

Call for Papers: The Politics of Language in Hong Kong

The Research Committee on The Politics of Language (RC50)
of the *International Political Science Association* (IPSA)

and the

Research Group on Language Politics
of the *Global Research Network on Comparative Territorial Autonomies* (GRN-CTA)

are soliciting abstracts on

The Politics of Language in Hong Kong

for an

Online Symposium

to be held on

Saturday 11 June 2022

and a subsequent

Book Project

to be edited by the organizers (details to be announced)

Deadline for abstract submission: 1 October 2021

Abstracts (250 words) and a short author bio should be submitted through:

<https://forms.gle/kbofdHWygEAsXZk58>

This symposium is organized by:

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IPSA RC50 Chair; GRN-CTA Language Politics Group coordinator

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GRN-CTA Language Politics Group coordinator

The Sinitic language family comprises a variety of mutually unintelligible languages (often inaccurately depicted as “dialects”) that have historically been united by a classical literary standard. The standardization of Mandarin and its adoption as national language in the 1910s has had tremendous effects on the conceptualizations and use of those languages in the Sinoophone world. In Hong Kong, the adoption of standard written Mandarin with Cantonese pronunciation has, until recently, largely been considered uncontroversial and unproblematic. Indeed, the unification of writing systems may have provided opportunities for the flourishing of Cantonese in high domains, which, in turn, has given rise to a relatively standard form of written Cantonese used in informal domains.

Yet, in recent years, the appropriateness of using Mandarin as the standard form of written Chinese in Hong Kong has been challenged, especially by Hong Kong nationalists, who are now calling for a Hong Kong literature written entirely in Cantonese, a language now referred to by some as *Hongkongese*. These developments have also been accompanied by a renewed interest in the study and use of Cantonese Romanization systems, away from Chinese characters.

Interestingly, little attention appears to have been paid to other languages traditionally used in Hong Kong. The Wai Tau dialect of Cantonese and the Hakka language, both of which were traditionally dominant in Hong Kong’s New Territories, have been in sharp decline.

This symposium and book project will look at issues concerning the Politics of Language in Hong Kong from a multidisciplinary perspective (education, geography, history, linguistics, political science, sociology, etc). Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Cantonese and the politics of identity and resistance in Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Cantonese standardization (Cantonese characters, romanization, pronunciation, etc)
- Language shift and revitalization in Hong Kong (Wai Tau, Hakka, etc.)
- Language use in the political realm
- Mandarin education and its implications
- Non-Chinese languages in Hong Kong
- The influence of colonial regimes on Hong Kong’s linguistic landscape
- Etc.

Papers written in comparative perspective are also welcome, provided Hong Kong is the primary focus.

Preliminary timeline (some dates may be adjusted later on):

- **1 October 2021:** deadline for abstract submission
- **Mid-October 2021:** decisions on abstracts and details on book project sent to authors
 - *End of 2021: Book proposal submitted to publisher*
- **11 June 2022:** Online symposium; deadline for paper submission (6000 words)
- **1 September 2022:** Comments sent to authors for amendments
- **31 December 2022:** Deadline for final version of all chapters
- **Early/mid-2023:** Complete manuscript submitted to publisher