may throw some light on the study of second/foreign language teaching.

Notes

1. There are 8 universities in Hong Kong funded by public and under the University Grants Committee in Hong Kong in 2019. The 8 universities are The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), City University of Hong Kong (CityU), Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), Lingnan University (LingU) and University of Hong Kong (HKU).
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