

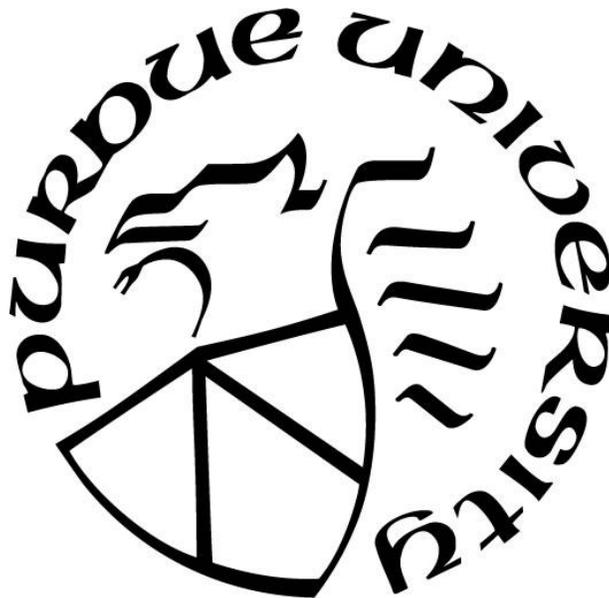
**DEFENDING A LANGUAGE: THE CANTONESE UMBRELLA
MOVEMENT**

by
Joshua S. Bacon

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THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Dr. Wei Luo, Chair

Department of Communication

Dr. Steven A. Carr

Department of Communication

Dr. Assem A. Nasr

Department of Communication

Dr. Lee M. Roberts

Department of International Language and Culture Studies

Approved by:

Dr. Wei Luo

Dedicated to the Cantonese people

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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates how the Cantonese language can simultaneously serve as a threat to the Beijing government and a counter-hegemonic articulation of Hong Kong protesters against the Beijing government by applying the theory of hegemony and the method of critical discourse analysis to Hong Kong newspapers during the Umbrella Movement. Focusing on how the Cantonese language is used to communicate messages of protest leads to a more thorough understanding of the significance of the language in a Hong Kong identity context. Thus, while Cantonese plays a larger role in the Umbrella Movement protests than scholars give credit for, newspaper discourse also plays a large part in obscuring the connection between Cantonese and the protests. By addressing four research questions regarding Cantonese, I conclude that the three studied newspapers largely conceal the Cantonese discourse in relation to the Umbrella Movement protests. However, when Cantonese is discussed it is mainly along the lines of the political affiliation of the newspaper. Though some newspapers do hint at the counter-hegemonic abilities of Cantonese, this aspect is often undervalued and underappreciated. Likewise, when Cantonese issues are brought up they often converge with issues of national identity, but in a manner to downplay the Cantonese identity. As such, *Wen Wei Po* makes no effort to detail a Cantonese nation, but instead uses the concept of “Zhong hua min zu” (Chinese nation/Chinese race) to negate any differentiation. Meanwhile, *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* do insinuate the differences of Cantonese and Hong Kong, but keep the dialogue firmly within the “one country, two systems” setup to avoid angering Beijing. The analysis reveals that while newspapers sometimes use the voice of Hong Kong Cantonese, this generally takes place through a small amount of direct quotations and images of signs rather than a large-scale showcasing of the Cantonese identity and Cantonese vernacular.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong is a multi-ethnic Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and is located off the southeastern coast of the mainland (Tsang, 2004, Xu, 2015). Often dubbed "Asia's world city," modern Hong Kong is forged out of the peripheral fragments of empires; the Manchu Qing dynasty, the British Empire, and the PRC (Cheung, 2018, Chin, 2011, Wu, 2016). It is a mixture of Tanka, Hakka, Cantonese, Chinese, British, and other ethnicities (Ma & Fung, 2007; Meacham, 2009; Tsang, 2004; Xu, 2015). From its humble roots of Yue fishing villages to the rise of an international city, the area now known as Hong Kong has been through many changes (Meacham, 2009; Siu, 1993; Tsang, 2004; Wong, 2017). Not least of these changes occurred on July 1, 1997 when authority over the city was transferred from the U.K. to the PRC under a system called "one country, two systems," in which Hong Kong was promised a high degree of autonomy and eventually universal suffrage (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2012, 2013; Stevens, 2014; Tsang, 2004; UK Parliament, 2014). The "one country, two systems" concept was originally designed to bring Taiwan under PRC control, but its implementation in Hong Kong was seen as useful in securing a smooth transition for the transfer of the city (Tsang, 2004). However, this setup now appears to be breaking down as Hong Kong cultural identity is increasingly under siege from the Beijing government while safeguards like universal suffrage have been denied (Hui, 2015).

Despite its small non-Han fishing village roots, the bulk of Hong Kong's population arrived as immigrants and refugees into British Hong Kong, mostly Cantonese from neighboring Guangdong Province who were fleeing the worst excesses of PRC rule, including the Cultural Revolution, the Great Leap Forward, and the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries (Meacham, 2009; Siu, 1993; Spence, 1999; Tsang, 2004; Xu, 2015). Whereas prior to the

founding of the PRC, many of those who came to Hong Kong from the mainland saw themselves as Chinese and adhered to Chinese nationalism, these numbers started to decline after 1949 (Ma & Fung, 2007; Veg, 2017; Wu, 2016). Cutoff from the mainland following the establishment of the PRC, Hong Kong began to develop a unique history, culture, and way of life, often seen as a mixture of Chinese values and British rituals (Ma & Fung, 2007; Tsang, 2004; Veg, 2017; Wu, 2016). However, in contrast to the PRC version of nationalism based on race (Anderlini, 2017; Chan, 2018; Dikötter, 2001), the Hong Kong identity is considered a civic identity based on the shared values of Hong Kongers, and rooted in values of freedom, democracy, and transparent government (Chan, 2018; Chong, 2017; Kwan, 2016; Veg, 2017; Wu, 2016). Kwan (2016) maintains “this conception of a civic nation is based upon the principle that the nation is formed through the choice of individuals” (p. 943). Thus the Hong Kong identity is “chosen” through a rejection of PRC ethnic nationalism (Kwan, 2016).

At the same time, referencing Anderson’s (1991) ideas of nationalism evolving out of print capitalism, the Hong Kong identity is also forged out of Cantonese movies, music, newspapers, and television (Snow, 2004; So & Chan, 2007; Wu, 2016). In that the bulk of Hong Kongers speak Cantonese, and that the language is increasingly under threat from the PRC, this makes the protection of the language all the more significant (Fong, 2017; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012). Therefore, when Hong Kongers came out to protest a 2014 PRC decision in which the National People’s Congress Standing Committee in Beijing decided that Hong Kong people could only vote for Beijing government approved candidates for Chief Executive, the head of Hong Kong (Full text, 2014; Hui, 2015), the Cantonese language played a major role in the protests (Lee & Chau, 2018).

However, scholars largely neglect the importance of language and the role that newspapers played in the movement. While Anderson (1991) argues that nations consist of imagined communities emerging out of print capitalism, imagined in that most members will not have met their fellow members, Jiang (2013) documents the importance of newspapers in this creation for language purposes. Newspapers allow people to share common experiences, engage in discourse, and come together in this imagined national community (Jiang, 2013). Importantly, Hong Kong has a high newspaper readership with a traditionally very free-wheeling press (High newspaper circulation, 2005; So & Chan, 2007), and among the most popular newspapers in the city are those that use Cantonese vernacular writing (Snow, 2004; Yeh, 2009). This Cantonese writing serves both as an expression of Hong Kong Cantonese-ness and also as a counter-hegemonic articulation against Beijing government domination and control. By studying the role that Cantonese played in the Umbrella Movement through newspapers, I will demonstrate how the language simultaneously serves as a threat to Beijing and as a counter-hegemonic articulation among Hong Kong protesters against Beijing.

Whereas the Beijing government portrays Cantonese as a dialect rather than a language (Cheng, 2018; Guilford, 2014; Tam & Lau, 2018), this results in the negation of a separate cultural and linguistic identity that in many ways has come to differentiate Hong Kong from the mainland. Beijing presents Cantonese as a dialect for the sake of unifying the diverse languages and cultures of the PRC under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership to promote patriotism, national identity, and even distrust of those outside the PRC (Gao, 2012; Kristof, 1992; You, 2018). In short, Beijing seeks to undermine a local identity that could lead to resistance against the CCP (Guilford, 2014). Therefore, Cantonese is deemed a dialect of Chinese (Guilford, 2014). However, the Chinese language pushed by the Beijing government is Mandarin, which is

unintelligible to Cantonese speakers (Guilford, 2014). If Beijing were to instead represent Cantonese as a completely different language than Mandarin, then questions begin to creep in about why that is the case. Why is Cantonese a different language than Mandarin? Why are Cantonese people different from those in the north? This creates a situation in which Cantonese could start to question why they need to take orders from Beijing, as well as leading to issues of greater autonomy or even outright independence.

While Hong Kong is predominantly Cantonese, at the time of the Umbrella Movement Hong Kong newspapers were able to demonstrate this differentiation more openly and effectively than in the subsequent years, as censorship has increased dramatically in the city since the 2014 Umbrella Movement (Harris, 2015; Lee, 2018a). Yet, despite such portrayals of difference prior to and during the Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong newspapers did not actively portray Hong Kong as a separate political entity from the PRC, nor did they seek to represent the view of an entirely independent Hong Kong. Instead, Hong Kong newspapers mainly sought room in which to maneuver within the “one country, two systems” setup for which Hong Kong is guaranteed a high degree of autonomy as part of legal agreements in which the city became a part of the PRC (Hui, 2018). Within this “one country, two systems” setup, Cantonese is an issue of differentiation to be explained to the *South China Morning Post*’s English readers, while for *Apple Daily* Cantonese already expresses that differentiation as the way Hong Kong people communicate, and for *Wen Wei Po* Cantonese does not differentiate Hong Kong from the mainland at all, as it is simply a dialect of Chinese.

Cantonese, also known as (广东话/廣東話) Guang dong hua/Gwong dung waa, is spoken by the majority of Hong Kongers and is a language that has cultural and historical significance for the city (Fong, 2017). It is a language that is unintelligible from the primary

language of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Pu tong hua/Pou tung waa (普通话/普通話) or Mandarin (Guilford, 2014; Harrell, 1993; Ng & Zhao, 2015). The distinctly Cantonese name for the Umbrella Movement is important in describing how Cantonese is different from Mandarin and serves as an example of the double entendre meanings in the language. The Beijing government finds the usage of such words with multiple meanings and slang terms a threat to its control, often advocating that people should speak “properly” and avoid using slang (Gan, 2017; Nordin & Richaud, 2014).

Cantonese itself is often singled out by the Beijing government as an improper way of speaking, and a separate way to say Umbrella Movement in Cantonese only serves to demonstrate the differentiation of Hong Kong. In Cantonese the word for umbrella is often written as 遮 (ze), which when combined with 打 (daa) in the distinctly Cantonese 遮打運動 (ze daa wan dung) (Umbrella Movement) becomes a play on words, as 遮打 is also the name for Chater Road, one of the main protest sites (Guilford, 2014; Ho, 2016; Klein, n.d.). Hence, it is the “Umbrella Movement” and the “Chater Road Movement” (Guilford, 2014; Klein, n.d.). Furthermore, since 打 means “to hit” or “to fight” then it is the “Umbrella Fight Movement” with the target being Hong Kong Chief Executive CY Leung, or in other words the “Umbrella Fight-Against-CY-Leung-Movement” (Guilford, 2014). The term 遮打運動 (zhe da yun dong) is nonsensical in Mandarin, as the language does not use 遮 (zhe) as the noun “umbrella,” but instead 遮 means “to cover” or “to hide” (Guilford, 2014). Thus, 遮打運動 does not mean the Umbrella Movement in Mandarin, but the “Cover-Hit Movement,” which is why one also sees 雨傘/雨傘 (yu san/jyu saan) (umbrella) used for 雨傘運動/雨傘運動 (Umbrella Movement) because the term makes sense in both Mandarin and Cantonese (Guilford, 2014; Ho, 2016).

Both scholarship and the media coverage could do more to emphasize this unique importance of language in the Umbrella Movement. Whereas Cantonese played a crucial role as the language of the protesters in the movement, the worldwide media narrative focused more on a people striving against an authoritarian state rather than language differences with the mainland (Ackeret, 2014; Beech, 2014; Keane, 2014; Li, 2014; Zhu, 2014). This narrative infers the overall Beijing government attack on Hong Kong identity, including civil and societal aspects that Hong Kong people view as tantamount to their way of life (Fong, 2017; Veg, 2017). Of these issues, the ability to communicate using one's native language is of primary concern. However, most scholars of the Umbrella Movement overlook the Cantonese language aspect of the protests and instead focus on the political issues of the fight for universal suffrage and the communication strategies used in that fight (Lee, 2018b; Lee, So, & Leung, 2015; Lee & Ting, 2015; Lin, 2017; Loo, 2018; Ortmann, 2015, 2016). Overlooking the language aspect means missing the articulation that Umbrella Movement protesters were not only committed to a democratic future for Hong Kong, but also to the survival of the Cantonese language, while often seeing these two elements as intertwined (Guilford, 2014). This connection is demonstrated on the *Facebook* page of Umbrella Movement leader Agnes Chow, who amidst posts of calls for democracy, headlines her page with a banner stating "Defending Cantonese" in English below the larger "我撐廣東話" (Ngo caang gwong dung waa) [I support Cantonese] (Chow, 2018; Kirhara & Chan, 2018). Chow's articulation is important in that many view Cantonese as a dying language, collapsing under the wake of a Beijing government takeover of Hong Kong (Benson, 1997; Bolton, 2000; da Silva, 2012; Groves, 2010; Liu, 2017; Salibra, 2010).

University of Hong Kong public opinion polls further demonstrate the distressed situation that many Hong Kongers feel their city is in, as indicators linked with a Hong Kong identity have

trended downward since 1997. Among these indicators are corruption-free practices, democracy, freedom, fairness, and equality (Chong, 2017). In addition, freedom of association, freedom of press, freedom of publication, freedom of speech, freedom of religious belief, freedom to engage in academic research, and freedom to engage in artistic and literary creation have all dropped off (Chong, 2017). Hong Kongers primarily exercise these core values using Cantonese, and when these beliefs are seen as in danger Hong Kongers will act in defiance, as demonstrated by the Umbrella Movement protests.

Cantonese plays a much more important role in the Umbrella Movement than scholarship has given it credit for and one sees this in newspaper coverage, and how newspaper coverage also conceals the counter-hegemonic abilities of Cantonese. As such, this research paper will demonstrate the role of Cantonese in the protests, along with how different Hong Kong newspapers regard that role depending on their political persuasion. In order to understand and decipher the different political viewpoints on the Umbrella Movement and the Cantonese language, I use the theory of hegemony and the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to study three Hong Kong newspapers. This theory and method allows one to understand the significance of the language in a Hong Kong identity context by teasing out the strands of power abuse and how Cantonese represents a threat to the linguistic hegemony of the Mandarin pushed by the Beijing government. Whereas the studied newspapers portray the Cantonese identity in different ways, none of them connect Cantonese to a Hong Kong independence movement. Instead the newspapers conceive of the Cantonese identity within the “one country, two systems” framework. For the *South China Morning Post* and *Apple Daily*, the Cantonese identity is based within the autonomy promised Hong Kong, while for *Wen Wei Po*, which actually does paint the Umbrella Movement as an independence movement, the Cantonese identity is not linked to the

Umbrella Movement, but is diluted into a Chinese identity to negate the differentiation of Hong Kong by emphasizing the “one country” aspect of “one country, two systems.”

Based on such considerations, this paper demonstrates how Cantonese simultaneously serves as a threat to the Beijing government and as a counter-hegemonic articulation among Hong Kong protesters against Beijing. While Cantonese is the most important language for Hong Kong people, the long-term status of the language has been called into question by a pushing of Putonghua from the Beijing government. However, the Cantonese view of Umbrella Movement protesters is very different from the view of those that are more pro-Beijing, and in order to obtain an accurate view of the differences among political persuasion one can analyze how different Hong Kong newspapers frame the discussion of Cantonese within the development of the Umbrella Movement. The differing views demonstrate how Hong Kong newspapers can advance competing hegemonic or counter-hegemonic narratives when describing the language.

Four research questions are posited for this study in order to allow one to not only understand how Umbrella Movement protesters view and use Cantonese, but how others within Hong Kong society view the language and its connection to the protesters. As such, the following four questions are researched in this paper:

Q1: How did different Hong Kong newspapers acknowledge the role of Cantonese as part of their coverage of the protests?

Q2: Did the way in which the newspapers acknowledge the importance of Cantonese as a part of the protests vary according to the political affiliation of the outlet?

Q3: How did Cantonese serve as a counter-hegemonic language in the Umbrella Movement protests?

Q4: What is the role of Cantonese and national identity within the protests?

In order to answer these four questions, I place this paper into eight major sections, an introduction, literature review, theory and methods section, four separate sections detailing each research question, and a conclusion. Each section will build on the previous section to describe the role of Cantonese as a threat to the Beijing government and a counter-hegemonic articulation against Beijing. The introduction lays the groundwork for this study, the literature review details what is missing from current scholarship on Cantonese, the theory and methods section addresses the way in which the artifacts are chosen and analyzed, the four research question sections detail the discovered results of analysis, and the conclusion demonstrates how this study contributes to existing literature.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

I discover three major themes when investigating how scholarship details the functioning of Cantonese as a counter-hegemonic expression against the Chinese government: Cantonese as a Hong Kong identity language, Putonghua as a colonizing language, and Cantonese in the Umbrella Movement. By researching these three key areas, the path forward demonstrates not only how Cantonese serves as a counter-hegemonic language within Hong Kong, but also a language of Hong Kong identity during the Umbrella Movement.

Cantonese as a Hong Kong Identity Language

The status of Cantonese is a point of contention among scholars, with some stating that its classification should be based on the identity of the speakers, rather than the technical aspects. For instance, Mau (2005) characterizes Cantonese more as a dialect than a language by arguing that although Cantonese and Putonghua are mutually unintelligible, the perception among Hong Kongers as seeing themselves as Chinese and their speech of Cantonese as a variety of Chinese more adequately points to the conclusion that Cantonese is not a language. However, Mau's (2005) conclusion that those from Hong Kong classify themselves as Chinese is premature and is not well supported in the overall views of Hong Kong people in the last decade. Studies show that people from Hong Kong are much more likely to view themselves as Hong Kongers rather than Chinese, a distinction that has rapidly increased in the last ten years (Fong, 2017; Wong, 2017; University of Hong Kong, 2018). Furthermore, Mau's (2005) study was conducted in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, a time in which Beijing was on its best behavior to pull off a successful showing to the world. Despite the warmer feelings between Hong Kong and the mainland during this era, it exists more as an anomaly rather than a harbinger of the future, as the

relationship plummeted once again after 2008, in concert with the down trending of Hong Kongers identifying as Chinese (C. Chan, 2014; Fong, 2017; University of Hong Kong, 2018; Wong, 2017). Sullivan, Schatz, and Lam (2012) find that Hong Kongers do begin to identify more with China when left alone, but when the Beijing government seeks to integrate Hong Kong with the more oppressive policies of the mainland then Hong Kongers react in defiance, fueling dissent and allegiance away from the Beijing government.

Even though Mau (2005) classifies Cantonese as a dialect, there is a lack of consensus among scholars in viewing it this way. Contrasting with Mau (2005), Groves (2010) finds that referring to Cantonese as a dialect instead of a language impacts how the language functions in society. While many Chinese language studies do refer to the mutually unintelligible languages of China as dialects, Putonghua is rarely referred to as a dialect (Groves, 2010). Therefore, when a language like Cantonese is placed in this classification it mischaracterizes the tremendous differences it has with Putonghua in grammar and lexicon (Yip & Matthews, 2000), and places Putonghua on a higher level. Thus, the term dialect may be more representative of a political meaning rather than a technical meaning in an attempt to integrate those that are different (Ng & Zhao, 2015). For example, if Cantonese is deemed a separate language then in what other areas might Cantonese people be described as different? These considerations might lead to imagining a different nation or race, thus challenging the concept of “Zhong hua min zu” (中华民族/中華民族) [Chinese race/Chinese nation] (Anderlini, 2017; Chan, 2018; Dikötter, 2001; Liu, 2001; Wang, 1998). However, if Cantonese is merely a dialect under a larger Chinese language umbrella, without challenging Putonghua, then there is a framework provided for the inclusion of Cantonese people in a larger “Zhong hua min zu” without challenging the language dynamics (Dikötter, 2001).

While a vast amount of research demonstrates a strong connection between group identification and language (Fishman, 2001; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1977; Krauss & Chui, 1998; Omoniyi & White, 2006; Schatz, Sullivan, Flanigan, & Black, 2002; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007), this connection also applies to mainland China and Hong Kong (Lai, 2011; Lam, Chiu, Lau, Chan, & Yim, 2006; Tong, Hong, Lee, & Chiu, 1999). Therefore, one can point to the embrace of the language of one's own group over the language of a different group. In the case of Hong Kong, its people increasingly link Cantonese with their Hong Kong identity, as opposed to the Putonghua that they more closely associate with a Chinese identity (Lai, 2009, 2011; Gu, 2011). Lam, Chiu, Lau, Chan, & Yim (2006) further find that those identifying with a Hong Kong identity prefer Cantonese speakers over Putonghua speakers, whereas those with a Chinese frame of reference prefer Putonghua speakers over Cantonese speakers. Thus, Hong Kong identity shows a preference for Cantonese, and Chinese identity for Putonghua.

According to He (2004), "identity is indexical with specific sets of acts and stances, which in turn are constructed by specific language forms" (p. 199). In this way, identity unfolds through interaction with others and how participants in those interactions react and respond to each other (He, 2004). He (2004) concludes that language is intricately linked in these interactions and forms a core part of identity construction. As such, the process of identity construction is not static, but a continuing process in which a person becomes or achieves through interactions with objects or people (He, 2004; Rampton, 1995; Wortham & Rhymes, 2003). This identity construction allows one to become a cultural member of a group through the use of language (He, 2004), and thus allowing the Cantonese identity to take hold through language.

Even more worrisome for Beijing is that given the historical counter-hegemonic linguistic abilities of Cantonese with regard to its connection to the indigenous Yue people and to the golden era Tang dynasty, the PRC has gone so far as to deny that Cantonese even constitutes an actual language, stating that it is only a dialect, and therefore beneath the significance of Mandarin (Cheng, 2018; Guilford, 2014; Tam & Lau, 2018). With this policy, the Beijing government pushes for the replacement of Cantonese with Mandarin as the language of instruction in Hong Kong schools and promotes the idea that speaking Cantonese is uncivilized (Cantonese language, 2015; Tam & Lau, 2018). For instance, banners across China state “说普通话，用规范字，做文明人” [Shuo Pu tong hua, yong gui fan zi, zuo wen ming ren] (Speak Mandarin, use simplified written characters, be a civilized person), and elementary school textbooks list “粤语” [Yue yu] (Cantonese) as an example of a “不文明的表现” [bu wen ming de biao xian] (uncivilized expression) (Lam, 2015). Tam and Lau (2018) further detail how this way of thinking spreads into Hong Kong as the Hong Kong Education Bureau argues that “Cantonese is not an official language,” reflecting a move to teach Chinese in Hong Kong classrooms using Mandarin instead of Cantonese. The need for government institutions to make such statements denying that Cantonese is a language demonstrates the power that exists in using Cantonese as a means of communication. As such, I put forward my study to emphasize how the language played an important role in the Umbrella Movement by demonstrating how the counter-hegemonic abilities of Cantonese threaten the Beijing government.

Putonghua as a Colonizing Language

While Hong Kongers show a strong preference for Cantonese in their identity, as juxtaposed to the Putonghua of the mainland, many scholars conflate the language differences by

arguing the Beijing takeover of Hong Kong is not colonialism. For instance, Lai and Byram (2003) connect Hong Kong with ex-colonial countries in Africa, Asia, South America, and the Arab world by pointing out cases of linguistic imperialism concerning Vietnamese in Cambodia, English in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, and South Africa, and Japanese in Burma, Korea, and Taiwan. In this fashion, Lai and Byram (2003) misconstrue the difference between Hong Kong and the mainland by thinking that the culture of Hong Kong would naturally be the same as the culture of Beijing if only the British influence and English language had not corrupted Hong Kong.

Anderson (1991) maintains the importance of these ex-colonial languages and education by fostering a nationalism of an “imagined community” in which the ex-colonial language is an important source for domination, rule, and ascension. Lai and Byram (2003) claim that it is this situation that Beijing must counter as it de-colonizes Hong Kong in order to replace English with Chinese and foster a national identity in Hong Kong. Yet, Lai and Byram (2003) relate such similar linguistic imperialism only to English in Hong Kong, but not Putonghua in Hong Kong. Whereas English did play an imperialistic role in Hong Kong’s past (Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012), what Lai and Byram (2003) are missing is that the ex-colonial countries that they mentioned, Cambodia, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Burma, Korea, and Taiwan all became independent countries, but Hong Kong did not. Instead, Hong Kong was removed from a United Nations list of non-self-governing territories in 1972 at the request of the PRC, which argued that Hong Kong was not a colony (Chu, 2010; Fong, 2017; Tang & Ching, 1994). Furthermore, the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration to hand Hong Kong over to the PRC from the U.K. was never put to a referendum for the Hong Kong people to decide, nor was it ever agreed to by an elected legislature (Lo, 2001; Raghubir & Venkataramani, 1999). The

reality of what Hong Kongers think of as their language is better demonstrated through a study of Cantonese during the Umbrella Movement.

Despite the proclamations of Lai and Byram (2003), Hong Kong is not primarily an English-speaking Chinese community just waiting for embrace by the motherland, but instead a society of Cantonese-speaking Hong Kongers who feel like they have been lied to, and that their culture, language, and identity are being erased (Chan, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2016; Fong, 2017; Ortmann, 2016; Wu, 2016). For instance, Fong (2017) declares “that Beijing’s incorporation strategies toward Hong Kong in recent years have resulted in waves of counter mobilization, shaping the dynamics of mainland-Hong Kong relations into a clash of nationalisms – the clash of state-building nationalism of mainland China and the periphery nationalism of Hong Kong” (p. 523). This incorporation includes backtracking from Beijing government pledges of the 1980s to leave Hong Kongers alone to administer their own affairs by instead seeking to “limit Hong Kong’s scope of autonomy and control the pace of democratic development” (Fong, 2017, p. 523). Ortmann (2016) argues that this forced incorporation, including “greater repression and threats to the residents’ freedoms have increased demands for democratization and most recently, even triggered calls for full autonomy and even independence” (p. 201). According to Wu (2016), behind this repression is the goal of dissolving Hong Kong’s uniqueness with an aggressive nation-building that has had a “tremendous impact on the preexistent patterns of resource allocation, social institutions, value systems and cultural identities of Hong Kong and therefore was bound to trigger resistance from local society” (p. 691).

A large part of Hong Kong’s uniqueness, and therefore its peripheral nationalism, is based on its language (Wu, 2016). In contrast to the mainland, Hong Kong’s “imagined community” is primarily based on Cantonese script, Cantonese phrasing, and Cantonese

speaking (Fong, 2017). For them, Cantonese is the most important language, not English or the Putonghua Chinese pushed by the Beijing government (C. Chan, 2014; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012). Hong Kongers might learn all of these languages and see the importance in learning them (Lai & Byram, 2003), but they do not want either of these languages replacing their own language in their home city, nor replacing their writing system, an important distinction in the forging of nationhood (Anderson, 1991; C. Chan, 2014; Jiang, 2013; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012).

Lai and Bryam (2003) argue for the importance of Putonghua in decolonizing Hong Kong, but the situation is actually more complex than that. Lai and Byram (2003) state how the post-handover Hong Kong government started a new language policy of trilingualism of Cantonese, Putonghua, and English, arguing that Beijing pushing Hong Kongers to learn Putonghua helps build a new Hong Kong citizenship that is based on national identity and integration with the mainland. This language policy is also augmented in Hong Kong media and communication (C. Chan, 2014; Lai & Byram, 2003; Liu, 2017; Ng & Zhao, 2015; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012). Lai and Byram (2003) argue that these language policies are part of a decolonization effort by the Beijing government to revive “Chinese as the high language in schools and in society at large” (p. 317). Furthermore, Lai and Byram (2003) state that the pushing of Putonghua “helps build a more inclusive society with class ascension not discriminated against by exploitative linguistic social groups of elite” (p. 317).

However, for many Hong Kongers, Beijing is not instituting a policy of decolonization, but is simply the new colonizer of Hong Kong that is replacing Britain as the old colonizer, and instead of creating an equitable and inclusive society for ascension, Beijing is pushing Putonghua at the expense of Cantonese, while giving preference to those that follow the Beijing line (Chan,

2018; Chin, 2011; Cheung, 2015; Wu, 2016). For instance, Chan (2018) states that “we [Hong Kong] were once colonised by the Brits, and now we are by the Chinese,” referencing the integration patterns by which the Beijing government seeks to incorporate Hong Kong. Chan (2018) continues that “per China’s orders, Hong Kong’s future generations will now abandon Cantonese and switch entirely to Mandarin,” and that “today, Hong Kong faces “national cleansing” from China.” Wu (2016) argues that with this erosion of Hong Kong society, complemented by an aggressive unilateral immigration policy by the Beijing government aimed at further integration, the “Hong Kong people had formed a community of common psychology, of which the crucial characteristic was an aspiration to be far away from the CCP [Chinese Communist Party]-dominated China” (p. 699).

Whereas the Hong Kong government did promote trilingualism in Hong Kong after the handover, the Hong Kong Education Bureau also posited Putonghua to replace Cantonese as the medium of instruction in Hong Kong schools by 2006 (Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012). Policies in Hong Kong also show less financial support toward Cantonese than Putonghua and English (Lee & Leung, 2012). These policies are further wrapped up in the mixing of nationalism and language, as speaking Putonghua is viewed as equivalent to being Chinese (Gu, 2011; Lai, 2009, 2012; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012), which for the Beijing government means accepting Beijing government control (Chan, 2018; Wong, 2017). While the British did push English as the medium of instruction in Hong Kong during its rule (Lai & Byram, 2003), the Hong Kong Education Bureau actually took a more hands-off approach, leading to a number of schools claiming to use English, but in reality, using Cantonese instead (Hopkins, 2006). In contrast to this approach, the Beijing government’s pushing of Putonghua at the expense of Cantonese is an

effort to instill Chinese nationalism within the Hong Kong people (Gu, 2011; Lai, 2009, 2012; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012).

Cantonese in the Umbrella Movement

Despite Cantonese playing such a vibrant part in Hong Kong society, few scholars focus on how the language played a role in the Umbrella Movement and how newspapers galvanized the public for action, instead focusing more on television images. For instance, Tang (2015) argues, “that in the Umbrella Movement, television played a crucial role in mobilizing the participants and contributing to the scale of the occupation” (p. 338), as “the televised images of the use of tear gas on people participating in the Umbrella Movement...contributed to the size and scale of the movement” (p. 338). While it is true that these images galvanized more people to join the protests, the televised images also featured dialogue explaining what was occurring that night in Hong Kong, and the language that galvanized people was in Cantonese (HKG mimi, 2014; i-Cable News, 2014). These televised images could have been rendered meaningless to people without the context of what was occurring at that moment and magnified by the connection Hong Kongers felt in hearing the news in their own language and seeing it in their own script. Studies show that this type of connection to one’s own language produces heartfelt responses of belonging (Lee & Chau, 2018; Pavlenko, 2007). Therefore, not only are images important, but the language is as well, even in producing a state of us (Hong Kong) versus them (Beijing government) (C. Chan, 2014; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012).

Furthermore, Tang’s (2015) study compares politically conservative Hong Kong news networks, like TVB (Lee, 2015) to more pro-democracy news sources like *Apple Daily*. Tang (2015) maintains those mobilized to protest because of the TVB images of tear gas see the station as credible. However, he leaves out the language aspect, and how TVB must still

broadcast in Cantonese, lest it lose all credibility with Hong Kong people. Contrasting with TVB, Tang (2015) argues that those involved with the Umbrella Movement prior to the tear gas images would be more inclined to see *Apple Daily* as a credible news source, with its strong pro-democracy stance and support of the movement in its early stages. Yet, Tang (2015) also fails to mention that *Apple Daily* makes use of the Cantonese vernacular, featuring articles that are often understood only by those connected with Hong Kong and the Cantonese diaspora.

Summary

Whereas previous research does hint at the counter-hegemonic potential for Cantonese, research is lacking in demonstrating the importance that Cantonese played in the Umbrella Movement. My study of how Cantonese was reporting on in Hong Kong newspapers during the protests will fill this gap. Furthermore, the political diversity of Hong Kong newspapers will also show how different narratives emerge regarding how the language is viewed according to the political persuasion of each newspaper. This is important to show not only how Cantonese is used counter-hegemonically, but also the consensual submission among some Hong Kongers and how newspapers can construe that acceptance as creating a multilingual society. However, in reality, the consensual submission leads to the replacing of one language with another.

CHAPTER 3. THEORY AND METHODS

Based on evidence that most Hong Kongers speak Cantonese and increasingly differentiate themselves from the Putonghua they see as indicative of the Beijing government's policies, one can see how Cantonese plays a major role in Umbrella Movement protesters asserting their rights under the "one country, two systems" framework and in defense of the democracy that was promised in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. Such language articulations among protesters are seen as fundamental to protecting their way of life. Unfortunately, many scholars downplay the importance of Cantonese within the Umbrella Movement and how the language plays a core part of the Hong Kong identity in the "one country, two systems" framework. This Hong Kong Cantonese identity is firmly rooted in the multicultural Hong Kong society and also has firm connections to the rest of the world and the overseas Cantonese diaspora. However, those that disagree with Umbrella Movement protesters are not as inclined to attach themselves to this multicultural view of Hong Kong, but rather to the connections Hong Kong has with the mainland. These pro-Beijing Hong Kong people are less inclined to see themselves as Hong Kongers and more committed to the Chinese identity connection. Thus, pro-Beijing Hong Kong people see the connection to the Beijing government as a positive, and Putonghua as a necessary engagement to help strengthen the connection. This consensual submission is best explained through Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which I will explain in the following section.

Theoretical Framework

This research paper utilizes Gramscian hegemony in order to analyze the counter-hegemonic abilities of the Cantonese language, and how that language functions as a source of

Hong Kong identity within the Umbrella Movement. Gramscian hegemony describes the ways in which a social group can claim supremacy over another group not only through physical force, but also by subtle means of eliminating cultural aspects within that society, including through a process of consensual submission (Litowitz, 2000). According to Gramsci (1988), ‘spontaneous’ consent is “given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (p. 306-307), and that groups who refuse to submit will face “the apparatus of state coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively” (p. 307). However, hegemony can be countered from below in a bottom-up method through civil society (Katz, 2006), which is why the Beijing government views the Cantonese language and its expressions of a unique Hong Kong identity as threatening.

In hegemony, the objectives of the ruling group are presented as the universal interests of the population as a whole (Mouffe, 1979). This constitutes the everyday meaning, reality, expectations, practices, and values of society (Mouffe, 1979; Williams, 1977). Although oppositional culture and politics exist in society, hegemonic groups deal with these threats by incorporating or transforming them (Williams, 1977). The hegemonic group will then weld these aims together into a single aim (Gramsci, 1971). In that the PRC currently rests its legitimacy on Chinese nationalism, the Beijing government presents Hong Kong people as Chinese, and so they must submit to the Beijing government as the protector of Chinese culture (Hui, 2008; Oyen, 2010; Pan, Lee, Chan, & So., 2001; Wong, 2017). Thus, as Chinese people it is in the interests of the people in Hong Kong to accept the Beijing government’s rule. In this view, the Hong Kong identity that exists is simply the result of British influence and must be eradicated in order to transform Hong Kong people back into the Chinese identity to which they really belong (Pan, et

al., 2001; Wong, 2017). The Beijing government maintains that Hong Kong has a long history of being part of China, and that British rule was merely a period in which a mainland governmental entity was simply just not exercising jurisdiction (Fung, 2016; Kwok, 2017; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.; Wong, 2016).

However, hegemony can be challenged, limited, and resisted in the existence of oppositional culture and politics (Williams, 1977). The contradictions existing within hegemony leave it open to resistance by these oppositional groups, with critical thinking a crucial aspect of resistance to hegemony (Giroux, 1981; 1983). As such, one can become aware that one is being targeted by the state for the process of hegemony (Giroux, 1983). With this critical thinking, McPeck (1981) argues that skepticism toward government statements are crucially important for this process. As such, one can point to the fact that the PRC was never in control of Hong Kong until 1997 and that the vast majority of people that make up Hong Kong actually came to the city to escape rule under the Beijing government (Ma & Fung, 2007; Spence, 1999).

Chinese Nationalism and “One Country, Two Systems”

According to Gramsci (1971), states are defined under theoretical and practical activities in which the ruling class maintains and justifies its dominance through hegemony protected under coercion. Bensman (1979) maintains that these claims to authority from the ruling group are based on two justifications. First, that the ruling group’s claim is justified by a high independent theory or principle (Bensman, 1979). This principle is Chinese nationalism in the case of the PRC (Anderlini, 2017; Barabantseva, 2012; Oyen, 2010; Pan, et al., 2001), as exemplified by the concept of “Zhong hua min zu” (Anderlini, 2017; Dikötter, 2001; Liu, 2001; Wang, 1998). This concept is not natural, but the result of a mix of economic, historical, and political circumstances influenced by Western ideas of the nation-state and race in an attempt to

bring together cultures as diverse from each other as the different European states (Dikötter, 2001; Mackerras, 2008; Wang, 1998). The second type of justification is based on references to which only ruling groups claim to be uniquely capable of accomplishing (Bensman, 1979). In this regard, the PRC argues that it alone is uniquely capable of bringing Hong Kong back under mainland control, regardless of if this is what Hong Kong people actually want (Pan, et al., 2001). It is in these two ways that Beijing stakes its legitimacy to rule over Hong Kong.

However, there is also a legal framework in which this legitimacy exists; “one country, two systems” (Fairbrother, 2008). This framework is the basis of the transfer of Hong Kong from the U.K. to the PRC and forms a core part of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, Hong Kong’s mini-constitution (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2012; UK Parliament, 2014). For Hong Kongers, the emphasis rests on the “two systems” aspect of the framework, as exemplified by Hong Kong’s status as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) (Wu, 2016). For many, this framework means Hong Kong autonomy under a Chinese federation (Wu, 2016). Conversely, the Beijing government views the “one country” aspect of the framework as more important, arguing that it has a right to integrate Hong Kong further into the mainland (Hui, 2018; Wu, 2016). Whereas the “one country, two systems” framework was initially setup as a way to ease Hong Kongers fears over Beijing influence by promising autonomy, one can find many instances of the Beijing government interfering in Hong Kong affairs to the detriment of this legal framework (Branigan & Kaiman, 2014; Haas & Phillips, 2016; Hui, 2017; Lewis, 2016; Mak, 2018; Wu, 2016). It is when Beijing steps over this line that Hong Kongers react in defiance, often by utilizing the differentiation of their Cantonese heritage and language.

Methodological Framework

The method of CDA serves as an excellent resource to augment the theory of hegemony in studying how hegemonic narratives emerge out of artifacts. CDA empowers scholars to work as both social critics and activists by engaging with language and text to discover the ways in which communication is utilized in social interactions (Huckin, 2002; van Dijk, 1993). CDA allows scholars to tease out power abuses embedded within society in order to confront the inequalities and injustices that stem from rampant abuses of power (van Dijk, 1993). Power abuse can involve controlling and limiting freedom of action and freedom of thought among members of society by restricting protest areas and normalizing oppressive patterns (van Dijk, 1993). Within Hong Kong, newspapers can demonstrate this power abuse by displaying the growing strength of the Beijing government, the push for Putonghua, and the nationalism used to invoke such considerations. In order to understand the role that Cantonese plays in fighting back against that narrative, one can analyze Hong Kong newspapers from different political persuasions for the purpose of uncovering narratives both for and against the Umbrella Movement protests, as well as deciphering how some Hong Kongers can internalize patterns of oppression. Within the lens of CDA, I look closely at terms within the realm of language, culture, and identity. For instance, how are the terms Cantonese and Putonghua used in the newspaper discourse, and in what context? Is Putonghua placed in a position of power over Cantonese, and are some accepting of that position? These questions merge with the research questions of this paper in deciphering the power abuse embedded in the media, as Q1 looks into how different newspapers acknowledge the role of Cantonese and Q3 looks into the ways in which Cantonese serves as a counter-hegemonic language in the Umbrella Movement.

While current scholarship on the Umbrella Movement mainly neglects the Cantonese connection to the movement, this research will serve to fill the gap in demonstrating that the

Cantonese language serves a much more important role in the protests than scholars have given it credit for. I aim to fill this gap in scholarly literature by analyzing articles from three Hong Kong newspapers addressing the topic and role of Cantonese during the length of the Umbrella Movement, from September 28, 2014 to December 15, 2014, in order to obtain a thorough understanding of the prominence of Cantonese during the movement. CDA is used in this research in order to determine if there is an effort to demonstrate the distinctiveness of Cantonese culture in comparison to the culture of Beijing within the newspaper discourse. Moreover, to obtain a more nuanced view of the phenomenon, the three newspapers will cover a spectrum of Hong Kong political positions; government neutral (*South China Morning Post* 南华早报/南華早報), pro-democracy (*Apple Daily* 苹果日报/蘋果日報), and Beijing mouthpiece (*Wen Wei Po* 文汇报/文匯報).

While much of the worldwide media takes a very short view on Hong Kong in describing it as a former British colony obtained under dubious means before being returned to China roughly one hundred and fifty-six years later (Hong Kong's handover, 2017; Langton, 2019; Roberts, 1999; Rodrigues, 2017; Stichwort, 2014), this narrative ignores thousands of years of history and the manner in which the people from what is now southeastern China have often fought against hegemonic domination from those in the north (Meacham, 2009). Furthermore, this narrative ignores the linguistic and cultural differences between Hong Kong and the bulk of mainland China (Lee & Chau, 2018; Xu, 2016), and it ignores that Hong Kong people were not allowed to determine their own destiny of who they are and what they wanted to be as a people (Chu, 2010; Tang & Ching, 1994; Wong, 2017). Whereas media and scholarly sources often do importantly focus on Hong Kong's current struggle for democracy (Ackeret, 2014; Beech, 2014; Kenae, 2014; Lee, 2018b; Lee, So, & Leung, 2015; Lee & Ting, 2015), the story goes deeper

than this, to the heart of who Hong Kongers are as a people. What is often missing from the story is the Cantonese language in which Hong Kongers use to express themselves. By using Hong Kong newspapers for this study, one can reveal patterns of who Hong Kongers are as a people and how the language of Cantonese plays such an important role in that identity. At the same time, such a study of Hong Kong newspapers can reveal patterns of consensual submission to Beijing government authority as the CCP's influence grows over Hong Kong and many Hong Kongers engage in self-censorship to avoid the repercussions of angering the regime. Using CDA helps reveal how the concept of "Zhong hua min zu" (中华民族/中華民族) [Chinese race/Chinese nation] is used by newspapers to negate the distinct differences of a Hong Kong and Cantonese identity. As Beijing has sought to monopolize leadership over "Zhong hua min zu," Hong Kong people must submit to this leadership and recognize their position of the submissive child to the dominant parent. This means accepting that Hong Kong people are Chinese and the Beijing government is the leader of Chinese.

According to Chan and Lee (2007) Hong Kong media plays an important role in shaping national identification, specifically in the post-handover era as the media has shifted to a more pro-Beijing direction. With this shift, Hong Kong newspapers are typically classified into two columns in terms of their political stance, pro-Beijing or pro-democracy (Jiang, 2013). As such, for this study I select a major newspaper from each area to help illuminate how the forces of hegemony and counter-hegemony play out in two of the most dominant Hong Kong newspapers, *Wen Wei Po* for pro-Beijing and *Apple Daily* for pro-democracy. To give an extra element of nuance to this study, *The South China Morning Post* is selected as a newspaper that is neither pro-Beijing nor pro-democracy, but instead government neutral. *The South China Morning Post*

offers a contrast to how hegemony and counter-hegemony play out in its texts in comparison to the more politically partisan *Wen Wei Po* and *Apple Daily*.

At the start of research on this thesis paper, all three newspapers offered free online access to their archives. However, financial, political, and platform issues later led to subsequent changes in the format of *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post*. *Apple Daily* now charges a subscription fee mainly due to decreased advertising revenue because of pressure from the Beijing government (Yeung, 2019). However, in the midst of the 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill protests, Hong Kongers seem more than willing to pay the fee for their democracy news as more than half a million subscribers signed up in a matter of only a few days (Yeung, 2019). In contrast, *Wen Wei Po*, as Beijing government mouthpiece, is flush with advertising revenue and support from the Beijing government, although less support from actual Hong Kongers.

Meanwhile, the *South China Morning Post* changed formats to make its search engine less reliable in obtaining sources further in the past. This change comes after the purchase of the newspaper by Chinese business magnate Jack Ma's Alibaba Group with the intention of taking it in a pro-Beijing direction in the post-Umbrella Movement era (Barboza, 2015). The new direction of the *South China Morning Post* was described by Alibaba advisors as giving "global readers a more pluralistic and realistic view of China" (Barboza, 2015), which instead actually calls into question the continued credibility of the newspaper since it was formerly seen as topping credibility polls precisely because it did not simply toe the Beijing government line (Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011).

Despite these problems, all three newspapers still offer a significant portion of articles on Cantonese from the Umbrella Movement. In fact, articles mentioning Cantonese during this time period range in the dozens for all three newspapers, with some articles much more pertinent to

the Umbrella Movement protests than others. In order to find the analyzed articles, I typed the word “Cantonese” into the *South China Morning Post* search engine, the word “廣東話” into the *Wen Wei Po* search engine, and the terms “廣東話,” “雨傘運動廣東話,” and “雨傘革命廣東話” into the *Apple Daily* search engine. With such a wide array of articles available, one has to make a judgement on which articles are most informative for this study. As such, five articles that best represent the view of Cantonese during the Umbrella Movement from each newspaper were chosen for a more detailed analysis. These articles were chosen for this study because of their dialogue based on nationalism, culture, identity, and language. The authors of the articles range from those advocating a more autonomous Hong Kong within the “one country, two systems” setup to those advocating a Hong Kong more firmly under Beijing government control. None of the articles advocate a Hong Kong completely independent of Beijing control, and therefore, none of the articles tie in a Cantonese identity as part of an independent Hong Kong.

CHAPTER 4. HONG KONG NEWSPAPERS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CANTONESE

An analytical reading of the newspapers the *South China Morning Post*, *Wen Wei Po*, and *Apple Daily* reveals that these three newspapers did not explicitly recognize the destruction of the Cantonese language in ways that other platforms did, such as social media in which Hong Kongers directly comment on issues. Thus, these newspaper outlets miss the importance of Cantonese as the means of communication in which Hong Kong people protest, and how they struggle to save their language and culture. Missing this distinction means missing the destruction of the Cantonese culture by the hegemonic Beijing government, and how the Umbrella Movement was part of a reaction to that destruction. This is an important consideration for scholars that care about human rights and the survival of a culture that is under attack. As a source of information, newspapers can work in a bottom-up direction of transmitting the will of the people by echoing that message throughout society. Yet, why do Hong Kong newspapers fail to do this? Why do they not specifically connect Cantonese to the Umbrella Movement? While the *South China Morning Post* does focus on describing a language under attack it does not explicitly connect this to the Umbrella Movement. Meanwhile, state-run *Wen Wei Po* portrays Cantonese as flourishing and instead contends that most Hong Kong people are against the Umbrella Movement. *Apple Daily* does utilize the Cantonese vernacular, but focuses more on Cantonese narratives only when useful to the democracy story. Cantonese language is concealed in the newspaper discourse as the core connection between the Umbrella Movement protests and the Cantonese identity. While some newspapers articles do hint at this, they do not specifically draw the connection between the two. Furthermore, even critical stories of the Beijing government refuse to advocate or portray an independent Hong Kong outside of Beijing control

that is based on a Cantonese identity. This chapter will demonstrate why that is the case and what can be done about it. In short, democracy is needed to save Cantonese, but Cantonese is also needed for Hong Kongers to protest for democracy.

While newspapers in general can challenge the dominant hegemonic structures in society by acting in a role as a watchdog on the government (So & Chan, 2007), newspapers in Hong Kong can only challenge hegemonic structures to a certain degree, as censorship and self-censorship have greatly increased in the post-handover era (Lee & Chan, 2009). During the Umbrella Movement era, newspapers did not push the boundaries of what is acceptable to Beijing by connecting Cantonese to an independent Hong Kong. Instead, as in the past, newspapers often show more of a willingness to challenge the hegemony of Beijing by working within the framework of a Beijing government discourse (Lee & Lin, 2006; Wiebracht, 2018). For instance, the newspaper viewed as most critical to Beijing in this study, *Apple Daily*, appropriates the language of the government in order to judge government actions (Lee & Lin, 2006). As such, *Apple Daily*'s criticism of Chinese national leaders is diluted within the dialogue (Lee & Lin, 2006). Likewise, the government neutral *South China Morning Post* also dilutes its criticism of the government in a similar fashion by appropriating language and not calling out Beijing leaders by name in the studied articles. This direction becomes even more pronounced by the *South China Morning Post* in the post-Umbrella Movement era as the newspaper began giving preferential treatment to Hong Kong and mainland officials in expressing their viewpoints, while neglecting the views of self-determination and independence activists (Wiebracht, 2018). Meanwhile, although *Wen Wei Po* does mention Hong Kong independence, it does not give voice to any views of activists in the studied articles, nor does it highlight a Cantonese identity.

On the contrary, *Wen Wei Po* paints the Umbrella Movement as a movement brought on by foreign interference rather than the negation of the democracy promised by Beijing.

Even though early reports of the Umbrella Movement from the *South China Morning Post* do demonstrate the significance of Cantonese in the protests to a certain extent by announcing that protesters chant phrases in the language, such as “Hong Kong, add oil!” and “CY step down!” (SCMP, 2014), the *South China Morning Post* neglects to mention that CY Leung completely marginalized Cantonese from the start of his term as Chief Executive of Hong Kong. Leung became the first Chief Executive to not take the oath of office in Cantonese, but instead in Mandarin (McDonald, 2012; Tam, 2016). This was seen as a sign by the public that Leung would not protect Hong Kong interests and instead was beholden to Beijing and increasing Beijing control over Hong Kong by the use of Mandarin (McDonald, 2012). To add to this, Leung actually won the position of Chief Executive after being elected by a 1,200-member committee stacked with pro-Beijing delegates that were told to vote for him by the Central Liaison Office, the Beijing government office within Hong Kong (Chen & Yung, 2012). CCP state-run media would even affectionately refer to Leung as “Comrade Leung Chun-ying,” a title normally reserved for CCP members only (Profile, 2015). This creates a perfect storm for which when Beijing refused to allow greater democracy within Hong Kong in 2014, Leung was targeted as the local tool of Beijing by protesters for his refusal to protect local interests, including Cantonese.

While the *South China Morning Post* did at least try to provide a detailed history of Cantonese and its connection to Hong Kong in its coverage, *Wen Wei Po* seems content on covering up any advanced history of the language. Instead, *Wen Wei Po* focuses more on portraying Cantonese as a hindrance to understanding Mandarin, but still walking a fine line to

conceal the major differences that might lead one to regard Cantonese as a separate language. For instance, a December 3, 2014 *Wen Wei Po* article focuses on the minute writing differences between Cantonese and Putonghua, but still reflects the societal norms that Cantonese speakers should learn Mandarin and not the other way around (Zhong wen shi ye, 2014). The beginning of the article points to the problems that Cantonese speakers have in learning Mandarin, while stating that “最困難的往往是遇到同形異義詞彙，也就是書寫形式相同或非常相似，可是意思迥異” [the most difficult thing is to encounter homographs where the writing is the same or very similar, but the meaning is different] (Zhong wen shi ye, 2014). In that the two languages are mutually unintelligible (Guilford, 2014; Harrell, 1993; Ng & Zhao, 2015), similar writing with different meanings is clearly not the most difficult aspect for Cantonese speakers learning Mandarin. Nevertheless, the article goes on to give examples of how different characters can take on different meanings in each language (Zhong wen shi ye, 2014). Therefore, the article is actually looking at a similar type of situation that occurs with the “遮打運動” distinctly Cantonese term for the Umbrella Movement not making sense in Mandarin (Guilford, 2014; Ho, 2016). Of course, the article does not take a look at the meaning of the “遮打運動” phrase though, seemingly preferring less participatory democracy inclined phrases to make their point instead. Yet, what the article misses as well is that it does not elaborate on the characters, phrases, and grammar that are distinctly Cantonese to begin with and where that distinctiveness comes from, whether that consists of connections to Yue or Tang (Bauer, 1996; Chow, 2014; de Sousa, 2015; SCMP, 2009). Nor does the article look at the rise of the Cantonese vernacular, which is becoming more commonplace in Hong Kong (Snow, 2004; Yeh, 2009).

As a newspaper that supported the election of Leung as Chief Executive, *Wen Wei Po* further conceals his neglect for Cantonese and instead takes aim at the Cantonese vernacular

utilizing *Apple Daily* when reporting on the Umbrella Movement by featuring quotes from anti-Umbrella Movement protesters stating that “黎智英收買了那批人，你們知道嗎?” [Li Zhi ying (Jimmy Lai) bought the people, do you know?] (Zhang, 2014). Jimmy Lai is the owner of *Apple Daily* and a proud pro-democracy and Cantonese supporter. This quote insinuates that Umbrella Movement protesters are not protesting of their own accord, but have been paid off. Furthermore, *Wen Wei Po* features no quotes from actual Umbrella Movement protesters in their articles, and instead points out how some anti-Umbrella Movement protesters speak Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. Thus, concealing the role that Cantonese actually played in the Umbrella Movement protests and why the language aspect was significant.

Wen Wei Po also conceals what Chinese diasporas around the world think about the Hong Kong protests and the Cantonese connection to the protests, while *Apple Daily* is more open about that support. For example, *Apple Daily* displays pictures of those in Singapore carrying signs stating “Singapore in Solidarity with Hong Kong” and “Support HK,” and stating that Singapore supporters would write messages of support to the people of Hong Kong and sing Cantonese songs (Fa xin she, 2014; Siau, 2014). This is an interested dynamic in a city where Mandarin is an official language, but Cantonese is not (Oi, 2010). Nevertheless, *Apple Daily* still does not explicitly make the Cantonese connection to the protests clear, but instead simply hints at the usage of Cantonese as a way to communicate.

One area in which *Apple Daily* and *South China Morning Post* articles do demonstrate a Cantonese connection to Hong Kong protests involves the Cantonese shopping protests that took place toward the end of the Umbrella Movement in which Hong Kongers protesters would roam the streets claiming to shop. Chief Executive CY Leung had previously called on people to go shopping as a way to dilute protester support, and an anti-Umbrella Movement protester from the

mainland had recently stated in Mandarin that she was only in Hong Kong to “购物” [gou wu] (shop) when asked by a reporter why she came to the city to participate in an anti-Umbrella Movement protest (Gan, 2017; Rühlig, 2016). The protesters took the Mandarin “gou wu” and transliterated it into the Cantonese “gau wu” (鳩鳴), “a made-up nonsense phrase that approximates the sound of the Mandarin pronunciation, but does not semantically replicate the meaning of the Chinese phrase” (Gan, 2017, p. 166). These “gau wu” protests reflect not only Hong Kongers deep sense of anxiety, but a disapproval of Mandarin as well. Thus, the newspaper articles reflect the social conflicts emanating from increased Hong Kong-mainland tensions in which the focus is no longer just on defying the Beijing government, but is bleeding into areas that are linked to being associated with Beijing as well (C. Chan, 2014; Zhang & Xie, 2014). However, these articles still do not explicitly discuss a Cantonese connection to why people are actually protesting, but instead rely on surface level information in mainly describing how protesters transliterated a Mandarin phrase into Cantonese. Likewise, *Apple Daily* puts the pressure on Hong Kongers to keep the protests going with quotes that display that if the movement fails then it is not the fault of the police or the government, but because Hong Kong people did not continue to protest and support the movement. While this is a very inspiring do-it-yourself approach, it also neglects the actions and violence of the police and government to suppress the movement, and refuses to call out by name the Beijing government supporting the repression. It also neglects the role that Cantonese plays in keeping the protests alive and how the Cantonese language is intertwined with the democracy movement. This is a result of not only censorship and self-censorship in Hong Kong, but the reflection of a political situation in which political interests also take precedence over language interests. As such, the political affiliation of the newspapers and how they portray Cantonese is the topic to which I turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5. IMPORTANCE OF CANTONESE BY POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Despite Hong Kong newspapers not advocating an independent Hong Kong based on a separate Cantonese identity, the newspapers do still vary in the ways in which they form narratives around the Cantonese language. These narratives are largely built around the political affiliation of the newspaper outlets. In this way, the largest distinction for these newspapers is how to filter Cantonese through the lens of their political stances. As such, Cantonese is mainly an afterthought to advancing a greater political agenda. The issue of newspaper credibility is also tied into this phenomenon as the changing political situation within Hong Kong has implications for how Cantonese is perceived and pulled along for the political ride. Addressing this phenomenon and discovering how the situation is changing in Hong Kong allows scholars to realize how Hong Kong is being targeted for hegemony and how Hong Kong can prevent hegemony through the use of Cantonese.

At the time of the Umbrella Movement, *The South China Morning Post* was seen as government neutral and topped polls as the most credible newspaper in Hong Kong (Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011). *Apple Daily* tends to trend much lower in terms of credibility than the *South China Morning Post*, but represents a significant portion of the Hong Kong public (High newspaper circulation, 2015; Yeung, 2018). Unlike the English language *South China Morning Post*, *Apple Daily* uses traditional Chinese characters and increasingly makes use of the Cantonese vernacular (Snow, 2004; Yeh, 2009). Furthermore, with its strong democracy stance, *Apple Daily* is one of the most popular newspapers in Hong Kong and often tops the charts in terms of circulation (High newspaper circulation, 2015; Yeung, 2018). Both, the Cantonese vernacular element and pro-democracy content has greatly endeared the newspaper to its readers.

However, the shifts in Hong Kong politics and the state of the media have left both *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* vulnerable to a changing market and intervention from the Beijing government.

Contrasting with the *South China Morning Post* and *Apple Daily*, *Wen Wei Po* is the voice of the Beijing government in Hong Kong (Lee, 1997). *Wen Wei Po* has very low credibility and popularity within the city (Lee, 1997). Yet, *Wen Wei Po* has also seen its credibility rise in the years after the handover, while the *South China Morning Post* and *Apple Daily* have seen credibility shift downward (Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011). Whereas *Wen Wei Po*'s credibility is still not near as high as the *South China Morning Post*, these shifting dynamics represent the pull of the Beijing government after the handover in that many Hong Kong people and newspapers now directly engage in consensual submission and self-censorship in order to appease Beijing government authorities due to private interests (Fung, 2007; So & Chan, 2007). This dynamic has led to a shift in which the media position represented as the majority centrist opinion has now trended more in the direction of the Beijing government (Fung, 2007). As a result of this shift, newspaper readers are increasingly led to believe that a more pro-Beijing position is actually an objective or neutral opinion and that positions represented in a pro-democracy newspaper like *Apple Daily* are just far too radical (Fung, 2007). With this, expressions of the Cantonese vernacular and a Cantonese identity have become much more muted. Beijing government news sources want to integrate Hong Kong into the mainland with the use of Mandarin and a Chinese identity that is not differentiated by Cantonese. *Wen Wei Po* helps push this narrative forward by centering it on a family narrative in which Hong Kong is a child returned to the motherland of the PRC. With this, Hong Kong is mainly shown as an extension of Chinese civilization and China focused around the concept of “Zhong hua min zu.”

Under this concept of “Zhong hua min zu” as addressed by *Wen Wei Po*, Hong Kong is not entitled to a separate Cantonese identity, but only the identity of being part of the Chinese race and Chinese nation. Within this Chinese nation, Beijing asserts its hegemonic control over Hong Kong and Hong Kong does not have the freedom to think of itself otherwise. Yet, this creates a conflict with the way in which Hong Kong sees itself, as Hong Kongers and not just specifically an extension of Chinese civilization. Cantonese is a key part of this difference and its usage demonstrates a counter-hegemonic articulation of not being totally under the control of Beijing and Mandarin.

While *Wen Wei Po* articles contain quotes appealing to the Beijing version of nationalism based on race, such as “其實大家都是黃皮膚，都是中國人，血液裡的東西變也變不了，大多數都是認同中國，也是喜歡中國人身份的” [in fact everyone has yellow skin, all are Chinese, and things in the blood can’t change, most of them agree with China, and like the Chinese identity], *Wen Wei Po* neglects to provide any quotes about a Hong Kong identity based on Cantonese (Zhang, 2014). In that these quotes were meant to reduce support for the Umbrella Movement, they also serve an effort to deflect attention away from the core goal of that very movement; the implementation of the universal suffrage promised by Beijing (Yeung, 2014). This universal suffrage could then be used to protect the Hong Kong Cantonese identity. The *Wen Wei Po* quotes are also troubling in that they hide the role that Beijing plays in declaring itself the sole representative speaking for a unitary Chinese race (Abraham, 2014; Wang, 2016). This forced homogenization of a diverse population is even extended to those overseas in an effort to portray the Beijing government as the legitimate protector of Chinese worldwide (Anderlini, 2017; Barabantseva, 2012; England, 2016; Oyen, 2010; Pan, et al., 2001).

Wen Wei Po's dismissal of Cantonese is further demonstrated through its reporting on the Umbrella Movement. The newspaper features articles with commentaries chastising the movement, but making no effort to understand actual Hong Kong people. At one point when a *Wen Wei Po* article is seemingly about to address the concerns of Hong Kong people with a quote asking “香港人講什麼語?” [what do Hong Kong people say?] (Guo, 2014), the author of the piece instead nonchalantly responds “講廣東話，我聽不懂” [I can't understand Cantonese] (Guo, 2014). This quote inadvertently reveals how *Wen Wei Po* is more beholden to Beijing power interests than the actual Hong Kong people. For *Wen Wei Po* it is not a big deal if reporters or journalists cannot understand Cantonese or even talk to Hong Kongers. Instead, the message of *Wen Wei Po* is to spread the official line of the Beijing government in a top-down fashion, while simultaneously negating and belittling the usage of a Cantonese language that could serve a counter-hegemonic purpose for Hong Kong people. Thus, *Wen Wei Po*'s Beijing political affiliation allows the newspaper to dismiss Cantonese for the sake of the political mission of hegemonic control over Hong Kong.

In contrast to *Wen Wei Po*, *Apple Daily* heavily favors the Hong Kong pan-democracy camp and has earned anger and condemnation from Beijing officials toward the newspaper. With its outspoken and unapologetically democratic founder Jimmy Lai at the helm, *Apple Daily* rocketed to one of the top newspapers in Hong Kong on a wave of bold imagery, Cantonese vernacular, and hard-hitting news uncovering political scandals. Having been arrested on several occasions for participating in Hong Kong protests (Griffiths & Kam, 2020; Lo & Cheung, 2015), one could say that the stance of Lai's newspaper reflects his love of the freedom he experienced when smuggled into Hong Kong at the age of 13 (Inocencio, 2019), as well as his love of Canton

as the city of his birth and the city for which Cantonese takes its name from (Allen, 1997; Yung, 1975).

Before *Apple Daily*, Cantonese writing was not likely to appear in newspapers, *Apple Daily* changed that with its massive success in utilizing the language and advocating for democracy (Snow, 2004; Yeh, 2009). Yet, despite the high use of Cantonese relative to other newspapers, *Apple Daily* still overwhelmingly uses standard traditional Chinese characters in reporting (Snow, 2004). It is mainly in the direct quotations from individuals where Cantonese appears more frequently (Snow, 2004). Thus, *Apple Daily* insinuates that standard Chinese characters are still the respectable method in which to write a newspaper column. When *Apple Daily* does use Cantonese for a standard column it is more to do with the subject matter having a Cantonese topic rather than just writing in Cantonese as a regularity. This is also very much true in the analyzed articles for this research paper. Therefore, while *Apple Daily*'s usage of Cantonese is impressive relative to other outlets, the newspaper still confines itself within the normalized patterns of standard journalistic column writing. Its democratic message is thus contained within this pattern, but it is only able to break free of the standardized chains when it utilizes the voice of the Hong Kong people through their Cantonese messages and quotes. This is when the voice of the Hong Kong people is really heard.

Likewise, with its use of Cantonese, *Apple Daily*'s criticism of the Beijing government is also confined to its support for democracy and working within a hegemonic structure set by Beijing. While *Apple Daily* very much supports Hong Kong protesters, the newspaper dilutes its criticism of the Beijing government by refusing to address those that clamp down on Hong Kong civil society. Instead, *Apple Daily* places the responsibility of keeping the movement alive on Hong Kong people. In many ways, this narrative focuses on the Hong Kong identity for the

maintenance of society, but totally absolves the Beijing governance power structure from any responsibility in Hong Kong's ills. For instance, one *Apple Daily* article states that “認為佔中面臨的最大危機，不是警方或解放軍鎮壓，而是失去民眾支持，一旦沒民眾支持就會被邊緣化” [it is believed that the biggest crisis facing the Occupy Central Committee was not the suppression by the police or the People's Liberation Army, but the loss of popular support, and it will be marginalized without popular support] (Liu tai xue sheng, 2014). Indeed, no Beijing government leaders were named or attacked in any of the *Apple Daily*, *South China Morning Post*, or *Wen Wei Po* articles. It is as if Chinese leader Xi Jinping does not exist and is not responsible for what happens in Hong Kong. Moreover, both *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* put their emphasis on the protesters demanding Hong Kong Chief Executive CY Leung step down, which neglects the role that Beijing plays in placing Leung in power and supporting him in that position. These newspapers are pressured to take these positions so as not to cross the line of engaging in direct criticism of the Beijing rulers and facing the repercussions that would take place for doing so.

The *South China Morning Post* is commonly seen as the least political partisan of the three newspapers, being dubbed as government neutral at the time of the Umbrella Movement and only within the last few years veering more directly to the side of the Beijing government. Yet, the neutral position of the *South China Morning Post* prior to the Umbrella Movement is not as neutral as generally perceived. The shifting of the newspaper to more pro-Beijing positions had already started in the early 1990s with the sackings of many prominent critical of Beijing editors, columnists, and cartoonists (Poole, 1997; Vittachi, 2017; Wiebrecht, 2018). Accusations of self-censorship and bias toward the Beijing government have only grown increasingly larger over the years as the *South China Morning Post* attempts to not lose the trust of the Hong Kong

people while appearing ever more conciliatory toward Beijing. As an English-language newspaper, the *South China Morning Post* is less accessible to the Cantonese public than other outlets, but this position can also be a boon for the *South China Morning Post* as Beijing fears less that it will contaminate the Chinese populace since it does not use Chinese characters or Cantonese writing. However, what the *South China Morning Post* does do is give a history of the Cantonese language that is missing from other newspapers due to the dialogue on this being taken more for granted among the non-English newspapers.

The *South China Morning Post* magnifies the longer history of Cantonese as opposed to Mandarin, along with its marginalization at the hands of the PRC. Chow (2014) details how many expressions of Cantonese “are derived from ancient Chinese language dating from the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) and Tang dynasty (618-907),” and how poems of the Tang dynasty rhyme when spoken in Cantonese. Cultural critic Jimmy Pang Chi-ming agrees with this assessment, stating that “much of the 5,000 years of Chinese civilization and culture are preserved in Cantonese,” and that this language is a reminder of that culture (Chow, 2014). Pang argues that northerners who came to Hong Kong in the early 20th century “criticized Cantonese as vulgar” mainly because “they were just ignorant and didn’t know how to write these characters” (Chow, 2014). Pang continues that “many of these ancient characters are kept only in Cantonese” and that “Putonghua is a language derived from foreign tribes north of the Han territory” (Chow, 2014). With this, the *South China Morning Post* is reiterating how the roots of Putonghua stem from it being brought in by the Mongol invasion that led to the Yuan dynasty where the language then evolved into the lingua franca of the Ming dynasty and later Qing dynasty (Chen, 1999; Chow, 2014; Norman, 1988).

While the *South China Morning Post* does detail the historical aspects of Cantonese, it still neglects to directly connect this history to the Umbrella Movement. Instead, this history is mainly displayed for English speakers who are unaware and are curious about the language. Cantonese is also wrapped into a concept of it only originating out of a mainland Chinese entity in the articles. While Cantonese is partially rooted in ancient Chinese, this description also completely overlooks the contribution of the indigenous Yue people and Yue language to what is now modern-day Cantonese. It is this distinction that allows for an ever-greater counter-hegemonic articulation of Cantonese. If the language and people are partially rooted in a culture that was actually considered non-Han Chinese to begin with, as well as fighting against northern aggression, then why is it considered just a part of the mainland family? Instead, if the Yue elements are teased out then the language begins to take on the relevance of being positioned outside the structure of mainland dominance and control as a counter-hegemonic language that is powerful enough to withstand northern Mandarin incursions for over a thousand years. Surely this differentiation annoys and frustrates the rulers in Beijing, along with the differentiation of Cantonese having more connections to ancient Chinese than Mandarin. This construction of Cantonese produces a potent language with which to stand up against Mandarin, and its counter-hegemonic abilities are the topic I turn to in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6. CANTONESE AS A COUNTER-HEGEMONIC LANGUAGE

Whereas many scholars underestimate the role that Cantonese plays in the Hong Kong identity and in protests, the words of Hong Kong protesters themselves bring the importance of Cantonese into greater focus. The problem exists in that mass media newspapers largely obscure the voice of Hong Kong people and write in a format that does not adequately display the Cantonese language. It is only when *Apple Daily* uses direct Cantonese quotations that the voice of Hong Kongers is heard in its counter-hegemonic originality. Nevertheless, the three analyzed newspapers of this study do vary in how they either conceal or magnify the counter-hegemonic abilities of Cantonese and this is largely demonstrated through a history of what is mentioned or glossed over.

Many Cantonese consider Putonghua to be a northern language of northern colonizers, developing out of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties; empires built on colonizing diverse people and bringing them under their control (Cheung, 2015; Chin, 2011; Gao, 2012; SCMP, 2009). As such, revolutionaries in the early 1900s viewed Mandarin as a northern dialect used by hated Manchu Qing officials (SCMP, 2009). Many Hong Kongers would also argue that the PRC is actually a foreign colonizer like the Qing and represents the major success of the Soviet Union's Comintern in spreading the Soviet system (Cheung, 2015; Chin, 2011). Added to this is that the PRC undertook a policy of trying to destroy Chinese culture, but now ironically portrays itself as the protector of Chinese culture (Oyen, 2010; Pan, et al., 2001; Roberts, 1999; Spence, 1999). In such a situation, Hong Kong is maintained to have protected and preserved elements of Chinese culture that the PRC destroyed (Chin, 2011; Wu, 2016). Thus, as the inheritors and protectors of the Chinese Tang culture, Cantonese people could potentially exert this distinction.

Hong Kong's hegemonic resistance can also take the form of an awareness that Hong Kong was not always a part of a northern mainland governance entity, and that in reality the area that is now southeast China was invaded and colonized by people from the north, and that southern people frequently fought against these northern incursions (Hase, 2017; Meacham, 2009). Many of those who live in Hong Kong and southeast China are descended, at least in part, from these indigenous groups, called the Yue (越/粵/粤) (Meacham, 2009; Siu, 1993; Wee, Ha, Loong, & Qian, 2010). The Beijing government has even gone to certain lengths to squash this information in China, including classifying the results of an ethnicity study, lest the region trace its ancestral roots and demands greater autonomy (Siu, 1993). Furthermore, one can point to the character 粵/粤 used for the Yue people as also being used for modern Cantonese people, and that Cantonese language is also called Yuht yuh/Yue yu (粵語/粤语), meaning language of the Yue. Whereas these terms are taken to be more regionally related rather than culturally related in the modern era, one can still not escape the fact that Cantonese culture is different from other areas of China (Bauer, 1996; de Sousa, 2015; Siu, 1993; Wee, et al., 2010). This consideration is further demonstrated in that modern Cantonese people, culture, and language retain elements of Yue blood, culture, and language (Bauer, 1996; de Sousa, 2015; Siu, 1993; Wee, et al., 2010).

This distinctiveness of Cantonese adds up to a counter-hegemonic ability of the language that leads Beijing officials to determine that Cantonese people “don't talk right” (Kristof, 1992). This is even more important for a regime that worries about territory breaking off and the role that language and culture play in potentially making that break happen. Nordin and Richaud (2014) state that “in post-reform China, standardized Party language remains an important aspect of the regime's propaganda” (p. 48). The Beijing government puts the emphasis on harmony (和谐) by marking this speech in official discourse (Nordin & Richaud, 2014). To enact this

harmony, the Beijing government makes use of political slogans to emphasize the role of Party language in facilitating ideological change and remolding the mind (Lu, 1999). In regard to language, perhaps most representative of these government slogans is that Chinese people “speak Putonghua,” widely seen in and around Guangzhou (Berg, 2014; Cantonese language, 2015), and the evidence of government success in marginalizing Cantonese, as seen by Guangzhou respondents placing their language as similar to or beneath Putonghua in a survey (Zhou, 2001). Yet, reappropriation of this Party language can take on forms of counter-hegemony within Guangzhou and Hong Kong. For instance, the slogan “Cantonese people speak Cantonese” during the 2010 Guangzhou protests and the articulation of “going shopping” in the “gau wu” Cantonese protests (Cantonese protests spread, 2010; Gan, 2017; Ng, 2014, Rühlig, 2016).

As Beijing government mouthpiece, *Wen Wei Po* sought to limit the distinctiveness of Cantonese during the Umbrella Movement by undermining the counter-hegemonic abilities of these slogans. Instead, *Wen Wei Po* wrapped the language into the concept of the shared harmonious society by concealing the actual displacement efforts of the language by the government. For instance, *Wen Wei Po* instead highlighted how non-Hong Kong students at the cities’ universities have increased in the last few years, and that these students were said to take Cantonese courses to help them adapt to life in Hong Kong (Ba da yuan xiao fei, 2014). Yet, *Wen Wei Po*’s information actually comes from the Hong Kong Education Bureau (Ba da yuan xiao fei, 2014), which had previously referred to Cantonese as not a language and not a mother tongue (Cheng, 2018; Tam & Lau, 2018). *Wen Wei Po* conceals this information in an effort to paint a picture of harmony in which students are integrating with each other to learn language and culture, when in reality the government is seeking to integrate Hong Kong with the mainland

and further Beijing control by displacing Cantonese with Mandarin. Moreover, *Wen Wei Po* later published an article about Cantonese speakers learning Mandarin, not the other way around.

Wen Wei Po's usage of race, nationalism, and education serve as weapons to silence protesters with concerns about their future, along with concealing the role that language plays in silencing the protesters. *Wen Wei Po*'s support for national patriotic education programs contain components in which Putonghua is elevated at the expense of languages such as Cantonese and thereby silencing the language in which Cantonese people use to communicate outside dominant Beijing governance structures. The attempts of a hegemonic top-down nationalism and education instituted by Beijing inadvertently give way to a bottom-up resistance in which Cantonese is key in voicing the concerns of Hong Kong protesters (C. Chan, 2014; Sullivan, Schatz, & Lam, 2012). For instance, the efforts from above to change Hong Kong curriculum toward Putonghua and patriotic education are met with resistance from civil society and the education sector while using Cantonese (C. Chan, 2014; Yam, 2016). Yet, *Wen Wei Po* features no quotes in Cantonese from the Hong Kong public, no Cantonese writing for its columns, and no quotes from anyone even disputing the government view.

Similar to *Wen Wei Po*, the *South China Morning Post* features no Cantonese writing in the studied articles. However, it would be a mistake to place the *South China Morning Post* on a similar standing with *Wen Wei Po* when it comes to coverage of Cantonese. The *South China Morning Post* does state how Cantonese has been a thorn in the side of the Beijing government ever since the founding of the PRC (Berg, 2014). The *South China Morning Post* also addresses the deteriorating condition of Cantonese and how 70 percent of Hong Kong's primary schools now use Putonghua as the medium of instruction, while reiterating that many scholars claim the language is doomed because of these government efforts (Chow, 2014). However, the problem

with the *South China Morning Post* is that its English language format makes no room for Cantonese writing; instead the writing about the Cantonese topic takes place in the English language.

Nevertheless, the *South China Morning Post* does actually hit on some of the consensual submission aspects of Cantonese speakers to Mandarin. The *South China Morning Post* states how the fate of Cantonese depends not only on the efforts of the government to replace it, but how many parents play a willing role of consensual submission by thinking that Putonghua will lead to a better future for their children and that Cantonese is simply a hindrance that will get in the way of Putonghua (Chow, 2014). Parents have come to believe that they need to only speak Putonghua to their children in order for them to get ahead in life, thereby robbing their children of a bilingual upbringing and playing a part in their native Cantonese culture. Mandarin is taught to children in schools at a young age, along with the distinction that they are Chinese and Chinese people speak Mandarin. With this distinction, the government knows that the more they can disconnect people from their language and culture then the firmer the Beijing government can maintain control. While economic reasons are often given for the marginalization of Cantonese at the expense of Mandarin, Hong Kong is more economically powerful than northern Mandarin-speaking Chinese cities, and is the third largest financial center in the world (Long Finance, 2019). Likewise, Guangzhou, although not as economically powerful as Hong Kong, is also an economic powerhouse in its own right (Long Finance, 2019). However, this economic prowess of Cantonese and Hong Kong is concealed in the *South China Morning Post* articles, along with how people might get ahead by using Cantonese or utilizing its counter-hegemonic abilities.

Of the studied newspapers, *Apple Daily* is the outlet that most utilized Cantonese writing. This writing also demonstrated a Cantonese counter-hegemonic pushback to Mandarin and the Beijing government. However, these Cantonese characters were mainly seen in a variety of pictures and quotes demonstrating support for the Umbrella Movement. For instance, pictures include supporters lifting umbrellas with the characters “撐香港” [support Hong Kong] on them (Liu tai xue sheng, 2014), utilizing the distinct “撐” in Cantonese. Students studying in Taiwan were also quoted as saying “我在台灣撐香港” [I am supporting Hong Kong in Taiwan] (Liu tai xue sheng, 2014).

Other quotes in *Apple Daily* show professors offering inspiring words for Hong Kongers, but featuring a lack of Cantonese characters, including “眼見家不成家.....我身為香港人責無旁貸，就算回去僅數天，亦要出一分力，讓我們這一代及下一代能擁有更好的未來” [I do not have a family at home.....I am duty bound to Hong Kong people, even if I go back only a few days, I have to, with one component, we can have a better future for this generation and next generation] (Liu tai xue sheng, 2014). While this quote demonstrates emotional support and the sense of commitment the professor feels to Hong Kong, its use of standard Chinese characters and a lack of Cantonese characters also reveals how those in professional positions write. Cantonese writing is considered non-professional and non-academic. Instead, it is the standard Chinese characters that hold prestige. Cantonese writing is seen more as the writing of the working class or lower class by allowing them to line up their characters with the way they are speaking (Snow, 2004). Of course, *Apple Daily*'s more extensive use of Cantonese is helping to change that phenomenon (Snow, 2004).

One series of events in which *Apple Daily* was very much able to demonstrate the counter-hegemonic ability of Cantonese involves the Mong Kok shopping protests that took

place toward the end of the Umbrella Movement. By late November 2014, protesters were being cleared out of the streets in the working class Mong Kok district when they seemingly found a new way to protest without being arrested (S. Chan, 2014; Ng, 2014). Chief Executive CY Leung had previously called on people to go shopping as a way to dilute protester support, and an anti-Umbrella Movement protester from the mainland had recently stated in Mandarin that she was only in Hong Kong to “购物” [gou wu] (shop) when asked by a reporter why she came to the city to participate in an anti-Umbrella Movement protest (Gan, 2017; Rühlig, 2016). The statement from the mainland woman fed into Hong Kong protesters’ fears by seemingly pointing to “proof that pro-Beijing organizations sometimes bussed in Mainlanders or local pensioners with little knowledge of the nature of the event they are at to boost numbers” (Gan, 2017, p. 166). This convergence of a mainland woman at an anti-Umbrella Movement rally in Hong Kong while saying she was really there only to shop seemed to confirm Umbrella Movement protesters’ suspicions that the vast amounts of mainland shoppers, as well as Leung’s calls to go shopping, reflect not just trivial acts, but are interjected with political meaning in an effort to change the social landscape of Hong Kong (Gan, 2017). As such, Umbrella Movement protesters took Leung’s words to heart and went “shopping.”

However, the coverage of these protests from *Apple Daily*, as well as the *South China Morning Post*, demonstrates that protesters did not seem to shop in the way that Leung wanted them to, as their actions serve as signs of linguistic, ideological, and political resistance (Gan, 2017). The protesters took the Mandarin “gou wu” and transliterated it into the Cantonese “gau wu” (鳩鳴), “a made up nonsense phrase that approximates the sound of the Mandarin pronunciation, but does not semantically replicate the meaning of the Chinese phrase” (Gan, 2017, p. 166). Hence, protesters would wander around the streets “shopping” or “gau wu” (Ng,

2014). “Gou” is distorted into “gau” in Cantonese here by taking on the meaning of “bird” in a classic Chinese poem, but has also become a staple in Cantonese foul language (Ng, 2014). “Wu” actually suggests the sounds of hooting (Gan, 2017). Thus, “gau wu” can mean the cooing of birds as a mockery of C.Y. Leung and those obsessed with Hong Kong shopping (Gan, 2017). But, “gau wu” takes on a more vulgar meaning here as well, as “gau” is also a homonym for a male private part (尻), which can also be written as “9,” since the Cantonese word for the number nine sounds like the word for penis (Gan, 2017). In this way, the “gau wu” protests are also transcribed as “9wu” (Gan, 2017). As such, “gau wu” is not just “the silly cooing of doves, but the cooing of dicks” (Gan, 2017, p. 167).

The transliteration techniques used by protesters allow the Cantonese language to function in a way that dismantles the hegemonic power of the government. The act of going shopping was used by Leung and a Mandarin speaker as a way to dilute Umbrella Movement support, but was turned around by protesters in a way to support the Umbrella Movement and Cantonese. Thus, protesters were able to oppose hegemonic forces with their own form of shopping and speaking. This counter-hegemonic articulation and series of events took place through a bottom-up direction to oppose the top-down direction from the government. The protesters took a manipulation of their society by external forces and turned that language around in their own manipulation to advocate for democracy and for Cantonese. Hence, the “gau wu” shopping tour was widely popular in Mong Kok by featuring powerful symbolism against those that do not care about politics in Hong Kong and instead bow down to consumerism and the PRC rulers, while at the same time mocking those that are “obsessed with materialism rather than fundamental rights and values” (Rühlig, 2016, p. 67).

The ways in which the three newspapers either broadcast or conceal Cantonese as a counter-hegemonic language exist largely along the lines of national identity. *Wen Wei Po* sought to conceal the counter-hegemonic ability of Cantonese while instead bringing Cantonese speakers under the authority of the Beijing government and the dominance of Mandarin. Meanwhile, *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* were able to find openings in which to iterate some of the differences that make Cantonese counter-hegemonic. While these iterations were not always clear and were sometimes obscured, they do not exist in a vacuum. The counter-hegemonic abilities of Cantonese are strong enough that they do lead to the imagining of a Cantonese nation, regardless of if this were the intent of the newspaper outlets or not. As such, the next chapter will focus on how the role of Cantonese and national identity play out within the protests.

CHAPTER 7. ROLE OF CANTONESE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE PROTESTS

The three analyzed newspapers for this study are all quite political in the way that they approach the Cantonese language. This often translates over to issues of national identity and the concept of “Zhong hua min zu” (Chinese nation/Chinese race). While most newspaper articles do not directly address this topic head-on, it is lurking behind the scenes wherever newspapers insinuate if they do believe in this concept and who might be the leader of it. As Beijing government mouthpiece, *Wen Wei Po* does directly mention “Zhong hua min zu,” and of course believes in the concept and that the CCP leads it. *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* are much more reserved on the matter by refraining from even mentioning the phrase in the studied articles. Beijing states that it is crossing a red line if one does not believe that the CCP leads the Chinese nation or even that there is no Chinese nation. Likewise, it is crossing a red line to think that there is more than one Chinese nation or even a Cantonese nation. Yet, even if newspapers do not mention “Zhong hua min zu” they do have ways of challenging it while still remaining within the government discourse. This is largely accomplished through the use of Cantonese and working within the “one country, two systems” setup of Hong Kong.

“Zhong hua min zu” is a social construct built on an imagined Chinese race, with the PRC now claiming to be the protector of that race (Anderlini, 2017; Dikötter, 2001; Liu, 2001; Wang, 1998). With this distinction, Chineseness is based on congenital inheritance, biological descent, and physical appearance (Su, 1991). This is in contrast to the ancient era in which one culturally becomes Chinese (Dikötter, 1990). In the modern era, one no longer becomes Chinese through culture, but instead is born Chinese (Dikötter, 1996). Therefore, aspects such as Chinese civilization or Confucianism are now subject to change as merely cultural features emanating out

of the biological group (Dikötter, 1997). The new definition of Chineseness means that regardless of if one is a Confucian scholar, socialist cadre, Hunanese peasant, or Hong Kong protester, one's blood means that one is always Chinese (Dikötter, 1997; Su, 1991). This foundation is central to the idea of race and national identity within twentieth and twenty-first century China, and infuses a racial nationalism in which the nation is endowed with a unique culture and history represented by a pseudo-biological entity revolving around blood ties (Dikötter, 1994; 1996).

While not directly addressing the concept of “Zhong hua min zu,” *Apple Daily* does hint at how this idea is not applicable to Hong Kong (Ye, 2014). Ye (2014) makes clear the Cantonese connection in an *Apple Daily* article, but also argues that “我們活在這國際大都會，身邊盡是不同國籍的人” [we live in this cosmopolitan city, surrounded by people of different nationalities], and that “我們已在一個有 100 多年歷史的香港生活” [we are living in Hong Kong with more than 100 years of history]. Ye (2014) then stresses that “一定會比建國 65 年的中華人民共和國，通稱中國而有所不同!” [it (Hong Kong) will definitely be different from the People's Republic of China, which was founded 65 years ago!]. This *Apple Daily* article is in many ways disputing that the PRC is the parent of Hong Kong, which is a common articulation among pro-Beijing supporters in that China, now represented by the PRC, is the parent and Hong Kong is the child (Ye, 2014). Meanwhile, Hong Kongers insist that they are not children to be told what to do by a government that was founded in 1949, and that did not rule Hong Kong until 1997 (Pan, et al., 2001). Ye (2014) is also disputing the articulation among pro-Beijing supporters that Hong Kongers only have yellow skin so should support the Beijing government under this concept of “Zhong hua min zu.” Instead, Ye (2014) argues that the skin has many different shades and actually more resembles an international color card with vast colors instead

of only the generic white, yellow, and black type terms. Yet, even though Ye (2014) does stress the importance of Cantonese, she does not use Cantonese writing in her article. Thus, once again *Apple Daily* demonstrates the fallback of using standard Chinese characters for articles, albeit the traditional characters used in Hong Kong.

Contrasting with *Apple Daily*, *Wen Wei Po* makes an appeal to its readers to not support the Umbrella Movement directly based on the concept of “Zhong hua min zu.” While arguing that democracy is leading to chaos in Hong Kong, *Wen Wei Po* supports the CCP and conceals the historical situation leading to the absence of democracy in the city while arguing that democracy will end the Chinese nation. As such, *Wen Wei Po* uses this concept of racial nationalism to state “中華民族一敗塗地之日，哈哈大笑的恐怕不是中國人” [on the day when the Chinese nation is defeated, I am afraid it is not Chinese] (Guo, 2014). With this phrasing *Wen Wei Po* manipulates the public by communicating the message that if the CCP is not in charge and does not have complete power then China does not exist, despite China having existed in the past under previous governments. At the same time, *Wen Wei Po* covers up information that the actual society and language under threat here is Hong Kong and Cantonese, to the point where Cantonese is not even considered a language. *Wen Wei Po* invokes 中華民族 (Zhong hua min zu), as a unitary version of what it means to be Chinese, while negating any understanding of being Chinese that does not involve CCP control. As such, any understanding of a Cantonese Hong Kong identity is nonexistent, much less one that places Cantonese on an equal footing with Mandarin.

Wen Wei Po further uses the concept of “Zhong hua min zu” to claim that Hong Kong’s democracy protests and differences are causing a major rift between the north and the south and that “一旦蔓延，南北反目，港民得到的不是民主” [once it spreads, the north and south are

against each other, and Hong Kong people are not getting democracy] (Guo, 2014). However, *Wen Wei Po*'s article blames the north-south rift on Hong Kong protests while concealing the historical factors of why the south has often been angry at the north. The way that mainland governments have historically thought of the southeast corner of the current PRC territory is quite illuminating. Southeast China is distant from the current political center of Beijing, and for centuries people in this region were viewed as backward and uncivilized, often existing on the margins of actually being human (Crossley, Siu, & Sutton, 2006; Meacham, 2009; Siu, 1993). Ancient Chinese writings described the people not as people, but half-human-half-fish mermaid-type creatures in desperate need of acculturation, forcibly if necessary (Cheung, 2016; Law, 2017; Meacham, 2009). It was in this area that imperial bureaucrats were often sent into disgraced exile, and it was in this area that foreigners were constrained to in the Qing dynasty era, to be kept away from the political north (Siu, 1993). The inhabitants spoke a distinctive Yue (Cantonese) language and maintain many different reference points as opposed to the political center (Siu, 1993). Yet, the distinctiveness of the southeast area has led it to become urban and industrialized, with extensive contacts worldwide and waves of its own immigrants spreading out around the world (Siu, 1993). In 1825, it was the city of Guangzhou (Canton) that stood majestically as the leading metropolis of the area and the third largest city in the world (Siu, 1993; Top ten, n.d.). However, by the mid twentieth century with Canton now cut off from the world, Hong Kong stood as the cultural center of the region, with those in Guangdong imitating the lifestyles seen on Hong Kong television dramas by the 1990s (Siu, 1993). These distinctions lead many scholars to acknowledge that south China could potentially break away from northern control (Siu, 1993).

However, instead of thinking that democracy and autonomy are a way to keep the north and south together, *Wen Wei Po* instead supports the introduction of the patriotic education of the

mainland into Hong Kong, along with more Mandarin. This patriotic education is often criticized by Hong Kongers as brainwashing, and consists of displaying the state, the nation, and the CCP all as one, with the CCP saving China from its brutalization at the hands of the West and Japan (Townsend, 1996; Wang, 2008; Yam, 2016). Patriotic education also portrays democracy as chaos, with the U.S. in a leading role of using it to destroy and contain China (Yam, 2016). *Wen Wei Po* calling for this type of education is an acknowledgement that Beijing has failed to further integrate Hong Kong into the mainland and instead must resort to more drastic measures. It also shows the impact that Mandarin has as part of these policies.

While *Wen Wei Po* expresses support for the patriotic education and Mandarin of the mainland, the *South China Morning Post* features examples of what has happened to Guangzhou (Canton), the city on the mainland from which Cantonese obtains its name and from where many in Hong Kong have their ancestral roots (Allen, 1997; Yung, 1975). Berg (2014) writes in a *South China Morning Post* article how she began speaking with some shop owners who were surprised and delighted that she could speak their mother tongue of Cantonese, even though out of habit they switched to Putonghua more than once, as that is the language that one is supposed to speak to foreigners in. As Berg (2014) was paying for her goods, the couple's daughter came in and the parents asked her in accented Putonghua about her homework. Berg (2014) spoke to the daughter in Cantonese and the girl shook her head. Berg (2014) then writes that "born in Guangzhou to Cantonese-speaking parents, she didn't know her own language."

The *South China Morning Post* articles on Cantonese serve as warnings to its readers what Hong Kong is in store for because despite PRC language policies having the reverse effect in the city at the moment, this is evidence to show that Beijing's policies are having the intended effect very close to home. This distinction is also backed up by research. Whereas a study in

1994 found that respondents from Guangzhou ranked Cantonese as higher than or similar to Putonghua (Bai, 1994), by 2001 respondents ranked their language as lower than or similar to Putonghua (Zhou, 2001). However, despite the *South China Morning Post*'s warning of what is happening to Cantonese on the mainland, the narrative is still in English. The articles feature no Cantonese writing, but only the explanation of what is happening to a language by using a different language.

While some of the Hong Kong newspapers give a surface level explanation of what is happening in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong public feels increasingly marginalized and neglected by the government and by the media. This is only exacerbated by the lack of Cantonese in these publications. With the restriction of these protest areas, Hong Kongers must turn elsewhere, to the streets to protest and to imagining an identity all of their own. The years leading up to and especially after the Umbrella Movement have seen a nosedive of Hong Kongers identifying as Chinese (Cheng, 2019; University of Hong Kong, 2019; Wong, 2017). The Beijing government must look at this situation soberly, as the Umbrella Movement protests were driven by the young and the 2019 protests by an even younger generation (Pepper, 2019; Sheehan, 2017; Su, 2019). The protest numbers are also increasingly growing larger, with a 2019 protest numbering at almost two million people (Creery & Grundy, 2019; Pepper, 2019). A 2019 poll also shows the largest percentage ever of Hong Kong people identifying as Hong Kongers and rejecting a Chinese identity (Cheng, 2019; University of Hong Kong, 2019). These numbers are more pronounced among the young with 90% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 even answering “no” when asked if they are “proud of becoming a national citizen of China” (Cheng, 2019; University of Hong Kong, 2019). In contrast to the optimism of the Umbrella Movement, the 2019 protests are also an open display of desperation, as protesters now directly target the

Beijing government as responsible for their lack of democracy, autonomy, and for causing the ills that infect their society (Griffiths, 2019). The protesters feel as if this is their last chance before being consumed by the Beijing government, and they openly express that they are willing to die to defend Hong Kong autonomy and secure democracy (Perper, 2019).

Why do so many Hong Kongers claim they are not Chinese? In many ways, the answer lies in that the Beijing government has now monopolized what it means to be Chinese; namely speaking Mandarin, submitting to CCP authority, and being more rigid and closed off (Chan, 2018; Fong, 2017). In contrast, the Hong Kong identity is a civic identity, represented as open and inclusive (Veg, 2017; Wu, 2016). Whereas one cannot become Chinese according to the CCP version of nationalism since it is based on race (Anderlini, 2017; Chan, 2018; Dikötter, 2001), one can become a Hong Konger, in that this nationalism is rooted in ideas of freedom, democracy, and transparent government as core Hong Kong values (Chan, 2018; Chong, 2017; Kwan, 2016; Veg, 2017; Wu, 2016). At the same time, the Hong Kong identity is centered on Cantonese, but is learnable (Snow, 2004; So & Chan, 2007; Wu, 2016). Hall (1997) argues that culture and identity deals with “shared meanings,” in which language is the method by which one makes sense of things. For Hong Kong people, Cantonese is the way of life that they know. Cantonese is how they communicate and how they come together in a shared community. Hong Kongers were not brought up on Mandarin television, movies, music, and newspapers, but instead Cantonese media. They were not brought up on the values of CCP closedness, but Hong Kong openness. Yet, the values of the CCP are the values that the PRC intends to insert into Hong Kong by molding the minds of Hong Kong people into the obedient subjects of the Beijing government. This process of hegemony is precisely why the Hong Kong people react in defiance, and it is precisely why Hong Kongers refer to the 2019-2020 protests as the final battle.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

Hong Kong's Cantonese roots in many ways differentiate it from the majority of the mainland. However, this distinction creates problems for the Beijing government's methods of control and integration. Whereas many Hong Kongers voice their support and protection of the Cantonese language and demand universal suffrage, fissures also exist in Hong Kong society in which some welcome encroachment by the Beijing government and consensually submit to the new hegemonic order over the city. The differences in these opinions are prominently displayed in Hong Kong newspapers. The *South China Morning Post* as an English language newspaper takes more of an interest in detailing the history of the Cantonese language, but does not tie that in to the larger protests taking place, nor does the newspaper utilize any Cantonese writing. *Apple Daily* as a pro-democracy Chinese language newspaper seems to have less of a need to explain Cantonese to its majority Cantonese-speaking readership and instead utilizes the Cantonese vernacular as a method of writing, but mainly through the direct quotes of others. *Apple Daily* features a heavily pro-democratic approach and it is when these direct Cantonese quotes appear that the voice of Hong Kongers is heard. Meanwhile, *Wen Wei Po* as Chinese language Beijing government mouthpiece seems intent on placing Hong Kong firmly under a "Zhong hua min zu" as controlled by Beijing and insinuates that Cantonese is not under attack in Hong Kong, but conceals the voice of Umbrella Movement protesters and refrains from using any Cantonese writing.

Scholars largely understate the importance of Cantonese in the Umbrella Movement by looking at issues other than language. However, when we hear the voice of Hong Kong protesters we discover how important Cantonese is to the Umbrella Movement and to Hong Kong. The role that Cantonese plays as a threat to the Beijing government, as a counter-

hegemonic articulation against the Beijing government, and as a Hong Kong identity language can be discovered by analyzing Hong Kong newspapers. While these newspapers largely obscure the role of Cantonese in the Umbrella Movement, the voice of the Cantonese Hong Kong people is heard through direct quotations and pictures of signs. However, this meager amount of Cantonese in newspapers is not enough for the Hong Kong people. They find their protest areas restricted and must take to the streets in ever greater numbers.

The analysis of the three newspapers reveals the answers to the four research questions posed in this paper. The newspapers largely obscure the role of Cantonese as part of their coverage of the Umbrella Movement protests. Yet, when the newspapers do utilize Cantonese or discuss it then the Cantonese narrative takes place through the lens of the outlet's political affiliation. With this, *Wen Wei Po* conceals the role of Cantonese as a counter-hegemonic language, while *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* display it in a much-understated way to avoid angering Beijing. Still, this counter-hegemonic ability of Cantonese brings up issues of national identity as part of the protests. While *Apple Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* do not state this connection outright, they do hint at it by leaning on the "one country, two systems" setup. Meanwhile, *Wen Wei Po* uses the concept of "Zhong hua min zu" as led by the CCP to negate any differentiation on the part of Hong Kong Cantonese.

This paper contributes to scholarship by displaying the role that Cantonese played in the Umbrella Movement, but how newspapers did not adequately portray that role. As such, more scholarship is needed on the issue of Cantonese within the Umbrella Movement. Newspapers do not adequately fill the role, but social media where Hong Kongers can directly state views in Cantonese just might.

To reiterate, studying Cantonese and identity within the three Hong Kong newspapers demonstrates that the language of Cantonese played a far more important role in the Umbrella Movement than scholars give credit for. Thus, while Tang (2015) argues for the importance of televised images in galvanizing support for the protests, the role of language is just as important. In particular, *Apple Daily*'s extensive use of Cantonese vernacular and reports on the democracy movement are among the reasons why the newspaper is so popular among Hong Kongers. Language is political and *Apple Daily* utilizes the Cantonese language along with its support for the Umbrella Movement in a way that causes those from the city to feel that it does try to represent them. Instead of utilizing a top-down method like *Wen Wei Po*, *Apple Daily* uses a bottom-up method to sound out the concerns of the citizenry. This method is augmented in that *Apple Daily* does not primarily rely on advertisers for revenue, but instead on the public and their support.

Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai hails from Guangzhou and has seen how Cantonese has deteriorated in the city. Hong Kong has now become the place to keep Cantonese language and culture alive. Contrary to the insinuations of Lai and Byram (2003), Hong Kong is not a society that was originally flush with northern Beijing language and culture before the British came in and supplanted it. Hong Kong is a society that has developed over thousands of years and became a city in which people sought refuge. Hong Kong stands as a city that shows there is a different way to be Chinese that does not mean accepting authoritarian rule and the eradication of the Cantonese language.

While some in Hong Kong do consensually submit to Beijing authority and would give up Hong Kong's distinction, the increase in Hong Kongers not identifying as Chinese threatens that very order. Even still, none of the three newspapers studied advocate for an independent

Hong Kong. Instead, the newspapers are constrained by working within the “one country, two systems” setup. *Apple Daily* does go up to a red line of what is acceptable, but does not cross over it into independence territory. Thus, Hong Kong newspapers walk a fine line in appealing to Hong Kongers’ frustration at seeing their society crumble, but also avoid overly antagonizing Beijing.

However, considerations of Hong Kong distinctiveness might consist of a moot point if the Beijing government allowed for the autonomy promised under the “one country, two systems” setup, as Hong Kongers would not feel the need to so decisively present themselves as different. Nevertheless, the Beijing government has made a point of incorporating Hong Kong further into the mainland by seeking to negate precisely what makes Hong Kong different. With this, Hong Kong is now seeing students work their way through the final stages of an education that has been entirely under the jurisdiction of the PRC following the handover. Yet, instead of producing citizens that are more committed to a Chinese identity, speaking Putonghua, and taking pride in the Beijing government, these Hong Kongers are increasingly asserting their Hong Kong identity, defending Cantonese, and rejecting the Beijing government in increasingly greater numbers. The harder that Beijing cracks down, the angrier Hong Kongers become. If Beijing wants to win over Hong Kong people, the way forward is to allow Hong Kongers to choose their own destiny rather than control it. This includes implementing the promised universal suffrage. This also includes openly stating that there is more than one way to be Chinese, and that includes speaking Cantonese.

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