

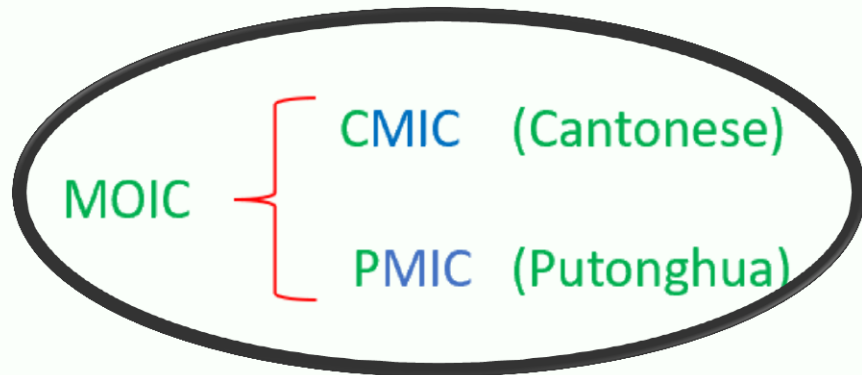
Medium Of Instruction Practices for Teaching Chinese in Hong Kong Schools: Impacts on Students' Language Proficiency and the Cultural Conservation in Hong Kong

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MOIC { CMIC (Cantonese)
PMIC (Putonghua)



Research Aims and Objectives

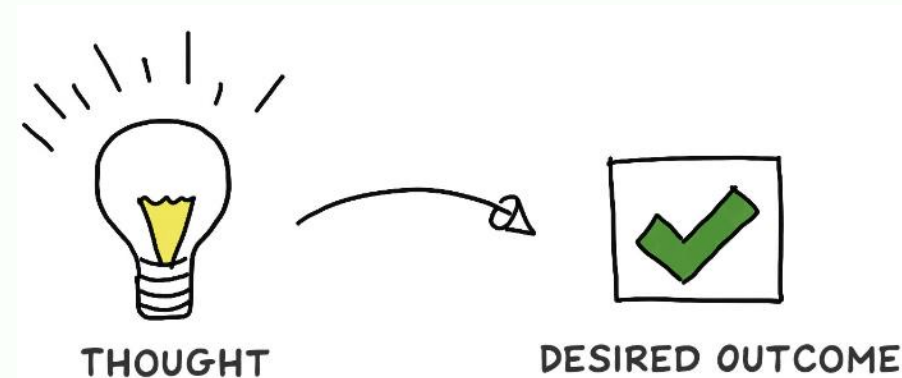


1 Investigate Implementation of PMIC and CMIC

- Actual implementation
- Reasons of choices

2 Assess MOIC's Impact

- Students' abilities in Chinese education.
- Cantonese language and culture conservation.



3 Propose Solutions

- Promote Putonghua & improve Chinese language proficiency
 - Adhere to educational principles and policies
- Preserve Cantonese language & culture
 - Align with the national policy of promoting multiculturalism

Background

1998 Putonghua as a mandatory subject in primary and junior secondary levels

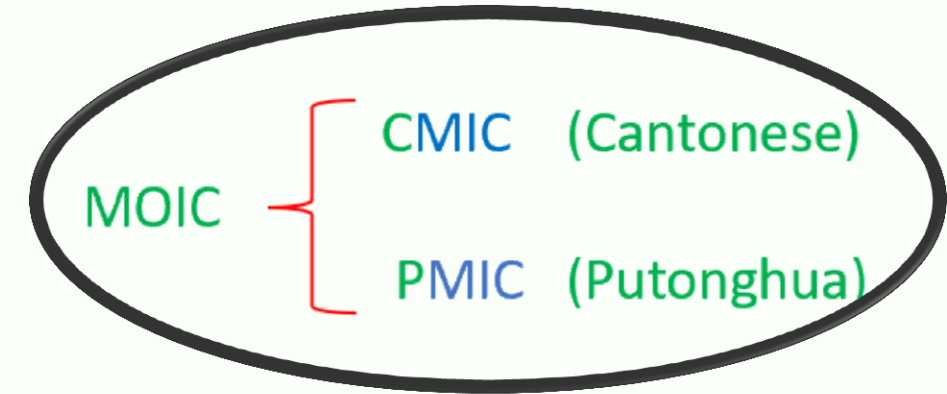
2000 PMIC declared long-term goal

2008-Present Huge funds were allocated to support PMIC

2008-2015 PMIC schools had been increasing

2016 The survey shows PMIC lacks effectiveness in Chinese learning

2016-Present Schools are allowed to decide on MOIC policy



Research Questions



1 Current Implementation?

MOIC

CMIC (Cantonese)

PMIC (Putonghua)

2 Advantages vs. Disadvantages ?

3 Stakeholder Views ?

4 Learning Outcomes?

5 New Solutions ?

Literature Review



Existing literature

- 1 Government Policies on MOIC*
- 2 Implementation of PMIC in schools*
- 3 Scholarly Perspectives on PMIC*
- 4 Theoretical Frameworks*
- 5 Cantonese, Literature, and Cultural Conservation*
- 6 Dialect Preservation and Putonghua Promotion*
- 7 HKDSE Chinese Language Statistics*

Research Gaps

- Outdated demographic data
- Insufficient empirical evidence
- Unexplored implementation challenges

Research directions

- (1) New Data on MOIC Implementation
- (2) Survey on Classroom Language Use
- (3) Population Census Data
- (4) Correlation Between Putonghua Promotion and Dialect Use
- (5) Relationship Between Dialects and Culture

Theoretical Framework

1 Curriculum Theories

Tyler's Curriculum Components

(1) Objectives (2) learning experiences (3) methods of organization, and (4) Evaluation .

Ornstein and Hunkins' Curriculum Elements

(1) Goals and Objectives

(2) Learning Experiences

(3) Methods and Materials

(4) Activities Related to Subject Matter

(5) Assess these Processes

2 Language Backward Transfer (Chen, 2020)

3 Model of Teacher Knowledge (Grossman, 1990)

Talmage's Curriculum Evaluation Questions

(1) Intrinsic value

(2) Instrumental value

(3) Comparative value

(4) Idealization value

(5) Decision value

4 The relationship between language and culture
(Sapir, 1921; Lut and Starenkova, 2022).

Research Philosophy

Epistemology

Focuses on **what is known to be true** through **objective data**



Doxology

Explores **what is believed to be true** through **stakeholder perspectives**



Pragmatic Approach

Values **practical usefulness** of research claims

Research Methodology

Literature Review / Secondary data analysis

Quantitative Research

Qualitative Research + Case Studies

Quantitative Research: Questionnaires

Students

- 247** students took the HKDSE Chinese exam
 - (**123** achieved grade 5+)
- 107** senior high students from a school with over 40% cross-border students
- 11** university students experienced PMIC in mixed MOIC schools.

Chinese Language subject teachers

- 83** pre-service teachers in Chinese Language Education
 - (**35** completed Internship)
- 69** In-service teachers

Parents

- 201** Primary and secondary school student parents



Total: 753 respondents

Qualitative Research and Case Studies

Semi-structured Interviews

2 Top Performing Students.

2 Students taught with the proposed Model

4 PMIC Class Students

14 Practicum Students interned in mixed MOIC schools

2 Teachers:

1 from a PMIC school reverted to CMIC.

1 from a school with 40% cross-border students

5 Parents of new immigrant or cross-border students.



Total: 29 interviewees

Findings: 1 Current Practices of MOIC in HK Schools

Trends and Shifts in PMIC Adoption (2008-2024)

Increase in PMIC Adoption (2008-2016):

Grew from **55.5%** (primary) and **31.8%** (secondary) in 2008
peak levels **71.7%** (primary) and **36.9%** (secondary) in 2016



Decline in PMIC Adoption (2016-present):

By **2020/21**: decreased to **67%** (primary) and **28.1%** (secondary)

By **2022/23**: declined to **44%** (primary) and **17%** (secondary)

2023/24: Only **32%** of primary schools used PMIC



Current Trends:

Few schools implement PMIC

Most PMIC schools are grade- or class-based

PMIC in junior levels, switches to CMIC in senior levels

Findings: 1 Current Practices of MOIC in HK Schools

Reasons for PMIC Trends

Funding Support (since 2008):

225 million HKD allocated to help schools implement PMIC.



Survey Findings (2016):

An official survey showed PMIC did not improve Chinese learning, leading to a Legislative Council motion to remove it as a long-term goal.



Preference for CMIC (2016-present):

Schools compared teaching experiences and outcomes, resulting in a general preference for CMIC over PMIC.

Findings: 2 Impact of PMIC on Teaching and Learning Effectiveness

Evaluate the PMIC by using Ornstein and Hunkins's curricular elements

(1) Goal and Objectives

Goal 1: Reading and Writing Abilities:

2023 HKDSE Chinese Language exam results:

33.0% of students achieve grade 4 or above;
11.0% achieve grade 5 or above.

HKDSE

Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education

Schools have higher percentages of students reaching the above-mentioned levels:

66 CMIC schools

14 mixed MOIC schools (only 1- CMIC classes in Junior forms)

3 PMIC schools

Findings 2: Impact of PMIC Models on Teaching and Learning Effectiveness

cont. **Goal 1: Reading and Writing Abilities:**

Survey Results from students and teachers' questionnaires

-No consistent advantage in Chinese reading and writing performance for PMIC classes.

-Challenges Faced by PMIC Students

- Listening Comprehension
- Limited Explanations
- Reluctance to engage
- Homonym Confusion

-Translation Difficulties

Translate colloquial speech and trendy language into standard written Chinese;
It is more challenging in Putonghua than in Cantonese.

Findings 2: Impact of PMIC Models on Teaching and Learning Effectiveness

cont. Goal 1: Reading and Writing Abilities:

Scholarly Perspectives on PMIC Limitations

Limits teacher expression and creates **communication barriers**.

Reduces student comprehension and leads to **passive learning**.

Hinders deeper understanding and creativity.

Insights

Fluency in Putonghua  coherent writing or cultural literacy.

"writing what I think"  "writing what I speak"



CMIC-educated students outperformed global peers in reading (PIRLS, 2011)

Many writers and proficient Chinese students have not experienced PMIC

cont. **Goal 1: Reading and Writing Abilities:**
Case Study of Two High-Achieving Students

Both Students:

Obtained distinction grades in the HKDSE Exam ★★
Won championships in national and citywide writing competitions



Student A (boy):

Mother tongue is Putonghua
Speaks daily in Cantonese
Experienced PMIC
Actively participates in debates in Cantonese

Student B (girl):

Mother tongue is Cantonese
Speaks daily in Cantonese
Not experienced PMIC
Enjoys reading text aloud in Cantonese




They believe the key Factors for success are:

- ❖ Positive learning environment
- ❖ Abundant resources
- ❖ Quality teaching
- ❖ Effective learning methods

**Putonghua was beneficial, but
PMIC was not helpful for their Chinese language learning**

Survey Results: Key Factors Enhancing Chinese Language Proficiency

Cantonese as mother tongue	96%	96%	92.3%	95.1%	66.4%
Respondents Factors	69 Teachers	201 Parents	247 students who took the DSE	123 students scored grade 5+	107 senior students
A	84.1%	47.3%	67.6%	73.2%	76.2%
B	82.6%	61.2%	40.5%	77.3%	47.6%
C	91.3%	55.7%	73.3%	78.0%	80%
D	73.9%	61.7%	63.6%	70.7%	62.9%
E	75.4%	52.7%	60.1%	65.9%	58.1%
F	79.7%	70.1%	48.2%	55.3%	53.4%
G	37.7%	NA	12.1%	12.2%	27.6%
H	34.8%	NA	34.0%	29.3%	38.1%
I	10.1%	NA	17.4%	13.0%	33.3%
J	1.4%	12.9%	2.4%	0%	1.9%
K	42.0%	43.3%	25.5%	23.6%	22.9%
L	66.7%	NA	NA	NA	NA
M	26.1%	NA	NA	NA	NA
N	21.7%	NA	NA	NA	NA



Key Factors Enhancing Chinese Language Proficiency

Factor J – Implementing PMIC very low support from stakeholders.

cont. Survey Results: Key Factors Enhancing Chinese Language Proficiency

Main Factors (55.3-91.3% Support):

- A. Comprehensive Reading Guidance
- B. Writing Enhancement Exercises
- C. Writing Techniques Instruction
- D. Practice Through Extensive Reading
- E. Feedback on Work
- F. Supplementary Readings

Potential Factors (10.1-43.3% Support):

- G. Exposure to Literature
- H. Interdisciplinary Training
- I. Proficiency in Putonghua.
- K. Mother Tongue Instruction
- M. Cross-Disciplinary Activities
- N. Chinese Literature as a Subject

Goal 2: To enhance students' Putonghua proficiency

Teacher Proficiency

Some PMIC teachers excel in Chinese, but their Putonghua proficiency may be lower than Putonghua subject teachers, resulting in students learning incorrect pronunciations.

Student Experience

Few PMIC students reported significant improvement in Putonghua. Some students experienced negative effects

Goal 3: To meet the targets of HK's Language Education Policy (Biliteracy and Trilingualism)

Goal 4: To create opportunities for new immigrants to learn Cantonese and adapt to life in HK

PMIC Impact:

Cantonese speakers experienced **Backward transfer**
Putonghua speakers lack motivation to learn Cantonese.

May not achieve true trilingual development.
Hinders new immigrants' Cantonese learning and social integration

CMIC Impact:

Maintains local students' Cantonese proficiency
Putonghua speakers actively learn Cantonese
Both Putonghua and Cantonese speakers support each other

Better promotes trilingual development
Supports new immigrants' social integration and improves prospects

(2) Learning Experiences

Student Feedback:

- Short-term or ongoing challenges, anxiety about falling behind.
- Difficulty understanding due to non-standard pronunciation.
- Stronger students dominate discussions
- Passive feelings and reduced engagement
- Overwhelmed by studying phonetics of English and Putonghua simultaneously

iː	ɪ	ʊ	uː
e	ə	ɜː	ɔː
æ	ʌ	aː	ɒ

ɪə	eɪ	
ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ
eə	aɪ	aʊ

p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j

声母表							
b	p	m	f	d	t	n	l
g	k	h	j	q	x	zh	ch
sh	r	z	c	s	y	w	

韵母表							
a	o	e	i	u	ü	ai	ei
ui	ao	ou	iu	ie	üe	er	an
en	in	un	ün	ang	eng	ing	ong

Teacher Observations:

- Some students need extra explanations for PMIC content.
- Insufficient Putonghua skills hinder interest and learning.
- Slower reactions and limited vocabulary in a non-native language.

(3)Teaching Methods and Materials

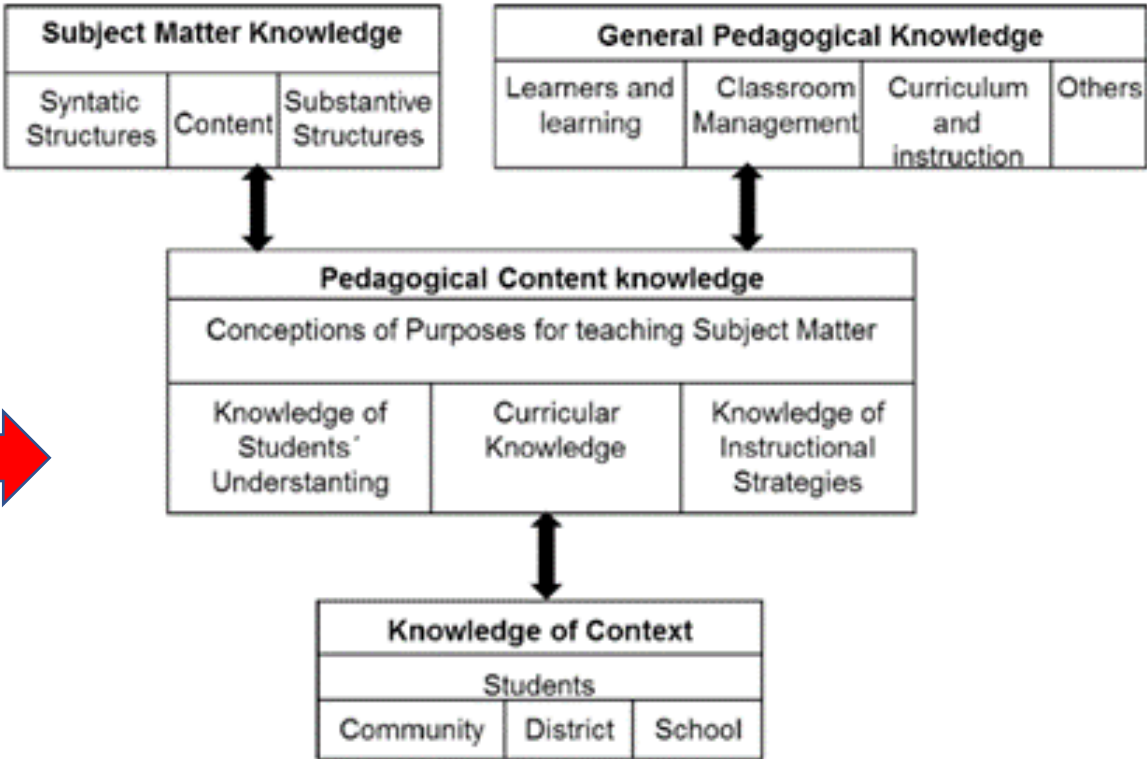
Teacher Qualifications:

Insufficient Putonghua proficiency affects teaching.
Only 42% report school readiness for PMIC.

PMIC Teacher Assessment :

- ✓ Subject Matter Knowledge
- ✓ General Pedagogical Knowledge
- ✗ Pedagogical Content Knowledge
- ✗ Knowledge of Context

Grossman’s Model of Teacher Knowledge



Curriculum Integration:

No clear guidelines for integrating Chinese and Putonghua.
72.5% of teachers face integration difficulties.
79.7% of teachers struggle with suitable materials and methods.

Teaching Materials:

PMIC textbooks only add Pinyin,
Insufficient adjustment.

(4) Activities Related to Subject Matter

Key Findings from Interviews with student experienced in PMIC

In-Class Activities

- Few students found the IRF pattern effective.
- Limited accommodation for learning differences in group activities.
- PMIC classes had fewer group discussions than CMIC.
- CMIC students experienced more engagement, fluency, and critical thinking.
- Teachers' stronger Cantonese skills slowed the curriculum pace.
- Limited Putonghua proficiency negatively affected lecturing and feedback quality.

Extracurricular Activities

- Lack of support for students with lower Putonghua proficiency.
- Limited encouragement for all students to participate in ECAs.
- New immigrant and cross-border students had few opportunities to learn Cantonese.

(5) Assess the Processes (Conclude evaluations of the aforementioned 4 aspects.)

1 Struggles to Meet Original Goals:

- ✗ Reading and writing abilities.
- ✗ Enhancing students' Putonghua proficiency.
- ✗ Promoting trilingual development.
- ✗ Supporting new immigrants' social integration.

2 Less enjoyable learning experiences

Decrease motivation and interest.

3 Teaching Method Deficiencies:

Issues with the IRF pattern.
Lack of PMIC curriculum

4 Ineffective Subject matter-related Activities:

Lack of effectiveness in-class and in ECAs.

PMIC Evaluation : Talmage's 5 Question Types

Intrinsic Value:

Failed 4 goals; lacked effective learning

Instrumental Value:

Failed to improve Chinese reading/writing skills

Worse HKDSE results

Ineffective for Putonghua proficiency

Comparative Value:

Counterproductive;

schools reverted to CMIC or reduced PMIC.

Idealization Value:

Schools reduced PMIC grades/classes after review.

Decision Value:

The above evaluations guide decisions on retaining, modifying, or discarding PMIC.

Findings: 3 Impact of MOIC Choice on the preservation of Cantonese and related cultural arts

Decline of Local Dialects in Mainland China:

Promotion of Putonghua and PMIC is leading to a decline of traditional dialects among youth.

Research shows declines in Wu Yu, Hu Yu, and Cantonese in Suzhou, Shanghai, and Guangzhou.

Experts urge the preservation of dialects.

Official documents highlight the need to protect dialects and related cultures alongside Putonghua.

Local Dialects Change in HK

1998-present Promoting Putonghua as a subject for 27 years.

1997-2021 1.12 million migrants, mainly from mainland China.

2001-2021 Putonghua proficiency among residents aged 5+ rose from 34.1% to 54.2%.

2001-2021 Cantonese usage declined from 96.1% to 93.7%.

(Many cross-border workers & students may be excluded from the statistics)

Cantonese may be marginalized in HK in the future, similar to Guangzhou.

Concerns about the need to conserve Cantonese and its cultural arts.



The literary and cultural value of Cantonese

Cantonese is **deeply rooted** in literary and cultural traditions

Cantonese has **9 tones**, making it ideal for **classical poetry recitation**.

Expressions of wisdom include riddles, proverbs, and folk sayings

Yueju is recognized as **UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage**

National Policy

Protect dialect cultures + Promote Putonghua.

The 14th Five-Year Plan supports HK as a cultural and artistic exchange center.

HK's Approach

Cultural exchange + Chinese cultures

Conclusion of the Findings

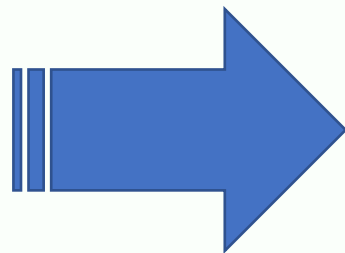
Decline in PMIC Adoption (2016-present)

Limited Effectiveness of PMIC

Cultural Preservation Concerns



Both Putonghua and Cantonese are beautiful and valuable.



Recommendations: a win-win solution

Recommendations

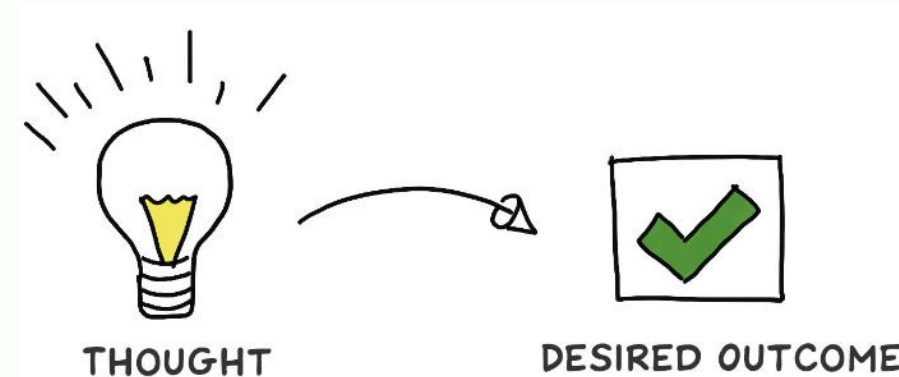
Dual Track Approach

Supports Cantonese preservation + Putonghua promotion.
Enriches Chinese cultural heritage + fosters national identity.

Strategies

- (1) Adopt CMIC (mother tongue teaching)
- (2) Strengthen Putonghua teaching and ECA
- (3) collaborative teaching approach
 - Create School-Based Materials
 - Integrate 3 subjects
 - Use blended teaching methods to connect the 9 domains in Chinese Education

(This is part of the past Action Research conducted by the researcher since 2016/17)
- (4) Promote reading.
- (5) Organize more Chinese cultural activities.
- (6) Encourage interaction between new immigrants and local students.
- (7) Provide Cantonese programs for new immigrants.



The statistical results from the stakeholder responses to MOIC proposals

- A. CMIC in all classes, retain Putonghua as a separate subject
- B. PMIC in all classes, cancel the Putonghua subject
- C. PMIC in some grades, CMIC in other grades
- D. 1-2 PMIC classes for new immigrants in lower grades
- E. 1-2 PMIC classes for new immigrants in every grade
- F. PMIC for Chinese in elite classes only
- G The researcher’s proposal, improved version of A

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Respondents	69 Teachers	201 Parents	247 Students completed DSE	107 Senior High Students
A	44.9%	38.7%	34.8%	49.5%
B	0%	5%	0.8%	0%
C	1.4%	4.5%	1.6%	1%
D	2.9%	3.5%	6.9%	6.7%
E	2.9%	3.5%	4.9%	1.9%
F	0%	0%	0%	1%
G	46.4%	44.8%	50.6%	40%
A+G	91.3%	83.5%	85.4%	89.5%



*This paper is dedicated to
passionate educators &
lovers of language and culture.*

Thank you.