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Yue-Cantonese and Language Contact: Some Recalcitrant and Incipient Linguistic Variations

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There is ample literature detailing linguistic features in Cantonese which are attributable to language contact with Mandarin or English. At the same time there are also accounts given on new variations in Yue-Cantonese which may be of indigenous origin.

The paper proposes to explore why some aspects of linguistic structure in Cantonese such as interrogatives remain recalcitrant structures (and even exert reciprocal reverse influence on Mandarin) while other features such as the incipient use of new nominal classifiers have surfaced. An explanatory account of these divergent development trends will be offered in terms of communicative efficacy and cognitive saliency.