The changes in the language of perception in Cantonese

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There are minor, but noticeable changes in the language of perception between older and younger speakers of Cantonese in Hong Kong and Macau.

Younger speakers have:

- finer categorisation in the distal senses; but
- poorer knowledge in the traditional categorisation of the proximal senses.

Possible cause:

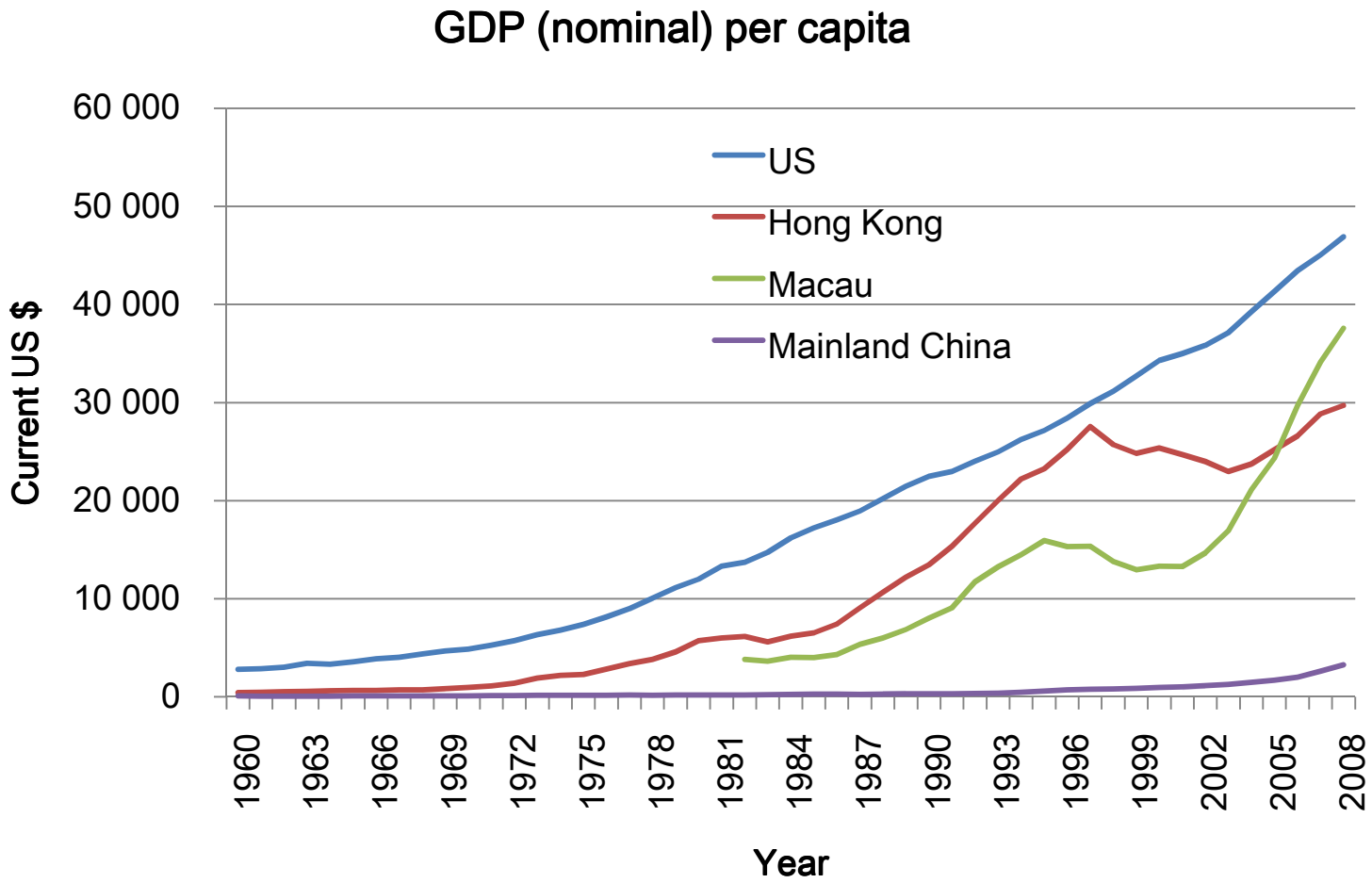
Rapid development in Hong Kong and Macau, which caused:

- a rapid increase in literacy; and
- internationalisation (i.e. westernisation) of the education system.

Westernisation of the education system:

- increased the emphasis on the categorisation of the distal senses (e.g. colouring activities, tuitions in western music); and
- general decrease of interest in traditional culture and knowledge, including the traditional finer categorisation of the proximal senses.

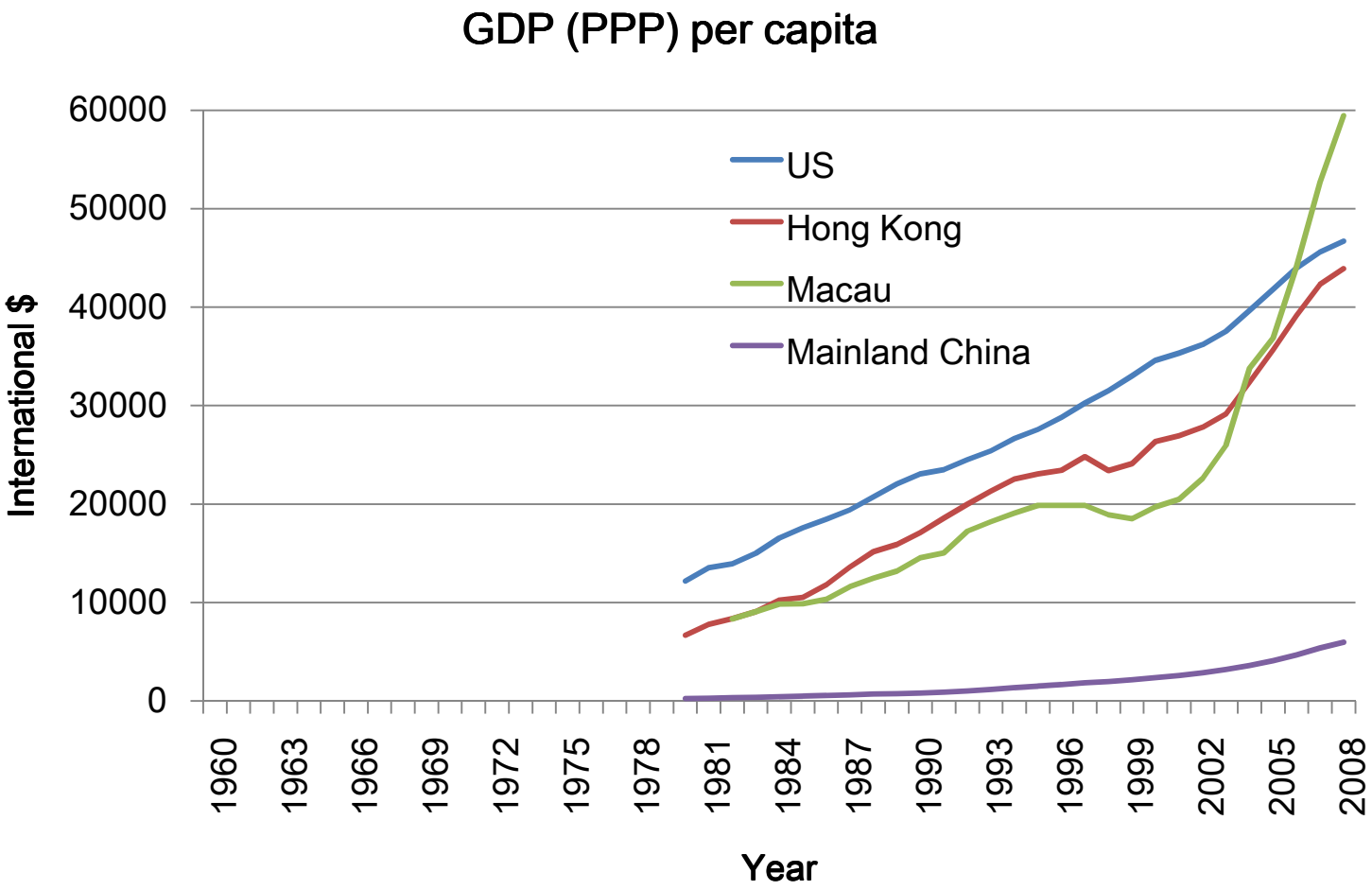
Hong Kong and Macau have rapidly lifted themselves from ‘developing’ status since 1970s…



Sources:

data.un.org

earthtrends.wri.org

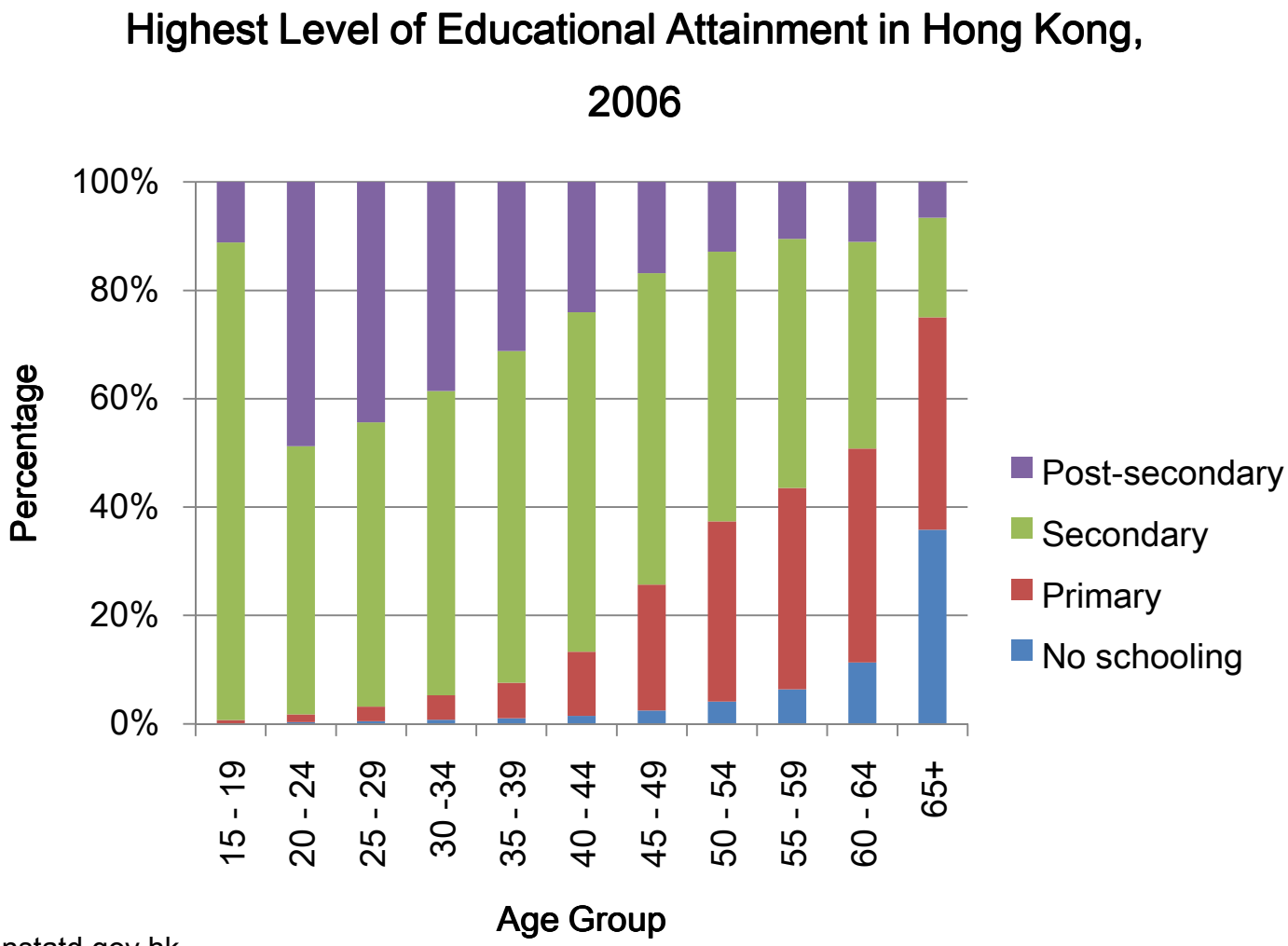


Sources:

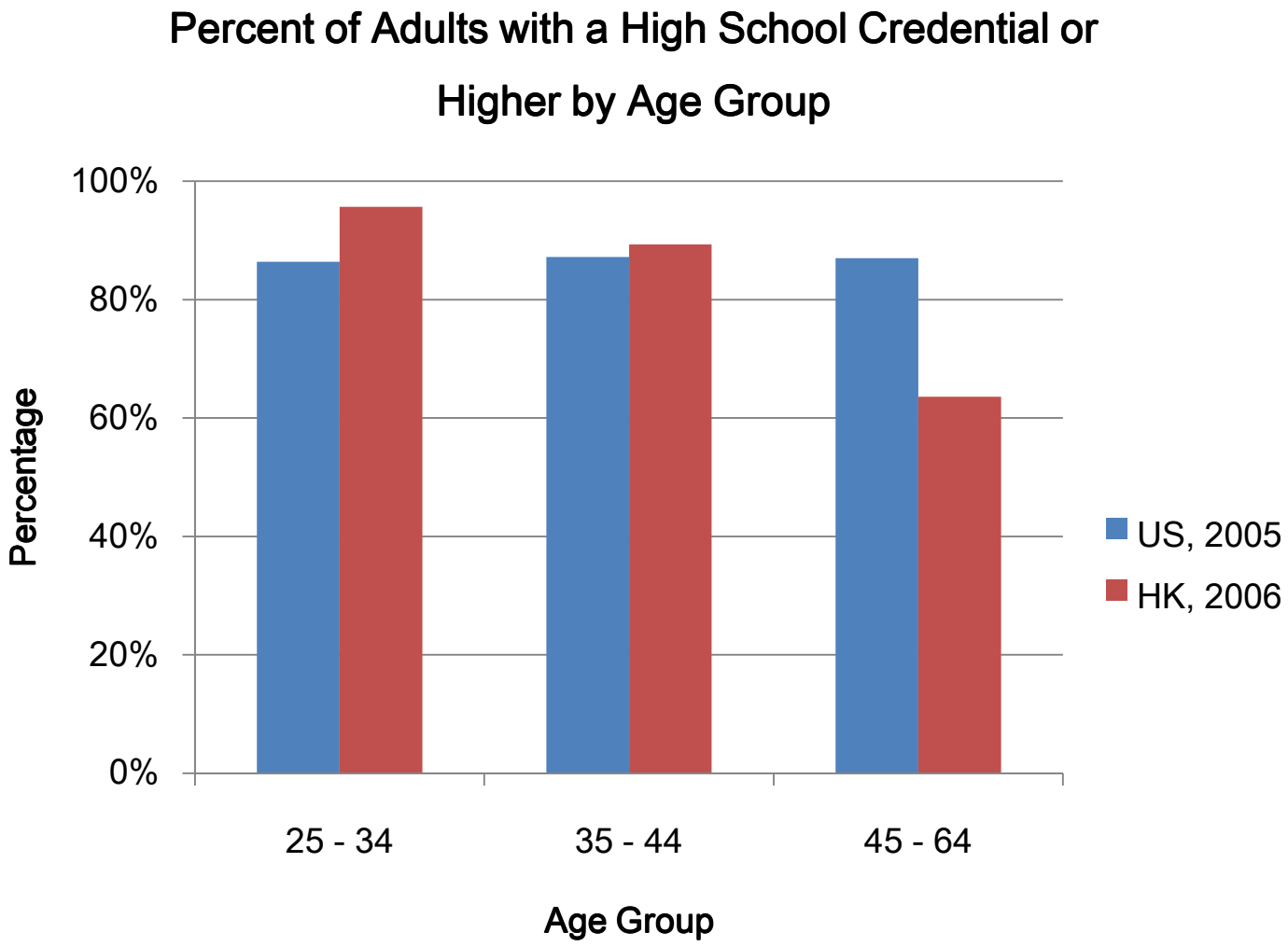
data.un.org

earthtrends.wri.org

and the level of educational attainment has also vastly improved.



Source:
www.censtatd.gov.hk

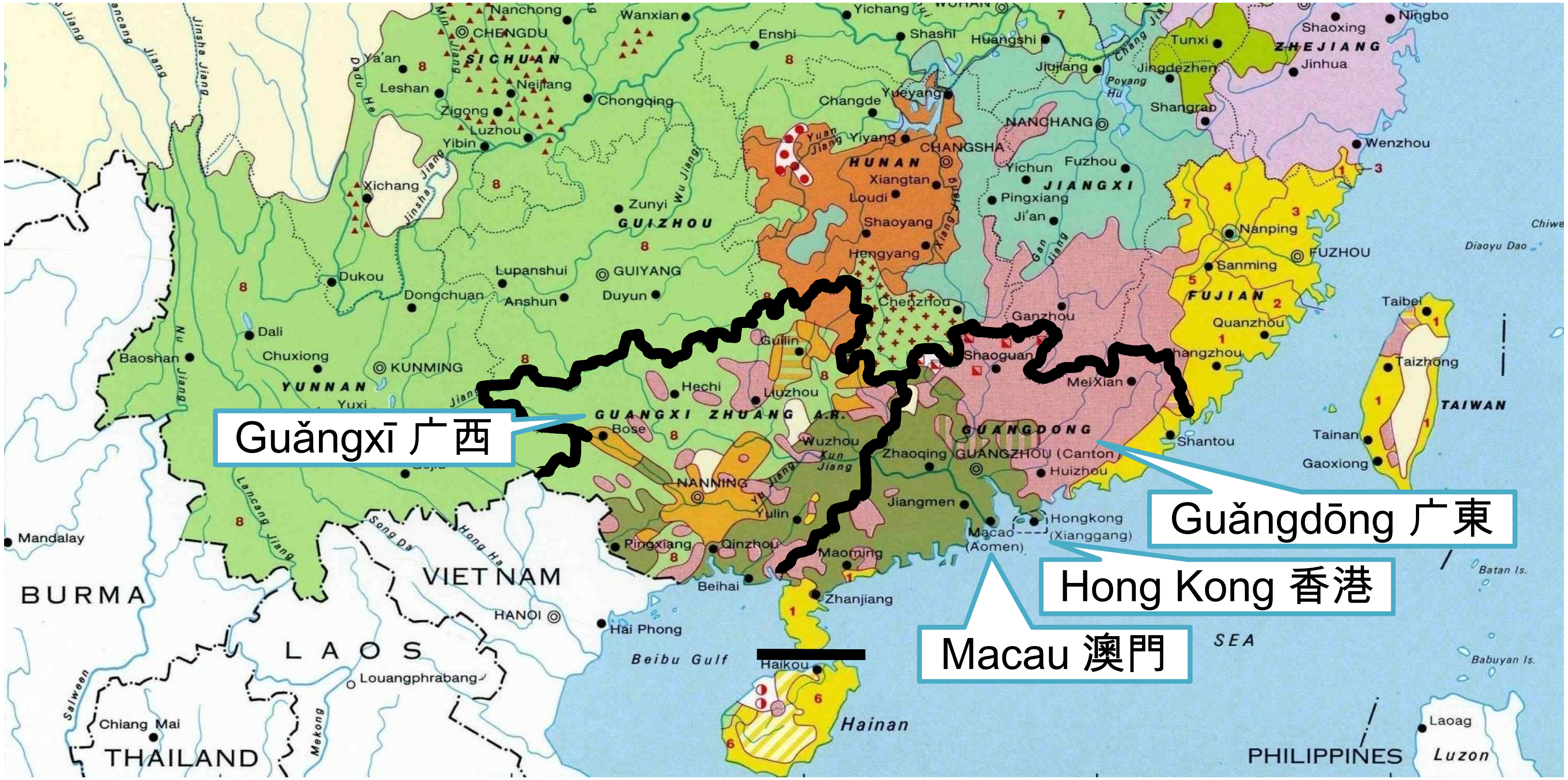


Sources:

www.censtatd.gov.hk
www.census.gov
www.higheredinfo.org

(Würm et al.1987)

Cantonese/ Yuè 粵



Guǎngxī 广西
Guǎngdōng 广東
Hong Kong 香港
Macau 澳門
SICHUAN
YUNNAN
GUIZHOU
HUNAN
JIANGXI
FUJIAN
ZHEJIANG
TAIWAN
GUANGXI ZHUANG A.R.
GUANGDONG
BURMA
LAOS
VIET NAM
THAILAND
PHILIPPINES
Hainan
Beibu Gulf
SEA
Luzon
CHENGDU
KUNMING
GUIYANG
CHANGSHA
NANCHANG
FUZHOU
NANNING
GUANGZHOU (Canton)
HANOI
Hongkong (Xianggang)
Macao (Aomen)

Cantonese

Experiments in Hong Kong & Macau
(July 2008)

(en.wikipedia.org)

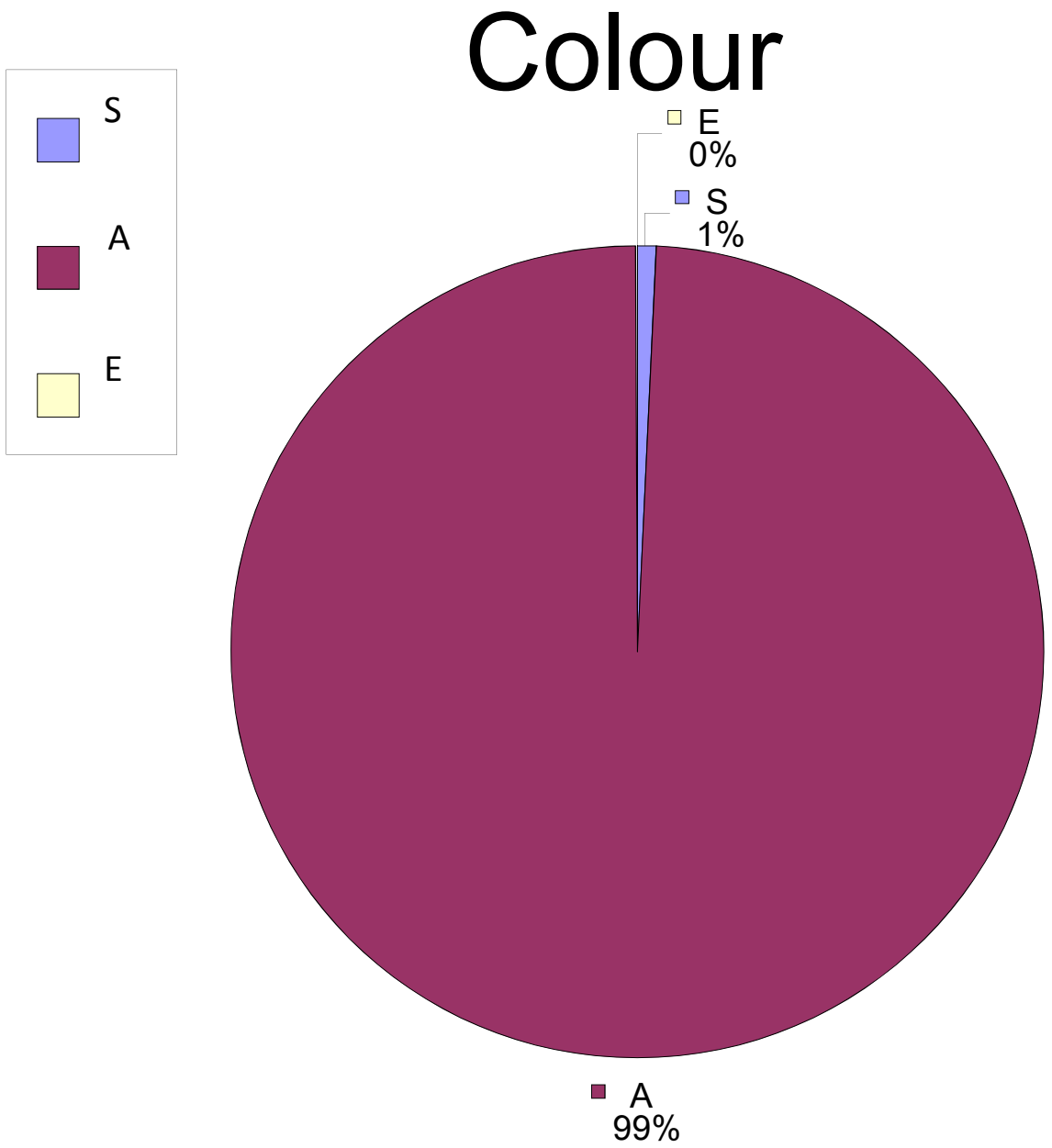
Hong Kong & Macau

- Mostly urban dwellers:

Consultants

part. ID	*c*	*d*	*a*	*e*	*k*	*l*	*g*	*h*	*i*	*j*	*b*	*f*
age ≈	70	70	55	35	35	35	30	30	30	30	25	20
gender	F	M	F	F	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	F

(All consultants had at least secondary school education.)


Colour
S
A
E
E
0%
S
1%
A
99%

Basic Colour Terms

啡

fe1

黑

haak1

灰

fui1

白

baak6

紅

hung4

橙

caang2

黃

wong4

綠

luk6

藍

laam4

紫

zi2

咖啡
kaa3 fe1
‘coffee’

灰
fui1
‘ash’

啡
fe1 (obslt.: 褐 hot3)

黑
haak1

灰
fui1

白
baak6

紅
hung4

橙
caang2

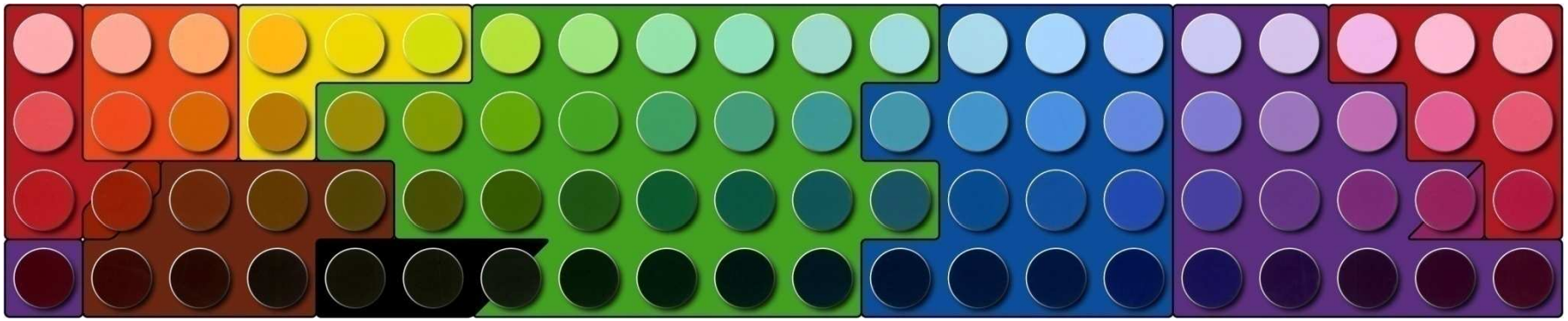
黃
wong4

綠
luk6

藍
laam4

紫
zi2

橙
caang2
‘orange’



(Additional Basic Colour Term for some younger speakers)

啡

fe1

(肉)

(juk6)

(青)

(ceng1)

黑

haak1

灰

fui1

白

baak6

紅

hung4

橙

caang2

黃

wong4

綠

luk6

藍

laam4

紫

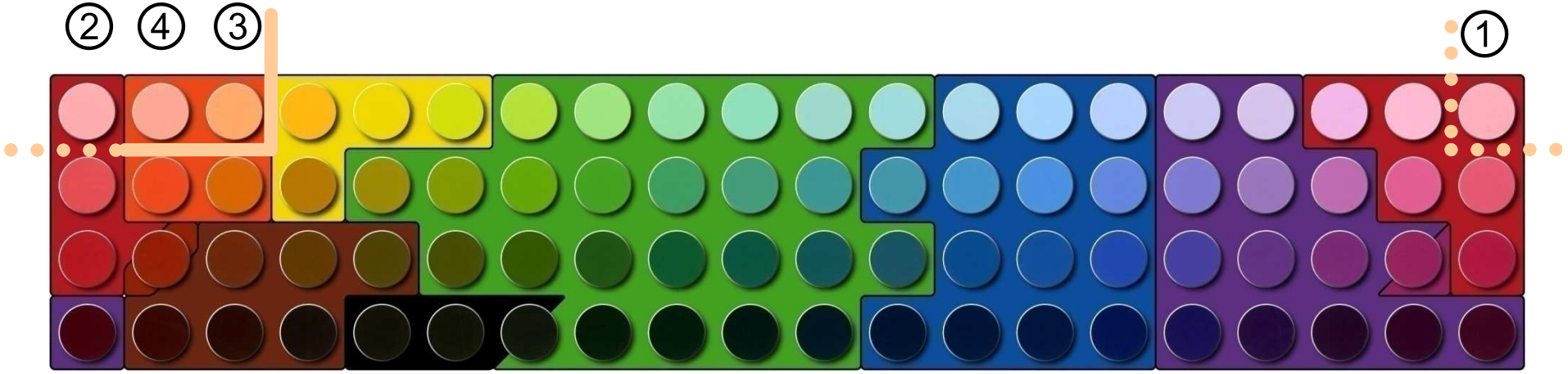
zi2

肉
juk6
‘flesh’

(肉)

(juk6)

participant ID	***g***	***h***	***b***	***f***
age ≈	30	30	25	20
gender	M	M	F	F

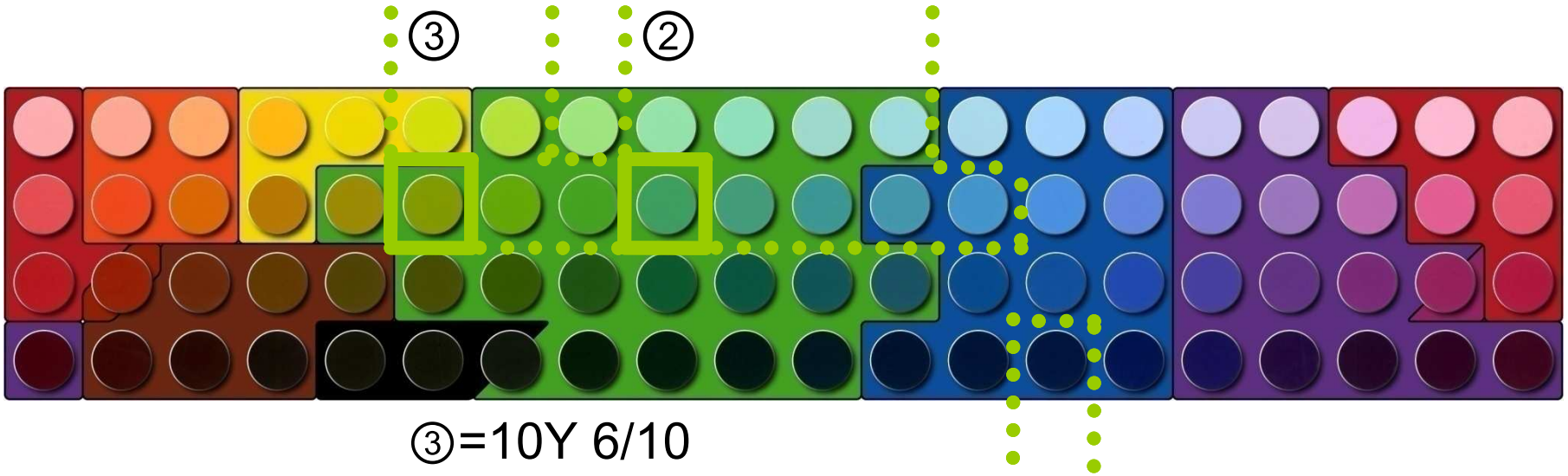


④=10R 8/6

(青)

(ceng1)

participant ID	***e***	***h***	***i***	***b***	***f***
age ≈	35	30	30	25	20
gender	F	M	M	F	F



③=10Y 6/10

②=5G 6/10

Berlin & Kay 1969

		黑	灰	白
		haak1	fui1	baak6
紅	黃	青	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	**ceng1**	laam4	**zi2**

Caskey-Sirmons & Hickerson 1977:

		黑	灰	白
		haak1	fui1	baak6
紅	黃	綠	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	**luk6**	laam4	**zi2**

Endō 2000 — HK Cantonese :

part. ID	***A***	***B***	***C***	***D***	***E***	***F***	***(G)***
age ≈	31	25	25	24	23	18	(47)
gender	M	M	F	F	M	F	(F)

- 綠 *luk6* ‘green’ (6/6 agr: 2.5G 4~3.5 )
- 青 *ceng1* ‘light green’ (4/6 agr: 2.5GY 8~7.5 )

Endō 2000 — HK Cantonese :

- 綠 *luk6* ‘green’ (6/6 agr: 2.5G 4~3.5 )
- 青 *ceng1* ‘light green’ (4/6 agr: 2.5GY 8~7.5 )

Morphosyntactic score for ‘basicality’

(based on 16 morphosyntactic criteria for the colour terms in nominal, adjectival and verbal environments; 3 points for perfect grammaticality, 0 points for absolute ungrammaticality. Full ‘basicality’ score is: 3 points * 7 consultants * 16 criteria = 336 points)

黑	白	紅	黃	藍	**綠**	灰	紫
haak1	*baak6*	*hung4*	*wong4*	*laam4*	***luk6***	*fui1*	*zi2*
‘black’	‘white’	‘red’	‘yellow’	‘blue’	**‘green’**	‘grey’	‘purple’
236	236	236	224	221	**220**	197	185
青	橙	啡		(粉)	(赤)	(棕)	(烏)
ceng1	*caang2*	*fe1*		*(fan2)*	*(cek3)*	*(zung1)*	*(wu1)*
‘lt. green’	‘orange’	‘brown’		(‘pastel’)	(‘red’)	(‘brown’)	(‘black’)
182	175	164		(103)	(52)	(48)	(19)

Berlin & Kay 1969

		黑	灰	白
		haak1	fui1	baak6
紅	黃	青	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	**ceng1**	laam4	**zi2**

Caskey-Sirmons & Hickerson 1977:

		黑	灰	白
		haak1	fui1	baak6
紅	黃	綠	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	**luk6**	laam4	**zi2**

Endō 2000

啡		青	黑	灰	白
fe1		**ceng1**	haak1	fui1	baak6
紅	橙	黃	綠	藍	紫
hung4	caang2	wong4	**luk6**	laam4	zi2

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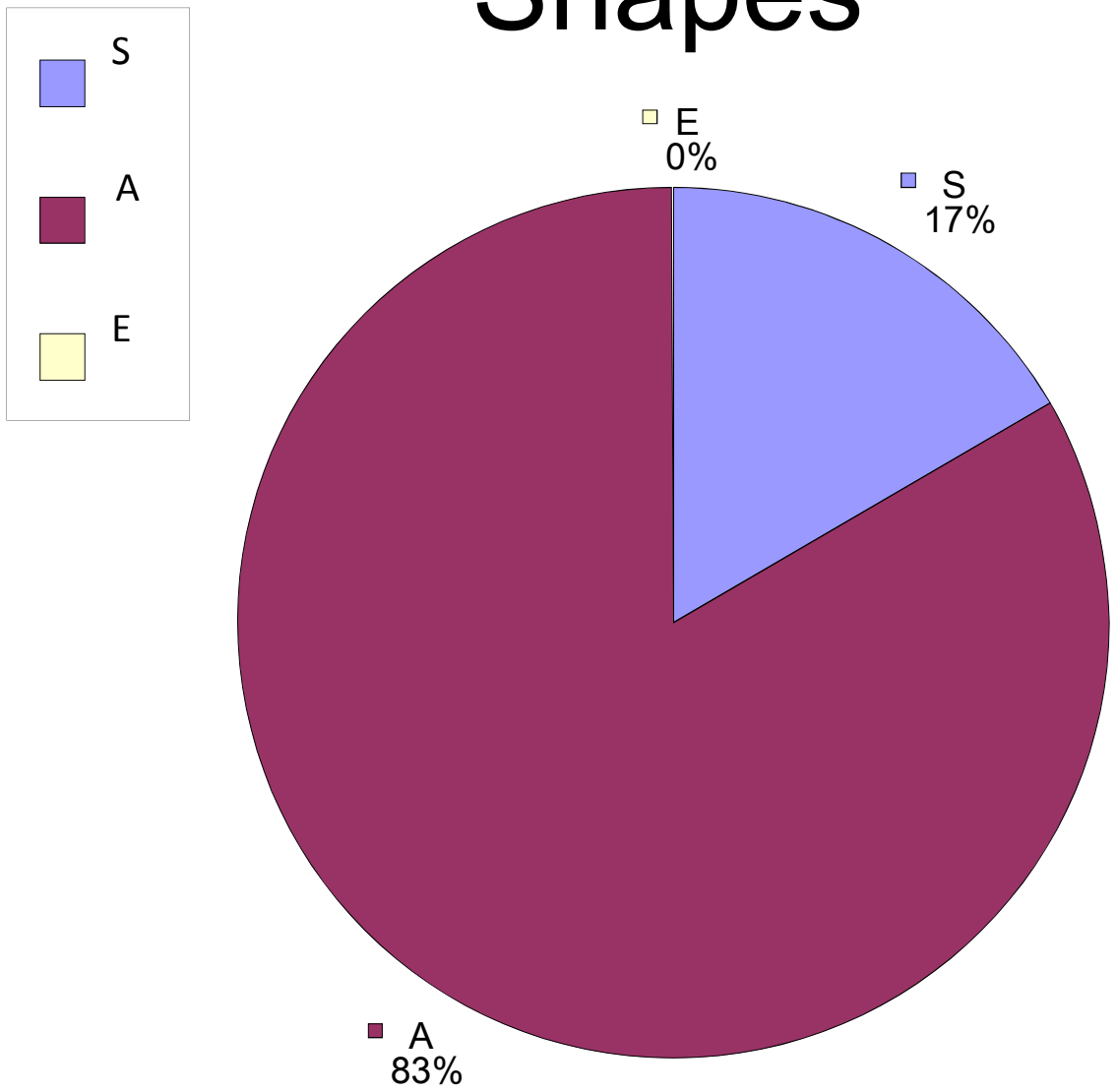
my data:

啡	(肉)	(青)	黑	灰	白
fe1	**(juk6)**	**(ceng1)**	haak1	fui1	baak6
紅	橙	黃	綠	藍	紫
hung4	caang2	wong4	**luk6**	laam4	zi2

Shapes



Shapes

- Older speakers tend to use descriptions which are not specifically 3D to describe 3D shapes;
- Younger speakers tend to use descriptions which are specifically 3D to describe 3D shapes

	Older speakers (>50)				Younger speakers (<40)			
	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº
sphere /2 spheres	圓 jyun4 J	3			圓 jyun4 J	2		
			太陽 taai3joeng4 J	1				
			球 kau4 J	2			球 kau4 (J/T)	16
							波 bo1 (J)	5
			圓球 jyun4 kau4 J	1			圓球 jyun4 kau4 (T)	4
elipsoid							蛋 daan2 (J)	5
			雞蛋 gai1 daan2 J	1			雞蛋 gai1 daan2 J	1
			鵝蛋 ngo4 daan2	1				
			欖 laam2 J	1			欖(球) laam2 (kau4) J	2
							水點 seoi2 dim1	1
							橢圓 to5 jyun4 T	2
cone /3 cones			漏斗 lau6dau2 (J)	1				
			錐 zeoi1 J	1				
			錐 ceoi2	1				
			圓錐 jyun4 zeoi1 J	2			圓錐 jyun4 zeoi1 (J/T)	13
							cone (shape)	2
							三角錐 saam1gok3 zeoi1	2
							雪糕桶 syut3gou1 tung2	1

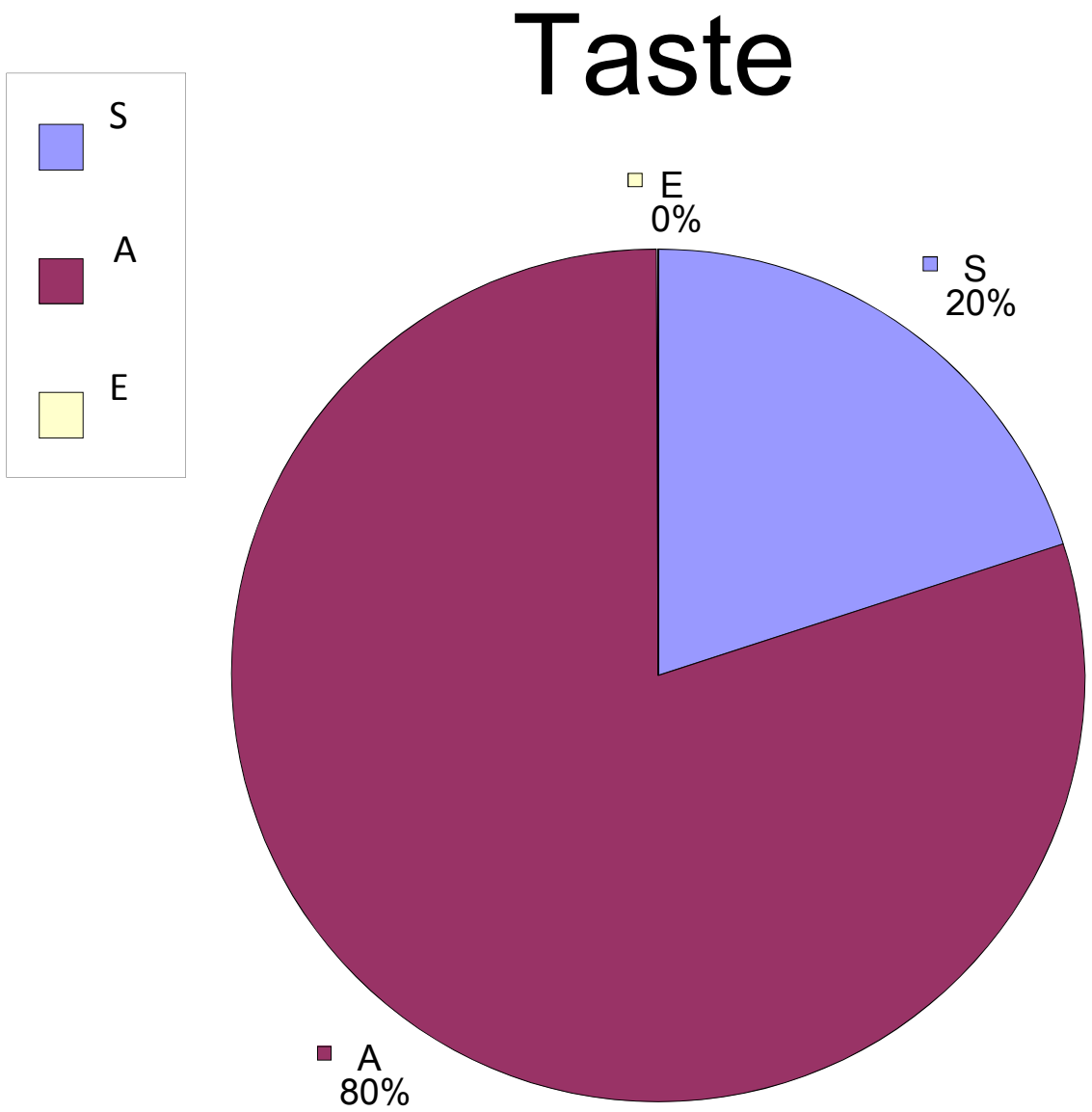
	Older speakers (>50)				Younger speakers (<40)			
	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº
cylinder	圓 jyun4 J	1						
			圓桶 jyun4 tung1 J	1				
			圓柱 jyun4 cyu5 T	1			圓柱 jyun4 cyu5 T	9
cube	四方 sei3 fong1 (J)	3						
/2 cubes	方 fong1	1						
	正方 zing3 fong1 J	1	正方					
			LT zing3 fong1 J	1				
							正方 zing3 fong1 T	13
							立方 laap6 fong1 T	3
							方 fong1 T	2
(rec.) cuboid	四方 sei3 fong1 J	1						
	長方 coeng4 fong1 J	2						
							長方 coeng4 fong1 T	8
							磚 zyun1 J	1

J=	*形 jing4*	*'shape' (2D/3D)*
T=	*體 tai2*	*'body' (3D)*
LT=	*立體 laap6 tai2*	*'3D'*

	Olders speakers (>50)				Younger speakers (<40)			
	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº
sphere	round J	3			round J	2		
/2 spheres			sun J	1				
			sphere J	2			sphere (J/T)	16
							ball (J)	5
			round sphere J	1			round sphere (T)	4
elipsoid							egg (J)	5
			fowl egg J	1			fowl egg J	1
			goose egg	1				
			olive J	1			olive (sphere) J	2
							water droplet	1
							oval sphere T	2
cone			funnel (J)	1				
/3 cones			cone J	1				
			cone	1				
			round cone J	2			round cone (J/T)	13
							“cone (shape)”	2
							triangle cone	2
							ice cream cone	1

	Olders speakers (>50)				Younger speakers (<40)			
	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº	non-spec	nº	spec 3D	nº
cylinder	round J	1						
			round bucket J	1				
			round prism T	1			round prism T	9
cube	four quad (J)	3						
/2 cubes	quad	1						
	perfect quad J	1						
			LT perf. quad J	1				
							perfect quad T	13
							3D quad T	3
							quad T	2
(rec.) cuboid	four quad J	1						
	long quad J	2						
							long quad T	8
							brick J	1

J=	*形 jing4*	*'shape' (2D/3D)*
T=	*體 tai2*	*'body' (3D)*
LT=	*立體 laap6 tai2*	*'3D'*


Taste
S
A
E
E
0%
S
20%
A
80%

Taste

味 *mei6* ‘taste/ smell’

- sweet 甜 *tim4*
- sour 酸 *syun1*
- bitter 苦 *fu2*
- salty 鹹 *haam4*
- umami 味精 *mei6zing1* ‘MSG’
  鹹鹹哋 *haam4haam2 dei2* ‘kind of salty’

only the two oldest speakers knew the term for umami: 鮮 *sin1*

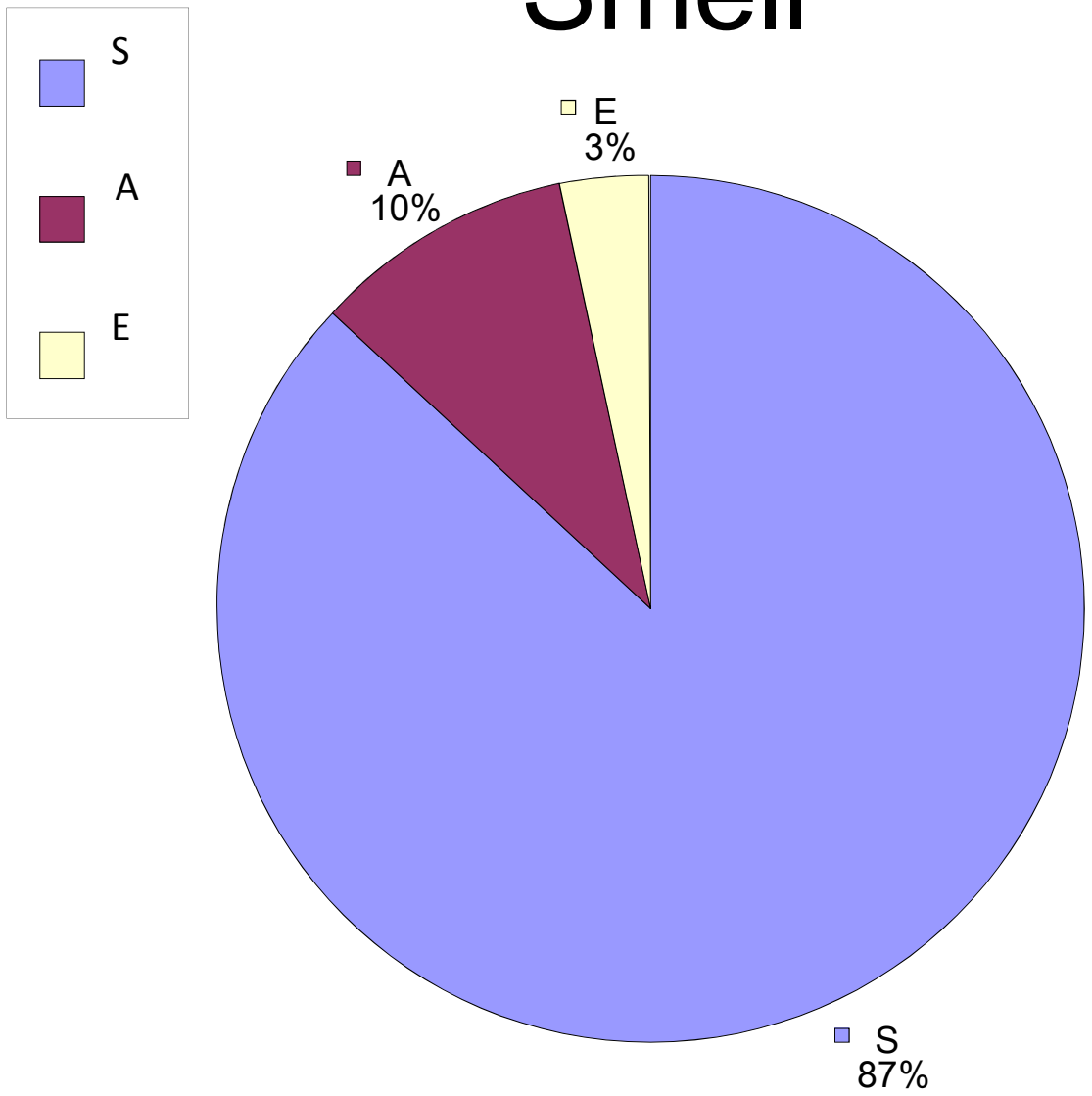
Taste + some other oral sensations

(free naming task)

甜	*tim4*	‘sweet’
酸	*syun1*	‘sour’
苦	*fu2*	‘bitter’
鹹	*haam4*	‘salty’
鮮	*sin1*	‘umami’
辣	*laat6*	‘spicy hot’
甘	*gam1*	‘sweet + aftertaste’
澀	*gip3*	‘tanniny’
麻	*maa4*	‘numbingly spicy hot’
淡	*taam5*	‘weak taste/ tasteless’
攻鼻	*gung1bei6*	lit. “nose attacking”
涼	*loeng4*	‘minty’/ “cool”
?	*hong2*	‘dry and itchy’

can be suffixed with
味 mei6 *‘taste’*

Smell



Smell

(free naming task)

香	*hoeng1*	fragrant
臭	*cau3*	stinky
清	*cing1*	“fresh”
俗/濁	*zuk6*	overwhelming fragrance → unpleasant
臊	*sou1*	mutton, dairy, baby, baby milk vomit, “gamey”
腥	*seng1*	blood, unfresh seafood, grass, bean sprout not well-cooked
?	*no3*	s.t. overheating (but usually not on fire)
?	*jyun1*	extreme stink: e.g. strong fart, salted fish, corpse, smell of athlete's foot, rotten food
?	*suk1*	sweat, mould, tofu gone off
?	*(ng)aat3*	urine, ammonia
?	*jik1*	stale/oxidised: peanut, seeds, oil, persevered meat
?	*hong2*	mouldy smell: peanut, seeds, uncooked rice

the extent of knowledge on olfaction adjectives for most younger speakers

Conclusion

In Hong Kong/ Macau:

Younger speakers have:

- finer categorisation in the distal senses; and
- poorer knowledge in the traditional categorisation of the proximal senses

than older speakers.

Possible cause:

Rapid development in Hong Kong and Macau, accompanied by:

- rapid increase in literacy; and
- internationalisation (i.e. westernisation) of the education system.

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