

# An Introduction to *An English-Chinese Dictionary* and *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary*—Views on the Language and Society in Canton Area From Two Unpublished Official Collative Dictionaries Compiled in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century\*

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*An English-Chinese Dictionary* (英咭喇國譯語, Ying Ji Li Guo Yi Yü) and *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* (播嘢都噶禮雅話, Bo Lü Duo Ga Li Ya Hua) are reckoned as the collative dictionaries compiled by the Office of Interpreters and Translators (會同四譯館, Hui Tong Si Yi Guan) in Qianlong time (1748), Qing dynasty. There is only one original manuscript of these books gathered and preserved by the Palace Museum. In the present paper, we intent to introduce the significant value and detailed information of these two official collative dictionaries from social background, process of compilation, and stylistic basis of the book. Meanwhile, we will primarily work out the phonetic principles between Canton dialect and foreign languages also indicate the dialect characteristics after clarifying the faults and errors. The present paper may supply with a rudimentary knowing and resource to the realm of “Canton English” and “Canton Portuguese”, even to the social status and Chinese dialect in Canton area for certain period. Detailed and specific research, especially for *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary*, still lies for future discovery.

**Keywords:** Hua Yi Yu Yü, Canton English, Canton dialect, Canton Portuguese

## Introduction

*An English-Chinese Dictionary* (英咭喇國譯語, Ying Ji Li Guo Yi Yü) and *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* (播嘢都噶禮雅話, Bo Lü Duo Ga Li Ya Hua) that we talked about in the present paper belong to the series of “Hua Yi Yi Yü” (華夷譯語, bilingual dictionary between Mandarin and non-Mandarin languages) compiled by the Office of Interpreters and Translators (會同四譯館, Hui Tong Si Yi Guan), which established by the imperial government in the year 1748, Qing dynasty. There is only one original manuscript of these two dictionaries gathered and preserved by the Palace Museum and one copied version preserved in the National Library of China. The detailed content, however, remains unfamiliar to the public. The exact year of completion is unknown, however, according to the edict issued by Emperor Qian Long in the year 1748 and 1749, has confirmed that the work of compiling this series of collative dictionary was an official act and the completion

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is unknown, however, according to the edict issued by Emperor Qian Long in the year 1748 and 1749, has confirmed that the work of compiling this series of collative dictionary was an official act and the completion should during the period from 1747 to 1761 (Huang, 2010, p. 152). These two dictionaries discussed in the present paper are transcribed page by page from the copied version preserved in the National Library.

According to existing record, these two materials are likely to be the earliest official English-Chinese and Portuguese-Chinese dictionary. The compiling process and the content of these two dictionaries are closely related to the bilingual society of Canton area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the aspect of society, language and dialect. The aim of the present paper are, on the one hand, to give a brief introduction of the social background, compiling process and style for both dictionaries, on the other hand, to make a detailed analysis of the English-Chinese phonological transcription, covering the transcription error, basic phonetic principles, and the Chinese dialect situation etc.

### **Social Background of Compilation**

As far back as the year 1407 Ming dynasty, the imperial government established an Office of Translators (四夷館, Si Yi Guan) for the liaison and exchanging between mandarin Chinese region and non-mandarin Chinese regions and countries, which could be somehow recognized as the Protocol Apartment of Foreign Affairs today. To cultivate skilled bilingual translators and to give a daily translation manual reference between nations, the Office of Translators was ordered by the emperor to translate and compile bilingual dictionaries and materials between Chinese and other languages, including minority languages and foreign languages. These dictionaries are all called “Hua Yi Yi Yü”, each one named after the specific minority or foreign language.

In the year 1748, Qing dynasty, Emperor Qian Long issued an order to compile a series of “Hua Yi Yi Yü” between Mandarin Chinese and European languages following the same style of early collections. These Europeans languages are namely English, French, Portuguese, Germany, Italian, and Latin. This imperial act was decided by the social background in that period, also a direct reflection of the entering and spreading of European religion, economy, and culture. All these influences and phenomenon, especially brought by Britain and Portugal from 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century through the southern coastal area of China, were condensed and centered on Canton area.

Since the first passel of Portuguese landed on Macao in the year 1553, Ming dynasty, they, in order to lead a life and to do business, started to communicate with local people. For both Chinese and Portuguese people, the essential requirement was to find a language that both of them could understand. This need finally mingled Portuguese and Chinese into a mixed pidgin language for business at first, while later came to the named as Macanese or Macau Creole as the born of the second generation.

The character of the dialect spoken there, moreover, among servants and shop-men, is that of a medley of Portuguese and Chinese; and the idioms and pronunciations of it are so corrupted from pure Portuguese, that those speaking it are nearly unintelligible to one newly arrived from Lisbon. (Williams, 1836, p. 431)

Affected by the policy of imperial government in Ming and Qing dynasties, southern coastal city like Canton had became one of the limited trading junctions in China. This situation, in certain way, helped Portugal to take the dominant position in trading with China by sea, which did not change until the rise of Britain, who supplanted the place of Portugal in China’s trading from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. To the language, 200 years after the

entrance of Portugal, there had emerged a new Sino-Anglo hybrid language in Canton. It was quoted in H. B. Morse:

Merchants in Canton were already using pidgin English by about 1715, and by the 1730s, pidgin English appears to have gained a solid footing among both merchants and linguists, and was probably the common medium of the compradors and factory servants as well. (Morse, 1926, p. 67; also see Van Dyke, 2005, p. 81)

The Portuguese people lost the superior dominance in Canton area, and Portuguese language no longer served as a common language for business, however, the influence brought about by Portuguese and its language maintained in the society and dialects in Canton area. One of the proofs was that an amount of Portuguese words had left and mixed into “Canton English” in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1834, Williams wrote a letter to his father and noted:

I have two Portuguese and three Chinese in the office, and but two of the five speak English. When I first went in I had to talk mostly by signs, but soon got a smattering of both languages, and was fain to use sentences made up in part of Portuguese, Chinese and Canton-English this last being a mixture of all three. Truly I have often smiled after I’ve been talking largely, to think of the *Babel-lingo* I was uttering. (Williams, 1889, p. 68)

As the common “foreign” language in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the user of “Canton English” mainly related to foreign trade and services, including imperial authorized hong (行),<sup>1</sup> semi-official comprador and linguist, as well as those landlords, servants working in the mixed environment. Besides, foreigners, in the interest of better communication, always substituted “Canton English” for standard mother language, which made them constitute another part of the users of “Canton English”. With the deepening of foreign trade, the range of “Canton English” had been escalated.

To be highlighted, due to the closed economy proposed by Qing government, Canton was the only foreign trade port left in Canton region from 1757 to 1842, therefore, the Chinese language that learned by foreigners who went to inland China through Canton was Canton dialect. Except for this, officers from Peking, while negotiating with foreigners who came from Canton, got in touch with Canton dialect as well, which made this dialect a reversed spreading to inland China. During that period, Canton dialect started to spread globally by way of the immigration of Cantonese People to America, Australia, and Southeast Asia.

Promoted by these social backgrounds, Emperor Qian Long issued two orders in 1748 and 1749 to compile collative dictionaries of Chinese and European languages following the same style of “Hua Yi Yi Yü”. *An English-Chinese Dictionary* (英咭喇國譯語, Ying Ji Li Guo Yi Yü) and *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* (播呼都噶禮雅話, Bo Lü Duo Ga Li Ya Hua) included. The Chinese transcription in the title of the former one transcribed from Portuguese word *Inglaterra* (correspondent with “England” in English) and the later one represented Latin word *Portugallia* (correspondent with “Portugal” in English), the reason of causing which was discussed in our recent research (to be published).

### Basic Stylistic Rules and Layout of Compiling

As mentioned above, the imperial government of Ming and Qing dynasties established the Office of Translators to compile collative dictionaries between Chinese language and non-Chinese languages, which have already been acknowledged by the academic circles. The first report on these Chinese-six European languages’ dictionaries preserved in the Palace Museum, however, did not appear until the year 1943. In this

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<sup>1</sup> 行 (hang), factory working with the trade with foreign countries in Canton (Guangzhou).

report, written by Walter Fuchs and published on the *Bulletin of the Catholic University*, all the translation works kept in the Palace Museum were mentioned. Furthermore, it pointed out the current preserving status of *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, being judged as the most extraordinary work compared with the same class of books. In the year 1968, Ishida Mikinosuke also worked out a paper indicating that those translation works preserved in the Palace Museum, including *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, are not the same as those known by the academic circles. In the year 1981, Feng Zheng, published an article, “Hua Yi Yi Yü Diao cha Ji” ( “華夷譯語” 調查記, An Investigation Report on the “Hua Yi Yi Yü”), in which, Feng introduced the system and classification which enlightened the present research a lot.

Throughout the research of “Hua Yi Yi Yü”, it could be confirmed that, as the official compiled dictionary, the stylistic rules and layouts were highly congruent, while *An English-Chinese Dictionary* varies to the rest in the following aspects.

First, *An English-Chinese Dictionary* does not bear the heading “Xi Yang Guan” (西洋館) and differs widely from the other European collections. It consists of only two volumes the English of which is written by a man, apparently a Chinese, who had not mastered the language and who made frequent mistakes (detailed analysis in following section).

Second, for each “Hua Yi Yi Yü” compiled in Emperor Qian Long period, including European series and Tibetan series, was classified into twenty distinctive sections, namely, the astronomy section, the times section, the human section, the organ section, the palace section, the geography section, the container section, the food section, the clothes section, the color section, the manuscript section, the history section, the direction section, the plant section, the animal section, the treasure section, the spicery section, the number section, the life section, and the general use section respectively. The difference lies in the name of the palace section that *An English-Chinese Dictionary* follows the Tibetan series as “Gong Shi Men” (宮室門), while the other European dictionaries called “Gong Dian Men” (宮殿門).

Third, entries contained in the dictionary varied by different series. *An English-Chinese Dictionary* contains 734 words, apart from a few exceptions, tally with the nine Tibetan dialect-vocabularies in ‘Hua Yi Yi Yü’. Specimens: 僧人 (seng ren) as “Bonze”, 回回 (hui hui) as “Moguls Country”, 都綱 (du gang) as “Provider”, 好生 (hao sheng) as “Bon viver”, while the other five European dictionaries contain 2070 entries plus-minus one entry accordingly. Detailed comparisons of entries in each section are as following:

Table 1

*Comparison of the Entry between These Two Dictionaries*

Section	Eng-Chi	Por-Chi	Section	Eng-Chi	Por-Chi
Astronomy	40	153	Direction	14	24
Geography	52	133	Manuscript	20	45
Times	36	90	Treasure	18	41
Color	14	45	History	14	62
Organ	36	95	Animal	49	125
Human	60	183	Number	22	59
Container	56	112	General Use	78	182
Palace	20	90	Spicery	32	32
Food	22	80	Plant	18	110
Clothes	24	95	Life	109	313

These two dictionaries varied in entries, however, according to detailed comparison, only 58 entries of *An English-Chinese Dictionary* were not contained in *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary*. This situation escorted us into a conclusion that the actual compiling time of *An English-Chinese Dictionary* was earlier than *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary*. During the compiling and using period, the entry contained did not meet the needs of society, so that an extension of entries was added, which was the base of *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary*.

Each page of these dictionaries contained four entries and actual entry of compiling sample lies as follows:

Table 2

*Sample of Entry Compiled in These Two Dictionaries*

<i>An English-Chinese Dictionary</i>	<i>A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary</i>
Wind	Vento
風	風
穩	溫都

In the table above, the Chinese Word 風 (feng) placed in the middle, the translation of the Chinese word lies above, i.e., wind and vento. The Chinese transcription of the foreign translation lies below the Chinese word, i.e., 穩 (wen) and 溫都 (wen du). This stylistic rules is better than the “Ao Men Ji Lüe” (澳門記略, *Notes on Macao*) compiled in the same period, which only records the Chinese word and Chinese transcriptions, but no origin spelling form of foreign translation.

### The Process of Compiling

Errors are inevitable in the dictionary compiling process, *An English-Chinese Dictionary* and *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* regarded no exception. However, errors contained in the former one are more than we expected (for details, see the next section). It is indicated, in our opinion, the process of compiling *An English-Chinese Dictionary* is distinguished with that of modern dictionary that compiled by one or a group of bilingual experts.

The compiling process of *An English-Chinese Dictionary* possibly creatively inherited the translation system of Buddhist Canon from ancient China. It is uncertain for us whether this dictionary is the original one or a copied one. Considering the faults and errors in it, however, it was not compiled and published by a single person. As to the custom in ancient times, at least in a series of Buddhist sutras translation that composed of four individual steps and worked out also by four workers respectively. The first person's duty was to read the original print and punctuated the words. The second one was the real translator, who did an oral translation on hearing the words and sentences. The third one, called bishou (筆受) in Chinese, was to write down those words and sentences spoken out by the second person. The last one had to reconstruct the paper writing. Among the four workers, the first two should be familiar with the knowledge, including reading and writing, in foreign languages; the latter two commonly didn't need to know such foreign languages.

Judging from all those “Hua Yi Yi Yü” of European languages preserved in the Palace Museum, all the works existed a unique vocabulary, which admitted by the Emperor Qian Long in Qing dynasty, and the Office of Interpreters and Translators must obey this principle when compiling these dictionaries. In most of the dictionary, the collected and translated Chinese words are same or equivalent. That is to say, the Chinese word in each entry is the start of compiling process. The first step, then, should be the translation from Chinese to

foreign language. Here, what the process of compiling the Buddhist sutras enlightened us is that the process of compiling *An English-Chinese Dictionary* could be divided into separate steps, and each step was completed by more than one person.

It is presumed that, in extreme cases, the first step is the process of foreign language translation. Someone, who might be standard mandarin user or mandarin dialect user, read the Chinese word in the column one by one. Then, one local bilingual, who might have the ability of reading Chinese character or might only understand the colloquial Chinese pronounced by the first person, translated the Chinese word into English. This person, in another circumstance, could be a “Canton English” user who could only speak but not write and spell. Therefore, a third person who knew English came out to note down the spelling form. These three people can be called “speaker”, “translator” and “writer” respectively. Of course, these works could be done by one or two person. As we have mentioned, the completion of this step is not the finish of one entry and one more step of providing Chinese transcription is needed. This step, in extreme cases also, still worked out by co-operation of three people. The origin of Chinese word was read by the “speaker” again, “translator” (bilinguals) translated and pronounced so that the third “writer” could be clearer enough to note down. The most important is that the step of translation and the step of providing Chinese transcription were totally separated, which means the actual translators were not the same person. Thus the foreign spelling form and the Chinese transcription are not always coincidence. In the research we have done, a number of entries of this type were figured out.

According to the above compiling steps and the spelling form and errors, it is possible for us to figure out that the person responsible for the translation and Chinese transcription work came from canton area, who was half-educated speaker of Canton dialect. The foreign language he used was Chinese pidgin language, i.e., “Canton English”. Because the early form of “Canton English” was a combination of Portuguese, English, and Canton dialect, which was used in the canton area. It also can be figured out from Chinese transcription that the character used included a great number of entering tone syllables,<sup>2</sup> which existed in Canton dialect (for more detail, see the next section).

Errors in *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* are limited. Through our early research, judging from the compiling style, entry include, and layout order, all European language dictionaries of “Hua Yi Yi Yü” no other than the Six Language Dictionary mentioned by P. Floriani Bahr (Bahr, 1758, p. 124). Thus the translator of *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* was the missionary who served in the imperial government of China. Compared among these dictionaries, it can be ascertained that when the missionary came across any unfamiliar Chinese word, he translated with the help of foreign spellings in other European language dictionaries of “Hua Yi Yi Yü”.

The Chinese transcription of *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* was worked by Chinese people, because there emerged systematical cases that not coincident with Portuguese alphabet and syllable pronunciation. Due to the actual situation in that period and phonological system contained, these phenomena were the interference of Latin pronunciation.

### **Brief Analysis of Errors in *An English-Chinese Dictionary***

As mentioned above, the particularity of *An English-Chinese Dictionary* was pointed out both by Fuchs (1943) and Ishida (1968), but, unfortunately, they did not make any further analysis about it. According to our

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<sup>2</sup> An entering tone (入聲, ru sheng) is not a tone in the phonetic sense, but a syllable ends in a stop consonant, such as p, t, k, or glottal stop.

previous research, a thoroughly classification on the faults and errors of this dictionary was established, all which indicated *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, instead of a bilingual dictionary, is a trilingual dictionary consisted of English, Portuguese and Chinese. Faults and Errors contained in the dictionary well-reflected the situation on society background and interpreter's personal information. Principle types of errors in *An English-Chinese Dictionary* are as follows:

Table 3

*Errors in An English-Chinese Dictionary (Type 1)*

	Sample 1	Sample 2	
Foreign Translation	To Hip	Him	Foreign Translation
Chinese Word	飛	誰	Chinese Word
Chinese Transcription	法來	呼	Chinese Transcription

Table 3 is classified for entries equivalent in Chinese word and Chinese transcription but not equivalent in foreign translation and Chinese word. In sample one, the actual English word described by Chinese transcription 法來 (fa lai) should be “fly”, which equivalent with the original Chinese word 飛 (fei, (lit.) “to fly”). As we can see, the foreign translation “to hip” is, not only, widely divergent to the Chinese transcription 法來 in pronunciation, but also semantically divergent to the Chinese word 飛. Same circumstance happened in sample two, in which the Chinese word 誰 (shei, (lit.) “who”) and Chinese transcription 呼 (hu, (translit.) “who”) are not what the foreign translation “Him” signified.

It is reflected in type one that the compiling process was possibly separated into two steps, the step of foreign translation and the step of Chinese transcription respectively. Besides, we can also figure out that there were at least two interpreters and the English level of the one who took responsible for foreign translation is worse than the one responsible for Chinese transcription, which caused the non-equivalence between the most common used Chinese word and foreign translation.

Table 4

*Errors in An English-Chinese Dictionary (Type 2)*

	Sample 3	Sample 4	
Foreign Translation	I Know it	Venerar	Foreign Translation
Chinese Word	知	拜	Chinese Word
Chinese Transcription	沙被	納歇	Chinese Transcription

Table 4 is classified for entries equivalent in the meaning of foreign translation and Chinese transcription, but disunity within the language. In sample three, although the foreign translation “I know it” is a contextualized phrase originated from verb “know” with supplementary elements, it equivalent to the Chinese word 知 (zhi, (lit.) “to know”). While the Chinese transcription 沙被 (sha bei), signifying the same meaning with foreign translation, is not from English, but a Portuguese word spelled in the form of “saber”. Same situation happened in sample four, only adjusted by the order of language, the foreign translation “venerar” is a verb in Portuguese which means “to respect”, which semantically equivalent to the Chinese word 拜 (bai, (lit.) “to worship”). However, the Chinese transcription 納歇 (na xie), obviously not the transcription of “venerar” from its pronunciation, is originated from the phrase “nod head” in English, which also semantically equivalent to the Chinese word.

What reflected in type two lies in: (1) The step of foreign translation and the step of Chinese transcription

were indeed separated, because if these two steps were done by the same time in the same place, there wouldn't be a phenomenon of such error; (2) The blending of English and Portuguese occurred both in the language of interpreters responsible for foreign translation and Chinese transcription, which coincident with the situation of "Canton English" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; (3) The Chinese character 納歇 exposed the dialect that the interpreter used. There is no equivalent word if these two characters are read in standard mandarin "na xie", but it becomes signified if we follow the Canton dialect "naap hit" (both are entering tone).

Table 5

*Errors in An English-Chinese Dictionary (Type 3)*

	Sample 5	Sample 6	
Foreign Translation	The Dia	Drink Comer	Foreign Translation
Chinese Word	今日	飲食	Chinese Word
Chinese Transcription	的禮亞	低領咭個迷	Chinese Transcription

Table 5 is classified for entries compounded with English and Portuguese in foreign translation or Chinese transcription. In sample five, the Chinese word 今日 (jin ri) literally corresponding to "this day" in English, and "today" in meaning. However, it is easy to figure out that both of its foreign translation and Chinese transcription (的禮亞, de li ya) are not pure English, which consisted of English word "the" and Portuguese word "dia" ("day" in English). Also, in sample six, Chinese word 飲食 (yin shi, (lit.) "drink eat") was translated to a phrase 低領咭個迷 (di ling ji ge mi) consisted of "drink" for 低領咭 in English and "comer" for 個迷 ("eat" in English) in Portuguese.

It tells us that, from type three and type two, the interpreter who took responsible for the dictionary possibly the user of Canton Portuguese or Macanese due to the level of Portuguese word he acquired. This pattern exhibits us the language situation of "Canton English" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well.

Table 6

*Errors in An English-Chinese Dictionary (Type 4)*

	Sample 7	Sample 8	
Foreign Translation	The Left	The Right	Foreign Translation
Chinese Word	右	左	Chinese Word
Chinese Transcription	列非得	來得	Chinese Transcription

Table 6 is classified for entries' derangement. As we can see, the corresponding between foreign translation and Chinese transcription for each word shown on the column above are perfect, in which 列非得 (lie fei dei) represents "left" and 來得 (lai de) represents "right". However, the origin Chinese word of 'the left' should not be 右 (you), which means "right" in English, and the correct Chinese word 左 (zuo), which means "left" placed to correspond "the right".

What reflected in this type exposed to us the possibly process of compiling was that the interpreter might not have the privilege to look at the Chinese vocabulary on his own, since it was an imperial issued document and only the prefecture mandarin knew the content of it. They did the translation work by hearing the pronunciation. Afterward, another one who, copied the handwriting on the imperial paper which somehow resulted in derangement in certain words, and this person, from the content, did not know any English or Portuguese at all.

The four principle types shown above are the most classic errors in *An English-Chinese Dictionary*. There



exists error in spelling, inverted words and missing word, which are not systematic appearing to list individually in the present paper.

Despite of the errors exposed in *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, which made it not as professional as others “Hua Yi Yi Yü”, however, these imperfect phenomena provides us a perfect carrier to understand the situation of the society, culture and language in Canton area about 300 years ago.

### **The Phonologic Foundation of *An English-Chinese Dictionary***

Although the public started to pay more attention to “Canton English”, restricted by the limit materials and chronologically left behind, the integral research right now still remains in primitive period. All those valuable materials and opinions have not been excavated. Meanwhile, limited by the geographical and accent identity, those who not familiar with the Canton dialects are stopped far away from the edge or could not keep on researching when stepping into the deeper level. All these elements resulted in the research of “Canton English” mainly stayed on the layers of basic introduction or moved the eyes to the cultural and social background of its emersion, rather than date back to the deeper origin through phonetic realm. In the following section, the final intention is trying to figure out the primary phonetic principles between Canton dialects and foreign languages reflected in *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, by analyzing consonant, vowel and ending consonant respectively. Limited by the paper, we are not going to consider the influence of vowels and “tone” in the corresponding system. What we mainly discuss here is the corresponding in voiced and voiceless consonants between these languages.

Specified ahead, the phonetic system revealed in *An English-Chinese Dictionary* is the corresponding between Chinese character transcription and foreign syllable. The pronunciation of these Chinese character might not come from standard mandarin (官話, Guan Hua) but from Canton dialect, which might also have the division of literary and colloquial pronunciation. What’s more, the difference on phonetic structure and system between Chinese and English will result in enormous impact on the corresponding principle. Besides, the phonetic of Portuguese and habit of corresponding principle inherited from traditional Chinese or from other dictionaries of the “Hua Yi Yi Yü” might influence the bilingual phonetic corresponding in *An English-Chinese Dictionary* as well.

Based on above, the actual process of our phonetic research was divided into the following steps. Firstly, input all entries in the database as the basic corresponding material, which include all English word (blending with Portuguese, similarly hereinafter), Chinese word and Chinese transcription. Secondly, syncopated each English word into separated segments on following the Chinese character of transcription respectively, for example, the Chinese transcription of “Bamboo” is 榜母 (bang mu), which could be syncopated for a second branch into two pair “bam” to 榜 and “boo” to 母. Thirdly, noted down the phonological status of each Chinese character used in transcription. On considering the actual situation of standard mandarin and Canton dialect in early Qing dynasty, we chose the fundamental corresponding system of traditional Chinese phonology in Song dynasty, which include 36 Characters for Initials<sup>3</sup>, four divisions (等, deng), etc. Fourthly, marked all English segments with IPA and syncopated into smaller unit by phoneme. As the sample in “bamboo”, the segment “bam” was marked as [bæm] and [b], [æ], [m] separated. All these analysis of phonology features were added into the database at the same time. The database, therefore, consisted of nine

<sup>3</sup> On considering the unfamiliarity of 36 Chinese initials for the mass, and also for evasion of confusion, each mentioned initial below will be given in the form of IPA.

columns as follows:

Table 7

*Sample of Database*

Eng. wd	Chn. Mn	Chn. Tr	Sig. Cha	Eng. syl	IPA	Ini. con	Vowel	End con
Fog	霧	花	花	fog	fɔg	f	ɔ	g

The first three columns are the English translation, Chinese word (霧, wu, “the fog”) and Chinese transcription (花, [hua] in standard mandarin and [fa:] in Canton dialect) respectively. The fourth column is the single character used in transcription. The fifth column is the English “syllable” of this character. In this example, the duplication and co-existence of 花 is due to the standard mono-syllable feature of foreign translation, but there still exist situation that the segment of English translation corresponding to its Chinese transcription character is not a perfect syllable, according to which we use the quote mark indicate as a general collective name. From column six to column nine are the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) of the “syllable” and its initial consonant, main vowel and ending consonant. For those segments do not include an ending consonant or less than one full syllable (lack of vowel), the grid below will be a marked blank.

By using this database, it becomes easier and more convenient for us to carry on specific sequencing and comparison according to various demands, such as the voiced and voiceless plosive, closed syllable, nasal ending, vowel with [a], [e], [i], [o], [u], etc., which will help us to judge the similarities and differences of historical phonology condition behind each Chinese character used in the transcription.

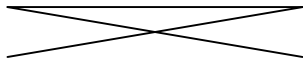
Through our research on *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, three domains are considered, namely, the initial consonant, main vowel, and ending consonant. According to the induction and analysis on the historical phonology condition of single transcription character, some new discoveries on the phonologic corresponding system between English and Canton dialect have been excavated. Limited by the space, we are going to introduce two main principles in the present paper.

### Principle A

The voiced and voiceless plosive in English generally correspond to the oblique-toned characters (仄聲字, ze sheng zi) in medieval Chinese pronounced with voiced (全濁, quan zhuo) and unvoiced (全清, quan qing) initial consonants, but not choose the level-toned character (平聲字, ping sheng zi) pronounced with aspirated (次清, ci qing) and voiced (全濁, quan zhuo) initial consonant. The voiced plosive in English also corresponds to Chinese characters pronounced with an initial nasal (次濁, ci zhuo) consonant, while the voiceless plosive does not have the same feature.

For example, the initial consonant [b] and [p] in English mainly correspond to oblique-toned Chinese characters pronounced with voiced and unaspirated-voiceless, but not the character pronounced with aspirated-voiceless consonant. However, initial consonant [b] in English also corresponds to character pronounced with initial nasal consonant [m], which like the transcription of “boo” in “bamboo” into 母 (mu), while there is no corresponding between initial consonant [p] in English to Chinese character pronounced with initial [m]. This principle is perfectly same with the corresponding condition of initial [d]/ [t] and [g]/ [k] in English with the related Chinese pronunciation. What can be demonstrated from this principle is the Chinese dialect revealed in *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, which has a tendency of devoicing on the voiced initial consonant. Beside, this dialect, same as standard mandarin and literary Canton dialect, has a feature that

level-toned in voiced initial consonant is aspirated while oblique-toned in voice initial consonant is unaspirated. The corresponding principle, then, can be drawn as follows:

English				Chinese		
b	d	g		p	t	k
p[p <sup>h</sup> ]	t[t <sup>h</sup> ]	k[k <sup>h</sup> ]		m	n	ŋ

The phenomenon that voiced initials in English correspond to nasal-voiced initials in Chinese can be resulted from two ways. One is the inheritance from the corresponding principle in ancient Buddhist canon. The other is a strong plosive component accompanied in pronouncing the nasal initial in such dialect.

Judging from the pronunciation feature in English, the actual value of initial consonants “p, t, k” are exactly the same as aspirated-voiceless initial consonant in Chinese, i.e., [p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], [k<sup>h</sup>]. However, the corresponding system in *An English-Chinese Dictionary* does not use the character pronounced with initial [p<sup>h</sup>] (滂, pang), [t<sup>h</sup>] (透, tou), [k<sup>h</sup>] (溪, xi) at all. This situation is regarded as peculiar if only consider English inside. While compared with *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary*, this phenomenon is explicable. The actual value of voiceless plosive initial consonants “p, t, k” in Portuguese are not [p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], [k<sup>h</sup>], but unaspirated-voiceless [p], [t], [k], which can hardly be distinguished from [p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], [k<sup>h</sup>] for people in the Chinese dialect area mentioned, who do not have the minimal pair contrast of voiced and voiceless consonant in phonological system. It can be concluded that the reason of this corresponding in *An English-Chinese Dictionary* is related to the plosive value of consonant’s phonology feature in Portuguese language prevailing in Canton area.

### Principle B

The fricative and affricate consonants in medieval Chinese are combined as one category in the Chinese transcription, which there is no distinction on the place of articulation among group [ʈʂ]/ [ʈʂ<sup>h</sup>]/ [ʂ], [ʈʂ]/ [ʈʂ<sup>h</sup>]/ [ʂ] and [ʈʂ]/ [ʈʂ<sup>h</sup>]/ [ʂ] in standard mandarin, also no distinction on the manner of articulation between fricative and affricate consonant.

For example, in *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, the initial consonant [z] in English corresponds to characters pronounced with initial [s](心, xin), [ʈʂ] (精, jing), [ʈʂ] (從, cong), [dʒ] (崇, chong), [ʈʂ] (船, chuan), [z] (禪, shan), [ʈʂ] (章, zhang) in medieval Chinese language and [s] in English corresponds to that with [s] (心, xin), [z] (邪, xie), [dʒ] (崇, chong), [ʂ] (生, sheng), [ʂ] (書, shu), [z] (禪, shan), [ʈʂ] (船, chuan). This feature, on the one hand, reveals the same devoicing tendency shown in principle A, on the other hand, demonstrates the indistinguishable feature among groups with initial consonant of [ʈʂ], [ʈʂ], and [ʈʂ], while mixed using among characters pronounced with initial [ʈʂ], [z], [ʈʂ], and [z].

In Canton dialect, characters pronounced with the colloquial reading of initial [m] (微, wei) still hold the feature of voiced-bilabial, while characters pronounced with initial [f] (非, fei), [f<sup>h</sup>] (敷, fu) and [v] (奉, feng) have already classified into labio-dental.<sup>4</sup> Besides, in *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, there also emerges the Process from the combination of colloquial reading [k<sup>h</sup>] (溪, xi) and [h] (曉, xiao) as [h] to further separation into [f] under the condition of closing vowel followed. For example, there exists the correspondence between 火 (“huo” in standard mandarin and “fo” in Canton dialect) in 火被委兒 (huo bei wei er) and [k] in “Could

<sup>4</sup> In *An English-Chinese Dictionary*, there are only two cases of corresponding between characters pronounced with initial [f] and initial “b” in English, which are 不 (bu) in 多不慮 (die bu lu) corresponding to “table” and 捧 (peng) in 捧味勿兒 (peng wei wu er) corresponding to “bom viver”. These two character 不 and 捧 are not pronounced labio-dental [f], but bilabial [p] or [p<sup>h</sup>] in nowadays’ Chinese dialects. Thus, this could not be regarded as an exception out of principle B in Canton dialect.

be well” in English. At the same time, a correspondence between 花 (“hua” in standard mandarin and “faa” in Canton dialect) and [f] in “fog” still exists.

During the research of correspondence, we encountered with individual cases that neither belong to standard mandarin nor Canton dialect, but seems closer to Min dialect or Hakka dialect. For example, character 京 (jing) in 罷朗京 (ba lang jing) transcribed from “Palanquin”. This character pronounced as [ging] in Canton dialect but [gin] in Hakka, the latter of which stays closer to the pronunciation of original English word than the former one. Whether these cases are the proof that Min and Hakka used to be the dominant dialect co-existing with Canton dialect in Ming and Qing dynasties along the coastal Canton area remains a deeper and further study.

### Conclusion

Mentioned by early researchers that the first two periods of Chinese pidgin languages are the origin at Canton and Macao from 1715-1748 and the Classical period used at Canton from 1748-1842 (Hall, 1944, p. 95; also see Reinecke, 1937, pp. 772-785). As we may see from the time range that *An English-Chinese Dictionary* and *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* were compiled right at the transition period, especially the former of which translated just by the user of Chinese Pidgin Portuguese and Chinese Pidgin English. As the unpublished official collative dictionaries compiled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these two dictionaries are not only a precious material on researching the language status, culture and economy in the bilingual and multilingual society in Canton area, but also provide valuable information on dialects used in Canton area 300 years ago.

The present paper, based on our research in 2006 and 2009, further discussed the compiling background, basic compiling stylistic rules, compiling process of *An English-Chinese Dictionary* and *A Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary*. Meanwhile, this paper introduced some detailed research selected from our early work on *An English-Chinese Dictionary* including (1) the classification of errors, in which demonstrated the causing of errors lies in the separating step in the process of compiling, i.e., step from Chinese word to foreign translation and step from Chinese word to Chinese transcription. It is also revealed from these two steps that translators who took the responsibility of the translation were trilingual users of Chinese, Portuguese, and English, among which the English level might be the worst; (2) a study on two principles excavated from the corresponding system, which analyzed from a series of comparisons including defining the unit of phoneme and syllable, the difference on phonological system and syllable structure between English and Chinese, phonologic positions in medieval Chinese of corresponding characters used in the Chinese transcription. At the same time, the study has discovered some features and characteristics in early Canton dialect. A further and deeper study will be launched on these dictionaries and Chinese pidgin language, which still needs help and instruction by the academic.

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