



# **The corpus of English loanwords in Hong Kong Cantonese**

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# INTRODUCTION

- English loanwords have had a long history in Cantonese.
- The earliest documentation dates back to Morrison (1828) in which words such as
  - bo1 kau4 波球 for “ball”
  - be1 zau2 卑酒 for “beer”
- Loanwords that have fully integrated into HK Cantonese include:
  - dik1 si2 的士 for “taxi”
  - am1 lit6 奄列 for “omlette”

# The Etymological Dictionary Project (I)

- A lot of interesting issues are found:
  - A. Some loanwords have been nativized
    - e.g. baa1 si2 巴士 for “bus” → no native term for it
  - B. Some loanwords go through “death”
    - e.g. daai6 got1 lau4 大葛樓 “high court”
  - C. Some English words are “borrowed” twice
    - e.g. “cream” was first borrowed as gei4 lim1 忌廉 in food items;
    - e.g. “cream” is recently borrowed as kwim1 but only referring to “cream” in hand or face cream



## The Etymological Dictionary Project (2)

- This is what prompted the etymological project.
- The purpose is to charter the “life cycle” of the majority of English loanwords found in Cantonese.
- The aim of the etymological dictionary project is to assemble an exhaustive list of English loanwords found in Cantonese with full annotation in terms of their pronunciation and origin, etc. and to compile a searchable database.

# The Etymological Dictionary Project (3)

- The initial product of this project is a small corpus: a collection of 694 English loanwords ([Bauer and Wong 2008](#)) documented in Cantonese over a time span of 180 years, from 1828 to 2008.
- Sources:

Academic	Non-academic	Internet
dictionaries	local newspapers	forums
monographs	tabloid magazines	discussion groups
journal articles	youth magazines	
student theses, dissertations	comic books	

# The Etymological Dictionary Project (4)

- Of these 693 items
  - 85%: only phonetically-transliterated syllables
    - e.g. baa1 si2 巴士 (“bus”)
    - transliterated from the English /bʌs/.
  - 15%: at least one phonetically-transliterated syllable
    - e.g. be1 zau2 啤酒 (“beer”)
    - the first syllable is transliterated from “beer” and the second syllable is a Cantonese word meaning “wine”.

# The Etymological Dictionary Project (5)

- In terms of word categories, the majority of these loanwords are nouns (80%). Only 12% of them are verbs.
- The semantic categories are quite diversified.

<b>food and drinks</b>	<b>recreation</b>
<b>academic terminology</b>	<b>fashion</b>
<b>technology</b>	<b>occupations</b>
<b>police jargon</b>	<b>music</b>

# The Corpus (I)

- In order to facilitate the eventual publication of this corpus as a dictionary, the corpus has the following features:
  - a text file in a particular format
  - each lexical entry consists of “bands” of information
  - the next slide illustrates what the entry for *be1 zau2* 啤酒 (“beer”) looks like in the original corpus
  - the slide after that shows what the entry will look like in the printed dictionary.

# The Corpus (2)

- .hw           bel zau2
- char          啤酒
- ps            N.
- en fm        Eng. beer
- seealso 啤be l
- et            first recorded as 啤酒 pay tsaw in RM1828:14  
and CHA1907:21
- stch         啤酒 pi2 jiu3
- df            beer
- exchar       佢一次過飲咗五罐啤酒
- exrom        keoi5 jat1 ci3 gwo3 jam2 zo2 ng5 gun3 bel zau2
- exeng        He has taken five cans of beer at a time
- ser          1000090179
- ref          RM1828:14, CHA1907:21, EIT1910:525,  
WEL1931:15, HPF1970:27, CHN1972:216

baa<sup>1</sup> naa<sup>4</sup> fan<sup>1</sup> laap<sup>6</sup>

3

ben<sup>1</sup> wan<sup>1</sup>

A

baa<sup>1</sup> naa<sup>4</sup> fan<sup>1</sup> laap<sup>6</sup> 巴拿芬蠟 N. <巴拿芬 baa<sup>1</sup> naa<sup>4</sup> fan<sup>1</sup> fm. Eng. paraffin> 石蠟油 shi<sup>2</sup> la<sup>4</sup> you<sup>2</sup> paraffin wax; often used in cosmetics | Paraffin 有各種用途 baa<sup>1</sup> naa<sup>4</sup> fan<sup>1</sup> laap<sup>6</sup> jau<sup>5</sup> do<sup>1</sup> zung<sup>2</sup> jung<sup>6</sup> tou<sup>4</sup> Paraffin can be used in various ways [WTH2004APP2:8]

baa<sup>1</sup> neoi<sup>5/2</sup> 吧女 N. <baa<sup>1</sup> fm. Eng. bar> 酒吧女郎 jiu<sup>3</sup> ba<sup>1</sup> nu<sup>3</sup> lang<sup>2</sup> bar girl | 吧女有年輕化嘅趨勢 baa<sup>1</sup> neoi<sup>5/2</sup> jau<sup>5</sup> nin<sup>4</sup> hing<sup>1</sup> faa<sup>3</sup> ge<sup>3</sup> ceoi<sup>1</sup> sai<sup>3</sup> There is a trend for younger girls to become bar girls

baan<sup>1</sup> kik<sup>1</sup> 班戟 N. (M: 個 go<sup>3</sup>; 件 gin<sup>6</sup>) 薄煎餅 bao<sup>2</sup> jian<sup>1</sup> bing<sup>3</sup> <fm. Eng. pancake> pancake | 芒果班戟 mong<sup>4/1</sup> gwo<sup>2</sup> baan<sup>1</sup> kik<sup>1</sup> Mango pancake [CHN1972:218, ZN1999:6]

baa<sup>1</sup> si<sup>6/2</sup> 巴士 N. (M: 架 gaa<sup>3</sup>; 部 bou<sup>6</sup>) <fm. Eng. bus> 公共汽車 gong<sup>1</sup> gong<sup>4</sup> qi<sup>4</sup> che<sup>1</sup> ① bus | 巴士站 baa<sup>1</sup> si<sup>6/2</sup> zaam<sup>6</sup> Bus stop | 上巴士 soeng<sup>5</sup> baa<sup>1</sup> si<sup>6/2</sup> Get on bus ② large coach | 旅遊巴士 lei<sup>5</sup> jau<sup>4</sup> baa<sup>1</sup> si<sup>6/2</sup> Sight-seeing coach [CHN1972:223, KKL1977:18, ROZ1981:3, ZRS1986:46, ZN1999:3, WTH2004APP1:2]

baa<sup>1</sup> si<sup>1</sup> dak<sup>1</sup> siu<sup>1</sup> duk<sup>6</sup> 巴斯德消毒 <baa<sup>1</sup> si<sup>1</sup> dak<sup>1</sup> fm. Eng. pasteurization> 巴斯德消毒 ba<sup>1</sup> si<sup>1</sup> de<sup>2</sup> xiao<sup>1</sup> du<sup>2</sup> N. pasteurization | 巴斯德消毒能殺死奶製品中嘅微生物 baa<sup>1</sup> si<sup>1</sup> dak<sup>1</sup> siu<sup>1</sup> duk<sup>6</sup> nang<sup>4</sup> saat<sup>3</sup> sei<sup>2</sup> naai<sup>5</sup> zai<sup>3</sup> ban<sup>2</sup> zung<sup>1</sup> ge<sup>3</sup> mei<sup>4</sup> saang<sup>1</sup> mat<sup>6</sup> Pasteurization can kill all microorganisms in dairy products ♦ v. to pasteurize | 我

| 雜果賓治 zaap<sup>6</sup> gwo<sup>2</sup> ban<sup>1</sup> zi<sup>6</sup> Fruit punch [WTH2004APP2:9]

ban<sup>6</sup> zyu<sup>1</sup> tiu<sup>3</sup> 笨豬跳 N. <笨豬 ban<sup>6</sup> zyu<sup>1</sup> lit. stupid pig; fm. Eng. bungee> 跳墜運動 tiao<sup>4</sup> zhui<sup>4</sup> yun<sup>4</sup> dong<sup>4</sup> bungee jumping | 我唔敢玩笨豬跳 ngo<sup>5</sup> m<sup>4</sup> gam<sup>2</sup> waan<sup>2</sup> ban<sup>6</sup> zyu<sup>1</sup> tiu<sup>3</sup> I do not dare to do bungee jumping [WTH2004APP2:2]

be<sup>1</sup> 啤 N. <fm. Eng. beer> (See also 啤酒 be<sup>1</sup> zau<sup>2</sup>) 啤酒 pi<sup>2</sup> jiu<sup>3</sup> beer | 生啤 saang<sup>1</sup> be<sup>1</sup> Draft beer ♦ v. <fm. Eng. beer> 喝啤酒 he<sup>1</sup> pi<sup>2</sup> jiu<sup>3</sup> to drink beer | 去邊度啤一啤? heoi<sup>3</sup> bin<sup>1</sup> dou<sup>6</sup> be<sup>1</sup> jat<sup>1</sup> be<sup>1</sup> Where do we go to have a glass of beer? [ZN1999:11]

be<sup>1</sup> be<sup>1</sup> tung<sup>4</sup> 啤啤熊 N. (also written as bear bear 熊) <be<sup>1</sup> fm. Eng. bear> 小熊玩具 xiao<sup>3</sup> xiong<sup>2</sup> wan<sup>2</sup> ju<sup>4</sup> teddy bear | 好大隻啤啤熊呀! hou<sup>2</sup> daai<sup>6</sup> zek<sup>3</sup> be<sup>1</sup> be<sup>1</sup> hung<sup>4</sup> aa<sup>3</sup> What a big teddy bear! [DZB2006.159:45]

be<sup>1</sup> gei<sup>1</sup> 啤機 N. <be<sup>1</sup> fm. Eng. press> 壓榨機 ya<sup>1</sup> zha<sup>4</sup> ji<sup>1</sup> a press; r.t. a machine press | 有個工人俾啤機整傷隻手指 jau<sup>5</sup> go<sup>3</sup> gung<sup>1</sup> jan<sup>4</sup> bei<sup>2</sup> be<sup>1</sup> gei<sup>1</sup> zing<sup>2</sup> soeng<sup>1</sup> zek<sup>3</sup> sau<sup>2</sup> zi<sup>2</sup> A worker's finger was injured by the press machine [WTH2004APP2:9]

bei<sup>1</sup> bi<sup>1</sup> fet<sup>1</sup> baby fat N. <fm. Eng. baby fat> 嬰兒肥 ying<sup>1</sup> er<sup>2</sup> fei<sup>2</sup> baby fat | 佢二十幾歲人仲有 baby fat keoi<sup>5</sup> ji<sup>6</sup> sap<sup>6</sup> gei<sup>2</sup> sei<sup>3</sup> jan<sup>4</sup> zung<sup>6</sup> jau<sup>5</sup> bei<sup>1</sup> bi<sup>1</sup> fet<sup>1</sup> He has not grown out of baby fat even at his 20's. [SKB2006.65:18]

# The Online Version (I)

- Currently, the content of the etymological dictionary is still being carefully revised and meticulously edited.
- The corpus has now been put on the web.
- First, the original WORD document was transferred to an EXCEL file.
- A website was constructed using the EXCEL file.
- “English Loanwords in Hong Kong Cantonese” is available at
- <http://funstuff.engl.polyu.edu.hk/loanwords/>

## The Online Version (2)

- The website is easy to use.
- A simple search can be done by typing in a word in English, Chinese, or romanized Cantonese under the “Search” button on the front page.
- The functions under the “Advanced Search” tap include three choices: search by
  - (1) Chinese characters/words,
  - (2) English words, and
  - (3) Jyutping (i.e. Cantonese romanization),



# Your Input is Most Welcome!

- Currently, the team is still working on the editing functions of the website.
- The idea is to update the corpus by adding newly found loanword items.
- Please try out the online version of our loanword corpus and give us comments and feedback.
- For enquiries and comments, please email me:
  - [cathy.wong.engl@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:cathy.wong.engl@polyu.edu.hk)



Thank  
You