

# Cantonese

Module type: Exercise

Class: Phonology

Keywords: Cantonese, phoneme, allophone, complementary distribution

Cantonese is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken by over 85 million people all over the world, including Hong Kong, Macau, China, as well as in many diasporic communities in North America. In Canada, Cantonese is the second most common language other than English or French spoken at home (Statistics Canada 2017), and one of the languages included in the *Heritage Language Variation and Change in Toronto Project* (Nagy 2011).

## Instructions

Consider the data below:

si	‘poetry’
lip	‘elevator’
hɪŋtʰøy	‘interest’
bin	‘side’
bun	‘half’
guwak	‘sneaky’
nam	‘male’
tʰim	‘sweet’
sik	‘to eat’
tʰit	‘iron’
dɪksi	‘taxi’
jok	‘meat’
tsʰuŋ	‘heavy’
bak	‘white’

Do [i] and [ɪ] belong to separate phonemes or are they allophones of the same phoneme? Explain.

Do [u] and [ʊ] belong to separate phonemes or are they allophones of the same phoneme? Explain.

## Sources

Nagy, Naomi. 2011. Heritage Language Variation and Change Project. Online: [https://ngn.artsci.utoronto.ca/HLVC/0\\_0\\_home.php](https://ngn.artsci.utoronto.ca/HLVC/0_0_home.php)

Statistics Canada. 2017. Focus on geography series, 2016 Census. Catalog no. 98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, Ontario. Online: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-CAN-Eng.cfm?TOPIC=5&LANG=Eng&GK=CAN&GC=01>