

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #21

Slowing Down the Cantonese

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TRADITIONAL CHINESE

1. 唔好意思。
2. 咩事?
3. 我聽唔明啊。
4. 咁...
5. 你可唔可以講慢啲啊?
6. 冇問題。

JYUTPING

1. m4 hou2 ji3 si1。
2. me1 si6 ?
3. ngo5 teng1 m4 ming4 a3。
4. gam2...
5. nei5 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 gong2 maan6 di1 a3 ?
6. mou5 man6 tai4。

ENGLISH

CONT'D OVER

1. Excuse me.
2. What's the matter?
3. I don't understand.
4. So...
5. Can you slow it down a bit?
6. No problem.

VOCABULARY

Traditional	Romanization	English	Class
聽唔明	teng1 m4 ming4	to not understand	verb
慢	maan6	slow	adjective/adverb
咁	gam2	so	conjunction
講	gong2	to speak	verb
快	faai3	fast	adjective
勤力	kan4 lik6	diligent	adjective
啲	di1	-er	suffix

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>我聽唔明。 ngo5 teng1 m4 ming4.</p> <p>I don't understand.</p>	<p>唔該講慢啲。 m4 goi1 gong2 maan6 di1 .</p> <p>Can you speak slowly please?</p>
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<p>行慢啲。 <i>haang4 maan6 di1.</i></p> <p>Walk slower.</p>	<p>咁... <i>gam2...</i></p> <p>So...</p>
<p>你識唔識講廣東話? <i>nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 gwong2 dung1 waa2?</i></p> <p>Do you speak Cantonese?</p>	<p>講快啲。 <i>gong2 faai3 di1.</i></p> <p>Speak faster.</p>
<p>勤力啲。 <i>kan4 lik6 di1.</i></p> <p>(Work) harder!</p>	<p>唔該慢啲講多次。 <i>m4 goi1 maan6 di1 gong2 do1 ci3.</i></p> <p>Can you repeat again, slowly please?</p>
<p>行慢啲。 <i>haang4 maan6 di1.</i></p> <p>Walk slower.</p>	<p>唔該細聲啲。 <i>m4 goi1 sai3 seng1 di1.</i></p> <p>Please lower your volume.</p>

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 啲, *di1* ("-er")

你可唔可以講慢啲?

nei5 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 gong2 maan6 di1 ?

"Can you slow it down a bit?"

In Cantonese, the character 啲 (*di1*) modifies adjectives and verbs and functions as the English equivalent of "-er." For example, the Cantonese words for "fast" (快) and "slow" (慢) turn into "faster" (快啲, *faai3 di1*) and "slower" (慢啲, *maan6 di1*). Notice that the 啲 directly follows the adjective or verb. We place adjectives that modify verbs behind the verb.

Formula: Verb + Adjective + 啲

For Example:

1. 食慢啲。
sik6 maan6 di1
"Eat slower."
2. 飲慢啲。
jam2 maan6 di1
"Drink slower."
3. 行快啲。
haang4 faai3 di1
"Go faster."
4. 勤力啲。
kan4 lik6 di1
"Work harder."

You can negate 啲 by placing 唔好 before the verb/adjective phrase.

For Example:

1. 唔好講慢啲。
m4 ho2 gong2 maan6 di1
"Don't speak slower."

In the dialogue, we used the grammar pattern 可唔可以 ("can or cannot") in conjunction with 啲.

For Example:

1. 你可唔可以講慢啲？
nei5 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 gong2 maan6 di1
"Can you speak slower?"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Cultural Misunderstandings

One of the biggest hurdles in living and working in both Hong Kong and Guangdong are not only the linguistic differences but the cultural differences as well. While Westerners can be given a free pass on many faux pas, there are a few proactive steps you can take to avoid stepping in cultural pot holes.

The first is the handshake. There is no need to bow in Chinese culture and oftentimes a handshake will suffice. You may notice that by American and European standards, a Chinese handshake is rather limp. The thumbs-up is quite ubiquitous in Hong Kong and mainland Guangdong, meaning "excellent!" You won't get too far with high fives though. You may also notice that many Hong Kong Chinese who do business with foreigners will use a "Western" name that is easier for them to remember and pronounce. These names are often generic and easy to pronounce, like "Eric," "Mike," or "Bill."

Gift giving is part and parcel of doing business in Hong Kong. It helps establish and maintain relationships. Gifts are always exchanged between business associates at Christmas and the Chinese New Year. Usually a red envelope with money inside is presented at both the Chinese New Year's and weddings. When giving and accepting gifts, use both hands. Gifts should be reciprocated.

Entertaining is a critical part of doing business in Hong Kong. Just like gifts, meals should also be reciprocated. Chinese tables are round and will have a "lazy Susan" in the middle so that the food can be distributed evenly. The guest of honor will sit furthest from the entrance while the host will sit closest to the entrance so they can better deal with wait staff.