CHAPTER 1

From *Ang moh* 紅毛 to *Phi jun* 批准: The Role of Southern Min in Early Contacts between Chinese and European Languages

*Picus Sizhi Ding*

1 Introduction

Literacy is usually considered to symbolize a high extent of civilization. Through texts, an enormous amount of knowledge can be maintained and transmitted properly. Texts also leave behind a record of language use over time. Nonetheless, a writing system is not a necessary phase of language development. In fact, the vast majority of human languages lack a writing tradition. This also holds true among Sinitic languages, where a northern prestige variety written in an ideographic system had represented for centuries the written standard, divorced from spoken Sinitic languages until the advent of a Mandarin-based national language in the early 1900s (see Chen 1999 and Hoogervorst, this volume). As such, it is often difficult to investigate issues related to sociohistorical linguistics in other Chinese varieties such as Southern Min, whose informal written form is found only in special genres, such as traditional opera scripts and other performance-based vocal works (van der Loon 1991; Chia, this volume). These texts were essentially created to cater the need of performers who would entertain an audience in front of them.

Lyrics – especially those for pop songs – represent an important additional source for written Cantonese and written Southern Min. These contemporary texts are extremely productive by virtue of the thriving entertainment industry in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In what follows I will first address lyrics of Cantonese pop songs, and later that of Southern Min. In the study of these and other non-Mandarin Sinitic texts, I propose to distinguish between literary-style texts and colloquial-style texts. The former are approximated to

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1 In this chapter, all Chinese characters are presented in the traditional form with tone marks omitted in their romanization. Unless noted otherwise, the romanization of Chinese characters is based on Standard Chinese. The *Hanyu pinyin* 漢語拼音 and *Jyutping* 粵拼 are adopted for the romanization of Standard Chinese/Mandarin and Cantonese respectively. An informal scheme is used to transcribe Southern Min and Hakka.
the standard conventions of written Chinese, whereas the latter duly represent
the written form of a Sinitic vernacular. Using excerpts of two Cantonese pop
songs written by contemporary lyricists from Hong Kong, these two styles of
texts are exemplified in (1) and (2) respectively. Sung in Cantonese, the songs
belong to the same genre of vocal entertainment found in historical Sinitic
texts in the south.

(1) Literary-style Cantonese
(a) 小小的 宇宙 天真的 宇宙
siu siu dik jyu zau tin zan dik jyu zau
small universe innocent universe
‘In the small and innocent universe’

(b) 真的 我 真的 你 唔係 小木偶
zan dik ngo zan dik nei m hai siu muk ngau
real me real you not.be small.puppet
‘you and I are real, not small puppets’
(Extracted from Siu Si Hau 小時候 ‘When We Are Small’)

(2) Colloquial-style Cantonese
(a) 我哋 呢班 打工仔
ngo dei ni baan daa gung zai
we this.group blue-collar
‘We, being a group of workers;’

(b) 通街 走羅 直頭係 壞腸胃
tung gaai zau dek zik tau hai wai coeng wai
through.street run.about certainly bad.belly
‘certainly (get) stomach sick by rushing from street to street’

(c) 撿 啥些少 到 月底 點夠 使
wan go se siu dou jyut dai dim gau sai
find that.little till month.end how.enough use
‘earning that little, enough for spending till end of the month?’
(From Bun Gan Baat Loeng 半斤八兩 ‘Half a Catty vs. Eight Taels’)

It must be noted that style-switching (or borrowing between the standard
and a vernacular variety) is a common phenomenon in non-Mandarin Sinitic
texts. For instance, the Cantonese negative copula m hai 唔係 is found in (1b),
an example of a literary style. This particular instance of style-switching is
necessary in order to accommodate a constraint on Cantonese lexical tones with musical tunes. In this regard, the lyric of *Bun Gan Baat Loeng* 半斤八両 ‘Half a Catty vs. Eight Taels’, which was released in 1976, is remarkable in its utter avoidance of Standard Chinese expressions. In consequence, it perfectly reflects spoken Cantonese when the lyric is sung or read out. Such a degree of matching between writing and speaking is impossible with a literary-style text.

Nowadays in Hong Kong, lyricists of Cantonese pop songs often choose to write in the literary style, as doing so represents a higher register with a tincture of learned fashion. On the other hand, the Cantonese version of Wikipedia (zh-yue.wikipedia.org) adopts the colloquial style. Similarly, the Southern Min version of Wikipedia (zh-min-nan.wikipedia.org) features the colloquial style, but it is written in the Latin alphabet. By contrast, lyrics of contemporary Taiwanese (a variety of Southern Min) pop songs are written with Chinese characters. As the convention for using characters to write Southern Min is underdeveloped, the writing style found in most Taiwanese lyrics holds somewhat of a middle ground between the literary and colloquial style.²

Examples (3) and (4) below present excerpts of lyrics displaying the two styles of Southern Min texts. The lyrics written in the literary style in (3) are taken from a duet in which a woman sings in Mandarin and a man in Taiwanese. This unusual combination of languages in the song has probably prompted the choice of a style closer to Mandarin (i.e. the literary style). In colloquial-style writing, the sound principle – that is, the approximation of Southern Min pronunciation – represents a favoured strategy for the selection of Chinese characters for a word, e.g. *phwey* 批 instead of *sin* 信 (which would be taken under a meaning-based approach) for ‘letter’, as found in the title of the song in (4). This principle for character selection is observed much more consistently in written Cantonese than in written Southern Min. As shown in (4), it is not uncommon to find varying preference over the choice of characters for the same word by different people in colloquial-style Taiwanese pop songs, e.g. 乎/予 for *hoh* ‘to give’ and 多/濟 for *jwey* ‘much, many’.

**(3) Literary-style Taiwanese**

(a) 为 妳 傷過 的 心  
wey li siong kwey ey sim  
for you hurt.EXP of heart  
‘The heart that has been hurt because of you’

² For a general review of the varied orthography of Southern Min, see Ding (2016: 70).
From Ang Moh 红毛 To Phi Jun 批准

(b) 孤單 望 月 又 一 年
koh tan mang kwey iu jin
‘look at the moon alone for another year’

(c) 不甘 離開 有 妳 的 記誌
m kam li khwi u li ey ki ti
‘unwilling to go off the memory of you’
(From Kim Sin Ji Wey Li 今生只為你 ‘This Life for You Only’)

(4) Colloquial-style Taiwanese

(a) 感謝 你 乎/予 我 愛過
kam sia li hoh kwa ai kwey
‘Thank you for having let me love you’

(b) 乎/予 我 心痛 也 這 多/濟
hoh kwa sim thia ya jia jwey
give me heartache also this much
‘giving me also so much heartache’

(c) 恨 我 自己/甲己 袜 覺醒
hun kwa ka yi wey kak chin
hate me oneself cannot awaken
‘I hate myself for being unable to wake up’

(d) 無 資格 會凍/會當 講 後悔
mo chu keh ey thang kong ho hwey
not have capability can say regret
‘have no right to express regret’
(From Jit Tiong Phwey 一張批 ‘A Letter’)

Taking Cantonese as an example, Table 1.1 summarizes the major differences of these two styles of texts. The literary style, with its vocabulary and grammar largely shared with Standard Chinese,3 is so close to writing in Standard Chinese that it can be considered a variety of written Chinese, readable by

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3 This refers to contemporary Mandarin in modern times and Classical Chinese (文言 wényán) in the past.
everyone literate in Chinese. In contrast, the colloquial-style text is difficult to comprehend for those who do not speak the particular vernacular. Because of this distinction, the aforementioned two styles of non-Mandarin Sinitic texts can be identified.

This distinction is relevant to the rest of this chapter. Historical texts written in Southern Min appear to be of the literary style, or a mix of both styles. In *Nai Kia Ki* 萊鏡記 ‘Tale of the Lychee Mirror’, which is dated to the sixteenth century and regarded as the first written literature in Southern Min, the general distribution pattern of writing styles is as follows: literary style for narratives (which read like Classical Chinese), and colloquial style for dialogues (see also Chia, this volume). As a result, Southern Min texts of early-modern times that faithfully represent its vocabulary and grammar are few and far between. Identifying a Southern Min word or expression written in Chinese characters (sometimes even when it is romanized, as in Pidgin English) is usually not a straightforward matter. Nevertheless, doing so enables us to unearth a number of elusive trajectories of language contact that form the backbone of this chapter.

In spite of the challenges posed by the meagre quantity of texts available for Southern Min, complicated by the issue of writing style, this chapter attempts to discuss some lexical contributions from Southern Min to Sinitic as a whole, underscoring its role in early Sino-European contact and international trade in Southeast Asia and southern China. These include the spread of the terms *ang moh 紅毛 ‘European; white person’, toh lien 檸檬 ‘durian’, *ang moh tan 紅毛丹 ‘rambutan’, and *han ji番薯 ‘sweet potato’ from Southern Min to other Sinitic languages, and a theory postulating *phi jun 批准 from Southern Min as the source of *pidgin in English. This chapter pays particular attention to *ang moh 紅毛, once a popular loanword found in many Sinitic languages and attested in old Chinese texts, and *phi jun 批准. It offers a solution to the obscure origins of *pidgin against the backdrop of significant contact between Southern Min and English since the early history of Sino-British trade.

### Table 1.1 Literary-style Cantonese versus colloquial-style Cantonese in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Literary-style Cantonese</th>
<th>Colloquial-style Cantonese</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Largely from Standard Chinese</td>
<td>As a norm, Cantonese words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Based on Standard Chinese</td>
<td>Based on Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligibility</td>
<td>Barring Cantonese expressions,</td>
<td>Barely intelligible to other</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>intelligible to all Sinitic speakers</td>
<td>speakers of Sinitic</td>
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via free access
This chapter is organized as follows: a brief ethnographic account of the Hokkien people and their languages is presented in the next section. Then the term *ang moh* 紅毛 is studied in detail, to be ensued by discussions of *han ji* 番薯 ‘sweet potato’, *toh lien* 榴槤 ‘durian’, and *ang moh tan* 紅毛丹 ‘rambutan’ as additional instances of lexical diffusion from Southern Min to other Sinitic languages. A large section is then devoted to unveiling the origin of *pidgin*. Firstly, the essential role of Hokkien merchants held in centuries-long Chinese foreign trade is addressed, and connections between Southern Min and Chinese Pidgin English are studied. Then, a morphological process known as clipping is scrutinized for its different applications in Mandarin, Cantonese and Southern Min. A hypothesis is advanced to account for the semantic change and borrowing of *phi jun* 批准 into English. Finally, this chapter concludes with remarks on these lexical contributions from Southern Min as the outcome of its intensive contact with foreign languages, including those of Europe as well as Southeast Asia.

2 Hokkien: An Ethnographic Outline

The term *Hokkien* 福建 comes from Southern Min and refers to the province of Fujian. In English usage, this toponym is also employed as the name for the major language spoken in southern Fujian: Southern Min. In this sense, *Hokkien* can be regarded to be a synonym to Southern Min, yet it must be emphasized that Fujian is one of the most linguistically diverse provinces in the coastal region of China, where a variety of mutually unintelligible Sinitic languages are spoken (Norman 1988). These include the Min group, as shown in Fig. 1.1 (based on Wurm et al. 1988). In addition, Hakka and Mandarin are also spoken in Fujian province. Among these Sinitic languages, Southern Min has the largest population and the widest distribution in southeast China. Smaller Min varieties such as *Pu-Xian* 莆仙, *Leizhou* 雷州, and *Hainan* 海南 have their roots in Old Southern Min, since their ancestors settled in or launched sail from the then Southern Min-speaking area (Li & Yao 2008). In modern times, however, their mutual intelligibility with Southern Min has been lost, and therefore, they have an independent status within the Min group.

Situated on the west side of the Taiwan Strait in south-eastern mainland China, Fujian is characterized by extensive mountainous and rugged terrain covering 95% of its land; four small plains lie on the east and southeast coast (Tang 1995: 27). The hills, however, provide excellent plantations for tea cultivation, and famous varieties of oolong tea are found in the Wuyi Mountains 武夷山 in the north and Anxi 安溪 in the south, rendering Fujian one of the
most important tea-producing centres in China. Indeed the word for tea in English, Dutch, Malay, and many other languages can be traced to 茶 in Southern Min (even if the word is not directly borrowed from Southern Min). Fujian also has China’s largest proportion of forestland, consisting of over 60% of land in the province. A high concentration of settlements along its shores has led to an extremely dense population with a resource scarcity of arable land. Consequently, Southern Min people have adopted a maritime orientation for living: “taking the sea as their farming field” (Li & Yao 2008: 140).

*Mazu* 媽祖, also known as Lin Mo Niang 林默娘 during her life, was a native of Fujian from an isle in Putian 莆田 who became exalted as the goddess of seafarers and fishermen. The worship of *Mazu* is shared among the linguistically diverse Min people as well as non-Min speaking Chinese living on the shores. *Mazu* temples, also known as “heavenly queen temples” 天后廟,
are frequently found in Min communities, not only in mainland China and Taiwan, but also in a large number of cities in Southeast Asia (see Xu 2007). The excellent maritime navigation skills of the Southern Min people have facilitated the development of harbours and seaports in Quanzhou 泉州 and Zhangzhou 漳州 in southern Fujian. During the Song and the Yuan Dynasties (ca. 1200s–1350s), Quanzhou served as the starting point of the Maritime Silk Route, which connected southern Fujian to Southeast Asia and beyond via the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca, and the Java Sea. Since the late-fourteenth century, a closed-door policy prohibiting maritime trade came into force repeatedly during the Ming and the Qing Dynasties. In 1567, when the Ming court decided to resume limited entrepôt trade with foreign countries, Zhangzhou was selected as the designated seaport. In the wake of the Sino-British Treaty of Nanking of 1842, Amoy 廈門 swiftly arose to its leading role of entrepôt in the Southern Min region (Wang 2011).

Centuries of trade via the Maritime Silk Route have resulted in the establishment of Chinese settlements in various parts of Southeast Asia (Tamura et al. 1997: 70; Miksic 2013: 20; Lee 2013). Natives of southern Fujian who migrated to Southeast Asia between the 1500s and 1940s typically possessed the following characteristics: (a) being a monolingual speaker of Hokkien, (b) believe in Mazu, and (c) engaging in business, such as wholesale or retail trade. The majority of Southern Min communities in Southeast Asia have maintained their mother tongue until unfavourable language policies were imposed by governments in the past four decades or so. Under these circumstances, language shifts from Southern Min to a national language precipitated the loss of Hokkien to Burmese in Myanmar, to Indonesian in Indonesia, and to English in Singapore. In the latter country, Mandarin is designated as the “heritage language” for ethnic Chinese regardless of their origin (Ding 2016).

3 **Ang moh 紅毛: Contact between Hokkien and European Languages**

At the turn of the sixteenth century, during the Age of Discovery in European history, waves of Europeans reached the Far East and established trading ports in Southeast Asia, first led by the Portuguese and Spaniards and then followed by the Dutch, British and French. Fig. 1.2 illustrates the new sea route navigated by Portuguese explorers, who first visited Malacca in 1509 by way of

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4 In addition to Amoy, Canton, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai were all open to trading with Europeans in this period.

5 See Ng (2015) for a further study of the commercial orientation of Hokkien speakers.
the Cape of Good Hope and southern India, and eventually penetrated South China upon reaching the waters of the Pearl River in 1513.

It is clear from European accounts that a metropolis had developed in Malacca – where the Chinese, Japanese, and Arabs met for trade over a lengthy period (Lach 1994: 501) – prior to the advent of Portuguese fleets in 1509. A small Hokkien community emerged in Malacca no later than the early fifteenth century (Lee 2013: 406–7). According to Chinese historical accounts (Ma 1451), Chinese communities consisting of natives of southern Hokkien as well as natives of Guangdong were found in various islands of present-day Indonesia, including Sumatra and Java, during Zheng He's 郇和 visits to Southeast Asia in the early 1400s (see also Lee 2013: 142–43). With decades of unceasing waves of immigration from southern Fujian, the Chinese traders grew into a large community, while their language, Southern Min, became the dominant language of the Southeast Asian Chinese.

Similarly, a considerable Chinese population, the majority of whom were Hokkiens, had resided in Indonesia well before a fleet of four Dutch ships first reached the island of Java in 1596. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) was

6 Known as the Ming treasure voyages, seven maritime expeditions were undertaken by Ming China’s treasure fleet between 1405 and 1433, reaching a number of countries in Southeast Asia, Middle East and East Africa (for details, see Levathes 1996).
7 See Aye (this volume) for an argument that Baba/Bazaar Malay evolved from a Hokkien-Malay pidgin. For a history of ethnic Chinese of Southeast Asia, see Lee (2013).
established in 1602 to safeguard Dutch commercial interests in the Far East (Walker 2012: 315). During the first half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch, under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company, emerged as a leading European power by establishing a number of trading ports in Southeast Asia and Taiwan (Andrade 2007; De Witt 2009). Permanent Dutch trading posts in Indonesia were founded in northwest Java: the first one in 1603 and the second one, also the most important one, in Jayakarta (nowadays Jakarta) in 1611. The 1620s witnessed a series of military conflicts, the “Sino-Dutch battles”, when the Dutch intention to open a trading port on the shores of Fujian was resisted by the Chinese court (Twitchett & Mote 1998). The Dutch, despite being defeated in the war, were granted permission to exploit the island Taiwan, then regarded to be an offshore frontier of China. After the island’s Austronesian-speaking aboriginals had been pacified or driven out of the plains in the 1640s, “Dutch Formosa” (1624–62) launched a large campaign to entice natives of southern Fujian to immigrate to the island. In the meantime, Dutch Malacca replaced Portuguese Malacca on the Malay Peninsula by 1641.

Sino-Dutch encounters continued in later centuries. In the mid-nineteenth century, the colonial government requested and supported the training of the first cohort of Dutch Sinologists to be employed as consultants stationed at various Indonesian ports. An emphasis was placed on their ability to speak Southern Min, so that they could assist in the management of local affairs in this Dutch colony (Kuiper 2017).

These encounters raise the question how the Dutch were designated by Hokkien speakers. In present-day Southern Min, especially its Southeast Asian varieties (see Churchman, this volume), the epithet ang moh 紅毛 (lit. ‘red hair’), means ‘European’ or more generally ‘white person; Caucasian’. In terms of genetic traits, individuals with red or auburn hair are much more common in the Dutch population than among the Portuguese.9 Apparently the Hokkien living in Indonesia used this epithet to refer to this new group of Europeans, who were physically distinguishable from the earlier Portuguese explorers, by the late 1590s.10 This semantic expansion reflected a successive shift of

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9 A map showing distribution of light hair in Europe can be found at the following link (retrieved on August 2, 2018): http://unsafeharbour.wordpress.com/2012/02/19/distribution-of-light-hair-and-eyes-in-europe/.

European powers in Southeast Asia. Subsequent to the Dutch, other European imperial powers also wielded their influence in this region and came in increasing contact with the Hokkien. These new Europeans are all known as ang moh 紅毛 in Southern Min, regardless of their nationality. It is therefore possible to interpret the essential meaning of this epithet as ‘blond-haired white people (from Europe)’, irrespective of nationality. For this reason, the English missionary Walter Henry Medhurst, having studied Hokkien in British Malaya, glossed the word ang moh 紅毛 as ‘English people’ in his Dictionary of the Hok-Kēèn Dialect of the Chinese Language (Medhurst 1832: 481). This semantic shift occurred in all Hokkien varieties spoken in Southeast Asia.

3.1 The Spread of Ang moh 紅毛 to Other Sinitic Languages

A Ming-dynasty travel writing titled Yue Jian Bian 粵劍編 (lit. ‘Guangdong sword book’) represents one of the earliest available texts where the word ang moh 紅毛 is attested in a compound. This book was authored by a mandarin named Wang Linheng 王臨亨 (1556–1603), who visited southern Guangdong on an official trip from Zhejiang in 1601. The following excerpt from the book suggests one of the first Sino-Dutch contacts within the territory of China:11

辛丑九月間，有二夷舟至香山澳，通事者亦不知何國人，人呼之為紅毛鬼。

Around the ninth lunar month in 1601, two foreign boats arrived at Macao. Even the interpreter did not know of their nationality, and people called them red-haired ghosts.

This brief mentioning of the first Chinese encounter with the Dutch in Macao (which by then was on lease to the Portuguese) corroborates the origins of the term ang moh 紅毛 in Southern Min. As noted above, Indonesia was gradually transformed into a Dutch colony in the wake of their first landing in 1596. Well before that, the Hokkien had settled there in significant numbers. The above passage clearly indicates that the word ang moh 紅毛 predated this particular episode of Sino-Dutch contact in Macao, even though the interpreter specialized in dealing with Europeans was not aware of the home country of these new visitors. In other words, some local Chinese from the south must have employed this epithet to refer to the Dutch by 1601, most likely through

11 For details, see http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=187407&searchu=紅毛.
contact between Indonesian Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, or other Sinitic varieties used among Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.\(^{12}\)

The word 紅毛 (Mandarin: hong mao) appeared alongside its formal equivalent 紅夷 (hong yi; lit. ‘red barbarian’) in Yu Yonghe’s 郁永河 undated *A Diary of Sulfur Mining* 採硫日記, which narrates a business trip taken in 1697 from Fuzhou 福州, the capital of Fujian, to Taiwan. In addition, 和蘭 (he lan), a transliteration of Holland, was adopted in formal historical writing compiled in a later time such as the Ming Shi 明史 ‘Chronicle of the Ming Dynasty’, e.g. 和蘭又名紅毛番 “Holland, alias, land of red-haired barbarians” (scroll 325).\(^{13}\) This formal term 和蘭 (he lan) was used less commonly than 紅毛 (hong mao) in written Chinese. Other written records in which the latter occurred include official documents of the mid-1700s and titles of self-taught booklets for learning Pidgin English in the 1800s (see Fig. 1.4 in section 5).\(^{14}\) These texts evince that the rate of diffusion from Southern Min to other Sinitic languages was rapid, suggesting vigorous activities and contacts with the Chinese in Southeast Asia and South China since the Dutch arrival in the Far East in 1596.

Southern Min has derived many compounds from *ang moh* 紅毛, e.g. *ang moh tey* 紅毛茶 ‘red tea’ (lit. ‘red-hair tea’), *ang moh wey* 紅毛話 ‘English’ (lit. ‘red-hair speech’), *ang moh hey* 紅毛灰 ‘cement’ (lit. ‘red-hair dust’) or *ang moh toh* 紅毛塗 ‘cement’ (lit. ‘red-hair mud’; mainly in Taiwanese), and *ang moh jun* 紅毛船 ‘European ship’ (lit. ‘red-hair ship’). In present-day Cantonese, while the term *hong mou* 紅毛 does not occur by itself, it is found in the compound *hong mou nai* 紅毛泥 ‘cement’ (lit. ‘red-hair soil’), which is still commonly used alongside the Standard Chinese term *shui ni* 水泥 (lit. ‘water soil’). In Hakka, especially the varieties spoken in Taiwan, cement is known as *fung mo foi* 紅毛灰 (lit. ‘red-hair dust’) or *fung mo nai* 紅毛泥 (lit. ‘red-hair soil’).

Nevertheless, 紅毛 hong mao and its derivations, in both written and spoken forms, have entirely retreated from standard Mandarin in mainland China since the completion of its lexical renovation, a process in which loanwords or vernacular forms were replaced by new preferable terminology. For instance, the terms *da ge da* 大哥大 ‘cell phone’ (lit. ‘big brother big’) and *fei lao* 肺癆 ‘pulmonary tuberculosis’ (lit. ‘lung tuberculosis’) are nowadays archaic in

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12 Reviewers of this chapter noted that the characters 紅毛 are found written on a seventeenth-century map, which depicted the Maluku Islands in eastern Indonesia (http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/term-ang-moh-in-use-as-early-as-1600s-in-ming-dynasty-map).


Standard Chinese in mainland China (but still used in other Sinitic varieties). The former has been replaced by shou ji 手機 (lit. ‘hand device’) and the latter by fei jiehe 肺結核 (lit. ‘lung nodule’).

3.2 The Borrowing of Ang moh 紅毛 into Japanese

Through the use of kanji in the Japanese writing system, the term 紅毛 (read in Japanese as kōmō) was borrowed into Japanese, referring primarily to the Dutch and being restricted to the Edo period (1603–1868). This is a likely instance of borrowing from Southern Min, as the Japanese word for red is written with a different kanji 赤, as found in Old Chinese texts, cf. 赤毛 (aka ge) ‘redhead’. The Japanese scholar Arai (1715) noted that the Chinese called the Dutch people 紅毛 (hong mao, ang moh), but no comment was made regarding its etymology in Japanese. In contrast to the lack of differentiation between the Portuguese and the Dutch in Chinese languages (at least in the vernacular languages),15 these two groups of Europeans were distinguished in Japanese since the early days of contacts: the Portuguese were known as namban 南蠻, or 南蠻 in present-day simplified kanji; lit. ‘south barbarian’), whereas the Dutch were designated as kōmō 紅毛 (lit. ‘red hair’). To some extent, these words can be expanded, e.g. namban 南蠻 may also refer to ‘Spaniard’, especially in the compound namban bōeki 南蠻貿易 ‘trade with the Portuguese and/or Spaniards’, and kōmō 紅毛 may cover ‘Occidentals’ in a vague sense.

The first Luso-Japanese contact occurred in September 1543, when a Portuguese boat originally headed for Ningbo 宁波 (situated on China’s eastern coast) was carried by a powerful storm to Tanegashima, a small island offshore southern Kyushu (Kshetry 2008: 39). According to a Japanese account recorded in Teppōki 鐵炮記 (lit. ‘iron cannon log’),16 a Chinese crew member from the boat communicated with the Japanese by writing Chinese on the sand, introducing the Portuguese as xi nan man zhong 西南蠻種 (lit. ‘southwest barbarian sort’), presumably because they sailed from their foothold in Malacca. Based on this, the Japanese appropriated the term namban 南蠻 to refer to the Portuguese. Nonetheless, the Chinese have never applied this term to any Europeans.

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15 In formal historical Chinese texts such as the Ming Shi 明史 ‘Chronicle of the Ming Dynasty’, the Portuguese were referred to with the term fo lang ji 佛郎機, based on franji ‘Franks’ in Arabic. In less formal writing, they were called xiang shan ao yi 香山澳夷 (lit. ‘barbarians of Macao’), or abbreviated to ao yi 澳夷. None of these terms were used in Cantonese or Southern Min, however.

16 This text appeared in 1601, almost six decades following the incident. For the original source, see https://ja.wikisource.org/wiki/鉄炮記 (retrieved on March 18, 2023).
It is also by accident that the first Dutch ship, *de Liefde* (Love), reached Bungo on the eastern shore of Kyushu in April 1600, having been blown off its original course to the Spice Islands (Maluku, Indonesia) by a violent storm (Goodman 2000: 9). Yet in this case, there was no Chinese person on the ship, which had departed from Holland. Instead, there was an Englishman, William Adams, serving as the pilot. Alongside the Dutch sailor Jan Joosten, the two became the first Europeans granted the title of *samurai* by a *shogun*, and they settled in Japan with their new Japanese names: Miura Anjin 三浦按針 (lit. ‘the pilot of Miura’) for William Adams and Yayōsu 耶楊子 for Jan Joosten. No historical account is available on the way the Japanese called the Dutch after their initial contact in Kyushu.

Japanese terminology for the Netherlands consists of a pair of synonyms: *oranda* 阿蘭陀 ~ 和蘭陀 versus *kōmō* 紅毛. The former represents a higher register, as it stems from a transliteration of the autonym *Holland*, while the latter was probably an epithet borrowed from Southern Min through written Chinese. The Ryukyu Kingdom (which became the Okinawa Prefecture after the annexation of Japan in 1879), being both a tributary state of China and a vassal of Japan, held a key role in maritime trade extending from Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Akamine 2017). Its function as a bridge between Japan and Ming China in this period was especially vital to the Japanese in terms of conducting indirect trade with China and receiving information on Chinese society, since the Sino-Japanese relationship had been severed in this period. Therefore, a probable borrowing channel of the term 紅毛 *kōmō* into Japanese would be in its written form through Ryukyuan traders, in an extended chain of borrowing: Southern Min > Written Chinese > Ryukyuan > Japanese.

3.3 A Synopsis of the Spread of Ang moh 紅毛

Following a general pattern of European contact with China by maritime routes, the Dutch first encountered the Chinese people outside China. More specifically, informal Sino-Dutch contacts began in Indonesia, where the Dutch met Hokkien-speaking Chinese in 1596 or shortly afterwards. This contact led to the creation of the epithetic expression *ang moh* 紅毛 in Hokkien. To conclude this section, the spread and development of *ang moh* 紅毛 is outlined in Fig. 1.3.

4 Diffusion of Southern Min Words into Other Sinitic Languages

Following the promotion of Mandarin in Taiwan by the Chinese Nationalist Party (國民黨 Kuomintang), especially under the national language campaign...
in the mid-1940s (Ding 2016: 64–68), a number of loanwords have entered
Taiwanese Mandarin from Southern Min owing to intensive language contact.
Examples include Southern Min ][: jua ‘without difference; does not mat-
ner’ rendered in Mandarin as mei cha 没差, sam pat ‘(derogatory) a spiteful or
unpleasant woman’ as san ba 三八, and swi jia boh ‘pretty woman’ as shui cha
mou 水查某. Barring such examples limited to Taiwan, lexical diffusion from
Southern Min to other Sinitic languages appears to be extremely rare in the
Sinitic heartlands except for an emerging trend in Internet literature.

Dispersed across Southeast Asia from premodern times, Southern Min vari-
eties have long been exposed to a number of tropical products. Naturally, some
fruit and vegetable names thus entered Standard Chinese and other Sinitic
languages via Hokkien, although such etymologies are often not realized by
the speech community. Three instances of this are han ji 番薯 ‘sweet potato’,
toh lien 榴槤 ‘durian’, and ang moh tan 紅毛丹 ‘rambutan’. As with ang moh 紅
毛, lexical diffusion of these words occurred smoothly by means of Chinese
characters. In fact, this has obscured their etymology due to the loss of sound
associations in the process of character-based infusion.

The sweet potato (Ipomoea batatas) is currently one of the most widely
grown crops in China. It is called han ji in Hokkien and faan syu in Cantonese,
written identically as 番薯 (lit. ‘foreign tuber’) in both languages. In other
parts of mainland China, the sweet potato is known by scores of terms on
account of lexical renovation in different varieties of Sinitic, e.g. hongshu
紅薯 (lit. ‘red tuber’), ganshu 甘薯 (lit. ‘sweet tuber’), and shanshu 山薯 (lit.
‘mountain tuber’) (Ni & Xiang 2014). As such, it is not possible to identify the
first designation of the sweet potato in the Sinitic family solely on linguistic
clues, but historical evidence may help us further. According to Ho (1955) and Simoons (1991: 102), in 1594, the governor of Fujian, Chin Hsüeh-tseng 金學曾, urged farmers to grow sweet potatoes in response to crop failures caused by natural disasters. This signified the first campaign leading to its large-scale cultivation in China after Chen Zhenlong 陳振龍, a native of Fujian, brought sweet potatoes from Luzon in the Philippines a few years earlier. The cultivation of sweet potatoes subsequently spread from coastal Fujian to eastern China and beyond (Ni & Xiang 2014; Zhang et al. 2009). In light of the strong ties between southern Fujian and Southeast Asia, Southern Min is the most likely Sinitic language from which the sweet potato received its initial name in China.

In recent decades, the durian (*Durio zibethinus*) has become rather popular in mainland China, being regularly sold at supermarkets in many cities. Misguided by the Chinese characters 榴槤 (Mandarin: *liu lian*, Hakka: *liu lien*, Cantonese: *lau lin*), few Chinese recognize its Malay etymology. Interestingly, Ma Huan 馬歎 (1451) mentioned the term 賭尔鳥 (*du er niao* in modern Mandarin, cf. *durian* in Malay) in reference to an exotic fruit of Sumatra with a compelling smell. The choice of the third character was a rather creative attempt to represent a nasalized rhyme; in conjunction with the consonant indicated by the second character, the two would have denoted the sound *rião*, using the centuries-long Chinese phonological tradition of *qie yun* 切韻 (lit. ‘cut rhyme’). Despite its approximation of the word’s Malay pronunciation, this transliteration did not gain traction in Chinese, since it was infeasible to export this fruit as a commodity to fifteenth-century China. In Burmese Hokkien, the durian is still called *toh lien* 榴槤, which is much closer to the Malay form *durian* than its pronunciation in Cantonese, Hakka, or Mandarin. This would indicate that the Malay loanword has spread from Southeast Asian Hokkien to other Sinitic languages through Chinese characters, which do not necessarily reflect its original pronunciation in the donor language. It is also worth pointing out that in the literary reading of Southern Min for 榴槤 *liu lien*, the dental initial of the first syllable becomes a lateral; such a sound correspondence is regularly observed in Southern Min.

The rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*) is another tropical fruit from the Malaysian-Indonesian region. Known in Chinese as 紅毛丹 (Mandarin: *hong

17 In later editions of the texts, the original characters 賭爾鳥 (*du er niao*) were altered to 賭爾焉 (*du er yan*).
18 For example *lwi* 錳 ‘money’ borrowed from Malay *duit* (which, in turn, is derived from Dutch *duit* ‘a copper coin’). Examples of this sound correspondence in Philippine Hokkien can be found in Chia (this volume).
The Chinese naming of this fruit appears to have been based on its appearance. In fact, the Malay name of this fruit, *rambutan*, likewise contains the word *rambut* ‘hair’. Upon scrutiny, however, a puzzle arises from the choice of the third character 丹 ‘crimson’, with the literal meaning of the Chinese term being ‘red-hair crimson’.19 If a descriptive approach had been taken in the naming of this fruit, it would have been 紅毛果 (*hong mao guo*; lit. ‘red-hair fruit’) or 紅毛荔枝 (*hong mao li zhi*; lit. ‘red-hair lychee’). The apparent sound correspondence between the third syllable of Malay *rambutan* and Chinese 丹 – transcribed as *tan* or *da(a)n*, depending on the romanization scheme and variety of Sinitic – bespeaks a transliteration of the original Malay name in Chinese. Among the pronunciations of 紅毛丹 in the four major Sinitic languages – Hokkien: *ang moh tan*, Mandarin: *hong mao dan*, Cantonese: *hong mou daan*, and Hakka *fung mo dan* – Hokkien stands out as the best candidate for the role of recipient. In the case of Southern Min, the only phonological modification involved is the deletion of the rhotic initial in the Malay word, after which a near-perfect name emerged for this exotic fruit characterized by red hair on the skin.

5  **Phi jun 批准: A Hokkien Hypothesis for the Origin of Pidgin**

In the field of Pidgin and Creole Studies, the etymology of the term *pidgin* has remained unresolved since its inception. A common view, as noted in Oxford English Dictionary, holds that *pidgin* – or *pigeon*, as in “pigeon English”, which was in use between 1859 and 1876 – is derived from a Chinese pronunciation of the English word “business”. This is attributed to the fact that Chinese Pidgin English emerged out of communicative needs for Sino-European trade, hence the presumed connection between *pidgin* and *business*. However, there is no linguistic evidence to support this claim. Li et al. (2005) attempt to explain the etymology of *pidgin* through a Cantonese truncation of ‘business’ to ‘busin’, yielding *bit zin* 必剪 or *bei zin* 卑剪. Yet compared to the Cantonese borrowing of ‘biscuit’ as *bei si git* 卑士結 or ‘bus’ as *ba si* 巴士, the hypothetical rendering

19  Coincidently, the previously mentioned term *da ge da* 大哥大 ‘cell phone’ (lit. ‘big brother big’) seems to allow a redundant use of descriptive morpheme in the word. The actual morphological structure of this word consists of two parts: *dage* ‘big brother’ and *da* ‘big’. Under the same analysis 紅毛丹 (*ang moh tan*) would be composed of *ang moh* ‘Dutch; European’ plus *tan* ‘crimson’, meaning ‘something red from the Dutch or from Europe’.
of **bit zin** 必剪 or **bei zin** 卑剪 for ‘business’ is rather aberrant.\(^{20}\) In fact, this etymology for *pidgin* was rejected as early as the 1870s, alongside other hypotheses such as Portuguese *ocupação* ‘occupation’ as its source (Leland 1876: 131; Holm 2000: 9; and references therein).

Belonging to the core vocabulary of Chinese Pidgin English, *pidgin* is a versatile word that covers many meanings and functions. Leland (1876: 131) listed ‘business; affair; occupation’ as its basic meanings, providing examples of its derivations such as *joss-pidgin* ‘religion’ and *chow-chow-pidgin* ‘eating or cookery’. Since semantic extension takes time to accomplish, the word should exist in the mixed language decades before its first appearance in the mid-nineteenth century in the expression written as *pigeon English*. Hence, by the time *pidgin* induced substantial interest and attention from scholars, its etymology had been lost.

Throughout the history of expansion of the British Empire in the Far East, contact between English and Sinitic languages took place not only in mainland China, but also in Southeast Asia. Thus, the early formation of Chinese pidgin varieties of English should not be confined to the interaction between the English and Cantonese in the Pearl River Delta region, as has been the case in previous studies (cf. Li et al. 2005; Ansaldo et al. 2010). This assumption has restricted the scope of investigation: linguistically speaking, its focus on Cantonese has led to negligence of other varieties of Sinitic; geographically speaking, it fails to recognize Southeast Asia as a significant region for Anglo-Chinese contact.

To trace the etymological origin of *pidgin*, an understanding of the socio-historical settings of British trade in the Far East is necessary. Despite being a relatively late arrival, the British Empire, following the signature of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, successfully consolidated its colonies in Southeast Asia. Since then, a vigorous recruitment of Chinese from Fujian and Guangdong contributed to the rapid growth and reinforcement of Chinese communities in British Malaya, including Singapore (Song 1967; Cheng 1985; Lee 2013; Ng 2015). Consequently, Sinitic languages – Southern Min in particular – represented important parts of the linguistic landscape of colonial Southeast Asia. As such, the Malay Peninsula could be regarded the linguistic backyard of the Sinophone even prior to British rule.

\(^{20}\) Uchida (2009) provides many examples of Chinese Pidgin English, using Chinese characters to mark pronunciation for reading in Cantonese.
5.1 Hokkien as Major Chinese Traders in Canton and Southeast Asia

Canton (nowadays Guangzhou 廣州) has been a major centre for Sino-European trade ever since it joined Zhangzhou in 1685 as one of three additional entrepôts on China’s coast. The trade volume between Britain and China was accelerated by an insatiable demand of tea on the British market since the 1750s (Li 2010: 22). As a result, Britain swiftly assumed a top position in the Sino-European trade by the late eighteenth century. For instance, the total value of the Sino-British trade in 1792 stood more than 24 times that of the Sino-French trade. The expansion of Sino-British trade largely coincided with the Chinese adoption of the so-called “Canton Trade System” (1757–1842), which designated Canton as the sole port for receiving foreign traders travelling to China. A number of restrictions and regulations were imposed on European merchants sojourning to Canton. For instance, foreigners were prohibited from learning Chinese or teaching foreign languages to the local population. Furthermore, no direct communication with the government was permitted. Instead, foreigners had to deal with their Chinese counterparts, hong 行 merchants (Downs & Grant Jr. 2014: 73–74).

As early as the turn of the eighteenth century, a number of merchants from Amoy decided to try their fortune in foreign trade in Canton. The following entrepreneurs, of considerable fame in Canton between the 1700s and 1730s, all hailed from southern Fujian: Limia, Anqua, Kimco, Shabang, Suqua, and Cowlo; each year they travelled regularly between Canton and Fujian (Ng 2015: 174; Van Dyke 2011: 80; Wang 2011, chapter 9). As a matter of fact, Hokkien businessmen dominated the international trade in Canton for most of the eighteenth century (Cheong 1997: 33; Van Dyke 2011: 79). Unsurprisingly, the designation in 1757 of Canton as the exclusive entrepôt for foreign trade spurred more Hokkiens to relocate from southern Fujian to Canton. Their number was so significant that it warranted establishing an association to promote Hokkien identity and solidarity for colleagues residing in Canton (Cheong 1997: 162). Two of the most influential hong merchants in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Canton had family origins in southern Fujian. Poankeequa or Puankhequa 潘啓官 (1714–88), the founder of the most successful international trading company of Qing China, was appointed in 1760 as the first head of the Hong Association of Canton, as advocated by nine major hong merchants. Howqua II 浩官 (1769–1843; full name: Wu Bingjian 伍秉鑑) was recognized as the richest merchant in Chinese history, and his family origins

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21 See Perdue (2010) for a vivid description of this system.
can be traced to Quanzhou. The Wu’s family business had evolved, over generations, from tea farming in southern Fujian to tea trading in Canton (Wang 2011, chapter 9).

Chinese trade with Southeast Asia was conducted in a rather different manner. It was Chinese merchants who played the itinerant role, travelling back and forth between China – southern Fujian, more specifically – and Southeast Asia. As no restrictions were imposed in Southeast Asia on Europeans learning Chinese or Chinese people learning foreign languages, freedom of direct interactions between Europeans and Chinese merchants naturally gave rise to significant language contact not possible under the Canton Trade System. In fact, it was in Malacca that pioneering work by Englishmen on Chinese linguistics came to fruition in the early nineteenth century, yielding Morrison’s *A Grammar of the English Language* (1823a) for Chinese learners at the Anglo-Chinese College, and Medhurst’s *A Dictionary of the Hok-Kêèn Dialect of the Chinese Language* (1832), the first bilingual dictionary for Southern Min. These endeavours shed light on the linguistic conditions of the Malay Peninsula and suggest vigorous Anglo-Chinese language contact, especially with Southern Min, prior to the formal establishment of British Malaya.

5.2 *The Emergence of Chinese Pidgin English*

According to Van Dyke (2005: 77–78), until the tightening of foreign trade in China in the mid-eighteenth century, communication between European and Chinese merchants relied greatly on the service of bilingual interpreters from Macao, who spoke Portuguese and Cantonese. By the early 1730s, however, it was reported that a simplified form of English, which would develop into what became known as Pidgin English, represented an indispensable communicative tool for foreign trade in Canton. Van Dyke (2011: 13, 124) further notes that throughout most of the eighteenth century, the term “European language” or “foreign language” was invariably understood by Sino-European traders to be Pidgin English. A licensed linguist, who had to be Chinese, was required to be fluent in Pidgin English, Cantonese, and Mandarin.

A curious comment, however, came from the pioneering Sinologist Robert Morrison (1823b): “not one of the five licensed linguists in Canton could read or write any foreign language and were not necessarily very skilled even in their own language”. His comment aptly reflected the sociolinguistic complexity of early-modern China, where diglossia was widespread due to the lack of a national language for verbal communication (Chen 1999). Obliquely, this

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22 This quotation is taken from Van Dyke (2005: 78).
statement also reveals a dynamic linguistic environment of Sino-European trade from the sixteenth century, involving Portuguese, Dutch, English, and other European languages on the southern and south-eastern shores of China, where a wealth of Sinitic varieties long abounded. As discussed previously, such extensive Sino-European contact was not confined to southern China; rather, it took place all over Southeast Asia, from the mainland to the archipelagos.

Pidgin English, by its very nature, was employed to enable the otherwise impossible exchange of messages between speakers of different languages; literacy in this variety was not expected. Early glossaries of Chinese Pidgin English, as exemplified in Fig. 1.4, often utilized Chinese characters to approximate the pronunciation of English words without providing their actual spelling in the Latin alphabet, e.g. 得打 (Cantonese: dak daa) for doctor, 些利文 (Cantonese: se lei man) for sailorman, and 痕甚 (Cantonese: han sam)
for handsome, etc.23 Using this approach, the “linguists” in Canton naturally would not have been able to read or write any European language. What is remarkable about Morrison’s comment lies in the second part, concerning their seemingly insufficient command of Cantonese and/or Mandarin (judged by his mastery of Mandarin and Cantonese). This suggests that some of these interpreters may have spoken a Sinitic language other than Cantonese and Mandarin as their mother tongue. If this had been the case, the most likely candidate would have been Southern Min.24

The Pidgin English names of influential Hokkien tycoons, as seen in the records of European traders, reflected their Southern Min pronunciation (Cheong 1997: 24). A name, initially the personal name of the founder of a trading company, would be passed on to successors who inherited the family business, followed by a Roman numeral. Table 1.2 displays names of some of the most famous hong leaders, transcribed in the three Chinese languages most important to early Sino-European trade. At the top of the table, the merchant names are provided in Chinese characters, followed by the year when their name was first recorded in foreign trade and the hometown or family origins of the merchant.25 The rhyming patterns of these Chinese varieties confirm the Hokkien identity of these guild leaders. The absence of a word-final /n/ in the English spelling of the Chinese honorific suffix qua 官 is particularly revealing, as a complete loss of nasality in the rhyme is possible only in certain dialects of Southern Min such as Burmese Hokkien (e.g. 三 ‘three’; Mandarin: san, Cantonese: saam, Burmese Hokkien: sa).26 This evinces frequent contact and interaction between European merchants and their Southern Min-speaking counterparts in the early period of Sino-British trade.

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23 See Li et al. (2005) and Qiu (2017) for further discussions on self-taught materials for learning Chinese Pidgin English. This practice of pidgin learning appears to have been the norm in East Asia, where the writing system of local languages differs significantly from that of European languages. Further examples can be found in Atkinson’s (1879) exercises of pidgin Japanese for English speakers; Japanese words were represented in English words without any kana or kanji, e.g. nanny for nani 何 ‘what’, yachts for yatsu 八 ‘eight’, and oh my for omae お前 ‘(singular) you’.

24 Although Van Dyke (2005) devoted a chapter to detail duties and income of interpreters working in the foreign trade, unfortunately, personal background of these Chinese interpreters was not available.

25 Sources of detail are Van Dyke (2011) and Cantonese Wikipedia (https://zh-yue.wikipedia.org).

26 The weakening of final nasals has resulted in varying effects in Southern Min dialects. In some dialects, the word-final /n/ was lost with a compensatory nasal vowel on the rhyme (similar to what has happened historically in French). In others, deletion of /n/ is not accompanied by nasalization, but simply by a removal of the coda.
While the personal background of Chinese interpreters is generally lacking in studies on early Sino-European trade, comments on the linguistic ability of Chinese commercial leaders can occasionally be found. For instance, Poankeequa was documented to have travelled on junks from his home village in southern Fujian to Manila at a young age and developed skills in Spanish and (Pidgin) English (Perdue 2010; Van Dyke 2016: 61).²⁷ Cai Hunqua, whose Chinese name is identified as 蔡煌官 in Van Dyke (2016: 3), was another merchant with whom Europeans could communicate directly in Pidgin English (Van Dyke 2011: 127). Excluding the honorific suffix qua, the pronunciation of his name is as follows: cai huang in Mandarin, choy wong in Cantonese, and chai hong (or chua hong) in Southern Min. The Cantonese pronunciation is the least similar to the English spelling. In Mandarin and Southern Min, the initial consonants of the individual characters are identical despite their varying romanizations. Therefore, the focus lies in the rhyme of the characters. In Southern Min, the family name becomes homophonous to its Mandarin equivalent when it is read as chai, which also gives rise to the English spelling. While neither Mandarin nor Southern Min shares the precise rhyme of his first name as seen in the English spelling, the Southern Min pronunciation is much closer than the Mandarin one. This indicates a Hokkien identity of Cai Hunqua. Both Hokkien merchants were actively engaged in Sino-European trade since the 1730s or shortly afterwards and could be regarded as the earliest group of intermediaries who conversed with Europeans in Chinese Pidgin English.

5.3 Southern Min as a Donor to Chinese Pidgin English
A prolonged, typically peaceful contact between speakers of two languages in a more or less equal relation may give rise to a new variety with mixed features

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²⁷ Poankeequa’s hometown was originally under the administration of Quanzhou, but was merged into Zhangzhou in 1958.
derived from both languages. One example is Pu-Xian 莆仙, the result of profound contact between speakers of Southern Min and Eastern Min. Language contact as a side product of European imperialism, by contrast, is characterized by marked power differences between European and local speakers. The resultant pidgin and creole languages are typically formed with a hegemonic language donating its vocabulary and a marginalized language providing the grammatical backbone. Accordingly, Chinese Pidgin English predictably demonstrates a Chinese grammatical structure on an English lexical foundation. Yet reality is more complicated in terms of its vocabulary. As discussed above, an extremely diverse linguistic setting characterized the trade between European merchants and Chinese middlemen from the late 1500s to the 1730s, before the emergence of Chinese Pidgin English. Sino-European commerce can in fact be considered an addition to well-established networks of maritime trade in the Far East. Under such circumstances, Chinese Pidgin English received lexical contributions from a wealth of donor languages. Table 1.3 provides a selection of words donated by languages other than English, based on two short glossaries compiled by Leland (1876) and Airey (1906).28 To facilitate the recognition of expressions derived from Sinitic sources, Chinese characters are supplemented to the etyma in the right column.

**Table 1.3** Donor sources of common vocabulary in Chinese Pidgin English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>English gloss</th>
<th>Etymon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>compladore ~</td>
<td>comprador; steward</td>
<td>Portuguese comprador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kam-pat-to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cumshaw</td>
<td>a present; a tip, gratuity</td>
<td>Hokkien kam sia 感謝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa ts'ai</td>
<td>to get rich</td>
<td>Mandarin fa cai 發財</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fytie</td>
<td>go quick; hurry!</td>
<td>Cantonese fai di 快啲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hahng</td>
<td>great firms which formerly regulated all Chinese commerce</td>
<td>Hokkien hang 行 (cf. Mandarin hang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hong</td>
<td>great firms which formerly regulated all Chinese commerce</td>
<td>Cantonese hong 行</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hwan-na-kou</td>
<td>dog of European breed</td>
<td>Hokkien hwan a kow 番仔狗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jin-rick-sha</td>
<td>a vehicle like a Bath chair</td>
<td>Japanese jinrikisha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kung-he</td>
<td>congratulations</td>
<td>Cantonese gung hei 恭喜</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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28 For the Chinese vocabulary in Pidgin English, Leland (1876) specified only Mandarin and Cantonese sources, while Airey (1906) mentioned Cantonese and Mandarin as the source for a few items.
As shown previously in Fig. 1.4, the Chinese made use of Chinese characters to indicate pronunciations of European words. This method resulted in alternate spellings of pidgin words based on the sounds of Chinese, as seen in compladore vs. kam-pat-to and savvy vs. sha-pi. Due to the extensive trade networks in the Far East, even the Japanese contributed a few culture-related words to the repertoire of Chinese Pidgin English.

Among the Sinitic languages, Cantonese donated the largest number of words to Pidgin English, while Hokkien and Mandarin also contributed their fair share. Unlike the character-based diffusion of ang moh 紅毛 and the tropical fruit names discussed above, Sinitic vocabulary typically entered Pidgin English through oral rather than written communication. The provenance of its vocabulary was irrelevant to the users of this improvised communicative tool. Some words exhibit doublets, as is the case for 行, which was the official firm in charge of handling Sino-European trade: Cantonese hong versus Southern Min and Mandarin hahng.

The honorific suffix qua 官 and the loanword cumshaw 感謝 are probably among the earliest lexical contributions from Hokkien to Pidgin English. The former was used not only after names of Hokkien merchants, but also for other well-respected Chinese, e.g. Mowqua 茂官 and Kingqua 經官 – both were famous Cantonese merchants. Remarkably, the meaning of cumshaw 感謝 has changed from ‘to thank’ to ‘a present; a tip, gratuity’, denoting a common practice of bribery in order to smoothen things in trading with the Chinese. This usage as a noun is not attested in Southern Min. Finally, it is worth noting that The American Cyclopaedia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge, under the presumption of English being the supplier of vocabulary to Pidgin English, treated commission as the etymon of cumshaw 感謝 with a change of meaning from ‘compensation for services’ to ‘gratuity’ (Ripley & Dana 1875: 518).

### Table 1.3: Donor sources of common vocabulary in Chinese Pidgin English (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>English gloss</th>
<th>Etymon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ming-pak</td>
<td>to understand clearly</td>
<td>Cantonese ming baak 明白</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pylong</td>
<td>thief; to thieve</td>
<td>Hokkien phai lang 収人</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa-ki</td>
<td>a Japanese alcoholic drink</td>
<td>Japanese sake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>savvy – sha-pi</td>
<td>to know; to understand</td>
<td>Portuguese saber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taotai</td>
<td>a Chinese magistrate</td>
<td>Mandarin dao tai 道台</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
507). By contrast, the Southern Min origin of this term was readily perceived by contemporary Dutch Sinologists (Kuiper 2017: 502).

5.4 Phi jun 批准: From ‘Approve’ to ‘Business’

The primary duty of an interpreter was to convey messages as accurately as possible. However, the “linguists” servicing foreign and Chinese merchants in Canton had other important duties. Van Dyke (2005: 79–80) reports that “bills of lading, stamped with the appropriate chops, had to accompany all merchandise and bullion shipped between Whampoa and Canton, and it was the job of the linguists to obtain these documents”. It is not difficult to imagine numerous permits, which had to be obtained before shipments could be unloaded ashore and would complete the international trade process. From the perspective of European merchants, official approval to unload all cargos from a ship was the final step to a successful long-haul voyage from Europe to China, which would take months depending on the season. No permits effectively meant no business.

Considering the importance attached to official permits in Sino-European trading in Canton, I hypothesize that the frequent use of 批准 (Mandarin: pi zhun, Southern Min: phi jun or phwey jun) ‘to approve’ has given rise to a semantic change from ‘to approve’ to ‘business’ when the term entered Chinese Pidgin English. This is reminiscent of Southern Min cumshaw 感謝, which has changed from ‘to thank’ to ‘a present; a tip, gratuity’ in Chinese Pidgin English. The semantic shift of phi jun 批准 could be explained in terms of re-analysis, where the intended message of “(cargos have been) approved” was interpreted by foreign merchants as something along the lines of “(successful) business”.

The term 批准 has variant pronunciations across Southern Min dialects:29 phi jun or phey jun in Zhangzhou and phwey jun in Xiamen and Quanzhou (also compare pai zeon in Cantonese and pi zhun in Mandarin). Phonologically, the case for phi jun 批准 as the origin of pidgin is appealing, as its pronunciations in Zhangzhou Hokkien and Mandarin demonstrate a striking similarity to English pigeon, the earliest attested spelling for pidgin. Yet treating Mandarin as the donor language for pidgin poses difficulties regarding the observed change from verb to noun. While this is common in Japanese, which systematically converts borrowed verbs into nouns,30 such a practice requires

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29 For details, see http://www.zdic.net/zh/yy/my/批.
30 For example, anaunsu アナウンス ‘announcement’ (from English announce). Japanese borrows many Chinese verbs, such as xu nuo 許諾 ‘to promise’, po chan 破產 ‘to bankrupt’,
a morphological motivation. In Sinitic languages, *phi jun*批准 functions as a verb rather than a noun. Unless it is regarded as an exceptional case, as in *cumshaw*感谢 mentioned previously, the borrowing of a verb from Chinese into Pidgin English as a noun, which simultaneously underwent a semantic change, would be rather extraordinary. Prior to this lexical borrowing, some linguistic process must have taken place to pave the way for the change of *phi jun*批准 from 'to approve' to 'permit' and then to 'business'.

Chinese terminology in the domain of commerce and/or laws contains such terms as *pi zhun wen jian*批准文件 ‘permit’ (lit. ‘approve document’) and *jin kou pi wen*進口批文 ‘import permit’ (lit. ‘import approve document’). The former is a nominal compound with a verb-plus-noun structure, whereas the latter represents a similar structure based on a shortened form of the former; see (5a). This kind of clipping, the shortening of quadrisyllabic nouns to disyllables, is extremely productive in Mandarin. Such quadrisyllabic compounds are nouns consisting of two disyllabic parts. Mandarin employs a selective clipping strategy to shorten each constituent by one syllable. A total of four patterns are possible, with decreasing productivity, as exemplified from (5a) to (5d). In most cases, the first syllable of each formative is retained, as shown in (5a).

(5a) Selective clipping on the second and fourth syllables

- *pi zhun wen jian*批准文件 ‘permit’ → *pi wen*
- *ding qi cun kuan*定期存款 ‘fixed-term deposit’ → *ding cun*
- *bei jing da xue*北京大學 ‘Peking University’ → *bei da*

(5b) Selective clipping on the second and third syllables

- *nong ye yin hang*農業銀行 ‘Bank of Agriculture’ → *nong hang*
- *tai wan tong bao*臺灣同胞 ‘compatriot of Taiwan’ → *tai bao*

(5c) Selective clipping on the first and third syllables

- *xiang gang tong bao*香港同胞 ‘compatriot of Hong Kong’ → *gang bao*
- *xiang gang di qu*香港地區 ‘district of Hong Kong’ → *gang qu*

(5d) Selective clipping on the first and fourth syllables

- *xiang gang da xue*香港大學 ‘University of Hong Kong’ → *gang da*
- *shen ti jian cha*身體檢查 ‘check-up of body’ → *ti jian*

*yin tu’引退 ‘to recede’ etc., and converts them into nouns. To use these as verbs, they must appear in the construction ‘N + suru’ (i.e. ‘to do N’) so that the Japanese verbal morphology can be applied through the native verb *suru.*
Tail-clipping represents another manner to shorten nouns from quadri-syllabic to disyllabic in Mandarin. In terms of style and register, it is casual and informal, and requires support from discursive or linguistic contexts. For instance, the truncated form huo qi ‘general deposit’ in (6) is normally employed in such compounds as huo qi hu kou 活期户口 ‘general deposit account’. Tail-clipping is seldom observed in Standard Chinese.

(6) Tail-clipping in Mandarin

huo qi cun kuan 活期存款 ‘general deposit’ → huo qi
qing hua da xue 清华大学 ‘Peking University’ → qing hua

All shortened forms presented in (5) can be used in Cantonese, often with a tint of borrowing. In colloquial Cantonese, however, the preferred clipping strategy targets the second constituent as a whole (“tail-clipping”), rather than individual syllables in both constituents (“selective clipping”). As shown in (6) and (7), tail-clipping curtails a longer noun by deleting the entire second constituent. This means that the shortened forms inevitably suffer from the partial loss of lexical content. This explains the necessity of a high degree of support from the discursive context. Note that the part-of-speech of a shortened form always remains intact, and this lends great service to coping with ambiguity which may arise on the surface. For instance, ding kei 定期 ‘regularly’ is an existent word in Cantonese. The fact that it is an adverb facilitates its disambiguation from the shortened form ding kei 定期 ‘fixed-term deposit’, which is a noun. Moreover, (8) shows that selective clipping on the syllable level also constitutes an important strategy for generating abbreviations in Cantonese.

(7) Tail-clipping in Cantonese

ding kei cyun fun 定期存款 ‘fixed-term deposit’ → ding kei
coeng tou din waa 长途电话 ‘long-distance call’ → coeng tou
sau tai hang lei 手提行李 ‘hand-carried luggage’ → sau tai
dung aa ngan hong 東亞銀行 ‘East Asia Bank’ → dung aa
hang sang ngan hong 恆生銀行 ‘Hang Seng Bank’ → hang sang

(8) Selective clipping in Cantonese

pai zeon man gin 批准文件 ‘approval document; permit’ → pai man
hang sang zi sou 恆生指數 ‘Hang Seng index’ → hang zi
gung gung fong uk 公共房屋 ‘public housing’ → gung uk
ning mung ho lok 檸檬可樂 ‘coke served with fresh lemon’ → ning lok
gai daan saam man zi 雞蛋三文治 ‘egg sandwich’ → daan zi
Both Southern Min and Cantonese appreciate simplicity of tail-truncation in spite of the potential ambiguity which may result from this type of truncation. 31 Southern Min differs from Cantonese, as well as Mandarin, in its tendency to refrain from selective clipping. 32 Various examples of tail-clipping in Southern Min are presented below.

(9) Productive tail-clipping of nouns in Southern Min

- *ting ki chun khwan* 定期存款 ‘fixed-term deposit’ → *ting ki*
- *tng toh tien wey* 長途電話 ‘long-distance call’ → *tng toh*
- *kia oh i in* 鏡湖醫院 ‘Kiang Wu Hospital’ → *kia oh* 33
- *swa ting i in* 山頂醫院 ‘St. Januario Hospital’ → *swa ting*

In addition to abbreviating quadrisyllabic nouns to disyllabic ones as exemplified in (9), Southern Min can also shorten a verb phrase to a disyllabic expression, as seen in (10). This type of shortening is unknown in Mandarin and Cantonese. Even in Southern Min, it is much more restricted than the clipping of quadrisyllabic nouns. Tail-clipped verb phrases tend to be sensitive to lexical collocation instead of linguistic factors; the clipping becomes unacceptable when the head of the verb phrase is replaced, as shown in (10').

(10) Restricted tail-clipping of verb phrases in Southern Min

- *jia hun ki* 食煙枝 ‘to smoke (cigarette)’ → *jia hun*
- *jia ping tiao* 食冰條 ‘to eat a popsicle’ → *jia ping*
- *sio kim un jwa* 燒金銀紙 ‘to burn joss paper’ → *sio kim*

(10') *wey hun ki* 買煙枝 ‘to buy (cigarette)’ → ? *wey hun* (acceptable in Taiwanese)

- *wey ping tiao* 買冰條 ‘to buy a popsicle’ → *wey ping* (lit. ‘to buy ice’)
- *wey kim un jwa* 買金銀紙 ‘to buy joss paper’ → *wey kim* (lit. ‘to buy gold’)

Finally, the quadrisyllabic nouns in (11) share an identical structure of verb-plus-noun. In colloquial Hokkien, the use of *kia kwa ho* ‘to send by registered mail’ in lieu of *kia kwa ho iu kia* 寄掛號郵件 is quite acceptable. While the

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31 Tail-truncation is also applicable to loanwords in Cantonese, e.g. *inso* ‘insurance’ and *sitkiu* ‘security guard’. This kind of truncation is also sometimes found in Japanese, generating disyllabic loanwords based on the initial part of the English original, e.g. *kiro* キロ from *kilometer* or *kilogram* and *suupa* スーパー from *supermarket*.

32 See also Churchman (this volume) on related processes in Penang Hokkien.

33 The names of 鏡湖醫院 and 山頂醫院, the two major hospitals in Macao, are often tail-truncated by the locals in Cantonese and Southern Min.
shortened form \textit{phi jun} 'permit' is not observed in present-day Southern Min (probably due to change of society and loss of its daily use context), it is theoretically a possible abbreviation produced by tail-clipping.

(11) Possible tail-clipping of nouns in Southern Min
\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{kwa ho} iu \textit{kia} 'registered mail' \rightarrow \textit{kwa ho}
\item \textit{phi jun mun} \textit{kia} 'approval document; permit' \rightarrow \textit{phi jun}
\end{itemize}

Returning now to the etymological path from Southern Min \textit{phi jun} to English \textit{pidgin}, the word in question may thus be argued to be a shortened form of \textit{phi jun mun} \textit{kia} 'permit', whose meaning was re-analysed as '(permit for) business'. Considering the variant pronunciations of \textit{批准} (\textit{phi jun} or \textit{phey jun} in Zhangzhou, \textit{phwey jun} in Xiamen) in Southern Min, the Hokkiens who introduced this word into Pidgin English were probably natives of Zhangzhou. Alternatively, one might conjecture that a Hokkien middle-man simply code-switched to Mandarin \textit{pi zhun} in his conversation with Europeans. In any event, the emergence of \textit{pidgin} involves a series of processes, as presented in Fig. 1.5.

This hypothesis also accounts for the variant pronunciations of \textit{pidgin} 'business' found in self-taught materials of Pidgin English for Cantonese speakers, i.e. \textit{bit zin} 必剪 versus \textit{bei zin} 卑剪. Such a variation corresponds to the dialectal variation of \textit{批准} (\textit{phi jun}, \textit{phey jun}, \textit{phwey jun}) in Southern Min. Due to Cantonese phonotactic constraints, the labiovelar glide in the third dialectal form is subject to deletion. Therefore, Cantonese speakers may have borrowed the term \textit{批准} (\textit{phi jun}, \textit{phey jun}) 'business' directly from Southern Min in their speech of Pidgin English. Alternatively, an oblique borrowing from Pidgin English, as indicated by the broken line in Fig. 1.5, is equally plausible.

6 Concluding Remarks

Against the backdrop of the sociohistorical background of Southern Min between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, this chapter has discussed some important contributions made by this less-studied Sinitic language in Sino-European contact, which first took place in Southeast Asia and then in coastal China. Terms such as \textit{ang moh} 紅毛 'European, white person', \textit{han ji} 番薯 'sweet potato', \textit{toh lien} 榴槤 'durian', and \textit{ang moh tan} 紅毛丹 ‘rambutan’ all trace their origin to Southern Min. The earliest written record of \textit{ang moh} 紅毛 is attested in a text of early seventeenth century, in which the Dutch, already known by the locals as \textit{ang moh} 紅毛, made their first visit to Macao in
This account suggests that this epithet was created in the late 1590s, after the Hokkien in Indonesia first encountered the Dutch. The borrowing of *toh lien* ‘durian’ and *ang moh tan* ‘rambutan’ from Malay into generic Chinese through Southern Min witnesses the extensive contact between Hokkiens and the people of Maritime Southeast Asia. By virtue of such a relationship, the sweet potato was introduced into China by a native of Hokkien from the Philippines, rendering Southern Min the language in which the naming of this crop first took place.

Since the early eighteenth century, Hokkien merchants had played a crucial role in international trade in Canton. Many business leaders were descendants from southern Fujian, and some of them were reported to communicate directly with European merchants in Pidgin English. The Southern Min word *phi jun or ph(w)ey jun* 批准 ‘to approve’, then, is arguably the source of English *pidgin*. A series of linguistic processes took place prior to the introduction of this Southern Min word into Pidgin English. Firstly, *phi jun mun kia or ph(w)ey jun mun kia* 批准文件 ‘approval document; permit’ was shortened to *phi jun or ph(w)ey jun* through tail-clipping – a morphological process common in Southern Min and Cantonese, but relatively rare in Mandarin – and

![Figure 1.5 Linguistic processes in deriving pidgin from Southern Min *phi jun or ph(w)ey jun*

OWN WORK](http://brill.com/pinh00473263)
then its meaning was re-analysed from ‘(business) permit’ to ‘business’. Code-switching involving Mandarin ｐｉ ｚｈｕｎ 批准 may have occurred before the variant ｐｈ(ｗ)ｅｙ ｊｕｎ made its way into Pidgin English. The dialectal variation in Southern Min – ｐｈｉ ｊｕｎ and ｐｈ(ｗ)ｅｙ ｊｕｎ – is probably responsible for the varying forms ｂｉｔ ｚｉｎ 必剪 and ｂｅｉ ｚｉｎ 卑剪 for pidgin ‘business’ as found in the Pidgin English of Cantonese speakers.

From ａｎｇ ｍｏｈ 紅毛 to ｐｈｉ ｊｕｎ 批准, the timeline in Table 1.4 indicates significant historical events pertaining to the linguistic issues investigated in this chapter. In the case of ａｎｇ ｍｏｈ 紅毛, the estimated time of its first occurrence is confined to a short interval. Conversely, the estimated timeframe for the first appearance of ｐｈｉ ｊｕｎ 批准 ‘business’ in Chinese Pidgin English spans decades, most likely taking place around the mid-eighteenth century. Cumulatively, these findings from Southern Min vocabulary support a central role of Hokkien speakers, including those based in Southeast Asia, in the history of Sino-European contact and the linguistic expressions created in this process.

**Table 1.4**  Timeline of relevant historical events and linguistic matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1410s</td>
<td>Hokkien community formed in Palembang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1420s</td>
<td>Hokkien community formed in Sumatra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1567</td>
<td>Zhangzhou as China’s sole seaport for foreign trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1594</td>
<td>China’s large scale planting of sweet potatoes initiated in Fujian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1596</td>
<td>The first Dutch arrival in Java</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1601</td>
<td>The first Dutch visit to Macao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600s</td>
<td>The first written record of 紅毛 attested in Yue Jian Bian 粵劍編</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>Canton (in addition to Zhangzhou) opened for international trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700s</td>
<td>Foreign trade in Canton dominated by Hokkien merchants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730s</td>
<td>The Southern Min honorific suffix -qua 官 used in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730s</td>
<td>Precursor of Chinese Pidgin English reported in Canton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Canton as China’s sole entrepôt (“Canton Trade System”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>Poankeequa 潘啓官 as the first head of Hong 行 Association of Canton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800s</td>
<td>Booklets for self-taught Pidgin English printed in Canton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Sino-British Treaty of Nanking (to open Canton, Amoy, Fuzhou, Ningbo &amp; Shanghai for trade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>The spelling of pigeon ‘business’ first recorded in English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

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