

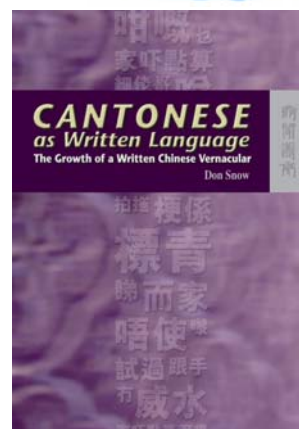
Workshop Written Cantonese and the Rise of Written Vernaculars

Speaker: Dr Don Snow
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Abstract

Today it seems only natural that a society's written language should be very similar to its spoken language. However, in pre-modern societies, the dominant written language was usually very different from the most widely spoken vernacular. The change in this state of affairs can be explained in part by the rise of modern nation states, which tended to promote spoken vernaculars as national languages. However, written forms of many spoken vernaculars had a significant history of development long before they were chosen for official promotion.



In this workshop we will consider the development of written Cantonese as an example of how written forms of spoken vernaculars develop "naturally," in other words, without promotion by any organized group. The case of written Cantonese will be used as a jumping off point for considering what generalizations can be made about patterns in "naturalistic" growth of written vernaculars.

Dr Don Snow has an MA in English (TESOL) from Michigan State University, and a PhD in East Asian language and culture from Indiana University. He has taught language, culture, and linguistics for over two decades in various parts of China, as well as in the United States, and currently teaches in the English Department of Nanjing University. He is the author of several books, including *Cantonese as Written Language: The Growth of a Written Chinese Vernacular* (Hong Kong University Press). His most recent book, *From Language Learner to Language Teacher*, will be released by TESOL Publications in early 2007.

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2 February 2007 (Friday), 3:30-5:30 p.m.
LG01, Hui Oi Chow Science Building, The University of Hong Kong
Chair: Mr Nigel Bruce, English Centre, HKU

All postgraduate students and interested parties are welcome.

Registration: <http://www.hku.hk/clear/snow.html>

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