

## Original Paper

# The Origin of English Textbooks with the English Pronunciation Indicated in the Chinese Characters

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### Abstract

*The earliest English textbooks compiled by Chinese people used Chinese characters to indicate the pronunciation of English words, hence they were called Chinese character phonetic English textbooks. The compilation of these kinds of textbooks has a long history. In a broader sense, their origins can be traced back to the compilation of foreign language textbooks during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, namely Hua Yi Yi Yü. In a narrower sense, their origin is closely related to the "Macao Portuguese" textbooks. Their prototype originated from the direct contact between Chinese and English languages, resulting in the orally transmitted "Canton English." As Sino-British trade expanded, there was an increasing societal need for more trade-related foreign language talent. Therefore, People used the Cantonese dialect to record the pronunciations of spoken English heard during interactions with British people, forming the earliest "Cantonese Phonetic English Textbooks" and establishing the rudimentary form of Chinese character phonetic English textbooks. In terms of compilation style, content arrangement, and phonetic notation methods, the textbooks of Hua Yi Yi Yü, Macao Portuguese, and Canton English share a common lineage, forming the framework of the Chinese character phonetic English textbooks.*

### Keywords

*origin, English textbook, Cantonese Phonetic English Textbook, Hua Yi Yi Yü, Macao Portuguese, Chinese character phonetic English textbooks*

## 1. Introduction

In China, there is a long history of transliterating foreign languages with Chinese characters. Foreign languages serve as tools and carriers for cross-cultural interaction and exchange among different nations, playing a pivotal role in advancing human societal civilization. Throughout the 5,000-year

history of Chinese civilization, every dynasty has placed great emphasis on foreign language education (especially the languages of other ethnic groups or foreign countries) and developed an effective method for teaching these languages: the Chinese character phonetic method, which involves using Chinese characters to indicate the pronunciation of foreign languages.

The practice of recording languages of other ethnicities or countries using Chinese characters has a long history. Many diplomatic documents and tribute records from envoys were preserved in the form of Chinese characters indicating sounds, such as "Hu," "Chanyu," "Mantou," "Maodun," "Yezhi," and "Qilian" in the Xiongnu ethnic language, all of which were retained through their Chinese phonetic representations. (Ma & Song, 2004) The "Book of Later Han: Biography of the Southwestern Barbarians" contains a song sung in Bailang language, known as "Song of the Bailang King." The lyrics are recorded phonetically with Chinese characters and translated into Chinese, for example, the first sentence in Bailang language is phonetically recorded as "Ti Guan Wei Gou, Wei Mao Yu Zao," with the Chinese interpretation being "Great Han governs in harmony with heaven's will." (You, 1997) This practice of recording foreign languages with Chinese characters marks the budding of the Chinese character phonetic method.

Buddhism was introduced into the Central Plains region from ancient India via the Western Regions. To meet the needs of translating Buddhist scriptures, people began to focus on the segmentation of Chinese phonetic syllables in Sanskrit-Chinese phonetic transcriptions, ultimately leading to the creation of the method of using Chinese characters for reverse-cutting phonetic notation. During the Wei, Jin, and North and South Dynasties, as Buddhism was extensively introduced into China, a large number of Sanskrit vocabulary entered the Chinese language. Due to the vast amount of Buddhist scriptures, each volume included a "Phonetic Explanation" after the chapters. Some common scriptures even had phonetic notations under difficult or easily mispronounced characters to prevent misreading. As the need for chanting scriptures arose, some dictionaries and glossaries specifically explaining the phonetic meanings of Buddhist scriptural vocabulary appeared (Li, 1999).

During the Tang and Song dynasties, teachers used methods such as adding radicals next to characters, creating "radical-body characters," and annotating with "double combinations" to gradually form standardized Sanskrit-Chinese phonetic transcriptions. In the West Xia period, the method of using Chinese characters for phonetic notation was inherited and innovated. The "Large Character Plus Small Character" phonetic notation form was created in the "Compendium of Fan-Han Syllables," initiating the phonetic notation style for character books comparing Chinese and ethnic languages.

According to Fu (1986), the Yuan government established a "School of Foreign Languages", or the Huihui National Academy, to teach the Persian script (also known as Estrangelo) in 1289 and it was renamed the Huihui National Academy Supervisorate in 1314, to strengthen management, establish organizational structure, provide academic officials and teaching assistants, and supply meals for faculty, showing great emphasis on learning Persian and Estrangelo. The method of using Chinese characters for phonetic notation became a foreign language teaching method in the Huihui National

Academy. The "Collection of Words from the Huihui Academy" and the "Glossary of the Huihui Academy" compiled were Persian-Chinese bilingual classified vocabularies that only included phonetic notations in Chinese characters, without the original foreign script. According to Professor Liu Yingsheng's research, the "Glossary of the Huihui Academy" was related to the teaching materials of the Huihui National Academy (Gao, 2007).

In the fifth year of Yongle (1407), the Siyi Guan was established to train translators and translate foreign documents. They continued the practice, using the "Chinese character phonetic method" when translating foreign documents and teaching the languages of neighboring ethnicities and countries, and even innovated upon this method.

The Qing government also set up specialized institutions for training translators, such as the Siyi Guan, Huitong Guan, Siyi Guan, and the joint Huitong Siyi Guan. In the first year of Shunzhi (1644), the Siyi Guan was established (and merged into the Ministry of Rites' Huitong Guan in 1748) as an institution for tributary translation studies. In the forty-seventh year of Kangxi (1708), the Russian Wen Guan was established to teach Russian students the Manchu and Chinese languages and scripts. During this process, a series of textbooks named "Hua Yi Yi Yü" were compiled, using Chinese characters to mark the pronunciation of foreign languages as textbooks for training foreign language translators.

At the beginning of the Era of the New Navigation, a large number of Europeans (especially Portuguese) sailed to Guangdong, China, for trade or missionary work. For sake of economic, trade, or cultural exchange, the Chinese applied the "Chinese character phonetic method" to the teaching of Portuguese, resulting in the "Macao Portuguese" textbooks. This laid a solid foundation for the birth of the earliest Chinese character phonetic English textbooks—the "Canton English Textbooks."

## 2. Hua Yi Yi Yü: Textbooks Used Chinese Character Phonetics

"Hua Yi Yi Yü" refers to the collective name for official compilations of Chinese-foreign language textbooks. Most of these books are handwritten copies with very few printed editions and limited circulation, resulting in many valuable texts being lost overseas. The "Hua Yi Yi Yü" is divided into four categories: A, B, C, and D. Category A, also known as the Hongwu "Hua Yi Yi Yü," was compiled by Huo Yuanjie, a Hanlin academician and lecturer, and Ma Shayihe, an editor, among others, under imperial order in the fifteenth year of the Hongwu reign (1382) and published in the twenty-second year (1389). This kind of books is divided into two parts: miscellaneous characters and text documents, using Chinese characters to phonetically transcribe Mongolian, without listing Mongolian script. Category B, also known as the Yongle "Hua Yi Yi Yü," was compiled after the establishment of the Siyi Guan (Translation Office) in the fifth year of the Yongle's reign (1407). The Siyi Guan had eight sections: Tatar, Jurchen, Western Fan (Tibetan), Western Heaven (Indian), Huihui (Muslim), Baiyü (various Southeast Asian tribes), Gaochang, and Burma. In the sixth year of the reign of Zhengde (1511), a section for the Baibang (from modern Vietnam) was added, followed by the addition of a Thai section in the seventh year of the Wanli reign, bringing the total to ten sections. Each section's

translations generally consisted of miscellaneous characters (corresponding word entries) and official documents, with such translations recording other ethnic scripts. The layout sequence was as follows: the top listed other ethnic scripts, the middle listed Chinese translations, and the bottom used Chinese characters to transcribe the pronunciation of other ethnic languages. Category C, also known as the Huitong Guan "Hua Yi Yi Yü," was compiled by Mao Duanzheng (1597-1636), with contributions from the Huitong Guan. These translations only included miscellaneous characters, without official documents, and only featured Chinese character phonetics without other ethnic scripts. Category C covered thirteen sections including Korean, Ryukyu (Okinawa), Annam (Vietnam), Champa (Campa), Thailand, Tatar, Uighur, Western Fan (Tibetan), Huihui (Muslim), Malacca, Jurchen, and Baiyü (various Southeast Asian tribes). Category D, also known as the Huitong Siyi Guan "Hua Yi Yi Yü," was compiled after the establishment of the Huitong Siyi Guan in the thirteenth year of the Qianlong's reign (1748). It comprised forty-two types in seventy-two volumes. This kind of "Yi Yü" recorded only miscellaneous characters without official documents, and all included other ethnic scripts except for one type,

The miscellaneous characters of the type A of "Hua Yi Yi Yü" is divided into 17 categories, with a total of 878 entries. Each miscellaneous character contains only the Chinese translation and phonetic notation without the Mongolian script. From the perspective of this first type of "Hua Yi Yi Yü," a teaching method employing Chinese characters to annotate Mongolian has been established. The type B of "Hua Yi Yi Yü" includes miscellaneous characters and texts from nine ethnic languages: Mongolian, Burmese, Jurchen, Western Barbarian (Xifan), Gaochang, Hui, Baiyi, Baibaisa, and Siamese, amounting to 24 volumes in total. Some have supplementary volumes for the miscellaneous characters while others do not; some include texts while others do not, suggesting an incomplete collection, thus making it impossible to count the number of entries in the miscellaneous characters. The type C of "Hua Yi Yi Yü" consists only of miscellaneous characters without any minority scripts. It encompasses five ethnic languages, each divided into 17 categories, but the number of entries varies. The Nuzhen language has 1152 entries; the Tatar language has 961; the Uyghur language has 829; the Hui language has 673; and the Hexi language has 255. The type D of "Hua Yi Yi Yü" comprises only miscellaneous characters without texts, except for one, all contain ethnic scripts (Feng Zheng, 1981). The categorization varies with counts of 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 20 categories, but most are divided into 20 categories. The number of vocabulary entries also varies, with the fewest at 112 and the most reaching 2070.

"Hua Yi Yi Yü" started with compiling miscellaneous characters for various ethnic minorities and then expanded to include European languages, adopting a one-character-one-sound-one-translation approach to understand and master foreign languages or scripts. Gradually, this practice expanded to include phrases, expressions, and even short sentences or essays. This model for compiling foreign language textbooks significantly influenced the creation of Chinese character phonetic English textbooks. Therefore, in this sense, the "Hua Yi Yi Yü" with Chinese character phonetics can be considered the

historical origin of Chinese character phonetic English textbooks.

### 3. The "Macau Portuguese" Textbooks Using Chinese Characters for Phonetics

"Macau Portuguese," a mixed language primarily used for communication between the Chinese and Portuguese before English became the common language of Sino-Western trade, was mainly used for conducting trade exchanges. The "Macau Portuguese" textbooks were specifically designed to teach this Sino-Portuguese mixed language, focusing on vocabulary and using Cantonese dialect to annotate Portuguese pronunciation. The emergence of "Macau Portuguese" indicates that the Chinese began to apply the "Chinese character phonetic method" used for learning neighboring minority languages to the study of European languages, Portuguese, laying the foundation for the subsequent compilation of "Cantonese English" textbooks.

#### 3.1 *The Social Background of the Compilation of "Macao Portuguese" Textbooks*

At the beginning of the 16th century, Portugal began trading with China. By the mid-16th century, Portugal had established a firm foothold in Macau, which quickly became a center for Sino-Western trade. Western Jesuit missionaries followed one after another, and by the 1580s, approximately 630 Jesuits and 200 preachers from various religious orders were dispatched to China (Louis le Compte, 1697, p. 15). According to the foreign trade system regulations of Guangzhou, foreigners coming to China for trade were required to leave Guangzhou during the off-season, returning to their home countries or staying temporarily in Macau. Therefore, while Macau served as a residence for Portuguese, it also became a common residence for Western merchants engaged in trade with China. Chinese merchants saw business opportunities and flocked there to make a living, creating a mixed "Chinese and Barbarian" community. These conditions laid the groundwork for the emergence of "Macau Portuguese." With the flourishing of commercial trade in Macau, the business of the "interpreter groups" increased, and the demand for interpreters grew accordingly. As a result, Macau interpreters compiled simple Cantonese-Portuguese glossary textbooks using Cantonese dialect to mark Portuguese pronunciation, known as "Macau Portuguese" textbooks, to help sub-interpreters master this trade lingua franca quickly.

The earliest known Chinese character phonetic "Macau Barbarian Talk" textbook is recorded in the "Brief Account of Macau," compiled by Yin Guangren and Zhang Rulin, historically referred to as "Macau Translation." Another textbook is the "Complete Book of Mixed Characters of Macau Barbarian Language" issued by the Wuguitang in Guangzhou.

#### 3.2 *The Overview of "Macao Portuguese" Textbooks*

The earliest document reflecting the "Macao Portuguese" that we can see today was compiled in 1751 by Yin Guangren and Zhang Rulin, titled "Ao Yi, or Macau Translation."

"Ao Yi" follows the compilation style of the "Hua Yi Yi Yü," organizing entries into categories. It includes 395 Portuguese terms: 83 related to heaven and earth, 161 to people, 52 to clothing and food, 48 to utensils and tools, and 51 to general use. The text does not include the original Portuguese words;

it only provides the meanings in Chinese along with Chinese characters indicating the Portuguese pronunciation. For phonetic indication, different font sizes are used to distinguish between the Chinese meanings and the phonetic characters.

Another "Macao Portuguese" textbook is "Complete Collection of Macao Barbarian Words." This book adopts the same categorization method as "Ao Yi," arranging entries by categories. According to the table of contents, it is divided into 16 categories, including heaven and earth, people, body, common speech, buying and selling questions and answers, clothing, food, objects, silks, colors, foreign goods, copper and iron, numbers, measurements, weight units, and volume units. However, this book is incomplete, with content missing after the food category. From the remaining parts, the number of entries in each category is as follows: 95 for heaven and earth, 73 for people, 55 for body, 136 for common speech, 66 for buying and selling questions and answers, 33 for clothing, 69 for food, totaling 527 entries.

The two textbooks mentioned above are the earliest known "Macao Portuguese" textbooks that use Chinese characters to indicate the pronunciation of Portuguese.

### *3.3 The Content of the "Macau Portuguese" Textbooks*

The content of the "Macau Barbarian Language" textbooks is closely related to the social life in Macau at that time. It can be summarized into the following three aspects.

#### *3.3.1 The Vocabulary for Social and Everyday Use*

The famous Chinese educator Yang Xianjiang once said, "The emergence of education is rooted in the practical needs of the local people's lives; it is a means to help people manage social life." (Yang, 1982) And the education of Macau Portuguese originated from the needs of social life at that time. In the process of Sino-Western trade interactions, social appellations and everyday vocabulary for clothing, food, housing, and transportation were indispensable, thus forming an important part of the content in the Macau Portuguese textbooks.

#### *3.3.2 The Vocabulary for Commercial Trade*

It is known that Macau Portuguese education gradually developed in the process of Sino-Western commercial trade. Therefore, vocabulary related to commercial trade became the core content of the Macau Portuguese textbooks. These vocabularies can be categorized as follows: names of import and export goods, numerical terms indicating quantity or order of goods, names of currencies and other units of measurement, names of trade countries, cities, ports, and places en route, names of various occupations related to trade, and terms describing the nature of goods, etc. These are essential vocabularies that merchants, interpreters, compradors, and other specialized personnel involved in trade must master. This is the most commonly used commercial English vocabulary, most of which is still in use today.

#### *3.3.3 The Vocabulary Related to Science and Culture*

After Macau became a center of Sino-Western trade, Western missionaries followed Portuguese merchants to this place. To achieve their goal of evangelization, they adopted a "cultural adaptation"

strategy. On one hand, they made efforts to master Chinese language and culture, translating Chinese classics into Western languages; on the other hand, they also translated European classics into Chinese. Moreover, they established schools or other institutions in Macau, adopting Western educational models to disseminate knowledge of astronomy, geography, mathematics, natural sciences, etc., with the aim of achieving their evangelistic goals. Therefore, the vocabulary related to scientific culture includes terms related to astronomy and calendars, advanced technological products from the West, natural world terms such as birds, beasts, fishes, insects, and medical terms related to the human body and diseases, etc.

As the renowned Chinese scholar Yu Yi said, "Language is the shell of thought." These early Macau Portuguese textbooks focused mainly on trade-related vocabulary, using Cantonese dialect to indicate the pronunciation of Portuguese words. This was an external manifestation of the Chinese initiative to accept Western culture, artifacts, and values. Through learning these Western vocabulary terms, the Chinese gradually broadened their horizons, changed their original cognition, updated their concepts, and laid the groundwork for the subsequent transformation of traditional Chinese education. In summary, the "Macau Barbarian Language" textbooks have a direct lineage relationship with the early "Hua Yi Translated Language." However, the early "Hua Yi Yi Yü" was only used for teaching the languages of surrounding ethnic minorities, while the "Macau Barbarian Language" textbooks applied the Chinese character phonetic method to the teaching of European languages, an undeniable innovation. Since Portuguese and English both belong to the Indo-European language family and share many similarities, when the British gradually dominated the trade market in China, the Chinese transferred this method of learning Portuguese to learning English, giving rise to the "Cantonese Phonetic English" textbooks.

#### **4. The Emergence of Cantonese g Phonetic English Textbooks**

The compilation of Cantonese phonetic English textbooks was the result of the accumulation of Canton English to a certain stage. Canton English gradually formed and developed with Macao Portuguese as an intermediary, initially existing mainly in spoken form. It was greatly influenced by Macao Portuguese and the Cantonese dialect in terms of pronunciation and grammar, differing significantly from native English. The transition from Macao Portuguese to Canton English spanned over a hundred years. During this period, communication between Chinese and British people involved either Portuguese or gestures and body language, which can be regarded as the "oral transmission" of Canton English teaching, accumulating the necessary vocabulary material for the compilation of "Canton English" textbooks.

##### *4.1 The Transition from "Macao Portuguese" to "Canton English"*

The indirect cultural exchange between Britain and China had long been established through the Silk Road. However, sustained direct contact between the two began with the sinking of the British merchant ship Unicorn off the coast of Guangdong in 1620. During the three-month salvage operation,

communication barriers necessitated the use of "Macao Portuguese." As Sino-British trade continued to develop, Chinese people increasingly encountered and used English, gradually integrating some common English vocabulary into Macao Portuguese. With the continuous addition of English terms, the English content in Macao Portuguese eventually surpassed the Portuguese content, evolving into a new language—Canton English.

Before 1748, Canton English primarily existed as an oral form, progressing through three distinct stages. The first stage, from 1620 to 1715, saw Macao Portuguese as the main lingua franca of Sino-Western trade, with Canton English playing a supplementary role. The second stage, from 1715 to 1731, featured both Macao Portuguese and Canton English as equally important languages of trade. The third stage, from 1731 to 1748, marked Canton English as the dominant language of trade, with Macao Portuguese serving a supplementary role.

American scholar Paul A. VanDyke analyzed why Canton English overtook Macao Portuguese as the primary trading language along the Chinese coast: "After the Netherlands, Denmark, and France joined the Guangzhou trade in 1729, 1731, and 1732 respectively, the number of foreigners arriving in China increased year by year. Perhaps these Scandinavian merchants abroad preferred speaking English over Portuguese." Clearly, Portugal had lost its former status as the maritime hegemon, and Portuguese was no longer a mandatory language for European captains. Conversely, Britain rapidly developed into the world's leading commercial, and the international stature of the English language surged, becoming the lingua franca of international trade..

#### *4.2 The Vocabulary of "Orally Transmitted" Canton English*

According to existing research literature, prior to 1748, there were no textbooks available for teaching Canton English; instead, it was primarily disseminated through oral transmission from one person to another. Despite this, the content of Canton English education can be traced within the works of early British navigators, missionaries, and other residents in China. For example, in 1637, Peter Mundy recorded 88 Asian English words and expressions in his travelogue. Charles Nobel also noted 73 vocabulary items characteristic of Canton English in his "Voyage to the East Indies, 1747-1748."

By analyzing the Canton English and its vocabulary preserved in the works of these early foreign authors, we can see that the content of Canton English shares a common lineage with Macao Portuguese, mainly encompassing the following aspects.

##### *4.2.1 The Vocabulary Related to Occupational Titles and Geographical Names*

These terms primarily include names and titles involved in interactions between Chinese and British traders, such as Hapoo, tsongtou, Mandeli, compradore, pilot, supercargo, second supercargo, cowlie, Wampu, Amoy, Fokin, etc. A comparison between the content of Macau Portuguese and Canton English reveals significant commonalities, notably focusing on trade-related goods, people, and places as important content. The difference lies in the fact that most terms shifted their etymological origin directly from Portuguese to English, while a minority retained their Portuguese roots. For instance, the term for an umbrella continued to use the Portuguese word "Kito-sol" instead of adopting the English



term “Umbrella”. Additionally, new English vocabulary emerged during Sino-British interactions. For example, the term “Hapoo”, actually denoted the Canton Customs established in 1685. As Sino-British trade expanded, an increasing number of British merchant ships and captains arrived, making these nouns part of the English content mastered by Chinese people at the time. However, due to the incompatibility of the Chinese phonetic system, these transliterated words from the West faced considerable difficulties in assimilation, which greatly impacted their dissemination. (Federico Masini, 1997).

#### 4.2.2 The Vocabulary Related to Trade Goods and Daily Necessities

After British vessels entered Guangzhou, the Cantonese interpreters had to register the imported goods and collect taxes for the Guangdong customs. Besides, they had to provide essential living supplies for the British in Guangzhou. Therefore, these vocabularies became core content of Canton English. For example, terms for goods included “Timlong (lantern), tea (Tia, Chaa, tay, te), hyson singlo (new Loogee tea), sutchong (sootchuen) (small species tea), bohea (Bohea tea), pekoe (white tip tea), congou (congou tea)”, etc.; terms for daily food and drink included “chau (cohao, porridge), hockshew (hockshu) (shell liquor), samshew (Shun-shew, arrack), ginseng (ginseng, ginseng), paling (paling, white damask), ketchup (tomato sauce)”, etc. Most of these trade goods and daily necessities were unique to China, so they were often directly transliterated, making them the most common sources of Chinese loanwords in English, which are still widely used today.

When foreigners arrived at the port of Guangzhou, besides conducting trade, they also needed to address daily needs such as clothing, food, shelter, transportation, medical care, and even physiological issues. Therefore, it was necessary to master everyday English vocabulary related to laundry, mending clothes, repairing shoes, haircuts, vegetables, fruits, travel, medical treatment, and more. Merchants and interpreters with a high level of English proficiency could even discuss cultural and religious topics with foreigners. This shows that the content of Canton English was closely tied to everyday life needs.

#### 4.2.3 The Vocabulary Related to Units of Weight and Measurement

During the process of Sino-Western trade, weight and measurement units were core vocabulary needed by both parties. Charles Noble recorded in his travelogue how to express English numerals in Cantonese: (Noble, Charles, 1762). Besides numerals, measurement vocabulary also included units of weight and currency, such as cash, cundoreene, mace (massa), tael (tahel), pecull, cattees (catty), casse, li, yard, coved, piece, and so on.

When foreign vessels arrived in Guangzhou, Chinese interpreters were responsible for measuring the ships, reporting to the Guangdong Customs on the ship's volume, the weight of the cargo, and the amount of taxes due. This involved conversions between Chinese and Western measurement and currency units, making these measurement unit terms essential content to master in English. Knowledge of Western and Chinese measurement units and their conversion was not only a linguistic requirement for Chinese traders but also cultural knowledge, indicating that early English education in China integrated knowledge and cultural dissemination.

This kind of Chinese and Western measurement and currency units changed continuously, rendering dozens of related English terms obsolete nowadays. However, they were indispensable under the social context of the particular period of time in the history. This demonstrates that the content of English education developed alongside changes in social life.

In summary, the content of English education in Guangzhou existed orally, accumulating terms related to trade goods, personal titles, measurements, and geographical names during this period. This laid the foundation for the emergence of Chinese character phonetic English textbooks.

## 5. Conclusion

The compilation of Chinese character phonetic English textbooks was not an overnight success but rather the product of a long historical accumulation and the development of society to a certain stage. Its historical roots can be traced back to the annotation of minority scripts and Indian Buddhist scriptures during the Han and Tang dynasties. By the Yuan and Ming dynasties, this method of using Chinese characters to annotate pronunciations was widely applied to the translation and teaching of scripts from minorities around China and tributary state documents, resulting in the earliest foreign (ethnic) language textbooks that used Chinese characters to denote pronunciation, known as "Hua Yi Yi Yü." European colonizers led by the Portuguese opened up the Asian trade market and established direct trade contact with China. Portuguese became the lingua franca of Sino-Western trade. The Chinese in Macao applied the Chinese character phonetic method to learning Portuguese, compiling "Macao Portuguese" textbooks. Britain entered the Chinese trade market. Initially, Sino-British interactions relied on "Macao Portuguese," but as Britain's trading status in China improved and direct contacts between the two nations increased, English gradually gained prominence in trade, leading to the emergence of "Canton English," which replaced "Macao Portuguese" as the common language of Sino-Western trade. For a long historical period, "Canton English" existed orally until the compilation of *The Interpretation of English Language* by Cantonese interpreters following an edict by Emperor Qianlong in 1748, marking the birth of the first Chinese English textbook. Since it used Cantonese to annotate English pronunciation, it was referred to as a "Canton English" textbook.

Both "Hua Yi Yi Yü." and "Macao Portuguese" adopted a "categorized" approach to arranging teaching content, focusing mainly on "miscellaneous characters" and using Chinese characters to denote foreign (ethnic) language pronunciations. This textbook compilation style had a direct impact on the creation of "Canton English" textbooks, which became the earliest textbooks with the English pronunciation indicated in the Chinese characters.

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