

There is good evidence here, as Bauer also shows in his article on 'Five leads the way'. But you haven't suggested how would you go about finding more about this

Cantonese Sound Change Across Subgroups of the Hong Kong Speech Community

Two synchronic sound changes in Hong Kong Cantonese (Bauer 1983):

1. $\eta \rightarrow m$
Standard Cantonese (SC) syllabic velar nasal / η / becomes bilabial /m/.
2. $kw \rightarrow k / _ \text{ɔ}$
SC labialized velar initial /kw-/ becomes plain velar initial /k-/ before the low back rounded vowel /ɔ/.

Similar to the common English variation of 'quarter'

Speakers who used both the labialized /kw/ and plain velar /k/ initials in variation identified the two members of the following minimal pairs as having the same pronunciation.

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|-----------|-----------|--------|--------------|
| (1) /kwō/ | 'cross' | /kō/ | 'classifier' |
| /kw ôŋ/ | 'bright' | /k ôŋ/ | 'river' |
| /kw óŋ/ | 'broad' | /k óŋ/ | 'port' |
| /kwok/ | 'country' | /kok/ | 'each' |

Three speech contexts are tested, spontaneous speech, reading the Cantonese story and nursery rhyme, and pronouncing words in the word lists.

	Spontaneous speech	Word-list reading
(2)		
Only standard velar / η /	19	31
Only labial /m/	29	13
Variation of / η / and /m/	27	29
(3)		
Only standard /kw/	2 (age 68,73)	2
Only velar /k/	47	36
Variation of /kw/ and /k/	26	35 (Bauer 1983:324-30)

The change of / η / \rightarrow /m/ has affected primarily younger subjects.

(4) Age distribution of / η / \rightarrow /m/ in spontaneous speech

	Only labial /m/	Variation of / η / and /m/	Only standard velar / η /
Age 15-22	17/25	8/25	0
Age 23-37	11/31	15/31	5/31
Age 40-75	1/19	4/19	14/19

Education and gender also significantly affect the variation.

The impact of the sound change on the lexicon is not even across lexical items with the same structural description, such as (5) and (6) show.

(5) Patterns of η /m distribution

Number of speakers	'five'	'noon'	'surname'
9	η	η	η
4	m	m	m
3	m	m	η /m
2	m	η /m	η /m
2	m	η /m	η
2	η /m	η	η
4	η /m	η	η /m
2	η /m	η /m	η
4	η /m	η /m	η /m
1	η /m	m	m
1	η /m	m	η /m

(Bauer 1983:338)

(6) The distribution of kw/k by 38 subjects in the reading of the nursery rhyme, story and word lists

	'cross'	'country'	'broad'	'fruit'	'light'	'surname'
/kw/	16	29	26	54	53	29
/k/	13	32	18	23	8	58
kw/k	71	39	56	23	39	13

References

Bauer, Robert S. 1983. Cantonese sound change across subgroups of the Hong Kong speech community. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 11. 303-354.