Lesson 3: Family

Dialogue 1

Yale Romанизation
A: nei² uk¹ kei² yau² gei² do¹ go³ yan⁴ a³?  
B: ngo⁵ uk¹ kei² yau² ng³ go³ yan⁴; yau⁵ ngo⁵ ba⁴ ba¹, ma⁴ ma¹, ga¹ je¹, sai³ lou², tung⁴ maai⁴ ngo⁵. nei² uk¹ kei² ne¹?  
A: ngo⁵ uk¹ kei² ji² yau⁵ saam³ go³ yan⁴ – ngo⁵ fu⁶ mou⁵ tung⁴ maai⁴ ngo⁵. ngo⁵ mou⁵ hing¹ dai⁶ ji¹ mui²

English Translation
A: How many people are there in your family?  
B: There are 5 people in my family: there’s my dad, mom, older sister, younger brother, and me. How about your family?  
A: There are only 3 people in my family: my dad, mom, and me. I don’t have brothers and sisters.

Note: [1] uk¹ kei² ‘home’ is used here to refer to immediate family; the word uk¹ by itself refers to house.  
[2] ba⁴ ba¹ ma⁴ ma¹ is a more colloquial way of referring to both parents, the more formal way is fu⁶ mou⁵.

Vocabulary

Yale Romанизation | Part of Speech | English Meaning  
---|---|---
uk¹ kei² | N | home; family  
yau² | V | to exist, to have  
go³ | MW | measure for people  
ba⁴ ba¹ | N | father  
ma⁴ ma¹ | N | mother  
gai¹ je¹ | N | older sister  
sai³ lou² | N | younger brother  
tung⁴ maai⁴ | Conj. | and, with  
mou⁵ | V | to not exist, not exist  
hing¹ dai⁶ ji¹ mui² | N | brothers and sisters  
ji² | Adv. | only  
fu⁶ mou⁵ | N | parents  
ama⁴ ma¹ ba² ba¹ | N | mom and dad

Note: For other family members, please refer to handout.

Dialogue 2

Yale Romанизation
A: nei² yau³ mou⁵ hing¹ dai⁶ ji¹ mui² a³?  
B: ngo⁵ yau² y¹ ga³ ga¹ je¹.  
A: keui⁵ daai⁶ (gwo³) nei² gei² do¹ nin¹ a³?  
B: keui⁵ daai⁶ (gwo³) ngo⁵ saam³ nin¹.  
A: o⁵…ngo⁵ yau¹ yat¹ go³ sai³ lou². keui⁵ sai³ (gwo³) ngo⁵ leung⁵ nin¹.

English Translation
A: Do you have any brothers and sisters?  
B: I have a sister.  
A: How many years is she older than you?  
B: She is older than me by 3 years.  
A: Oh…I have a younger brother. He is younger than me by 2 years.

Note: The comparative gwo³ is occasionally omitted.

Vocabulary

Yale Romانيةisation | Part of Speech | English Meaning  
---|---|---
daai⁶ | Adj. | big, large  
gwo³ | V. | to pass  
gei² do¹ (+ MW) | QW | how many…?  
sai³ | Adj. | small, little  
leung⁵ | Det. | two (used with measures)

Supplementary Adjectives

Yale | Meaning | English | Meaning  
do¹ | Adj./Adv. many/more | hau¹ saang¹/nin¹ ching | young
Cantonese Decal Spring 2008  

**Facilitators:** Mel Lo & Jeannie Fong  
**ASUC Sponsored – handicap / wheelchair accessible**

### Dialogue 3

**Yale Romanization**  
A: nei⁵ uk¹ kei² yau¹ mou⁵ chung² mat⁶ a³?  
B: ngo⁶ yau¹ yat¹ jek³ gau² tung⁴ yat¹ jek³ maau¹. nei⁵ ne¹?  
A: ngo⁶ dei⁶ gau² tung⁴ maau¹ dou¹ mou⁵ daan⁶ hai⁶ ngo⁵ yau¹ gei² tiu⁴ gam¹ yu².  
B: nei¹ dei¹ dim² gaa¹ mou⁵ gau² tung⁴ maau¹ a³?  
A: yan⁶ wai⁶ ngo⁵ ma⁴ ma¹ m⁴ jung¹ yi² yeung⁵ gau² tung⁴ maau¹, so⁴ yi² ngo⁵ dei¹ uk¹ kei⁵ mou⁵ lo¹.  

**English Translation**  
A: Do you have any pets at home?  
B: I have a dog and a cat. How about you?  
A: We neither have cats nor dogs, but I do have a few goldfish.  
B: Why don't you have cats and dogs?  
A: Since my mom doesn't like to raise cats and dogs, so we don't have any at home.

### Vocabulary

**Yale Romanization**  
chung³ mat⁶  
je⁵  
gau²  
maau¹  
tung⁴  
dou¹  
daan⁶ hai⁶  
gei² + MW  
tiu⁴  
gam¹ yu²  
yan¹ wai⁶  
yeung⁵  
sou² yi²  

**Part of Speech**  
N  
MW  
N  
N  
Conj.  
Adv.  
Conj.  
Det.  
MW  
N  
Conj.  
V.  

**English Meaning**  
pet  
measure for many animals, body parts, objects  
dog  
cat  
and, with  
both, all, every  
but, however  
several, few…  
measure for long animals and objects  
goldfish  
because, since  
to raise, train, foster  
therefore, so

**Supplementary Vocabulary**

**Yale Romanization**  
ni¹ + MW  
go² + MW  
ni¹ dou⁶  
go² dou⁶  

**Part of Speech**  
Dem.  
Dem.  
N  
N  

**English Meaning**  
this…  
that…  
here  
there, over there

---

**Note:** [1] This use of dou¹ is different from the usage of dou¹ meaning 'also'.

---

Facilitators: Mel Lo & Jeannie Fong  
ASUC Sponsored – handicap / wheelchair accessible
Grammar

1) Existential Verbs *yau⁵* ‘to exist, to have’, *mou⁵* ‘to not exist, to have’

In Cantonese, the verb *yau⁵*, which loosely translates to “to exist, to have, there is” has an extensive set of functions depending on whether it is used with nouns, verbs, or adjectives. In this lesson, we will make use *yau⁵* followed by nouns, which has the above-mentioned meaning of existence and possession.

Examples:

\[ \text{ngo}⁵ \text{yau}⁵ \text{saam}¹ \text{jek}³ \text{gau}². \]  
I have three dogs.

\[ \text{Paak}³ \text{Hak}¹ \text{Loi}⁴ \text{yau}⁵ \text{hou}² \text{do}¹ \text{hok}⁶ \text{saang}¹. \]  
Berkeley has many students/There are many students in Berkeley.

\[ \text{ni}¹ \text{dou}⁶ \text{yau}⁵ \text{yat}¹ \text{jek}³ \text{maau}¹ \]  
There is a cat here.

The negative form of *yau⁵* is *mou⁵*, which means ‘to not have, to not exist’.

Example:

\[ \text{ngo}⁵ \text{mou}⁵ \text{hing}¹ \text{dai}² \text{ji}² \text{mou}². \]  
I have no brothers and sisters.

\[ \text{fo}³ \text{sat}¹ \text{leui}⁵ \text{min}⁶ \text{mou}⁵ \text{to}² \text{dang}³. \] (\text{*fo}³ \text{sat}¹: classroom, \text{leui}⁵ \text{min}⁶: inside, \text{to}² \text{dang}³: tables and chairs)
There are tables or chairs in the classroom.

\[ \text{go}² \text{dou}⁶ \text{mou}⁵ \text{chi}³ \text{so}² \] (\text{chi}³ \text{so}²: toilet, restroom)
There are no restrooms there.

2) Measure Words

Measure words (or noun classifiers) are a crucial part of the structure of Cantonese nouns. Each noun in Cantonese is assigned in classifier, whether it be one specific to the noun or a more generic one. In English, the closest things to measure words are count words that are specific to certain nouns, such as: *a pride of lions, a pair of pants, a cup of coffee, a flock of sheep*. As with these count words, measure words in Cantonese have to be learned, and the use of the proper measure is important in conversation.

Measure words are needed in the following situations:

a) when counting/quantifying
Ex: \text{yat}¹ \text{jek}³ \text{gau}² ‘one dog’; \text{mui}⁵ \text{tui}⁶ \text{fish} ‘every fish’

b) with demonstratives \text{ni}¹ ‘this’, \text{go}² ‘that’
Ex: \text{ni}¹ \text{go}² \text{hok}⁶ \text{saang}¹ ‘this student’; \text{go}² \text{gaan}¹ \text{hok}¹ \text{maau}⁶ ‘that school’

c) with question words (QW)
Ex: \text{gei}² \text{do}¹ \text{go}² \text{yan}¹ ‘how many persons?’; \text{bin}¹ \text{jo}⁶ \text{suk}¹ \text{se}⁵ ‘which dorm?’

3) Conjunction *tung⁴ (maai⁴)* ‘and, with’

*tung⁴* or *tung⁴ maai⁴* is used when connecting nouns, noun phrases, or for lists.
They are interchangeable in many cases, although when used to express personal relationships, *tung⁴* is often used.

Examples:

- ngo⁵ jung yi² sou³ hok⁶, ging¹ jai³ hok⁶, tung⁴ maai⁴ ying¹ man⁴
  I like Math, Economics, and English.

- keui⁵ tung⁴ ngo⁵ hai⁶ hou² pang⁴ yau⁵.
  He and I are good friends.

- ngo⁵ hou² jang¹ sai² saam¹ tung⁴ dou² laap⁶ saap³. (jang¹: to hate, sai² saam¹: to wash clothes; dou² laap⁶ saap³: to take out the trash)
  I really hate doing laundry and taking out the trash.

- ngo⁵ tung⁴ keui⁵ yat¹ chai⁴ heui³ lei⁵ hang⁴. (yat¹ chai⁴: together; heui³: to go; lei⁵ hang⁴: travel)
  I go traveling together with him/He and I go traveling together.

4) Making Comparisons with *gwo³*

*gwo³* in Chinese originally meant ‘to pass’, but in Cantonese it developed a comparative usage, in the following pattern:


Examples:

- keui⁵ gou¹ *gwo³* ngo⁵.
  He is taller than me.

- Mei⁵ Gwok³ daai⁶ *gwo³* Ying¹ Gwok³ hou² do¹.
  The USA is a lot larger than England.

- ngo⁵ ga¹ je¹ daai⁶ *gwo³* sei³ nin⁴.
  My sister is 4 years older than I am.

Note: This is not the only comparative pattern used in Cantonese; there is another more formal construction that is similar to the Mandarin comparative. This will be discussed later.

5) Conjunction *daan⁶ hai⁶* ‘but, however’

A common pattern in Cantonese is seui⁴ yin⁴..., *daan⁶ hai⁶*..., which means ‘although..., but...’ and is used when the first clause is used to make a concession that the second (main) clause contradicts.

Examples:

- seui⁴ yin⁴ ngo⁵ hai⁶ Gwong² Dung¹ Yan⁴, *daan⁶ hai⁶* ngo⁵ m⁴ sik¹ Gwong² Dung¹ Wa². (sik¹: to know, Gwong² Dung¹ Wa²: Cantonese)
  Although I am Cantonese, (but) I don’t know Cantonese.

- seui⁴ yin⁴ ngo⁵ m⁴ ma¹ m⁴ jung¹ yi³ gau², *daan⁶ hai⁶* ngo⁵ jung¹ yi⁶.
  Although my mom dislikes dogs, I like (them).

In the dialogue *daan⁶ hai⁶* is used by itself in the second clause, which simply concedes what was mentioned before it.

Examples:
This book is long, but good.

I like raising cats, but I dislike raising dogs.

6) Expression  

The expression  is used to indicate a reason for something, in which the first clause gives the reason for whatever is in the second (main) clause.

Examples:

\[ \text{yan}^1 \text{wai}^6 \text{gyu}^6 \text{dorm hou}^2 \text{gwai}^6, \text{so}^2 \text{yi}^5 \text{ngo}^5 \text{jou}^1 \text{paak}^1 \text{man}^2 \text{gyu}^6. \]  
Since living in dorms is very expensive; (therefore), I’m renting an apartment.

\[ \text{yan}^1 \text{wai}^6 \text{ngo}^5 \text{jung}^1 \text{yi}^3 \text{gai}^3 \text{sou}^3, \text{so}^2 \text{yi}^5 \text{ngo}^5 \text{gyu}^2 \text{sau}^1 \text{sou}^3 \text{hok}^6. \]  
Since I like to do math, I’m majoring in Mathematics.

so^2 \text{yi}^5 ‘therefore, so’ can also be used by itself in the second clause.

Example:

\[ \text{keui}^5 \text{hai}^2 \text{Heung}^1 \text{Gong}^2 \text{lei}^4, \text{so}^2 \text{yi}^5 \text{keui}^5 \text{sik}^1 \text{Gwong}^2 \text{Dung}^1 \text{Wa}^2. \]  
He’s from Hong Kong, so he knows Cantonese.

7) Adverb  ‘both, all, every, each’

dou^1 is a word that has a broad range of functions. One function, to simply put it, is to express a sense of ‘both’, all, every, each’ in referring to a noun in the sentence.

Example:

\[ \text{ngo}^5 \text{dei}^6 \text{gau}^2 \text{tung}^4 \text{maau}^1 \text{dou}^1 \text{mou}^5. \]  
We do not have cats or dogs.

(In English, since it’s a negative, we have to translate it a bit differently, but literally, we’re saying [we - cats - and - dogs - both - not have]. Take for example the positive statement below and it’s a bit more obvious)

\[ \text{ngo}^5 \text{dei}^6 \text{gau}^2 \text{tung}^4 \text{maau}^1 \text{dou}^1 \text{yau}^5. \]  
We have both cats and dogs.

Other Examples:

\[ \text{keui}^2 \text{ga}^3 \text{che}^1 \text{dou}^1 \text{jung}^1 \text{yi}^3. \]  
He likes every car.

\[ \text{ngo}^5 \text{mat}^1 \text{ye}^5 \text{syu}^1 \text{dou}^1 \text{m}^4 \text{ta}^2. \]  
I don’t read any books.

(Again, as we pointed out, in English dou^1 doesn’t have a direct translation)
Note: As mentioned earlier, this function of dou¹ is grammatically different from the dou¹ meaning 'also' (even though it's the same character)

8) Demonstratives ni¹ ‘this’, go² ‘that’

The demonstratives ni¹ ‘this’, go² ‘that’ must be accompanied by a measure word.

Example:

- ni¹ go³ pang⁴ yau⁵ ‘this friend’
- ni¹ jo⁸ daal⁶ ha⁶ ‘this building’
- go² go³ tung⁴ hok⁶ ‘that classmate’
- go² bun² syu¹ ‘that book’
## Family Terms (ga¹ juk⁶)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Cantonese (Notes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>ba⁴ ba¹ / a³ ba⁴ / lou² dau⁶ (colloq.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>ma⁴ ma¹ / a³ ma¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brother (older)</td>
<td>go⁴ go¹ / a³ go¹ / daai⁴ lou² (colloq.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(younger)</td>
<td>sai³ lou²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brothers</td>
<td>hing¹ dai²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sister (older)</td>
<td>ga¹ je¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(younger)</td>
<td>sai³ mui² / mui²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sisters</td>
<td>ji² mui²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son</td>
<td>jai²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>neui²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>husband</td>
<td>jeung⁶ fu¹ / lou⁵ gung¹ (colloq.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wife</td>
<td>taai³ taai² / lou⁵ po⁴ (colloq.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paternal Relatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Cantonese (Notes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>ye⁴ ye² / a³ ye⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandmother</td>
<td>ma⁴ ma⁴ / a³ ma⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cousin (male, older)</td>
<td>tong⁴ a³ go¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(male, younger)</td>
<td>tong⁴ sai³ lou²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(female, older)</td>
<td>tong⁴ ga¹ je¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(female, younger)</td>
<td>tong⁴ sai³ mui²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle (older than father)</td>
<td>baak³ fu⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle's wife</td>
<td>baak³ leung⁴/baak³ mou⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle (younger than father)</td>
<td>a³ suk¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle's wife</td>
<td>a³ sam²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aunt (older than father)</td>
<td>gu¹ ma¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(younger than father)</td>
<td>gu¹ je¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aunt's husband</td>
<td>gu¹ jeung²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Maternal Relatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Cantonese (Notes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>gung¹ gung¹ / a³ gung¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandmother</td>
<td>po⁴ po² / a³ po⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cousin (male, older)</td>
<td>biu² go¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(male, younger)</td>
<td>biu² dai⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(female, older)</td>
<td>biu² je²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(female, younger)</td>
<td>biu² mui²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle</td>
<td>kau⁵ fu²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle's wife</td>
<td>kam⁵ mou²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aunt (older than mother)</td>
<td>yi⁴ ma¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(younger than mother)</td>
<td>a³ yi¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aunt's husband</td>
<td>yi⁴ jeung²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>