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My name is Masood, I am from Pakistan. I am currently teaching English and Mandarin at a local mainstream secondary school in Tai Wai. In 2014, I graduated from Beijing Normal University Zhuhai with a Bachelors Degree of Arts in Chinese. Speaking from my personal experience before 4-year tertiary education, I had very little encounter with the local Chinese society despite living here for over 20 years. I believe it was due to the language barrier between us. Other than that, I now too believe that the Chinese Language taught in mainstream schools in my time was not effective nor practical. In primary school I was only taught English and Urdu as a second language. Later in secondary school, the school suggested me to take French as I had no fundamental knowledge of the Chinese language. The school somehow had basic Chinese classes until secondary 3 with 2 lessons a week.

However after my experience in learning Chinese in the university, I am able to read and write over 2500 characters and speak fluent Mandarin in 4 years' time. In the final year of my Bachelor's Degree programme, I did a research on the issue regarding ethnic minority face while learning Chinese and I received positive response. The teaching method at university turned out to be very effective. I managed to speed up my progress in a short period of time by pinyin which was developed in the 1950s based on earlier form of Romanization. I believe pinyin is a building block as it is very important as a foundation. Learners feel comfortable with roman alphabets. It is easy to remember. It is helpful: when a beginner is engaged in a conversation with a local, there are high chances for the beginner not to understand a lot of words. This is where the beginner can easily and quickly take notes by pinyin and search for the words later on. What is more, my students often jot down self-created jyutping in order to remember the sound of a character. Hong Kong teachers do not adopt this approach which could possibly be one of the reasons why ethnic minorities are unable to learn Cantonese effectively.

Throughout my learning experience, dictionary has been the handiest and the most helpful tool. According to what I have experienced, apps for learning Chinese on app stores are limited and the apps available have various problems. There is no proper jyutping input method. Most of the dictionaries don't support this input method. They sometimes display wrong jyutping and the audio recording for pronunciation of characters is mispronounced.

Another issue I would like to address is regarding the CSL curriculum. Over the years, numerous people have complained about IGSCCE being too easy. In my opinion, the curriculum can be divided into 6 or 7 levels; 4-5 levels can be taught in secondary curriculum and the remaining can be shifted to the university curriculum. Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) can be taken into consideration. I think level 5 or 6 should be the target of the students. However, those who fail to pass a higher level should still be given a chance to enter the university. For entering the job market, a job description might ask foreign applicants with a level 5 better.

Now I would like to ask the government some questions:

1. Has the government considered introducing Cantonese jyutping system to teach the EM students?
2. Any research being done in this regard?
3. What are the considerations of the government of not introducing this system for Cantonese learning for students whose mother tongue is not Chinese?

Possible solutions to the above mentioned problems are: to revise the Chinese language curriculum by adding jyutping in the teaching materials, design a teaching material which is in line with an appropriate assessment, and some apps – supported with proper input method – should be created to enhance the teaching and learning of Cantonese.

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