

ARE THERE SIX OR NINE TONES IN CANTONESE?

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Most contemporary linguists adopt a six- over nine-tone system in Cantonese. This study confirmed the psychological validity of the six-tone system through Cantonese speakers' knowledge of Mandarin tone pronunciations using a Mandarin *pinyin* transcription task. There are pronunciation relationships between Cantonese and Mandarin at the lexical level and previous studies have shown that Cantonese speakers were more accurate in giving the Mandarin pronunciation when the word followed the dominant correspondence than when it did not. Results from ANCOVA and regression analysis showed that the pronunciation correspondences using the six-tone system accounts better for the accuracy data than the nine-tone system, thus providing empirical support for the former.