

BEGINNING OR ON-GOING?  
2B-3A TONE CHANGE IN HONG KONG CANTONESE REVISITED

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to study the tonal variation between tone 3a (i.e. *Yinqu* 阴去) and 2b (i.e. *Yangshang* 阳上) as observed in modern Hong Kong Cantonese. Two social variables will be involved: age and gender. In the light of apparent time hypothesis, the findings help to determine whether such a variation is a result of an on-going sound change. The results reveal that there are two on-going tone changes in opposite directions, namely,  $3a > 2b$  and  $2b > 3a$ , and so far the former seems more forceful than the latter. The sound changes are carried out by lexical diffusion, and the unit of diffusion is more likely to be disyllabic and other polysyllabic compound words rather than monosyllabic morphemes. The gender variable, on the other hand, is found significant only in  $2b > 3a$ .

KEYWORDS

Cantonese Tonal variation Lexical diffusion Compound

1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper intends to study the tonal variation between tone 3a (i.e. *Yinqu* 阴去) and 2b (i.e. *Yangshang* 阳上) as observed in modern

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相混之始还是相混之中?  
香港粤语 2b-3a 音变之再探讨

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提要

本文旨在探讨现代香港粤语所出现的阴去(3a 调)与阳去(2b 调)声调交替的现象。本文将考察以下两个因素的影响: 年龄和性别。基于显象时间假设, 研究结果有助判定这种语音交替是否正在进行的音变。结果显示, 有两个相反方向的音变正在发生, 即  $3a > 2b$  和  $2b > 3a$ , 迄今前者的力量较大。另外, 两者皆以词汇扩散的方式进行, 但扩散的单位并非单音节的语素, 而是双音节乃至多音节的合成词。至于性别此一因素, 则只于  $3b > 3a$  发现有显著作用。

关键词

粤语 声调交替 词汇扩散 合成词