

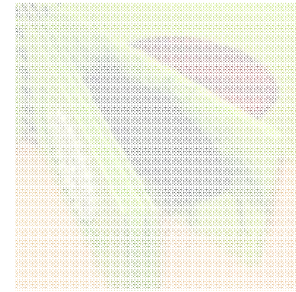
# **The changes in the language of perception in Cantonese**

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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:

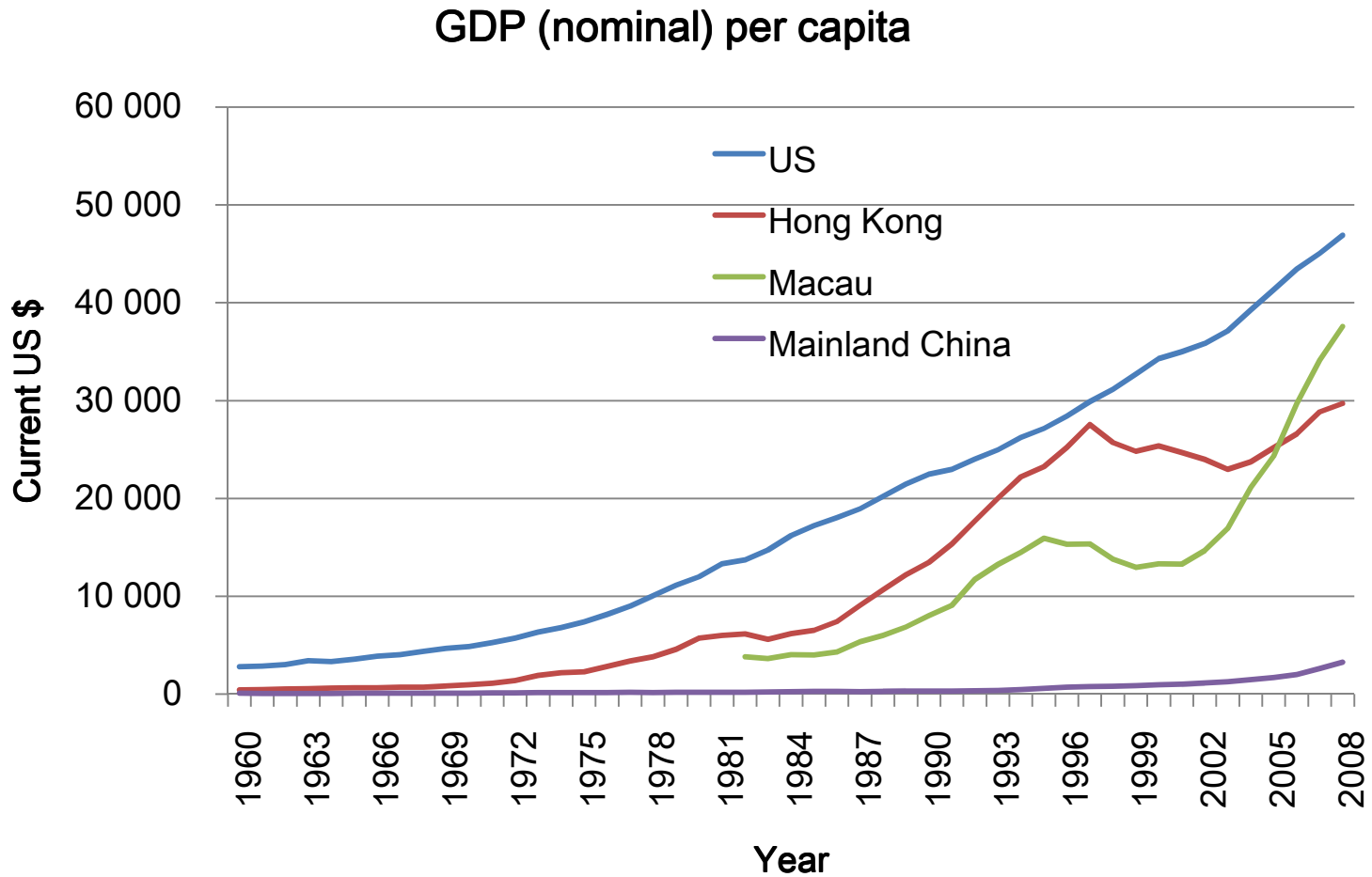
Rapid development in Hong Kong and Macau, which caused:

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

## Westernisation of the education system:

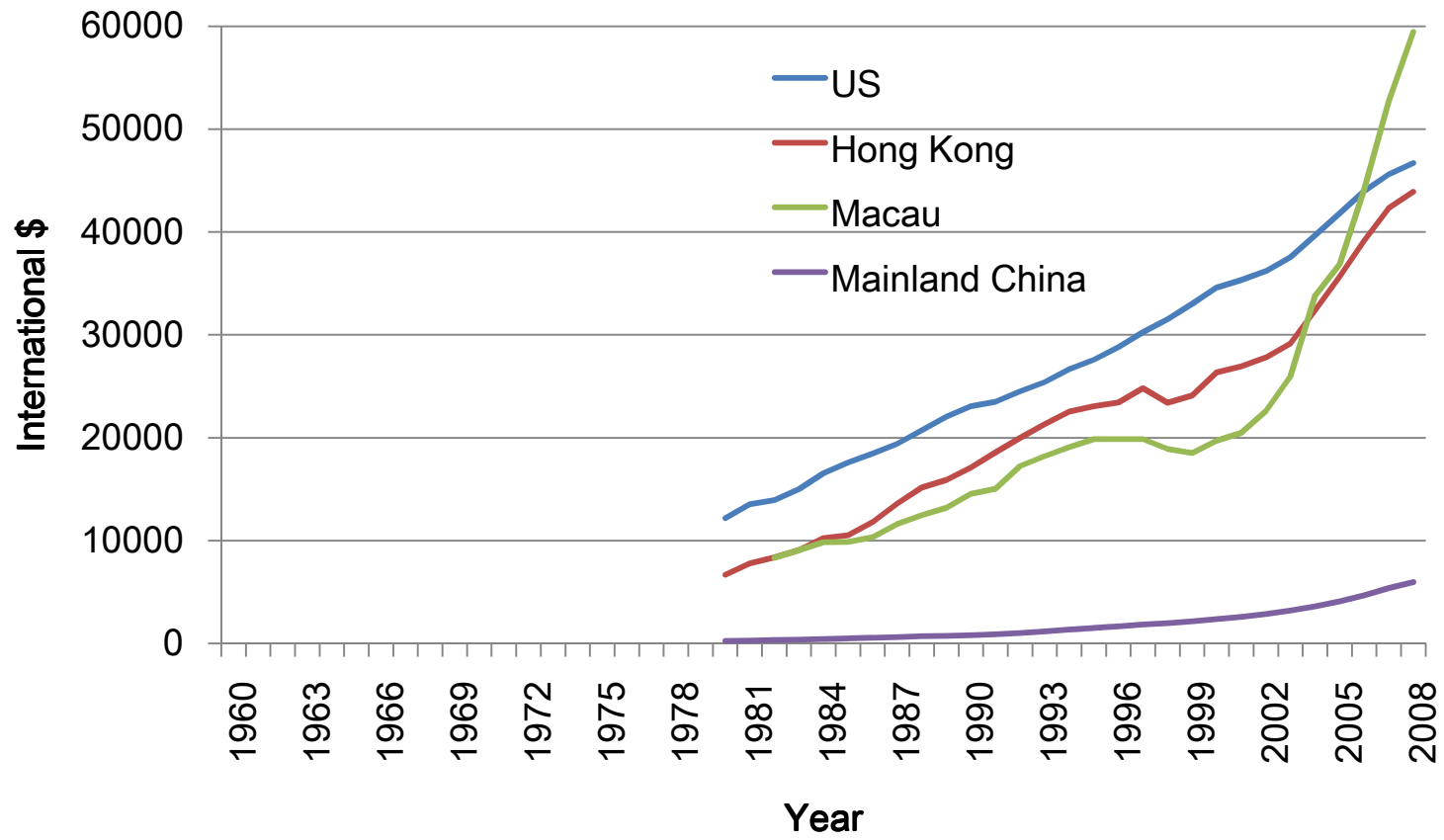
- increased the emphasis on the categorisation of the distal senses (e.g. colouring activities, tuitions in western music); and
- general decrease of interest in traditional culture and knowledge, including the traditional finer categorisation of the proximal senses.

Hong Kong and Macau have rapidly lifted themselves from 'developing' status since 1970s...



Sources:  
data.un.org  
earthtrends.wri.org

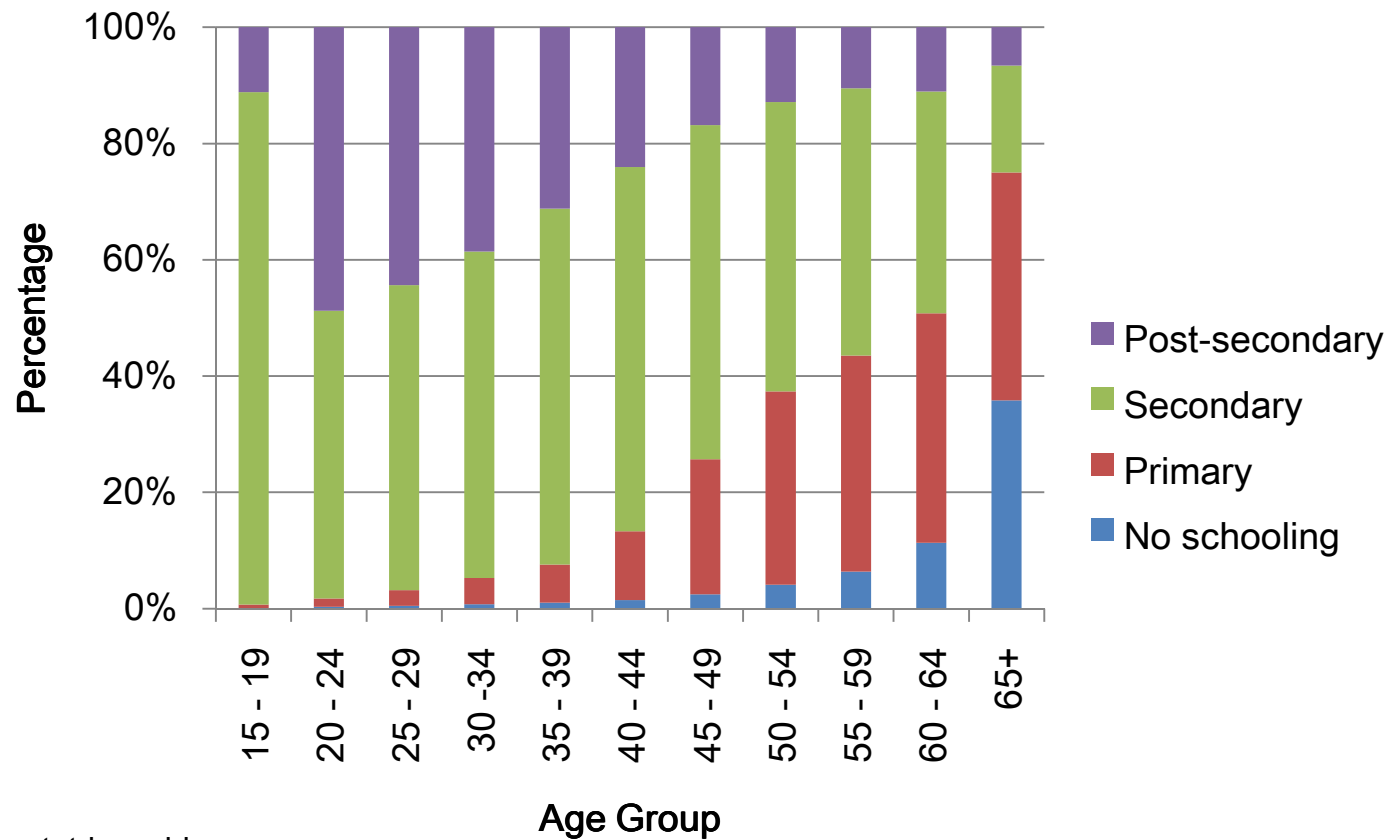
### GDP (PPP) per capita



Sources:  
data.un.org  
earthtrends.wri.org

and the level of educational attainment has also vastly improved.

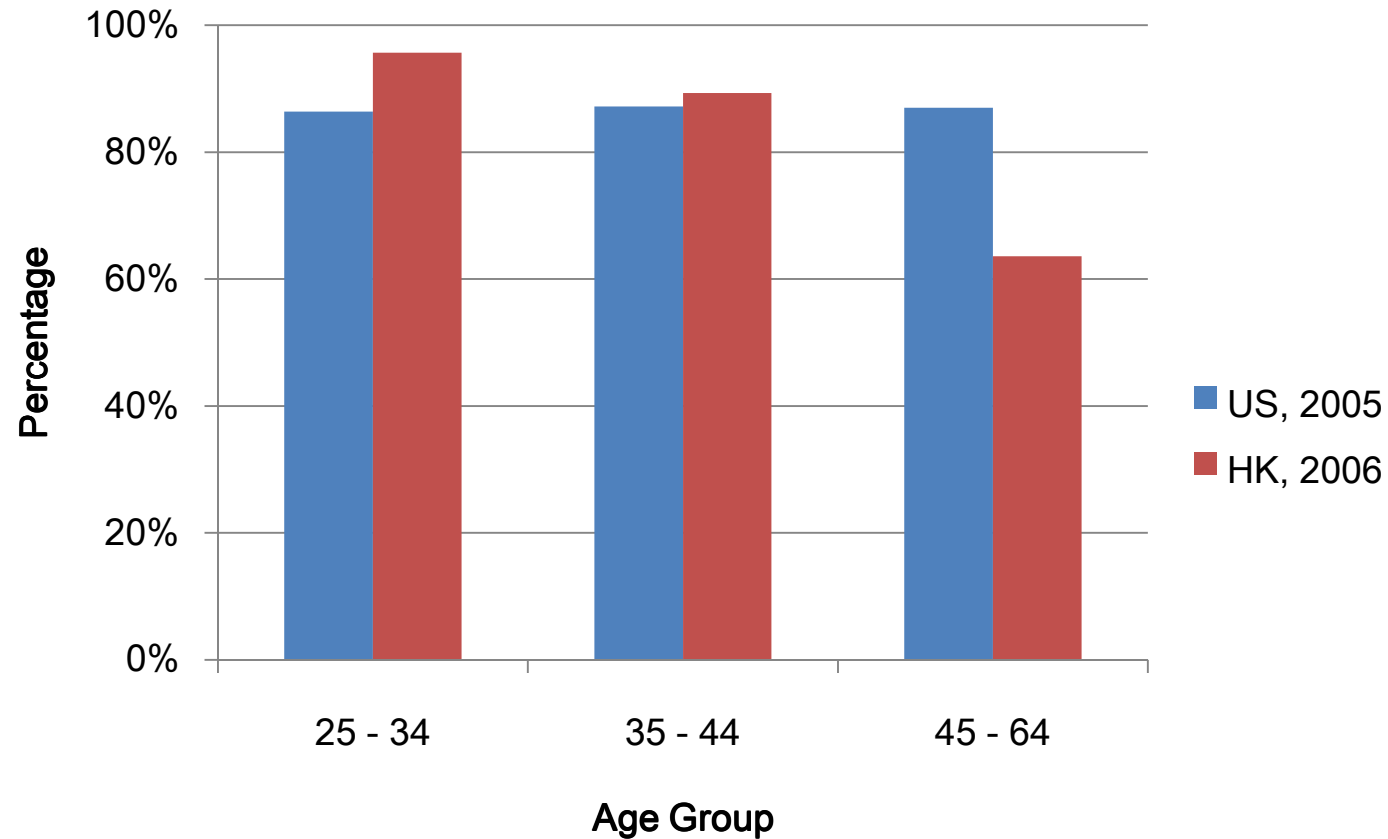
Highest Level of Educational Attainment in Hong Kong,  
2006



Source:  
[www.censtatd.gov.hk](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk)



## Percent of Adults with a High School Credential or Higher by Age Group



Sources:

[www.censtatd.gov.hk](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk)

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

[www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org)



(Wurm et al.1987)

Cantonese/ Yuè 粵





# Cantonese

Experiments in Hong Kong & Macau  
(July 2008)



(en.wikipedia.org)



# Hong Kong & Macau

- Mostly urban dwellers:

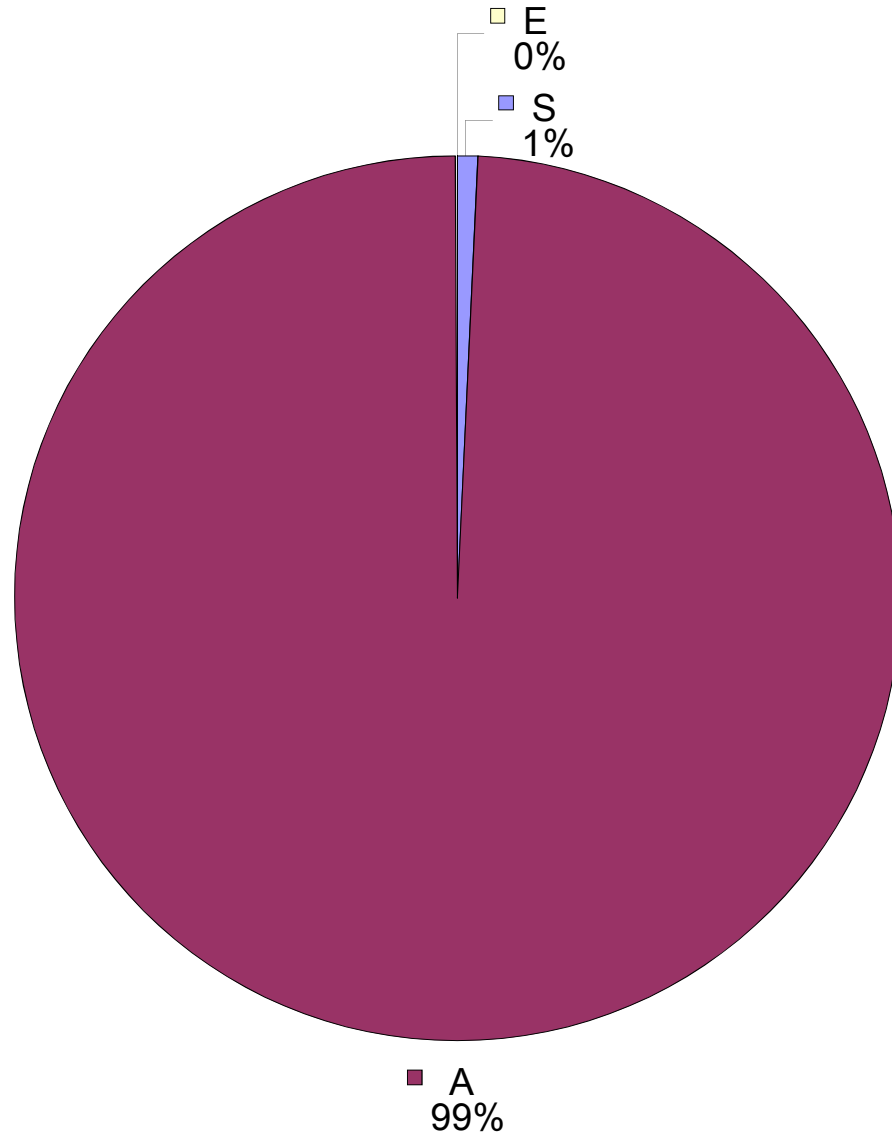
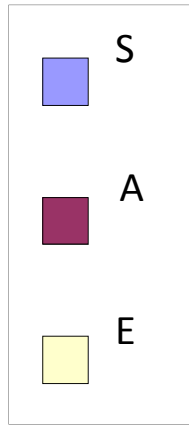


# Consultants

part. ID	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>f</i>
age $\approx$	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



# 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

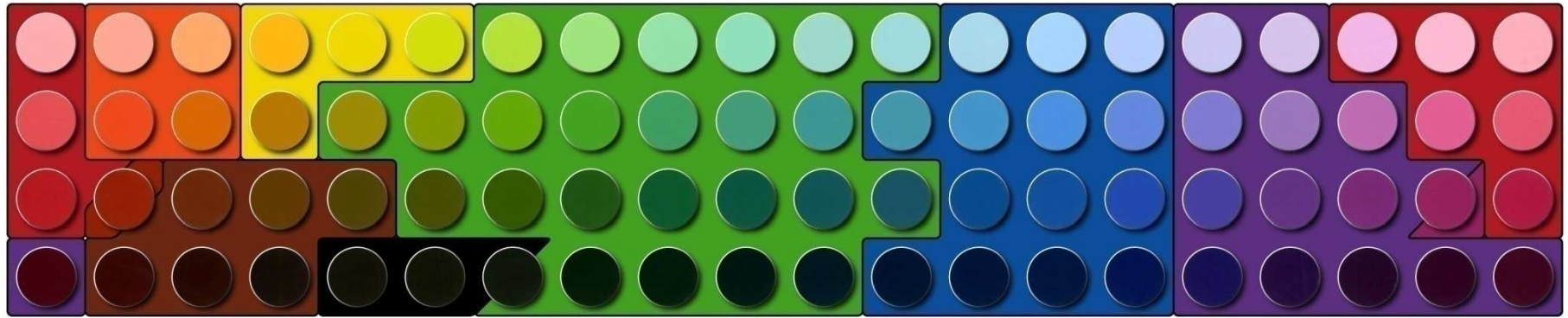


紫

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)

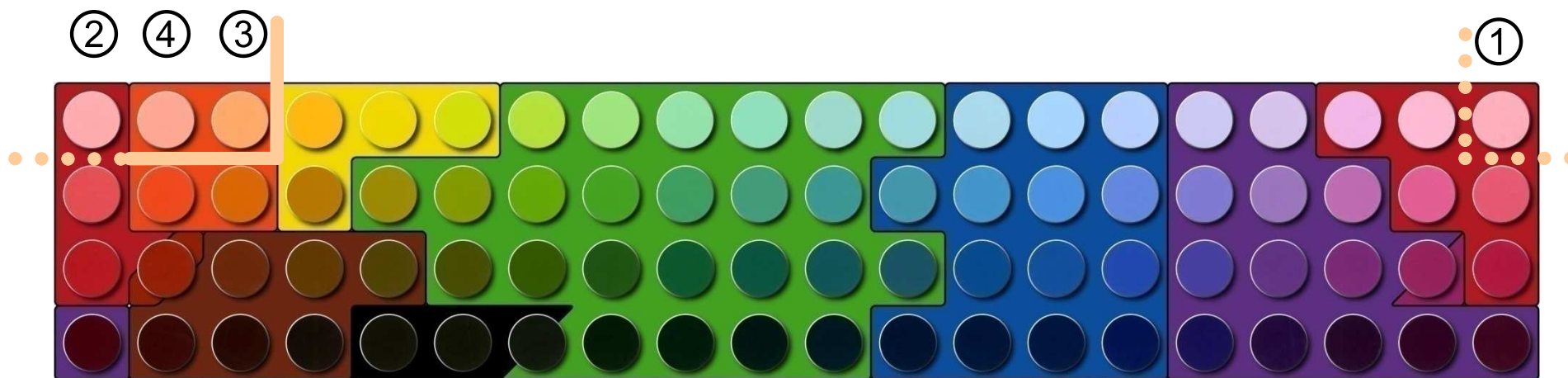
(juk6)

participant ID

age ≈

gender

<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>f</i>
30	30	25	20
M	M	F	F



④=10R 8/6



(青)

(ceng1)

participant ID

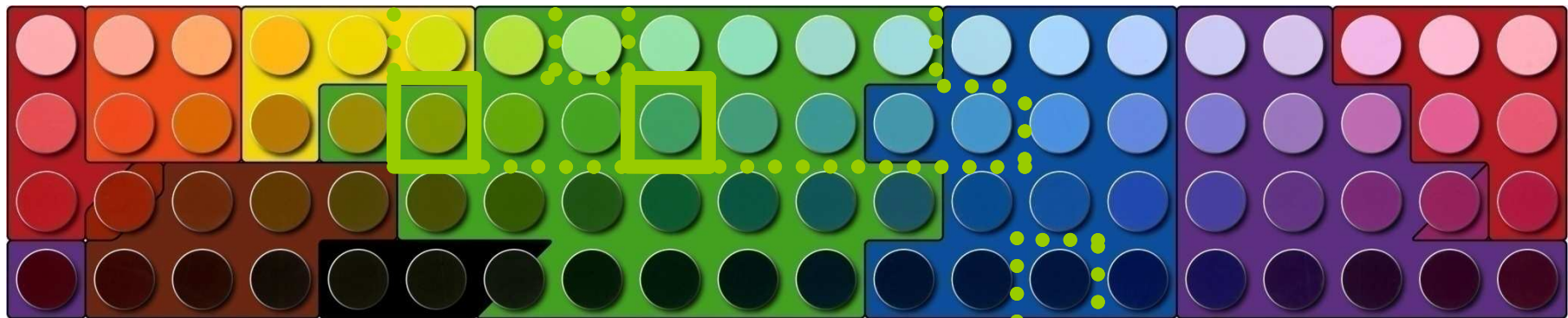
<i>e</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>f</i>
35	30	30	25	20
F	M	M	F	F

age ≈

gender

③






②



③=10Y 6/10






②=5G 6/10

# Berlin & Kay 1969

				
紅	黃	青	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	<u>ceng1</u>	laam4	zi2



---

# Caskey-Sirmons & Hickerson 1977:



				
紅	黃	綠	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	<u>luk6</u>	laam4	zi2

## Endō 2000 — HK Cantonese :

part. ID	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>(G)</i>
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 ‘basicity’

(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 ‘basicity’ score is: 3 points \* 7 consultants \* 16 criteria = 336 points)

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








# Berlin & Kay 1969

				
紅	黃	青	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	<u>ceng1</u>	laam4	zi2

---

# Caskey-Sirmons & Hickerson 1977:

				
紅	黃	綠	藍	紫
hung4	wong4	<u>luk6</u>	laam4	zi2

# Endō 2000



啡

fe1



青

**ceng1**



黑

haak1



灰

fui1

白

baak6



紅

hung4



橙

caang2



黃

wong4



綠

**luk6**



藍

laam4



紫

zi2

---

## my data:



啡

fe1



(肉)

**(juk6)**



(青)

**(ceng1)**



黑

haak1



灰

fui1

白

baak6



紅

hung4



橙

caang2



黃

wong4



綠

**luk6**



藍

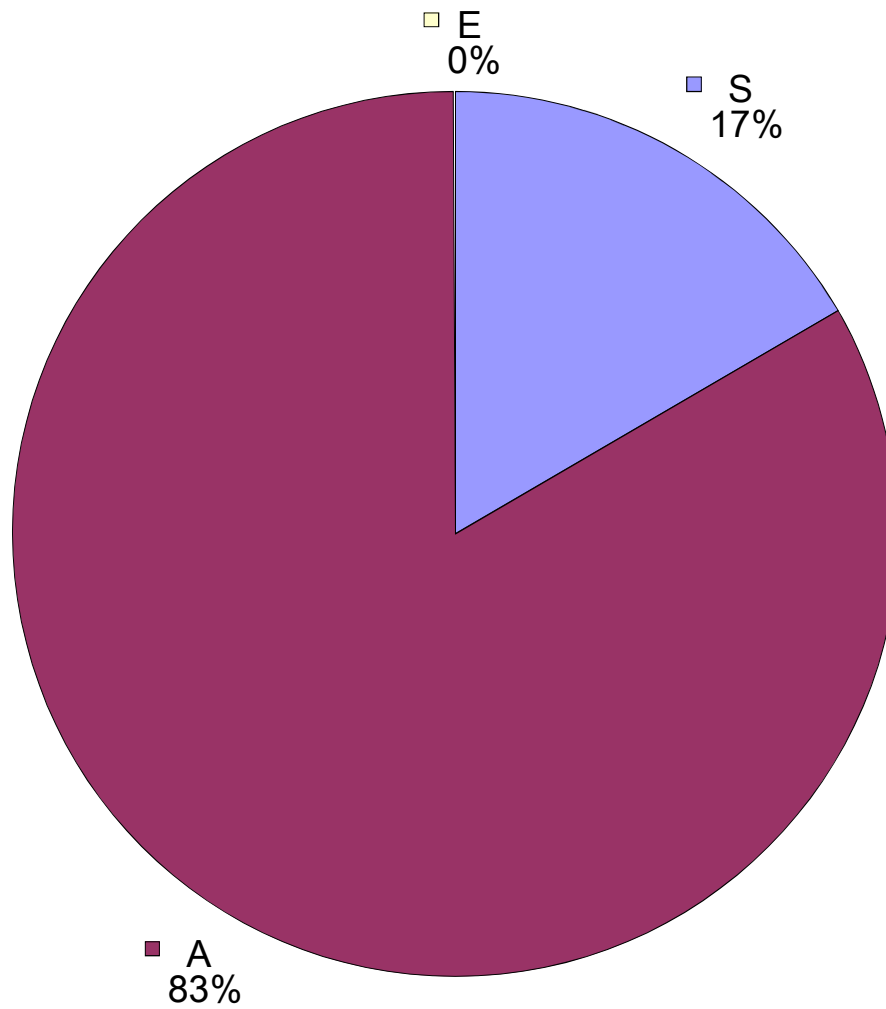
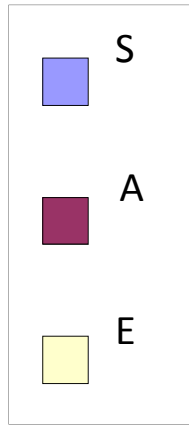
laam4



紫

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	n°	spec 3D	n°	non-spec	n°	spec 3D	n°
sphere	圓	jyun4 J	3		圓	jyun4 J	2	
/2 spheres				太陽	taai3joeng4 J	1		
				球	kau4 J	2	球	kau4 (J/T) 16
				圓球	jyun4 kau4 J	1	波	bo1 (J) 5
							圓球	jyun4 kau4 (T) 4
elipsoid				雞蛋	gai1 daan2 J	1	蛋	daan2 (J) 5
				鵝蛋	ngo4 daan2	1	雞蛋	gai1 daan2 J 1
				欖	laam2 J	1	欖(球)	laam2 (kau4) J 2
							水點	seoi2 dim1 1
							橢圓	to5 jyun4 T 2
cone				漏斗	lau6dau2 (J)	1		
/3 cones				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	n°	spec 3D	n°	non-spec	n°	spec 3D	n°
cylinder	圓 jyun4 J	1						
			圓桶 jyun4 tung1 J	1				
			圓柱 jyun4 cyu5 T	1			圓柱 jyun4 cyu5 T	9
cube /2 cubes	四方 sei3 fong1 (J)	3						
	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	

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

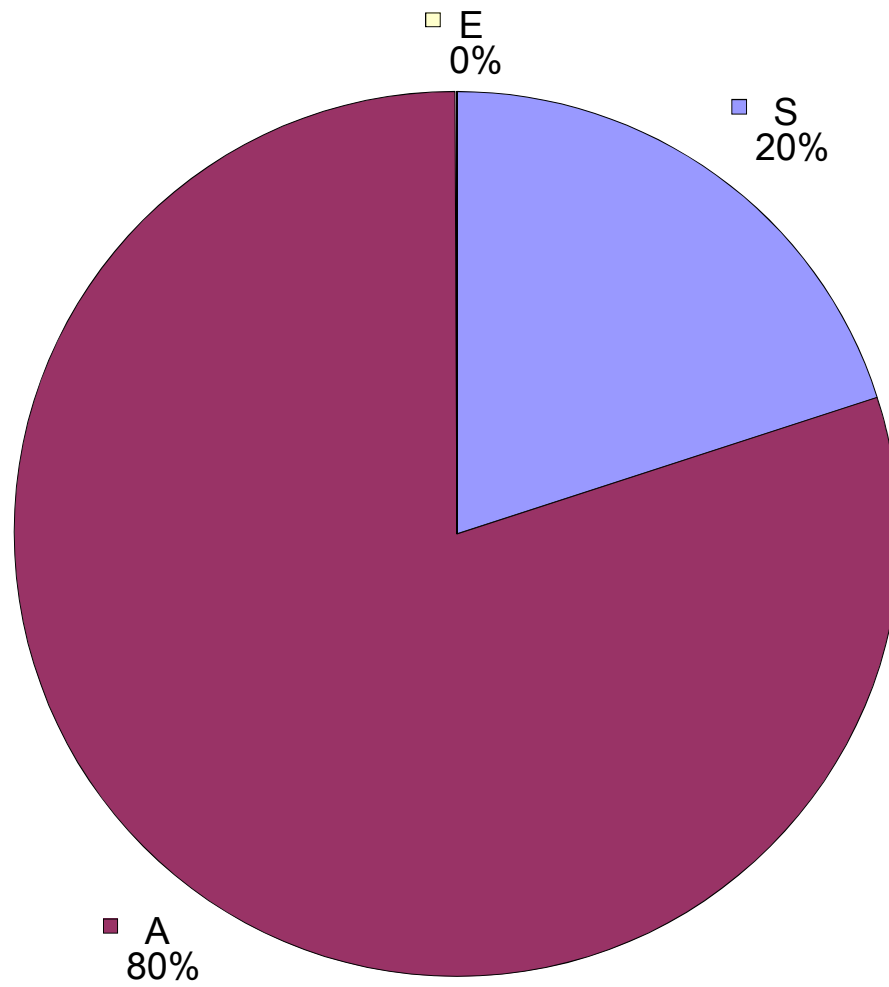
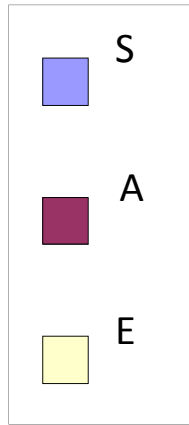
	Olders speakers (>50)				Younger speakers (<40)			
	non-spec	n°	spec 3D	n°	non-spec	n°	spec 3D	n°
sphere	round J	3			round J	2		
/2 spheres			sun J	1			sphere (J/T)	16
			sphere J	2			ball (J)	5
			round sphere J	1			round sphere (T)	4
elipsoid							egg (J)	5
			fowl egg J	1			fowl egg J	1
			goose 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	n°	spec 3D	n°	non-spec	n°	spec 3D	n°
cylinder	round J	1						
			round bucket J	1				
			round prism T	1			round prism T	9
cube /2 cubes	four quad (J)	3						
	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



# Taste

味 *mei6* 'taste/ smell'

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

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

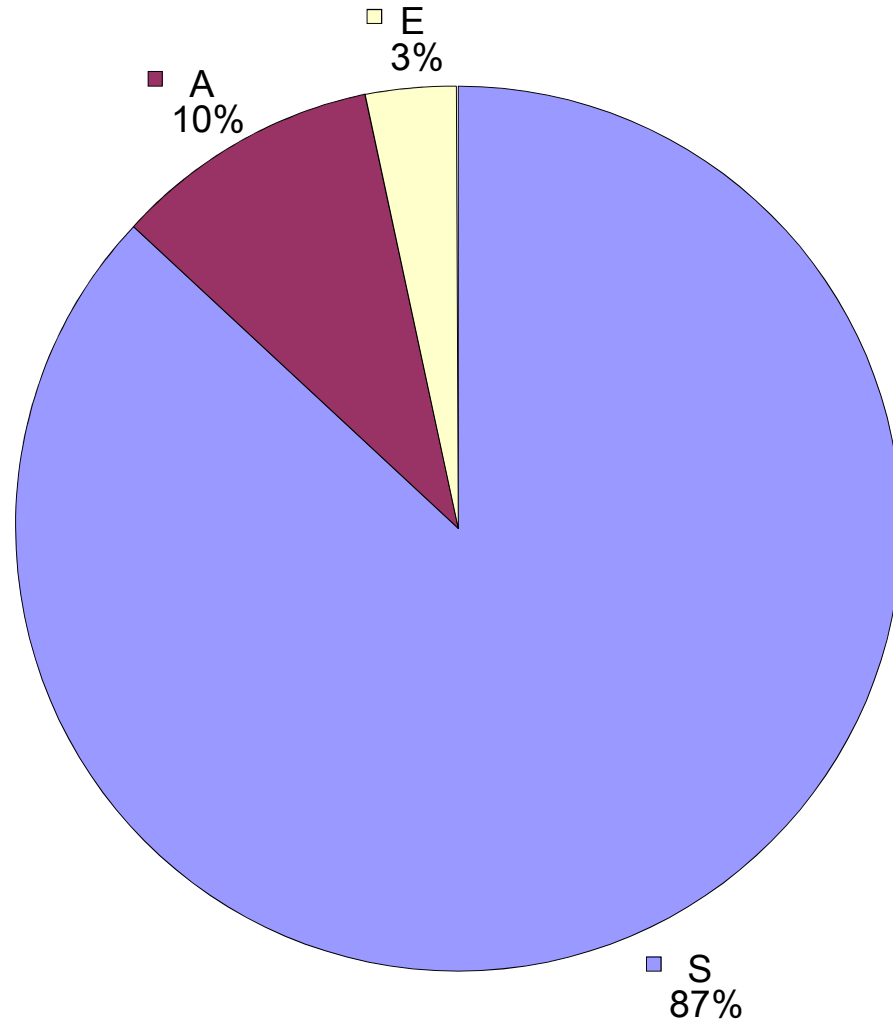
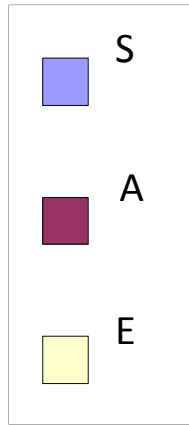
# Taste + some other oral sensations

(free naming task)

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

*can be suffixed with*  
味 *mei6* 'taste'

# Smell



# Smell

(free naming task)

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

# 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.

## Bibliography

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