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**CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE PRONUNCIATION
MODEL FOR THE ELT CLASSROOM IN HONG KONG:
A SOCIOLINGUISTIC INQUIRY**

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Ph.D

The Hong Kong

Polytechnic University

2015

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**Choosing an Appropriate Pronunciation Model for
the ELT Classroom in Hong Kong: A Sociolinguistic
Inquiry**

Jim Yee Him Chan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2014

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ABSTRACT

The globalisation of English in recent decades has focused scholarly attention on the choice of an appropriate pronunciation model in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom. Traditionally, native-speaker (NS) pronunciation such as Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) has been regarded as the only goal for second-language (L2) learners in most ELT contexts and has thus been widely adopted in ELT listening and speaking materials, curricula and teacher education around the world. One consequence of regarding the exonormative NS model as the ideal learning target and, presumably, the benchmark for English proficiency has been the routine teaching practice of correcting students' inevitable mother-tongue influenced English accents, which are considered as pronunciation 'errors'. Over the past two decades, the NS model has been criticised in the field of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics on the grounds that it not only neglects real language use and needs in multilingual settings, but also takes little account of local culture and identity (Kirkpatrick, 2007). To overcome these limitations, two other pedagogical models have been proposed by World Englishes (WE) (e.g. Baumgardner, 2006) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) scholars (e.g. Jenkins, 2000) respectively, namely the endonormative nativised model and the ELF approach which potentially are more appropriate in the outer and expanding circles respectively (see Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Against this background, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the appropriateness of adopting the aforementioned two pedagogical proposals in the ELT classroom in Hong Kong, where English serves as an indispensable tool for international communication. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it explores the (dis)connection between the sociolinguistic reality and school practices in Hong Kong in two

dimensions: (1) the stakeholders' experience of using/learning spoken English and (2) their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation teaching. These stakeholders include students (of different academic levels), teachers (using English to teach ELT and content-area subjects), and the professionals (in diverse disciplines) who contribute to the real use and long-term development of English in Hong Kong. In order to capture a more holistic picture of the issues being investigated, the study adopted a mixed-method approach which involved the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative methods included structured questionnaire surveys and the verbal-guise technique (VGT) whereas the qualitative methods consisted of semi-structured focus groups/individual interviews, document analysis and a school case study.

The discussion of the findings is divided into four main parts. The first section focuses on the education reality of pronunciation teaching and modelling at both policy and practice levels via the document analysis of the most recent ELT curricula, public assessments and three sets of local commercial textbooks as well as a school case study. The findings suggest that Hong Kong's new ELT curriculum is shifting towards a more WE/ELF perspective, which aims for communicative competence while downplaying the importance of conforming to NS pronunciations, but it is not fully implemented at the level of examination and textbooks which are apparently still guided by NS norms. In the classroom context, however, students were to a great extent exposed to different degrees of HKE pronunciation (over 70% on a weekly basis) by their ELT as well as content-area teachers who adopt English as the medium of instruction. The second section draws on findings derived from large-scale structured questionnaire surveys and VGT, which provide an overview of the

stakeholders' English-using experience and their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning. In addition to a general NS Anglophone-centric attitude among the participants, two important discoveries include, firstly, the contextual variation in the participants' acceptability of the non-native-speaker (NNS) (also HKE) vis-à-vis NS accents in that they had less adverse reactions to NNS accents in less formal and more interactive situations and, secondly, there was a tendency that English learners at a high education level perceived the HKE accent more negatively than those at a lower academic level (and the reverse for NS accents such as RP).

A more in-depth comparison of the participants' English using/learning experience in relation to their attitudes towards a learning target among the various groups of stakeholders (i.e. professionals, English learners, teachers) are discussed in sections three (the professionals) and four (English learners and teachers), which draw on findings of semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In terms of the use of English by the stakeholders, the data illustrate the complicated sociolinguistic reality in Hong Kong that is quite different from what is portrayed in the education context, where students learn English. Based on their experience of using/learning English, the participants have suggested their challenges in communication (e.g. accent variation), strategies to overcome these challenges and, recommendations for English teaching/learning. Furthermore, the diverse groups of participants have also provided reasons for their choice of a English learning target mainly in four dimensions, namely its (1) perceived attainability, (2) intelligibility, (3) instrumental value (in relation to its social status) and (4) integrative value. Having evaluated the (dis)connection between the sociolinguistic and education reality as well as the stakeholders' diverging (and converging) attitudes towards their pronunciation target,

the study concludes by providing recommendations for multiple levels of education such as the language-in-education policy, curricula, assessments, teaching materials and teacher education so as to help future learners to promote a pluricentric view of English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Stephen Evans and Dr Cathy Wong, for their guidance, support and valuable advice throughout my PhD study. I am grateful to Dr Barbara Seidlhofer for her temporary supervision during my visit to the University of Vienna. I should also express my sincere gratitude to all the participants for their assistance and participation during the collection of the data. Without any of these people, this thesis can never have been completed.

Parts of this thesis have been published in international referred journals (and presented in conferences) in diverse research areas. They comprised investigations into Hong Kong's ELT curricula, assessments and teaching materials (*Journal of English as a Lingua Franca; RELC Journal*), classroom practices of pronunciation modelling (*International Journal of Applied Linguistics*), the fine-tuning medium-of-instruction policy (*Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development; Language and Education*) and stakeholders' language attitudes (*TESOL Quarterly; World Englishes; Journal of Asia TEFL, Asian EFL Journal*). This research has also been awarded the *Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fellowships for Postgraduate Research Students* in 2011 and, more recently, the *Fawzia Braine Memorial Award* in 2013.

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Table of contents

	Page
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	vii
Table of contents	xi
List of tables	xxii
List of figures	xxiv
List of appendices	xxvii
CHAPTER ONE Introduction	
1.1 Issues and problems	1
1.2 Objectives	10
1.3 Research questions	12
1.4 Organisation of the thesis	13
CHAPTER TWO Literature review I – World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF)	
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 The spread of English	20
2.3 World Englishes research and the birth of new Englishes	25
2.4 Challenges to the Second Language Acquisition theories	28
2.5 The native English teacher fallacy	33
2.6 Pedagogical implications of WE research for ELT	39
2.7 Establishing the field of English as a lingua franca	48
2.8 Defining the nature of English as a lingua franca	52

2.9	Research into English as a lingua franca	63
2.9.1	Regional ELF research	63
2.9.2	Linguistic research in ELF	65
2.9.2.1	Phonology	66
2.9.2.2	Lexis and lexicogrammar	74
2.9.2.3	Pragmatics	77
2.9.3	Domains of ELF research	81
2.9.3.1	The business domain	82
2.9.3.2	The academic domain	84
2.9.4	Pedagogical implications of ELF research	87
2.10	Summary and brief account of the next section	93

**CHAPTER THREE Literature review II – The choice of a pedagogical model
in Hong Kong’s ELT classroom**

3.1	Introduction	95
3.2	The notion of ‘Standard’ English(es)	96
3.3	The choices of a pedagogical (pronunciation) model	102
3.4	Which model in Hong Kong’s ELT classroom?	107
3.5	English in Hong Kong – An outer circle or expanding circle context?	111
3.5.1	The role of (spoken) English in Hong Kong	111
3.5.2	The existence of HKE	116
3.5.3	Positioning the ELF paradigm in Hong Kong	119
3.5.4	English in Hong Kong – implications for future research	123
3.6	The acceptance of an ELF model in Hong Kong classrooms	128
3.6.1	The importance of social acceptability	128

3.6.2	The status of English in the Hong Kong economy	132
3.6.3	The demand for ‘standard’ English in Hong Kong education	133
3.6.4	Local acceptability of HKE	136
3.6.5	The complexity of social acceptability: Local identity versus economic success	140
3.6.5.1	Identity construct of Hong Kong Chinese	144
3.6.5.2	Language and identity in Hong Kong	148
3.6.6	Acceptability – directions for future research	152
3.7	Summary and brief account of the next section	155

CHAPTER FOUR Research methodology

4.1	Introduction	158
4.2	Researching the sociolinguistic reality and language attitudes	159
4.3	Research perspectives and the mixed-method approach	165
4.4	Interviews	168
4.4.1	Research instrument	170
4.4.2	Participants	173
4.4.3	Data analysis	175
4.5	Structured questionnaire Survey	176
4.5.1	Research instrument	177
4.5.2	Participants	180
4.5.3	Data analysis	184
4.6	Document analysis	186
4.6.1	Selected documents	186
4.6.2	Phonetic analysis	190

4.6.3	Analysis of choice of English speaking contexts	190
4.7	Case study	191
4.7.1	The school	192
4.7.2	Data collection	193
4.7.3	Document analysis	196
4.7.4	Data log sheet	196
4.7.5	Phonological analysis	198
4.8	The verbal-guise technique	201
4.8.1	VGT vs MGT	202
4.8.2	Participants	204
4.8.3	Speech samples of VGT	206
4.8.4	The task	211
4.8.5	Data analysis	216
4.9	Summary and brief account of the next section	217

Part I Pronunciation teaching and modelling in the education setting

CHAPTER FIVE An evaluation of the ELT curricula, public assessments and local commercial textbooks

5.1	Introduction	221
5.2	The ELT curricula	222
5.2.1	Cultural understanding and values	223
5.2.2	Teaching of speaking and pronunciation models	228
5.2.3	Language and society	235
5.3	Public examinations	237
5.3.1	Listening	238

5.3.2	Speaking	245
5.4	Textbook analysis	248
5.4.1	Cultural understanding and values	249
5.4.1.1	Junior secondary textbooks	249
5.4.1.2	Senior secondary textbooks	253
5.4.2	Teaching of speaking and pronunciation models	254
5.4.2.1	Junior secondary textbooks	254
5.4.2.2	Senior secondary textbooks	258
5.4.3	Language and society	264
5.4.3.1	Junior secondary textbooks	264
5.4.3.2	Senior secondary textbooks	271
5.5	Summary and pedagogical implications	277

CHAPTER SIX Exposure to accents and pronunciation modelling:

A case study of a secondary school

6.1	Introduction	281
6.2	Exposure to accents and medium of instruction in Hong Kong	282
6.3	The school-based language policy	286
6.3.1	Overall language policy	287
6.3.2	EMI arrangements for teaching	288
6.4	Students' exposure to English pronunciation	288
6.5	Phonological features in teachers' accents as pronunciation models	294
6.5.1	Overall phonological patterns	294
6.5.2	Non-standard vowels	295
6.5.3	Non-standard consonants	302

6.6	Summary and implications	311
-----	--------------------------	-----

Part II Major stakeholders' attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning

**CHAPTER SEVEN A quantitative questionnaire survey on attitudes
towards accents and pronunciation learning**

7.1	Introduction	319
7.2	Overall survey results	320
7.2.1	Perception of participants' own accent	321
7.2.2	Factor analysis	323
7.2.3	Factor 1: Recognition of 'non-standard' English varieties	324
7.2.4	Factor 2: Legitimacy of NS varieties	325
7.2.5	Factor 3: Exposure to NS accents in multi-media	326
7.2.6	Factor 4: Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study	327
7.2.7	Factor 5: Communicating with NSs/NNSs	329
7.2.8	Factor 6: Preference for NS accents	330
7.2.9	Factor 7: Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent	334
7.2.10	Factor 8: Perception of learning English	336
7.2.11	Factor 9: Speaking a local accent	337
7.2.12	Factor 10: Hong Kong Identity	338
7.3	Differences among secondary students	339
7.3.1	Recognition of 'non-standard' English varieties	340
7.3.2	The legitimacy of NS varieties	341
7.3.3	Exposure to NS accents in multi-media	343
7.3.4	Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study	344
7.3.5	Factor 5: Communicating with NSs/NNSs	345

7.3.6	Factor 6: Preference for NS accents	347
7.3.7	Factor 7: Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent	349
7.3.8	Factor 8: Perception of learning English	350
7.3.9	Factor 9: Speaking a local accent	351
7.3.10	Factor 10: Hong Kong Identity	353
7.4	Summary and pedagogical recommendations	354

CHAPTER EIGHT Exploring attitudes towards accents and their contextual variation using a verbal-guise test

8.1	Introduction	357
8.2	Overall findings of VGT	358
8.2.1	Awareness of accent variation	358
8.2.2	Attitude towards accents: Status and solidarity	363
8.2.2.1	Principal Component Analysis	363
8.2.2.2	Overall perceptions of status and solidarity	365
8.2.3	Overall attitudinal pattern in contexts	366
8.2.3.1	Differences in acceptability of varieties of English	366
8.2.3.2	Differences in acceptability of NNS and NS accents	370
8.3	A comparison of findings among three student groups	375
8.3.1	Awareness of accents among students	376
8.3.2	Students' perceptions of status and solidarity	380
8.3.3	Students' attitude towards accents in contexts	383
8.4	Summary and pedagogical implications	387

Part III Views from the professionals

CHAPTER NINE Professionals' self-report experiences of English language

use in Hong Kong

9.1	Introduction	395
9.2	Use of English in Hong Kong based on Census data	397
9.3	Use of spoken English by professionals	402
9.4	Exposure to accents by the professionals	405
9.5	English use and exposure to accents in higher education	413
9.5.1	Sciences programs	415
9.5.2	Business programs	416
9.5.3	Social sciences and humanities programs	418
9.5.4	English as a lingua franca in higher education in Hong Kong?	419
9.6	Challenges facing the professionals in English communication	422
9.7	Summary and implications	449

CHAPTER TEN Professionals' choice of a pronunciation target and attitudes

towards pronunciation learning

10.1	Introduction	453
10.2	Choice (a): a native speaker of English	454
10.3	Choice (c): it doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners	480
10.4	Summary and implications	488

Part IV Views from secondary students and teachers

**CHAPTER ELEVEN Students' exposure to English and attitudes towards
pronunciation teaching**

11.1	Introduction	495
11.2	Use of English	496
11.2.1	English use in the education context	497
11.2.2	Use of English outside school	499
11.2.3	Perceived use of English after graduation	504
11.3	Students' choice of an English learning target	506
11.3.1	High status of NS English versus attainability	507
11.3.1.1	Junior secondary students	507
11.3.1.2	Senior secondary students	514
11.3.2	Hong Kong English	520
11.3.2.1	Junior secondary students	520
11.3.2.2	Senior secondary students	523
11.3.3	Intelligibility of NS versus NNS English	525
11.3.3.1	Junior secondary students	525
11.3.3.2	Senior secondary students	527
11.3.4	Cultural identity	529
11.3.4.1	Junior secondary students	529
11.3.4.2	Senior secondary students	532
11.4	Choice of a Putonghua learning target	534
11.4.1	Junior secondary students	534
11.4.2	Senior secondary students	540
11.5	Summary and implications	545

CHAPTER TWELVE Teachers' exposure to English and teaching of pronunciation

12.1	Introduction	549
12.2	Exposure to English	550
12.2.1	English language teachers	550
12.2.2	Subject teachers	559
12.3	Pedagogical foci on teaching spoken English	563
12.3.1	English language teachers	563
12.3.2	Subject teachers	582
12.4	Summary and pedagogical implications	592

CHAPTER THIRTEEN Conclusion

13.1	Restatement of issues, problems and research purposes	596
13.2	Major findings	599
13.2.1	English use in Hong Kong and attitudes towards English varieties	560
13.2.2	Challenges facing professionals in English communication	605
13.2.3	The current pronunciation model(s) at secondary level	608
13.3	Pedagogical implications: Choosing an appropriate pronunciation model in the ELT classroom	612
13.3.1	Benchmarking an endonormative pronunciation target	613
13.3.2	The portrayal of English-using society	616
13.3.3	Pedagogical foci of spoken English and assessments	621
13.4	Contributions to future research and limitations	624

Endnotes	N1
Appendices	A1
References	R1

List of tables

CHAPTER TWO

2.1	EIL and NS pronunciation targets	69
-----	----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1	Overview of research methods and data collection process	168
4.2	Information about participants in focus groups and interviews	175
4.3	Number of participants in structured questionnaire survey	182
4.4	Selected ELT textbooks for analysis	189
4.5	Biographical information about speakers of the speech samples	209
4.6	Key HKE phonological features in the speech sample	211

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1	Learning objectives contributing to the development of WE-related values and attitudes across four key learning stages in the ELT curriculum	226
5.2	Varieties of accent in HKDSE examination paper 3 (listening)	239
5.3	English-speaking situations in HKDSE examination paper 3 (listening)	243
5.4	Selected ELT textbooks for analysis	248
5.5	Modules and Units about Hong Kong cultures and traditions	249
5.6	Festivals introduced in the textbooks	251
5.7	Segmental features highlighted in ESNSS	261

CHAPTER SIX

6.1	A summary of the shared non-standard vowels among teachers	299
6.2	A summary of the shared non-standard consonantal features among teachers	307

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1	Recognition of ‘non-standard’ English varieties (factor 1)	324
7.2	The legitimacy of NS varieties (factor 2)	325
7.3	Exposure to NS accents in multi-media (factor 3)	326
7.4	Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study (factor 4)	327
7.5	Communicating with NSs/NNSs (factor 5)	329
7.6	Preference for NS accents (factor 6)	331
7.7	Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent (factor 7)	334
7.8	Perception of learning English (factor 8)	335
7.9	Speaking a local accent (factor 9)	337
7.10	Hong Kong Identity (factor 10)	338

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.1	The rotated component Matrices for SS and FTU groups	363
8.2	Rankings of accents for status and solidarity (overall results)	365

List of figures

CHAPTER FIVE

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 5.1 | Perceived identities of English users in the photos in three junior secondary textbooks | 267 |
| 5.2 | Spoken text types in three junior secondary textbook series | 270 |
| 5.3 | Choice of spoken texts in the senior secondary listening textbook series | 276 |

CHAPTER SIX

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 6.1 | Students' exposure to English accents (S1) | 290 |
| 6.2 | Students' exposure to English accents (S2) | 290 |
| 6.3 | Students' exposure to English accents (S4) | 293 |
| 6.4 | Proportions of standard to non-standard pronunciation by ELT and subject teachers | 295 |
| 6.5 | Percentages of non-standard vowel features in various categories in the pronunciation of subject and ELT teachers | 301 |
| 6.6 | Percentages of non-standard consonantal features in various categories in the pronunciation of subject and ELT teachers | 309 |
| 6.7 | Differences in non-standard consonant percentages between the pronunciation of subject and ELT teachers | 311 |
| 6.8 | Prominence of HKE vowels in the pronunciation of teachers | 314 |
| 6.9 | Prominence of HKE consonants in the pronunciation of teachers | 314 |

CHAPTER SEVEN

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 7.1 | Perception of participants' own accent (Overall) | 320 |
|-----|--|-----|

7.2	Perception of participants' own accent (sub-groups)	321
7.3	Recognition of 'non-standard' English varieties (secondary students) (factor 1)	340
7.4	The legitimacy of NS varieties (secondary students) (factor 2)	341
7.5	Exposure to NS accents in multi-media (secondary students) (factor 3)	343
7.6	Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study (secondary students) (factor 4)	344
7.7	Communicating with NSs/NNSs (secondary students) (factor 5)	345
7.8	Preference for NS accent (secondary students) (factor 6)	347
7.9	Hong Kong people speaking with an NS accent (secondary students) (factor 7)	349
7.10	Perception of learning English (secondary students) (factor 8)	350
7.11	Speaking a local accent (secondary students) (factor 9)	352
7.12	Hong Kong Identity (secondary students) (factor 10)	353

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.1	Recognition of accents (overall results)	358
8.2	Ability to distinguish between NS and NNS accents (overall results)	359
8.3	Similarity with participants' accent (overall results)	360
8.4	Perceived intelligibility of accents (overall results)	361
8.5	Contextual variation in accent acceptability among varieties (overall results)	366
8.6	Contextual variation in accent acceptability between NS and NNS varieties (overall results)	370
8.7	Recognition of accents (students)	376

8.8	Similarity with students' accent	377
8.9	Perceived intelligibility of accents	379
8.10	Scores of status for the seven varieties	380
8.11	Scores of solidarity for the seven varieties	382
8.12	Attitudes towards NS and NNS accents in contexts	383
8.13	Attitudes towards RP in contexts	384
8.14	Attitudes towards the HKE accent in contexts	386

CHAPTER NINE

9.1	Percentages of visitors to Hong Kong among non-Chinese-speaking population	399
9.2	Purposes of all overnight visitors in Hong Kong	400
9.3	Purposes of overnight visitors from the inner circle	400

List of appendices

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1	Interview consent form	A1
4.2	Parent/Guardian research consent form	A3
4.3	Interview protocol (Professionals)	A5
4.4	Interview protocol (Teachers)	A6
4.5	Interview protocol (students)	A7
4.6	Bilingual questionnaire (Speaking English in Hong Kong	A8
4.7	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University research subject informed consent form	A14
4.8	A sample of the data log sheet	A19
4.9	Verbal-guise test (Part 1)	A20
4.10	Verbal-guise test (Part 2)	A21
4.11	One-way ANOVA results for VGT	A22

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1	Culture-related activities recommended in the curriculum guide	A28
5.2	Tasks and topics in HKDSE examination paper 4 (speaking)	A29
5.3	Segmental features introduced in OE	A30
5.4	Suprasegmental features introduced in OE and LE	A31
5.5	Communicative strategies and sample phrases introduced in three junior textbooks	A32
5.6	Pronunciation of diphthongs in ESNSS	A34
5.7	Common pronunciation errors highlighted in DSNSS	A34
5.8	Segmental features highlighted in LENSS	A35

5.9	Scenarios about international language use in LE	A35
5.10	Themes about issues and knowledge around the world in LE	A36

CHAPTER SIX

6.1	Details of English enhancement measures	A37
6.2	Details of EMI arrangements for teaching	A39

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1	Recognition of ‘non-standard’ English varieties (factor 1)	A42
7.2	The legitimacy of NS varieties (factor 2)	A42
7.3	Exposure to NS accents in multi-media (factor 3)	A42
7.4	Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study (factor 4)	A43
7.5	Communicating with NSs/NNSs (factor 5)	A43
7.6	Preference for NS accent (factor 6)	A44
7.7	Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent (factor 7)	A44
7.8	Perception of learning English (factor 8)	A45
7.9	Speaking a local accent (factor 9)	A45
7.10	Hong Kong Identity (factor 10)	A45

CHAPTER NINE

9.1	Use of English at work by the professionals	A46
9.2	Use of English in leisure time by the professionals	A47
9.3	Exposure to NS vis-à-vis NNS by the professionals	A47
9.4	Perceived origin of interlocutors by the professionals	A48
9.5	Exposure to accents by the professionals (additional cases)	A49

9.6	Challenges facing the professionals in English communication (supplementary comments)	A50
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CHAPTER TEN

10.1	The choice a pronunciation model by the professionals (supplementary comments)	A54
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CHAPTER ELEVEN

11.1	Students' use of English in education contexts (focus groups)	A62
11.2	Students' use of English outside school (focus groups)	A62
11.3	Students' perceived future use of English (focus group)	A64

CHAPTER TWELVE

12.1	ELT teachers' use of English outside classroom	A66
12.2	Subject teachers' use of English outside classroom	A66
12.3	Teachers' pedagogical foci of teaching spoken English (additional cases)	A67

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Issues and problems

One of the consequences of the emergence of English as a global lingua franca is increasing scholarly interest in the issue of accent in international or intranational communication worldwide (e.g. Jenkins, 2000; Deterding, Brown & Low, 2005; Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Waniek-Klimczak, 2008). As pronunciation variations occur among English varieties, and in most cases regional dialects, one of the main controversies in applied linguistics has been the choice of a suitable pronunciation model in English-language classrooms in multilingual settings. While the traditional practice, under the well-established Second Language Acquisition (SLA) paradigm, has been to apply a native exonormative norm, e.g. Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA), to all sociolinguistic contexts (i.e. English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL)) (Kirkpatrick, 2007a), the long-standing criticisms of this monolingual and monolithic native-speaker model are that it ignores the multilingual character of many ESL/EFL contexts (Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986; Kachru, 1996; Lee, 2005) and takes little account of local culture and identity (Phillipson, 1992a; Pennycook, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 2007a).

Having observed the emergence of new Englishes in many outer circle countries, World Englishes (WE) scholars advocate the codification and subsequent adaptation of a nativised endonormative model in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom in these contexts on the grounds of its high attainability and appropriateness for local communicative purposes (Baumgardner, 2006).

Notwithstanding landmark WE research to describe and legitimise newly emerging varieties in the outer circle over the past three decades, one of the limitations of this impressive body of work is that it has tended to overlook the sociolinguistic reality in the international setting (Jenkins, 2006a). Pennycook (2007) states that the WE framework places nationalism as the key emphasis because of the extensive use of English within the outer circle countries not only as a tool for intra-ethnic communication, but also as a cultural and identity marker. In this respect, the ELF approach differs from the WE paradigm in that it centres on the verbal communication among non-native speakers of English (NNSs) with different first languages (L1s) (whether or not they are from the expanding or outer circle) rather than with native speakers (NSs) since they have become the minority in the rapidly globalising world (Jenkins, 2006a; Pakir, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2009). Although the nature of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has been a matter of debate since its

development into a research paradigm, many researchers have stressed the dynamism and fluidity of ELF and its function as a shared communicative resource in international settings (Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey, 2011; also see Friedrich and Matsuda, 2010 for the terminology of ELF).

A major contribution to the development of an ELF pronunciation model is Jenkins's (2000) innovative lingua franca core (LFC), the aim of which is to offer a teachable and learnable pronunciation alternative (or an additional option for learning and teaching) based on the frequency of miscommunication and communication breakdown in genuine interactional speech data from educated NNSs of different L1s. In this pioneering research project, the main emphasis was on the segmental phonological features which impede international intelligibility whereas NS-like suprasegmentals (i.e. weak forms, word stress, 'stress-timing', pitch movement and other features of connected speech) are claimed to be either 'non-manageable' in ELT classrooms or less important to intelligibility in ELF communication. By de-emphasising the teaching of suprasegmentals, Jenkins argues that the core features indicate which kind of pronunciation has the potential to cause ELF errors and should be the pedagogical focus for production in the classroom while students' other local phonological features should be retained (ibid.). According to Seidlhofer (2003), the

underlying pedagogical purpose is to ‘provide a basis which students can learn from, fine-tuning subsequently (usually after leaving school) to any native or non-native varieties and registers that are relevant for their individual requirements’ (p.23). Given the focus of ELF studies on the international use of English, it is understandable that scholars have sought to apply the ELF research findings as well as the relevant pedagogical proposals (e.g. LFC) to ELT classrooms in continental Europe (Seidlhofer, 2010a) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Kirkpatrick, 2010a), which are ‘typical’ ELF situations (i.e. mainly involving NNS-NNS communication).

Since the emergence of the ELF paradigm, its nature has been vigorously debated in academia over whether it should be regarded as a new English variety in the expanding circle (e.g. Mollin, 2006; Prodromou, 2007). In some critics’ position, ELF is considered a monolithic norm which, in a sense, is no different from the NS model (e.g. Prodromou, 2007). In recent studies, ELF researchers have argued that the identification of core ELF features does not imply a single variety but, instead, it highlights the functional use, diversification and hybridization of ELF, which accord with the ‘transformationalist’ nature of globalisation (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010; also see Park & Wee, 2011). Dewey and Jenkins (2010) explain that this

transformationalist perspective implies an increased hybridity of cultures as a result of interconnectedness, which is blurring the distinctions ‘between internal and external affairs’, ‘between the international and domestic’ and hence ‘the local and global’ (p.79) (cf. two other perspectives of globalisation, i.e. Hyperglobalist hypothesis and Sceptical hypothesis). In terms of ELT, advocates of an ELF approach emphasise the need to develop learners’ accommodation skills and raise their awareness of different varieties of English around the world (Jenkins, 2007, 2011; Walker, 2010). From this point of view, the term ‘approach’ might represent a more appropriate term than ‘model’, which suggests a point of reference for pronunciation teaching.

In Kirkpatrick’s (2007b) proposal for adopting what he calls ‘local institutional bilingual targets’ (p.379) in the Hong Kong ELT classroom from an ELF perspective (where ELT teachers are the most suitable role model), the justification is the discrepancy between the apparently unattainable and irrelevant idealised exonormative norm and the teachers’ local accent as a role model in the educational context (see also Kirkpatrick & Chau, 2008). Kirkpatrick (2007b) suggests that the key step is a codification process which targets the features of the educated Hong Kong English (HKE) pronunciation with reference to the LFC (see also Sewell 2009). By establishing a more appropriate and attainable set of endonormative linguistic

benchmarks, Kirkpatrick (2007a) suggests that the possible advantages of the ELF approach include legitimising local teachers' own model of English, enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem, thus promoting cultural identity in an increasingly multilingual setting.

It is important to stress that this proposal of an ELF-oriented model as well as the codification process is not an attempt to regard this model as a monolithic norm which, in a sense, has no difference from the NS model (see Dewey & Jenkins, 2010). Kirkpatrick (2003) expressly notes that the lingua franca model is never a 'single standard, devoid of cultural influences' and 'it is inevitable and desirable that speakers will transfer some of the pragmatic norms of their L1 to lingua franca English' (p.88). In this respect, the adoption of an ELF-oriented pronunciation model, as can also be seen as part of the ELF approach, also emphasises the need to develop learners' accommodation skills and raise their awareness of diverse varieties of English worldwide (Jenkins 2007; Walker, 2010). The benchmarking of the local teachers' pronunciation model, as proposed by Kirkpatrick (2007a, 2007b), is nevertheless an important step to legitimise an endonormative pedagogical model for the classroom, given that competent local teachers are the role model of the students in most (if not all) ELT contexts. In a practical sense, it seeks to cease penalising

learners' L1-influenced pronunciation which does not impede international intelligibility, i.e. being intelligible to the majority of NNSs in lingua franca interactions (see Jenkins's LFC).

In its narrower sense, a phonological model from an ELF perspective might refer to the pronunciation of local multilingual teachers who are also successful English users in international communication. Putting forward this model to the entire (local) school setting, we might then interpret a pronunciation model as a 'package' of input which develops students' own English pronunciation throughout their learning process at school. More precisely, this 'package' involves the various accents students are exposed to in their daily school life such as accents in the audio teaching materials, in listening tasks in the school-based or public examination and, most importantly, those of the English (and sometimes subject) teachers. On top of this, all of the above ingredients in the curriculum, as well as the language-using contexts represented in the teaching materials, are to be informed by empirical ELF research findings.

However, one fundamental question associated with adopting the ELF-oriented pronunciation model in the Hong Kong context, and this applies equally to other outer/expanding circle, is whether it harmonises with the local sociolinguistic context.

From this perspective, two main issues should be taken into consideration. First, the sociolinguistic reality described in ELF research should be to a great extent realised in the local context. More specifically, the English-speaking situations in Hong Kong should accord with the typical ELF communicative contexts, where NNSs rather than NSs are the majority. Indeed, the heart of the discussion on the ELF-oriented pronunciation model is the potential discrepancy between the accents promoted in the classroom and those people are exposed to in daily life and in the workplace. To date, little empirical research has been conducted into the varieties of accents (1) students encounter in the classroom compared with their leisure time and (2) people are exposed to in the key domains of Hong Kong. The emphasis is no longer only on to what extent spoken English is used but also which varieties of accents (NS or NNS) and in what situations people encounter and speak in both their workplace (or school) and everyday life. From an educational perspective, this implies investigations into daily classroom practices in ELT from various perspectives such as the curricula, assessments, teaching materials, and teachers' practices. If the teaching model is a reflection or, if feasible, a reproduction of the local sociolinguistic reality, there seems to be a pressing need to investigate diverse spoken discourses in Hong Kong in both receptive (listening) and productive (speaking) modes. A possible disadvantage of over-emphasising the NS model, while neglecting the sociolinguistic reality, is the

students' failure to cope with communication with, or simply understand the speech of, other NNSs after graduation. On the other hand, marginalising the NS accents might also undermine graduates' ability to communicate with NSs, if this is an important requirement in the workplace. Without the requisite census data and empirical evidence of English use in Hong Kong society, there might be a danger of prematurely applying the ELF approach, as well as the relevant research findings, to an inappropriate (or unknown) context.

Second, it is crucial to take into account the acceptability of the HKE pronunciation vis-à-vis the exonormative norms among major stakeholders, which is essential if it is to be successfully implemented. Despite the generally negative perception of HKE derived from previous attitude studies (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Luk, 1998, 2010; Andrews, 2002; Timmis, 2002; Tsui & Bunton, 2000; Li, 2009a), further research should be conducted to explore the acceptability of an endonormative model from a range of perspectives and seek to understand people's view. While Li (2009a, p.109) highlights the complexity of the NNSs' attitudes and the need to take account of speaker identity, intelligibility and ownership of the English language, he did not take a step further, as he acknowledged, to offer a convincing explanation. In other words, an explanation for any given attitude is far more crucial than simply the 'performance

data' and 'experimental studies' (ibid., p.84) as it has profound implications for both educational practitioners and policy makers. Apart from the above factors, attitudes towards a particular accent might also be closely associated with the instrumental value (e.g. business success) of the local vis-à-vis the 'prestigious' NS accent and their awareness of language variations and varieties. Nevertheless, this issue of acceptability is arguably one of the most crucial criteria for the adoption of a localised pedagogic model (Bamgbose, 1998; Ferguson, 2006).

Based on the two dimensions above, the main purpose of this study is to bridge the gap between the sociolinguistic reality and recommendations for pedagogy, in this case the ELF approach, by exploring the 'two realities' (i.e. the sociolinguistic and educational reality) so as to provide the foundation for a suitable and feasible pronunciation model.

1.2 Objectives

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the appropriateness of adopting an ELF-oriented vis-à-vis NS pronunciation model by exploring the (dis)connection between the sociolinguistic reality and school practices in Hong Kong in two dimensions, namely the actual function of spoken English and the issue of local

acceptability. It seeks to examine (1) stakeholders' use of and exposure to spoken English in their everyday life and (2) their attitudes towards accent variation as well as pronunciation teaching. These stakeholders include students (of different academic levels), teachers (using English to teach ELT and content-area subjects), and the professionals (in diverse disciplines) who contribute to the real use and long-term development of English in Hong Kong. In order to capture a more holistic picture of the issues being investigated, the study adopted a mixed-method approach which involved the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative methods included structured questionnaire surveys and the verbal-guise technique (VGT) whereas the qualitative methods consisted of semi-structured focus group/individual interviews, document analysis and a school case study. In the investigation of the daily use of English by the students and teachers, more emphasis was placed on the educational reality such as the curriculum, teaching materials and teachers' practice whereas the use of spoken English in specific professional domains was partly supplemented by evidence in the literature. Furthermore, the education reality in this study mainly corresponds to secondary schools (and partly university), where students mostly develop their English proficiency and were (potentially) strongly influenced by curricula and the school-exit public examination at the end of their study which determines their university admission.

1.3 Research questions

In order to further explain the key objectives of the present study, the following are the research questions which the study seeks to answer. These research questions are derived from previous research on issues related to the choice of a pronunciation model, language attitudes and the sociolinguistic conditions in Hong Kong.

1. How is spoken English used among different social groups in Hong Kong? More specifically, under what circumstances do people speak English and what varieties of accent do they use and encounter? How do they feel about these accents in their everyday lives?
2. What challenges do people face in comprehending English accents? What do people think they should learn at school to overcome these problems related to pronunciation in Hong Kong?
3. Which model of pronunciation is being taught/promoted at secondary level? Which varieties of accent are students exposed to in their secondary education? In what contexts do students learn spoken English?
4. How does the school curriculum reflect the sociolinguistic reality of English needs in Hong Kong in terms of the choice of pronunciation model? Is an exonormative or endonormative model of pronunciation more appropriate? Why is this model more suitable?

1.4 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis consists of an introduction, two chapters of literature review, a research methodology, four parts of findings and discussion as well as a concluding chapter.

The introduction (i.e. the present chapter) has highlighted how the issue of a pronunciation model in Hong Kong has emerged from controversial issues and problems in the literature and has further discussed the key objectives of this study. It has also posed the four research questions with respect to the sociolinguistic situation in Hong Kong.

The following two chapters address the need for the present study by reviewing major controversial issues about the notion of language ‘standard’ in the literature globally as well as in the Hong Kong context. More specifically, Chapter 2 provides an overview of how the global spread of English has impacted on the development of World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) research which subsequently have challenged the long-established Second Language Acquisition (SLA) perspective in English language teaching. Along the same lines, chapter 3 (the second part of the literature review) centres on the notion of standard in ELT and discusses a research gap in determining whether employing the ELF pedagogical proposals of pronunciation modelling harmonises with the sociolinguistic vis-à-vis

educational reality in the Hong Kong context. By evaluating the sociolinguistic situation in Hong Kong (i.e. the use of English in Hong Kong and local acceptability of Hong Kong English, HKE) based on previous studies, the chapter explains the motivation for the present research project.

The methodology of the research project is described in Chapter 4. This explains the nature of the study and then the research design of adopting a mixed-method approach to investigate the issues in focus from multiple perspectives. The investigation comprises the triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders such as students (of different academic levels), teachers (using English to teach ELT and content-area subjects), and the professionals (in diverse disciplines), who contribute to the real use and long-term development of English in Hong Kong. The quantitative methods included structured questionnaire surveys and the verbal-guise technique (VGT) whereas the qualitative methods consisted of semi-structured focus group/individual interviews, document analysis and a school case study. Each of these methods aims to address specific research questions which, upon integration of the corresponding findings, contribute to pedagogical recommendations about pronunciation modelling and teaching in the Hong Kong setting.

The discussion of the findings is divided into four main parts. The first part comprises chapters 5 and 6, which focus on the education reality of pronunciation teaching and modelling at both policy and practice levels. Chapter 5 discusses findings derived from a document analysis of the most recent ELT curricula, public assessments and commercial textbooks by three major local publishers. It first examines the main ELT document for senior secondary education to identify themes that are potentially influenced by the WE and ELF paradigms, followed by an evaluation of how these pedagogical recommendations are implemented in the public examinations and textbooks. Chapter 6 reports on a school case study that explores students' exposure to diverse varieties of English accent throughout their weekly school timetable, together with the phonetic analysis of the speech of local subject and English language teachers in their classroom teaching. Taking account of the phonological variation among these locally educated English speakers, the case study prioritises the educated HKE vowel and consonant features and promote an internationally intelligible endonormative model in the globalised world.

Part two of the findings and discussion (i.e. chapters 7 and 8) centres on the quantitative data, viz. the large-scale structured questionnaire surveys (N=1893) and VGT (N=488), which provide an overview of the stakeholders' English-using

experience and their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning. In chapter 7, the factor analysis of the questionnaire results have identified explanatory factors that account for the participants' responses about their exposure to and awareness of English accents and their attitudes towards varieties of English accent. A further statistical analysis is made to compare the differing responses of students with diverse academic ability. The verbal-guise test reported in chapter 8 examines the participants' attitudes towards English accents from three interrelated perspectives: (1) their awareness of accents, (2) their perception of accents in relation to the dimensions of status and solidarity, and (3) their choice of accents in various local language-using contexts. Furthermore, the results of three student groups (i.e. junior secondary, senior secondary and university students) are compared to underline any emerging attitudinal patterns based on their educational backgrounds.

A more in-depth comparison of the participants' English using/learning experience in relation to their attitudes towards a learning target among the various groups of stakeholders (i.e. professionals, English learners, teachers) are discussed in parts three (chapters 9-10: the professionals and university students) and four (chapters 12-13: secondary students and teachers), which draw on findings of the semi-structured interviews (N=25) and focus groups (N=35). In terms of the use of English by the

professionals, the interview data reported in chapter 9 illustrate the complicated sociolinguistic reality in Hong Kong that is quite different from what is portrayed in the education context such as in terms of exposure to English accents, identities of interlocutors and the English-speaking contexts. Based on their experience of using English mainly in the workplace, the professionals have indicated their challenges in communication, strategies to overcome these challenges and, recommendations for English teaching/learning. In association with their academic backgrounds, occupational status and English-using/learning experiences, chapter 10 accounts for the professionals' (from interview data) choice of a English learning target in dimensions such as its perceived attainability, intelligibility, instrumental value (in relation to its social status) and integrative value.

In the final part (part four: chapters 11-12), the investigation shifts to the discussion of views from stakeholders in the educational contexts (secondary students and teachers), the foci of which are again on their daily use of English as well as attitudes towards pronunciation learning/teaching. On the basis of the focus group data, chapter 11 identifies contexts where the secondary students tend to use English in their daily life as well as at school and discusses their difficulties in learning/using English and the importance of pronunciation in speaking English. By referring to the secondary

students' (rather limited) exposure to English apart from the school contexts, the chapter further evaluates their choice of a pronunciation target as well as views on learning (spoken) English. Subsequently, chapter 12 centres on the pedagogical foci, daily use of (and exposure to) English and expectation for students by the ELT and content-area teachers as they in different degrees contribute to students' learning of (spoken) English in their everyday teaching.

Having summarised and evaluated the (dis)connection between the sociolinguistic and education reality as well as the stakeholders' diverging (and converging) attitudes towards their pronunciation target, chapter 13 concludes the study by providing recommendations for multiple levels of education such as the language-in-education policy, curricula, assessments, teaching materials and teacher education so as to help future learners to promote a pluricentric view of English.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review I

World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF)

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explains that the main purpose of this study is to bridge the gap between the sociolinguistic and educational reality in Hong Kong. The present chapter is the first part of the literature review section, which provides a broad-brush picture of how the development of World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) research impacts on ELT theories and practices. First, section 2.2 gives an overview of how the global spread of English in the past four centuries has resulted in an unprecedented growth in the number of English speakers worldwide. Based on the diverse functions and forms of English around the world, it reviews some representative theoretical frameworks or models in the literature which illustrate the global spread of English. Second, it devotes considerable attention to the development of the WE paradigm with the main focus on the outer circle context (section 2.3) and, crucially, how the ever-changing multilingual reality poses challenges for the long-established Second Language Acquisition (SLA) paradigm as well as the pedagogical implications of WE research for ELT (sections 2.4, 2.5 & 2.6). Third, a substantial part of this chapter is dedicated to the discussion of the newly developed

field of research in ELF, which comprises issues such as the controversial nature of ELF (sections 2.7 & 2.8), the various perspectives of ELF research and how ELF research is oriented towards ELT practice in the 21st century (section 2.9).

2.2 The spread of English

The past centuries have witnessed a tremendous expansion in the number of English speakers around the world¹. One significant consequence of this change is the rapid growth in the numbers of second language (L2) vis-à-vis native speakers (NSs) (Crystal, 1985, 2003, 2008; Graddol, 1997, 2006, 2010). Statistics have demonstrated a much higher population of second language speakers than NSs in approximately seventy-five territories where English is spoken either as a first language (L1) or an official (or institutionalized) L2 in fields such as education, law and government (Crystal, 2003, p.62-5), not to mention those using English as a foreign language who comprise a much higher population. While it is estimated by Crystal in 2003 that only one out of every four users of English in the world is an NS, a much larger difference in proportion would be expected today. English no longer belongs to a particular group of prestigious NSs but is the shared language of every English user (see also Graddol, 1997). Kachru and Nelson (2006) attribute the global spread of English to two diasporas². The first diaspora involved the migration and settlement of a

substantial number of English speakers from the British Isles to North America and Australasia. The second one entailed the transportation of language (with little transportation of English-speaking people) as a result of colonialism (through education) and other political and economic factors in Asia and Africa (see also Graddol, 1997; Fennel, 2001). Furthermore, Omoniyi and Saxena (2010) argue that the unprecedented rate and scale of globalisation in the present era has become a powerful third type of diaspora, fostered by the advancement of technology and hence the high speed of information flows through the internet and mass media. This third diaspora has had an incredible impact on the development of English in a much wider range of regions such as South, East and Southeast Asia, South American, South, West and East Africa, the Caribbean and Europe (B. Kachru, Y. Kachru & Nelson, 2006). Given the rapidly growing English-speaking population worldwide, an increasingly common phenomenon in multilingual settings is the use of English as a contact language among NNSs of different first language backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2001, 2011; see also Brumfit, 2002).

The global spread of English has not only resulted in a significant upsurge in the number of English speakers worldwide, but more crucially, it has also highlighted the differing functions and forms of English in diverse multilingual contexts. In order to

illustrate the development, use and forms of English worldwide, a number of theoretical frameworks, or models, have been proposed since 1980. For instance, Stevans (1980, 1992) regarded American and British English as two branches in an upside-down family tree diagram being superimposed on a world map. McArthur's (1998) Circle of World English has also sought to differentiate Englishes through regional varieties including both standard and standardising forms. Around this time, Modiano (1999a; see also Modiano, 1999b for another model) proposed the centripetal circles of international English to define speakers of English according to their language proficiency. Graddol (2006) likewise sought to represent the community of English speakers as including a wide range of proficiencies. Among these significant studies, Kachru's (1985, 1986, 1992a, 1992b; Kachru & Nelson, 1996; appropriated by Crystal in 1997) pioneering three concentric circles have been the most inspiring and influential model to visualise the complex reality of Englishes by identifying, characterising and categorising the distinct geographical varieties of English into the inner, outer and expanding circles. Under this classification, inner circle Englishes are norm-providing varieties and are the dominant languages used in their societies (e.g. US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). Outer circle (or post-colonial) Englishes are norm-developing varieties in which there has been a long history of institutionalized functions and standing as a language which plays a key

role in education, governance, literary creativity, and popular culture in the territories (e.g. India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, and Zambia). The expanding circle refers to countries or states where English is only used for specific purposes (e.g. reading knowledge for international communication) and expanding circle Englishes are therefore norm-dependent varieties (e.g. English in China, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, and Nepal). These three circles mirror the traditional three-way categorisation: English as a native language (ENL, the inner circle), English as a second language (ESL, the outer circle) and English as a foreign language (EFL, the expanding circle), which differentiates English-using speech communities (Jenkins, 2009a, p.15-16). Based on Kachru's model, groundbreaking research has sought to describe, codify and legitimise the evolving Englishes in outer circle countries such as Singapore, India and Nigeria over the past three decades (Kachru & Nelson, 2006).

However, having observed the increasingly complex sociolinguistic reality in the post-colonial globalised era, a number of recent studies have challenged the validity of the Kachruvian model (e.g. Bruthiaux, 2003; Rajadurai, 2005; Mollin, 2006; Michieka, 2009; Pennycook, 2009). Some limitations include the increasingly vague boundary amongst the three circles (Jenkins, 2009a), the portrayal of an over-idealised dominant national pattern, the neglect of sociolinguistic complexities

within the nation state and the inability to capture sociolinguistic change over time (Ferguson, 2006). As a result, a few modifications of the Kachruvian model have been proposed to overcome these limitations and provide a more accurate representation of Englishes worldwide³ (e.g. Yano, 2001, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, Pennycook, 2009). Despite these critics of Kachru's pioneering three-circle concentric model, his model is still one of the most frequently-cited references which forms the basis of most previous research. By deconstructing and reinterpreting the three circles as a model for the system of ideological forces, Park and Wee (2009) argue that the underlying implications of the model are still of tremendous value.

Another approach to describing the emergence of new varieties of English is the theorisation of Englishes in terms of developmental stages (e.g. Kachru, 1983a, 1992b, 1992c; Moag, 1992; Schneider, 2003a, 2003b, 2007). The major advantage of this approach is that it not only views individual varieties in isolation but also explains their particular features as the products of unique historical circumstances and contact situations (Schneider, 2007). In this regard, Schneider's (2003a, 2003b, 2007) innovative Dynamic Model is arguably one of the most promising and well-described theoretical frameworks to account for the evolution of English varieties in post-colonial contexts. Schneider proposes that any post-colonial English undergoes

the same (or a similar) evolutionary process involving a diachronic sequence of five developmental phases: (1) foundation, (2) exonormative stabilisation, (3) nativisation, (4) endonormative stabilisation, and (5) differentiation. Each of these is characterised by four sets of parameters, viz. extralinguistic background, identity constructions, sociolinguistic conditions and linguistic consequences (see Schneider, 2007, p.56). In his monograph, Schneider draws particular attention to the evolutionary process of Englishes in the outer circle where English, in his view, is at the most interesting and critical stage (phase 3 or 4). As the emergence of new English varieties in the outer circle has been at the heart of discussion in the field of World Englishes (WE), the next section discusses the impact of the newly born Englishes on the ELT theories and practices in the past few decades.

2.3 World Englishes research and the birth of new Englishes

‘English’ in its singular form generally referred to Standard British or American English before Kachru (1977) published his article *the new Englishes and old models* indicating the pluricentric meaning of ‘English’ as different varieties. The Honolulu conference organised by Larry Smith in Hawaii in 1978 laid the foundation for the WE paradigm, in which participants signed a statement and an agenda for the future that articulated their views⁴ (Kachru, 1992b). This period also witnessed important

publications such as Kachru's (1983b) book on 'the Indianisation of English', Pride's (1982) *New Englishes* (the first book about new Englishes) and Platt, Weber and Ho's (1984) work (see also Platt & Weber, 1980). Thanks to the establishment of three leading journals in the field, namely *English World-Wide* (from 1980, edited by Manfred Görlach), *World Englishes* (from 1981, edited by Braj Kachru and Larry Smith) and *English Today* (from 1985, edited by Tom McArthur), important issues in the field of WE were widely discussed in a vast number of published journal articles.

Early discussion of 'new Englishes' often referred to the development of the localised form of English found in the Caribbean, West and East Africa, and parts of Asia, which are former colonies of Britain or America (Bolton, 2003). However, in the last two decades, increasing scholarly attention has focused on the 'Englishes' in other parts of the world especially in Asia (e.g. Kachru, 1994, 1998, 2005; Baumgardner, 1996; Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Prescott, 2007). The journal *Asian Englishes* (edited by Nobuyuki Honma) was therefore established in 1998 to explore the development of Englishes in Asia and the Pacific. Beginning in 2002, Hong Kong University Press has also published volumes for the *Asian Englishes Today* series (edited by Kingsley Bolton), which sets out to provide a contemporary record of the spread and development of English language in Asia from both linguistic, sociolinguistic and literary perspectives (e.g. Bolton, 2002; Adamson, 2004; Stanlaw, 2004; Kachru,

2005; Y. Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Bautista & Bolton, 2008; Lim, Pakir & Wee, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2010a; Lee & Moody, 2011).

Bolton (2004, p.367) defines the pluricentric approach of WE as the study of English associated with Kachru and his colleagues, namely the Kachruvian approach. Apart from the main focus on the 'nativised', 'indigenised', 'institutionalised' and 'new Englishes' in the outer circle countries (e.g. in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean), WE also represents English in a global sense and is referred to as 'World English', 'International English(es)' and 'Global English(es)'. Having surveyed the literature in the past three decades, Bolton (2003) identified numerous approaches to research in the field of WE, namely English studies, the sociology of language, a 'features-based' approach, Kachruvian studies, pidgin and creole studies, applied linguistics, lexicography, popularisers, critical linguistics and futurologists. While long-established corpora often describe inner circle Englishes (e.g. the Brown Corpus of American English and Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of British English) and learner English (e.g. International Corpus of Learner English), a comparably sizable corpus (with one million words of spoken and written texts) known as the International Corpus of English (ICE) was also constructed in 1990 to include outer circle Englishes. This corpus, which comprises Englishes from 18 countries from the both inner and outer circles (e.g. Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines), has enormously facilitated computer-based research in the field of WE. Mollin (2007) describes the development of English in the past few decades as 'a veritable paradigm shift in English variety linguistics from the acceptance of only

native-speaker varieties to the establishment of second-language varieties as legitimate' (p.167).

2.4 Challenges to the Second Language Acquisition theories

One major consequence of the paradigm shift in the nature of the English language and the approaches to investigating English varieties is the re-conceptualisation of the theories and practices in English language teaching (ELT). Although previous developments in ELT centred on searching for a 'best method'⁵ for the language teaching classroom, a fundamental question that has emerged from WE research is how to define and determine a language learning goal in multilingual societies. In other words, who are the successful or proficient learners? In applied linguistics, mainstream ELT research (and also practices) in the outer/expanding circle countries has been informed by Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories. In this paradigm, 'successful acquisition is viewed as successive approximation to a target language norm' (Ferguson, 2006, p.156) and the 'ideal goal' is to attain the 'the native speaker's "competence", "proficiency" or "knowledge of the language"' (Stern, 1983, p.341). The core theories explaining the failure of achieving native-like proficiency are the concept of interlanguage and fossilisation. Selinker (1972, 1992) argues that an L2 speaker's competence lies on an interlanguage continuum at some point between their first language and their second language. Any differences between

learners' output and Standard English are regarded as errors caused mainly by L1 interference. A phenomenon called fossilisation is an inevitable result when a student's learning progress reaches a plateau for a while before something stimulates further progress (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). However, the controversy raised by WE scholars is whether NS English should be regarded as the standard, or a teaching model, in the outer/expanding circle classroom.

The discussion of the implications of the emergence of new Englishes for the choice of a standard can indeed be traced back to the 1960s. Randolph Quirk, who stands for the conservative position, was one of the first to discuss "varieties" of English and the notion of "standards" of World English in 1962. At that time, it was generally perceived that the adoption of an L2 variety was inappropriate because its linguistic form tended to be less stable (Prator, 1968). On the other hand, Halliday, MachIntosh and Strevens (1964, p.293) were the pioneering scholars who questioned the continued use of British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) teaching models in the era of decolonisation. A well-known dispute for and against this standard language ideology in the global context is known as the 'Quirk and Kachru debate'⁶ (see Quirk, 1985, 1988, 1990; Kachru, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1992b), also called the 'English Today debate' (Seidlhofer, 2003), in the international journal *English Today*.

In his landmark work, Kachru (1984) insightfully problematised the challenges of determining an appropriate learning target in the local ELT context:

The question of norms for localized Englishes continues to be debated, though the tone is becoming more one of realism and less one of codification. Furthermore, the educated non-native varieties are now being increasingly recognized and defended, both on attitudinal and on pedagogical grounds. The national uses of English are being separated from the international uses, and the nativized innovations are now being considered as essential stylistic devices for non-native English literatures. One notices a shift of opinion toward considering such localized varieties *different*, not necessarily *deficient*. (p.74)

Having set the agenda for future WE research, Kachru (1991) explains that the notion of 'standard' English should go beyond purely descriptive linguistics, yet recognise the complex multilingual reality in which researchers should also take into account the linguistic realities (i.e. a complex network of various types of linguistic behaviour), sociolinguistic realities (i.e. the context of language, attitudes and identities) and educational realities (i.e. classroom resources, equipment, teacher training, teaching materials, etc.). With respect to English proficiency assessment, Lowenberg (2000) likewise recognises that NS norms do not necessarily apply in the majority of multilingual settings where NNS varieties of English are literally the media for communication (see also Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986). Built upon this foundation were his challenges to the two main false assumptions of a universal NS target for English learners in all contexts: (1) NS varieties still provide the norms which all NNSs

attempt to follow even when no NSs are involved; (2) designers of the English proficiency tests still believe that NSs should determine the norms for Standard English around the world (see also Lowenberg, 1986, 1992, 2002). This challenge to the traditional goal of attaining a native-like proficiency has been a recurring theme in the literature (but not necessarily limited to mainstream WE research⁷, see Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007; Magnan, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 2007). Generally speaking, the major criticism of this native-proficiency goal is the false assumption of the SLA theory on the acquisition of an L2 based on NSs' acquisition process while neglecting the real language use in bilingual/multilingual settings in most outer/expanding circle countries (e.g. Lowenberg, 1986; Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986; Sridhar, 1994; Kachru, 1996). While SLA theories describe and model English in the inner circle, WE scholars recognise 'Englishes' in the plural, which implies the existence of a wide range of varieties in all three circles (Kachru, 1988, 1996; Bolton, 2003, 2004; Seidlhofer, 2005, 2009). Nevertheless, SLA theories regard the inner circle English as a number of discrete and stable languages (e.g. British English, American English) but overlook significant regional linguistic variations within a variety. Evidence of the distinct linguistic features of English varieties in the inner circle has been described in a number of monographs and editions (e.g. Wells, 1982; Bauer, 2002; Melchers & Shaw, 2003, 2011; Schneider, Kortmann & Burridge, 2004; Trudgill & Hannah, 2008;

Kortmann, Upton, Schneider, Burridge & Mesthrie, 2008) as well as in special journal issues (e.g. *English Today* volume 27, 2011 about Irish English).

The key focus of WE research is the emergence of new varieties in the outer circle, where English plays an institutional role due largely to colonial history. Given the multiethnic, multilingual settings in the outer circle (e.g. Singapore, India, Nigeria, South Africa and the Caribbean), English is widely used in intra-ethnic communication. In these circumstances, it is argued that the monolingual, monolithic NS norm is not only unattainable and inappropriate, but more fundamentally it no longer serves the diverse needs and functions in the multilingual and multicultural contexts (Lowenberg 1986, 2000; Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986). On top of this, the imposition of the native English ideology is criticised as it impedes local culture and identity (e.g. Phillipson, 1992a; Pennycook, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 2007a). In his landmark monograph, Phillipson (1992a) highlights the interrelationship between English language teaching and the dominance of English worldwide and proposes the notion of ‘English linguistic imperialism’ (see p.47 for the definition), which entails the structural and systemic inequalities between English and other languages owing to the political and economic hegemony of western Anglophone powers. With regard to applied linguistics, he accentuates the notion of ‘native speaker fallacy’ (p.193) and

challenges the long-lasting perception that NSs are automatically the ideal teachers of English due to the ‘recognition of variety in English in the periphery’ (i.e. ESL or EFL contexts) (p.199) (see also Phillipson, 1992b). This critical perspective on WE and applied linguistics was later advanced and refined in Pennycook’s major works (e.g. 1994, 1998a, 2001; see also Bolton, 2003 for detailed discussion).

2.5 The native English teacher fallacy

The deep-rooted belief that native English teachers (NETs) are the best teachers is indeed a complex and controversial issue. The first fundamental problem is the definition of native speakers and the notion of ‘nativeness’ in multilingual societies.

In SLA theories, a native speaker refers to an individual who acquired the language in their early childhood (Davies, 1991). Some key features of a native speaker include: correctness of language form, the possession of the intuitive knowledge about the language itself and the cultural connotations of the language, the ability to produce fluent and spontaneous discourse, competence in communication and the appropriate use of idiomatic expressions (e.g. Davies, 1991, 2002; Medgyes, 1992, 1994, Phillipson, 1996; Braine, 1999; see also Lee, 2005 for a summary of the features of an NS in the field of SLA). The assumption underlying the SLA principle is that ‘complete’ acquisition of the NS competence is virtually impossible after the critical

period (Birdsong, 1999). Nonetheless, Davies⁸ (2002) has sought to challenge this critical period hypothesis by providing some empirical evidence (also Birdsong, 1992; Bongaerts, 1999). He stresses the lack of consensus as to how to define an NS and rejects the idea that NSs are uniquely and permanently different from NNSs.

This controversy over the notion of nativeness was the subject of considerable scholarly attention in the 1980s and early 1990s. One of the most radical views was propounded by Paikeday (1985), who denied the existence of the native speaker of a language: ‘There is no such animal as the native speaker of a language. Even if there was, rigor mortis seems to be the native speaker of a language’ (p.89). Since then, the ‘native speaker myth’ has been vigorously challenged in the field of applied linguistics (e.g. Cook, 1999; Davies, 2002). A number of theoretical frameworks have been proposed to reconceptualise and redefine the notion of nativeness, such as Davies (2000) and Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) who generally suggest a continuum between NSs and NNSs⁹. Nevertheless, the growing number of bilingual English speakers in multilingual societies has also made the distinction between people who learn English as a mother tongue and as an additional language more ambiguous (e.g. McKay, 2002; Jenkins, 2003; Garcia, 2009). Canagarajah (1999a) points out that 80% of English language professionals worldwide are indeed bilingual

users of English. In addition, this phenomenon of bilingualism is argued to be particularly prominent in postcolonial societies (Anchimbe & Mforteh, 2011). The increasingly multilingual social realm has encouraged policy makers to rethink the goal of and approach to language education (see Cenoz, 2009; Lin & Man, 2009).

The second key question in the NEST vis-à-vis NNEST debate is whether the teaching of NESTs is more beneficial to the learners than that of NNESTs. One prominent scholar in this field is Péter Medgyes (1992), who stresses that both NSs and NNSs have an equal chance to become successful teachers, but only that the routes used by the two groups are different. He continues the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of NESTs and NNESTs in his seminal monograph (Medgyes, 1994, also republished in 1999), and suggests that NNESTs might be a more suitable choice (see also Medgyes, 2001). Meanwhile, considering the learning objectives, Widdowson (1994) articulated the differing roles of NESTs and NNESTs in a plenary address at the 27th Annual TESOL convention in Atlanta. He argued that NESTs ‘know what is appropriate in contexts of language use, and so to define possible target objectives’ whereas NNESTs ‘know what is appropriate in the contexts of language learning which need to be set up to achieve such objectives’ (p. 387). Further, Widdowson opposed discrimination against NNESTs, an attitude which

is broadly found in many EFL and ESL contexts (see also McGill, 1998; Pennycook, 2003; Levis, 2006; Cheung & Braine, 2007; Clark & Paran, 2007; Ali, 2009; Ferguson, 2009; Fiedler, 2010). Despite the pioneering critical work of Phillipson in 1992 and Medgyes in 1994, more research into NNESTs was only initiated after nearly a decade when George Braine's book was published in 1999. Influenced by this significant study, scholars have broadened the scope to not only the advantages¹⁰ and disadvantages of NNESTs vis-à-vis NESTs (e.g. Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Boyle, 1997a; Seidlhofer, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Benke & Medgyes, 2005), but also topics and issues ranging from teachers' perceptions of their own identity to students' views and aspects of teacher education (see Moussu & Llorca, 2008 for a detailed discussion of the development of research into NNESTs). These emerging studies, while approaching the issue from a wide range of perspectives, have posed challenges for the long-standing NEST myth (i.e. the belief that NESTs are better teachers) and thus have aimed at the empowerment of local teachers (e.g. Braine, 1999; 2010; Canagarajah, 1999a, 1999b 1999c; Cook, 1999, 2002, 2007; Seidlhofer, 1999, 2001; Kirkpatrick, 2002, 2006a, 2007a, 2009, 2010a, 2011a; Llorca, 2004, 2005; Moussu & Llorca, 2008).

Another important consequence of the vigorous debate over the NEST myth, and also the revolutionary WE paradigm since the 1970s, was the launch of the Nonnative Speaker Movement in a colloquium organised by George Braine at the 30th Annual TESOL Convention in Chicago in 1996. This movement later resulted in the establishment of the NNEST Caucus in the TESOL association in 1998 and in 2008 the NNEST Caucus became the NNEST Interest Section (see Braine, 2010 for the main development and achievement of this movement). Based on this impressive body of work in the past two decades, a recent volume edited by Mahboob (2010a) not only reviews issues of NNESTs in the field but also aims to move the field forward and suggest ways to contribute to the evolution of the discipline and the profession through what he calls a ‘NNEST lens’. This concept, as Mahboob (2010b) explains, is a lens of multilingualism, multinationalism, and multiculturalism through which NNESTs (as classroom practitioners, researchers and teacher educators) take diversity as a starting point, rather than as a result.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned advantages of NNESTs, policy makers are nevertheless prone to hire NESTs in primary and secondary schools particularly in the Asian context as NESTs are still believed to be the role (and target) model for learning. Programs recruiting NESTs are often supported by learners, parents and the

general public (Jeon & Lee, 2006). Some examples include the implementation of the English Program in Korea (EPIK), the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JETP), the Native English Teacher Scheme (NET) in Hong Kong and the mass introduction of NESTs in Taiwan and provinces in China recently (Ahn, Park & Ono, 1998; Lai, 1999; Carless, 2006; Jeon & Lee, 2006; Forrester & Lok, 2008). Despite this, the policy and regulation in these regions vary to a certain extent in terms of scale, the definition and role of the NESTs, their language proficiency, prior teaching experience and teaching qualification (see Jeon & Lee, 2006 for a brief comparison). Seidlhofer (1999) acknowledges the dilemma that, on the one hand, NNESTs are ideal teachers of L2 learners but, on the other hand, the global demands for NESTs remain considerably high. She therefore seeks a negotiation between this gap between the global claims and the local conditions. Nevertheless, recent research has shown learners' positive attitudes towards both NESTs and NNESTs considering their strengths in different dimensions (e.g. Cheung & Braine, 2007; Moussu & Braine, 2006; Moussu, 2010; Rao, 2010). Looking ahead, Graddol (2006) predicts that NSs may in the future be seen as part of the problem rather than the solution and, particularly as teachers, they 'may not possess some the skills required by bilingual speakers, such as those of translation and interpreting' (p.114).

2.6 Pedagogical implications of WE research for ELT

The major controversy of WE scholars over the traditional SLA theories is the imposition of an inner circle teaching ‘standard’ or ‘correctness’ (also known as a native exonormative norm) on all the three circles while regarding new varieties (particularly in the outer circle) as deficit models. Lowenberg (1986, p.71) observes that the misconception of interpreting nativisation as merely the fossilisation at a societal level of an interlanguage is largely attributed to the apparent similarities between linguistic processes involved in SLA and in the nativisation of new English varieties. This notion of applying fossilisation to WE contexts has therefore been at the heart of the debate (e.g. Kachru Y., 1993; Kachru B., 1996; Kachru & Nelson, 1996). From a macroscopic point of view, Brutt-Griffler (2002) points out that the major problem with traditional SLA theories has been their focus on individual acquisition and interlanguage error, rather than acquisition by entire speech communities and new varieties. It is suggested that a pluricentric view of language acquisition and use is required in today’s pedagogical world (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Canagarajah, 2007a). In essence, the pedagogical approach to teaching from the WE perspective mainly centres on cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication in multilingual societies. Based on Kachru’s (1992b) early proposal, Baumgardner (2006) discusses the themes and elements that should be incorporated in a WE course namely

(1) bilinguals' creativity, (2) contact and convergence, (3) cross-cultural discourse, (4) textual competence and interpretation, (5) language acquisition, (6) language attitudes, (7) language in society and (8) lexicography. He emphasises that it is necessary for the teachers to infuse local culture into the English language classroom and raise students' language awareness, the aim of which is to eliminate linguistic discrimination against NNS Englishes (ibid.). The speech of a proficient user of English in the outer circle (or expanding circle) should be perceived equally well as that of the inner circle speakers (Y. Kachru, 1994; Sridhar, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 2007a). The claim of language awareness raising has been empirically affirmed by Jin (2005a; see also Jin, 2005b), who illustrated a positive influence of Chinese undergraduates' developing view of WE on their preference for a NNEST over NEST.

The need to incorporate cultural elements into the curriculum has generally been endorsed by international scholars (Smith, 1976; Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Alptekin, 2002; McKay, 2002, 2003; Wen, 2004; Baumgardner, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2008a). For the purpose of cross-cultural communication, Kirkpatrick (2008a) addresses one principal goal, that learners need to understand how to express their own cultural values using English. Further, McKay (2002) poses the difficulty, or more likely the impossibility, of teaching a language without the cultural content. Indeed, this cultural content should not be limited to either the local or the Western culture but a mixture of both as well as other cultures (Smith, 1976; Kachru & Nelson, 1996). While monocultural competence has become inadequate in the global context,

some academics argue that intercultural communicative competence should be fully considered in both the school curriculum and teaching training curriculum as well as teaching materials. For example, Alptekins (2002) suggests that the design of instructional materials should incorporate cultural content coming from features of the local settings. Wen (2004) likewise proposes a model for intercultural communicative competence and argues that the teaching of listening, speaking, reading and writing should be closely connected to intercultural communication.

One of the most controversial issues in WE pedagogy is the adoption of an appropriate pedagogical model in the outer circle classroom. This model has traditionally viewed the native speaker as the ideal speaker-hearer and thus has not used context as a variable to vary the proposed methodology (Brown, 2006, p.681). It is hence of the utmost importance that a model used in teacher pedagogy should accord with the needs of the local context, rather than an alleged superior model (i.e. the NS norm) (Baumgardner & Brown, 2003, p.249). In Strevens's (1983a) pioneering work in this area, this model should refer to a localised form of English which serves as a vehicle for education, administration, science and technology, literature, the media, entertainment and publicity in the local context. This localised innovation not only has its pragmatic function but it is also the English language which belongs to all those who use it (Brown, 2006). As Kirkpatrick (2007a) recently has put it, the nativised endonormative norm should be the recommended target in the

outer circle classroom as it is highly attainable and appropriate for the local multilingual context (see also Baumgardner 2006; Kirkpatrick 2006a, 2006b). One example is Kaushik (2011), who proposes to adapt more local sample texts, which entails the generally accepted 'educated' Indian English (based on empirical findings), in the teaching materials.

Despite this model's pedagogical and ideological attractiveness, scholars have been sceptical about the practicality of implementing such an approach prematurely.

Although Brown (1995) supports the WE paradigm, his main concern is the reservation from the key stakeholders in that teacher preparatory programs tend to maintain a hierarchical attitude towards English which places inner circle English at the top. Other considerations include the lack of time capacity in the curriculum and also insufficient concrete data about particular English varieties available to teacher educators (*ibid.*). From a similar perspective, Bamgbose (1998) has articulated five unsettled issues which hinder the legitimisation of innovations, namely (1) the status of innovations in the nativisation process, (2) the continued use of native norms as a point of reference, (3) local people's ambivalent attitudes between the recognition of a local variety and the acceptance of it as a non-native norm, (4) the adequacy of WE pedagogical models and (5) the overriding need for codification. Among the above,

Bamgbose identifies codification and standardisation as the main priorities because in their absence teachers will be unclear as to what is correct. Further, he suggests that the acceptability factor is the 'ultimate test of admission of an innovation' (p.12). Li (2010) has recently added to Bamgbose's previous work a sixth factor which also takes into account the popular choice of acrolectal (the educated form) on the internet whatever their first language may be. In the past few decades, the codification process has been undertaken by descriptive linguists who have sought to record and generalise linguistic patterns of emerging English varieties in the outer circle such as Nigerian English (e.g. Bamgbose, 1992, 1997), South African English (e.g. Mesthrie & West, 1995; Silva, 1997; De Klerk, 1999, 2003; Bobda, 2001), Malaysian English (e.g. Newbrook, 1997), Singapore English (e.g. Deterding, Brown & Ling, 2005; Deterding, 2007; Lim, Pakir & Wee, 2010), Philippine English (e.g. Bautista, 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2004; Bolton & Butler, 2004; Bautista & Bolton, 2008), Indian English (e.g. D'Souza, 1997; Sailaja, 2009) and Hong Kong English (e.g. Bolton, 2002; 2003; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010; Cummings & Wolf, 2011) (and also some expanding circle varieties e.g. China English as in Kirkpatrick & Xu, 2002; Jiang, 2002; Bolton, 2003; Wei & Fei, 2003; He & Li, 2009; He & Zhang, 2010; Eaves, 2011). However, as Ferguson (2006) maintains, it is still uncertain to what extent these local varieties are accepted among educated users outside the academic community.

Although the WE approach tends to emphasise the use of English as an intra-ethnic communicative tool to express individual cultural identities in the outer circle, WE scholars are also concerned with the important issue of international intelligibility in cross-cultural communication. One of the most representative and influential intelligibility systems (later known as the Smith paradigm) was proposed by Larry Smith, who argues that there are three basic levels of intelligibility, namely intelligibility (word/utterance recognition), comprehensibility (word/utterance meaning) and interpretability (meaning behind a word/utterance), of which interpretability plays the most vital role in cross-cultural communication (see Nelson, 1983, 1995, 2008, 2011; Smith 1983, 1992; Smith & Rafiqzad, 1983; Smith & Nelson, 1985; Jenkins, 2000; Kachru, 2008; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Sewell, 2010). His landmark article (with Rafiqzad) in 1979 was one of the most substantial empirical investigations at the time (and it is still valid at present), which targeted at least 30 educated participants from 12 Asian countries¹¹. The findings surprisingly indicated that NSs were always found to be among the least intelligible speakers (see also Smith & Bisazza, 1982; Kachru & Smith, 2008).

However, Smith's groundbreaking framework apparently has not been adopted entirely in all empirical studies due largely to the complexity of the concept of

intelligibility. In an important article, Nelson (2008) compared and contrasted the diverging interpretations of the term intelligibility in the literature since 1969. Departing from Smith and Rafiqzad's (1979) seminal study, Nelson noted, by citing other important works (e.g. Bamgbose, 1998; James, 1998; Jenkins, 2000; Munro, Derwing & Morton, 2006), that some investigators only acknowledge but do not apply the Intelligibility-Comprehensibility-Interpretability scheme proposed by Smith (e.g. Smith & Nelson, 1985; Smith, 1992) in their studies. He concluded by maintaining that the Smith paradigm has given 'a good, solid frame on which to hang our investigations and analyses of Englishes as they are spoken' (Nelson, 2008, p.307). From a practical perspective, Munro and Derwing (2011) stress the immense diversity in approach and scale among pronunciation research with reference to the research timeline. The diverse dimensions of research foci include (1) the investigation of the different varieties of English, (2) intelligibility in various linguistic levels (e.g. grammatical, lexico and phonological features), (3) intelligibility based on different target receivers and (4) the adoption of different research instruments (e.g. Nelson, 1983, 2001; Smith & Bisazza, 1982; Smith & Rafiqzad, 1983; Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, R. & Koehler, 1992; Munro & Derwing, 1995, 1998, 2006, 2008; Derwing & Munro, 1997, 2009; Matsuura, Chiba & Morton, 1999; Llorca, 2000; Jenkins, 2000; van der Walt, 2000; Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta &

Balasubramanian, 2002; Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Deterding, 2010a, 2010b; Nihalani, 2010). Even though intelligibility research has developed in multiple dimensions over the past few decades, the intelligibility of specific varieties of English is hardly comprehensive as many of these studies are virtually impossible to compare.

In his recent monograph, Nelson (2011) provides a more comprehensive overview of theories of intelligibility in WE research and further extends the discussion from purely sociolinguistic-based research to applied linguistics by highlighting the implications of accent variation and international intelligibility for ELT. Having reviewed the development of ELT approaches from the audio-lingual method to the communicative approach, Nelson acknowledges that the shift in pedagogical focus towards social and cultural competence has indeed come much closer to the framework of intelligibility in WE (i.e. intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability). While the audio-lingual method is basically a structural approach which requires memorisation and undeviating mimicry of 'correct' pronunciations, the communicative approach, depending on the instructors' perspective, might involve intelligibility criteria which involve elements of recognising various possibilities based on students' home-culture experience and English proficiency

(Brown, 2000; McDonough & Shaw, 2003; see also Savignon, 2001). Although Nelson (2011) acknowledges that ‘there is usually little we can do’ about language policy sent down from above by ‘a ministry, a board, an established syllabus, or other authoritative directive’ (p.88), he insists that teaching English with a WE perspective should involve:

an approach to the work that is centred on the intelligibility of the language that is learned and that will be used. Students learn from the models and practice that they find available; teachers teach their own Englishes and elements of others that they make themselves aware of. Since we cannot teach and no one can learn every English there is as such, the appropriate focus is on what may best be termed open-heartedness. (p.95)

It is therefore the job of WE teachers to prepare their students to meet perceptual challenges with assured flexibility (ibid.).

To summarise, WE research highlights the importance of cross-cultural/international communication (Smith, 1983; Smith & Rafiqzad, 1983; Nelson, 1983, 1995, 2008; Smith & Nelson, 1985; Berns, 2008) rather than native-like competence in bilingual/multilingual contexts in most outer circle (and sometimes expanding circle) countries. Any variety of English is a legitimate form of language (Kachru, 1992b; Bolton, 2006; Y. Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Modiano, 2009, p.217) and, once it is codified, a nativised endonormative model should be adopted in the local classroom

given its high attainability and appropriateness (Kirkpatrick, 2007a). The central component of the WE teaching approach is the tolerance of Englishes other than one's own. It is suggested by Kachru and Nelson (1996, p.95) that 'it is the vehicle of cross-cultural awareness that can be used not only to teach but to learn, in bidirectional ways, multicultural literatures, customs, and acceptance' (see also Baker, 2011). In addition to the focus on the global functions of English, this approach also takes into account the multiplicity of identities, canons, and voices that represent the sociolinguistic context and the extent of bilinguals' linguistic creativity (Kachru, 1990, 1992b, 1996; Brown, 2006; Baumgardner, 2006).

2.7 Establishing the field of English as a lingua franca

The foundation of the descriptive work on English as a lingua franca (ELF) has been built on a long history of scholarly ground work in the areas of native language variation and change (e.g. Chambers, Trudgill & Schilling-Estes, 2002), indigenised varieties (e.g. Kachru, 1992b; Schneider, 2003a, 2003b, 2007), language contact (e.g. McGroarty, 2003; Mesthrie, 2006), simplification in language use and language pedagogy (e.g. Tickoo, 1993), the older conceptual and empirical work on English as an international language (e.g. Basic English in Ogden, 1930, Nuclear English in Quirk, 1981) and particularly the recent development of the WE paradigm (see

Seidlhofer, 2002a, 2004). Notwithstanding groundbreaking WE research to describe and legitimise newly emerging varieties in the outer circle over the past three decades, one of the limitations of this impressive body of work is that it has tended to overlook the sociolinguistic reality in the international setting (Jenkins, 2006a). The aim of ELF research thus centres on how English is used as the communication medium among people from different L1 backgrounds in international multilingual settings (ibid.).

In fact, English fulfilling this function has been referred to by a number of terminologies in the academic discourse such as “English as a medium of intercultural communication” (e.g. Meierkord, 1996), ‘English as a global language’ (Crystal, 1997; Gnutzmann, 1999), ‘English as an international language’ (EIL) (Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009), ‘English as a lingua franca’ (ELF) (Gnutzmann, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2001) and ‘English as a world language’ (Mair, 2003) (see also McArthur, 2001 for an early summary). Although these terms seem to overlap partly in their meaning, it is important to note that they have fundamental differences. For example, Halliday (2006) makes it clear that English has been expanding globally as ‘English’ but internationally as ‘Englishes’ as the latter ‘has expanded by becoming world Englishes, evolving so as to adapt the meanings of other cultures’ (p.362), which to a greater extent conforms to the WE perspective.

The acronym ELF was not introduced as a distinct field of research at the time when ELF or EIL was occasionally and independently discussed as a phenomenon in the publications between the late 1980s and the late 1990s (e.g. Haberland, 1989; Firth, 1996; Jenkins, 1996, 1998; Firth & Wagner, 1997; House, 1999). It was only with the publication of two landmark works at the beginning of the new millennium, namely Jenkins (2000) and Seidlhofer (2001), that ELF became a converging subject of study in applied linguistics and English language teaching. Whereas Jenkins's (2000) empirical study sets out to identify the common phonological features in ELF interactions, Seidlhofer (2001) argues persuasively on a conceptual basis that even though NS English norms are still considered the only valid target of learners (particularly in the expanding circle), ELF users should perceive English in their own right. She thus calls for an empirical research agenda to fill this 'conceptual gap' by describing the linguistic features in ELF communication using sizable corpora. For these reasons, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) project (the pioneering ELF corpus which is presumably comparable to ICE) was launched at the University of Vienna under the leadership of Seidlhofer. In 2003, the corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA) was also compiled by a team at Tampere (now Helsinki) University under the directorship of Anna Mauranen (see Mauranen, 2003). More recently, the Asian Corpus of English (ACE, formerly

known as English as a Lingua Franca in Asia or ELFiA) has also been compiled in Hong Kong, led by Andy Kirkpatrick with a team in various parts of East Asia (Kirkpatrick, 2010b). The ultimate aim is to compile a corpus comparable in size and scale with VOICE for future comparative research in continental Europe and Asia.

In addition to the compilation of ELF corpora, the past decade has also witnessed the publication of a plethora of article-length studies (see section 2.9), dedicated journal issues (e.g. Meierkord, 2006; Mauranen & Metsä-Ketelä, 2006; House, 2009a; Mauranen & Hynninen, 2010; Björkman, 2011), monographs and edited volumes (e.g. Jenkins, 2007; Prodromou, 2008; Breiteneder, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2010a; Smit, 2010; Walker, 2010; Dröschel, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011, Baker, 2012; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mauranen, 2012; Björkman, 2013; Deterding, 2013; Jenkins, 2013; Mackenzie, 2014) in ELF research. At the 13th annual International Association for World Englishes (IAWE) conference in 2007, a focus workshop on ELF discussed five complementary perspectives on ELF as a subject of study, namely (1) ‘lingua franca: form or function?’, (2) ‘English as a lingua franca Interpretations and attitudes’, (3) ‘Inclusive/Exclusive? English as a lingua franca in the European Union’, (4) ‘world Englishes and English as a lingua franca: two frameworks or one?’ and (5) ‘the future of English and the Kachruvian Three Circle Model’ (see Berns, Jenkins, Modiano,

Seidlhofer & Yano, 2009). Since 2008, the ELF conference series has taken place annually (Helsinki in 2008, Southampton in 2009, Vienna in 2010, Hong Kong in 2011, Istanbul in 2012, Rome in 2013, Greece in 2014). In 2012, the first issue of the dedicated journal, the *Journal of English as a Lingua franca* (2 volumes per year), has been published, with Barbara Seidlhofer, Jennifer Jenkins, Anna Mauranen as the editors.

2.8 Defining the nature of English as a lingua franca

Given the highly globalised modern world, English has become unquestionably the dominant lingua franca¹². As Ferguson (1992) suggests, ‘there has never before been a single language which spread for such purposes over most of the world, as English has done in their century’ (p.xv). At the time, there has been no consensus on which specific term this function of English should be named and among many the notions of ELF and EIL were the most common ones. Jenkins (2006a) noted that ELF is an alternative to EIL meaning ‘the use of English as a means of international communication across national and linguistic boundaries’ (p.160). However, some scholars prefer the former because EIL¹³ can be misleading as being a distinguishable, codified and unitary variety for international use (Seidlhofer, 2004). Although Jenkins (2000) adopted the term EIL in her earlier groundbreaking publication, she employs

the notion ELF in her later monograph (2007) in recognition of the predominant communication among NNSs worldwide. Nevertheless, she insists that ‘ELF and EIL are one and the same phenomenon, and that both refer to lingua franca uses of English primarily among its non-mother tongue speakers’ (p.xi). Another interpretation of the nature of ELF includes Firth (1990), who suggests that ELF consists of a dual meaning, namely (1) international lingua franca (which ‘covers settings where English is used by different nationality groups’) and (2) intranational lingua franca (which is used among speakers of mutually incomprehensible languages within the same country). One controversial, but occasionally-cited, definition derived by Firth (1996, p.240) is that ‘a lingua franca is a “contact language” between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication’. House (1999) likewise also defines ELF interactions as ‘interactions between members or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue’ (p.74). However, this perspective is referred by Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) to being only ‘shared by a minority of ELF researchers’ in that it implies the exclusion of NSs from ELF communication as they cannot be considered as ‘foreign language’ speakers of English (p.283).

As ELF scholars highlight the undeniable fact that NNSs largely outnumber NSs in international communication contexts, one of the criticisms of the ELF approach is indeed whether this marginalisation of NSs should result in their exclusion from the ELF empirical data (see Prodromou, 2007). In this regard, while Jenkins (2006a) acknowledges the minor role played by NSs in ELF contexts, she also admits that it cannot be taken for granted that NSs are absent in ELF interactions. Seidlhofer (2004) emphasises that ‘it has to be remembered that ELF interactions often also include interlocutors from the Inner and Outer Circles’ (p.211-212). Jenkins (2009b) further clarifies that ELF databases usually include both outer circle and inner circle speakers (e.g. 10% in VOICE) as long as the numbers ‘do not distort the data with a surplus of ENL forms or (unwittingly) act as norm-providers’ (p.201). The definition of ELF is in fact straightforward on the VOICE website and it is described as ‘an additionally acquired language system which serves as a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages’ (VOICE, 2014). Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) explain that this definition does not exclude NS English(es), since ELF is different from ENL, and by the description ‘additionally acquired’ it means that both NSs and NNSs have to learn the language system, though through slightly differing learning processes (p.283). To further define the nature of ELF, Jenkins (2006b) makes a clear distinction between the notion of ELF as part of the WE paradigm and

EFL as part of modern foreign languages, which is based on the SLA perspective¹⁴. In this regard, code-switching/ mixing in EFL is regarded as a problem which might lead to interference errors but it is an important bilingual resource in ELF (ibid.).

Apart from the above comparison between ELF and EFL (or possibly ENL), the similarities and differences between EFL and the well-established WE paradigm have also aroused scholarly interest (see the special issue of *World Englishes* in 2009). The fundamental difference between WE and ELF research stems from its differing foci in the role and function of English in the outer circle and international settings respectively. Pennycook (2007) states that the WE framework places nationalism as the key emphasis because of the extensive use of English within the outer circle countries, not only as a tool for intra-ethnic communication, but also as a cultural and identity marker. ELF studies, on the other hand, focus on the language interactions in the expanding circle context which WE research pays scant attention to (Seidlhofer, 2009). ELF scholars hence argue that there is a dearth of research in describing the characteristic function of language in the international setting because the vast majority of the empirical WE studies are related to the nativised English varieties in the outer circle (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2002b, 2009; Jenkins 2006a). It is evident that one of

the largest WE corpora, ICE, does not include the interactions among NNSs, but only 'English as a native language' and 'English as a nativised language'.

Seidlhofer (2009) is one of the scholars who emphasise the similarities of (over differences between) WE and ELF research in that both paradigms 'are engaged in the same shared endeavour to understand and confront the sociolinguistic challenges of a rapidly changing world' (p.243). Their shared pluricentric assumption implies that (1) English belongs to all those who use it; (2) it is concerned with the sociolinguistic, sociopsychological, applied linguistic implications and (3) the research focuses on language contact, variation and change, linguistic norms and their acceptance, ownership of the language and expression of social identity (p. 236). Pakir (2009) also shares a similar view that WE and ELF are alike in terms of 'four common working axioms' namely the emphasis on the 'pluricentricity of English', recognition of varieties, acceptance of 'language changes' and adaptation to new environment and 'discourse strategies of English-knowing bilinguals' (p.233). The emerging consensus is that both the WE and ELF research share the same basis of recognizing the pluricentricity of English in the fast-changing sociolinguistic realm (Seidlhofer, 2005, 2009; Pakir, 2009). Although other observable differences between the WE and ELF research are also discussed in some publications (e.g. Jenkins, 2006a; Berns, 2008;

Pakir, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2010b, 2011a), ELF scholars tend to agree with Seidlhofer (2009) that they are from the ‘common ground’ (i.e. sharing the same pluricentric assumption) while ‘different reality’ (i.e. focusing on different sociolinguistic contexts).

One of the most penetrating criticisms of the ELF approach has been the ambiguous nature of ELF: that is, whether it is a single stabilised variety, a number of regional varieties or a functional language (e.g. Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006). From a pedagogical perspective, the controversy mainly centres on its codification. In her early attempt to fill the ‘conceptual gap’, Seidlhofer (2001) proposed, through the compilation of VOICE, ‘to explore the possibility of a codification of ELF with a conceivable ultimate objective of making it a feasible, acceptable and respected alternative to ENL in appropriate contexts of use’ (p.150; see also Seidlhofer, 2003). Jenkins (2007) refers to ELF as ‘an emerging English that exists in its own right and which is being described in its own terms rather than by comparison with ENL’ (p.2). However, in the same publication, ELF is described in the plural form: ‘ELF varieties are used internationally rather than intranationally and are born of international contact among their NNSs’ (p.17) (see also Jenkins, 2009). Based on the early discussion of the aims and approaches of ELF, scholars have

questioned its fundamental nature. Saraceni (2008) has offered a critique of the notion of English as a lingua franca between its form and function. Saraceni is sceptical about ELF as a 'one-size-fits-all model of English' which did not seem very different from 'Quirk's idea of International English' (p.22). In this position, he further expresses his uneasiness with the 'prototypical user of ELF' and that the description was 'made within a discourse which elected empirical research as the sole credible way forward in the field' (p.22). By referring to previous literature on ELF (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2001; Jenkins, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2007a), Saraceni concludes by advancing four possible readings of ELF: (1) The function of English as used among NNS as a common language; ELF communication does not have to exclude native speakers (see also Kirkpatrick, 2008a); (2) Varieties of English emerging in Expanding-Circle settings; (3) A variety of English, with its own phonological and lexico-grammatical features, stemming out of the types interactions involving primarily NNS; (4) A distinct variety of English used internationally as a lingua franca in a particular region of world. These diverse interpretations of ELF seem to accord with Pakir's (2009) summary of the previous development of ELF in that 'ELF does not clearly stand out as having an orientation that will successfully predict its enterprise of managing the study of English in the world' (p.231) (see also Kirkpatrick, 2003).

A major concern that arises from the above view of ELF being a singular linguistic entity is its adoption as a single model of English which, in a sense, has no difference from the monolingual, monolithic NS model. Although Fiedler (2010) agrees that the ELF approach is apparently feasible, she foresees a number of factors that are likely to hinder its chances of realisation, one of which is the perception of ELF as a reduced variant of English (cf. e.g. Globish in *Nerrière, 2004*; McCrum, 2010 and Globalish in *Ammon, 2003, 2006, 2007*). *Prodromou (2008)* argues that this reduced form of English provides people only with a 'broken weapon', with 'reduced linguistic capital' (p.150) as English, in his interpretation, is a 'weapon in the hands of the oppressed' (p.249) which provides people with privileged access to formal education and career prospects. Similarly, *Ferguson (2006)* warns that the ELF model might be perceived mostly by practicing educators as a 'second-rate English, like other 'reduced models' proposed previously (p.177; see also *Ferguson, 2009*). Given the unpredictable future needs in communication, *Ferguson* maintains that 'a prestige variety of English of wide currency, internationally as well as in the inner circle, will be the best, most flexible bet for them [learners]' (p.177). In recommending the model of English, *Kuo (2006)* claims that it is up to TESOL professionals and learners in each context to decide on an appropriate model (see also *Groom, 2012*). Nevertheless, she maintains that an NS model 'would appear to be more appropriate and appealing in second

language pedagogy than a description of English which is somewhat reduced and incomplete' (p.220) (see also van den Doel, 2008).

Although some scholars seem to be doubtful about the nature of ELF, more recent discussion in the field has apparently reached an emerging consensus that tends to deny the existence of a single static variety of ELF. In integrating ELF into the Kachru's tripartite model of English, Mollin (2006) argues that ELF does not count as a variety in the traditional sense as it appears to lack coherent features marking it off from other varieties. Instead, she tends to believe that 'ELF can be conceptualized as a functional phenomenon concerning English world-wide, emerging from the strategies of lingua franca communication.'(p.54). In addition, Canagarajah (2007b) has stressed the difficulty in describing lingua franca English (LFE) (with the 'English' as the main focus; see also Dröschel, 2011 for the definition of LFE) as it belongs to a virtual speech community where speakers are not located in one geographical boundary. The form of LFE, as Canagarajah sees it, is variable as it is actively negotiated by the participants who understand the interlocutors' variants and proceed effectively with the communication, in turn using their own variants¹⁵ (p.926).

The perspective of recognising ELF in hybridity has gradually been found to be endorsed by numerous scholars in the literature. Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) have made it clear that ELF is ‘a widely and meticulously researched phenomenon that has abundant support from empirical findings’ (p.283) and that it has no connection with the notion of ‘Globish’, an arbitrarily simplified version of English (see Nerrière, 2004; McCrum, 2010 for the discussion of ‘Globish’). Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) also continue to comment on the fluidity of ELF as a ‘globalised’ and ‘globalising’ phenomenon in that the world has become more interconnected in terms of economic, cultural, political, professional and social spaces. This transformationalist nature of globalisation has necessarily contributed to an increasing hybridisation of language and culture in all English-using contexts (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010). As reflected in Pakir’s notion of ‘Glocal English’ that the global role of English is necessarily and inevitably rooted in the local contexts of its users (Pakir, 1999, 2004; see also Facchinetti, Crystal & Seidlhofer, 2010; Sharifian, 2010), the ‘glocalisation’ of English would result in diversification of its form, function and culture.

Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) attribute some criticisms of ELF to the misconceptions about its dynamic nature. These misconceptions, in their view, are

inevitably due to a lack of clarity in the field as it develops (p.308). Looking ahead to future development of ELF, Dewey and Jenkins (2010) explain that the ‘transformationalist’ perspective is indeed of most relevance to ELF research (p.87). They emphasise (strongly) that the aim of ELF is to describe how the language is manipulated in innovative ways to suit the communicative needs of speakers who interact in complex multilingual communities of practice, in settings where the language is sufficiently stable to act as a lingua franca, yet sufficiently variable to fit the infinite purposes it serves (p.89), but certainly not to promote a uniform, monocentric version of English (see also Jenkins, 2012). As Park and Wee (2011) put it, ELF ‘treats language not as a fixed structural system with static rules but as an emergent product of speakers’ practices in local contexts’ (p.361). In addition, ELF ‘views language as social action, as a product that emerges out of our engagement with things, ideas, and other people in interaction, instead of a fixed structure with a set of rules that determine and delimit its form and patterns of usage.’ (p.265). More recently, Sewell (2013a) comments on the debate surrounding ELF: ‘all language use – whether by native or non-native speakers – is variable, emergent, contextual, and subject to hybridity and change’ (p.3).

2.9 Research into English as a lingua franca

2.9.1 Regional ELF research

A major reason for the emergence of the ELF phenomenon is the current era of globalisation in which it is vital for the participants to communicate effectively in a lingua franca with the interlocutors who speak a different L1. To enhance and liberalise trade among countries, a number of more or less integrated trading blocks have emerged in various regions around the world such as the European Union (EU), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the common market of the southern cone (MERCOSUR) (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010). Early investigations into ELF (if not by name) took place in continental Europe (and sometimes in Britain) where English has emerged as the most common and appropriate working language among the 23 recognised official languages across the 27 member states of the European Union¹⁶ (see Dröschel, 2011). The European ideals of individual plurilingualism and societal multilingualism have resulted in a conceptualisation of ELF as ‘common property’ (Seidlhofer, 2007; see also Seidlhofer, 2011). As the role of English as the *de facto* lingua franca has exerted a significant impact on the domains of business, the media, the internet, advertising, popular youth culture and entertainment and, particularly, the curricula in the tertiary education sector in mainland Europe (Seidlhofer, 2010a), the

focus of much of the ELF research has been on the shared linguistic features of English in such domains. The earliest conceptualising of ELF was carried out by the German scholars such as Haberland (working in Denmark), Hüllen and Knapp (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011). Independent of the German work, ELF research was subsequently taken up by scholars across the continent such as Firth (1996, Denmark, later UK), House (1999, Germany), James (2000, Austria), Jenkins (2000, UK), Mauranen (2003, Finland) and Seidlhofer (2001, Austria). Since 2001, when Seidlhofer launched the VOICE project in Vienna followed by Mauranen's ELFA corpus in Helsinki, a growing number of postgraduate students and academics have made significant contributions to researching ELF in other parts of Europe. To date, findings and results of ELF studies with specific focus on Europe have been widely published not only as discrete research articles and reports but also as book-length studies (see below).

More recently, ELF research has been extended to a comparable multilingual context, i.e. Asian settings, particularly by Deterding and Kirkpatrick (e.g. Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; see also Deterding, 2010a, 2010b) and later, by Kirkpatrick's ACE team in Hong Kong (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011). Similar to the case of continental Europe, English is the *de facto* lingua franca of the grouping of ASEAN

and with the signing of the ASEAN Charter in December 2008 is now assumed official its working language (Kirkpatrick, 2008b; 2010a). Given the important functions of English in Asia, the ACE project has collected spoken ELF data from ten states of ASEAN plus China, Japan and Korea. Although the Asian ELF team proposes to work closely (when it is readily compiled) with the VOICE team, one distinction from the continental European context is that ELF in ASEAN consists of countries in both the outer and the expanding circles. As ELF research conducted in particular geographical locations does not necessarily relate to English of that location (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011), the two corpora of a similar size potentially provide a valuable comparison of the distinctive linguistic features, communicative strategies and types and causes of communication breakdown in the two regions.

2.9.2 Linguistic research in ELF

The major effort to describe ELF at the linguistic level has been based on genuine, naturally occurring interactional speech data¹⁷ by speakers from a wide range of L1 backgrounds (e.g. Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2010b). From this perspective, the following sub-sections discuss the key linguistic levels in the literature on ELF, namely phonology (with primary focus because of the scope of the present study), lexis, lexicogrammar and pragmatics.

2.9.2.1 Phonology

A major (and indeed the earliest) contribution to ELF phonological research is Jenkins's (2000) empirical study which explores two aspects of pronunciation in the ELF phenomenon: the issue of mutual intelligibility and the use of accommodation skills (see also Jenkins, 2002). The key objective was, at least when it was first proposed, to offer a teachable and learnable pronunciation alternative (or form the basis for a phonological syllabus for ELF learners) based on the frequency of miscommunication and communication breakdown in naturally occurring interactional speech data from educated NNSs of different L1s¹⁸. Since the basis of ELF research stems from international settings (mainly in Europe) in which L1 speakers of English, in most cases, are excluded (or the minority), the focus is no longer the lingua-culture of the NSs (Jenkins, 2004, 2006a). That is to say, previous research aiming to prepare L2 speakers for interaction with L1 speakers based on spoken data from the listener perspective of both NSs and NNSs (e.g. Derwing & Munro, 2001a, 2001b; Derwing, Rossiter & Munro, 2002) is no longer valid in the ELF context. With respect to the issue of intelligibility, the fundamental difference between Jenkins's work and the Smith paradigm (as mentioned in section 2.7) is that the former tends to associate intelligibility with general linguistic and speech act theory whereas the latter centres on negotiation of meaning in the diverse levels

(Berns, 2008). The main emphasis of Jenkins's (2000) project is on the segmental phonological features which impede international intelligibility whereas native-like suprasegmentals (i.e. weak forms, word stress, 'stress-timing'¹⁹, pitch movement and other features of connected speech) are claimed to be either 'non-manageable' in ELT classrooms or less important to intelligibility in ELF communication (also Kirkpatrick, 2008a). Jenkins (2000) also criticises those 'who give primacy to suprasegmentals' because of their ineradicable 'NS-NNS communication' mindset, a lack of consideration on 'the implications of EIL' and a dearth of empirical research (p.136).

Perhaps the most significant outcome of Jenkins's (2000) empirical study is the proposal of a Lingua Franca Core²⁰ (LFC), which identifies phonological and phonetic features that do (and do not) impede intelligibility in ELF communication (see also Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Deterding, 2010a, 2010b for the ELF phonological features in the Asian context). The value of LFC is that it has the potential to reduce the phonological task (by redefining phonological errors) for the majority of ELF learners (p.123). Jenkins (2000) suggests that the core features indicate which kind of pronunciation has the potential for ELF errors and should be the pedagogical focus for production in the classroom while other phonological features should be retained. From this pedagogical perspective, while the core items seem to be vital as safeguards of mutual intelligibilities in the teaching of ELF, Jenkins (2002) argues that the non-core features should be 'considered as areas in which L1 transfer indicates not "error" but (NNS) regional accent' and thus should signify 'a redefinition of phonological and phonetic error for EIL [i.e. ELF]' (p.97).

The benefit of presenting the non-core items to learners is to raise their awareness in terms of their own comprehension of NSs and their understanding of the differences between their own pronunciation and that of NSs (ibid.). Nonetheless, Jenkins argues that ‘it is perhaps NSs who need to make receptive adjustments rather than expecting NNSs to alter their production in EIL [i.e. ELF] contexts’ (p.98). Her elaboration of the relationship between the ELF and NS positions, as well as the core features, is shown below in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: EIL and NS pronunciation targets (adapted from Jenkins, 2002, p.99)

	NS target	EIL target
1. The consonantal inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All sounds ● RP non-rhotic /r/; GA rhotic /r/ ● RP intervocalic [t]; GA intervocalic [ɾ] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All sounds except /ə/, /ð/ and [ɫ] ● Rhotic /r/ only ● Intervocalic [t] only
2. Phonetic requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rarely specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aspiration after /p/ /t/ /k/ ● Appropriate vowel length before fortis/ lenis consonants
3. Consonant clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All word positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Word initially, word medially
4. Vowel quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-short contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-short contrast
5. Vowel quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Close to RP or GA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● L2 (consistent) regional qualities
6. Weak forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Essential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unhelpful to intelligibility
7. Features of connected speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inconsequential or unhelpful
8. Stress-timed rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not exist
9. Word Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unteachable/ can reduce flexibility
10. Pitch movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Essential for indicating attitudes and grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unteachable/ incorrectly linked to NS attitudes/ grammar
11. Nuclear (tonic) stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● critical

From the same perspective, other phonological studies have also sought to identity the shared (intelligible) features among diverse English varieties. For instance, comparing the pronunciation features of the various Englishes in Southeast Asia (e.g. Englishes

in Singapore, China, Hong Kong and the ASEAN region), Deterding (2010a) argues that some shared pronunciation features (not found in inner circle varieties) not only do not interfere with comprehension but, in some cases, they actually enhance intelligibility. Deterding has also discovered that the deletion of final consonants is not limited to Englishes in Southeast Asia but is also commonly found in British and American English, and thus the omission of these sounds should be encouraged. However, his study also suggests that the encouragement of other features as part of the regional norm remains controversial (e.g. the relative absence of reduced vowels and the use of syllable-based rhythm). In an empirical study, Osimk (2010), in contrast, shows that the 'standard' pronunciation (e.g. RP and GA) in fact does seem to be intelligible to speakers of different L1s. On the other hand, Osimk also suggests that variants of [ð] / [θ] and /r/ in NNS varieties are equally intelligible and can be tolerated and even taught considering their teachability and learnability. The above examples point to the need for the replication and modification of Jenkins's (2000) groundbreaking phonological study.

Another salient feature in ELF interaction that emerged from Jenkins's (2000) findings is the phenomenon of accommodation (a theory introduced by Howard Giles by the 1970s, e.g. Giles, 1973, 1984), which refers to speakers' temporary and

long-term adjustments in pronunciation (or other aspects of linguistic behaviour) to approximate their speech to their interlocutors (Gralińska-Brawata, 2008). Situated in the ELF context, Jenkins (2000) points out the importance of accommodation skills as they enable ELF users to 'be able to adjust their speech in order to be intelligible to interlocutors from a wide range of L1 backgrounds, most of whom are not inner circle native speakers' (p.174). The critical role of accommodation is emerging as possibly the single most important pragmatic skill in ELF communication in alignment with the use of code-switching, which according to some scholars, is also an accommodation strategy (e.g. Cogo, 2009; Jenkins, 2011). Thus, the focus of ELF research has shifted from 'an orientation to features and the ultimate aim of some kind of codification' to 'an interest in the processes underlying and determining the choice of features used in any given ELF interaction' (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011, p.287). In contrast to the use of accommodation strategies by NNSs, Jenkins (2009b) argues that monolingual NSs 'tend to be less competent than many NNSs in their acquisition and use of accommodation strategies, and instead expect NNSs to make all the adjustments' (p.53). Some monolingual NSs may be ineffective in ELF communication because they are less likely to be able to code-switch, less capable of using accommodation strategies and less flexible in their use of English than NNSs (Jenkins, 2011). As NNSs greatly outnumber NSs in ELF contexts, Dewey and

Jenkins (2010) argue that NSs need to observe ELF norms and employ ELF strategies such as accommodation in the same ways and to the same extent as do NNSs in international settings (p.73).

The teaching of accommodation skills is particularly relevant and valuable in classrooms where students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Jenkins, 2007).

Although there are three main types of accommodation (also known as convergence) depending on the speakers' motivation, namely (1) converging on one another's form, (2) avoiding certain forms (e.g. idiomatic language) and (3) converging on a more target-like form, Jenkins (2006c) laments that contemporary language tests only acknowledge the latter one (but penalise the former two) purely because the resulting form is close to the standard NS variant. Jenkins hence urges that assessment of ELF should reward the successful use of accommodation strategies in ELF and penalise their absence. Furthermore, she argues that the assessment criteria in examinations is the most powerful means of promoting changes as teachers and learners tend to be 'reluctant to embrace any curriculum change' if the targets are not set by 'the major examination boards' (p.42). Indeed, the development of accommodation skills is practical, productive, and enjoyable but scholars have reminded us that it should never be regarded as a 'soft' option (e.g. Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009;

Walker, 2010). Deterding (2010b) argues that the teaching and learning of accommodation skills involve considerably more work than the teaching of an RP or GA accent. Based on the empirically deduced LFC, Jenkins (2000, p.209-210; also 2004) recommends five progressive stages of pronunciation learning:

- Addition of core (LFC) items to the learner's productive and receptive repertoire
- Addition of a range of L2 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire
- Addition of accommodation skills
- Addition of non-core items to the learner's receptive repertoire
- Addition of a range of L1 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire

Since the formulation of the LFC in 2000, a number of replicated ELF phonological studies seem to support Jenkins's (2000) findings (e.g. Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Rajadurai, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Osimk, 2010). However, some scholars are still doubtful about the generalisability and the practicality of the research findings. Apart from the dispute over the LFC as a monolithic pronunciation model (as discussed in section 2.8), other key issues include the spelling versus pronunciation mismatch (Wells, 2008) and the disagreement over some ELF phonological features (e.g. Dauer, 2005) (see also Remiszewski, 2005; Sobkowiak, 2005). Although Walker (2010) also agrees that LFC needs a degree of 'fine-tuning' (p.43-44), his pioneering book indeed

provides useful guidelines for the integration of an ELF approach into pronunciation teaching²¹.

2.9.2.2 Lexis and lexicogrammar

Influenced by the ground work of WE research in describing the linguistic features of outer circle varieties of English using corpora (e.g. ICLE), early ELF research also sought to record, describe and codify the emerging patterns of lexical and grammatical forms of ELF, which is fostered by the launch of the VOICE project (Seidlhofer, 2001). It is important to note that these linguistic features are considered to be ELF variants, rather than fossilised errors as in the traditional SLA paradigm (see Seidlhofer, 2002a, 2002b, 2004; Ranta, 2009²²). It has been revealed that many of the ELF features are consistent with the language forms of the learner English, which has long been regarded as errors as they do not conform to NS norms. More interestingly, some of these features are found to be common among speakers from different L1 backgrounds and geographic locations (cf. Kirkpatrick, 2010b). They include the use of present simple third person (e.g. Cogo & Dewey, 2006), the verbal ‘-s’ suffix (e.g. Breiteneder, 2009) as well as the use of prepositions, the article system and collocations (Cogo & Dewey, 2012) (also see Seidlhofer, 2004 for a summary²³).

While early ELF research was mainly concerned with the identification of linguistic forms, recent scholarly attention has tended to focus on the functional role of ELF. Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) point out that Seidlhofer's preliminary analysis of the lexicogrammatical characteristics 'at the time was put forward as a set of hypotheses rather than determinate ELF features' (p.289) and that 'the formal and functional properties of ELF lexicogrammar involve longstanding processes of language evolution, with many features occurring as the result of a regularisation of the system' (p.291). In this regard, Björkman (2009) reports that ELF speakers adapt English morphosyntactically, or as she described 'to get the job done' (p.225), in order to serve their communicative purpose. Pitzl (2009) also found that idiomatic expressions in ELF communication were constructed very differently from that of ENL. Applying Sinclair's (1991) idiom principle to ELF communication, Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2009) describe how the ELF interactants from various language and cultural backgrounds exploit and modify the principal, co-constructing ELF-specific expressions for their communicative needs, creating and enjoying new ELF idiomaticity.

Hüttner (2009) supports the view of fluency of ELF as a dialogic rather than monologic phenomenon in that ELF interactions (in educational settings) are not only

related to individual speakers but they also rely on interactive features (e.g. laughter) to further the creation and perception of fluency. Along the same lines, Hülmbauer (2009) explains that ELF communication processes involve both traditional NNS strategies and innovative linguistic behaviour that result in the hardly predictable nature of ELF forms including some common phenomena such as communicative cooperation, mutual accommodation as well as meta- and cross-linguistic sensitivity. This dynamicity of ELF is also realised by the use of code-switching, a common and effective feature of ELF conversations to mix the two languages (English and their L1) together (Klimpfinger, 2009). Nevertheless, Mauranen (2005) argues that ELF communication is primarily oriented to meaning rather than form as revealed in certain aspects of her empirical findings, notably (1) forms were often approximate rather than accurate, (2) some form-function pairings were ignored and (3) some specific functions of expressions were ignored (p.289). The recent work reviewed above has indicated that ELF research has perhaps advanced from merely the description of shared features among ELF speakers to the explanation of the underlying meanings of the forms (see Seidlhofer, 2009).

2.9.2.3 Pragmatics

Some earlier landmark studies of intercultural pragmatic ELF communication include Firth (1996), House (1999) and Meierkord (2002), in which the former two studies at the time were not explicitly oriented towards ELF in the sense it is understood at present. Together with other later ELF empirical research on pragmatics particularly in the business (e.g. Firth & Wagner, 1997; Haegeman, 2002) and academic domain (e.g. House, 2002, 2013; Knapp, 2002, 2011; Lesznyák, 2004; Watterson, 2008), the following are some major characteristics of ELF communication (summarised in Seidlhofer, 2004, p.218):

- Misunderstandings are not frequent in ELF interactions; when they do occur, they tend to be resolved either by topic change or, less often, by overt negotiation using communication strategies such as rephrasing and repetition.
- Interference from L1 interactional norms is very rare - a kind of suspension of expectations regarding norms seems to be in operation.
- As long as a certain threshold of understanding is obtained, interlocutors seem to adopt what Firth (1996) has termed the 'let-it-pass principle', which gives the impression of ELF talk being overtly consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive, and thus fairly robust.

These early studies tend to centre on miscommunication and non-understandings as well as speakers' strategies to deal with them in ELF interaction. One of the dominant strategies found in ELF data to resolve these problems is the use of repetition as both an indicator of, and response to, non-understanding due to mutual unintelligibility (Watterson, 2008). In addition, some lingua franca conversational studies (e.g. Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Mauranen, 2006a; Böhringer, 2009; Cogo, 2009; Kaur, 2009; Klimpfinger, 2009) also reveal that other similar accommodation strategies such as clarification, self-repair, paraphrasing and silences are also found to be adopted by ELF interactants to repair intelligibility problems. Many of these features, being successful communicative strategies by ELF users, have been found to be independent of their linguistic and cultural background as well as their level of competency in English (Kaur, 2009). The source of many of the misunderstandings, however, is mainly ambiguity in the speaker's utterances, mishearing and lack of world knowledge, which is due largely to misunderstanding in intracultural communication (Kaur, 2011).

Another salient pragmatic feature found in ELF corpus findings is the speakers' collaborative effort to construct meaning by means of their shared linguistic repertoire (Hülmbauer, 2009; Cogo, 2010; see also Lesznyák, 2002). That is to say,

accommodation involving convergence to one another's form and avoidance of certain linguistic forms is often constructive in negotiating in these contexts (see Jenkins, 2006c, 2011). Despite this sign of convergence in ELF conversations, studies also indicate ways in which participants construct or express their own cultural identity using code-switching (e.g. Cogo, 2009; Klimpfinger, 2009). Interestingly, the findings suggest that the switches in ELF conversation are self-explanatory and can be assumed to be understood by the other participants at least from context (Klimpfinger, 2009). Furthermore, while idiomatic expressions are usually localised and divergent among people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, Seidlhofer (2009) demonstrates how ELF speakers co-construct idiomatic phrases (or languages) through the process of, in her term, 'online idiomatising'. These phrases not only serve to facilitate cooperative convergence on shared meaning, but also serve as markers of shared territory, expressive of common understanding and attitude (ibid.; see also Pitzl, 2009; Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009).

The use of discourse markers in ELF communication has recently become an emerging area of particular scholarly concern which has previously been underplayed. In many cases, empirical studies have revealed their differing functions in ELF from ENL communication. Some examples include 'you know' (House, 2009b),

'yes'/'yeah' and 'so' (House, 2010, 2013) and the use of stance-taking markers 'I think' and 'I don't know' (Baumgarten & House, 2010). Since ELF speakers cannot rely on much shared linguistic or cultural knowledge in international communication, Mauranen (2010) argues that explicitness strategies such as discourse reflexivity (i.e. metadiscourse) to a great extent contribute to mutual understanding in dialogic speech events. Concerning the use of chunking in ELF speech, Mauranen (2009) points out that although their interactive phraseological patterns tend to accord with the conventional forms in terms of the length of the utterance, the emergent regularity in the expressions (e.g. 'in my point of view') seems different from the conventions. In Ranta (2006), the innovative extended use of the progressive (i.e. -ing form) is also found to be a characteristic feature of lingua franca English which, in addition to its standard uses, functions as an 'attention-catching' form (p.114). Nevertheless, although previous phonological research (e.g. Jenkins, 2000) tends to study merely (or predominantly) the segmental features of ELF interaction, Pickering (2009) argues that both pitch movement (i.e. tone choice) and relative pitch level (i.e. key choice) are crucial to intelligibility and interactional success. Her findings suggest that pitch cues are used by ELF speakers both to signal a possible trouble source and indicate that negotiation or repair sequences have been successfully accomplished. Although most ELF studies have tended to centre on the descriptive level, House (2002) has, in

the early stage of development, also proposed a set of performance criteria for the teaching of ELF pragmatic competence (i.e. characteristics of pragmatic fluency).

2.9.3 Domains of ELF research

As ELF interactions occur in social contacts where speakers with diverse language backgrounds meet, ELF scholars worldwide have explored its use for communication in a range of research domains such as international business (e.g. Haegeman, 2002; Charles, 2007; Ehrenreich, 2009; Pullin Stark, 2009, Pitzl, 2010; Evans 2013a), academic settings (e.g. Erling, 2007; Björkman, 2008, 2013; Smit, 2010; Knapp, 2011; Schaller-Schwaner, 2011; Jenkins, 2013), school settings (e.g. Sifakis & Fay, 2009), tourism, politics, technology, the media (see Seidlhofer, 2004) as well as the traditional use of ELF in international air and sea travel (e.g. Weeks, Glover, Johnson & Strevens, 1988). Given that ELF interactions are inseparable from a sociolinguistic context, ELF studies have centred on the domains in which the ELF is most prominent in the specific contexts. A case in point is the project conducted by Leppänen and Nikula (2007), who aimed to describe the uses and functions of English in language contact situation across the three key domains in Finland, namely the media, education and professional life (cf. Dröschel, 2011 for the case in Switzerland). Nevertheless, among these various aspects of ELF the domains of business and

academic communication have been studied more extensively than the others because English has a key functional role in these contexts regardless of geographical regions.

2.9.3.1 The business domain

Emerging from its early form as a trade language among speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the use of Business ELF (BELF) (or English as a business lingua franca) has been a fertile domain for investigations particularly due to the highly globalised and interconnected world. Two influential early studies in the field were Charles (1996) and Louhiala-Salminen (1996), who investigated the business discourse with the main emphasis on business language. This scholarly interest in analysing language used in isolated written texts or speech events has, however, shifted towards the analysis of contextualised communicative genres with a specific focus on the organisational and/or cultural factors associated with the individuals (see Nickerson, 2005). Recent studies in the field of BELF mainly focus on one of four major communicative genres, namely negotiations (e.g. Charles, 1996; Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Vuorela, 2005a, 2005b), meetings (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1997; Rogerson-Revell, 1999, 2008; Bilbow, 2002; Poncini, 2002, 2003, 2004), business letters (e.g. Connor, Davis & De Rycker, 1995; Connor, Davis, DeRycker, Phillips & Verkens, 1997; Upton & Connor, 2001; Gillaerts & Gotti, 2005)

and emails (e.g. Nickerson, 2000; Gimenez, 2002; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta, 2005; Kankaanranta, 2006; Jensen, 2009). A number of studies have also explored the role of small talk and humour (e.g. Pullin Stark, 2009, 2010) and a few others have focused on the teaching of English for international business communication (e.g. Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2007). While BELF research has been reported in fields of studies such as business communication (e.g. Charles, 2007; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010), English for specific purposes (e.g. Nickerson, 2005; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010), business discourse (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009; Koester, 2010) and world Englishes (e.g. Grin, 2001; Deneire, 2008), a substantial number of studies has centred on continental Europe (e.g. Nickerson, 1998; Vandermeeren, 1999; Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Erling & Walton, 2007; Rogerson-Revell, 2008; Ehrenreich, 2010).

Some key findings revealed in BELF studies concern its simplified, hybridised and dynamic nature which however places top priority on clarity and accuracy of the business content, rather than linguistic (i.e. NS) correctness (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; see also Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010), its complex relationship with other languages which play a significant role in international business communication (e.g. Charles, 2007; Erling & Walton, 2007; Ehrenreich, 2009, 2010;

Virkkula-Räsänen, 2010), the differing intercultural communicative competency and use of BELF between NSs and NNSs in international business contexts (e.g. Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Rogerson-Revell, 2007, 2008; Sweeney & Zhu, 2010) and accommodation by BELF speakers to facilitate understanding and communicative efficiency (e.g. Pitzl, 2005; Rogerson-Revell, 2008; Ehrenreich, 2009; Koester, 2010). The results seem quite convincingly point to the recommendation that teaching of BELF should focus on intercultural communication skills (rather than mastery of the linguistic form), which both NSs and NNSs need to acquire.

2.9.3.2 The academic domain

The emergence of English as the dominant lingua franca in academic settings is another area of research which has witnessed a significant upsurge of scholarly interest due largely to the inherently internationalised nature of academic discourse. Mauranen (2006a; see also 2006b) argues that this is a ‘rich domain of ELF’ particularly since the Second World War, after which the scale of mobility and the global dominance of English has become unprecedented. The pioneering breakthrough in this field is the beginning of the project ‘English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings’ (ELFA) at the University of Tampere, and now at the University of Helsinki, led by Mauranen in 2003, following the launch of the VOICE

project in 2001 (see Mauranen, 2003). As described on the ELFA project website, the project comprises two main parts, the ELFA Corpus project²⁴ and the Studying in English as lingua franca (SELF) project²⁵. More recently, the ELFA team has also started to compile a database of written academic ELF (WrELFA)²⁶ (ELFA project website). Like ELF research in other domains, corpus analysis of academic ELF spoken discourse displays the emergence of a systematic new pattern (both linguistically and pragmatically), which differs from the NS varieties (e.g. Mauranen, 2005, 2006b, 2007b; 2009; Metsä-Ketelä, 2006; Ranta, 2006, 2009; Björkman, 2008). These features include the use of the progressive aspect (i.e. ‘-ing’ form) (Ranta, 2006), the expression ‘more’ or ‘less’ (Metsä-Ketelä, 2006), ‘chunking’ (Mauranen, 2005, 2009) and front-loading of the lexical subject of a clause (Mauranen, 2011).

Indeed, research into academic ELF is not limited to corpus linguistics but scholars have also sought to adopt other approaches to explore various important issues (not merely the description of the language) in the academic domain. For example, Smit (2010) offers a book-length ethnographically-embedded analysis of the function of ELF among international student groups in English-medium higher education. In a textbook analysis which includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches, Kopperoinen (2011) reveals a minimal amount of NNS vis-à-vis NS accents

incorporated in the audio materials in two Finnish secondary school textbook series, indicating the lack of an ELF perspective in the teaching materials. Furthermore, Ranta (2010) compares the Finnish English teachers' and students' views of the teaching targets and practical goals underpinning their use of English inside and outside school. Nonetheless, a dedicated journal issue has brought together a number of recent studies about the pragmatics of English as a lingua franca in international universities (Björkman, 2011). More recently, while Björkman's (2013) book-length treatment has presented further descriptive work focusing on form and pragmatic issues about ELF in the university setting, Jenkins (2013) in her latest monograph has sought to discuss the implications of ELF for current policies and practices in international universities.

Emerging from the accumulated research in academic ELF, the issue of academic English language policy has recently received particular scholarly attention. One of the problems, among others, in international scientific communication is the predominance of one single international language of science, which not only offers an unfair advantage for Anglophones, but may also slow down scientific development (Ammon, 2006). In an edited volume of the AILA Review (Carli & Ammon, 2007), a series of collected original contributions collaboratively draw a picture of actual and

potential conflicts in the academic discourse in that non-Anglophone academics are of tremendous disadvantages from both the cultural-academic and economic aspects. Ammon thus calls for a campaign for, on the one hand, raising NSs' awareness of the challenges faced by NNS using inner circle English and, on the other hand, proposing a more ELF-oriented, pluricentric approach (rather than an NS norm) which he renames it 'Globalish' (Ammon, 2006, 2007). This issue of the disadvantages experienced on NNS academics by the dominance of English in scientific publication and academic exchange is critically reviewed by Ferguson, Pérez-Llantada and Plo (2011), who also uncover the complex and multidimensional attitudes among Spanish academics based on empirical findings. Apart from the idea of moving towards a more ELF-oriented approach to academic English, Kirkpatrick (2011b) urges universities (particularly in Asia) to collaboratively establish new 'centres' for bilingual journal publishing in that local scholars are encouraged to published in the local language followed by the translation of these publications into English.

2.9.4 Pedagogical implications of ELF research

As early ELF research has focused on conceptualising and describing ELF as both a sociolinguistic and linguistic phenomenon, it is no coincidence that ELF scholars, like other researchers in applied linguistics, have gradually developed an interest in the

pedagogical implications of the research findings for ELT. Reflecting on the sociolinguistic reality in the modern era, Widdowson (1997) states that '[t]he school is the real world for pupils: they spend most of their day there' and that '[a]ll subjects on the curriculum are faced with the need to so fashion this world that it appeals to the interest of pupils and motivates them to learn' (p.145). Having radically challenged the narrow scope of language education, Widdowson further poses a rhetorical question: 'What if they subsequently needed to use the language outside the domains of use they have been schooled in?' (p.145-6) (see also Widdowson, 1998). In this regard, ELF findings emerging from authentic data seem to provide a solid foundation for ELT professionals. Because of this reason, the 2012 ELF conference in Istanbul was specifically given the theme *Pedagogical implications of ELF in the expanding circle*. Meanwhile, Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) also suggest five key areas of ELF which have far-reaching implications for ELT (and also language teacher education), namely the nature of the language syllabus, teaching materials, approaches and methods, language assessment and the knowledge base of language teachers (p.305). Along with this development, there has been an increasing number of scholarly works focusing on the pedagogical implications of ELF in the journals such as the *ELT Journal* (e.g. Baker, 2012; Cogo, 2012; Jenkins, 2012; Murray, 2012;

Sowden, 2012; Sewell, 2013a) and *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* (e.g. Dewey, 2012; Honna, 2012, Kirkpatrick, 2012; McNamara, 2012).

Furthermore, several book-length publications have addressed the issue of teaching ELF in greater detail, many of which have referred ELF to EIL (especially in its early development). One groundbreaking work is McKay (2002) who aims to clarify assumptions of EIL and subsequently integrate EIL into the design of teaching methods and materials. This monograph begins by defining EIL and further discusses important issues in each chapter such as ‘bilingual users of English’, ‘standards for EIL’, ‘culture in teaching EIL’ and ‘teaching methods and EIL’. McKay concludes the discussion by reorienting the goals and approaches in EIL teaching. More specifically, she proposes that an approach towards an appropriate methodology for EIL should take into account the political and social context, the educational institution itself, the teachers’ and students’ background. By adopting a cultural perspective, Holliday (2005) explores social and political issues in ELT in diverse international contexts. Central in this important work is the balance of power in classroom vis-à-vis curriculum settings, the relationship among language, cultural and discourse and also the change in the ownership of English. Whereas these detailed texts have highlighted controversial issues in EIL, Walker (2010) is one of the few

publications which provides practical ELF-oriented pedagogy to teach pronunciation (see section 2.9.2.1). In his comprehensive account for the practice of English language teaching, Harmer (2007) also discusses, and illustrates with some examples, how the changing world of ELF has informed contemporary ELT practice. However, as Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) acknowledge, there seems to be ‘little detailed discussion of how different varieties of English, or how the dynamic variability of ELF, might impact on language teaching models or methodology’ (p.305).

Although it has been widely argued that an exonormative norm (i.e. American or British English) tends to be inappropriate, unnecessary and unachievable in lingua franca contexts (e.g. Jenkins, 2000, 2006b; Kirkpatrick, 2007a), few studies have explicated the implications of ELF findings for the choice of a pedagogical model (see chapter 3). In opposition to the adoption of a monolithic norm, Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) explain the ultimate goal of ELF research as follows:

... the aim of ELF researchers has never been to propose an alternative model of English, let alone a monolithic version that should be taught in all contexts. Rather, ELF research provides insights into the heterogeneous nature of English as it is used in contact situations. Thus a fundamental initial consequence of ELF research is the need to raise awareness of the relationship between language models (which are necessarily abstractions) and the variable nature of language in interaction. From this perspective, developing an ELF perspective in pedagogy entails above all, at least for now, the generating of an understanding among learners and teachers of the

inherent variability (even instability) of human language in general and English more specifically. (p.305-306)

From this perspective, ELF research tends to promote a pluricentric approach to teaching (see Canagarajah, 2005; Pennycook, 2009) in that both teachers and learners should be exposed to different varieties of Englishes (see also Ferguson, 2006) and also be informed that communicative competence, rather than NS norm, is of paramount importance. An example as such is Baker (2011), who adopts a more fluid approach to the 'norms' of communicative practices. With respect to oral assessment, Levis (2006) argues that pronunciation accuracy should not be assessed because of three main reasons: (1) accuracy is a relative term; (2) accuracy assumes a standard against which errors can be measured; (3) pronunciation accuracy may be quantifiable but the effect of deviation is not (p.249) (see also Levis, 2005). Levis emphasises that speaking is more than pronunciation but good pronunciation alone cannot compensate for the lack of skill in communicating (see also Tollefson, 2002). In terms of the assessment of ELF, Elder and Davies (2006) propose two options: the first testing model resembles the existing EFL assessment approaches (based on Standard English) but it explicitly incorporates the testing of accommodation skills; the second assessment scheme regards ELF as a code (rather than Standard English) in its own right and places greater emphasis on strategic competence over linguistic accuracy.

Although both assessment alternatives, as they also acknowledge, seem problematic in practice, the main idea is to reconceptualise the meaning of effective intercultural communication in ELF contexts and give authority and legitimacy to English users (and learners) in the expanding and outer circle (*ibid.*; see also Davies, 2011).

Rather than the effort made by academic researchers, some scholars argue that language teachers, as the key stakeholders, should seek to reassess their own practices by carrying out action research so as to choose and adjust to the best teaching approach which suits their own situation (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2004; Jenkins, 2006b).

Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) emphasise that the promotion of an ELF teaching perspective should not be regarded 'as an alternative approach intended to supplant existing pedagogy but rather as an additional option about which teachers and learners can make informed choices' (p.306-307). Echoing this claim are Matsuda and Friedrich (2011) who seek to sketch a curriculum blueprint for the teaching of EIL.

Although Matsuda and Friedrich acknowledge that 'much of the discussion on English in its international manifestation and its pedagogical implications has remained at the abstract level' (p.333), they highlight the various important aspects which an EIL curriculum should take into consideration using the conceptualisation of EIL as a function of English in lingua franca contexts (see their earlier discussion on

the nature of EIL in Friedrich & Matsuda, 2010). More practically, it entails issues such as the selection of an instructional model, awareness of language varieties, the kinds of culture to be covered as well as the politics of English and the responsibilities of EIL users (e.g. language and power, the relationship between English and indigenous languages, linguistic ecology, and linguistic divide). They conclude by advocating the collaborative effort of researchers and teacher educators to ensure that pre-service teachers have opportunities to learn about the re-conceptualisation of ELT and the new way of perceiving English(es).

2.10 Summary and brief account of the next section

This chapter has discussed how the globalisation of English has stimulated research in WE and ELF with regard to outer circle and expanding circle contexts respectively.

While this part of the literature review explores how the WE and ELF research has exerted enormous impact on the 21st ELT theories and practice, the next chapter (the second part of the literature review) discusses, more particularly, one of the most controversial issues in the literature namely the notion of ‘standard’ and the choice of a pedagogical model in NNS multilingual contexts. By first reviewing previous discussion on this essential notion of ‘standard’ in ELT, it seeks to highlight the relevance of the WE and ELF research framework (as well as findings) to the

selection of an appropriate model. Given the scope of the present study, the next chapter aims to establish the link between the ELF-oriented approach and the sociolinguistic reality in the Hong Kong context. In this regard, it throws the spotlight onto how (and whether) the ELF approach can be applied to the Hong Kong classroom by examining the various dimensions such as international intelligibility of Hong Kong English (HKE), the identity of Hong Kong people, stakeholders' acceptability of pronunciation of English varieties and the genuine use of English in Hong Kong.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature Review II

The choice of a pedagogical model in Hong Kong's ELT classroom

3.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on and extends the previous part of the literature review section (chapter 2) by evaluating the appropriateness of employing the English as a lingua franca (ELF) pedagogical model in Hong Kong's ELT classroom from a sociolinguistic perspective. The section begins by reviewing the development of English 'standard(s)' from a historical perspective (section 3.2) and furthermore discusses the choices of a pedagogical model depending on the various sociolinguistic situations (section 3.3). Having contextualised the controversial issue of a pronunciation standard in the Hong Kong classroom, it discusses the possibility of adopting an ELF-oriented pronunciation model in Asia's self-styled World City (section 3.4). By examining the sociopolitical, socioeconomic and sociolinguistic situation in Hong Kong, it identifies two key areas which determine whether such an approach is suitable in the local context. First, insufficient empirical studies have been undertaken to demonstrate the comparability of Hong Kong's sociolinguistic conditions with typical ELF contexts (section 3.5). More specifically, the necessary census data and empirical evidence of the actual use and functions of (spoken)

English in major domains should be identified before applying the ELF empirical findings in the local context. Second, it is argued that the issue of social acceptance is the key factor in any educational policy (section 3.6). While previous research has revealed a perceived negative attitude towards the local accent, contemporary investigations should provide more in-depth explanations which embed a range of interrelated perspectives such as identity, intelligibility of pronunciation and exposure to accent. In order to bridge the gap between education policy and sociolinguistic reality in the local context, the section concludes by posing questions that formulate the research agenda of the present research project (section 3.7).

3.2 The notion of ‘Standard’ English(es)

One of the few publications, in the 1990s, to offer a systematic account of the development of standard English(es) alongside the history of English²⁷ was Görlach (1990), who observes that the standardisation process (which often involves codification of the language in grammars and dictionaries and the use of it in school books and newspaper editing) stems from the need to communicate, especially in writing, over a large area. This standardisation process, at the same time, leads to the predominance of one particular variety, which subsequently results in the spread of a dominant variety and hence greater homogeneity in the language (ibid.). The notion of

Standard English (also known as the Queen's or King's English) in Britain was broadly based on London English, a East Midland dialect used at the courtly, literary and administrative level, which gradually gained prestigious status in England from the 15th century, in Wales, Scotland and Ireland from the 16th century and later throughout Britain's overseas territories from the 17th century (Görlach, 1990; McArthur, 1999). While the earlier form of Standard was often associated with the usage of English of the educated people who could read and write and 'were close to the royal court' (Kachru, 1992a), the spoken form of this 'good' or 'proper' English (both in terms of pronunciation and grammar) had evolved into public-school 'Received Pronunciation' (RP) or 'Received Standard' (English) by the late 19th century (McArthur, 1999). By the end of World War II, the rise of the United States, both politically and economically, has made American English another internationally accepted standard²⁸ (McArthur, 2001; see also Mair, 2013). Since then, both Standard British and Standard American English have been widely accepted as a dual standard in the inner, outer and expanding circles.

Lowenberg (1993) defines Standard English as 'the accepted model for official journalist and academic writing, for public speaking before an audience or on radio or television, and for use as a medium and or subject of instruction in the school' (p.96)

(see also McKay, 2002 for her definition). McArthur (2002) likewise identifies three main characteristics of Standard English: (1) 'it is easiest to recognise in print because written conventions are similar world-wide'; (2) 'it is usually used by news presenters'; (3) 'its usage relates to the speaker's social class and education' (p.442).

In his insightful article, Trudgill (1999) argues that Standard English is 'an unusual dialect' in that it is 'the most important dialect in the English-speaking world from a social, intellectual and cultural point of view' (p.123), which is neither a language, an accent, a style nor a register²⁹. Generally speaking, the perspective of a standard being more a matter of grammar than pronunciation is endorsed by numerous scholars mainly because grammar is practically fixed and uniform (e.g. Widdowson, 1994; McArthur, 1998; Crowley, 2003; Ferguson, 2006). Crystal (1999, p.16) explains that codified and available written grammar is the 'embryonic de facto World Standard Print English' as a result of the invention and popularity of the mass printing technology. Despite the common identification of 'Standard English' with written English, Gupta (2001, p.320) observes the relatively weak concept of standardness not merely in phonology but also in lexis. Her observation is to a great extent coherent with Trudgill's (1999) claim: '[t]here is no such thing as standard English vocabulary' (p.127). From an educational viewpoint, Trudgill concludes that 'the position of Standard English as the dialect of English used in writing is unassailable' but 'it has

nothing whatsoever to do with spelling or pronunciation' (p.127). The above elaboration by scholars has jointly pointed to the fact that a Standard Spoken English in terms of pronunciation could hardly be defined. The fundamental reason is the enormous variation in pronunciations among people in different countries, as varieties, and even in different regions of the same countries, as regional dialects (Jenkins, 2000; Crystal, 2003; Kachru & Nelson, 2006).

Indeed, in his early publication, Stevens (1985) stressed that this notion of 'Standard English' is potentially misleading in two ways, the first of which highlights the complex linguistic variations among English varieties (as in the above discussion) whereas the second one entails false perceptions of the general public such as the prestige status of a standard and that it is used by the majority of English users. Milroy and Milroy (1999) argue that the standard ideology, as promoted by the standardisation process through various channels, has encouraged prescription in language, which nurtures the belief that 'there must be one, and only one, correct way of using a linguistic item (at the level of pronunciation, spelling, grammar and, to a great extent, meaning)' (p.262). Although attempts to prescribe a spoken standard especially at the pronunciation level have never been entirely successful, Milroy and

Milroy suggest that this perspective has already succeeded in ‘bringing about broad consensus on the norms of written language’.

Given the consensus that Standard English is basically a dialect (i.e. ‘one variety of English among many’, Trudgill, 1999, p.123), the adoption of it as the teaching and learning target in ELT has become a vigorously debated area in the academia. Towards the second half of the 18th century, the standardisation process of English was mainly associated with a dramatically increasing number of publications by the grammarians, who propagated a normative, prescriptive view of language (Locher, 2008). This perspective was overridden by descriptivism in the Victorian age and especially in the first half of the 20th century led by Bloomfield (1933) and the American structuralists, thanks to the rise of corpus-based grammars which reflect the up-to-date form of (mainly written) English (Locher & Strässler, 2008). Nevertheless, the descriptive approach to standardisation in the early 20th century solely relied on the linguistic production of the inner circle varieties of English. Since the remarkable breakthrough of WE research in the 1970s, grammatical description of varieties of English has received considerable scholarly attention (Schneider, 2003; Davis, 2006). With the growing attention to the work by WE (and ELF) scholars³⁰, the pedagogical implications of a localised standard have been widely discussed in published

monographs (e.g. Strevens, 1982; Fisher, 1996; Gaskell, 1998; Milroy & Milroy, 1999; Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002; Crowley, 2003; Freeborn & Freeborn, 2006; Ferguson, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Trudgill & Hannah, 2008), edited volumes (e.g. Bex & Watts, 1999; Dziubalska-Kolaczyk & Przedlacka, 2005; Locher & Strässler, 2008) and articles (in journals and book chapters) (e.g. Kachru, 1985, 1991, 1992b; Quirk, 1990; Lowenberg, 1992, 2000; Bamgbose, 1998; Jenkins, 1998; Davies, 1999, 2009, 2011; Modiano, 1999; Tollefson, 2002; Li, 2005/6; Brown, 2006; Farrell & Martin, 2009; Deterding, 2010a; Nihalani, 2010). Despite this, Davis (2006) reminds us that descriptive language (especially that of NNS varieties) should be used carefully because it reflects language attitudes within education systems, the publishing industry and media. Although it is quite clear from the literature on WE research that a monolithic, monolingual NS standard is no longer valid in the modern modern multilingual society (see section 2.5), the choice of a pedagogical model remains at the theoretical level and yet to be successfully (and fully) implemented in education contexts.

Having outlined the changes in approach to defining Standard English over the past few decades in ELT, Bex and Watts (1999) suggest that the school curriculum should aim to identify (and describe as accurately as possible) the variety (or varieties) which,

in local people's eyes, best performs the higher functions of a developed society as standard. This standard, which varies from country to country, is potentially available to all English users as it is not limited to any particular regional group and social class and is comparatively open to its linguistic form (ibid.). Under this circumstance, Halliday (2006) redefines a standard language as 'a tongue which has moved beyond its region, to become "national"; it is taken over, as second tongue, by speakers of other dialects, who however retain some features of their regional forms of expression' (p.352). Nonetheless, the general principle, as McKay (2002) states, is that '[r]eliance on a native speaker model as the pedagogical target must be set aside' (p.238).

3.3 The choices of a pedagogical (pronunciation) model

One of the most controversial issues in the discussion of Standard English is the choice of a pedagogical model in ELT. Because of the immense phonological (or dialectal) variation in any English(es), Halliday (1998) highlights that '[t]he biggest failure in language teaching in the last half century has been the failure to keep up the effective teaching of pronunciation' (p.35). As it is generally agreed among scholars that a spoken standard is not associated with accent, major criticisms have been raised against the adoption of an NS exonormative phonological norm in multilingual situations (e.g. Jenkins, 1998, 2000, 2007; Dziubalska-Kořaczyk & Przedlacka, 2005;

Ferguson, 2006; Levis, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2010a). Indeed, early attempts to standardise English pronunciation can be traced back to Daniel Jones (1924), who documented the pronunciation of specified classes of people in the world's first pronunciation dictionary in 1917. Although Jones expressly stated that his work did not make any attempt to decide how people should pronounce, Roach, Hartman and Setter (2006) comment (in the editors' preface of the 17th edition dictionary) that 'it has become established as a classic work of reference, both for native speakers of English wanting an authoritative guide to pronunciation, and for users of English as a foreign or second language all over the world' (p.iv). As the specified classes in the dictionary, according to Jones (1924), refer to Southern English people who have been educated in the great public boarding-schools, the implied phonological model might somehow make people think about the notion of Received Pronunciation (RP), being a presupposed teaching norm (see also Locher & Strässler, 2008). Traditionally, the pronunciation norm in most ELT contexts is associated with the British 'Received Pronunciation' (RP) or the General American (GA) accent in that the former usually refers to public school pronunciation or the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) accent whereas the latter is mainly a network standard used by educated American people (McArthur, 2001). In reality, however, RP has always been a minority accent spoken by less than 3-4% of the British

population (McArthur, 1992, p.851) and GA, as some US language scholars argue, does not correspond to any kind of real-life usage (McArthur, 2001). As far as RP is concerned, Crystal (2003) argues that many forms of regionally modified RP are in fact now being used among educated people in Britain and abroad as accents are changing due to societal change and language contact.

In other words, a teaching model based on RP or GA is somehow not even realistic and reasonable in Britain (or America) where remarkable accent (or even dialectal) variations are commonly found among NESTs, let alone the fact that most local NNESTs do not speak English with a native accent. It is also perhaps due to this unprecedentedly changing scene in language forms and functions that an edited volume has invited contributors worldwide to critically discuss this issue of teaching models (see Dziubalska-kołaczyk & Przedlacka, 2005). Although the notion of norm and model are often found alongside the term standard in the discussion of a teaching and learning target, Jenkins (1998) emphasises (strongly) the difference between these two terms particularly in pronunciation teaching. Whereas a norm has a strong connection with the ideology of native correctness which is invariable, a model only refers to a point of reference and guidance, yet does not necessarily represent most learners' goal (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, McArthur (2001) maintains that 'having a specific

model for the pronunciation of a language (however artificial) is better than having no model at all' (p.12) and he foresees that an 'educated' subvariety (its acrolectal base) could act as a spoken standard in multilingual societies because such communities promote (and thus strengthen) their own standard varieties by peer pressure and greater use in local radio and TV. More specifically, Ferguson (2006) recommends that a localised pronunciation model should aim at an internationally intelligible acrolect which is closest in form to the speech of local NNESTs (see also Modiano, 1999). Meanwhile, Sowden (2012) argues that 'since neither World English nor nativized local Englishes have yet gained full legitimacy, it is clear that the native-speaker model still has an important role to play, though one modified by new cultural and pedagogical priorities' (p.89).

In his significant monograph, Kirkpatrick (2007a) proposes a 'identity-communication continuum' to visualise the relationship between English varieties and their function as an identity marker vis-à-vis international communication and thus explain why ELF tends to display relatively little variation. While more standard or educated varieties of a language is more suitable for the function of 'communication' on one end of this continuum, broad and informal varieties (or job- and class-specific registers) tend to be more appropriate for

signifying 'identity', which is on the other end. By making the claim that a classroom model depends on the position of this identity-communication continuum, Kirkpatrick provides a comprehensive account of the advantages and disadvantages of three pedagogical alternatives in various ELT contexts, namely (1) an exonormative native speaker model, (2) an endonormative nativised model and (3) the lingua franca approach (see also Kirkpatrick, 2006a, 2006b; Van den Doel, 2010). Kirkpatrick acknowledges that the exonormative NS model has long been adopted in most outer and probably all expanding circle countries due largely to its long history of codification in most existing reference tools, publishers' marketing decisions and policy makers' conservative attitudes. However, in alignment with views of most WE/ELF scholars, he also argues that this practice in fact undermines the work of local multilingual NNESTs (but reversely greatly benefits NESTs). As an alternative, Kirkpatrick advocates that a codified endonormative model, which has become socially acceptable, could be adopted in outer circle contexts (e.g. Singapore) whereas a lingua franca approach³¹ based on the goal of successful cross-cultural communication is most appropriate in ELF contexts such as continental Europe (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2010a) and ASEAN (Kirkpatrick, 2010a) (see also Nihalani, 2010).

3.4 Which model in Hong Kong's ELT classroom?

The mother-tongue of most Hong Kong residents is Cantonese, a spoken dialect which significantly differs from written Chinese. Since 1997, the 'trilingual, biliterate' education policy in Hong Kong has been designed to equip students with the proficiency in three spoken languages (Cantonese, English and Putonghua) and two written forms (English and Chinese). In spite of this ideological wish to foster multilingual learners in the Hong Kong education system, the outcome has tended to be lacking efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in ELT (see Tsui & Bunton 2000; Bunton & Tsui 2002; Kirkpatrick 2007b). Kirkpatrick (2007b) attributes the apparent failure of the current ELT practice to the unattainable and irrelevant teaching model (an idealised exonormative norm) in the multilingual setting. Therefore, in their 'one country, two systems, three languages' proposal, Kirkpatrick and Chau (2008) recommend a modification of the Canadian bilingual model³² (Swain & Johnson, 1997), which might better suit the sociolinguistic situation in Hong Kong. In this respect, Kirkpatrick's (2007b) proposal for adopting what he calls 'local institutional bilingual targets' (p.379) in the classroom (where ELT teachers are the most suitable role model) is one major part of his macroscopic education policy. The justification is the discrepancy between the apparently unattainable and irrelevant idealised exonormative norm (mainly in the audio-recording of teaching materials) and the

teachers' local accent as a role model in the educational context (see also Cheng, 2010 for his proposal for promoting HKE as well as other English-speaking related measures in the Hong Kong secondary school). Kirkpatrick (2007b) suggests that the key step is a codification process which targets the features of the educated Hong Kong English (HKE) pronunciation with reference to the LFC. Details of this procedure include:

- providing a more appropriate and attainable set of linguistic benchmarks for the teaching and learning of English in local schools;
- identifying and incorporating linguistic features that interfere with the international intelligibility in the ELT curriculum (see also Jenkins, 2000; 2002);
- legitimising the variety of English spoken by highly proficient local English teachers as being a relevant and appropriate linguistic model and
- helping students establish a sense of identity, self-confidence and pride in their bilingual variety of English. (Kirkpatrick, 2007b, p.387)

A preliminary attempt of this codification process is reported by Sewell (2009) who passes the HKE phonological features through an 'intelligibility filter'. Sewell and Chan (2010) also examine the implicational patterns of HKE consonantal features (which illustrate the priority of the HKE consonants) with reference to the

intelligibility characteristics of the possible developmental pathways among English learners. By establishing a more appropriate and attainable set of endonormative linguistic benchmarks, the possible advantages of the ELF approach include legitimising local teachers' own model of English, enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem, thus promoting cultural identity in an increasingly multilingual setting (Kirkpatrick, 2007a; see also Fiedler, 2010 for both the advantages and disadvantages of the ELF approach). It is important to stress that this proposal of an ELF model as well as the codification process is not an attempt to regard this model as a hypothetical, monolithic norm which, in a sense, has no difference from the NS model (see Dewey & Jenkins, 2010). Kirkpatrick (2003) expressly notes that:

I do not see a lingua franca model as being a single standard, devoid of cultural influences. In this respect, this concept of Lingua Franca English is quite different from the concepts of English as an international language proposed by others, whether these be a simplified form of English (Quirk 1981) or a specific academic register (Widdowson 1997). I think it is inevitable and desirable that speakers will transfer some of the pragmatic norms of their L1 to lingua franca English. These might be reflected in address forms, for example, where a speaker feels the need to provide some form of honorific. (p.88)

In this regard, the adoption of an ELF pronunciation model, as can also be seen as part of the ELF approach, also emphasises the need to develop learners' accommodation skills and raise their awareness of diverse varieties of English around the world (Jenkins, 2007, 2011; Walker, 2010). While the term 'approach' might represent a

broader meaning, a ‘model’ suggests a point of reference for pronunciation teaching. The benchmarking of the NNESTs’ pronunciation model, as proposed by Kirkpatrick (2007a, 2007b), is nevertheless an important step to legitimise an endonormative pedagogical model for the classroom, given that competent local teachers are the role model of the students in most (or even all) ELT contexts. In a practical sense, it seeks to cease penalising learners’ L1-influenced pronunciation which does not impede international intelligibility. In its narrower sense, the ELF phonological model should be based on the pronunciation of local multilingual teachers who are also successful English users in international communication. Putting forward this model to the entire (local) school setting, the present study regards a pronunciation model as a ‘package’ of input which develops students’ own English pronunciation throughout their learning process at school. More precisely, this ‘package’ involves the various accents students are exposed to in their daily school life such as accents in the audio teaching materials, in listening tasks in the school-based or public examination and, most importantly, of the English (and sometimes subject) teachers. On top of this, all of the above ingredients in the curriculum, as well as the language-using contexts in the teaching materials, are to be informed by empirical ELF research findings.

A fundamental question concerning the adoption of the ELF approach as well as applying the ELF research findings in the Hong Kong context, and this applies equally to other outer/expanding circle contexts, is whether it harmonises with the local sociolinguistic context. In this regard, two key questions are addressed in the next few sections based on previous literature in Hong Kong:

1. Do the actual use and functions of English (particularly spoken English) in key domains in Hong Kong accord with those of typical ELF contexts (e.g. EU and ASEAN) as reflected in the empirical findings?
2. What is the acceptability of the HKE accent (as the localised teaching model) vis-à-vis the exonormative NS norm among major stakeholders in relation to a range of aspects (e.g. people's cultural identity, their exposure to accent variation, the pragmatic functions of pronunciation, the intelligibility of particular accents)?

3.5 English in Hong Kong – An outer circle or expanding circle context?

3.5.1 The role of (spoken) English in Hong Kong

A key question concerning the validity of the ELF approach stems from the different sociolinguistic origins of the WE and ELF paradigms in that the target language groups are in the outer circle (or ESL) and expanding (or EFL) circle respectively.

While Kachru (2005, p.90) categorises Hong Kong as an EFL context (also Falvey, 1998; Kachru, 1998; Li, 2009b), other scholars find it more appropriate to identify it as an ESL context (e.g. McArthur, 1998, 2001; Tsui & Bunton, 2000; Bolton, 2003; Jenkins, 2009a) (cf. Li, 2007 for his claim of English as an untypical second language in Hong Kong). A crucial indicator of this outer/expanding circle distinction is the role of English in the Hong Kong community. Unlike Singapore, India, Nigeria and other 'typical' examples of outer circle countries, English is generally not used in intra-ethnic communication since the overwhelming majority (over 90 percent) of Hong Kong people speak Cantonese. Given the ubiquity and vibrancy of Cantonese, scholars have argued that Hong Kong lacks an essential condition for the evolution of a nativised variety of English, namely, its use as a *lingua franca*.

Early proponents of this view were Luke and Richards (1982), who characterised the sociolinguistic situation in late colonial Hong Kong as 'diglossia without bilingualism'³³ (p.51) with English functioning as 'an auxiliary language' (p.58). Owing to the lack of a societal basis for the development of a localised variety, Luke and Richards (1982) concluded that there was 'no such thing' as HKE (p.55). In the past three decades, the notion that English has a limited role in Hong Kong has been a recurring theme in the literature (e.g. Cheung, 1984; Tay, 1991; Johnson, 1994;

Hyland, 1997; Falvey, 1998; Pang, 2003; Li, 2009b; Poon, 2010). Since 1997, when sovereignty over Hong Kong reverted to China, this position has continued to be endorsed by scholars such as Pang (2003), who questioned whether HKE was ‘a stillborn variety’ in consequence of the ‘limited use of English’ (p.16). On the issue of acceptability, Pang claimed that ‘the mass of Hong Kong people will not easily accept that a distinctive Hong Kong English exists’ (p.17). More recently, Li (2009b) has also pointed to ‘the absence of a conducive language-learning environment’ (p.72) for students to practise and use English outside the classroom, where intra-ethnic communication among Cantonese speakers is judged to be highly marked (see also Li, 1999, 2011a). This perception of the restricted societal role of English is also held by Poon (2010) in her account of language use and planning in Hong Kong. Poon discounts the possibility that HKE is a variety of English, but instead regards it as a ‘variant of English spoken by Hong Kong people’ carrying ‘a connotation associated with erroneous and improper use of English’ (p.9). If the logical deduction is founded on the ‘clear-cut’ differentiation among the three circles, the above comments, if evidently proved accurate, seem to be pushing Hong Kong towards the expanding circle, a norm-dependent (or exonormative) setting.

One of the limitations of the case against HKE is perhaps its oversimplification of the sociolinguistic situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Bolton (2003), the leading advocate of HKE, has challenged what he sees as the ‘monolingual myth’³⁴ by pointing to the steadily increasing proportion of the population who claim to be able to speak English. While the perception of the limited role of English in Hong Kong seems to be supported by census data which indicates that more than 90% of the population use Cantonese as their mother tongue (Census & Statistics Department, 2006, 2011), this obscures the fact that a steadily increasing proportion of the population has claimed to be able to speak English (from 9.7% in 1961 to 44.7% in 2006) (Lee & Collins, 2006; Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008; Evans, 2009; Lau, 2009). This expansion of English users in Hong Kong, largely due to compulsory schooling since the 1970s, has probably led to a significant increase in the use of English (especially written English) in the last two decades (Bolton, 2002; Evans, 2000, 2006, 2009). In the new millennium, evidence of a wide range of English language discourses such as emails, letters, faxes, reports, legal documents and minutes has also been found in both the public and private sectors (Evans & Green, 2003). A recent study by Evans (2010) found that English rather than Chinese is the main medium of written communication in white-collar employment (see also Evans, 2011a). Apart from the use of written English in the workplace, studies have

also revealed that English plays a significant role in Hong Kong people's daily lives, particularly in the multimedia world such as using email, social networking and SMS (Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008; Evans, 2011b). In tertiary education, Ho (2008) reveals that local university students adopt the code-choice of 'mainly Cantonese with English' (48%), 'pure Cantonese' (24%), 'pure English' (10%) and 'mainly English with Cantonese' (6%) to serve different pragmatic and social functions (but with relatively little usage of Putonghua). The dominant use of written English in the key domains such as the civil service, legislature, judiciary and education system (mainly in tertiary education and some secondary schools), in addition to the business workplace, is perhaps one of the persuasive arguments against Hong Kong being categorised as an expanding circle context³⁵.

As for the functions of spoken English, regardless of the general impression of its limited role in intra-ethnic communication, Evans (2010) reveals that there is a high tendency for English to be used in formal situations such as meetings, employment interviews, presentations, seminars and conferences (see also Evans, 2011a). These studies cast doubt on the belief that Hong Kong lacks a societal basis for the emergence of a new English. Moreover, there is still a dearth of empirical research to capture the complete sociolinguistic picture in the Hong Kong context. Until this

essential groundwork is conducted, the positioning of Hong Kong as an outer circle or expanding circle context remains uncertain.

3.5.2 The existence of HKE

Another indicator of whether Hong Kong should be placed in the outer circle is the emergence of a nativised English variety (see Bolton, 2000). A key argument in Bolton's (2002, 2003) case for HKE is his belief that it fulfils four of the five criteria in Butler's (1997, p.106) definition of a new English variety, namely (1) a standard and recognizable pattern of pronunciation handed down from one generation to another, (2) particular words and phrases which spring up usually to express key features of the physical and social environment and which are regarded as peculiar to the variety, (3) a history – a sense that this variety of English is the way it is because of the history of the language community and (4) a literature written without apology in that variety of English. In support of this, recent studies have pointed to the distinct linguistic features of HKE particularly in phonology (e.g. Hung, 2000; Setter, 2008; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010; Sewell & Chan, 2010) and vocabulary (e.g. Benson, 2000; Groves & Chan, 2010; Cummings & Wolf, 2011). Kirkpatrick (2007a) also agrees that HKE meets the first three criteria, but is sceptical about the literary creativity criterion. He further observes that reference

works such as dictionaries and style guides (i.e. the fifth criterion) usually appear after decades of language development in the community. His claim perhaps echoes Tam's (2002) brief chronological analysis of English language teaching in Hong Kong (from colonialism to decolonisation) in that, despite the inclusion of elements about the local culture in the textbooks, the variety of HKE is virtually absent. In an edited volume, Tam (2004) maintains that:

The British brought English to Hong Kong, but the English used in Hong Kong is not much nativized. Even though English has been the working language in Hong Kong for over 150 years, it has not developed into a variety that can be compared to Indian or Singapore English, despite efforts in localizing it. (p.xxv)

One of the limitations of Butler's criteria is that they do not include the question of local acceptance, which is an indispensable factor to justify the existence of an autonomous variety (Bamgbose, 1998). In this regard, Schneider (2007), who also considers the issue of local acceptance, claims that Hong Kong has entered phase three (nativisation) of his Dynamic Model. In the transition from phase 3 (nativisation) to phase 4 (endonormative stabilisation) in his Dynamic Model, Schneider argues that the parameter of acceptability is one of the decisive factors³⁶. Although Schneider argues that Hong Kong English (HKE) has 'reached phase 3, with some traces of phase 2 still observable' (p.133), Hong Kong is indeed at a more advanced stage than other contexts where only a small percentage of NSs reside. Schneider attributes this

to its ‘considerably tighter colonial grip by the British for a long time’ (p.133). In terms of linguistic terminology, Schneider explains that the major differentiation between phase 3 (nativisation) and phase 4 (endonormative stabilisation) is the key question of whether ‘there exists just an “English in Hong Kong” or whether by now a “Hong Kong English”’ (p.50). However, one potential limitation of Schneider’s model is his overreliance on secondary sources (i.e. mainly Bolton, 2002, 2003) and expert opinion rather than on findings derived from empirical research. His position on the local acceptability of HKE is expressed only by quoting the hypothesis formulated by Joseph (2004), who predicts that

Hong Kong English might become ‘a locus of cultural identity and expression’ especially if the Beijing Government should decide to suppress the Cantonese or southern Chinese identity that prevails today to force a more mainstream northern Chinese, Putonghua orientation upon Hong Kong People unwilling to pursue such a direction. (Cited in Schneider, 2007, p.139)

Although Bauer (2000) also predicts that Putonghua will have replaced Cantonese in key domains and make Hong Kong a predominantly Putonghua-speaking society by the end of the century, empirical findings suggest that Cantonese and English are still the most commonly-used languages in both the public and private sectors (Ho, 2008; Evans, 2010). This issue of local acceptance is discussed further in section 3.6.

3.5.3. Positioning the ELF paradigm in Hong Kong

As the principal limitation of WE research on Hong Kong is its irrelevant focus on English as an intranational spoken language, it is perhaps more pertinent to shift the attention to the ELF perspective. In the past decade, the focus of much of this research has been on the functions and status of English in international contexts such as continental Europe and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see section 2.10). Notwithstanding the intuitive role of English as an international lingua franca in Hong Kong's business and financial sectors, a fundamental question needs to be asked: Is the situation in Hong Kong comparable to the NNSs-dominant context in continental Europe and ASEAN? Drawing a parallel to the quintessential ELF contexts, ELF in Hong Kong might imply that Hong Kong people's use of English is mainly with NNSs from the expanding circle (e.g. continental Europe and Indonesia) and outer circle (e.g. India and Singapore), with a relatively small proportion of NSs. If it is agreed that 'the classroom is a rehearsal for the outside world' (Prodromou 2007, p.52), the application of the ELF model in a local classroom would (or should) mean a lack of or little NS-NNS communication in most English-speaking contexts in Hong Kong. Even though ELF databases usually include both outer circle and inner circle speakers (e.g. 10% in VOICE), the argument of de-emphasising the teaching of native-like suprasegmental features in fact relies on evidence of NNS-NNS

communication breakdowns (Jenkins, 2000). Admittedly, as the suprasegmental features might contribute more than the segmental ones to intelligibility for the NS listener (ibid., p.135), it should be emphasised that participants, in a particular context (whether they are NSs or NNSs), play an irreplaceable role when intelligibility is the ultimate goal.

In the case of Hong Kong, support for a nativised pronunciation model is provided by groundbreaking phonological research (e.g. Hung, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2009; Peng & Setter, 2000; Setter, 2006, 2008; Cheung, 2008; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Wee, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010; Sewell & Chan, 2010) and, more importantly, the relatively high international intelligibility of the HKE pronunciation³⁷ (Kirkpatrick, Deterding & Wong, 2008). However, an underlying limitation of previous studies seems to be the lack of empirical evidence to bridge the gap between the intelligibility evidence and the sociolinguistic reality in the Hong Kong context. Even though the conclusion of high intelligibility is drawn from the shared linguistic repertoire, namely the syllable-timed rhythm, among most NNS varieties in the ELF context (e.g. Hung, 2002; Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Deterding, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010), there seems to be a conspicuous gap between the marginalisation of NSs in communication in NNS-dominating circumstances and the real role of NS

accents in the Hong Kong context. If the ELF approach is to be implemented, ground work on which accents people encounter is one of the prerequisites, let alone other unsettled disputes over the LFC (e.g. Dauer, 2005; Remiszewski, 2005; Sobkowiak, 2005; Wells, 2008). Provided Jenkins's (2000) recommendation that the learning of the native English accent should be an optional one and placed last in her 'five stages of pronunciation learning', the arrangement might have to be reprioritised depending on the role of both the NS and NSS participants in the community (p.209-210). Nonetheless, this has a significant effect on the contentious issue of intelligibility as participants in empirical studies should be well defined in terms of various forms of linguistic interaction (i.e. NS-NS, NS-NNS or NNS-NNS interaction, see Kachru, 1988) with reference to their role of importance in a specific context. Assuming the speakers from the inner circle have an influential impact on a society, research might also have to take account of the perceived intelligibility and attitudes from the NSs' perspective (e.g. Cargile & Giles, 1998; Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois & Pittam, 2001; Bresnahan, Phashi, Nebashi, Liu & Shearman, 2002; Lindemann, 2003, 2005; Hiraga, 2005). Although Li (2005/6) also acknowledges that an EIL-oriented curriculum (i.e. ELF) undoubtedly empowers NNESTs and English learners through raising their awareness of accent variation as well as lingua cultural patterns of social interaction (which are valuable capitals of NNSs), he highlights a research gap, namely the need

to analyse and identify the learners' English language needs in the local context and further design a curriculum which would respect their linguacultural identity in international communication, be they NSs or NNSs. Given his reservations about the ultimate replacement of the traditional ELT norms with ELF forms as a long-term goal, Li proposes 'the teaching of a standard variety as the pedagogic model, supplemented, where appropriate, by the corresponding linguistic and sociolinguistic patterns in the non-native (especially nativised) variety of English commonly used and heard in the region' (p.126).

Another factor militating against the adoption of the ELF approach is the difficulty of defining the expert ELF users for codification (Ferguson, 2009). According to House (2003), the 'yardstick' for measuring performance in the ELF model is 'an "expert in ELF use", a stable multilingual speaker under comparable socio-cultural and historical conditions of language use, and with comparable goals for interaction' (p.573). However, identification of this competence is not easily achieved, especially if the ELF form is an unstable one (Ferguson, 2009). Scholars such as Kachru (1985) and Bamgbose (1998) have described the variation within a particular variety in terms of acrolect (the educated variety), mesolect (the semi-educated variety) and basilect (the bazaar variety). Under this classification, the pronunciation of the local teachers

should be closest to the educated one³⁸. In this respect, clearly defined criteria for an educated accent derived from empirical data seem to be lacking to initiate the codification process in Hong Kong. A recent study by Sewell and Chan (2010) formulating an implicational (or hierarchical) scale based on the variation of consonantal features in HKE has helped to prioritise certain phonological features for pedagogical purposes. Even so, Ferguson (2009) tends to be more sceptical, arguing that it would be ‘premature’ at this stage of instability to ‘assert the existence of a systematic ELF variety with a linguistic identity of its own’ (p.122). The suggestion is therefore that ‘a prestige variety of English of wide currency, internationally as well as in the inner circle, will be the best, most flexible bet’ for the learners because of the unpredictable future needs in international communication (Ferguson, 2006, p.177; see also McKay, 2002, p.72).

3.5.4 English in Hong Kong – implications for future research

Whereas the sociolinguistic reality in Hong Kong does not fully accord with the WE paradigm, the adoption of the ELF approach seems equally questionable. A possible explanation is the lack of investigations into the actual use of (spoken) English in diverse local contexts. In the Asia-Pacific Region, Nunan (2003) highlights the need to examine the role of English so as to evaluate the impact of English on educational

polices and practices. Indeed, the heart of the discussion on the ELF pronunciation model is the potential discrepancy between the ‘standard’ promoted in the classroom and the accents students are likely to be exposed to in their everyday and professional lives. To date, little empirical research has been conducted to survey the varieties of accents (1) students encounter in the classroom compared with their leisure time and (2) people are exposed to in the key domains of Hong Kong. The emphasis is no longer only on to what extent spoken English is used but also which varieties of accents, NS or NNS, people encounter and speak in both their workplace (or school) and everyday life. This need to investigate the uncertain functionality of English in the expanding circle has also been highlighted in Matsuda and Friedrich’s (2011) curriculum blueprint for EIL, in that ‘the goal of the course and the needs of students’ is held to be the main criterion for selecting ‘the dominant instruction model’ (p.337).

In spite of scholarly skepticism over the societal basis for the use of English in Hong Kong, the use of spoken English in certain professional domains might be quite important. As Evans’s (2010) findings have underlined the importance of spoken English in formal business contexts, more research regarding workplace English could follow in different occupational domains. In a knowledge-based economy, international business transactions in Hong Kong might often involve both NNSs (e.g.

from the Southeast Asia and Europe) and NSs (e.g. from America, Britain and Australia) given Hong Kong's long-established role as an internationally oriented business centre. In the educational context, since 1998 there has been a division between Chinese-medium instruction (CMI) and English-medium instruction (EMI) secondary schools, although this distinction has been blurred due to the recently introduced 'fine-tuning' medium of instruction (MOI) policy (Kan & Adamson, 2010; Poon, 2010; Kan, Lai, Kirkpatrick & Law, 2011). Under the former language policy, a reasonable assumption could be that a student who studied in an EMI secondary school (less than 30% of all secondary schools) for seven years and subsequently a university (also EMI) for another three years is to a great extent exposed to the local (or other NNS) English accent. Following the recently implemented 'fine-tuning' MOI policy, schools are given the autonomy to opt to teach some or all non-language subjects in English at junior secondary levels based on the capability of their teachers and students. Students might thereafter have more opportunities to be exposed to the local accent. Quite predictably, as language proficiency of the subject teachers might vary, one likely consequence is that they will encounter the 'broader' (i.e. less educated) HKE accent rather than an educated one.

Indeed, the Native English Teacher (NET) scheme³⁹ was regarded as a cure to students' lack of exposure to the NS of English as well as the apparent falling standard. Each primary/secondary school can hire (depending on the number of students in the school) one to three expatriate teachers to facilitate English teaching. Although NESTs are required to possess certain teaching qualifications (as well as with relevant teaching experience), the scheme still fails to initiate the teaching of an unspoken 'standard model' because the notion of nativeness is defined by merely the place where the NSs were born or have been living for a certain period of time (Boyle, 2004). Instead of those who speak either RP or GA, a more common phenomenon is the recruitment of NESTs having an accent of other varieties such as the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and sometimes Indian accent. Even if a British or American NEST is hired, in most cases, their accents might be a variant of the RP or GA accent. Students may find that the English spoken by their NESTs to some extent differs from what they hear in the audio teaching materials. In many local schools, NESTs usually only meet each class once a week in a double period (e.g. 1.5 hours) whereas the local English teachers meet them nearly every day. The major duties of the NESTs are often merely to develop students' speaking ability in extra-curricular activities and daily talks in occasional school activities. Subsequently, as the local teachers (who most likely have a local accent) occupy most of the English teaching 'channels', the

exposure of students to a standard RP or GA pronunciation is perhaps only limited to the pronunciations in the audio teaching materials.

The above assumption does not point to an answer but, on the contrary, poses questions for investigation of the educational reality as compared to the sociolinguistic one. More specifically, this implies investigations into daily classroom practices in ELT from various perspectives such as the curriculum, teaching materials, assessment and teacher qualifications. If the teaching model is a reflection or, if feasible, reproduction of the local sociolinguistic reality, there seems to be a pressing need to investigate diverse spoken discourses in Hong Kong in both receptive (listening) and productive (speaking) modes. A possible disadvantage of over-emphasising the NS model, while neglecting the sociolinguistic reality, is the students' failure to cope with communication with, or simply understand the speech of, other NNSs after graduation. One example is illustrated in Evans and Morrison's (2011) longitudinal study in which it was found that university students in Hong Kong find it more difficult to listen to lectures conducted by international scholars than by local academics. On the other hand, marginalising the NS accents might also undermine graduates' ability to communicate with NSs, if this is an important requirement in the workplace.

Irrespective of the actual English-speaking context in Hong Kong, the implementation of an ELF endonormative model should also consider people's preference for particular accents. The next section draws on previous attitude research on the local accent, discusses the hypothesis accounting for the perceived negative attitudes and, crucially, makes a case for more up-to-date empirical studies from multiple perspectives. The hypothesis is formulated by reviewing the literature on the status and pragmatic value of English as well as the use of languages and identity in Hong Kong.

3.6 The acceptance of an ELF model in Hong Kong classrooms

3.6.1 The importance of social acceptability

Scholars from both WE and ELF perspectives have highlighted the necessary conditions of codification and, crucially, acceptance for legitimising an endonormative model. In his landmark article, Kachru (1992b, p.8) addresses the fundamental question: 'What is standard English and what are its models and norms? This is essentially a question of attitude and power.' Bamgbose (1998, p.4) notes that the 'acceptability factor', among all factors, 'is the ultimate test of admission of an innovation', in other words, a legitimate norm. With respect to an educational target,

Nihalani (2010) argues that a pronunciation model should be ‘universally intelligible’ and ‘socially acceptable’ (though they prefer the WE to the ELF intelligibility approach) (p.63). Ferguson (2006) likewise offers comparable criteria for the adoption of the ELF pedagogic model, namely intelligibility, identity, practicality, acceptability and standardisation (p.163). As a result, numerous studies have sought to elicit attitudes towards various NNS accents vis-à-vis NS accents. Jenkins’s (2007) publication is one of the few substantial monographs to discuss the issue of attitude and identity in ELF. Drawing on a comprehensive overview of the literature on language attitudes followed by existing research on NNSs’ attitudes towards ELF, Jenkins points out that the majority of NNSs, particularly teachers and students, are still mainly guided by NS norms even though most respondents agreed that international intelligibility should be the principal criterion. Her conclusion seems to accord with many attitudinal studies on English varieties in contexts such as Greece (e.g. Sifakis & Sougari, 2005), Denmark (e.g. Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006), Turkey (e.g. Van den Doel, 2007), Malaysia (e.g. Crismore, Ngeow & Soo, 1996), India (e.g. Wiebesiek, Rudwick & Zeller, 2011), Singapore (Chia & Brown, 2002; Saravanan, Lakshmi & Caleon, 2007; Tan & Tan, 2008; Cavallaro & Ng, 2009), Hong Kong (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Flowerdew, Li & Miller, 1998; Luk, 1998; Li, 2009a; Groves, 2011), China (e.g. Hu, 2004, 2005; He & Li, 2009; Hu & Lindemann, 2009; He &

Zhang, 2010) and Japan (e.g. Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto, 1995; Matsuda, 2000; McKenzie, 2008, 2010; Tanaka, 2010; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011; River, 2011) as well as a number of publications which include people from a variety of countries (e.g. Timmis, 2002; Derwing, 2003; Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu, 2006; Ilurda, 2009; McGee, 2009; Jenkins, 2009b, 2009c). While Jenkins (2009b) attributes the generally negative attitude to the unfamiliarity and stereotyping of NNS accents, McKay (2002) addresses the notion of 'social inequality', rather than 'linguistic inequality', leading to the prestige of certain varieties of 'standard' English and resulting in the reluctance to adopt an endonormative pronunciation model in the classroom (p.55). Accounting for teachers' attitudes towards ELF in relation to their own cultural identity, Jenkins (2005) admits that 'it cannot be taken for granted that teachers (let alone all speakers) from the expanding circle wish unequivocally to use their accented English to express their L1 identity or membership in an international (ELF community)' (p.541) but that acceptability comes only if teachers see an ELF identity as 'providing their students with accents which will enhance rather than damage their future social and economic prospects internationally' (p.542). In both WE and ELF settings, an ambivalent sociopsychological attitude between status (i.e. admiration for the NS norm) and solidarity (i.e. expression of identity) is often described (Bamgbose, 1998; Jenkins, 2009b). It is perhaps because of this unsettled

acceptability issue that even if international tests of English language proficiency (e.g. TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, MELAB) seem unfair to NNSs as they privilege standard forms of English (Hamp-Lyons & Davies, 2008), there seems to be less of a demand for local WE norms in formal assessment due largely to the uncertainty of local stakeholders, rather than the imperialism of Western political and economic power (Davies, 2009).

Instead of a general description of the acceptability of NSS accents, the discussion should focus on the target context. The following sections examine Hong Kong people's attitudes towards the HKE vis-à-vis NS pronunciation model based on the sociohistorical, sociocultural and socioeconomic background. First, it addresses the high status of and high demand for English in Hong Kong's service-led economy. Second, it seeks to explain how this demand for high English proficiency is associated with an NS 'standard' in the educational context. Third, it proposes a hypothesis which accounts for Hong Kong people's preference for a pronunciation model with respect to their local identity and, crucially, economic success. Finally, it accentuates the complexity of this issue of social acceptability in Hong Kong and highlights the need for a meticulous study to test for the proposed hypothesis.

3.6.2 The status of English in the Hong Kong economy

One of the prominently emerging phenomena worldwide is the role of English as ‘a gatekeeper to positions of wealth and prestige’ in both intranational and international contexts (Pennycook, 2003, p.86). Notwithstanding critical linguists’ notion of ‘English linguistic imperialism’ (Phillipson, 1992a) and ‘cultural hegemony’ as a result of discourses of colonialism (Pennycook, 1998), Hong Kong people seem to be less a case of ‘passive victim’ than ‘active agents of pragmatism’ as, according to Li (2002a), little evidence has shown the intention of the British government to impose their culture and lifestyle on the local people⁴⁰ (see also Bolton, 2004). Alternatively, the demand for English has been Hong Kong people’s pragmatic attitude towards the language (e.g. Pierson, Fu & Lee, 1980; Pennington & Yue, 1994; Boyle, 1997b; Hyland, 1997; Axler, Yang & Strevens, 1998; Flowerdew, Li & Miller, 1998; Li, 2002b; Sweeting & Vickers, 2005, 2007). While the small proportion of ‘proficient’ English speakers in the colonial era enjoyed the significant advantages of access to well-paid and stable civil service positions, English has become a prerequisite for a prosperous career and, hence, maintaining the position of Hong Kong as a flourishing business and financial centre in the era of globalisation. With the significant socioeconomic and political changes since the handover in 1997, despite some concerns about the status of English being challenged by Putonghua (the national

language of China) (e.g. Johnson, 1994; Hyland, 1997; Morrison & Lui, 2000; Poon, 2004), research findings have shown that English still possesses the highest instrumental value among all other languages (e.g. Lai, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013). It is perhaps reasonable to predict that English will continue to predominate and function as a vehicle for educational and occupational advancement (see So, 1992; Li, 1999). Having shifted from a manufacturing centre to a service-led economy in the past thirty years, Hong Kong has gradually offered a much wider range of white-collar jobs which place highly sophisticated demands on professionals' language skills. Fostered by the mass media, which regularly reinforces the value of English as an indispensable economic asset, the overriding status of English in Hong Kong is unlikely to be eroded in the short term.

3.6.3 The demand for 'standard' English in Hong Kong education

In the educational context, a salient reflection of this positive instrumental value of English has been the widespread perception that English standards are declining (Li, 2002a, 2009a). Since the imposition of the mother-tongue language policy in 1998, there has been considerable concern among principals, teachers, students, educators and the general public that this socially divisive CMI/EMI policy⁴¹ might deprive students of the opportunity to learn English effectively. Nevertheless, irrespective of

the credibility of this perception, which Bolton (2003) terms the ‘falling standards myth’, a ‘complaint tradition’ in Hong Kong can indeed be traced back to the 1850s (Evans, 2009). This long-standing social demand for high levels of English proficiency indicates that English education should be carefully framed to accord with stakeholders’ viewpoints.

One significant insight from the above debate is the stakeholders’ (e.g. students, teachers, educators, parents, policy makers, and the professionals who contribute to the real use and long-term development of English in Hong Kong) perception of the notion of ‘standard’, most of which generally refers to the ‘native-like’ or ‘near-native’ proficiency. Highlighting language proficiency as the ‘single most important tool for effective business communication’ (Au, 1998, p.179), Au’s recommendation⁴², from the business perspective, was that English education should be entrusted to teachers who have native-like proficiency and, ideally, are native English speakers as the role model (p.181). As far as education policy is concerned, Andrews (2002) recalls his personal communication in 2000 with the Chief Executive of the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI), who said that learners should be exposed to the standard native varieties such as British English, American English and Australian English, even though a target variety of English was not specified in the curriculum. As for the

acknowledgement of a HKE model, although both teachers and policy makers recognise some features of HKE, they are reluctant to regard it as the teaching model either due to the absence of a clear definition or the uncomfortable feeling that it is a flawed model (ibid.).

Indeed, the underlying reasons for the preference for the NS norm may be less a case of pedagogical considerations than psychological reservations. One proposed argument is that the prestigious status of 'standard English' based on social factors is 'stubborn and recalcitrant to top-down planning' by the government (Ferguson, 2006, p.171). This conservative mindset of adhering to the traditionally perceived 'ideal model' not only applies to language planning, but also language teachers' practice as they are more familiar with theories of fossilisation and interlanguage which they have been conveying to their students from generation to generation by penalising their L1-influenced 'errors' (Fiedler, 2010). This notion of pedagogical conservatism is particularly valid from the production point of view (Crystal, 2003, p.59) given the long-developed NS-based content of course-books and materials in the free-market economy. From the parents' perspective, there seems to be an irrational obsession with the teaching of NESTs in that, in Sung's (2011) personal teaching experience, Hong Kong parents perceive native and even 'white' teachers (even though white

people in many cases do not equate NSs) as ideal teachers regardless of their linguistic competence. In this sense, the case of Hong Kong is not dissimilar to that of Europe as the ‘conservative factions’, mostly the policy makers, tend to support ‘native-speakerism’ and ‘prescriptivism’ and keep ELT ‘free from world Englishes ideologies’ (Modiano, 2009, p.221). While the above discussion has revealed an implicit propensity towards a native model from the educators’ and policy makers’ perspective, it is also important to review previous empirical attitudinal studies which elicit local people’s attitudes towards the HKE accent vis-à-vis accents of other English varieties.

3.6.4 Local acceptability of HKE

To date, research into Hong Kong people’s attitudes towards HKE is somewhat limited due to experts’ mere impression of local people’s NS norm-dependent attitudes, the oversimplification of the issue itself or limitations in methodological design. For instance, Tsui and Bunton (2000) suggest that even though most local teachers have attained the requisite English qualifications, they often lack confidence in their own mastery of the language and tend to rely on NS reference materials such as dictionaries, grammar books and NS colleagues. This sense of insecurity about their own language proficiency can be seen in school-based listening exercises and

examinations in which most audio recordings are conducted by NESTs or are simply adaptations of NS-based teaching materials. Students also incline towards the NS norm as they tend to believe in the benefits of NESTs for raising their language proficiency by increasing their exposure to the ‘more standard’ English and use of ‘authentic’ communication (Luk, 2001).

While Bunton and Tsui (2002) show that the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT) (a prerequisite qualification for primary and secondary school English teachers in Hong Kong) penalises teachers for their L1-influenced ‘errors’ (see also Luk & Lin, 2006) in speaking, this assessment criterion was modified by removing the discriminative descriptor against NNS accents in LPAT after 2007 (Education Bureau, 2007). In Sewell’s (2013b) recent systematic analysis of the examination reports regarding the candidates’ pronunciation in LPAT between 2003 and 2011, it was discovered that the examiners’ comments are generally compatible with the international intelligibility criteria based on Jenkins’ (2000) LFC but the importance of certain suprasegmental features is questionable. In public discourse, HKE is perceived as a deficit model as revealed in the ‘Speak Better English Campaign’ which is jointly run by Hong Kong Education City and Oxford University Press offering a comparison between the phonetic system of Cantonese and English

(Luk & Lin, 2006). Apart from these rather indirect references to acceptability, Lee and Collins (2006) have identified the relatively low linguistic acceptance of HKE amongst teachers and students in terms of lexico-grammar.

Bolton and Kwok's (1990) landmark study was the first to examine Hong Kong people's (in fact undergraduates') perception of the HKE accent vis-à-vis NS accents using an indirect approach, i.e. a verbal-guise test (VGT). Although the participants found it difficult to recognise various accents of English (except the HKE accent), the study indicated that Received Pronunciation (RP) had the highest status followed by the 'Hong Kong bilingual accent' (p.169). One interesting finding is a divided attitude between females (20.2%) and males (43.3%) on choosing the 'Hong Kong bilingual accent' as the English model. Bolton and Kwok explain that while the female participants tend to converge towards overt 'status' or 'prestige' norms, the male participants tend more towards 'covert' or 'solidarity' norms (p.170). In a follow-up study, Luk (1998) also confirmed the previous study that secondary school students prefer RP to the HKE accent. Yet, quite contrary to learners' admiration for a local teacher with a NS accent, a surprising finding was that Hong Kong students appreciate non-NESTs more than NESTs because they are more attuned to the local teachers' accent and methods of teaching (Cheung & Braine, 2007). In a recent

attitude study (Luk, 2010), professional English teachers were asked to differentiate between the HKE accent and pronunciation errors. The findings have revealed ‘a strong adherence to the exonormative norms’ particularly regarding the segmental features of HKE but a ‘more tolerant attitude’ was found with respect to suprasegmental features (p.40). This negative attitude, however, is not apparently due to any ‘obstruction to intelligibility’ but rather a ‘strong sense of subjectivation’ because of the participants’ ‘institutional roles and obligation as educators’ (p.39) (see also Van den Doel, 2007). By means of a typical VGT (i.e., investigating the dimensions of status and solidarity), Zhang (2013) has recently sought to compare Hong Kong students’ attitudes towards HKE and Mandarin-accented English, which also revealed a perceived high status of an NS accent (yet her study was small in scale, N=44).

With respect to the relationship among NNSs’ views on accent, intelligibility and identity, Li (2009a) conducted a large-scale empirical study by employing a questionnaire survey and focus group interviews. Although Li’s finding that 81% of the respondents prefer a NS-based accent seems unsurprising, an important discovery is that some participants expressed a concern about the local English accent being a ‘source of intelligibility problems’, even though it enacts one’s Chinese identity

(p.108). In order to further explore this complex issue of social acceptability, the next section puts forward a hypothetical explanation which takes into consideration how accents can serve as an identity carrier and a useful tool for economic success in Hong Kong. Even though Sewell (2012) seeks to relate the acceptability of HKE accents to intelligibility characteristics of phonological features for pedagogical purposes, his study is mainly confined to the linguistic (rather than the sociolinguistic) level. Interestingly, Groves (2011) tends to be quite positive towards HKE moving into Phase 4 of Schneider's Dynamic Model. In her questionnaire survey, although the participants (140 undergraduate students of various Arts and Science majors) also preferred to speak British (60%) or American (13%) English, the majority of them acknowledged the existence of 'a variety of HKE' (74.3%), around half of whom believed that HKE is 'unique' and 'acceptable' (46.1%).

3.6.5 The complexity of social acceptability: Local identity versus economic success

The notion of ethnic identity is the central argument from the WE perspective. Previous research has demonstrated NNSs' preference for the localised accent in the outer circle countries (e.g. India, Singapore and Nigeria) owing to a strong reaction against their former coloniser (Kachru, 1986). Attributed to a feeling of identity and solidarity among ethnic groups of NNSs, Kachru and Nelson (1996) raise a pertinent

question that '[i]f a typical American has no wish to speak like or be labeled as a British user of English, why should a Nigerian, an Indian, or a Singaporean user feel any differently?' (p.86) (see also Baxter, 1980). Halliday (1998) also adds that 'there are millions of people using English around the world who have no interest whatever in British or American culture' (p.28). Regarding the expanding circle countries, Jenkins (2000) deploys a similar argument that the majority of ELF speakers would like to preserve some features of their L1 accent when they speak English. In some cases, a more complex scenario could even be that learners may wish to sound like an NS in NS-NNS communication but to speak ELF in NNS-NNS communication (Ferguson, 2009). It is also interesting to observe whether local people would be more conscious with their pronunciation 'correctness' speaking with NSs than with other NNSs to express their cultural identity. Even if the preservation of identity is a desirable aim, the tension between linguistic identity and economic pragmatism is more a political decision than merely an educational one in many Asian countries (e.g. Malaysia and Singapore) (Gill, 2002).

In light of previous research on attitudes, identity and the status of English in the Hong Kong context, it is likely that pragmatism will outweigh group solidarity in the choice of a pronunciation model. As a centre of finance and business, a bold

hypothesis for the case of Hong Kong could be formulated by drawing a parallel between the high status of English and the seeming prestige of the NS accent. Chan's (2002) elaboration on the relationship between language and identity is one of the few substantial articles to apply Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) classification of capital into the socioeconomic situation in post-colonial Hong Kong. Taking into account both the individual and collective (societal) level, Chan (2002) accentuates the superior status of the English language as it has been transformed into both 'cultural' (i.e. various kinds of legitimate knowledge acquired mostly through education) and 'symbolic' capital (i.e. the more intangible aspects of prestige and honour) and, in turn, converted into 'economic' capital (i.e. material wealth), implying both personal pride and future success. Relating the high instrumental value of English to the perceived prestigious status of the NS 'standard' accent, if the general public regards RP or GA pronunciation as the only form of 'good English', it would possibly make the ELF pronunciation model undesirable, just like the post-1997 mother-tongue language policy. As a result, the ELF model, if (mis)interpreted as a reduced form of English (Ferguson, 2009), may be perceived as providing learners with a 'broken weapon' and hence 'reduced linguistic capital' (Prodromou, 2008, p.250). Despite the increasing recognition of the WE paradigm, the social and cultural capital in the sociopolitical

situation in Hong Kong might be far more important than any human rights ideology (Luk & Lin, 2006).

One stereotypical description of the ethnic identity among people in post-colonial countries is a 'love-hate relationship' towards the 'standard' accent, i.e. admiring the native pronunciation but being unwilling to sound like a native speaker (Bamgbose, 1998). However, the 'love-hate complex' in Hong Kong is untypical in the sense that students acknowledge the desirability of having high English proficiency but at the same time are generally reluctant to learn it due largely to the considerable learning difficulties it entails, given the presumed lack of societal usage (Li, 2002a). The notion of 'standard English' (and furthermore a NS-like proficiency) has apparently become the benchmark for communicative competence and is seeded in the psyche of Hongkongers, 'a psyche which transcends boundaries across generations and socio-economic classes' (p.51). Since the colonial era, as Hong Kong has been lauded for its flourishing economy and blend of Chinese and Western culture, Hong Kong people have subsequently established a sense of separate identity from the mainland Chinese (Johnson, 1994; Li, 2002b; Fung, 2004; Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Tsui, 2007). This identity, as Mathews (1997) suggests, represents Chineseness plus: affluence, cosmopolitanism and capitalism; English, education and colonialism; democracy,

human rights and the rule of law. In this regard, studies of language, attitudes and identity in Hong Kong indicate that the use of Cantonese as well as ‘better’ English (also education) are markers of Hong Kong identity (e.g. Lau & Kuan, 1988; Bolton & Luke, 1999; Brewer, 1999; Mathews, 2001; Sullivan, Schatz & Lam, 2004; Lai, 2005). In Hong Kong’s postcolonial period, Fung (2004) stresses that the present question is whether the local identity is ‘prioritised over the national’ or ‘the national will engulf the local’ in the long term (p.402). It is therefore important to continue to explore how the Hong Kong identity emerged in the past, develops at present and might evolve in the future.

3.6.5.1 Identity construct of Hong Kong Chinese

A hybrid Hong Kong identity has developed due largely to the diverging sociocultural, sociopolitical and socioeconomic environment in Hong Kong as compared to China since the rule of the colonial government⁴³. On the one hand, there seemed to be a general disillusionment with the Chinese political system as a result of a series of political incidents mainly in the 1970s (e.g. the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, the attempt coup led by Lin Biao, Mao’s right-hand man in 1972 and the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976), which led to the estrangement of Hong Kong people from China (Tsui, 2007). On the other hand, local Hong Kong Chinese have

developed a sense of pride and belonging to Hong Kong owing to its affluence and dynamism (e.g. the unprecedented rate of economic growth, the increasingly affluent population, improvements in social welfare and major town-planning projects) (ibid.). In addition, the role of the media is also crucial in nurturing local culture and identity in that it promotes Cantopop, Cantonese drama series, movies and documentaries as well as success stories of the affluent, upwardly mobile young adults from the grassroots population (Ma, 1999). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the innovative use of code-mixing (and code-switching) (of Cantonese and English) has yielded a new hybrid variety of Cantonese blended with a distinct local cultural identity (Bolton & Luke, 1999; see also Lau, 1997; Tsang, 2004). Li (2011b) reports that the practice of code-switching to and from a new language, especially in academic jargon and newly acquired technical terms, is to a great extent due to the regular exposure to that language as the medium of education. In the case of Hong Kong, English has been introduced into both the secondary and tertiary education system as the MOI over years of colonialism.

Tsui (2007) describes Hong Kong before the handover as ‘a vibrant city of opportunities that rewards hard work, a cosmopolitan city where the East meets the West, a city with a promising future, and a city in which its people would take pride’

(p.129). Attracted by this 'promised land' was a massive influx of new (but often illegal) immigrants from mainland China in the 1970s in which it generated a social division between 'us' (the local hardworking Hong Kong insiders) and 'them' (the Chinese immigrant outsiders) in the community (Mathews, Ma & Liu, 2008). A negative image of new immigrants was stereotyped by much of Hong Kong's mass media as backward, ignorant, ill-mannered migrants who could barely speak English (Lau & Kuan, 1988; Ma, 1999; Tsang, 2004). In contrast, Hongkongers (if compared to the former) were perceived as 'well-educated, quick-witted, smart, pragmatic, cosmopolitan, and bilingual in Chinese and English' (Tsui, 2007, p.130). In these circumstances, when Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, many local people neither identified with PRC (i.e. the People's Republic of China) nor knew much about it (Tse, 2007; Fairbrother, 2008). Notwithstanding the increasing exchanges between Hong Kong and China (in many aspects, e.g. business, tourism, education) after reunification, Brewer (1999) suggests that the self-identity of Hong Kong Chinese is only limited to ethnic and cultural affiliation, but not national identity (see also Vickers & Kan, 2003). The major reasons for this lack of identification are the unfavourable socio-political conditions in mainland China which conflict with what Hong Kong people tended to enjoy under the British rule such as the democratic elections (though limited in scope), freedom of speech and rule and

law⁴⁴ (Tsui, 2007). Since the handover, attempts to initiate decolonisation and reconstruction of local identity have been undertaken through a range of political decisions, many of which focus on education policy⁴⁵. Despite these efforts to develop Hongkongers' sense of belonging to the 'motherland' China, scholars (and also the local citizens) have questioned their effectiveness and also the political motivation of some of the measures⁴⁶ (e.g. Vickers & Kan, 2003; Tse, 2007; Fairbrother, 2008).

Previous studies have generally displayed a multiple identification of Hong Kong people with China. Lee and Chan (2005) show that local citizens had increasing identification with China from 1999 to 2001 but a slightly decreasing trend in their identification scores between 1997 and 1999 as well as that between 2001 and 2003 respectively. Their findings also indicate a different 'Hong Kong Chinese' identity in terms of political attitudes and beliefs despite the economic, social and political integration of the 'two places' in 'one country'. In their longitudinal study (by a series of surveys) between 1996 and 2006, Ma and Fung (2007) likewise confirm the mixed identity of Hong Kong people in that there seems to be convergence in terms of economic values but reservations in terms of political values (see also Hong, Liao, Chan, Wong, Chiu, Ip, Fu & Hansen, 2006 for another longitudinal study). However, findings from the Hong Kong Transition Project (2007) have demonstrated a lack of

significant changes (or increase) in Hongkongers' Chinese patriotism after ten years since the handover. Nevertheless, previous identity studies have illustrated an ingroup-outgroup identity distinction between Hongkongers and mainland Chinese in that local people tend to possess a negative perception (or even negative stereotype) of the mainlanders because of their (rude) behaviour in Hong Kong (e.g. Chau, Chiu & Foo, 1998; Lam, Lau, Chiu & Hong, 1998; Lam, Lau, Chiu, Hong & Peng, 1999; Lam, Chiu, Lau, Chan & Yim, 2006, Ladegaard, 2011). If this divergence between the local and mainland Chinese identity continues or becomes amplified, Hongkongers may want to, in some ways, preserve and assert their own local identity especially in the presence of people of other ethnicity as well as mainlanders. More specifically, the use of languages is perhaps an inevitable resource to fulfil this need.

3.6.5.2 Language and identity in Hong Kong

The inseparable relationship between language attitudes and social identification has been a subject of considerable research (e.g. Giles, 1977; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Fishman, 2001; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Brewer (1999) argues that Hong Kong identity might be defined in terms of differentiation from mainland China rather than that from the west in the colonial era. With respect to the use of languages, previous studies tend to support the idea that both Cantonese and English serve as distinct

markers of the Hong Kong identity (e.g. Lau & Kuan, 1988; Chiu & Hong, 1999; Mathews, 2001; Sullivan, Schatz & Lam, 2004; Lai, 2005, 2007, 2011; Gu, 2011).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Bolton (2011) maintains that English enjoys high prestige as ‘a co-official language of government and law’ (see Ng, 2009 for a comprehensive review of the use of English in the legal system) and as ‘a dominant language of higher education and the business community’ (p.68) whereas Cantonese is vital for being ‘a community language’ which symbolises the continued lifestyle of a city-state whose identity combines ‘a unique blend of colonial modernity, global capitalism and diverse contacts with Asian, Europe, North America and the world’ (p.69) (see also Li, 1999, 2009b). Owing to the harmonious co-existence of the two main languages in Hong Kong, Bolton (2011) argues that the tension between Chinese and English is potentially far less contentious than that between Cantonese and Putonghua particularly in language policy and planning. Nevertheless, language attitudes studies have revealed that Putonghua has neither achieved the same instrumental value as that of English nor the integrative value as that of Cantonese (e.g. Lai, 2005, 2007, 2011).

Linguistically speaking, the use of Cantonese and English as distinct markers by Hongkongers are generally different from those used by the mainland counterparts.

Although Cantonese is a spoken Chinese dialect shared by the majority of Hong Kong citizens and mainlanders in the Guangdong province, Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong has evolved into a new hybrid variety carrying a distinct local cultural identity (Lau, 1997; Tsang, 2004). As a consequence of the British colonialism, Englishisation of Hong Kong Cantonese is characterised by the practice of code-mixing (and code-switching) blended with both the local and western culture (see Bolton & Luke, 1999; Li, 2000; Lin, 2000; Low & Lu, 2006; Chan, 2009, Tam, 2009; Sung, 2010; Ho, 2008). While the use of English in Hong Kong is never viewed as a threat to the local identity (e.g. Pennington & Yue, 1994; Li, 1999; Poon, 2010), proficiency in English indicates educational and economic success (e.g. Pennington, 1998; Morrison & Liu, 2000; Lai, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011; Humphreys & Spratt, 2008). At the same time, a relatively high English proficiency might imply a signal of differentiation between local Hongkongers and mainlanders. Although Gu (2011) suggests that English plays a less important role in communication between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese, its role in lingua franca contexts (whether or not involving mainland Chinese) is nevertheless irreplaceable. In any case, if Hongkongers wish to project a distinct local identity, rather than a mainland Chinese image, whenever they use English, they might prefer a linguistic form which to a certain extent differs from that used by their mainland counterparts. In spoken English,

Hong Kong people might find that accents, 'being powerful linguistic and identity markers', have somehow provided a 'social and cultural symbol' to 'distinguish themselves from their fellow Mainlanders' (Luk & Lin, 2006, p.15). This accent, while it could be a less preferred distinctly HKE accent, mostly refers to a standard prestigious one from the inner circle.

Nonetheless, this assumption of expressing the Hong Kong identity by a typical variety of accent should also take into account the perspective of accommodation theory in which the counterparts in a conversation are also considered. Irrespective of their ability to choose their accent, local people's preferred pronunciation in communication with NSs and NNSs might vary from context to context. In this respect, Sung (2014a) discovered that Hong Kong university students display different degrees of affiliations with their local and global identities in ELF communication such as a local or global identities and a hybrid of both. Nevertheless, as shown in his other studies, their Hong Kong identities might be associated with their 'multi-competence' in English, Cantonese and Putonghua (Sung, 2014b) but might not be necessarily associated with any particular accents of English (Sung, 2014c). Regardless of their local cultural identity, some Hong Kong people nevertheless show their preference for an NS accent due to its perceived pragmatic

value (Sung, 2013). As these studies only focused on the interview data of a number of university speakers in Hong Kong, further investigation of this relationship between ELF and people's identity is needed for other social groups especially for the professionals, who use English every day. The need for comprehensive attitudinal research is discussed in the next section.

3.6.6 Acceptability – directions for future research

Two key questions concerning the issue of acceptance are the unrepresentative picture that emerges from previous attitude research and the absence of credible explanations derived from empirical evidence. In fact, the notion of psychological reservations is more an intuitive thought than a finding derived from a meticulous study. The first limitation is the narrow scope of teachers' and students' perceptions of the HKE accent vis-à-vis the native accents, not to mention the relatively small scale of most of the previous studies. Although these stakeholders undoubtedly play an important role in legitimising the pronunciation model in the classroom, the full spectrum of the sociolinguistic reality has yet been fully considered. As mentioned earlier, if the educational reality reflects learners' future societal environment, attitude studies should also incorporate perspectives from stakeholders such as policy makers, publishers and the professionals who contribute to the real use and long-term

development of English in Hong Kong. Preliminary studies to extract thoughts from policy makers (e.g. Bunton & Tsui, 2002) and employers (e.g. Au, 1998) were either lacking in-depth or excessively narrow in scope. While Li's (2009a) project targeted undergraduate and postgraduate students and a number of working adults (18 respondents) to avoid judgments being imposed by their language teachers, the participants were restricted to the educational field. In addition to investigating the use of spoken English in the Hong Kong context, a multi-perspective approach would no doubt provide a more holistic profile of how the HKE accent, and the appropriate pronunciation model, is perceived. In some cases, even teachers might work without any clear idea of which model is the target (Young & Walsh, 2010).

The second limitation of research on acceptability is the oversimplification of a complex issue. While Li (2009a, p.109) highlights the complexity of the NNSs' attitudes and the need to take account of speaker identity, intelligibility and ownership of the English language, he did not take a step further, as he acknowledged, to offer a convincing explanation. In other words, an explanation for any given attitude is far more crucial than simply the 'performance data' and 'experimental studies' (ibid., p.84) as they have profound implications for both educational practitioners and policy makers. Apart from the above factors, attitudes towards a particular accent might also

be closely associated with the instrumental value (e.g. business success) of the local vis-à-vis the ‘prestigious’ NS accent and their awareness of language variations and varieties. Notwithstanding the core principle of both ELF (e.g. Jenkins, 2009b) and WE scholars (e.g. Baumgardner, 2006) of incorporating awareness raising content in curricula, assessment, teaching materials and teacher education courses, few scholars have explored the extent to which these elements are actually included. Above all, the assessment criteria in examinations are the most powerful source to initiate backwash effect as teachers and learners tend to be ‘reluctant to embrace any curriculum change’ if the targets are not set by ‘the major examination boards’ (Jenkins, 2006b, p.42). To further complicate the investigation, there seems to be little mention of the phonological variation of the HKE accent (see Sewell & Chan, 2010) in previous studies for levels of accents are hardly differentiated or defined. This ambiguity causes difficulties in both the selection of an appropriate audio sample in experimental studies and the interpretation of participants’ conception of the HKE accent, let alone a well-described ‘educated’ local accent as an endonormative model. This challenge has highlighted the paramount need for description and codification of the HKE pronunciation (Bamgbose, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 2007b).

The preceding discussion has underscored the complexity of the acceptability issue which involves multiple interrelated factors. Although previous studies did not fully capture the issue of acceptance, they have indeed created the basis for future large-scale research in which triangulation of both data collection methods and observers is most appropriate. By approaching this complex matter from diverse perspectives, the desirable outcome is that the jigsaw puzzle of acceptance can be solved so as to bring about changes in attitudes, if necessary, towards the ideologies in the WE and ELF paradigm.

3.7 Summary and brief account of the next section

Prompted by the growing demand for highly proficient English speakers worldwide, ELF advocates have proposed to adopt a multilingual endonormative model (Kirkpatrick, 2007a) to replace the deep-rooted ‘hypothetical’ and ‘monolithic’ NS exonormative norm (Jenkins, 2006a, p.160). From a sociolinguistic perspective, this study has proposed a future research agenda by posing essential questions that need to be addressed before employing the ELF-oriented model in the Hong Kong classroom, namely (1) Is the role of (spoken) English in Hong Kong comparable to those reflected in ELF research findings? (2) What are the factors contributing to the social acceptability of an endonormative vis-à-vis exonormative pronunciation model in the

local context? It has argued that the implementation of this approach could be premature and problematic if it fails to take account of the sociolinguistic reality in major local domains as revealed by empirical research. On the one hand, whether the ELF paradigm, as well as the empirical findings, fit perfectly into the local use of (spoken) English is a matter for investigation whereas, on the other hand, the issue of acceptability of local people towards the HKE pronunciation, being the pedagogical model, is still unresolved. While it has been suggested that codification (Kirkpatrick, 2007b) and language awareness raising (Jenkins, 2009b) are the ultimate sources to foster recognition and trigger attitudinal changes, there is a need to uncover the underlying beliefs of the local people with respect to the socioeconomic context in Hong Kong.

The implication is to remind one of the educational ideology, though not easily achieved, that language education in the classroom (in this case the recommendation of the ELF pronunciation model) should be an authentic reflection of the societal needs. The questions raised in this chapter therefore point to the need for a detailed exploration of the sociolinguistic reality as compared to the educational reality in Hong Kong in order to form the basis for future curriculum planning. Notwithstanding the accusation that policy tends to be informed by ideology rather

than logic (Seidlhofer, 2010a), the imposition of a new model without fully understanding the local sociolinguistic situation may equally risk pursuing another ‘ideological myth’ at the other end. In recent years, the Hong Kong education system has entered a new phase in which the New Senior Secondary curriculum and ‘fine-tuning’ MOI policy have been progressively implemented. With these momentous changes in education policy, an exploration of the current school practices would undoubtedly offer valuable insights into how this ‘bridge between two realities’ can be better established.

The present study aims to explore the two main areas (as highlighted in this chapter) which determine whether an ELF model is appropriate in the Hong Kong context, namely the actual role of (spoken) English and social acceptability of HKE. The next chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in the present project (i.e. a mixed-method approach) which involves the triangulation of a number of data collection methods. Both quantitative (i.e. questionnaire survey and verbal-guise test) and qualitative (i.e. interviews, document analysis and a school case study) methods are incorporated so as to capture a more holistic sociolinguistic profile of the Hong Kong context.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research design and the relevant research methods that seek to answer the research questions posed in chapter 1. As the objectives of the study emerge from the uncertain sociolinguistic (as well as educational) situation in the Hong Kong context (see chapter 3), this chapter first addresses the relevant approaches to exploring the social reality (section 4.2) followed by an explanation of the research perspective adopted (section 4.3). Given the employment of a mixed-method approach, it then elaborates on each of the quantitative and qualitative research methods and instruments (section 4.4 – 4.8). When necessary, it refers to specific research questions (i.e. Q1 - Q4, see also chapter 1) when explaining the purposes of the relevant data collection methods:

1. How is spoken English used among different social groups in Hong Kong? More specifically, under what circumstances do people speak English and what varieties of accent do they use and encounter? How do they feel about these accents in their everyday lives?
2. What challenges do people face in comprehending English accents? What do people think they should learn at school to overcome these problems related to

pronunciation in Hong Kong?

3. Which model of pronunciation is being taught/promoted at secondary level?

Which varieties of accent are students exposed to in their secondary education?

In what contexts do students learn spoken English?

4. How does the school curriculum reflect the sociolinguistic reality of English needs in Hong Kong in terms of the choice of pronunciation model? Is an exonormative or endonormative model of pronunciation more appropriate? Why is this model more suitable?

4.2 Researching the sociolinguistic reality and language attitudes

The present research project explores two main issues: (1) Hong Kong people's actual use of (spoken) English (in their perception) at school, in the workplace and everyday life; and (2) their degrees of acceptance of the local (educated) form of English pronunciation vis-à-vis that of other NS and NNS varieties. Whereas the first issue to a greater extent depends on factual and behavioural information about the participants (Dörnyei, 2003) which can be obtained and investigated by means of survey and interviews (e.g. Bolton & Luke, 1999; Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008; Evans, 2011a), the second issue involves participants' language attitudes which is by its nature more complex and elusive in terms of methodological issues (Garret, Coupland & Williams,

2003). It is therefore pertinent to briefly explain the concept of language attitudes and the typical approaches to the measurement of language attitudes.

The concept of 'language attitude' is an essential component rooted in a wide range of interrelated disciplines such as the social psychology of language, sociology of language, anthropological linguistics, communication, and discourse analysis (Cargile, Giles, Ryan & Bradac, 1994). In the field of sociolinguistics, the importance of this notion was advanced by Labov's (1966) groundbreaking work on the social stratification of speech communities. Notwithstanding the lack of a single definition to capture its complex meaning, a general consensus tends to be that attitudes have a tripartite structure consisting of the affective, cognitive and behavioural components (e.g. Edwards, 1982; Cargile, Giles, Ryan & Bradac, 1994; Giles & Billings, 2004; Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003; McKenzie, 2010). Garret, Coupland and Williams (2003) explain that attitudes are 'cognitive in that they contain or comprise beliefs about the world', 'affective in that they involve feelings about an attitude object' and 'systematically linked to behaviour, because they predispose us to act in a certain way' (p.3).

From an empirical perspective, language attitudes research encompasses a broad range of major areas which entail a number of specific attitudes (McKenzie, 2010).

Baker (1992, p.29) identifies the following foci over the years:

- Attitudes to language variation, dialect and speech style
- Attitudes to learning a new language
- Attitudes to a specific minority language (e.g. Welsh)
- Attitudes to language groups, communities, minorities
- Attitudes to language lessons
- Attitudes of parents to language learning
- Attitudes to the uses of a specific language
- Attitudes to language preference

The study of attitudes, which arguably began in the 1930s (e.g. Pear, 1931; Bloomfield, 1933) has focused mainly on eliciting people's evaluative reactions towards accents and languages (i.e. the first of the above listed by Baker) (Cargile & Gile, 1997; Giles & Billings, 2004). This is also the major objective of the present study in that it seeks to examine local people's attitudes towards language variation, i.e. the HKE accents vis-à-vis accents of other English varieties.

Ryan, Giles and Hewstone (1988) point to three main approaches to researching language attitudes: (1) the analysis of the societal treatment of language varieties (also known as 'content analysis'), (2) direct measures and (3) indirect measures (sometimes relabelled 'speaker-evaluation paradigm' or 'matched-guise technique' by Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960), all of which have a number of strengths and weaknesses (see also Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003; McKenzie, 2010). First, the societal treatment approach is in fact less prominent in mainstream language attitudes research but it is a valuable means of evaluating people's beliefs associated with language varieties (Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003, p.15). It is generally qualitative and in its nature unobtrusive, and typically involves observational, participant observation and ethnographic studies (McKenzie, 2010). In some cases, it is also conducted through the analysis of sources in the public domains such as government and educational language-policy document, job advertisements and newspapers to identify people's views on particular issues (Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003, p.15). Although the societal treatment approach is often considered to lack rigour in sociolinguistic and social psychological studies, McKenzie (2010, p.41) argues that it is most appropriate in situations where access to respondents is not possible under completely natural conditions or where there is limited time and/or space. In addition, it can serve as a preliminary to more rigorous sociolinguistic

analysis, which involves direct or indirect methods (Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003, p.16).

Second, the direct approach, unlike the societal treatment approach, is generally more obtrusive as it elicits language attitudes by asking direct questions about language evaluation and preference usually through questionnaires and/or interviews (Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003; Dörnyei, 2007; McKenzie, 2010). One advantage of this approach is that it is not the researcher who interprets attitudes based on the observed behaviour, but the respondents themselves who express their views by answering questions (Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003). Nonetheless, it is also for this reason that the research instruments should be prepared and designed with meticulous care to ensure objectivity (see section 4.4 - 4.8).

Third, the indirect approach to researching attitudes generally involves more subtle techniques of measures in which the underlying purpose of the study is made less obvious to the respondents (McKenzie, 2010). It is considered to be able to 'penetrate deeper' than direct methods and often can go beyond 'the level of conscious awareness' and/or 'behind the individual's social façade' (p.45). In general attitudinal studies, the indirect approach comprises three main strategies: (1) observing subjects

without their awareness that they are being observed; (2) observing aspects of people's behaviour over which one can presume that they have no control; (3) successfully fooling subjects (Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003, p.16-17). In language attitudes research, however, the indirect approach is seen as a synonym of the matched-guise technique (MGT) pioneered by Wallace Lambert and his associates in the late 1950s (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960). Garret, Coupland and Williams (2003) explain that the MGT differs from typical indirect method techniques in attitudinal research in that it is basically an 'elicitation task' where 'the respondents are deceived into thinking that the researchers are investigating attitudes other than those that they are actually researching', rather than in normal cases, respondents are completely unaware of their attitudes being investigated (p.17). One potential pitfall of this approach is nevertheless its 'decontextualized presentation of language varieties' and 'over-reliance on attitude-rating scales' (p.18).

Due to the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three approaches to investigating language attitudes, the present research project sets out to integrate the societal treatment approach, direct approach and indirect approach to offer a more comprehensive account of the issue. Details of each approach and the relevant research methods are described in sections 4.3-4.8.

4.3 Research perspectives and the mixed-method approach

The basis of the investigation is primarily on a naturalistic and interpretive perspective (Mertens, 1998; Patton, 2002) which, as Merriam (2009) notes, tends to be more appropriate to uncover the social reality. Despite some criticism from some positivists over its lack of scientific measurement, many positivist social researchers acknowledge its usefulness particularly in exploratory research (e.g. field research and historical-comparative research) (Neuman, 2006). Crucially, such an approach has become the foundation of social research techniques that emphasise meaningful social action, socially constructed meaning and value relativism (ibid., p.87-88). Nevertheless, this study also to a certain extent incorporates a positivist perspective involving elements such as careful empirical observations and value-free research (ibid., p.81). These various perspectives are brought together by the adoption of a mixed-method approach which integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods to offer a more comprehensive, convincing account for the research issue (Dörnyei, 2007). As Dörnyei states, the combination of methods broadens 'the research perspective and thus provides a general picture or to test how the different findings complement or corroborate each other' (p.172). In addition, Merttens (2005) argues that it is a particularly valuable design to examine issues embedded in a complex educational and social context.

Triangulation is an indispensable element for mixing methods (Dörnyei, 2007). The fundamental principle is to collect multiple data using different strategies, approaches, and methods so that the resulting mixture is likely to result in complementary strength and non-overlapping weaknesses (Johnson & Turner, 2003). In this study, triangulation of measures, methods and observers (Neuman, 2006) is accomplished to generate information from different data sources, participants and methods. While the naturalistic perspective of the qualitative approach creates the basis for the complex sociolinguistic issue being investigated, the quantitative inquiry provides a more systematic, rigorous, reliable and replicable statistical analysis (Dörnyei, 2007) for verification and broadening of the investigation. The qualitative methods in this study included focus group/individual interviews, a school case study and document analysis for informative description whereas the quantitative methods entailed structured questionnaire surveys and a verbal-guise test (VGT) (a variant of MGT) which might yield more generalisable findings. At the end of the data collection process, they are integrated to offer an informative analysis.

Another key component of this research project is the triangulation of observers (Neuman, 2006, p.150) in which the issue of English use in Hong Kong and school practices are viewed by stakeholders (e.g. professionals, English learners, teachers)

from diverse backgrounds. The main purpose is to gather a representative cross-section of perspectives from a wide range of key domains in Hong Kong. Owing to the emerging and flexible design of qualitative study (Merriam, 2009, p.16), these domains were bound to change depending on the richness of information gathered during the data collection process. Since the aim of this research is to explore the (dis)connection between the sociolinguistic and education reality, different methods were used to answer different research questions with regard to these two areas. All the data gathered in this study contribute to answering the fundamental research question, i.e. (Q4) the implications for choice of pronunciation model in the classroom. Sections 4.4 to 4.8 describe each of the aforementioned data collection methods in greater detail, namely (4.4) interviews, (4.5) structured questionnaire surveys, (4.6) document analysis, (4.7) a school case study and (4.8) the verbal-guise test (VGT). An overview of these research methods, the data collection process and the chapters in which the corresponding findings are discussed is illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Overview of research methods and data collection process

Time	Qualitative method	Quantitative method	Chapter
Jan 2011-May 2012	Document analysis		5
Mar-Apr 2012	School case study		6
Mar- Jun 2012	Focus group & Individual interviews (N=156)		9-12
Jun 2011- Dec 2013		Questionnaire survey (N=1893)	7
Jun 2011-Dec 2013		Verbal guise test (N=488)	8

4.4 Interviews

An interview is a ‘process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study’ (DeMarrais, 2004, p.54). It is a purposeful technique to directly elicit the other person’s perspectives (Patton, 2002, p.340-341). During the process of the person-to-person encounter, rich information could be elicited from the participants (Merriam, 2009, p.88). The core data [for research questions (1) - (4)] was derived from semi-structured focus group/individual interviews with participants from different backgrounds (i.e. students, teachers and professionals) (Gillham, 2005; Dörnyei, 2007; Merriam, 2009). In a face-to-face, semi-structured interview, the researcher provided guidance and direction (by a set of pre-prepared guiding questions) but also from time to time followed up interesting developments and to allow the participants to elaborate on the issues being discussed (Dörnyei, 2007, p.136). Alternatively, focus group interviews (also known as group interviews) tend to be more appropriate to gather a relatively

large amount of qualitative data, particularly if the group of participants (e.g. secondary students) share similar experiences (ibid., p.144). Normally, high-quality data from a focus group (usually 6-12 members) can be elicited through ‘participants thinking together, inspiring and challenging each other, and reacting to the emerging issues and points’ especially when a ‘synergistic environment’ is created (and facilitated by the researcher) for a(n) deep and insightful discussion (ibid., p.144). Whereas a face-to-face semi-structured interview could be more suitable for individuals, such as professionals (and teachers) who have a unique experience, a focus group interview might be more appropriate for students as it alleviates their pressure by more causally discussing with their peers. In line with established research ethics principles, prior approval was obtained from the various groups of participants (by a consent form; see Appendix 4.1) before the data collection process commenced. Parents were also invited to sign a consent form to approve whether or not the students could participate in the research activities (see Appendix 4.2).

Most of the interviews and focus groups were conducted in Cantonese, the mother-tongue of the participants, except for one interview (conducted in English) where the interviewee was a bilingual in English and Cantonese. This participant reported that despite being raised in Hong Kong, English was in fact his first language.

An advantage of interviewing in the interviewees' mother-tongue is that it can avoid the possibility of misunderstandings or misinterpretation due to language differences (Patton, 2002, p.392-3). A total of 25 focus groups and 30 (individual) interviews (except one with the school principal) were audio-recorded using a professional Memo 703 digital voice recorder (and were saved as HP-128Kps MP3 files), yielding a total of 8 hours 7 min 33s and 28 hours 58 min 29s respectively. Among the 30 interviews with the professionals and teachers, five of them involved two participants who knew each other and were eager to discuss the issues being investigated in great detail. Note-taking also took place during the interviewing process as it stimulated thinking and probing more useful information. Any reflections were written immediately following the interview (Merriam, 2009, p.107). Verbatim transcriptions or English translations of the recorded interviews were conducted to provide the database for analysis.

4.4.1 Research instrument

The advantage of conducting interviews in the semi-structured individual or focus group format is its 'flexibility balanced by structure, and the quality of the data so obtained' (Gillham, 2005, p.70). A detailed interview guide (or interview schedule/protocol) was prepared as it ensured a more systematic and comprehensive interview

by delimiting the issues to be explored (Patton, 2002, p.343-344). According to Dörnyei (2007), an interview protocol helps the interviewer in five main areas: (1) 'by ensuring that the domain is properly covered and nothing important is left out by accident'; (2) 'by suggesting appropriate question wordings'; (3) 'by offering a list of useful probe questions to be used if needed'; (4) 'by offering a template for the opening statement'; (5) 'by listing some comments to bear in mind' (p.137). The arrangement of questions in the interview schedule was equally important as it set the tone and created initial rapport at the beginning of the interview, elicited core information with respect to the research issue (e.g. experiences and behaviour, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory information, background or demographic information), applied probes to let the participants further elaborate on the topic and closed the interview by asking questions e.g. 'Is there anything else you would like to add?' (p.137-138). In addition, a pilot interview was also carried out so that 'the questions elicit sufficiently rich data and do not dominate the flow of the conversation' (p.137).

Three interview guides with different foci were prepared for the interviewees depending on their disciplines, i.e. (1) professionals, (2) teachers and (3) students (see Appendices 4.3-4.5). The first set of questions explored the sociolinguistic reality of

the use of spoken English such as the use of English (in some cases also Putonghua for a comparison) in Hong Kong, the attitudes towards accents and the expectations of learning pronunciation [i.e. research questions (1) - (2)] whereas the second and third sets uncovered the school practices in terms of the current model of teaching at school and expectations of learning pronunciation [i.e. research question (3)]. As might be expected, the interview protocols were slightly different depending on the role of the participants such as professionals of various occupations and teachers teaching different subjects (e.g. science, English). Although both students and teachers were from the same domain (i.e. education), the questions focused on their thoughts and feelings from a teaching and learning perspective respectively. By establishing the link between the perspectives of these three groups of participants, research question (4) is answered.

In comparison to a questionnaire survey, face-to-face interviews are more time consuming and more likely to interfere with participants' thoughts. While a carefully designed interview protocol derived from certain pilot tests is highly desirable, the fundamental principle was to ensure that the respondents were willing to participate and the questions were objective. In other words, questions which might be 'offensive,

intrusive, misleading, biased, misguided, irritating, inconsiderate, impertinent or abstruse' had to be avoided (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.318).

4.4.2 Participants

Purposeful sampling was adopted in order to select information-rich cases for study in depth (Patton, 2002; Neuman, 2006). Among various purposeful sampling strategies, maximum variation sampling was predominantly applied to this study as it identified and sought out those who represent the widest possible range of the characteristics of interest in the study (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2009). Other sampling strategies also included convenience and snowball sampling (Patton, 2002; Neuman, 2006; Gillham, 2008; Merriam, 2009) as in most other research in the same area. Despite the potential risk of producing “information poor” cases (Merriam, 2009, p.79), they only served to complement the maximum variation sampling strategy in terms of availability of respondents. The selected participants still fulfilled the criteria for this study. Furthermore, snowball sampling helped identify people who met the criteria of the particular study and then invited these participants to identify further appropriate members of the population (Dörnyei, 2007).

While Dörnyei (2007) suggests that an initial sample size of 6-10 might work well for an interview study, it is vital in a qualitative study to continue to gather information until a point of saturation or redundancy is reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.202). In total, 164 participants were involved in this study, among whom 121 were secondary students (junior: 75; senior: 46), 18 were school staff (Principal: 1; subject teacher: 7; ELT teacher: 8) and 18 were professionals (see Table 4.2). In order to investigate the issue from multiple perspectives, these carefully-selected professionals were from a wide range of occupational domains, and at different levels (e.g. junior, senior, managerial), including marketing, overseas education consultancy, investment banking, diamond selling, programming, accountancy, secretary, dentistry, government sector, social work (for local ethnic minorities), financial consultancy and academia. In addition, although the student interviewees studied in a school where the majority of students were band 2 (out of three bandings in Hong Kong based on their academic ability), these students were selected from the various graded classes and at different grade levels. In this kind of middle-level school, students might range from band 1 to band 3 in their corresponding graded classes. Generally speaking, the key selection criteria were that they have constant exposure to English in their workplace and/or daily life. In the longer interviews, the participants' prior English learning and

using experience were also discussed such as in their universities/institutes and/or the relevant English training.

Table 4.2 Information about participants in focus groups and interviews

	Focus groups	Interviews
Number		25 35
Number of participants	Junior secondary students (secondary 1-3): 75	Professionals: 18
	Senior secondary students (secondary 4-7): 46	English teachers: 9
		Subject teachers: 7
		Principal: 1
Total time in audio-recordings	8hr 7min 33s	28hr 58min 29s

4.4.3. Data analysis

Each interview recording was transcribed verbatim or translated into English by the researcher, who conducted the focus groups/interviews and understood the contexts during the recordings to avoid misinterpretation. The researcher has also maintained contact with the participants for cases where there were areas for clarification in the transcriptions. Rudimentary analysis was carried out in parallel to the process of collecting data. This gave a preliminary impression of the context and possibility help improve the coming interviews (Merriam, 2009). The analytical and interpretation process included three phases of coding, namely, open, axial, and selective (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) which were highly inductive. In the first phase, open coding involved reading and annotating the interview transcripts and queries or comments were written in the margins. Then, axial coding, or analytical coding (Merriam, 2009,

p.180), was the process of categorising and subcategorising the comments based on any recurring patterns perceived in the data. Some of these categories and subcategories from participants' responses, if appropriate, were quantified and cross-referenced. The final process of developing a core category, propositions or hypotheses is called selective coding (Merriam, 2009, p.200). Excerpts of the speech of individual participants or in specific focus groups are included with their corresponding identity codes. For the data of the professionals, the identity codes (e.g. PF1, PM2) include their nature (i.e. P: professional), gender (F: female; M: male) and their identification number. In addition, 'ET' and 'ST' refer to English teacher and subject teacher respectively in the individual interviews whereas identity codes such as 'S1G1' and 'S2G2' represent students' grade levels (e.g. secondary 1, secondary 2) and group numbers (e.g. group 1, group 2) for the specific focus groups.

4.5 Structured questionnaire Survey

Quantitative questionnaire data and interview data are inherently complementary (Brown, 2001, p.78-9). While the basis of this overall investigation is qualitative, the questionnaire survey quantitatively offers a broad-brush picture of participants' attitudinal reaction towards accent variation in different contexts, which is best complemented by qualitative methods for explanations. The sample included

participants from various backgrounds in the educational (e.g. full-time university students, secondary teachers, secondary students) and professional fields as in the interviews but with a much larger population. The questionnaire data was cautiously compared with the qualitative information derived from other methods to answer research questions (1) - (4).

4.5.1 Research instrument

A survey is an efficient technique of collecting data from a large number of respondents (Wray, Trott & Bloomer, 1998; Dörnyei, 2003; Gillham, 2007). The research instrument (namely a bilingual questionnaire in both English and Chinese) was structured in design (Gillham, 2007) that consisted of factual (e.g. personal information), behavioural (e.g. use of English in daily life) and attitudinal (e.g. attitudes towards accents) questions (Dörnyei, 2003, p.8-9; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p.5). In order to prevent 'fatigue effect' (Dörnyei, 2003, p.14; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p.9), the instrument was limited to a short length of 5 pages so that the participants can finish in a short period of time (less than 15 minutes). Although Gillham (2008) argues that an appropriate length of a questionnaire should range from 3-4 pages (which can be finished in 10 minutes), the bilingual instrument adopted in

this study was in fact of a comparable length due to the space occupied by statements written in the two languages.

The bilingual questionnaire was designed with reference to previous surveys on language attitudes, attitudes towards accents and language use (e.g. Pennington & Yue, 1994; Hyland, 1997; Matsuda, 2000; Lai, 2001, 2005; Derwing, 2003; Jin, 2005b; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005; He & Li, 2009). It comprised six main sections which elicited information about participants' (1) personal information, (2) awareness of English(es) around the world, (3) exposure to pronunciation variations in their everyday life, (4) attitudes towards the integrative and instrumental value of accents, (5) perception of international intelligibility amongst NS and NNS accents and (6) views on model of pronunciation in the classroom (see appendix 4.6). The participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements (39 items in all) by choosing the appropriate number on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 4 ('strongly agree').

A four-point Likert scale was employed in the questions to avoid a central tendency (Dörnyei, 2003, 2007; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). In the literature, the issue of whether to use an even or an odd number in the Likert scale has been controversial

among scholars. For example, Dörnyei (2003, p.37-8) suggests that some researchers might prefer the use of an even number because of the concern that certain respondents might tend to choose the middle options (e.g. ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘not sure’, or ‘neutral’) to avoid making a real choice or to take the easy way out. Dörnyei has also suggested that these respondents might comprise roughly 20% of the sample. Though this percentage, as he argues, might not affect the relative proportions of those actually expressing opinions, he prefers to use an even number for the scale points. With respect to research methods in the education context, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) also express no particular preference on whether to adopt an odd or even number. Nevertheless, it has been revealed that there is a tendency that Asian students opt for the midpoint on such scales (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). In previous attitudinal studies, particularly in the Hong Kong context, many of the most-frequently cited language attitudes studies have also adopted a four-point scale in their questionnaire (e.g. Pennington & Yue, 1994; Hyland, 1997; Lai, 2001, 2005; 2010). Therefore, the present questionnaire also adopts a four-point scale as it has drawn on these language attitude studies in its development process. In addition, the choice of a four-point scale over a six-point one, based on the authors’ previous research experience, also allows the participants to complete the questionnaire more easily, especially if attitudinal questions which involve more consideration are

incorporated (also as the survey involved a large quantity of junior secondary students).

Before the administration of the survey, the questionnaire underwent a piloting procedure which comprised three phases, namely, an initial piloting of the item pool, final piloting and item analysis (Dörnyei, 2003, p.63-69; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p.54-7). Having adapted items from previous language studies, the statements were commented on by seven researchers (both native Cantonese and English speakers) followed by some adjustments in terms of wordings, meanings, Chinese translation, etc. In the final piloting stage, the questionnaire was completed by a group of 30 local undergraduates and the preliminary data was analysed using SPSS for final modification.

4.5.2 Participants

Purposeful sampling was adopted to select the most relevant stakeholders (Patton, 2002; Neuman, 2006) who are the key English users and/or learners in Hong Kong. A precise number of sample size required could not be determined in this study as the population of English speakers in Hong Kong has not been accurately surveyed but as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggest, 30 people are the minimum for each

sub-group being investigated. Given this complex situation, it is believed that a large sample size with great variety should yield a more representative result. More specifically, the questionnaire was completed by a total of 1893 participants (Male: 45.2%; Female: 54.8%) comprising four main groups, namely, (1) secondary students, (2) teachers, (3) full-time university students and (4) professionals (see Table 4.3 for a summary). All of them were native speakers of Cantonese and 91.1% had not stayed in an inner circle country for over three months. These participants represented the views of people in different stages of English using and learning. For instance, whereas secondary students are mainly English learners (and sometimes users in English-medium (EMI) subjects, see chapter 6), university students in Hong Kong mostly use English as the Medium of instruction (MOI) in their study at tertiary level, though they also to some extent learn English in particular courses. The views and experience of professionals and teachers are crucial as they use English every day in their workplace. Furthermore, those of the latter also possess an additional value because their perception of English might influence those of their students in their teaching.

Table 4.3 Number of participants in structured questionnaire survey

Participants	Number
Full-time university students	141 (Postgraduates:21; Undergraduates: 120)
Teachers	132 (ELT teachers:45; Subject teachers: 72; Unknown:15)
Professionals	309
Band 1 students	447
Band 2 students	406
Band 3 students	458
Total	1893

All school-age residents in Hong Kong enjoy twelve years of free education and are allowed to study up to grade 12 with English as a compulsory subject. Therefore, secondary students constitute the majority of English learners in Hong Kong. All secondary students in Hong Kong are categorised under the three-band scale (band 1–highest academic ability; band 3–lowest) and subsequently allocated to different schools based on these levels. As students of these bandings might have different attitudes towards English and experience of learning (or using) it due to their diverse socio-economic backgrounds (Yip, Tsang & Cheung, 2003; Lai, 2010), the bilingual questionnaire was distributed to students (both junior and secondary) in three schools in which, according to their principals, the majority of students belonged to these three categories respectively. Under the government’s MOI policy, these schools were allowed to include differing proportions of EMI teaching in some or all content-area subjects depending on students’ academic capability. In other words, students with a

higher (band 1) and lower (band 3) banding in their corresponding schools might experience greater and less English exposure in non-language lessons. In the present study, students in these three schools refer to 'band 1' (B1) (n=447), 'band 2' (B2) (406) and 'band 3' (B3) (458) students respectively.

Most of the 132 questionnaires were completed by teachers from the above schools in addition to others studying on master's degree programs in various universities in Hong Kong. The vast majority of them possessed a Bachelor's degree (53.4%) or also Master's degree (43.5%). Both subject (ST) and English language teachers (ET) were involved as they are also stakeholders in Hong Kong's current MOI policy. The former were users of English in EMI content-area subjects whereas the latter taught English in ELT lessons, both of whom were expected to have different degrees of influence on students' language attitudes. The university students who participated were full-time undergraduate (120) and postgraduate students (21) who were studying in BA and MA English programs in a university in Hong Kong. As English is the major medium in universities in Hong Kong, these English users as well as learners presumably would have diverse experiences of language use on the campus with people from around the world, which might influence their perceptions of English. While the university students represent a group of more educated Hong Kong people,

the professionals perhaps entails a much wider range of English users in the workplace. Additional convenience and snowball sampling strategies were adopted to survey a higher quantity of participants, most of whom in this study were part-time degree students in the university and business people from the researcher's network (Patton, 2002; Neuman, 2006; Gillham, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Among 309 collected questionnaires from these professionals, 95.4% were above post-secondary and 62.7% above degree level, indicating that they have a certain academic level.

4.5.3 Data analysis

Each returned questionnaire was treated anonymously (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010) and they were given a unique identification code. After coding the data, the structured questions underwent the process of data cleaning, data manipulation and variable reduction with the aid of SPSS (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Nineteen invalid questionnaires were discarded. The internal consistency reliability was determined in terms of the 'Cronbach alpha coefficient' (Dörnyei, 2003, p.112-113; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p.94-6), which was 0.793 signalling a reliable internal reliability. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.506) have provided the following guideline for the value of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient:

> 0.90	Very highly reliable
0.80-0.90	Highly reliable
0.70-0.79	Reliable
0.60-0.69	Marginally / minimally reliable
<0.60	Unacceptably low reliability

With reference to earlier studies on language attitudes (Pierson, Fu & Lee, 1980; Pennington & Yue, 1994; Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto, 1995; Lai, 2005), Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was undertaken (followed by Varimax rotation) to determine the factors involved in the 39 items in the questionnaires. This yielded 10 factors with loadings of 0.45 or greater, all of which were positively loaded for all items (see chapter 7). Further one-way analyses of variances (ANOVAs) were only conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean values for each statement among the three groups of secondary students due to their comparable sample sizes and backgrounds (i.e. $p < 0.01/0.05$, confidence level: 95%). Prior Levene's tests were employed to diagnose if each comparison did not reject the homogeneity of variance assumptions (i.e. $p > 0.05$) (Larson-Hall, 2010). Based on the results of the Levene's tests, the one-way ANOVAs were subjected to follow-up Tukey's post hoc test (or Games-Howell test for cases where there were unequal variances) to further determine any mean differences among groups (Rietveld & van Hout, 2005). To enhance readability, the (*) indicates a significant difference among groups in the tables and figures.

4.6 Document analysis

Document analysis involves mining data from documents which reveal views and opinions from a particular group of participants. For example, public records are the official, ongoing records of a society's activities (Merriam, 2009, p.140) that are very likely to show the attitudes from the government's perspective. In this study, various kinds of document were assembled to achieve different outcomes, most of which were, either directly or indirectly, associated with the school practice of teaching English. Content analysis of the documents was conducted and it was mainly qualitative in nature (with some quantitative elements) due to its 'reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis' (Altheide, 1987, p.68). Specifically, it involved identifying, sorting and grouping major themes from the documents. As Merriam (2009) suggests, the process of searching and analysing documents also allowed accidental uncovering of valuable data.

4.6.1 Selected documents

To answer research question (1), census reports will be closely examined so as to uncover the general picture of use of English (e.g. nationality and population) in Hong Kong. According to the Census and Statistics Department, population censuses have been conducted every ten years since 1961 and a by-census in the middle of the

inter-censal period. In the present study, the most up-to-date demographic information was derived from the population census in 2011, the analytical foci of which mainly lay in the population composition of ethnic groups in Hong Kong as well as the population composition of visitors to Hong Kong based on their nationalities and purposes of visiting (see chapter 9).

The investigation triangulated various sources of document published by the government and local publishers, which sought to identify the goals of pronunciation teaching and school practices in Hong Kong [i.e. to answer research question (2) and (3)]. In practical terms, a pronunciation norm is usually found in the speaking assessments and pedagogical foci on phonology in the teaching materials whereas a pronunciation model could be identified in the choice of accents in listening assessments and practice exercises in textbooks. Furthermore, as WE and ELF research corresponds to particular sociolinguistic settings implying differing functions and use of English, the investigation also evaluated how language-using situations were described in the examination papers and ELT textbooks. Qualitative (and partly quantitative) contextual analysis of these documents was conducted via two phases. First, it examined the main ELT document for senior secondary education, namely, *English Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6)* (CDC 2007),

to identify themes such as teaching speaking, phonological foci, language-using situations in speaking and listening and local culture or cultures of other countries, which potentially carry WE and ELF elements. Despite the focus of the study on the senior secondary curriculum, the junior secondary curriculum (i.e. *English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 3)*) was also analysed to determine whether there were WE or ELF features to yield a more holistic picture. Specific themes were nevertheless generated by identifying, sorting and grouping key features from the above two curriculum documents.

After identifying the above themes in the curriculum, the second stage of the document analysis assessed how these pedagogical emphases were implemented in the following documents:

- *Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (English Language): Subject Examination Report and Question Papers* (HKEAA 2012)
- Local junior and senior secondary commercial textbooks by three publishers (see Table 4.4)

Both junior and senior secondary textbooks were selected from the three local commercial publishers, i.e. Longman, Artisto and Oxford. While general ELT coursebooks are commonly used in junior secondary classrooms, ELT teachers at the

senior level tend to choose materials with specific language and skill foci in preparation for the various papers in students' future public examinations, namely, as writing, reading, listening and integrated skills and speaking. Given the primary focus of the present study on spoken discourse, examination practice coursebooks of listening and speaking skills that cater for HKDSE were chosen. As shown in Table 4.4, a total of 12 and 10 books at the two levels respectively were analysed. These coursebooks are usually the main ELT materials in Hong Kong because they prepare students for the HKDSE. The three local publishers are also popular as their textbooks have been traditionally on the Education Bureau's recommended textbook list.

Table 4.4 Selected ELT textbooks for analysis

Publishers		
<i>Longman</i>	<i>Aristo</i>	<i>Oxford</i>
Junior secondary		
(2012) [LE] <i>Longman Elect JS1A/B</i>	(2012) [AS] <i>Aristo success 1A/B</i>	(2010) [OE] <i>Oxford English 1A/B</i>
<i>Longman Elect JS2A/B</i>	<i>Aristo success 2A/B</i>	<i>Oxford English 2A/B</i>
<i>Longman Elect JS3A/B</i>	<i>Aristo success 3A/B</i>	<i>Oxford English 3A/B</i>
Senior secondary		
(2009) [LENSS] <i>Longman Elect NSS listening skills book Part 1/2</i>	(2010) [DSNSS] <i>Developing skills Paper 3 Bk4 set B</i> <i>Developing skills Paper 3 Bk5 set B</i>	(2010) [ESNSS] <i>Exam skills plus paper 3 Vol. 1 set B</i> <i>Exam skills plus paper 3 Vol. 2 set B</i>
<i>Longman Elect NSS speaking skills book Part 1/2</i>	<i>Developing skills Paper 4 Bk4 set B</i> <i>Developing skills Paper 4 Bk4 set B</i>	<i>Exam skills plus paper 4 Vol. 1 set B</i> <i>Exam skills plus paper 4 Vol. 2 set B</i>

4.6.2 Phonetic analysis

In addition to qualitative content analysis of these documents, the study also entailed phonetic analysis of segmental features produced in the sample audio recordings. As we shall see in the findings in chapter 5, the majority of speakers in the recordings in the listening tasks in all the textbooks speak RP or GA. The analysis therefore centred on the identification of words that were pronounced differently from the dictionary pronunciation (i.e. other than RP and GA) for phonetic transcription (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Walter 2005). Examples of these words with reference to each speaker are provided for discussion.

4.6.3 Analysis of choice of English speaking contexts

Apart from qualitative analysis of these textbooks to identify the pronunciation model(s) involved and their design for pronunciation teaching, further analysis comprised the categorisation and quantification (i.e. counting the number) of spoken texts in the listening exercises in the junior and senior secondary textbooks with respect to their nature (i.e. monologue or interaction) and type of speech events (e.g. radio programs, meetings, interviews). In the textbooks, these audio texts (accompanying tapescripts) provide students with model samples of speech embedded in an English-speaking situation, which might or might not correspond to the real-life

English use in Hong Kong and/or international settings. The categorisation of these texts was guided by the speech event types reported in VOICE and empirical studies about the use of English in Hong Kong (Evans, 2010b, 2011), yielding spoken text categories (e.g. ‘informal discussion’, ‘phone call/message’, ‘formal meeting’) that might frequently occur in ELF interactions and in Hong Kong. The discussion of these tasks and texts was nevertheless accompanied by qualitative data about their designated language-using situations. In addition, the counting of these texts was based on their frequency of occurrence in all the textbook units and the results was also taken to indicate whether the language-using situations chosen by the textbook writers have any relevance for Hong Kong (e.g. Evans, 2010a, 2011) as well as WE and ELF contexts.

4.7 Case study

The purpose of the case study was to address research question (3) about the education reality of pronunciation teaching and modelling in a mainstream secondary school in Hong Kong and it comprised two main dimensions: First, it examined the quantity (in minutes) and variety of English accents (i.e. who spoke English) that local secondary students were exposed to over a typical 5-day week under the newly-implemented fine-tuning MOI policy. Second, as the speech of local ELT and

subject teachers is supposedly, and in our findings confirmed to be, the major source of pronunciation for secondary students, it also evaluated and compared the phonological features of these two groups of teachers in the selected school. By integrating the two sets of empirical findings, the study sought to uncover, both qualitatively and quantitatively, which pronunciation models are being adopted in the local school setting so as to provide pedagogical recommendations. While a case study might not yield highly generalisable findings, it has provided in-depth information to understand the real situation in a particular context. Apart from the major findings reported in chapter 6, the case study was supplemented by the qualitative (interviews) data in other chapters.

4.7.1 The school

The selected school was a typical government-aided secondary school in which most students are classified as band 2 (out of the 3 bandings), indicating that they had an average academic level among all students in Hong Kong. It should be noted that the new fine-tuning initiative mainly impacts on schools whose students are mostly in band 2 or 3 because these schools previously had little or no EMI teaching in non-language subjects (Kan, Lai, Kirkpatrick & Law, 2011). In recent years, their graduating students had attained higher passing rates (or even credit rates) than the

averages of all students in Hong Kong in almost all subjects in the public examination. If we consider Yip, Tsang and Cheung's (2003) categorisation of Chinese-medium (CMI) schools into 'high', 'medium' and 'low' on the basis of students' ability, the target school was likely to be classified in (or at least towards) the 'high' category. Due to the relatively high academic performance of the students, a significant proportion of EMI teaching could be adopted in a number of subjects at both the junior and senior secondary levels. Under the new MOI policy, it is noted that students with a higher (band 1) and lower (band 3) banding in other mainstream secondary schools might experience greater and less English exposure in non-language lessons respectively based on their academic ability and the autonomous school-based policy.

4.7.2 Data collection

The data collection procedure took place in March 2012 the selected school, where there was a substantial amount of EMI teaching across various subjects. The major findings of the case study were derived from three sets of empirical data: (1) the school-based documents about their ELT and MOI arrangements, (2) the data log sheets completed by two junior classes (S1 and S2) and one senior class (S4) and (3) the audio-recordings of lessons conducted by six teachers (3 ELT and 3 subject

teachers). The data log sheets were completed by students of the three classes at the end of each of the five consecutive days throughout the week (about 10 minutes) in the presence of either the researcher or their class teacher, who explained the tasks to the students. These teachers were briefed in advance regarding the data collection procedure. Therefore, students were able to ask for clarification about the data log sheets. The data collection procedure took place in the same regular teaching week, which was several weeks after the examination period with no special school functions. Upon completion, they were collected immediately to ensure a full response rate. The secondary 1 (N=30) and secondary 2 (N=39) classes were chosen because they included students in the two forms where the fine-tuning took place in this second year of policy implementation. Students in these two classes differed in levels (i.e. years 7 and 8) and academic capability and thus different ELT and MOI arrangements were implemented correspondingly under the school-based policy. As these two group of students differ in academic capability, the quality (or/and quantity) of their responses might vary and hence the findings in the two classes are not compared. The selected secondary 4 class (N=41), albeit not falling within the ambit of the fine-tuning policy, was an elite class where students presumably have greater English exposure in the EMI content subjects. Unlike junior form students who attend almost all lessons together, senior form students only sit for the selected electives (and

also the core subjects) and therefore there might be great individual variations in English exposure among students.

In addition, lessons of the 3 local ELT teachers and 3 subject (2 integrated science and 1 Geography) teachers were audio-recorded using a professional Memo 703 digital voice recorder (and were saved as HP-128Kps MP3 files), which yielded a total of 6 hours, 33 minutes and 36 seconds. Supplementary information about the school-based MOI and ELT policies as well as other related issues were obtained from the school documents and focus group/semi-structured interviews with the students, teachers and the principal (see section 4.3). Although Patton (2002, p.269-263) notes that people often behave differently when they know they are being observed versus how they behave naturally, the focus of our audio-recorded ‘nonparticipant’ and ‘unstructured’ lessons observations (Dörnyei, 2007, p.178-9) was on the pronunciation of the teachers (rather than their teaching approach), which might not be easily altered. As the investigation involved different groups of human participants, a consent form was delivered to the principal to ask in advance for permission for the data collection process (Appendix 4.7). Parents were also invited to sign a consent form to approve whether or not their children at school could participate in all the research activities (Appendix 4.2).

4.7.3 Document analysis

The first component of the case study was the content analysis of the (internal) school documents, which provided useful information about the school-based language policy. These records include documents related to language policy provided by the school administrators (e.g. timetables of different classes, minutes and school policy documents), the arrangement of EMI teaching (e.g. teaching materials and school-based syllabi), the school-based examination (e.g. exam/test papers), the role of native English speaker teachers (NESTs) and any other activities which enhance students' learning of English outside lesson time. Given the scope of the present study, we only focused on information related to pronunciation teaching and how the school-based arrangements influenced students' exposure to the NS vis-à-vis NNS accents in their daily school-life.

4.7.4 Data log sheet

A data log sheet is a useful self-reported research tool that records a person's daily (or weekly) activities in various time intervals and it is often applied to business communication research (e.g. Cheng & Mok, 2008; Evans, 2013b). In the present study, three sets of tailor-made data log sheets were completed by the secondary students to record the quantity and nature of accents they were exposed to at different

time intervals throughout a 5-day week. As the data log sheets were completed by secondary school students with diverse ability, the bilingual (English and Chinese) research instrument was designed to be clear and user-friendly. This bilingual (English and Chinese) research instrument was basically modelled on the class's weekly timetable and required students to fill in the exact number of minutes they used English vis-à-vis Chinese within a specific time slot (e.g. 'morning assembly', 'recess', 'lunch', 'lesson 1', 'lesson 2') (see a sample in Appendix 4.8). During the initial data screening and cleaning process, responses that were carelessly written or did not make sense were discarded (27 out of a total of 519 sheets).

In fact, in order to reduce the difficulty of the task, students were not required to differentiate the use of receptive and productive aspects of the languages or the diverse modes of a language (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking). In other words, it only asked for students' general perception about the use of English in various sessions. This design sought to ensure the reliability of the instrument by making the task as simple as possible. The data log sheet also invited students to write down 'what they have learnt' in each time interval as this might provide additional information about what they were doing during the time. One crucial indicator of which teaching models are being adopted is perhaps which teacher (e.g. NEST, local

ELT teacher, subject teacher) they encounter at specific times. Supplemented by the school documents and information provided by the interviewed teachers, we could determine whether the specific lessons were taught by NESTs, local ELT teachers or subject teachers and, for the cases of ELT lessons, whether they were speaking, listening, writing and reading lessons. The average amount of English used by the whole class as well as the corresponding pronunciation models throughout the week were analysed and are reported in chapter 6.

4.7.5 Phonological analysis

As the data revealed that local ELT and subject teachers are the major source of pronunciation for students at school (see chapter 6), the phonological analysis centred on the evaluation and comparison of/between the pronunciation features of these two groups of teachers in the genuine classroom setting. Ten minutes were selected from the recording(s) of each teacher respectively for phonological analysis. Each 10-minute extract should include a minimal amount of interactions and students' interruption while focusing on the speech of the teachers in their most natural way. All of the participating teachers were females whose first language was Cantonese. Though the audio-recording of a classroom lesson might involve 'noises' such as from the background, students and overlapping speech among students and the

teacher, this spontaneous naturally occurring speech data, like that in ELF research, nevertheless reflects the true pronunciation model in the classroom and is hence most valuable (see Mauranen, Hynninrn & Ranta, 2010). More importantly, these simultaneous speech samples also include words in teachers' pronunciation which they are more confident with and avoid asking participants to pronounce unfamiliar words in an artificial text.

The analysis of the speech samples was mainly on the segmental level which, according to Jenkins (2000), is most crucial to international intelligibility. Each recorded sample was orthographically transcribed (or verbatim) and followed by phonemic transcription, which involved two researchers who listened to the extracts independently. Both researchers are university teachers of phonology. Each vowel and consonant that did not accord with dictionary British and American pronunciation (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Walter 2005) was highlighted in the transcripts for further analysis. These transcription treatments enhanced the accuracy and enabled final checking of the analysed results.

Some over-repeated discourse makers (e.g. okay) and hesitations were excluded to avoid distortion of the data. All the transcribed vowels and consonants were compared

and cross-checked to identify instances of disagreement. The final decisions were made by repeated listening and negotiation between the two researchers to reach an agreement. As the audio samples were recorded in genuine classroom settings, background noises may cause a lack of clarity of some words pronounced by the teachers and, thereby in some cases, they were discounted in the analysis. It is also for this reason (and also a relatively high level of agreement between the two raters, Sewell & Chan, 2010, p.146; see chapter 6) that instrumental analysis might not be as appropriate. Despite the difficulty of using instrumental analysis in naturally-occurring classroom interaction (particularly for suprasegmental analysis), this method resembles the authentic pronunciation modelling situation where students listen to the teachers' audible speech. The present investigation therefore focuses on teachers' production of consonants and vowel qualities (which depend on the openness and shape of the mouth) but makes no attempt to analyse vowel quantities (i.e. long-short vowel contrast) which often requires instrumental analysis. For instance, though mergers of /i:/ and /ɪ/ are found to be typical in Hong Kong English (HKE) (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Hung, 2000; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008), the analysis only sought to evaluate the difference in their audible vowel quality, notably the articulation of /i/ and /ɪ/ (also /ɔ/ and /ɒ/ as well as /ʊ/ and /u/).

After the phonemic transcription of the six speech samples, the analysis comprised the calculation of total amount of vowels and consonants actually pronounced by the teachers as compared to the recommended pronunciation according to the dictionary. Non-standard vowels and consonants in their actual productions were then categorised into various shared phonological patterns in the two groups of teachers with reference to previous phonological studies on HKE (see chapter 6). The proportion of dictionary English to non-standard English regarding different feature categories produced by the teachers is reported in percentages to offer a comparison. The six analysed speech samples consisted of a total of 16,969 phonemes, of which 40.3% (6,844 tokens) and 59.7% (10,125 tokens) were vowels and consonants respectively. Overall, there was 96.1% agreement between the two listeners for all tokens, which involved 95.0% agreement for vowels and 96.8% agreement for consonants.

4.8 The verbal-guise technique

The verbal-guise technique (also known as the verbal-guise test) (VGT) is one of the major quantitative methods to explore stakeholders' attitudes towards HKE, the ultimate goal of which is to generate pedagogical implications for the Hong Kong ELT classroom [i.e. research question (1) and (4)]. Specifically, the present VGT examined local people's attitudes towards HKE vis-à-vis numerous inner, outer and

expanding circle varieties not only by considering the dimensions of status and solidarity, but also taking account of the participants' awareness as well as their attitudes towards accents in the various locally language-using contexts. Whereas previous studies on language attitudes mostly centres on participants of a specific age group, the present VGT sought to explore the attitudes among English learners/users of diverse backgrounds (i.e. junior secondary, senior secondary, university students, professionals), who might have different perception of English based on their prior knowledge, learning experience and exposure to English.

4.8.1 VGT vs MGT

VGT is a variant of the matched-guise technique (MGT) developed by Wallace Lambert and his associates (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960), who sought to indirectly elicit participants' attitudes towards accents, dialects and varieties of a language. This is because overt responses from traditional direct approaches might not sufficiently represent participants' privately held attitudes (Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003). In a typical MGT, respondents are required to listen to a series of audio-recorded speeches of the same 'factually neutral' text with a range of accents, which are mimicked by the same multilingual individual, but yet perceived by the respondents as different speakers. These speech samples are arranged in

random order and the respondents are asked to evaluate the speakers (usually) on a number of seven-point Likert (or on other scales) bipolar adjective scales (ibid., p.51). In most cases, these adjectives accord with the three dimensions of attitude in Zahn and Hopper's (1985) speech evaluation instrument, namely superiority (or status or education) (e.g. 'educated', 'rich', 'intelligent', etc.), attractiveness (or solidarity or social attractiveness) (e.g. 'kind', 'friendly', 'pleasant', etc.) and dynamism (e.g. 'active', 'confident', 'enthusiastic', etc.).

Although MGT is regarded as the standard indirect measure of language attitudes, one of the major criticisms of this approach is its unnaturalness and the lack of authenticity of the audio-recordings which feature a single multilingual individual (e.g. Dailey, Giles & Jansma, 2005; Campbell-Kibler, 2005; Hiraga, 2005; see also Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003, p.57-61 for detailed discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of MGT). This is particularly valid when numerous English varieties in all the three circles have become the foci of investigation. To overcome such a limitation, VGT differs from MGT in that it records the speech of authentic speakers of a particular accent. This approach has become increasingly popular in comparative studies of accents or varieties of English (e.g. Giles, 1970; Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto, 1995; Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois & Pittam, 2001;

Lindemann, 2003; Young, 2003; Ladegaard & Sachedv, 2006; Hiraga, 2005; McKenzie, 2008; McGee, 2009). Nevertheless, the forms of VGT in specific studies slightly vary in the ways they seek to achieve their differing research purposes, most of which require the participants to rate (on a Likert scale) adjectives related to the various dimensions of language attitudes or statements about their attitudes towards accents. In some cases, the indirect VGT (or MGT) studies are also accompanied by direct methods such as questionnaire surveys (e.g. Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto, 1995; Hiraga, 2005) and interviews (e.g. Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu, 2006) to further examine the participants' attitudes.

4.8.2 Participants

The findings for the VGT were derived from 488 local Cantonese-speaking participants (62.1% female; 36.7% male), who fell into four categories, namely, 164 junior secondary students (JS) (i.e. secondary 1-3), 89 senior secondary students (SS) (i.e. secondary 4-6), 133 full-time university students (FTU) and 102 young professionals (P). The data collection procedures for the former two groups took place in a typical government-aided secondary school in Hong Kong, where most students were classified into band 2 (out of the 3 bands), indicating that they had an average academic level among all local students. These two groups of students might differ in

their perception of English, as they studied different ELT syllabi in line with their different grade levels. That is, whereas the junior secondary syllabus aims to establish students' foundation in English and thus tends to be more flexible in the teaching arrangement, the senior secondary curriculum, which mainly caters for the high-stakes public examination that determines students' university admission, is more restricted in nature.

The full-time university students who participated in the present study were enrolled in BA and MA English programs at a university in Hong Kong, ranging in age mainly range from 19 to 29 (96.9%). As university students majoring in English, these participants were exposed to English in very different ways than their junior and senior secondary counterparts. In addition, the young professionals were part-time students enrolled in BA and MA English programs in the same university, who presumably should have different exposure to English depending on their occupational backgrounds. All of them were under the age of 45. Most of the participants (77.5%) were in full-time employment in the professional or business fields (among whom 16.5% were teachers). Some of them (22.5%) did not report on their occupational status. Although the data were collected in the middle of the course, the participants (both the full-time university students and professionals) were given

no prior knowledge about WE and pronunciation variation. Research ethics approval procedures at the authors' own institution were adhered to, and, particularly for data collection at the secondary school, approval was obtained in advance from the principal, teachers, parents and students.

4.8.3 Speech samples of VGT

In the present adaptation of VGT, seven speech samples of the same contextually neutral passage entitled 'Please call Stella' were used. Six of them were selected from the Speech Accent Archive (Weinberger, 2010) with prior approval from the web administrator. The seventh speech sample for the HKE pronunciation was recorded by a native Cantonese speaker because none of the recordings in the archive entirely fulfilled our selection criteria (see below for discussion of the criteria). According to the archive, the elicitation paragraph aims to include most of the consonants, vowels and consonant clusters of standard American English and most of the recordings are phonetically transcribed following the 1996 version of the IPA. Segmental rather than suprasegmental features (e.g. stress and tone) are focused in the transcription. The same phonetic transcription process was also undertaken for the speech sample of the HKE accent so that the phonological features could be identified (see below). Though some other attitudinal studies (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990) adopted more than one

speech sample for each accent to cater for inter-speaker pronunciation variation, the use of a single-sample approach in the present study seeks to ensure the inclusion of more varieties of English while avoiding fatigue effects on the listeners, which might affect the reliability of the results. In other words, participants were exposed to only one speech sample for each of the varieties represented in the study.

The carefully selected or recorded speech samples consist of three NSs (i.e. British, American and Australian English) and four NNSs (i.e. Indian, Philippine, China and Hong Kong English). Speakers of these varieties were chosen mainly because these are probably the accents most prominent and, therefore, most likely to be heard in the Hong Kong community. For example, whereas British and American pronunciations are commonly included in VGT as references for comparison, they are also frequently claimed by educators or in teaching materials as the ‘standard’ or ‘model’ for English language teaching. Australian English may also be another inner circle variety that local Chinese are relatively familiar with as there have been increasing numbers of Hong Kong people who have emigrated to or studied in Australia in the last decade and/or might have returned to Hong Kong. As for the NNS accents, Filipinos and Indians comprise 29.5% and 6.3% of the local minority population respectively in 2011 (Census & Statistics Department, 2011) and both these Englishes, like HKE, are

emerging varieties with distinctive pronunciation features (Kortmann, Upton, Schneider, Burridge & Mesthrie, 2008). The choice of a Chinese English pronunciation is due largely to the increasingly frequent contact between Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese in the political, economic, cultural and education domains since the handover. On some occasions, English functions as the medium of communication between the two groups particularly in academic discourses (if not Mandarin).

In order to minimise variables that might affect the results, the speakers' gender, age and voice quality were carefully considered. For instance, the pronunciation of words in each sample had to be clear, all speakers were females aged between 21 and 30 and the voice quality of each speaker was judged by three researchers (both NSs and NNSs) (who reached a mutual agreement for all the selected speech samples) as not significantly different from the others. Despite these precautions, it should be noted that other features of the speakers in the samples, such as their slightly differing speech rates (ranging from 126.0 to 202.8 words/min) and pitch ranges (mean pitch ranging from 185.01 to 234.59 Hz), might also have some influence on the participants' ratings of the speeches. Among all audio samples, the US speaker has the highest speech rate and lowest mean pitch. Although it has been discussed in the

literature that certain speech rates (e.g. medium and/or fast) and pitch variation (e.g. medium) might contribute to people's more positive attitudes towards accents (e.g. Ray & Zahn, 1999), it is difficult to determine the extent to which the differences among individual speeches in these aspects were sufficient to cause any attitudinal variation. Biographical information about the speakers is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Biographical information about speakers of the speech samples

Speaker	Age	Gender	Birth place	First language	Onset age of learning English	Inner circle country resided in	Year(s) of residence in inner circle country
UK	30	F	UK	English	0	UK	30
US	25	F	USA	English	0	USA	25
AUS	28	F	Australia	English	0	Australia	24
HK	26	F	Hong Kong	Cantonese	3	/	0
IND	27	F	India	Hindi	4	USA	1
CHI	26	F	China	Mandarin	13	USA	2
PHI	21	F	The Philippines	Tagalog	7	USA	4

While some speakers had experience of living in an inner circle country, the key selection criterion is that they should have the distinctive phonological features of their accents (e.g. RP and GA for British and American pronunciation respectively) based on previous research, namely *Learner English* (Swan & Smith, 2001), *International English* (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008), *Varieties of English* (Kortmann, Upton, Schneider, Burrige & Mesthrie, 2008) and *Hong Kong English* (Setter, Wong, & Chan, 2010; also Hung 2000; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008). The selection

of speech samples was made by the three researchers, who listened to the samples and cross-checked with the phonetic transcriptions provided in the speech archive. An addition of seven local researchers were involved in the process of choosing the HKE pronunciation from five recorded samples of Hong Kong Cantonese speakers by identifying the key phonological features. All of these speakers are local Cantonese-speaking professionals who had graduated from university in Hong Kong, indicating they possess a certain education level. Some of these features in the selected sample are shown below (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Key HKE phonological features in the speech sample

Feature name	Brief description	Examples from the speech
Voiceless TH	Substitution of voiceless dental fricative /θ/ with [f]	e.g. thing [fɪŋ], thick [fɪk], three [fri:], with [wɪf]
Voiced TH	Substitution of voiced dental fricative /ð/ with [d]	e.g. this [dis], the [də], brother [brədə]
Voiced fricatives	Substitution of voiced fricatives /v/ and /z/, with voiceless fricatives [f] and [s] respectively	e.g. of [ɔf], kids [ki:s], cheese [tʃi:s]
L vocalisation	Deletion of /l/ preceded by a vowel	e.g. will [wɪʊ], call [kɔ:], small [smɔ:]
[n, l] conflation	[n] and [l] are interchangeable	e.g. snake [slæk]
Word-final consonant	Deletion of final plosives /d/ and /k/	e.g. ask [ɑ:s], need [ni]
Initial consonant clusters	Replacement or omission of /r/ and /l/	e.g. please [pi:s], plastic [pɑ:stɪk], blue [bu], fresh [feʃ], train [tʃɪŋ]
Monophthongs	Mergers of /æ/ as /e/ and of /ɪ/ and /i:/	e.g. slabs [slebs], need [ni], these [dis]

4.8.4 *The task*

The VGT listening task sheet comprised two main sections: the first elicited the participants' attitudes towards the seven accents in two dimensions (i.e. status and solidarity), whereas the second examined their awareness of and attitudes towards pronunciation variation in designated English-speaking contexts. With reference to

previous attitudinal studies using VGTs (Cavallaro & Ng, 2009; Hiraga, 2005; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006; Lindemann, 2003; McKenzie, 2008) as well as results from a pilot study (involving 59 participants), a list of eight randomised bipolar adjectives (or traits) was employed for the first part, in which the participants were invited to rate on a six-point Likert scale. An even number of response options was used to avoid a central tendency as some participants might use the middle category to avoid making a real choice (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Four of the traits belonged to the category of status (i.e. 'intelligent', 'rich', 'educated', 'successful') and solidarity (i.e. 'considerate', 'kind', 'friendly', 'honest'), respectively, of the speakers (see Appendix 4.9). To simplify the task that involved both university and secondary students (and was based on our experience in the pilot study), the word 'not' was added to each adjective to indicate its negative meaning, and these negative phrases were always located on the left side of the semantic-differential scale (e.g. 1-not considerate; 6-considerate).

In the second part, the participants needed to rate a series of statements on a four-point scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 4 ('strongly agree'). A four-point rather than a six-point scale was used because the rating of these longer statements (rather than mere adjectives as in section one) might require more

consideration and time. A simpler scale was therefore felt to be more suitable, especially for the secondary student participants. These statements sought to evaluate the participants' perception of accents in aspects such as their perceived intelligibility, similarity with their own accent, and the appropriateness of using them in a number of English-speaking contexts (see Appendix 4.10). These situations corresponded to the major uses of spoken English in Hong Kong (see Evans, 2010, 2011a, 2011b), and they included both high-stakes (e.g. 'news broadcast', being a 'teaching model', 'business meeting', 'job interview') and more casual use of spoken English (e.g. 'giving directions to NS tourists', 'discussion in class', 'chatting with NNS friends'). They also varied in interactional patterns (monologue speech versus interaction) and identities of interlocutors (NS versus NNS). A final question was also included asking the participants to name the country where they thought the speakers in the speech recordings came from and the proportions of their correct identification are reported in the discussion. For ease of analysis, the data treatment was quite straightforward in that only written responses corresponding to each speaker's specific origin were considered as correct (e.g. England/UK for RP, America/US for GA), while any potentially borderline answers were not counted (e.g. Scotland/Ireland for RP, Canada for GA).

Apart from the above rather straightforward treatment, their written records were subsequently classified into native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) countries, which sought to examine if the participants were able to identify whether the speakers in the speech samples tended to come from an NS (i.e. mother-tongue English speaker) or NNS (i.e. second language English user or learner) country. Again, the proportions of their correct distinction in this regard are reported in the results and discussion section. It should be emphasised that this categorisation is essential for our later analysis as it enables a clearer illustration of the differences among the attitudes of the three participating groups especially in terms of the various English-speaking situations. The rationale was two-fold. First, based on the background information of the speakers, the British, American and Australian speakers spoke English as their mother tongue whereas the remaining speakers used spoken English as an additional language (see Table 4.5). Second, as the participants had little or no knowledge of the classification of English varieties (e.g. the Three Circles model), the categorisation was determined from a layman's perspective, namely, NS versus NNS, possibly mainly based on the pronunciation features of the speakers. It was also revealed in the findings that the NNS accents were generally rated lower than the NS counterparts particularly for the second section of the

listening task, though the Indian accent interestingly often attained ratings somewhere between those of NS and NNS accents (as is discussed in chapter 8).

The listening task was conducted in sessions in a number of UG and MA courses as well as in lessons at the secondary school. Like most other VGT/MGT designs, these data collection settings allow the formation of a sizeable sample, though their relatively more formal (and educational) nature might have some influence on the participants' responses. Furthermore, the task was presented as an activity for the students' interest in which they were not obliged to participate. The indirect nature of VGT also counterbalanced this concern as it elicited the participants' underlying attitudes towards accents without being informed of the nationality of the sample speakers. For the secondary students, a Chinese version of the task sheet was provided for the listening activity. The translation was commented on by three additional researchers and was finalised after some modifications. Upon distribution of the task sheet, followed by explanation by the researcher, the participants were given sufficient time to read and raise questions about the task, as they were after the listening task. The seven randomised audio recordings were broadcasted through external speakers to the participants following one sample clip at the beginning so that they could have a taste of how they were supposed to complete the task. Each speech

sample was around 30s in length and was played three times consecutively. The participants were asked to rate the adjectives and statements during the time intervals between the samples (about 5 minutes depending on the participants' progress of completion).

4.8.5 Data analysis

At the initial stage of the data screening and cleaning process, responses that were carelessly written or did not make sense were discarded (21 out of a total of 509 responses). The data analysis procedure comprised the determination of internal consistency, mean values of the participants' choices and any statistical differences in mean scores among varieties of English accents and mainly among three of the participated groups (i.e. JS, SS, FTU. Based on our preliminary data analysis, the significantly differing occupational backgrounds among the professionals had made their VGT results difficult to compare with those of the three other students groups, who were full-time students at their different stages of learning English with similar experience.

Particularly for the results of section 1 of the task, Principal Component Analysis was conducted as in other studies using VGT (e.g. McKenzie, 2008) (this is further

discussed in chapter 8). The internal consistency of the two parts in the VGT for the four participating groups (i.e. JS, SS, FTU, P) was determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which ranged from 0.887 to 0.937, signalling a high (0.80-0.90) or very high internal reliability (>0.90) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.506). One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean values of the participants' preferences among all varieties of English, NS and NNS accents, and the three differing full-time student groups (i.e. $p < 0.01/0.05$, confidence level: 95%). Prior Levene's tests were employed to determine whether each comparison did not reject the homogeneity of variance assumptions (i.e. $p > 0.05$) (Larson-Hall, 2010). Based on the results of the Levene's tests, the one-way ANOVAs were subjected to follow-up Tukey's post hoc test (or Games-Howell test for cases where there were unequal variances) to further determine any mean differences among groups (Rietveld & van Hout, 2005). To enhance readability, the symbol (*) or (#) in the figures indicates cases where there were statistical mean differences among groups (see Appendix 4.11 for details).

4.9 Summary and brief account of the next sections

This chapter has described and explained how this study adopts a mixed-method approach to address the four key research questions. Quantitative methods include a

VGT and structured questionnaire surveys whereas qualitative methods entail individual and focus group interviews, document analysis and a case study of a secondary school. The data from each of these methods are reported in the different chapters under the four parts of discussion sections:

- Interviews/focus groups: Chapters 9 (professionals), 10 (professionals), 11 (secondary students), 12 (teachers);
- Structured questionnaire surveys: Chapter 7;
- Document analysis: Chapters 5;
- School case study: Chapter 6;
- Verbal-guise test: Chapter 8

While each method seeks to answer a number of specific research questions, the combination of all the methods, as well as the research findings, in the data analysis presents a comprehensive picture of the issue and with the ultimate object to answer research question (4). The integration of these findings is presented in the last chapter (i.e. chapter 13), which not only summarises and synthesises all the empirical results but also proposes pedagogical recommendations for multiple levels of education such as the language-in-education policy, curricula, assessments, teaching materials and

teacher education so as to help future learners to promote a pluricentric view of English.

PART I

Pronunciation teaching and modelling in the education setting

Part I of the finding and discussion sections focuses on the education reality of pronunciation teaching and modelling at both policy and practice levels. It comprises two chapters. Chapter 5 evaluates the influence of WE and ELF research, if any, on the recent ELT curricula, public assessments and commercial textbooks by three major local publishers. In chapter 6, the real practices of pronunciation modelling are illustrated in a school case study, which explores students' exposure to diverse varieties of English accent throughout their weekly school timetable, followed by the phonetic analysis of the speech of local subject and English language teachers in their classroom teaching. This part therefore aims to provide background information about the real practices of pronunciation teaching and modelling, which might impact on students' (and teachers') attitudes towards accents and an English target.

CHAPTER FIVE

An evaluation of the ELT curricula, public assessments and local commercial textbooks

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on an evaluation of Hong Kong's ELT curricula, public examination and local commercial textbooks at the secondary level, which form the basis for teaching and assessing students' pronunciation at the school level (see section 4.6). Section 5.2 examines the main ELT documents for junior and senior secondary education, namely, *English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 3)* (CDC, 2002) and *English Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6)* (CDC, 2007)), to identify themes related to teaching speaking, phonological foci and language-using situations in speaking and listening from the WE and/or ELF perspective. Subsequently, sections 5.3 and 5.4 evaluate how these pedagogical emphases are implemented in the listening and speaking papers in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) and the junior and senior secondary textbooks by three major publishers in Hong Kong. Based on the research findings, the chapter argues (in section 5.5) that an important step in the move towards WE/ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching is to recognise the role of English in particular sociolinguistic

settings because by embedding the tasks in a simulated authentic language-using context, it is likely that teachers and students will be aware that the speech and pronunciation of non-native speakers are most relevant.

5.2 The ELT curricula

The HKSAR's twelve-year free education runs from primary one until secondary six when students compete for university admission by sitting a school-exit public examination (i.e. HKDSE). In recognition of the important role of English as a global language in Hong Kong especially for business, trade and professional communication, the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum (which targets HKDSE) has highlighted the necessity of planning English language as a core subject (CDC, 2007, p.2):

English is the language of global communication. It is not only a powerful learning tool, a medium by which people gain access to knowledge from around the world, but also a medium through which they develop positive values and attitudes, establish and maintain meaningful relationships with people, increase their cultural understanding and expand their knowledge and world-views.

English is the language of international business, trade and professional communication. Traditionally much emphasis has been placed on English Language learning in school. Such a tradition must be continued, since proficiency in English is essential for helping Hong Kong to maintain its current status and further strengthen its competitiveness as a leading finance, banking and business centre in the world.

Upon further analysis of the remaining parts of the two ELT curricula, three main themes associated with the WE and/or ELF pedagogical proposals have been identified, namely (1) cultural understanding and values, (2) teaching of speaking and pronunciation models and (3) language and society. It should be noted that the discussions of the two curricula are not separated as they contain similar information.

5.2.1 Cultural understanding and values

A core component in WE research has been the focus on cultural diversity in that, on the one hand, English users are encouraged to understand and preserve their own cultural and language identity whereas, on the other hand, they should also develop their cultural and intercultural awareness (or competence) that is crucial to international communication (Baker, 2011; see also Risager, 2007; Witte and Harden, 2011). In this regard, one of the overall aims of the primary and junior secondary ELT curriculum is ‘to provide every learner of a second language with further opportunities for extending their knowledge and experience of the cultures of other people as well as opportunities for personal and intellectual development, further studies, pleasure and work in the English medium’ (CDC, 2002, p.17). Subsequently, the curriculum proposes a set of values and attitudes that could be promoted at school, e.g. ‘equality’, ‘plurality’, ‘tolerance’, ‘equal opportunities’, ‘culture and civilisation

heritage’, ‘sense of belonging’, ‘solidarity’, ‘adaptable to changes’, ‘open-minded’ and ‘with respect for self, others, fair play, different ways of life, beliefs and opinions’ (p.69). In terms of implementation, both the junior and senior curricula recommended that teachers should ‘stimulate learners’ imagination, sharpen their aesthetic sensitivity, promote the sharing of experiences and foster inter-cultural awareness and understanding’ (CDC, 2002, p.97; CDC, 2007, p. 74). However, even though the curriculum underlines these universal ideologies, its promotion of respect for culture seems to be dissociated from that for diverse varieties of English.

Despite the emphasis on the local cultural identity in WE research, this issue is relatively ambiguous in the curriculum document in that, like that in many post-colonial countries, it highlights the building of ‘national identity’ underneath the broader framework of moral and civic education (CDC, 2002, p.90). One recommendation given in the curriculum is to start with ‘theme-based activities’ such as ‘appreciating Chinese culture’, where ‘learners can be asked to introduce some aspects of Chinese culture in English to the Native-speaking English Teacher (NEST) or the English Language Teaching Assistant (ELTA)’ (CDC, 2002, p.91).

Regarding planning and implementation, numerous (potentially) WE-related values are suggested in the curriculum to be incorporated in students' learning across four key stages in English language education, most of which centre on junior secondary level (S1-S3) (CDC, 2002, extracted in Table 5.1). Throughout the transition from primary to secondary English language education, the curriculum begins by recognising the role of English as an international language, then to developing students' cultural interest through language arts and exposing students to cultures in different contexts. Particularly in the NSS curriculum (for secondary 4-6), the inclusion of an elective component, namely 'Language Arts' also highlights the importance of enhancing learners' cultural awareness mainly through short stories, poems and songs, popular culture, albeit without a clear definition of the term 'culture' (CDC, 2007, p.23). Generally speaking, the focus of the English-language program shifts from cultures of the inner circle (at primary level) to those of local and others (at secondary level), which underlines the aforementioned values such as an open-minded attitude and respect for oneself and the other. Unlike some attitudes (e.g. confidence) which are claimed to be more important to all learning activities, the curriculum guide suggests that the awareness of English as an international language of communication (which is apparently perceived to be less important) 'only be consciously developed in specific tasks' (CDC, 2007, p.27).

Table 5.1 Learning objectives contributing to the development of WE-related values and attitudes across four key learning stages in the ELT curriculum (extracted from CDC, 2002)

Key stage 1 (P1-3) p.70	Key Stage 2 (P4-6) p.71	Key Stage 3 (S1-3) p.72	Key Stage 4 (S4-5) p.73
/	- show awareness of English as an international language - show understanding and respect for the different cultures of the English-speaking world through participating in learning activities concerning themes of other places (e.g. Halloween, Mother's day)	- develop cultural interest and appreciation through being exposed to art forms such as music painting and literature when learning language - develop an open-minded attitude, showing understanding and respect for different cultures, ways of life, beliefs and points of view through exposure to a wide variety texts, both spoken and written, or through direct communication with people from different cultural backgrounds (e.g. fellow students in international schools or guest speakers from different ethnic groups in Hong Kong)	- develop through language learning activities (such as debates, group discussions and projects) an open-minded attitude towards different cultures, ideologies and points of view and a willingness to share ideas with different people - develop, through interacting with a wide range of texts and people from different cultural backgrounds, an appreciation of the relationship of Hong Kong to other countries and cultures, and the interdependent nature of the modern world

One specific example recommended in the curriculum guide is in a module entitled 'Cultures of the World' at Key Stage 3 (S1-3), which 'allows learners to examine different related areas of knowledge such as travel and discovery, and customs, food and clothes of different places' and 'enable[s] them to be engaged in using English to find out about, discuss and experience different cultures in a variety of ways, such as acting as tour guides to introduce a country or city, writing recipes for and inviting people to join an international food festival' (CDC, 2002, p.79). By encouraging greater integration of both formal and informal curricula, the Education Bureau (EDB)

also suggests providing ‘more life-wide learning experience by collaborating with other professionals of different fields, practitioners and people from different cultural backgrounds to organise relevant activities (such as visits, talks on specific topics in English) to enhance students’ understanding of the use of English in the local community and work contexts’ (CDC, 2002, p.28).

Towards the end of the curriculum guide (P1-S3) it includes exemplars of some recommended projects or activities, some of which illustrate how the above cultural elements could be implemented (CDC, 2002; see Appendix 5.1 for some examples). However, although some of these suggested activities have apparently incorporated some degrees of cultural knowledge in some parts of the world (e.g. Africa, India, the US, China), there seems to be a lack of correspondence between language and culture in the task while some of them only involve factual information about the countries (e.g. exemplar 9 in CDC, 2002). Furthermore, it is doubtful how these tasks are directly relevant to the main theme or objective of the specific activity (e.g. exemplars 1 & 8).

Although cultural elements are mainly focused at junior secondary level, the elective of Language Arts at the senior level also ‘seeks to develop learners’ language

sensitivity and cultural awareness, as well as creative and critical thinking, through the use of imaginative texts such as poems, novels, short stories, dramas, films, film scripts, jokes, advertisements, song lyrics, and radio and television programmes' (CDC, 2007, p.87). This emphasis on cultural enrichment to some extent accords with WE research as it recognises the inseparable relationship between language and culture (CDC, 2007, p.87-88):

One of the overall aims of the senior secondary English Language curriculum is to achieve effective communication, in addition to language knowledge and skills, the learner needs to have the necessary cultural information to perceive the shades of meaning and allusions in the words and expressions used by speakers of English from different cultures.

However, there seems to be little mention of this idea in the high-stakes, external school-exit public examination whereas traces of it in a few sample tasks are only found in the school-based assessment (SBA), which only contributes to 15% of candidates' total public examination result.

5.2.2 Teaching of speaking and pronunciation models

The fundamental impact brought about by WE and ELF research is the shift from focusing on language use and forms in the inner to the outer and expanding circles. In terms of the teaching of speaking, both perspectives advocate communicative competence and a localised pronunciation model (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey 2011).

From this viewpoint, the HKSAR's ELT curriculum does highlight learners' need for communicative functions and language skills and strategies in listening and speaking (CDC, 2002, p.5; CDC, 2007, p.13). It encourages effective participation in oral interaction through speaking strategies such as making an appropriate opening and closing, asking for slower repetition, offering alternatives, replying, asking relevant questions, explaining, giving examples, negotiating meanings, making suggestions and using appropriate degrees of formality (CDC, 2007, p.24, 49). Furthermore, this pedagogical emphasis is reflected in its recommendation for adopting task-based language teaching (TBLT), which aims at 'developing learners' communicative competence' (CDC, 2002, p.95; CDC, 2007, p.73):

Language learning should be experiential and should aim at developing learners' communicative competence. The task-based approach to language learning emphasises learning to communicate through purposeful interaction. Through the use of tasks, learners are provided with purposeful contexts and engaged in processes that require them to exercise critical thinking and creativity, explore issues and solutions, and learn to use the language skills and functions, grammar items and structures, vocabulary, and tone, style and register for meaningful communication. (CDC, 2007, p.73)

However, whereas communicative approaches to ELT have become increasingly popular worldwide, particularly in the Asia-Pacific Region (Butler, 2011), Seidlhofer (2011) argues that TBLT does not in fact develop communicative proficiency along the lines that is advocated in ELF (and WE) settings but rather 'proficiency in

conforming to native-speaker norms' (p.184). The discussion of the recommended speaking strategies in the curriculum is also quite general, and does not necessarily align with the kinds of strategies frequently used by ELF speakers (see Mauranen & Ranta 2009 and below for further discussion of these strategies in the listening examination). Moreover, as in traditional NS-based teaching approaches, the mastering of grammatical items and structures (e.g. tenses, parts of speech, conditional sentences, formulaic expressions, see CDC, 2007, p.13-21 for a list of examples) is still considered in the curriculum to be crucial for negotiating meanings:

Language items include a range of grammatical forms and structures that learners need to develop as they perform the communicative functions. Learners at senior secondary level should already have encountered most of the essential structures of English and have applied them in various situations. (CDC, 2007, p.13)

As far as pronunciation teaching is concerned, though the curriculum guide suggests 'the teaching of phonics in meaningful contexts' (CDC, 2002, p.9), it also highlights teaching it 'through minimal pairs and modelling' and 'working on stress, rhythm and intonation' (CDC, 2002, p.9) without specifying which reference(s) it models. One clue from the document guide is the acknowledgement of ELT teachers as the 'language resource person', 'assessor' as well as 'facilitator' (CDC, 2002, p.12). In practice, it suggests putting more emphasis on the development of phonics, listening and speaking skills in primary English language education and, subsequently,

checking if learners have developed some ‘phonological awareness’ at secondary level, where the teaching of ‘letter-sound relationships in words or texts’ might need to be further addressed (CDC, 2002, p.27). In the summative assessment for speaking, the ELT curriculum (P1-S3) clearly states that ‘due acknowledgement is given to fluency instead of just accuracy’ (CDC, 2002, p.112). However, an example of a (peer and teacher) evaluation form for oral presentation in the curriculum guide does include the criteria of ‘accent’ on a five-point scale range from ‘excellent’, ‘average’ to ‘very weak’, without defining what a good (or bad) accent actually means (CDC, 2002, p.E27). Furthermore, another set of assessment criteria for speaking in one exemplar explicates the controversial criteria of ‘pronunciation’ and ‘intonation’, together with ‘fluency’, ‘audibility’, ‘eye contact’, ‘facial expression’ and ‘gesture’ (CDC, 2002, p.E72-E73):

Pronunciation: This refers to the way in which a word is said. When a person pronounces a word correctly, he/she says it with the right sound(s) and the proper stress.

Intonation: Intonation is the rise and fall of a person’s voice as he/she speaks. For example, people tend to raise their voice in order to add meaning to what they say.

These rather vague descriptors nonetheless implies the radical idea of linguistic correctness by adopting phrases such as ‘pronounce a word correctly’ and ‘says it with the right sounds and the proper stress’, which, without other existing references,

are likely to correspond to an NS standard. In terms of grammar, a sample feedback sheet for speaking requires the assessor to rate students' use of grammar and sentence structure on a 3-point scale (i.e. needs improvement, satisfactory, well done) in great detail based on a list of criteria, viz. 'tense', 'word order', 'subject verb agreement', 'connectives (e.g. but, and, so)', 'modals (e.g. can, must, may)', 'prepositions', 'pronouns', 'articles', 'imperatives', 'gerunds & infinitives' and 'sentence structure' (CDC, 2002, p.A21-22). This perhaps indicates that grammatical correctness is still given prominence in the curriculum, even if it is situated in conversations and discussions.

At the senior secondary level, there seems to be an intention by policy makers to adopt a more pluricentric view of English in listening. Perhaps influenced by WE research, the assessment guide suggests that one of the aims of the listening assessment is to examine candidates' ability to 'understand speakers with a range of accents and language varieties in speech delivered at a moderate pace' (CDC, 2007, p.49). However, there is no specification of the kinds of accents (i.e. inner, outer and expanding circles) to be involved in the audio materials. In speaking, the curriculum requires learners to 'pronounce words clearly and accurately' while using 'appropriate pace, volume, intonation, stress, eye contact and gesture to support effective

communication’ (CDC, 2007, p.49). Further descriptions about the criteria of pronunciation and the use of communicative strategies are given in the examination report, accompanying two other domains, i.e. ‘vocabulary & language patterns’ and ‘ideas & organisation’. The following records those of the former two at level 7 (the highest) of the speaking examination (HKEAA, 2012, p.160):

Pronunciation & delivery:	Projects the voice appropriately. Pronounces all sounds/sound clusters and words clearly and accurately. Speaks fluently and naturally, with very little hesitation using intonation with some sophistication to enhance communication.
Communicative strategies:	Uses appropriate body language to display and encourage interest. Uses a full range of strategies skilfully to initiate and maintain interaction and to respond to others.

While there is no mention of whether the notions of ‘accurate pronunciation’ and ‘use of stress and intonation’ refer to an NS norm or any other varieties of English, some clues for the implications of these notions can be identified in the level 3 descriptors, where the term ‘accurate’ is omitted for assessing pronunciation (HKEAA, 2012, p.161):

Poor voice projection may cause difficulties for the listener. Pronounces simple sounds clearly but may have some problems with sound clusters.

In the above description, the notion of ‘problems’ might imply that some phonological features are regarded as pronunciation errors (or not ‘accurate’), which should be penalised in the examinations. This evidence perhaps implicitly reveals the continuing conservative orientation towards (NS-based) language correctness in public assessments, which diverge from the ideology of linguistic pluricentricity in WE and ELF. Nevertheless, given these rather obscure descriptions, how they are interpreted and implemented in the classroom depends on the corresponding teacher who, according to the curriculum, is ‘most relevant to contexts where explanation, demonstration or modelling is required to enable learners to gain knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect of the subject, e.g. grammar rules and syntactic structures of sentences’ (CDC, 2007, p.71). On top of this, as these descriptors are also applied to the high-stakes public assessments, it is highly likely that the assessment of candidates’ speaking performance also relies on examiners’ interpretation of the assessment guide based on their prior knowledge of English. One possibility is that examiners will make judgements according to the long-standing practice of adhering to NS norms.

5.2.3 Language and society

The validity of the WE and ELF perspectives to pedagogy lies in their suitability in particular sociolinguistic settings. A major difference between these two approaches stems from their differing origins in that the former focuses on intra-ethnic communication in the outer circle whereas the latter emphasises the use of English among NNSs from different L1 backgrounds in international contexts. In this respect, as the Hong Kong school curriculum tends to be locally contextualised, we might expect some degree of correspondence with the functions and role of English in the local context. In preparing learners for work and study after leaving school, the curriculum suggests that learners should ‘develop the necessary language knowledge and skills for their future needs, whether they choose to pursue vocational training or university education, or to work after they complete secondary education’ (CDC, 2007, p.3). Also to meet language needs in the workplace, a module called ‘learning English through workplace communication’ is offered as an elective in the senior secondary ELT syllabus. Despite this, there is no explicit claim of what these ‘language needs’ conceptually or practically refer to, e.g. the needs either for communication in NS-dominant or ELF situations.

Presumably, these objectives are reflected in the recurring theme of adopting TBLT in which learners are encouraged to practice their language in a variety of ‘authentic’, ‘purposeful’ English-using contexts (CDC, 2007, p. 53; see also CDC, 2002, p.95).

The choice of these contexts varies according to the four key learning stages from using English in classroom situations at junior level to a more complex usage in real or simulated school, community and working situations when learners advance to secondary education (CDC, 2002, p.30-34). According to the new senior secondary curriculum, one suggested way of achieving this is to include text types in the classroom that might reflect ‘real-world’ English use such as ‘conversation’, ‘directions’, ‘announcements’, ‘explanations of how and why’, ‘jokes and riddles’, ‘news reports’, ‘telephone conversations’, ‘weather reports’, ‘presentations’, ‘interviews’ and ‘advertisement’ (CDC, 2007, p.151). Though many of these speech events could be present in WE- and ELF-related English-speaking contexts for purposes such as intra-ethnic communication and/or international interaction, whether they correspond to these perspectives highly depends on the design of activities or tasks in public examinations and teaching materials. Apart from stimulating English-using activities in the classroom, the senior secondary curriculum also proposes ‘life-wide learning’ that ‘provides opportunities for experiential learning through meaningful use of English in authentic settings, including the community and

the workplace' (CDC, 2007, p.98). To support life-wide learning, teachers are recommended to 'interact with learners in English both inside and outside the classroom', 'provide learners with wider exposure to authentic use of English', 'encourage learners to seek and create opportunities to learn and use English in natural settings', 'maximise the use of space and resources in school' and 'promote learning through formal and informal curricular activities' (CDC, 2007, p.98).

5.3 Public examinations

As EDB acknowledges, the backwash effect of public assessments in Hong Kong, like many other Asian countries, is particularly prominent because their results are typically employed to 'make critical decisions about individuals' (CDC, 2007, p.51).

The analysis in this section centres on two main components in the HKDSE, namely paper 3 (listening) and paper 4 (speaking). The following subsections discuss how the assessment criteria and tasks in the two papers reflect the pedagogical foci in the curriculum (e.g. focusing on communicative functions, including varieties of accents, contextualising in the local English-speaking situations).

5.3.1 Listening

According to the curriculum and assessment guide (HKEAA, 2012), the HKDSE listening examination should involve a range of spoken texts, accents and language varieties as well as language features. Notwithstanding WE and ELF's emphasis on exposing learners to different varieties of English, this recommendation is not directly reflected in the assessment tasks. The majority of English speakers in the recordings speak an inner circle variety while some phonological features of HKE are produced by a few local speakers. Table 5.2 summarises the varieties of accent that appeared in the recordings in the listening examination in 2012. Examples of features that differ from RP or GA are given. Though there might be overlapping speakers in the recordings, these speakers are described based on their role in the corresponding listening sections.

Table 5.2 Varieties of accent in HKDSE examination paper 3 (listening)

Speaker code	Speaker	Gender	Varieties of accent	Examples of phonological features
E1	Announcer	F	GA RP <u>Other</u>	<u>Other</u> : /aʊ/ → [ʌʊ]: n <u>ow</u> [ʌʊ], ann <u>ou</u> ncement [ʌʊ] /əʊ/ → [ʌʊ]: earph <u>o</u> nes [ʌʊ], n <u>o</u> te [ʌʊ] /aɪ/ → [ʌɪ]: f <u>i</u> nd [ʌɪ], prov <u>i</u> de [ʌɪ] /æ/ (or /ɑ:/) → [ʌ]: h <u>a</u> ve [ʌ], <u>a</u> nswer [ʌ] Others: se <u>co</u> nds [kʰ]
E2	Jack Law	M	RP	
E3	Cherry Tam	F	RP	
E4	Rob Lee	M	GA RP	
E5	Dannie Wan	M	RP	
E6	Grace Yau	F	RP <u>HKE</u>	<u>HKE</u> : /ð/ → [d]: th <u>e</u> m <u>s</u> elves [d], bo <u>t</u> her [d] /æ/ → [e]: ip <u>a</u> ds [e], ch <u>a</u> tting [e] Missing final consonants: sh <u>ou</u> ld <u> </u> , thin <u>k</u> Simplification of consonant cluster: dan <u>ge</u> rous [dʒəs] Change in quality of diphthongs: ph <u>o</u> ne [oŋ], ma <u>k</u> e [ɪ]
E7	Icarus Liu	M	RP	
E8	Michael Ong	M	RP	
E9	Rowland North	M	RP	
E10	Jerry Brooker	M	RP	
E11	Lionel Chan	M	GA RP	
E12	Arlene Lee	F	RP GA <u>HKE</u>	<u>HKE</u> : /ð/ → [d]: th <u>o</u> se [d], th <u>e</u> ir [d] Simplification of consonant cluster: con <u>ta</u> ct [t], Missing final consonants: qu <u>i</u> te, fin <u>d</u> , Devoiced consonants: v <u>e</u> ry [f], form <u>s</u> [s] Non-reduced vowel: <u>a</u> dvice [ed], c <u>o</u> m <u>p</u> are [ʌ] Change in quality of monophthongs and diphthongs: Chan [e], d <u>o</u> wn [ɑ:ŋ]

As in traditional ELT assessments, prominence is almost exclusively given to NS varieties and, particularly, RP (7 out of 12 speakers). A number of speakers speak a mixture of RP and GA (E4, E11) in which some distinctive GA segmental features are realised in the production of retroflex /r/ (e.g. 'start' in E4, 'aware' in E11), vowels /ɑ:/ (e.g. 'want' in E4, 'what' in E11) and /æ/ (e.g. 'chance' in E11) and alveolar tap /r/ (e.g. 'totally' in E11) (see Roach, 2009). This mixed accent is also observed in the phonological production of a speaker (E11) who claims to have been born in Singapore.

Perhaps the most noticeable breakthrough in the listening examination paper is the inclusion of some typical segmental features of the HKE produced by local speakers of English (E6, E12). Although these speakers tend to follow RP in most of their speech production, some HKE features include the occasional omission of final consonants (e.g. 'think' in E6, 'find' in E12; though this also sometimes occurs in the natural speech of other NS speakers), devoicing (e.g. 'forms' [s] in E12) and variation of consonants (e.g. 'other' [d] in E6, 'those' [d] in E12), simplification of consonant clusters (e.g. 'dangerous' [dʒəʃ] in E6, 'contact' [t] in E12), changes in quality of monophthongs (e.g. 'chatting' [e] in E6, 'Chan' [e] in E12) and diphthongs (e.g. 'make' [ɪ] in E6, 'down' [ɑ:ŋ] in E12) as well as the stressing of reduced vowel /ə/

(e.g. ‘advice’ [ed], ‘compare’ [ʌ] in E12) (cf. Hung, 2000; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010). Interestingly, ‘the announcer’ (E1) for examination instructions in the audio-recording produces a mixed accent containing phonological features of mainly RP (e.g. ‘last’ [ɑ:], ‘either’ [aɪ]), together with GA (e.g. ‘part’ [r]) and other ‘non-dictionary’ varieties (e.g. ‘announcement’ [ʌʊ], ‘provide’ [ʌɪ], ‘seconds’ [kʰ]). Overall, despite the small proportion of local accents incorporated in the public examination, it perhaps implies that policy makers have now taken an important step in recognising the local English-speaking situation, where local HKE speakers should play a role. However, it is uncertain if the small number of HKE features present in the audio recordings might in the future be recognised as acceptable phonological features in the speaking examination and, furthermore, become a legitimate teaching model. It is also unsure if this design in assessment would further initiate a transition in Hong Kong’s ELT development to more authentic WE or ELF contexts where the key interlocutors are NNSs. However, the present form of the assessment clearly does not fully accord with the suggestion of involving more varieties of English. Nor does it reflect the sociolinguistic settings in Hong Kong because it is not the case that the majority of speakers (e.g. local students, school staff and professionals) in the recordings speak RP or GA.

Another important clue in determining whether the assessment tasks reflect WE and ELF sociolinguistic realities is the choice of the English-speaking contexts as well as the corresponding participants. Most speech contexts adopted in the examination are interactional situations that concern students' daily school life such as discussion about projects, listening to internet podcasts, presentation followed by presenter-audience interactions and school meetings. While these contexts generally align with the WE perspective about local language use, their choice of speech event types resembles the ELF interactions in VOICE (2013), e.g. interviews, seminar discussions, meetings, panels, question-answer-sessions and conversations. A few listening tasks are also potentially situated in international settings (e.g. lectures, interviews) (see Table 5.3 for a summary).

Table 5.3 English-speaking situations in HKDSE examination paper 3 (listening)

Task	Speech events	Content	Participants	Varieties of Accent
1	School meeting	Discussing the college's new online system	Students School staff	RP GA
2	Presentation (with some interactions)	Describing some of the features of the new website	Students School staff	RP GA
3	Discussion	Discussing the online systems and issues about studying online	Students	RP HKE
4	Presentation (Monologue; lecturing)	A podcast about online systems	The presenter The audience	RP
5	Interview	An interview with a book author in a weekly podcast programme	The interviewer The interviewee (an author from Singapore)	RP GA HKE

Nonetheless, there is a sense of ‘disharmony’ or ‘oddness’ in the tasks due to the mismatch between the role of local participants (mainly students and school staff) and their speech production due to the high quantity of inner circle varieties included. Violating the core principle of both WE and ELF proposals, this mismatch limits learners’ recognition of the present globalised English-speaking world by misleadingly introducing the myth that NS accents are the sole phonological references they need to acquire and respond to. Even if in one interview scenario the interviewee is claimed to be an author coming from Singapore, he speaks a mixture of

RP and GA. In this conversation, though the task designers have presumably intended to raise learners' cultural awareness by discussing some practical difficulties facing people from Africa, South America and Middle East in Hong Kong, they failed to connect ones' culture with the languages they speak (ET5). Alternatively, the message that Hong Kong is an international city with people of diverse ethnicities is only delivered as dissociated factual knowledge rather than described by the corresponding ethnic groups in their own variety of English. Apparently, these so-called real and meaningful tasks have only maintained genuineness in the language-using scenarios but have lacked linguistic authenticity.

Apart from the selection of English-speaking contexts, it seems that numerous communicative strategies have been deliberately introduced into the audio-recordings. They include asking for repetition or clarification, further elaboration/explanation, paraphrasing, seeking or showing (dis)agreement, skills of interruption and spelling of difficult words. Numerous features of naturally-occurring speech such as the use of discourse markers (e.g. 'yeah', 'well', 'right', 'okay', 'you know') and hesitations (e.g. 'uhm', 'erm') have also been added to increase the authenticity of the interaction. However, these general interactional practices seem to be by no means specific to those used by ELF users to negotiate understanding and accommodate differences in

ELF communications (see Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen & Ranta, 2009). Owing to the absence of more varieties of English, the tasks apparently fail to promote accommodation strategies that are commonly found in ELF interactions, namely adjustment to interlocutors' linguistic repertoires such as vocabulary, grammar forms and pronunciation (Jenkins, 2000; Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Cogo, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2009). This assessment approach corresponds to Jenkins's (2006) dissatisfaction with contemporary language tests, which merely recognise one typical type of accommodation (i.e. converging on a more target-like form) while overlooking others such as converging on one another's form and avoiding certain forms (e.g. idiomatic language).

5.3.2. *Speaking*

The public oral examination consists of a group interaction followed by individual responses. It typically involves four candidates in a group, each of whom will be assessed independently by two examiners. The eight-minute group interaction section requires the candidates to 'make suggestions', 'give advice', 'make' and 'explain a choice', 'argue for and/or against a position', or 'discuss the pros and cons of a proposal' (CDC, 2007, p.118). In the succeeding one-minute individual response, each candidate responds individually to the examiner's question(s) based on the group

discussion task where s/he is asked to ‘make and justify a choice’, ‘decide on and explain a course of action’ or ‘argue for or against a position’ (ibid.). Although the candidates’ speaking ability is assessed on the basis of four domains, viz. ‘pronunciation & delivery’, ‘communication strategies’, ‘vocabulary & language pattern’ and ‘ideas & organisation’, there is indeed no specific discussion of candidates’ performance on pronunciation in the examination report (HKEAA, 2012).

In contrast, a large coverage is given to commenting on students’ use of communicative strategies and examination skills (HKEAA, p.180-182). Some of the recommendations include the ability to ‘ask for repetition and clarification’, ‘take turns at the right moment’, ‘make judgements and suggestions’, ‘support and develop the views of others’, ‘disagree and offer alternatives’ and ‘use appropriate interaction skills and conversational strategies’. Apparently, there is a tendency that the Education Bureau downplays the importance of (NS-based) correctness in pronunciation but, in practice, it is likely that the assessment of students’ performance relies on the examiners’ (who are mostly practising teachers) professional judgement.

As mentioned earlier, ‘pronunciation & delivery’ and ‘communicative strategies’ are two independent examination criteria. Without a clear guideline about assessing pronunciation, candidates might be penalised for their local accent (as it might be

judged to be not ‘accurate’) even if they use appropriate communicate strategies that ensure effective communication.

By examining the English speaking contexts and topics in the different sets of speaking papers (see Appendix 5.2 for a summary), we discover that the overwhelming majority of the group interaction parts are situated in artificial contexts where the candidates are instructed to prepare for a task (e.g. report, review, blog, letter, project, presentation) or simply discuss a topic through the English medium (e.g. the use of diaries by students, the popularity of reality TV shows in Hong Kong, the tradition of giving moon cakes). Occasionally, some tasks assign a role to the candidates (e.g. a member of a club at school) who are asked to organise activities mainly in the school settings (e.g. welcoming event for new members, Stephen Chow festival). Like most expanding circle settings where (spoken) English has limited role outside the classroom, these language-using contexts are inevitably relatively inauthentic as they require candidates to use English in a normally non-English-speaking situation. Furthermore, most topics are related to local issues such as ‘the king of comedy Stephen Chow’, ‘the cross-harbour swimming race in Hong Kong’ and ‘the lack of space in Hong Kong’, which somehow accord with WE scholars’ suggestions of focusing on local contexts. One advantage of this design is

that it enables students to discuss local issues in their future English use and, furthermore, helps develop their local identity.

5.4 Textbook analysis

We now shift our attention to three sets of local textbook series that presumably should reflect the design and requirement in Hong Kong's English language curriculum and public assessment as discussed above. The analysis comprises textbooks targeting both junior and secondary students and mainly centres on the suggested modules and units by the curriculum with reference to the three WE/ELF-related themes identified in previous sections, i.e. (1) cultural understanding and values, (2) teaching of speaking and pronunciation models and (3) language and society. Therefore, each of the following sections discuss how the junior and secondary ELT textbooks respond (or not respond) to these three themes in their design (see Table 5.4 for a summary of textbooks).

Table 5.4 Selected ELT textbooks for analysis

Levels	Textbook series
Junior secondary (S1-3)	1. <i>Longman Elect</i> (LE)
	2. <i>Aristo success</i> (AS)
	3. <i>Oxford English</i> (OE)
Senior secondary (S4-6)	1. <i>Longman Elect NSS listening/speaking skills book</i> (LENSS)
	2. <i>Developing skills paper 3/4 Bk4/5</i> (DSNSS)
	3. <i>Exam skills plus paper 3/4 Vol. 1/2 set B</i> (ESNSS)

5.4.1 Cultural understanding and values

5.4.1.1 Junior secondary textbooks

The three sets of junior secondary textbook possess different proportions and distribution of cultural elements across the units in the six books in each series, so are their ways to situate students on the world stage. While OE and AS textbooks tend to place a small amount of culture-related events and knowledge in specific modules and units, they are widely-scattered across the whole LE series notably with more varieties of cultures and international contexts. As illustrated in Table 5.5, one or two units is/are designed under themes in specific modules which discuss cultures (e.g. ‘food’ in OE), traditions (e.g. ‘old-day occupations’ in OE, ‘Hong Kong heritage and stories’ in LE) or places (e.g. ‘tourist spots’ in AS) in Hong Kong.

Table 5.5 Modules and Units about Hong Kong cultures and traditions

Textbook series	Module	Unit
<i>Oxford English</i> (OE)	Hong Kong, Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hong Kong favours• The shoes shiner
<i>Aristo success</i> (AS)	Cultures and traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stopover in Hong Kong
<i>Longman Elect</i> (LE)	My city	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hong Kong stories

Traditionally, the inclusion of worldwide cultural knowledge in Hong Kong’s textbooks generally refers to the discussion of festivals in Hong Kong and those mainly in inner circle countries. This design seems to have been inherited to the latest

editions of the three textbook series, where one unit is devoted to the discussion of festivals ‘around the world’. In fact, a lack of significant changes in new textbook editions has been common for the publishing houses because of commercial considerations. Nonetheless, a noticeable advancement in all the textbooks is the introduction of several festivals other than those celebrated in Hong Kong and inner circle countries (see Table 5.6). They consist of festivals mostly found in Asian countries (e.g. Loi Krathong in Thailand, Coming of Age Day in Japan, ‘Chu Suk’ in Korea) which students might be familiar with but have relatively little knowledge about their cultures. More festivals in wider contexts (e.g. European countries) were also found to be included in the LE textbooks such as a comparison of how Christmas is celebrated (differently) among various countries. In comparison to the traditional approach of straightforwardly describing a festival, a comparative approach might further raise learners’ awareness of cultural differences among places. This is also adopted in the AS series, which compares the celebration of Valentine Day among Japan, Korea and Hong Kong. It is noted that some festivals originated in inner circle countries are also commonly celebrated in Hong Kong (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Halloween) owing to its colonial history.

Table 5.6 Festivals introduced in the textbooks

	<i>Oxford English (OE)</i>	<i>Aristo success (AS)</i>	<i>Longman Elect (LE)</i>
Module	The world around	Cultures and traditions	My word
Unit	Festivals	Festival fun	Time to celebrate
Hong Kong	Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, Christmas		
	Dragon Boat Festival, Seventh Goddess' Day (Chinese Valentine's Day), Cheung Chau Bun Festival, Halloween		/
	Easter, Chung Yeung Festival, Chinese Ghost Festival	/	Winter Solstice, Diwali (in Hong Kong), Easter
Inner circle countries	Christmas, Thanks giving		
	Halloween		
	Easter, Bonfire night	Valentine's Day	Easter
Thailand	Water Splashing Festival	/	Loi Krathong
Japan	Coming of Age Day	White Day, Valentine's Day	
Korea		Black Day, Valentine's Day	'Chu Suk'
Other countries			Diwali in India, Jewish Hanukkah, Christmas in the Philippines and Mexico, Saint Martin's Day in Holland, Belgium and other European countries

Apart from festivals, information about popular cultures is also incorporated in some isolated tasks (under themes), of which the discussion of films is most prominent

possibly because this theme is thought to more readily arouse students' interest. Due to the size and influence of the Hollywood movie industry, the majority of selected films in all the textbooks are famous Hollywood productions (e.g. 'Lord of the Rings', 'High School Musical', 'X-men: The Last Stand') in addition to a small quantity of local films (e.g. 'Shaolin Soccer', '2046', 'Big Ears'). Local food culture is common in the three textbooks and sometimes foreign cuisines in countries such as Thailand (in AS), Taiwan and Macau (LE) are also involved. Other areas of popular culture (or traditional culture) are only mentioned in AS and LE (not OE) but again they tend to be based on inner-circle countries such as Cartoon (e.g. 'Snoopy', 'Garfield'), hip hop dance in New York, stand-up comedy in the US/UK and English musicals (e.g. 'Phantom of the Opera', 'Cats'). Particularly in LE textbooks, a few other culture-related activities are occasionally introduced including Mime in Ancient Greece, 'House of Hosing Water' in Macau, opera, circus performance, puppet show, ballroom dancing, recital and Canton pop while some instances of Japanese 'manga' (e.g. 'One piece', 'Doraemon'), Cantonese cartoon (e.g. 'McDull') and Chinese dragon dance are found in AS. Nevertheless, despite the inclusion of these cultural issues in the textbooks, they were mainly presented as factual knowledge (and activities for vocabulary learning) in the textbooks, which is rather disconnected from the language and intercultural communication.

5.4.1.2 Senior secondary textbooks

Cultural elements are usually embedded in the exam practice tasks in the senior secondary listening textbooks (rather than speaking materials) since they involve audio-recording inputs as well as contextualised texts. As mentioned earlier, as cultural awareness raising tends to be the focus of the junior secondary ELT curriculum, there are few listening tasks that feature cultural issues in the different sets of senior secondary listening textbooks. For example, in one topic called ‘a student exchange program’ in ESNSS, some aspects of culture in some foreign places such as Japan, the Netherlands, Spain and Scotland are introduced in a short listening task for a comparison. They consist of people’s customs, ways of greetings (e.g. bow, embrace/hug, handshake, kiss), traditional clothes (e.g. kilt, kimono, clogs, mantilla, sari) and food and drinks (e.g. taco, haggis, hamburger, curry, paella, pizza, spaghetti, sushi, tea). Alternatively, cultural elements are scattered but less in-depth under several themes such as sports (e.g. golf, soccer, volleyball), travelling (to China, Europe, Japan) and entertainment (e.g. pop music, films) in the DSNSS textbooks. One interesting instance in the topic ‘successful people & amazing deeds’ is the discussion of how people in Britain and North America say dates differently. In the LENSS series however, little discussion on culture have been found. Nevertheless, the above examples somehow indicate that these textbook writers are to some extent

aware of the importance of integrating a variety of cultural issues in the senior secondary curriculum. However, as culture-related issues do not contribute greatly to the public examinations, a high degree of washback effect might be absent to urge the authors for a great alternation in the textbook design.

5.4.2 Teaching of speaking and pronunciation models

5.4.2.1 Junior secondary textbooks

The second major area in the analysis is how spoken English is taught and the pronunciation models are presented in the textbooks. Although the ELT curricula (CDC, 2002, 2007) centre on language forms (including vocabulary, text types, grammar items and structures) and communicative functions by promoting task-based language teaching, it is necessary that ELT textbooks include speech models in audio listening task as well as content for explicit teaching of speaking. In this respect, even though it is evident that the listening paper in the recent public examination has incorporated some features of HKE pronunciation in the audio tape, the listening textbooks seem to be lagging behind such a design as there is basically no trace of HKE phonology in any of their audio materials. In other words, RP is still the unquestioned choice of accent in the recordings.

Another key component in the textbooks that provides students with a pronunciation model is the foci of phonological features in different units. Among the three sets of junior secondary textbooks, there is surprisingly no discussion of any specific pronunciation teaching in the entire AS series whereas in the OE and LE textbooks, a strong preference for NS norms can be found given that numerous NS phonological features are highlighted but in differing ways. For example, the OE writers have evidently taken reference of previous phonological studies about HKE features and have incorporated a few of them as pedagogical foci in some units (cf. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Chan & Li, 2000; Hung, 2000, 2002, 2009; Setter, 2006; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Chan, 2010; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010). Three specific segmental features emphasised in the OE textbooks include the pronunciation of ‘-ed’ and ‘-s’ endings as well as /v/ and /w/ (see Appendix 5.3 for a summary). In its last book for the junior secondary curriculum (i.e. Book 3B, unit 5), the OE series also recommends several common pronunciation mistakes that should be avoided by the students. They are associated with the pronunciation of past tense or past participle ending in ‘-ed’ (e.g. /pli:zd/ not /pli:zdə/ in ‘pleased’) and words beginning with ‘th-’ (i.e. /ð/ in grammatical words, e.g. ‘the’, ‘this’, ‘that’ and /θ/ mostly in content words, e.g. ‘thanks’, ‘think’, ‘three’). The approach adopted in OE apparently follows the traditional SLA pronunciation teaching which conforms to the NS

linguistic form while highlighting the L2-influenced ‘errors’ by local people. However, some of these features such as the pronunciation of /ð/ and /θ/ and word-final consonant clusters (e.g. ‘-ed’ and ‘-s’ endings), have been found to be not significant to international intelligibility in the ELF data.

The LE series alternatively uses a slightly different approach to teaching pronunciation in that it has no explication of HKE pronunciation ‘errors’, despite its emphasis on NS norms. More specifically, the textbooks highlight the different sound aspects in dictionary English pronunciation by using IPA symbols and word examples. They comprise short vowels, long vowels, diphthongs and consonants. Furthermore, ‘clear’ and ‘accurate’ pronunciation is highly emphasised in the textbooks and it is evident that these notions refer to the dictionary pronunciation. For the purpose of demonstration, a few short vowels (e.g. /æ/ in acrobat, /ʌ/ in juggler), long vowels (/ɑː/ in arts, /ɜː/ in circus), diphthongs (/ʊə/ in tour, /aɪ/ in recital) and consonants (/f/ in laugh, /tʃ/ in watch) are also underlined to remind students’ of the ‘correct pronunciation’ (LE, Book 3B, unit 5).

Apart from segmental features, the OE and LE textbooks also take account of various aspects of suprasegmentals, many of which are about how to make meanings and

functions using tones and intonations. Not only are these features introduced in speaking tasks in the textbooks, but some of them are also included in listening tasks, which train students to understand people's attitudes in their speech. Though these suprasegmental features are likely to conform to NS English usage, they aim to foster communicative competence (see some examples in Appendix 5.4). Some functional uses of tone and intonation include stressing important information, expressing certainty, feelings and attitudes (e.g. excitement, happiness, disappointment, boredom, anger, surprise, approval, displeasure) as well as raising questions (e.g. 'wh-' questions, yes/no questions). As the ELT curriculum emphasises students' communicative functions in English, all the three junior secondary textbook series introduce a list of communicative and body language strategies in various units, most of which in fact cater for speaking tasks or assessments such as presentation and group discussion. To further help students practise these speaking strategies, many of them include sample phrases (see Appendix 5.5). While the provision of suggested phrases/sentence has been a traditional input-providing approach in Hong Kong (and many Asian EFL countries) to meet the demands of public examinations, Luk (2009, 2010) argues that this has resulted in students' memorisation of model phrases for assessments, which are nevertheless not recommended in EDB's assessment reports.

Clearly, there was also no sign of ELF accommodation of linguistic features in any of these textbooks.

5.4.2.2 Senior secondary textbooks

The pedagogical foci of listening and speaking in examination-oriented NSS textbooks often have a great impact on students' attitudes towards what English 'standard' they should pursue and achieve. Nevertheless, these pedagogical foci in the senior secondary textbooks were found to be quite similar to those of their junior counterparts but in greater detail. In terms of the choice of accent in the listening textbooks, as with the design of junior secondary textbooks, RP is basically the only pronunciation model (especially in DSNSS and LENSS), regardless of the participants' identity (e.g. local/international student, local/NS teacher) and nationality (e.g. Hong Kong Chinese, Japanese, Canadian). This is in fact a rather 'strange' design due to the disjunction between the speakers' role and their accent. On top of this, the design might also deliver a false message to students that English belongs to the NSs and they should try to imitate their pronunciation.

Quite surprisingly in the ES series, several NNS accents were found to be included in a unit called 'a student exchange programme'. As these foreign exchange students

come from Scotland, Japan, the Netherlands and Spain respectively, it is perfectly appropriate and natural that they introduce the customs and clothing in their home country in their own accent. In this short listening activity (less than 4 minutes), we could perhaps see the intention of the authors to inform students of accent variation around the world by exposing them to a variety of accents. Though this kind of design is rare in other units of ES as well as in other textbook series (i.e. DENSS and LENSS), it indicates that once a listening task is situated in an international setting, the inclusion of NNS accents might become completely natural and reasonable if the task aims to reflect the English-using reality.

As the textbooks serve to prepare students for the school-exit public examination, the pedagogical foci of speaking tend to cater for the assessment criteria. In terms of pronunciation, the notion of ‘accurate pronunciation’ in the textbooks exclusively refers to the NS-correctness in the three sets of textbook series, whereas the term ‘problem’ (in the curriculum) is interpreted as numerous typical HKE segmental features. Among the three series, the ESNSS speaking textbooks most explicitly emphasise linguistic forms in phonology. Table 5.7 summarises the HKE segmental features which they claim should be avoided (cf. Hung 2000, Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010). These features include long-short

contrast in vowel quantity (e.g. /ɪ/ and /i:/), the pronunciation of some consonant clusters (e.g. /kl/, /kt/), ‘-s’ ending and ‘-ed’ ending and the differentiation of some consonant groups which are often ‘confused’ by Hong Kong people (e.g. /l/, /r/, /n/ and /m/; /v/, /w/ and /f/; /s/ and /ʃ/; /ð/ and /θ/). Apparently, some of these features (e.g. ‘-s’/‘-ed’ endings, the pronunciation of /ð/ and /θ/ distinction) are included only because they differ from the NS norms but they hardly cause communication breakdown in real ELF interactions (Jenkins, 2000). A whole section in ESNSS is also devoted to describing how English diphthongs should be pronounced, all of which correspond to the dictionary pronunciation (see Appendix 5.6).

Table 5.7 Segmental features highlighted in ESNSS

Segmental features	Description	Examples
Vowel quantity	Long-short contrast	<u>se</u> at/ <u>si</u> t, <u>be</u> at/ <u>bi</u> t, <u>shee</u> p/ <u>shi</u> p
	Pronouncing /æ/ and /e/	<u>sa</u> t/ <u>se</u> t, <u>ba</u> t/ <u>be</u> t, <u>ma</u> n/ <u>me</u> n
Consonant clusters	Pronouncing /kl/ and /kt/	<u>cl</u> othing, <u>at</u> trac <u>ti</u> ve, <u>re</u> spect
‘-s’ ending	Third person ‘-s’/ plural ‘-s’	exhib <u>it</u> s, folk <u>s</u>
‘-ed’ ending	/d/: preceded immediately by a voiced sound except /d/	<u>li</u> ved, <u>jo</u> ined, <u>pl</u> ayed
	/t/: preceded immediately by an unvoiced sound except /t/	pack <u>e</u> d, shop <u>p</u> ed, purchas <u>e</u> d
	/ɪd/: when /d/ or /t/ precedes ‘-ed’	crowd <u>ed</u> , visit <u>ed</u> , need <u>ed</u> , visit <u>ed</u> , want <u>ed</u>
/l/, /r/, /n/ and /m/:	Do not pronounce /r/ as /l/	envi <u>r</u> onment, tour <u>r</u> ism
	Do not confuse /l/ and /n/	<u>n</u> ature, <u>l</u> and
	Pronounce /n/ and /m/ clearly (especially at the end of a word)	ban <u>n</u> , form <u>m</u>
/v/, /w/ and /f/	Do not pronounce /v/ as /w/ or /f/	<u>v</u> iew, <u>v</u> oice, <u>v</u> iew/ <u>f</u> ew
/s/ and /ʃ/	Pronounce /s/ and /ʃ/ clearly	<u>s</u> ee, <u>sh</u> e
Differentiating /ð/ and /e/	Do not confuse /ð/, /e/ and /d/	<u>th</u> e, <u>th</u> eme

Along similar lines, the DSNSS series also highlights several groups of ‘common pronunciation errors’ by local English speakers in one single unit (see Appendix 5.7).

They consist of a list of commonly ‘mispronounced’ words (e.g. addict, cosmetics, novel) and similar sounding words (e.g. bear/beer, fruit/foot, terrorists/tourists), the confusing pronunciation of final consonants such as /d/, /t/ and /s/ (e.g. buildubuilt, guessuguest, recentureasonurent), of /n/, /r/ and /l/ (e.g. fight/flight/fright, name/lame, price/pie) and of voiced and unvoiced initial consonants (e.g. very/ferry, shoe/Sue) as well as the pronunciation of past simple ‘-ed’ endings. A speaking assessment guide is also attached to some of the speaking tasks, which evidently adheres to NS norms.

In the LENSS textbooks, a sample speaking assessment guide also accords with the criteria in HKDSE, which includes descriptors such as the use of ‘correct’ pronunciation, appropriate loudness, fluency and stress and intonation. Although the LE speaking textbooks tend to have less emphasis on typical HKE ‘errors’, the writers adopt another approach to teaching pronunciation in which a summary pronunciation guide is provided to describe the general features of dictionary English phonology (e.g. short and long vowels, diphthongs, consonants). In addition to this clear adherence to NS norms, the textbooks also remind students of three sets of segmental features (i.e. sound endings, consonant clusters, long/short vowel) that should be pronounced ‘correctly’ (see Appendix 5.8). Again, all of these features are found to be typical HKE phonological features.

All the NSS speaking textbooks highlight numerous suprasegmental features that they suggest students should pay attention in order to convey meanings. Even though Jenkins (2000) argues that ‘native-like’ suprasegmentals are less vital to international intelligibility or are not manageable in ELT classroom, some of these target features are explained with examples in all the textbooks. The shared features among these textbooks include word and sentence stress, connected speech, intonation for meanings, feelings, statements, yes/no and wh- questions and lists. While most of these suprasegmental features are apparently NS-oriented, the textbooks have highlighted the functional use of them, especially when discussing intonation (e.g. rising tone for wh-questions).

In accordance with the curriculum’s emphasis on communicative functions, large proportions of the speaking textbooks have been devoted to discussing various communicative strategies in the three textbook series. However, these strategies seem to have little or no association with ELF interactions as they do not consider the cultural and language identity of the interlocutors in that accommodation to others’ linguistic features of English is needed. In contrast, the examination setting often assumes that English is only used among local student candidates and sometimes with the examiner, who share the same L1 background (i.e. Cantonese). Some of the

suggested communicative strategies in the three textbooks include making suggestions, giving advice, responding to others, self-correcting, clarifying and asking for clarification or repetition, summarising key ideas and agreeing and disagreeing.

5.4.3 Language and society

One fundamental dimension which differentiates WE and ELF paradigms lies in the language function and needs in particular sociolinguistic settings. The former mainly refers to outer circle countries where English is used for intraethnic and intercultural communication while the latter centres on international interactions among people from varying L1 linguistic backgrounds. Though Hong Kong's ELT secondary curriculum promotes communication in a globalised world, which is seemingly closer to the ELF proposal, it is pertinent to examine how it is reflected in local commercial textbooks in terms of the choice of English-speaking contexts in the various tasks and the interlocutors involved.

5.4.3.1 Junior secondary textbooks

In junior secondary textbooks, pictures, photos and images are key sources of attraction for students' attention and interest. As a result, one indicator of the perceived identity of English speakers in the textbooks is the ethnicity or nationality

of people appearing in the selected pictures. Although the role of people in the images may not accurately reflect their ethnicity, these images could impact on students' perception about who the English users in the textbooks refer to. For this purpose, the human photos of the English users (cartoons were not included) in the three junior general ELT coursebooks were quantified and categorised into people from Hong Kong (i.e. local Chinese), inner, outer and expanding circles and images with a variety of people. The categorisation procedure generally resembled how students perceive the identity of people in the photos in their first sight by their face colour, context of the photo or their names and nationality if provided. For example, Hong Kong people often tend to believe that 'white' people are equivalent to NS, even though it is highly possible that they are from other countries (e.g. those in Europe) in the reality (see Sung, 2011). Asian faces are easily recognised as local Hongkonger if there is no specification of the context and people's nationality (e.g. mainland Chinese, Japanese, Korea). It is also easy to determine the identity of real-life people such as celebrities and sportspeople included in the textbooks (e.g. Barack Obama from the US, David Beckham from the UK, Li Na from China). In other cases where there were no clues as to determine people's ethnicity (e.g. those with black or brown faces), the photos were classified as 'uncertain'. The total number of analysed photos in OE, AS and LE are 278, 334, 499 respectively.

As depicted in Figure 5.1, the findings suggest that the majority of images adopted in the textbooks apparently reflect a local Chinese identity (AS: 79.3%, OE: 66.5%, LE: 54.1%) because many of the themes and topics in the textbooks are localised in the Hong Kong context (e.g. at school), where local people, and mainly Hong Kong students and teachers, are the main participants. While NS faces (e.g. NS teachers) contribute to the second most frequently appearing images in LE (25.9%) and OE (26.9%), it is not quite the case in AS (8.4%) in which their authors seemingly do not want to create an explicit association between English users and NSs in the photos (uncertain identity: 9.3%; cf. OE: 1.4%, LE: 5.0%). The ambiguous identities of English users in AS are mainly reflected in the brown faces of people and English teachers in the images. In addition, the LE series tends to be relatively more internationalised as it has inserted a considerable number of images with people who are claimed to come from the expanding circle such as Japan, Thailand and continental Europe (9.0%, cf. OE: 4.0%, AS: 2.1%). This textbook series also includes several pictures showing a group of people from different countries (e.g. in an international institute) (4.0%, cf. OE: 1.4%, AS: 0.9%). A few pictures in the three sets of textbook also contain people from countries such as Burma, India, the Philippines and Jamaica. Although the selection of these images perhaps reflects textbooks writers' intention to project the message that English is used by local

Hongkongers, a disadvantage of including so many ‘white faces’ in the textbooks might be that it encourages a perception that the English language nevertheless belongs to Anglo-NSs.

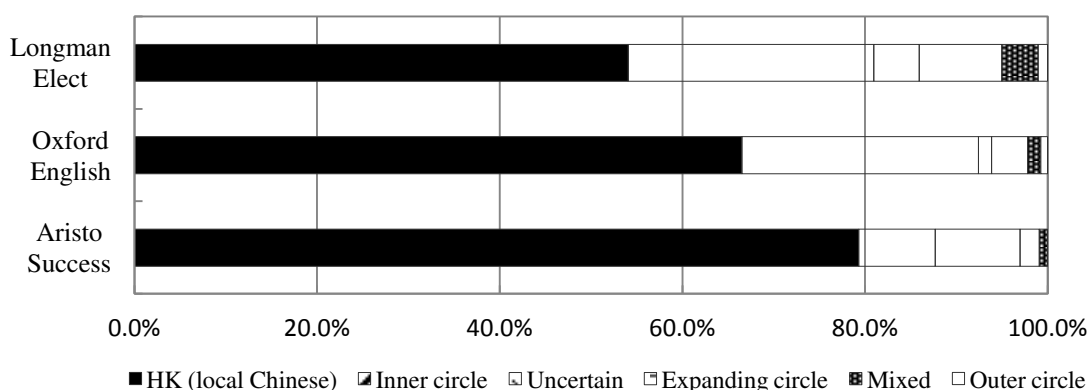


Figure 5.1 Perceived identities of English users in the photos in three junior secondary textbooks

Apart from the identity of English users, another key question concerning WE or ELF research is the context in which English communication takes place. Though many of the themes in the textbooks are associated with local topics such as culture (e.g. festivals, traditional occupations, food), places (e.g. tourist spots), vehicles (e.g. transportation) and social issues (e.g. drugs, obesity, pollution) in Hong Kong, numerous themes about international language use have been identified in the junior textbooks. In the OE and AS textbooks, these situations seem to be quite limited in that the use of English as an international language is only via internet communication and travelling to overseas countries/cities (e.g. Beijing, Macau, New Zealand, Australia, London in OE; Australia, Tokyo, Macau in AS). In contrast, there is a

much wider range of activities and countries/cities involved, and are described in greater details, regarding international language use. A summary of the representative scenarios described in LE is provided in Appendix 5.9 where English is used internationally in situations such as travelling and (in)direct contact with relatives/friends from around the world. In addition, the LE authors also include a great variety of information about issues and knowledge in different countries. Some of the themes include travelling, food, extraordinary things, incredible people, environmental issues, jobs, pop culture and places (see Appendix 5.10). It is evident that there is a stronger sense of globalisation in the LE textbooks as they provide students with wider perspectives around the world.

Nevertheless, regardless of the choice of topics, the student readers are usually situated in the school context, where they retain their role as a student, friend or relative to complete a short activity or a series of activities (in the integrated tasks). In order to further investigate the correspondence of the spoken texts adopted in the textbooks to the English-speaking contexts in ELF or in the Hong Kong context, a more detailed analysis of the English-speaking situations selected for the audio listening tasks (accompanying tapescripts) in the textbooks was conducted as they situate a semi-authentic sample speech in specific speaking contexts. The analysis

comprised the categorisation and quantification of all the spoken texts in listening tasks in the three textbooks, which yielded a total of 8, 10 and 10 text-types in OE, AS and LE textbooks respectively.

It is assumed that the choice of spoken English situations in the textbooks' audio listening tasks reflects what the writers thought about the corresponding real-life language use in the local context. From this viewpoint, the findings depicted in Figure 5.2 reveal that the overwhelming majority of recordings in these textbooks simulate audio programs on the radio or in internet podcasts (37), particularly in the OE and LE series. In the AS series, the key sources were found to be audio recordings of informal discussions (e.g. among students and/or between students and teachers) and telephone conversations. Other relatively common texts in all the textbooks comprise recordings of face-to-face interviews, monologue speeches (e.g. by the teacher, manager of a company), seminars/lessons, formal meetings and poems but they in fact merely range from 11 to 5 in terms of the total numbers. As the LE textbooks contain more tasks, they include more texts and text-types, among which their choice of recordings of plays and songs reflects the component of language arts in the curriculum. In contrast, the OE and AS series have incorporated a small

number of audio recordings of people participating in a guided tour. One instance of a weather announcement is also found in the AS textbooks.

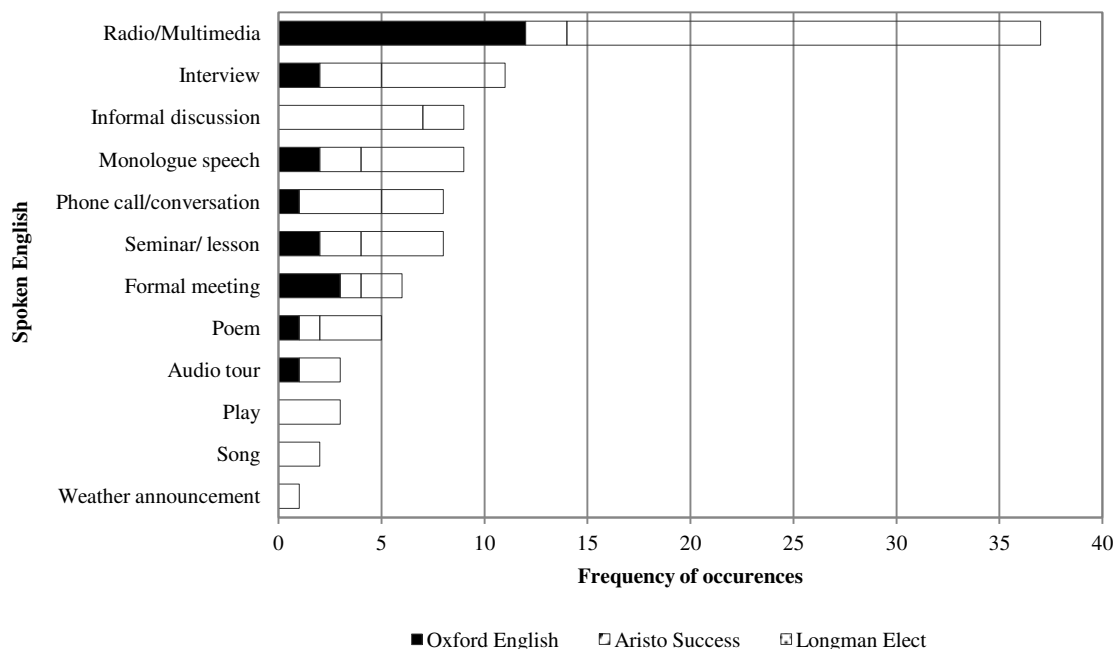


Figure 5.2 Spoken text types in three junior secondary textbook series

The limited variety of spoken English contexts in the textbooks perhaps stems from the restricted use of spoken English in Hong Kong, especially in people’s leisure time, where only a number of rather receptive uses of spoken English (i.e. film, music, television, overseas travelling) were reported in Evans (2011b) about Hong Kong people’s English-using habits in their leisure time. This probably indicates that, like most expanding circle (and also ELF) contexts, spoken English is mainly used for specific workplace and professional purposes in situations such as formal meetings, conferences, seminars, presentations and telephoning (see Evans, 2011a). In addition,

it might also not be expected that these situations should occur in junior secondary textbooks, which serve students' broader communicative needs. In turn, challenges might have been created for textbook authors who need to design samples of authentic spoken English use in audio listening tasks from the perspective of students. Given that junior secondary students would have few opportunities for spoken English interactions, listening tasks might only be confined to simulating audio recordings of interactions on the radio and the internet which, at the same time, could maximise flexibility in task design. Furthermore, English-mediated interactions within the school context are quite rare, although they are commonly simulated as informal/formal discussions, telephone conversations and interviews in the tasks mainly as spoken teaching models, which to some extent accord with contexts where ELF is often used. Nonetheless, the adoption of mostly RP in all the audio listening samples has resulted in a rather inauthentic sample speech, which might lead to students' misconception about the identity of interlocutors (i.e. mainly NSs) in real English communication both in Hong Kong and/or ELF settings.

5.4.3.2 Senior secondary textbooks

One of Tam's (2002, p.123) observations about the changes in Hong Kong's English language education since the 1960s has been 'a shift of emphasis from colonial

British English to a recognition of the concept of World Englishes'. This perhaps implies that ELT textbooks might be thereafter based on localised sources and life under local themes and topics rather than relying on British and American sources (see sections 5.4.1 & 5.4.3.1). The units and tasks in the three senior secondary textbook series are also mainly contextualised in the Hong Kong settings and, most frequently, from the perspective of a student at school level. Some of the local themes in all the listening and speaking textbooks include tourist spots, celebrities and films in Hong Kong. Many texts are also localised by incorporating local school names, referring to specific real places in Hong Kong (e.g. Yuen Long, Sha Tin, Tai Po) and situated in local workplace. In other words, what Tam claims to be the influences from WE seems to be only to do with localisation of task contexts as well as the addition of small proportions of cultural elements (e.g. food, costume, ways of greeting) but does not necessarily include the linguistic features of new varieties of English. Again, the analysis examined whether or how ELF situations are reflected in the textbooks in dimensions such as who uses English, who the interlocutors are and in what situations English is used. The discussion is mainly on the listening textbooks because tasks in speaking textbooks, like those in the examinations, are often only contextualised in school settings. It is noted that the analysis of photos in the junior

secondary textbooks does not apply to the senior secondary ones because of their absence of photos (but only a few cartoon pictures).

Though the three NSS listening textbooks have included some tasks that potentially offer a global perspective, it is difficult to determine whether some of their language-using contexts are truly ELF contexts because of their limited task description and uncertain identity of speakers (but mostly with an NS accent). The sense of ‘globalness’ in some more clearly-described tasks (as discussed below) is mainly achieved by situating the student reader in an international event and/or including foreign English speakers as interlocutors. The ESNSS series has incorporated more scenarios that are seemingly ELF-related. One particularly relevant theme is ‘a student exchange program’ in which students encounter exchange students from Scotland, England, Japan, the Netherlands and Spain as well as a teacher from London. In another topic, namely ‘natural disaster relief’, the textbooks also describe a number of situations where students are involved in international organisations, most of which however refer to NS ones. They include UK students helping victims after an earthquake in Asia, students having summer internships in New Zealand and placement in California. Other scenarios included in ESNSS also consist of Hong Kong students sending books to children in Southern Africa, an international

conference about extra-ordinary science in Hong Kong, a volunteer scheme in Ghana (Africa), interviewing a Ghanaian student about the life in Ghana and taking part in an international volunteer program in the UK. All of these somehow address the use of English around the world.

In contrast, in DSNSS and LENSS, there are fewer scenes that reflect the international use of English. Several rather short tasks are associated with the theme of travelling and contact with friends or relatives. For example, those in DSNSS involve studying in England and travelling to Shenzhen, Europe and Japan whereas in LENSS, they comprise a Canadian cousin's visit to Hong Kong, visiting a brother in the US, going for a trip to San Francisco, attending an exchange program in Los Angeles and meeting an American NS teacher. As can be seen in those in LENSS most places mentioned are Anglophone-centric English-speaking countries or cities. One disadvantage of such a design is that it might provide students with a perception that Anglo-NSs are the main interlocutors when they use English in their future life. This nevertheless is contradictory to the ELF reality where NNSs are overwhelmingly the language users.

Another aspect relevant for many ELF situations is the interactive nature of speeches in the audio recordings in the listening textbooks, which serve as sample speech models in that they give students an illustration of the importance of communication strategies and provide opportunities for practising these. After categorising all the sample speeches in the three sets of textbooks, it is discovered that the majority of the speeches are interactions (e.g. meetings) rather than monologues (e.g. presentations) (i.e. DSNSS: 97.2%; ESNSS: 86.6%; LENSS: 82.8%). Further classification of their text-types suggests that all three series mostly use audio speeches of informal discussion mainly in student-student or student-teacher interactions because most listening tasks are situated in the school setting (ESNSS: 70; DSNSS: 81; LENSS: 39) (Figure 5.3). Other selected spoken text types in the recordings involve phone calls/messages (ESNSS: 13; DSNSS: 8; LENSS: 14), formal meetings (e.g. school staff meetings, club meetings) (ESNSS: 7; DSNSS: 5; LENSS: 11), monologue speeches (e.g. presentation, an artist's speech) (ESNSS: 9; DSNSS: 1; LENSS: 9), programs in the radio or on the internet (ESNSS: 5; DSNSS: 7; LENSS: 6), interviews (ESNSS: 5; DSNSS: 2; LE: 6) and service encounters (ES: 2; DS: 1; LE: 1). A few other text types such as seminars/lessons (LENSS: 1), weather forecasts (ESNSS: 1) and travelling tours (DSNSS: 1) have also been incorporated in the different textbooks.

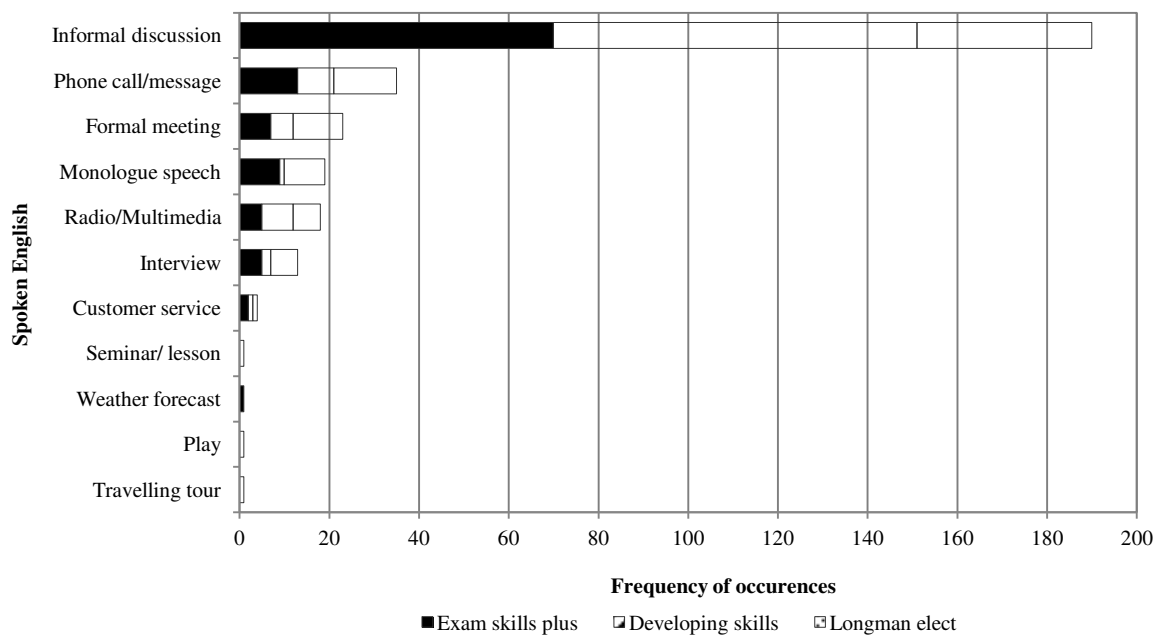


Figure 5.3 Choice of spoken texts in the senior secondary listening textbook series

These classified language-using situations are likely to have some correspondence with those often discussed in ELF research (e.g. seminar discussions, working group discussions, meetings, panels), so are certain uses of spoken English in Hong Kong particularly in the workplace (e.g. formal/informal meetings, telephoning) (Evans 2011a). However, a challenge in designing textbook listening texts, as also mentioned above, is the divergence between classroom discourses and the limited spoken language use in the Hong Kong context. While the former often needs to be situated in the school settings, the latter is mainly confined to specific English-using contexts (e.g. higher education, workplace). As secondary school education aims for general English rather than for specific purposes, it is quite difficult for the textbook writers to

design samples of spoken English texts that could reflect real-world English-speaking language-using situations. Furthermore, even if the selected text types in the listening tasks to some extent accord with the ELF settings, the choice of accents presented in them are in fact largely dissociated from those of ELF speakers, who are mainly NNSs. That is to say, the design of the listening tasks in these textbooks, on the one hand, accords with the language-using situations in ELF and identities of the interlocutors (i.e. NNSs such as local Chinese and people from around the world), but on the other hand, it only (or mainly) includes NS linguistic features both in terms of grammar and phonology.

5.5 Summary and pedagogical implications

This chapter has evaluated the potential influence of WE and ELF research on Hong Kong's ELT education from three perspectives, namely, the ELT curricula, examination papers and commercially-published textbooks, which play important roles in ELT school practices. Three main themes have been identified and discussed with respect to these documents: (1) cultural understanding and values, (2) teaching of speaking and pronunciation models and (3) language and society.

As can be observed in the ELT curricula and textbooks, elements of cultural issues and values mainly centre on the junior secondary level where students develop their interest in and awareness of the English language. Relatively little discussion of these cultural elements is found in the senior secondary textbooks and, furthermore, the school-exit public examination which focuses much on the English language. Probably having considered the pedagogical recommendations of WE scholars, all the ELT textbooks are to a large extent locally contextualised in which all themes and tasks are designed to be from Hong Kong students' perspective (see also Tam, 2002). However, their textbook design (which did not undergo significant changes in the different editions over years) apparently has not been extended to accounting for the emerging ELF realities involving cultures and first languages of people from diverse NNS (or also NS) regions.

In recognition of the global status of English, the SAR's new ELT curriculum apparently has taken account of the WE and/or ELF perspectives, which aims for communicative competence while downplaying the importance of conforming to NS pronunciations. There is, however, a lack of clarity of which pedagogical ideologies the curriculum conforms to, but it seems to be conceptually still guided by NS norms. As for policy implementation, the global perspective promoted in the curriculum does

not cohere with the rather conventional and established approaches to designing examination and particularly textbooks. As might be influenced by WE research, one breakthrough in the listening examination is the inclusion of local HKE speakers, even if most of the speakers in the recordings have an NS accent. The use of local themes in the assessment and textbooks has yielded a variety of ELF-using contexts because of the role of Hong Kong as an international city. However, the design of listening and speaking tasks in textbooks seems to be lagging behind the development of the new curriculum. Not only are typical HKE phonological features stigmatised in the speaking tasks, but their listening tasks also fail to fulfil the curriculum's suggestion of exposing students to various English accents. Furthermore, there is a clear disjunction among the language-using situations (e.g. ELF), the identity of speakers (i.e. mainly NNSs) and their accents (i.e. mainly RP) in the audio listening recordings. This may give students the impression that NS pronunciations are the only pedagogical target, even though they are largely irrelevant in ELF communication (Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2007a, Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Although commercial publishers are often reluctant to implement significant changes to ELT textbooks due to various economic and marketing considerations, one valuable insight from the design of some of the textbook tasks (especially in ESNSS)

is the inclusion of language-using contexts which involve English speakers from around the world. This choice of situations and identity of speakers has a decisive role in pronunciation modelling because, in principle, it determines which varieties of accents appearing in the listening tasks if it aims to simulate the real-world English-speaking situation. Though changes in the education policy often take time to implement, the case in Hong Kong has perhaps set a valuable example to other similar outer/expanding circle contexts, where English is used as an international language. As our analysis has discovered, an important step in the move towards WE/ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching (depending on the target situation) is perhaps to recognise the role of English in the local sociolinguistic setting. This role needs to be acknowledged and substantially reflected in the local ELT curriculum and public examinations, which might subsequently stimulate fundamental changes in textbook design owing to prominent washback effects particularly in Asia's traditional examination-oriented culture. By embedding a speaking or listening task in a simulated authentic language-using context, the long-standing myth of pursuing (let alone attaining) an NS phonological target is likely to be resolved because teachers and students will be aware that the speech and pronunciation of local educated English speakers are most relevant.

CHAPTER SIX

Exposure to accents and pronunciation modelling:

A case study of a secondary school

6.1 Introduction

Following an evaluation of the government documents and commercial textbooks regarding the teaching and modelling of speaking in chapter 5, this chapter further explores how pronunciation is being taught and modelled at the school and classroom levels based on a case study of a mainstream secondary school in Hong Kong (see section 4.7). The case study seeks to explore the controversial issue of pronunciation modelling in the secondary classroom in association with the medium-of-instruction (MOI) policy in Hong Kong. In order to provide readers with some background information, section 6.2 briefly discusses how the latest development of the language policy in Hong Kong potentially contributes to students' exposure to English. The discussion of the findings centres on three dimensions: (1) the school-based medium-of-instruction (MOI) and ELT policies (section 6.3), (2) students' exposure to English accents throughout their weekly school timetable by means of a data log sheet (section 6.4) and (3) the phonological differences between the speech of local subject and English language teachers (section 6.5). The chapter ends by prioritising the educated HKE vowel and consonant features and promoting an internationally intelligible endonormative model in the globalised world (section 6.6).

6.2 Exposure to accents and medium of instruction in Hong Kong

Although (NS-centred) teaching materials are often the main references in ELT lessons, Kirkpatrick (2007a, 2007b) rightly argues that local English teachers are undeniably the major source of language inputs for students in terms of both time exposure and daily face-to-face interactions. The fundamental question is therefore which varieties of English students are actually exposed to in their everyday school life. Furthermore, if a pronunciation model refers to the diverse linguistic sources in speech provided to students during the self-construction process of their own accent, previous discussion of this issue should probably be extended to the entire language-immersion environment in the school setting (rather than being restricted to the ELT classroom), where students might also encounter English spoken by their peers, (a small proportion of) native English speaker teachers (NESTs) and, crucially, local content-area teachers who use English to teach subject knowledge.

Indeed, the relationship between pronunciation modelling and MOI policy has received surprisingly little scholarly attention. Owing to colonial history and the unprecedentedly growing demand for English education, English-medium instruction (EMI) has been widely adopted around the world, particularly in postcolonial nations such as the Philippines, Singapore, Tanzania and Nigeria (Ferguson, 2006;

Kirkpatrick, 2012). With the belief that EMI teaching enhances students' exposure to English and hence their English proficiency (not only in the ELT subjects), it is expected that students would thereby be exposed to a significant proportion of English of their subject teachers. As a result, it is inevitable that students acquire the pronunciation of some technical vocabulary items and subject-related language (if not the entire pronunciation pattern) modelled by their subject teachers despite their lack of ELT training. As a former British colony, Hong Kong resembles many outer circle societies in which written English is extensively used in the key domains such as government, law, education, business and professional employment (Evans, 2010). However, since the majority of Hong Kong people speak Cantonese as their mother tongue, the fact that there is a limited role for spoken English in the community has seemingly pushed Hong Kong towards the expanding circle (Li, 2009). In this respect, students' English exposure in the EMI classroom is of paramount importance for their learning of pronunciation due to their lack of opportunity to practise English outside school.

In the 2010/2011 academic year, Hong Kong witnessed an important turning-point in the development in its MOI policy in that the introduction of a major new initiative, namely the fine-tuning MOI policy, offered secondary schools greater autonomy in

determining their MOI policy. More specifically, the new arrangement allows schools to adopt some proportion of EMI across various subjects or alternatively to implement full-EMI teaching in a number of non-language subjects at junior secondary level (Secondary 1-3) depending on (1) students' ability to learn through English, (2) teachers' capability to teach through English and (3) whether schools possess adequate support strategies/measures in place (Education Bureau, 2010). At the senior level (Secondary 4-6), the policy does not limit the choice of MOI in content subjects but, in many cases, individual schools might also offer EMI subjects depending on students' academic performance. Under such circumstances, students' exposure to accents at school, if we also consider the pronunciation of local subject teachers, will be greatly influenced by the proportion of English used in EMI content subjects. In many cases, individual schools might opt to include a higher proportion of EMI teaching in non-language subjects to increase students' English exposure and perhaps also as a sound promotional strategy to attract parents and students.

Given the great complexity of both the school-based MOI policy and, moreover, the combined sources of pronunciation in individual school settings, the only possible way to understand the pronunciation modelling process is perhaps to explore, from the students' perspective, which models they actually encounter throughout their

regular school life and furthermore identify the phonological features of such models. Therefore, the present case study is probably the first in the field to examine this aspect of the educational reality in terms of the school-based language policy, students' exposure to diverse varieties of English in a typical school week and the pronunciation features of local secondary teachers, i.e. ELT and content-area teachers, who are presumably role models for students.

While policy implementation mainly entails three levels, namely the government (macro), school (meso) and stakeholders (micro) (see Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), this case study centres on the latter two, i.e. the school-based MOI and ELT policy and students' (and teachers') use of language as the macro level is partly considered in the previous chapter (5) about the government documents. Under the fine-tuning policy, the specific school-based policy is developed by each school on the basis of the general guidelines proposed by the Education Bureau (EDB) (i.e. the macro level). The school-based ELT arrangement is often based on the junior and senior secondary ELT curricula and public assessment as students' academic results are often the key concern of parents, school administrators, teachers and students. At the meso level, this study examines the specific MOI and ELT arrangements proposed by the school administrators not only limited to those related to academic work in the classroom,

but also the measures in support of students' learning of English in other school contexts. At the micro level, it explores how much English students (both junior and senior) were exposed to vis-à-vis Chinese throughout a week of regular teaching based on the proposed MOI and ELT arrangements.

6.3 The school-based language policy

Information about the autonomous ELT and MOI policies of the secondary school in the case study was derived from the school's (internal) documents as well as the interview data with the (ELT and subject) teachers and the principal. Owing to falling birth rates and school closures over the past decade, the administrative decision on the role of English and its teaching in secondary schools (particularly former Chinese-medium instruction (CMI) schools) has been of utmost importance in that it has not only served the practical function of enhancing students' English ability, achieving better academic results in public examinations and, its key goal, raising the university admission rate, but it has also been an 'indispensable' marketing strategy given the tremendous parental demand for such teaching.

6.3.1 Overall language policy

Both Chinese and English are the official languages of the school and thus, according to the school website, can be used in all official situations (e.g. morning assemblies, school ceremonies and guest seminars) by teachers and students. Official documents such as the student handbook and parent notices are also written bilingually. Apart from the use of English in the designated lessons of the ‘finely tuned’ content subjects, like most former CMI schools, this school has also implemented a variety of English enhancement measures with the primary aim of creating an English-speaking environment in the school. More specifically, many of these measures applied to non-academic sessions such as the morning assembly, morning reading period, recess, lunch time and the class teacher’s period, where students have more opportunities to use English (more information about these measures are described in Appendix 6.1). Moreover, having considered the increasing number of non-language subjects which are now being taught in English, the school has also established a ‘Language Across Curriculum Committee’ to provide additional language support for the teaching of EMI non-language subjects and facilitate the coordination among the diverse EMI teaching subjects (including the English subject). Furthermore, three native English-speaker teachers (NESTs), who come from Britain, Australia and New Zealand, were recruited mainly for the teaching of oral English.

6.3.2 EMI arrangements for teaching

At the junior level, this school accords with the Education Bureau's (EDB) fine-tuning guidance, in that EMI teaching is fully implemented in all classes in two content subjects, namely, Integrated Science (IS) and Computer and Information Technology (CIT). In addition, differing proportions of EMI teaching are constantly incorporated into other non-language subjects, such as Mathematics, Geography and History, depending on which class the students study in. As for the senior secondary level, 5 non-core electives, i.e. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Information and Communication Technology (ITC) and Business, Accounting and Financial Studies (BAFS) are EMI subjects. Mathematics is also an EMI content subject for the elite class (see Appendix 6.2 for further detail).

6.4 Students' exposure to English pronunciation

In the data log sheet, students in the three designated classes were invited to write down the exact number of minutes where English vis-à-vis Chinese was used in each session of the school day (e.g. 'recess', 'lesson 1') on each of the five consecutive days. The results suggest that students in the two junior secondary classes encountered a similar amount of English (S1: 1.85 hours; S2: 1.78 hours) whereas a greater amount exposure to English was recorded by students in the senior secondary

class (S4: 2.44 hours). Though the findings in the data log sheets are not intended for a detailed comparison among the three classes, they do suggest that senior students in this particular class on average were exposed to around 30 minutes more English than their junior counterparts per day during this particular week. One possible reason is the inclusion of more EMI teaching in non-language content subjects in this elite class under the school-based curriculum as these students performed better than the others in the same form and presumably could study a subject in English. By referring to the amount of English use in the corresponding sessions in students' weekly timetable, we could examine in greater detail the proportion of English exposure they receive in terms of who taught the corresponding subjects (i.e. NESTs, local ELT and subject teachers)

The findings indicate that the major sources of accents for students in these junior classes were the pronunciations they encountered in English language subjects (S1: 52.9%; S2: 54.9%), followed by those of local subject teachers in EMI content subjects (S1: 42.2%; S2: 37.8%) (see Figures 6.1 & 6.2). These students also encountered several other accents outside academic lessons (S1: 4.9%; S2: 7.3%) such as those that appeared in the class teacher's period, morning assemblies, recess

and lunch time. During out-of-class periods, these English accents might include those from their teachers, NESTs and also peers.

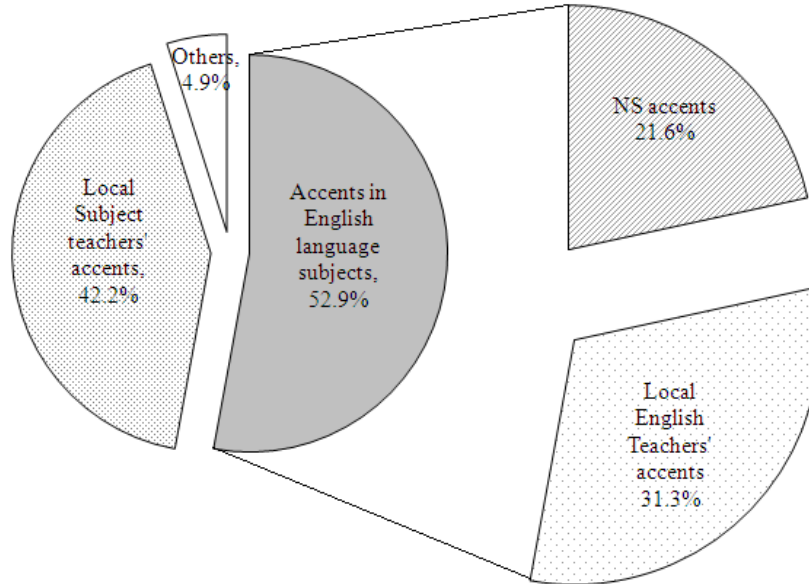


Figure 6.1 Students' exposure to English accents (S1)

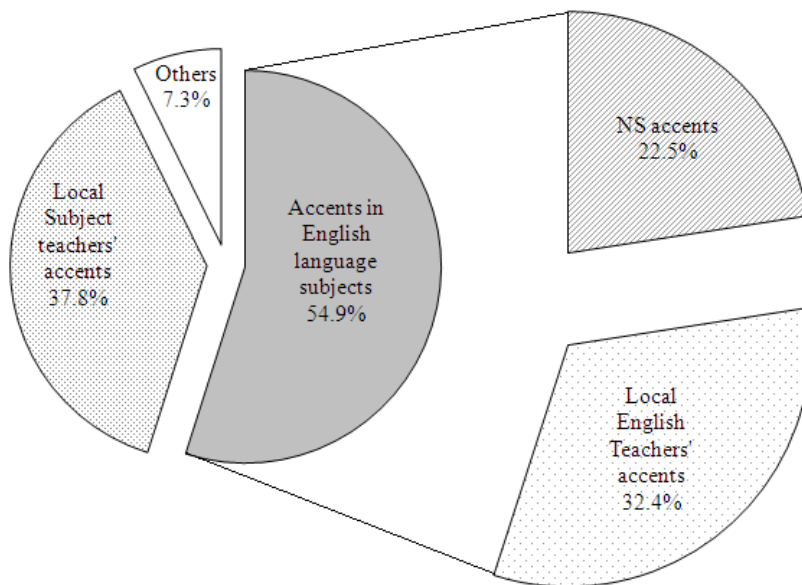


Figure 6.2 Students' exposure to English accents (S2)

Although it appears that over half the amount of students' exposure to English accents stemmed from those in the English language lessons, unlike the (almost) single source of accent in non-language subjects (i.e. the corresponding teacher), there were indeed three major kinds of model in typical ELT lessons, viz. the pronunciation of NESTs, local ELT teachers and that in audio-teaching materials. According to the teaching schedule, two English lessons (out of 8 classes in total) were normally allocated to the teaching of listening and speaking respectively every week whereas the rest (4 lessons) focused on general English (e.g. reading and writing) and were taught by local English teachers. In the listening lesson, the ELT teachers reported that they mainly work with students on practice tasks in commercial audio-listening materials, in which an NS model (and mostly RP) is presumably adopted (see chapter 5).

Furthermore, two teachers (a local ELT teacher and a NEST) shared the speaking lessons in alternate weeks and, as mentioned earlier, the NESTs in the selected school were from Australia, New Zealand and the UK respectively. Both teachers and students in the interviews raised an interesting issue that the British NEST has a strong Italian (or 'weird') accent when speaking English probably because he lived in Italy for a long period of time. In other words, even if students were exposed to some degree of NS accents, it is highly possible that these accents might not fully conform

to the dictionary pronunciations, which generally refer to GA or RP. Taking into account the above information, we could determine students' exposure to local ELT teachers' (S1: 31.3%; S2: 32.4%) and NS (S1: 21.6%; S2: 22.5%) accents respectively over the week. Based on the proportion of the various English models in the above two classes, one important discovery is that these junior secondary students encountered a much greater amount of local teachers' pronunciation (a total of over 70%) than the NS counterparts (around 20%) in their regular study. Surprisingly, the accents of local subject teachers tended to override those of local ELT teachers as the predominant pedagogical model in terms of time exposure in both cases.

At senior secondary level, not only were students exposed to a larger amount of English over the week, but they also experienced a different pattern of teaching models. In Figure 6.3, the findings of the secondary 4 class, in contrast to those at the junior level, reveal a larger proportion of English accents in content-area subjects (51.6%) than ELT subjects (37.4%). The students also had slightly greater exposure to English accents in the time outside academic lessons (11.0%). A similar distribution of NS (16.4%) and local ELT teachers' (21.0%) accents was also found in the total amount of ELT lesson time. In brief, the findings indicate that the pronunciation models encountered by the students stemmed from their local subject and ELT

teachers' accents (72.6%) in this elite secondary 4 class but the main divergence lies in a higher proportion of the former because more EMI teaching was adopted in non-language subjects.

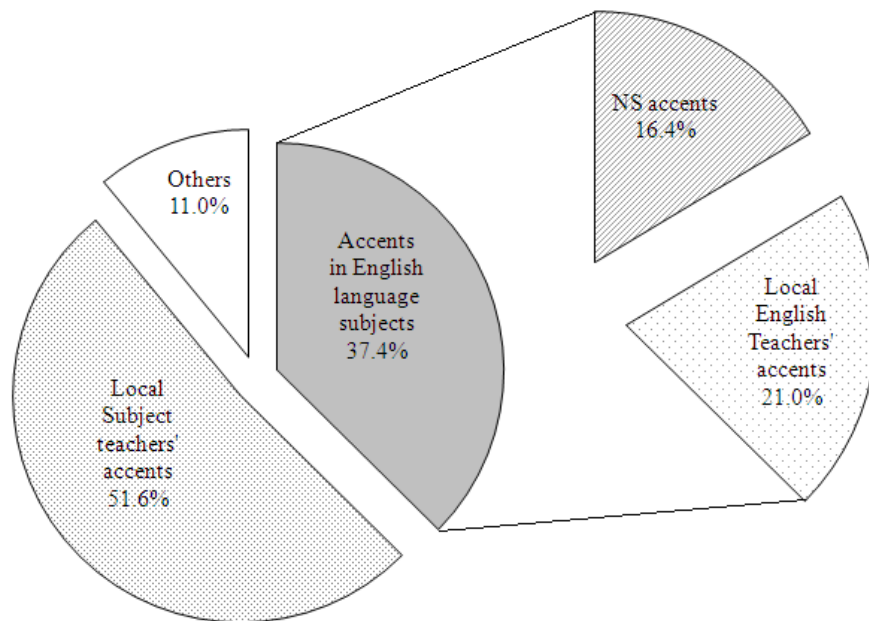


Figure 6.3 Students' exposure to English accents (S4)

The results from the data log sheets generally accord with Kirkpatrick's (2007a) argument that the pronunciation of local ELT teachers is the main phonological model for students in the classroom. However, it is evident in the findings that this argument should be extended to include the pronunciation of local subject teachers, who also contribute significantly to students' learning of pronunciation in terms of time exposure. Interestingly, students in the interviews commented that the pronunciation

of their subject teachers varied in quality in that some of their accents were reported to be rather ‘non-standard’ whereas others were not significantly different from those of the ELT teachers. In any case, it is unavoidable that students (sub)consciously imitate the pronunciation of their subject teachers especially for the subject-related language and terminology. The next section therefore seeks to investigate the quality of such teaching models in the ELT and content subject lessons by identifying the phonological features of the teachers involved.

6.5 Phonological features in teachers’ accents as pronunciation models

6.5.1 Overall phonological patterns

The analysis of (3) subject and (3) ELT teachers’ phonological features was conducted by counting the amount of dictionary-recommended vis-à-vis non-standard tokens (i.e. phonemes that do not accord with dictionary pronunciation) in their phonemically transcribed extracts. The findings indicate that the majority of phonemes in their 10-minute recordings in fact accord with the dictionary pronunciation (see Figure 6.4). Both groups of teachers achieved an NS rate of over 70% though, as expected, the ELT teachers (ET) (79.2%) produced a relatively higher proportion of standard features than the subject teachers (ST) (72.4%), who had generally received less English language training. There was also more non-standard

phonemic production of consonants (ET: 14.2%; ST: 18.4%) than vowels (ET: 6.6%; ST: 9.2%) in both their recorded samples

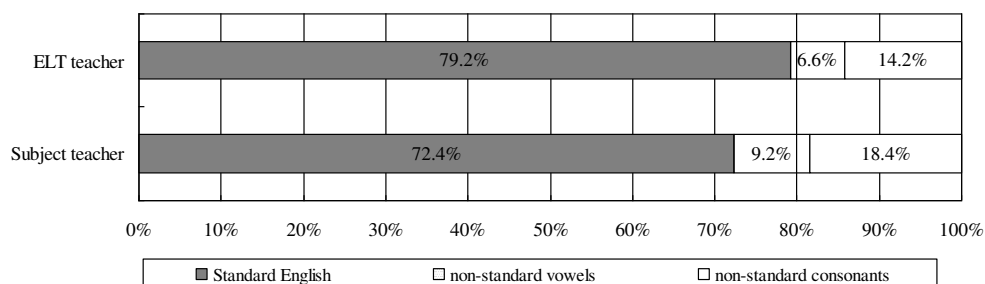


Figure 6.4 Proportions of standard to non-standard pronunciation by ELT and subject teachers

6.5.2 Non-standard vowels

The empirical data reveal that all the teachers shared an almost identical set of non-standard vowels (ST: 88.8% and ET: 86.2% of all their non-standard vowels respectively) but with different frequency of occurrence. In other words, although these teachers tended to follow a stable series of vowel patterns, their authentic speech production might not be fully consistent in that they did not necessarily produce vowels in equal quality every time throughout the recording. In addition to considerable individual variations among teachers' pronunciation, divergence also occurs in vowels in words which are highly dependent on the context and speakers' choice of vocabulary. The major vowel features shared by all the teachers are described below with reference to previous phonological studies of HKE (e.g. Bolton

& Kwok, 1990; Chan & Li, 2000; Hung, 2000, 2002, 2009; Setter, 2006; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Chan, 2010; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010) (see Table 6.1 for a brief summary):

- *substitution of /æ/ with /e/*: There is a tendency in our data that /æ/ was replaced by the more closed and fronted /e/ in most of the words regardless of teachers' choice of vocabulary (e.g. 'can', 'ham'). In fact, even though /æ/ was apparently non-existent in some teachers' vowel inventory (ST2, ST3), it is a rather unstable vowel for the other teachers (ST1, ET1, ET2, ET3), who occasionally produced /æ/ in words such as 'have', 'that' and 'aactivity'.
- *non-reduced vowels*: Vowel reduction (the pronunciation of a schwa /ə/) in unstressed syllables has been commonly reported to be non-existent not only in HKE but also in many outer and expanding varieties of English whose speakers' mother tongue is a tonic language (i.e. having a syllable-timed rhythm) (Kirkpatrick, 2010a). In the classroom situation, the lengthening and strengthening of particular words or syllables might also be relatively more common when local teachers attempt to slow down their speech for explanation and clarification (e.g. 'atmosphere' /oʊ/, 'damage' /eɪ/).
- *mergers of /ɪ/ and /i/*: As mentioned earlier, the researchers only considered audible differences in vowels and thus the long-short contrast between /ɪ/ and

/i:/ was not evaluated. Despite that, the merging of /ɪ/ and /i/ in terms of vowel quality was still noticeable. In addition, it appeared that the shifting from /ɪ/ to /i/ in words such as ‘this’, ‘fish’ and ‘hint’ occurred more frequently (ST: 13.5%; ET: 4.3% of all words with /ɪ/ and /i:/) than the vice versa such as that in ‘need’, ‘feeling’ and ‘seasoning’, (ST: 0.8%; ET: 0.8%), though this is also due to the lower occurrence of words with the /i/ vowel in the data.

- *substitution of /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ with /ʌɪ/ and /ʌʊ/ respectively:* The pronunciation of diphthongs /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ consists of gliding from /a/ towards /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ respectively and both groups of teachers tended to substitute the former vowel with a more closed and front /ʌ/ in some specific words, conditioned by diphthongs followed by a final voiceless oral stop (i.e. /p/, /t/, /k/) in the data (cf. Hung, 2009) (e.g. ‘about’ /a**ʌ**ʊt/, ‘pipe’ /p**ʌ**ɪp/). These non-standard diphthongs, however, did not occur in other words such as ‘our’, ‘cloud’, ‘now’ and ‘five’ which end with some other consonants or an open vowel.
- *reduction of /eɪ/ to /ɪ/ or /e/:* Reduction of diphthongs to monophthongs in syllables ending in a stop consonant was common among all the teachers but there were slight differences among specific words. For instance, /eɪ/ was pronounced as /ɪ/ in syllables closed by /k/ and /t/ (e.g. ‘take’, ‘straight’) and,

typically in those ending with /n/, /eɪn/ was replaced by /ɪŋ/ (e.g. ‘rain’, ‘change’). However, in one case of the word ‘again’, /eɪ/ was instead reduced to /e/ (ST2). As also evidenced in Hung (2009), the diphthong /eɪ/ in open syllables and in syllables closed by a non-stop consonant was retained, e.g. ‘may’, ‘say’ and ‘page’.

- *reduction of /aʊ/ to /ɑ/*: Similarly, it is also revealed in the data that all the teachers tended to only reduce the diphthong /aʊ/ ending with /n/ to /ɑ/ but retain it in open syllables. That is to say, the /aʊn/ in ‘down’, ‘found’, ‘pronoun’ and ‘countable’ was substituted with /ɑŋ/ whereas /aʊ/ in ‘how’ and ‘now’ was unchanged in the data.
- *pronunciation of /ɜ/ in ‘the’*: While the determiner ‘the’ should be pronounced as /ði:/ and /ðə/ in its strong and weak forms respectively according to the dictionary, it is occasionally pronounced as /ðɜ/ by the teachers. A possible reason for this production is their pronunciation of the weak form /ðə/ as a non-standard strong form /ðɜ/ due to the great similarity in vowel quality between /ə/ and /ɜ/. This feature is hence not considered a non-reduced vowel because of its change in vowel quality and, more importantly, its differing frequency of occurrence among ELT and subject teachers, which is the key objective of the present study.

Table 6.1 A summary of the shared non-standard vowels among teachers

Features	Brief description	Examples from the data	Agreement rate
/æ/ → /e/	Substitution of /æ/ with /e/	can /e/, that /e/, ham /e/, thank /e/	98.3%
/ə/	Non-reduced vowels	atmosphere /oʊ/, damage /eɪ/, concern /ɒ/, away /ɑ/	86.5%
/ɪ/ ↔ /i/	Mergers of /ɪ/ and /i/	this /i/, fish /i/, hint /i/, need /ɪ/, feeling /ɪ/, seasoning /ɪ/	97.6%
/aɪ/, /aʊ/ → /ʌɪ/, /ʌʊ/	Substitution of /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ with /ʌɪ/ and /ʌʊ/ respectively	about /ʌʊ/, write /ʌɪ/, like /ʌɪ/, pipe /ʌɪ/	90.2%
/eɪ/ → /ɪ/ or /e/	Reduction of /eɪ/ to /ɪ/ or /e/	take /ɪ/, make /ɪ/, straight /ɪ/, rain /ɪŋ/, change /ɪŋ/, explain /ɪŋ/, again /e/	78.9%
/aʊ/ → /ɑ/	Reduction of /aʊ/ to /ɑ/	down /ɑŋ/, found, /ɑŋ/, pronoun /ɑŋ/, countable /ɑŋ/	95.3%
The /ɜ/	Pronunciation of /ɜ/ in 'the'	the /ɜ/	99.2%

Apart from the above non-standard vowel features, it is also evident in the data that individual teachers displayed some degree of systemicity in a number of vowel productions, most of which accord with previous phonological studies of HKE. These features were relatively more vocabulary-specific and thus did not account for a great proportion of teachers' overall non-standard pronunciations. Some of these HKE vowel features in the data include mergers of /ɒ/ and /ɔ/ (e.g. 'hot', 'across', 'talk') and those of /u/ and /ʊ/ (e.g. 'food', 'route', 'good'), reduction of /ɔɪ/ to /ɒ/ (e.g.

‘point’, ‘powerpoint’) and substitution of /ʊ/ with /o/ (e.g. ‘cook’, notook, ‘look’).

The percentages of the aforementioned shared non-standard vowel features by the two teacher groups are plotted against each feature category in Figure 6.5. These percentages were obtained by dividing the number of a specific non-standard feature in the sample by the total number of tokens consisting of such a feature. The findings reveal that some regularly occurring non-standard features tended to be more consistent throughout the speeches of all teachers whereas some others appeared to be less stable and only occurred occasionally. On the one hand, over 70% of the tokens in the pronunciation of /æ/, /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ were produced by both subject and ELT teachers in a non-standard manner. On the other hand, their non-standard features in the cases of vowel reductions, /ɪ/ and /i/ mergers and the pronunciation of /ɜ/ in ‘the’ only accounted for less than 30% of the corresponding features. The proportion of non-standard pronunciation in /eɪ/ however varied between the two groups of teachers.

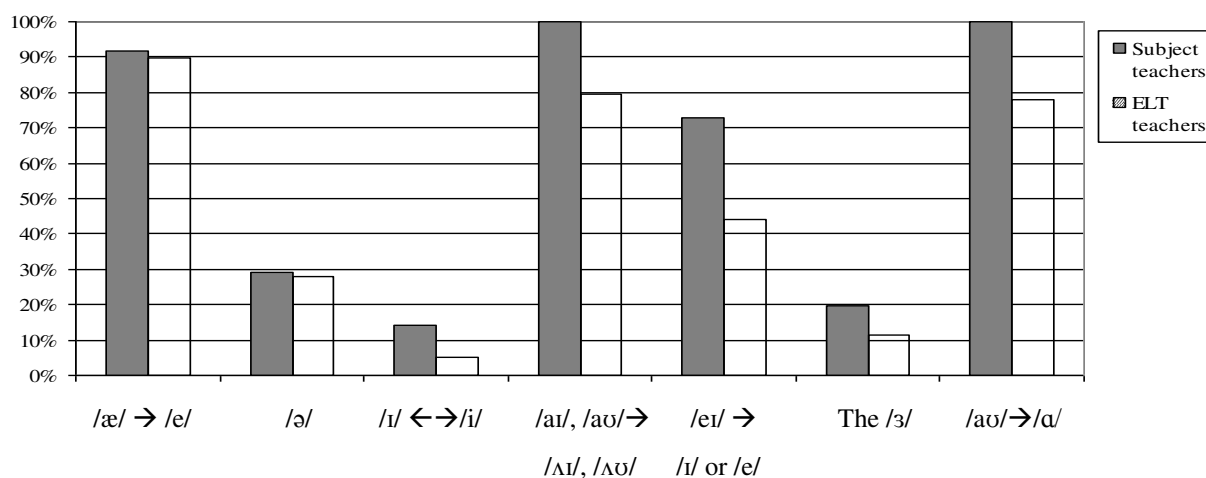


Figure 6.5 Percentages of non-standard vowel features in various categories in the pronunciation of subject and ELT teachers

In comparing the specific non-standard features between subject and ELT teachers, one intriguing finding is their lack of noticeable difference in the proportion of pronouncing /æ/ (ST: 91.9%; ET: 90.0%) and reduced vowels (ST: 29.0%; ET: 27.8%). As for other feature categories, subject teachers generally produced higher percentages of HKE features than ELT teachers. For instance, while all subject teachers consistently produced /Λɪ/, /Λʊ/ and /ɑ/ in substitution for /aɪ/, /aʊ/ and /aʊ/ respectively in the corresponding words in the data, ELT teachers sometimes pronounced their standard form in words such as ‘noun’ (ET1), ‘time’ (ET3), ‘down’ (ET2) and ‘like’ (ET2). The non-standard percentages of these two

categories for ELT teachers, i.e. replacement of /aɪ/, /aʊ/ by /ʌɪ/, /ʌʊ/ and that of /aʊ/ by /a/, are 79.5% and 77.8% respectively. Similarly, subject teachers also produced a greater proportion of non-standard features in other HKE vowel categories, namely mergers of /ɪ/ and /i/ (ST: 14.3%; ET: 5.1%), reduction of /eɪ/ to /ɪ/ or /e/ (ST: 72.7%; ET: 44.2%) and the realisation of /ɜ/ in ‘the’ (ST: 19.6%; ET: 11.2%). Overall, the data suggest that ELT teachers might be more aware of the dictionary-recommended pronunciation, which however resulted in greater instability in their vowel production. In reality, this instability might lead to speakers’ switching between standard and HKE vowels not only in diverse word choices (e.g. ‘like’ /aɪ/ vs ‘light’ /ʌɪ/ in ET2) but also within the same word (e.g. ‘noun’ /aʊn/ vs ‘noun’ /aŋ/ in ET1).

6.5.3 Non-standard consonants

Consonants constitute the main source of non-standard features in the speech of all teachers, who also largely confirmed previous phonological studies of HKE speakers’ consonantal pattern (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Hung, 2000, 2009; Peng & Setter, 2000; Chan, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Setter, 2008; Wee, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010; Sewell & Chan, 2010). Again, in our data, a number of HKE consonantal features shared by the teachers contribute to the great majority of their non-standard

consonantal productions (ST: 85.3%; ET: 92.0%) (see Table 6.2). These features include:

- *TH*: The dictionary pronunciation of ‘th’ in spelling consists of dental fricatives /θ/ (as in ‘thing’) and /ð/ (as in ‘this’) depending on different words and positions of the consonant. Consistent with previous research on HKE, the teachers also had the tendency to substitute voiceless /θ/ and voiced /ð/ with voiceless /f/ (e.g. ‘thing’, ‘anything’) and voiced /d/ (e.g. ‘this’, ‘tother’) respectively.
- /v/: The devoicing of voiced consonants is also a typical feature of HKE. An interesting case in point is that of the phoneme /v/, which is hypothesised by Hung (2000) to be non-existent in HKE and is phonetically realised as /w/ at the onset of a stressed syllable, but as /f/ at the beginning of an unstressed syllable. His hypothesis is largely confirmed in our data in that /v/ in words such as ‘value’, and ‘view’ was pronounced by the teachers as /w/ whereas it was produced as /f/ in words such as ‘cver’ and ‘seven’. However, it is evident that /f/ also replaced /v/ in the coda of syllables such as ‘gve’ and ‘twelve’. An exceptional case which violates this hypothesis was also found in the word ‘very’ where /v/ at the initial position of the stressed syllable was substituted

with /f/ rather than /w/ (ET1). In addition, as Hung also noted, the pronunciation of /f/ could sometimes be shown up as a ‘devoiced’ [v̥], which was indeed the major source of disagreement between the two researchers.

- /z/: Another voiced consonant which is virtually non-existent in HKE in any position - initial, medial or final - is the voiced alveolar fricative /z/. Quite consistently, the realisation of /z/ as a voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ occurred in the overwhelming majority of words in the data (e.g. ‘zebra’, ‘reason’). However, there were also a few instances (7 out of 352 tokens of all /z/) where /z/ is produced by both the subject (e.g. ‘dissolve’ in ST3) and ELT teachers (‘is’ in ET2, ‘these’ in ET3).
- *Final /dʒ/*: The teachers also showed the devoicing of the voiced post-alveolar affricate /dʒ/ to the voiceless /tʃ/ in the final position of words such as ‘page’, and ‘damage’. However, this consonant /dʒ/ apparently did occur in the word initial (e.g. ‘just’, ‘gerund’) or medial (e.g. ‘energy’, ‘nitrogen’) position, though Hung (2000: 347) points out that, together with other voiced consonants (e.g. /b/, /d/, /g/) in HKE, it is not truly ‘voiced’ but is to some extent ‘unaspirated’. As the aspiration of these consonants in initial positions is a matter of degree in terms of voice onset time, Hung chooses to adopt the conventional labels of ‘voiced’ and ‘voiceless’, as does the present study. It is also because of

this less audible difference in the degree of aspiration that these consonants in onset positions were not regarded as non-standard in the analysis.

- *Dark /l/*: L-vocalisation has been reported as common in HKE in that the dark /l/ is often replaced by a vowel. This feature is evident in the overwhelming majority of words containing a dark /l/ in the data (e.g. ‘will’ /wiu/, ‘else’ /eus/). As Hung (2000) and Deterding, Wong and Kirkpatrick (2008) also note, the dark /l/ was deleted rather than replaced when positioned after a back vowel in words such as ‘whole’ /hou/ and ‘all’ /ɔɪ/.
- *Final plosives*: According to the literature, plosives in the word final position or final consonant clusters often differ from dictionary pronunciation in HKE phonology. In our data, the plosives /t/ and /d/ were frequently found to have been unreleased (e.g. ‘it̚’, ‘let̚’, ‘add̚’, ‘word̚’), deleted (e.g. ‘write̚’, ‘out̚’, ‘oxide̚’, ‘cloud̚’) or replaced by a glottal stop /ʔ/ (e.g. ‘not̚’, ‘put̚’, ‘good̚’, ‘could̚’) in the final position and they were also omitted in word-final consonant clusters (e.g. ‘pollutants’ /ns/, ‘just’ /s/, ‘mind’ /n/, ‘kinds’ /ns/). Our findings also reveal cases where the final /t/ and /d/ were interchangeable (mainly /t/ replacing /d/), particularly in the pronunciation of ELT teachers, probably because they realised the existence of a plosive in the final position but failed to pronounce it due to its absence in the Cantonese phonology. The plosive /k/

however tended to be replaced by a glottal stop both in word final positions (e.g. 'like', 'talk') and final consonant clusters (e.g. 'mistakes' /mɪstɪʔs/), except for the cases of 'ask' and 'think' where it was omitted.

- *Hidden /k/ in coda:* The hidden /k/ in the present study refers to a plosive /k/ sound which is not spelt as 'k' in a word in the coda position, and it was analysed separately from the final plosive /k/ in the present study. This feature is reflected in words with the spelling 'x' and 'c' and was consistently replaced by a glottal stop in all tokens in the data.
- *Initial consonant cluster:* Initial consonant clusters which involve /l/ and /r/ as the second sound were sometimes found to have been modified in the audio data of all teachers but seemingly lacked consistency. In some cases, they were deleted (e.g. 'chlorine' /kɔːrɪːn/ in ST3, 'problem' /pʁɒblɒm/ in ST2) whereas, in many cases, they were modified as a voiced tap (e.g. 'black' /breʔ/ in ET1) or pronounced incompletely (e.g. 'problem' /pʁɒblɒm/ in ET3). As in previous studies, /tr/ was sometimes pronounced as /tʃ/ in words such as 'try' and 'nitrogen'.

Table 6.2 A summary of the shared non-standard consonantal features among teachers

Features	Brief description	Examples from the data	Agreement rate
TH /θ/	Substitution of voiceless dental fricative /θ/ with /f/	<u>th</u> ing /f/, som <u>th</u> ing /f/, <u>th</u> ree /f/, with <u>th</u> /f/	88.2%
TH /ð/	Substitution of voiced dental fricative /ð/ with /d/	<u>th</u> is /d/, <u>th</u> at /d/, <u>oth</u> er /d/, together <u>th</u> /d/	97.5%
/v/	Substitution of voiced fricative /v/ with voiceless /f/ or /w/	<u>v</u> ery /f/, acti <u>v</u> ity /f/, li <u>v</u> e /f/, <u>co</u> ver /f/, <u>v</u> alue /w/, con <u>v</u> ert /w/, <u>v</u> ehicle /w/	90.0%
/z/	Substitution of voiced fricative /z/ with voiceless /s/	<u>ex</u> ample /ʔs/, <u>is</u> /s/, please /s/, Chinese /s/, dise <u>as</u> es /s/	99.1%
Final /dʒ/	Substitution of voiced affricate / dʒ / with voiceless / tʃ /	page /tʃ/, damage /tʃ/, large /tʃ/, change /tʃ/, leakage /tʃ/	100.0%
Dark /l/	Deletion of /l/ preceded by a vowel	whole /hoʊ/, will /wiu/, else /eus/, spelt /speu/, all /ɔɪ/	87.9%
Final /d/		sh <u>ou</u> ld, mi <u>nd</u> , a <u>nd</u> , effect <u>ed</u> , stand	94.6%
Final /k/	Omission or variation of final plosives or final consonant clusters	li <u>k</u> e, ta <u>k</u> , thi <u>nk</u> , coo <u>k</u> , a <u>sk</u>	95.9%
Final /t/		wha <u>t</u> , ju <u>st</u> , differe <u>nt</u> , i <u>t</u> , pollut <u>an</u> ts	94.7%
Hidden /k/	Variation of hidden /k/ in coda	Effect /ʔ/, <u>ex</u> ample/ʔs/, next/ʔs/, si <u>x</u> /ʔs/, scientific/ʔ/	100.0%
Initial consonant cluster	Modification of initial consonant clusters	<u>tr</u> y /tʃ/, <u>pl</u> ease /pʳ/, <u>bl</u> ack /br/, ni <u>tr</u> ogen /tʃ/, <u>chl</u> orine /k/	87.1%

Nonetheless, some consonantal features that were not shared by the six teachers comprise the addition of extra consonants (e.g. ‘can’ /kens/ in ST1), realisation of initial /r/ as /w/ (e.g. ‘release’ /wilis/ in ST1) and pronunciation of the word ‘you’ with a /tʃ/ onset (e.g. in ST2) (see Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010). These features appeared rather inconsistently across the speech of the six speakers and were thus not categorised and quantified for detailed analysis.

In Figure 6.6, the percentages of subject and ELT teachers’ shared non-standard consonants are plotted against the corresponding features. The findings suggest that both groups of teachers generally pronounced some consonantal features (over 85%) in a non-standard way, probably confirming their non-existence in HKE phonology regardless of their English proficiency level. These features comprised TH /ð/ (ST: 96.1%; ET: 87.6%), /z/ (ST: 98.4%; ET: 97.6%), final /dʒ/ (ST: 100; ET: 100%), dark /l/ (ST: 99.4%; ET: 97.2%), final /d/ (ST: 92.9%; ET: 89.1%) and hidden /k/ (ST: 100; ET: 100%), though in most cases ELT teachers produced fewer non-standard instances. Although it also seems that the standard final voiced plosive /d/ rarely occurred in all teachers’ pronunciation, it is uncertain if this was due to its relatively less audible nature or a true lack of production by the speakers in comparison to other final plosives, e.g. final /k/ and /t/.

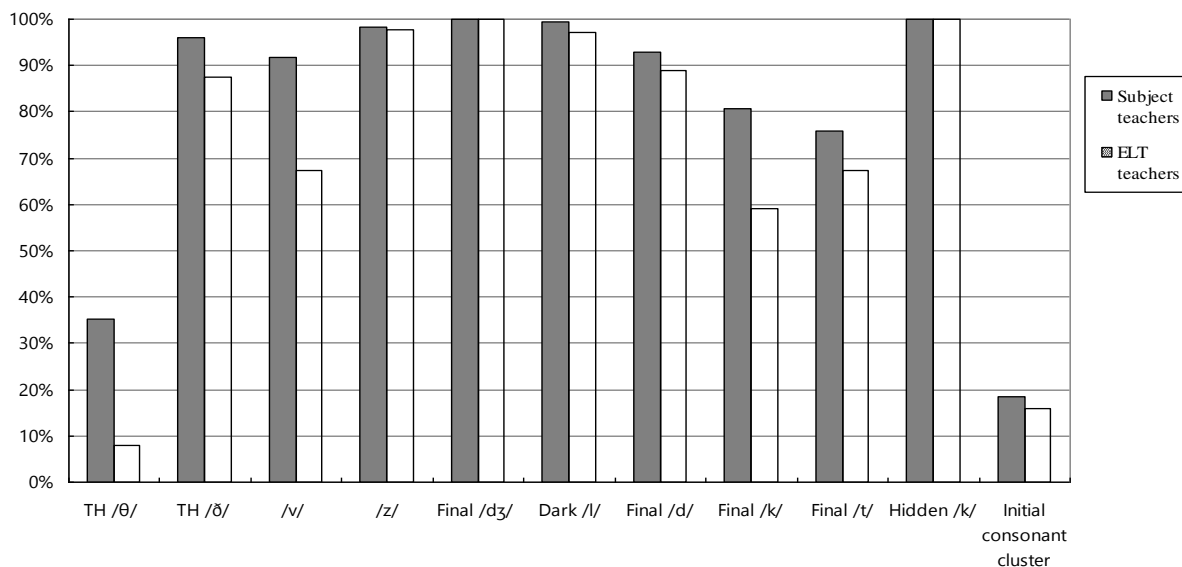


Figure 6.6 Percentages of non-standard consonantal features in various categories in the pronunciation of subject and ELT teachers

Contrary to this consistency in a number of HKE consonantal features among teachers were their relatively low percentages of non-standard production (less than 40%) with respect to two consonant categories, i.e. TH /θ/ (ST: 35.3%; ET: 7.7%) and initial consonant clusters (ST: 18.4%; ET: 16.0%), which perhaps signal that these features might be less typical HKE features. Nevertheless, the non-standard percentages of some other features such as /v/ (ST: 91.8%; ET: 67.2%), final /k/ (ST: 80.6%; ET: 59.1%) and final /t/ (ST: 76.0%; ET: 67.2%) ranged from 59.1% to 91.8% and diverged between the two teacher groups.

In this respect, a further differentiation between subject and ELT teachers' pronunciation could perhaps be determined by a closer evaluation of their percentages of non-standard features. As revealed in the data, while ELT teachers tended to possess a lower (or at most equal) non-standard rate across all the above consonantal features, there seems to be a divergence between the two groups with regard to particular features (see Figure 6.7). Notably a greater difference in percentage was found in three categories, namely TH /θ/ (difference in percentage 27.5%), /v/ (24.5%) and final /k/ (21.6%) followed by final /t/ (8.7%) and TH /ð/ (8.6%). There was little or no difference in other features including final /d/ (3.8%), initial consonant cluster (2.4%), dark /l/ (2.3%), /z/ (0.8%), final /dʒ/ (0.0%) and hidden /k/ (0.0%). Though standard pronunciations of final plosives /k/, /d/ and /t/ were found to be 'problematic' in typical HKE speakers, the findings display considerable differences in the actual production between the two groups: final /k/ > final /t/ > final /d/.

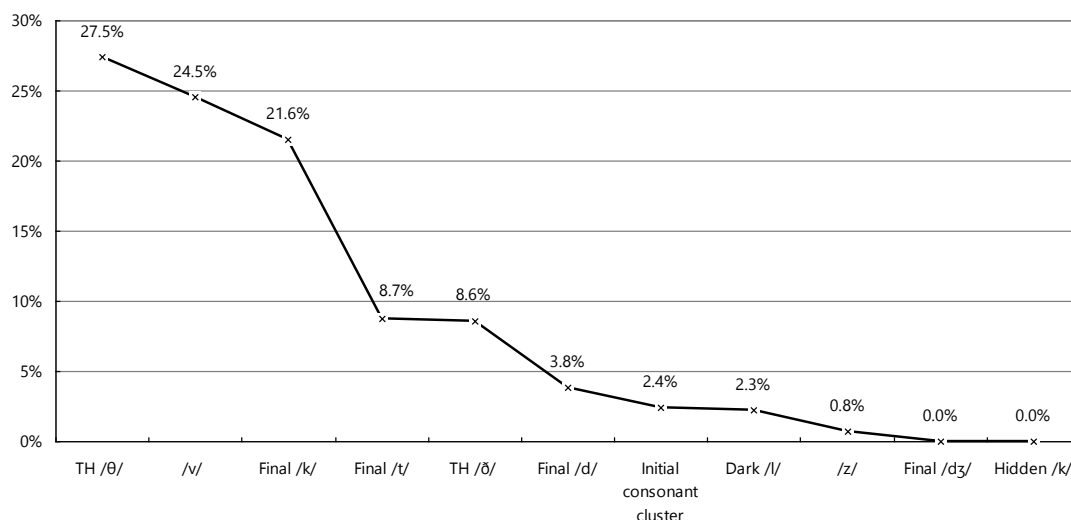


Figure 6.7 Differences in non-standard consonant percentages between the pronunciation of subject and ELT teachers

6.6 Summary and implications

The findings reported in the present case study indicate that the major source of English exposure in the classroom is local teachers' English pronunciation rather than the generally perceived NS models. Though RP is generally regarded as the model of teaching, it was basically only adopted in the audio recordings in the commercial textbooks whereas the three NESTs at the school (who came from different NS countries) tended to speak a different accent. Owing to the significant proportion of EMI teaching adopted based on the newly implemented MOI policy in Hong Kong, the phonological production of subject teachers has become equally vital, being an alternative source of linguistic inputs alongside that of ELT teachers. When comparing the pronunciation features of these teacher groups, our data revealed

relatively high proportions of non-standard consonant and vowel features in the speech of subject teachers but, at the same time, it also revealed numerous non-standard features shared by all teachers, which confirm previous studies about HKE phonology. This has perhaps indicated that these already-existing forms of HKE are undeniably legitimate in the daily classroom situations and, presumably, they are also intelligible to students. Whether they are equally legitimate in high-stakes public examinations (or other high-stakes situations), however, highly depends on wider social acceptance, which according to Kirkpatrick (2007b) might shift gradually upon codification.

In proposing an endonormative model in the outer circle classroom, WE scholars have laid the foundation by suggesting the codification of the ‘acrolect’ (the educated form) of a nativised variety of English that is positioned on a linguistic continuum with the ‘basilect’ (the bazaar form) at the other end (e.g. Bamgbose, 1998). In the context of Hong Kong, notwithstanding groundbreaking research in describing typical features of HKE in phonology (e.g. Hung, 2000; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010), little has been done to identify such an ‘acrolect’ with respect to who speaks it as well as the specific features involved. In this regard, Sewell and Chan (2010) take an intermediate step to prioritise the prominence of certain HKE

consonantal features among participants in local television programmes (e.g. politicians, civil servants, NGO spokespeople, journalists) by constructing an implicational (or hierarchical) scale. The present study has advanced research in this area about (educated) speakers' phonological variations by evaluating the authentically, simultaneously produced HKE features by local teachers, who were evidently role models for students. However, what complicates the scenario, as illustrated in the present case, is students' high exposure to pronunciation modelled by subject teachers.

Although one might argue that non-language teachers possess lower English proficiency and lack ELT training, they are indeed authentic English users in lessons where English is the medium of communication. In addition, most qualified secondary school EMI subjects teachers in Hong Kong are university graduates and have attained certain language requirements (see Education Bureau, 2010), indicating that they have a relatively high education level. Based on the empirical findings, an overview of the classroom model could perhaps be illustrated in terms of the prominence of the shared HKE vowels (Figure 6.8) and consonants (Figure 6.9) in the teachers' speech productions. In other words, the more prominent HKE features might

refer to those which are more commonly produced by all teachers whereas consonants and vowels that only occur occasionally might be less common HKE features.

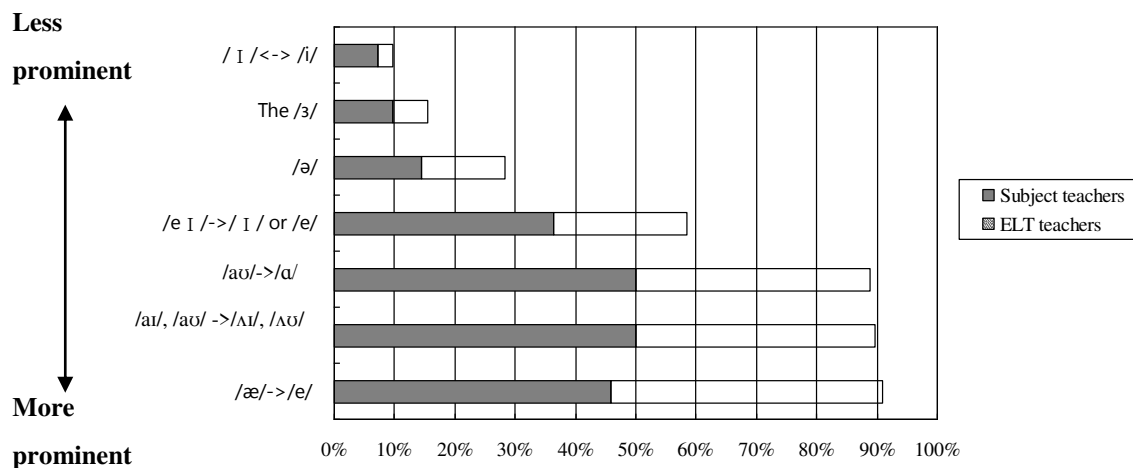


Figure 6.8 Prominence of HKE vowels in the pronunciation of teachers

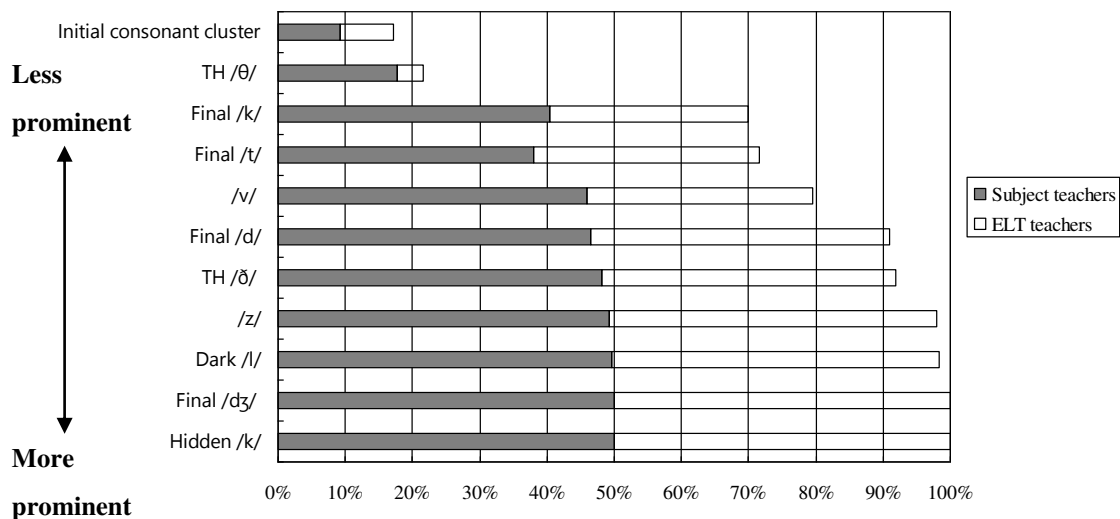


Figure 6.9 Prominence of HKE consonants in the pronunciation of teachers

After a more detailed exploration of phonological variations among (educated) HKE speakers with diverse backgrounds, the next important phase is perhaps to associate

these prioritised features with the local sociolinguistic situations and, furthermore, the relevant intelligibility findings for codification (e.g. Jenkins, 2000; Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Kirkpatrick, Deterding & Wong, 2008). For example, if it is assumed, and evidently proved, that the use of English in Hong Kong accords with those in international settings (i.e. mainly involving NNS-NNS interactions; see chapter 9 for a further discussion), one possibility is to highlight the prominent HKE phonological features that would interfere with international intelligibility and make them a pedagogical focus of the ELT curriculum (see Kirkpatrick, 2007b). Part of this work has been conducted by Sewell (2009) who passes features of HKE through what he calls an ‘intelligibility filter’ with reference to Jenkins’s (2000) LFC.

By applying the same ‘filter’ to our data to identify educated HKE segmental features which might impede international intelligibility, it could be found that a higher priority in pronunciation teaching might be only given to some local vowel and consonant productions such as vowel length contrast and initial consonant clusters. These features were not, however, particularly prominent in the speeches of both the subject and ELT teachers. In contrast, most of their other features, such as the (consistent) HKE vowel qualities, non-reduced vowels, (some) substitutions of the dental fricatives (i.e. /f/ for /θ/ and /d/ for /ð/), dark /l/ substitution and

simplification of final clusters, were indeed less likely to cause intelligibility problems in ELF communication (cf. Sewell, 2009).

Despite some controversies about the validity of the LFC and its applicability to all varieties of English (e.g. Deterding, 2010a), the above illustration suggests the possibility that some local phonological features can be permitted in the English speaking assessments, especially those serving as a benchmark for the English proficiency of ELT and/or content-area teachers (e.g. Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers in Hong Kong). By acknowledging the existence of a local (educated) HKE variety, this approach promotes the adoption of a legitimate endonormative model that is appropriate, attainable and in fact already being practised in the local classroom and, at the same time, caters for the learners' future needs of English in the globalised world.

PART II

Major stakeholders' attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning

The discussion in Part I has evaluated the educational reality of pronunciation teaching, learning and modelling from the perspectives of government policies, textbook designs and school/classroom practices, based on which a number of pedagogical recommendations have been proposed. These recommendations take reference of WE and ELF research, such as the inclusion of more NNS accents and semi-authentic ELF-using contexts in the teaching materials, setting a educated HKE target based on intelligibility results and improving teacher education. Nevertheless, whatever suggestions we propose, one critical factor that needs to be considered is the perceptions of the key stakeholders, who learn, teach and use English in their everyday lives. Part II of the findings and discussion therefore centres on the quantitative data, viz. the large-scale questionnaire surveys (N=1893) in chapter 7 and verbal-guise test (N=488) in chapter 8. By means of both direct and indirect methods, it aims to provide an overview of the stakeholders' English-using experience and their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A quantitative questionnaire survey on attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the attitudes of these stakeholders towards varieties of English accents and pronunciation learning based on data derived from a direct method, i.e. a large-scale questionnaire survey (N=1893) (see section 4.5). The participants involved in the survey included full-time university students (number=141), ELT and subject teachers (132), professionals of various disciplines (309) as well as secondary students of different academic levels (band 1 (B1): 447; band 2 (B2), 406; band 3 (B3): 458). To be specific, the questionnaire was designed to elicit information about the participants' personal information, awareness of English(es) around the world, exposure to pronunciation variations in their everyday life, attitudes towards the integrative vis-à-vis instrumental value of accents, perception of international intelligibility amongst NS and NNS accents and views on model of pronunciation in the classroom. The discussion of findings mainly consists of two main parts: the first centres on the overall results of all the participants (section 7.2); the second compares those among three groups of secondary students using statistical means due to their comparable sample size (section 7.3). Towards the end of this chapter, section 7.4

summarises the findings and points to the need to further discuss the participants' perceptions by combining results of the quantitative and qualitative data in other chapters as the latter reveal more detailed information about each group of the participants.

7.2 Overall survey results

As mentioned in the methodology chapter (section 4.5), the bilingual questionnaire comprised six main sections which elicited information about participants' (1) personal information, (2) awareness of English(es) around the world, (3) exposure to pronunciation variations in their everyday life, (4) attitudes towards the integrative and instrumental value of accents, (5) perception of international intelligibility amongst NS and NNS accents and (6) views on model of pronunciation in the classroom (see appendix 4.6). All these items required the participants to rate their degree of agreement based on a four-point Likert scale (i.e. 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree). In addition to some factual information about the participants (e.g. section 7.2.1 below), the discussion of the questionnaire items in each of these sections is based on the 10 factors derived from a factor analysis.

7.2.1 Perception of participants' own accent

One of the questions (Q6) in the section about the participants' personal information required them to choose or write down (beside the 'other' option) which English accent they think they spoke. Overall, most of them either thought that they spoke a HKE accent (54.0%) or were not sure about which accent they spoke (28.5%) (see Figure 7.1). Some other participants identified themselves as speaking with a British (9.4%) or American accent (6.2%), which, in the Hong Kong context, are often found in audio teaching materials probably due to the city's colonial history and the influence of popular culture (e.g. Hollywood movies, American TV programs) respectively (see chapter 5). It is possible that the participants regarded these two kinds of accents as their learning target, yet their responses might depend on their preference or previous learning experience.

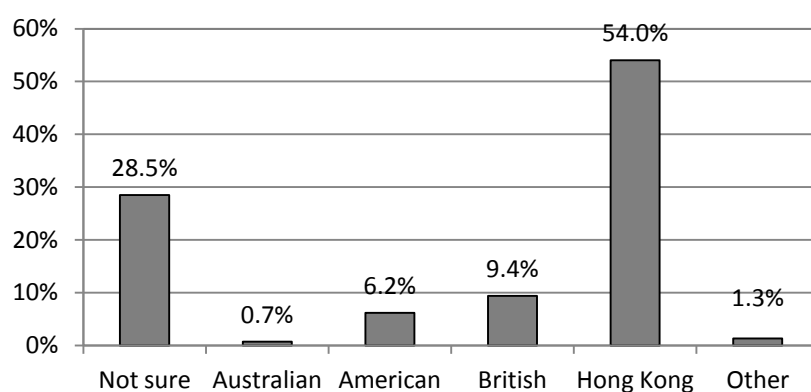


Figure 7.1 Perception of participants' own accent (Overall)

A further analysis of the results revealed differences among the six participating groups regarding the perception of their own accent (Figure 7.2). One particularly salient finding is that more full-time university students (than other groups) claimed they spoke with a UK (14.2%) or US (11.3%) accent but fewer of them thought they spoke the HKE one (38.3%). This is probably due to their current role as an English-majoring student who might have a greater desire to achieve the traditional goal of native-like proficiency (see chapter 8). Along with their years of studying in the English language, some of them might believe that their pronunciation is close to a native one or an uncertain one that is not HKE (not sure: 31.9%).

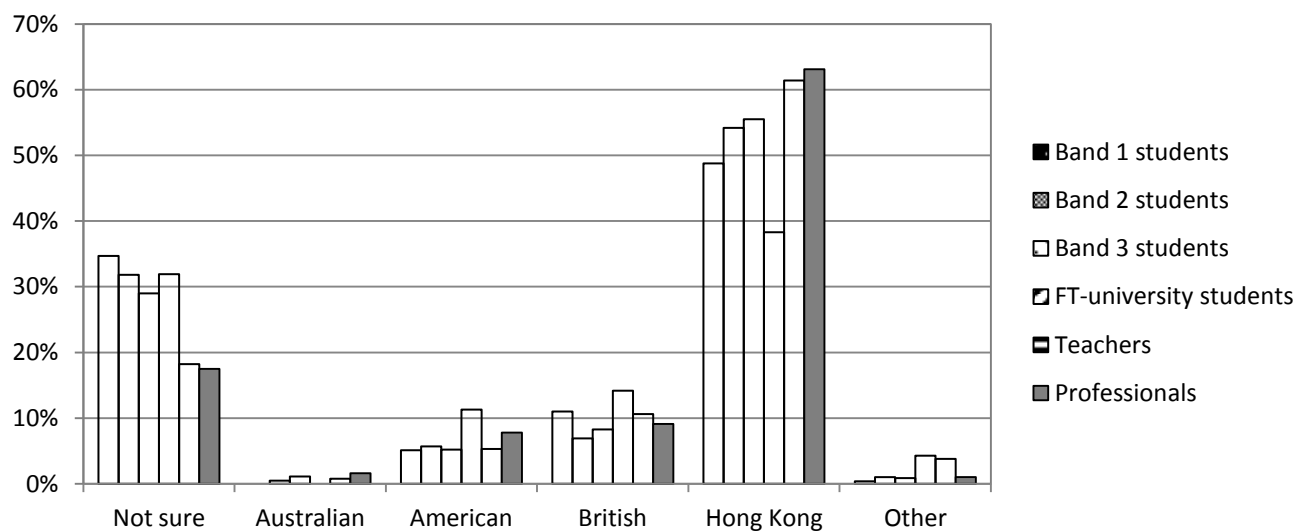


Figure 7.2 Perception of participants' own accent (sub-groups)

With the experience of using English at work, the professionals and teachers tend to feel more certain about their own accent (not sure - teachers: 18.2%; professionals: 17.5%) and a greater percentage of them claimed that they had a HKE accent

(teachers: 61.4%; professionals: 63.1%). As for the secondary students, though most of them also responded that they spoke with a HKE accent (B1: 48.8%; B2: 54.2%; B3: 55.5%) or were not sure about their accent (B1:34.7%; B2: 31.8%; B3: 29.0%), there seems to be a tendency that students with a higher academic ability were less prone to associate their accent with HKE. In particular, more band 1 students reported that they spoke a British accent, a model that is mainly adopted in commercial teaching materials in Hong Kong.

7.2.2 Factor analysis

Like earlier studies on language attitudes (Pierson, Fu & Lee, 1980; Pennington & Yue, 1994; Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto, 1995; Lai, 2005), Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was undertaken to determine the factors involved in the 39 items in the questionnaires, followed by Varimax rotation. This yielded the 10 factors below with (positive) loadings of above 0.45, each of which is discussed individually in the following sub-sections. While the discussion of the survey results mainly refers to the mean values, more detailed information is reported in Appendices 7.1-7.10 (for factors 1-10).

- Factor 1: Recognition of ‘non-standard’ English varieties
- Factor 2: The legitimacy of inner circle English varieties
- Factor 3: Exposure to NS accents in multi-media
- Factor 4: Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study

- Factor 5: Communicating with NSs/NNSs
- Factor 6: Preference for NS accents
- Factor 7: Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent
- Factor 8: Perception of learning English
- Factor 9: Speaking a local accent
- Factor 10: Hong Kong Identity

7.2.3 Factor 1: Recognition of 'non-standard' English varieties

The first factor derived from factor analysis of the 39 items in the questionnaire (factor loading > 0.45) corresponds to a group of statements that examine the participants' recognition of five 'non-standard' (here referring to non-dictionary) varieties of English (Table 7.2; Appendix 7.1). In general, the participants tended to agree that 'Australian English', which belongs to the inner circle, was a variety of English (Q10b, mean: 2.95) but their views seemed to be quite divided for 'Hong Kong English' (Q10c, 2.54) and 'Singapore English' (Q10e, 2.56). Nevertheless, 'Indian English' (Q10a, 2.28) and 'China English' (Q10f, 2.15) were less accepted by the participants as a variety of English. Despite a lack of information to account for their responses, there seems to be a stereotypical conceptualisation of these inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle English varieties at the back of their minds.

Table 7.1: Recognition of ‘non-standard’ English varieties (factor 1) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
The following is a variety of English:			
Q10a. Indian English	0.798	2.28	0.829
Q10b. Australian English	0.546	2.95	0.739
Q10c. Hong Kong English	0.713	2.54	0.797
Q10e. Singapore English	0.775	2.56	0.700
Q10f. China English	0.776	2.15	0.809

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.2.4 Factor 2: Legitimacy of NS varieties

In contrast to the participants’ views on non-standard varieties, the survey results for the following three statements in factor 2 seem to signal their perception that inner circle English varieties (e.g. British and American English) were legitimate in terms of being a ‘standard’ (Q9) and ‘a variety’ (Q10d) as well as the owner of English (Q8) (Table 7.3; Appendix 7.2). First, British English received a much higher mean score (3.46) for being ‘a variety of English’ than any other outer and expanding circle Englishes (see above). Though Australian English is conceptually also an inner circle variety, its questionnaire result (2.95) is not reported here due to its relatively lower factor loading of 0.367 (i.e. <0.45). Second, a relatively high mean value was also given to the argument that ‘English belongs to the UK/USA and other English-speaking countries’ (2.86) possibly owing to the perceived origin of the

English language by the participants (see also their interview result in chapters 9-12).

Third, they also tended to believe that ‘a Standard English pronunciation means the pronunciation of a native speaker of English’ (2.81), though there is a general scholarly consent that a standard is more a matter of grammar than pronunciation (e.g.

Widdowson 1994; McArthur 1998; Crowley 2003; Ferguson 2006).

Table 7.2: The legitimacy of NS varieties (factor 2) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
Q8. English belongs to the UK/USA and other English-speaking countries (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland).	0.734	2.86	0.823
Q9. A Standard English pronunciation means the pronunciation of a native speaker of English.	0.709	2.81	0.817
Q10d. British English (is a variety of English)	0.550	3.46	0.700

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.2.5 Factor 3: Exposure to NS accents in multi-media

The participants’ Anglophone-centric attitudes were perhaps developed by their previous experience of English use/learning, knowledge about English as well as prior exposure to English. In the questionnaire, they were asked to report on their exposure to either NSs or NNSs in a number of English-speaking contexts specifically in Hong Kong. The results of three of these contexts were strongly loaded on factor 3, reporting on their exposure to English in three media where people mainly listen to (rather than speak) English (see Table 7.4; Appendix 7.3). The finding shows that the

participants encountered NS more than NNS accents in all these situations such as ‘films’ (Q15c, 3.28), ‘TV programs’ (Q15a, 3.01) and ‘the Internet’ (Q15b, 2.78), especially for the former two. While the great exposure to NS accents in films is probably due to the dominant Hollywood film industry and great popularity of US (or UK) films including NSs in Hong Kong, NSs are also the overwhelming majority in Hong Kong’s TV channels. Alternatively, the relatively lower mean of their exposure to NSs in Q15b perhaps reflects a greater diversity in terms of the identity (and ethnicity) of speakers on the Internet (which is also more interactive in nature, e.g. social media) in the highly globalised world.

Table 7.3: Exposure to NS accents in multi-media (factor 3) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
I encounter native English accents more than non-native English accents in the following English-mediated situations:			
Q15a. TV programs	0.759	3.01	0.782
Q15b. The Internet	0.737	2.78	0.827
Q15c. Films	0.716	3.28	0.717

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.2.6 Factor 4: Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study

Another major English-using situation where people would speak or listen to English is in the workplace, university or school depending on their occupational status. As a result, the finding of the question statement about their exposure to English accents in

this aspect (as well as the previous ones) only portrays an overall picture of the participants' experience in the entire sample as their occupational statuses and roles varied largely (Table 7.5; Appendix 7.4). A more detailed investigation of their daily use of English is based on the interview data (i.e. chapters 9-12), which reveals a particular divergence among the professionals. Nevertheless, a lower mean (2.69) of this statement (Q15d) (than Q15a-c) suggests the participants' greater opportunities to encounter NNSs in their place of work or study. Quite surprisingly, however, it also indicates that they were more exposed to NS than NNS accents, which contrasts with the ELF situations where the majority of the interlocutors are NNSs. The mean value for this question resembles that of another context (i.e. in 'Q15e. On overseas trips'), where the participants reported they encountered a smaller proportion of NSs (than in the previous contexts in factor 3) in English communication (mean: 2.72). Q15e is not, however, reported in the table and appendix below, due to its relatively small loading of 0.391 (i.e. < 0.45) on factor 3.

Table 7.4 Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study (factor 4) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
Q15d. At work/school/university	0.749	2.69	0.812

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

An important note on this finding is that the survey results only indicate the participants' general perception about their daily exposure to English, which is different from more accurate results, derived from the data log sheets adopted in the previous section (see chapter 6 for the case of students). As can be seen in the interview data in chapters 9-12, some participants indeed had an initial perception of using English with NSs in their daily life but they altered their responses when they were asked more precisely about their concrete experience of using English. Particularly, many of the secondary students initially thought that they tended to speak English with NS teachers at school but they seemed to have forgotten the fact they often encountered English in their EMI lessons instructed by local ELT and content-area teachers (as reported in their data log sheets). Nonetheless, they did gradually discuss this aspect of exposure to English in the interviews (see chapter 11).

7.2.7 Factor 5: Communicating with NSs/NNSs

The following three statements (Q12-14) in factor 5 focus on the participants' actual experience of communicating with NSs vis-à-vis NNSs (Table 7.6; Appendix 7.5).

Q14 sought to determine the identity of interlocutors and whether they encounter NSs or NNS more often, when using English for communication. A mean score of 2.70 (just over 2.5) indicates that the participants tended to agree that they communicate more with NNSs than the NS counterparts. In addition, the survey results also display

their slight disagreement with the statements that ‘I find it difficult to understand the speech of native English speakers’ (Q12, 2.34) or ‘the speech of non-native English speakers’ (Q13, 2.37). Alternatively, there was also a mean of less than 2.5 for the statement ‘Q17. Foreigners will not understand me if I speak with a Hong Kong English accent’ (2.23), though it is not reported in Table 7.6 because of its relatively smaller loading on this factor (loading: 0.393). As these are merely their self-reported data in the survey, the interview data (as discussed in chapters 9-12) however revealed that a considerable number of participants admitted they had problems listening to an NNS accent but found no problems for foreign listeners to understand a HKE accent.

Table 7.5 Communicating with NSs/NNSs (factor 5) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
Q12. I find it difficult to understand the speech of native English speakers.	0.683	2.34	0.806
Q13. I find it difficult to understand the speech of non-native English speakers, except Hong Kong speakers.	0.608	2.37	0.778
Q14. Whenever I use English in communication, I usually communicate with other non-native speakers of English.	0.518	2.70	0.801

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.2.8 Factor 6: Preference for NS accents

Factor 6 entails the largest group of statements in the questionnaires, all of which point to the participants’ preference for an NS accent, but from various perspectives (Table 7.7; Appendix 7.6). For instance, Chan (2002) argues that superior status of

English in Hong Kong (individually and collectively) has resulted in both ‘cultural’ capital (i.e. various kinds of legitimate knowledge acquired mostly through education) and ‘symbolic’ capital (i.e. the more intangible aspects of prestige and honour) and, in turn, ‘economic’ capital (i.e. material wealth), which implies both personal pride and future success (see also Bourdieu, 1986). This argument could perhaps be extended to the perceived instrumental value of an NS pronunciation by the participants, which was revealed in their relatively high mean values in a number of statements, namely, ‘Q23. A native-like pronunciation of English is a mark of high English proficiency’ (2.89), ‘Q20. A Hong Kong person who has a native English accent is usually educated and well-off’ (2.88) and ‘Q19. Having a native-like English accent is advantageous for job hunting and career development’ (3.25). In other words, an NS accent was perhaps perceived to be a form of ‘cultural capital’ as it represented a high level of English proficiency. It was considered a ‘symbolic capital’ as it signals a sense of education and wealth and it was also an ‘economic’ capital as it apparently enabled career advancement.

Table 7.6 Preference for NS accents (factor 6) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
Q19. Having a native-like English accent is advantageous for job hunting and career development.	0.688	3.25	0.759
Q20. A Hong Kong person who has a native English accent is usually educated and well-off.	0.575	2.88	0.818
Q23. A native-like pronunciation of English is a mark of high English proficiency.	0.639	2.89	0.782
Q25. I want to sound like a native speaker when talking to a native speaker.	0.761	3.06	0.775
Q26. I envy those who sound like a native speaker of English.	0.741	2.96	0.867
Q28. We should adopt a native-speaker pronunciation model of English (e.g. British and American English) for teaching and learning.	0.698	3.12	0.760
Q29. I will try my best to get rid of a Hong Kong English accent.	0.647	2.86	0.801
Q31. Features of the Hong Kong English accent should be corrected because they are pronunciation errors.	0.458	2.79	0.775
Q35. It is ideal to have a native speaker teacher of English because his/her pronunciation is my learning target.	0.546	2.87	0.801

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

From an education viewpoint, the participants also tended to show agreement with the following statements: ‘Q28. We should adopt a native-speaker pronunciation model of English (e.g. British and American English) for teaching and learning’ (3.13); ‘Q31. Features of the Hong Kong English accent should be corrected because they are pronunciation errors’ (2.78); ‘Q35. It is ideal to have a native speaker teacher of English because his/her pronunciation is my learning target.’ (2.89). These findings

seem to signal their preference for a NS pronunciation model while regarding HKE pronunciation features as errors that should be corrected. Probably for these reasons, they also tended to prefer NS teachers, given their pronunciation as a learning target. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Q31 generated a relatively lower mean score among all the statements in factor 6. This could perhaps be accounted for by the interview results in that many participants regarded speaking an NS accent as a bonus rather than holding a strong view on HKE pronunciation features being errors (see chapters 9-12).

Moving to a personal perspective, the participants also tended to agree with these statements: ‘Q25. I want to sound like a native speaker when talking to a native speaker’ (3.07); ‘Q26. I envy those who sound like a native speaker of English’ (2.96); ‘Q29. I will try my best to get rid of a Hong Kong English accent’ (2.86), indicating their wish to speak an NS rather than an HKE accent. In fact, the result of Q25 was originally designed to be compared to that of Q18 (i.e. ‘I want to retain my local accent when speaking with non-native speakers’, mean: 2.19) so as to determine if the identity of interlocutors would have any influence on their choice of accent (see chapters 9-12; this is also discussed later). This assumption was derived from ELF research finding that ELF users would wish to retain their own cultural identity in the

international setting where most interlocutors are NNSs (e.g. Jenkins, 2007). The relatively low mean score (2.19; i.e. < 2.5) for the latter statement (i.e. Q18) implies that many of these Hong Kong participants did not want to retain their local accent, which generally accords with the qualitative data despite some variation among participants (see chapters 9-11). As Sung (2014a, 2014b, 2014c) suggests, Hong Kong people might have different degrees of affiliations with their local and global identities in ELF communication. However, some of the interviewees suggested that their choice of accent seemed to be less a case of identity construct than merely the ‘perceived pressure’ given from the NS interlocutors (see chapter 9). More specifically, some participants suggested that they would care less about linguistic correctness when talking to NNSs but would pay more attention to it with NSs.

7.2.9 Factor 7: Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent

While the above statements about the participants’ preference for an NS accent, the following three questionnaire statements in factor 7 perhaps reflect their thought, more specifically, about Hong Kong people speaking it. As illustrated in Table 7.8 (and Appendix 7.7), the participants seemed to have quite divided opinions on two statements, namely, ‘Q16. A Hong Kong person who speaks like a native speaker is a ‘show off’ (2.50) and ‘Q32. If we study English at a local school, we can never

acquire a native English accent' (2.47). Despite this, follow-up interviews discovered that many of the interviewees did not think that speaking with an NS accent indicated 'showing off', yet it was acknowledged to be difficult (or impossible) to attain if a person was only educated locally (see chapters 9-12). Their responses also revealed that their perceived attainability of an NS pronunciation depended on their own learning ability. Further, the survey results suggest a relatively low mean (2.21) for Q22: 'I feel uncomfortable when I hear a Hong Kong person who sounds like a native speaker'. This could be attributed to the increasing number of Hong Kong people, who have emigrated to or studied in inner circle countries (e.g. Australia, Canada, Britain, America) since the last decade and/or might have returned to Hong Kong. It is therefore possible that Hong Kong people have become more accustomed to encountering these NSs or bilinguals (in English and Chinese) in their social life, study, workplace or the media.

Table 7.7 Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent (factor 7) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
Q16. A Hong Kong person who speaks like a native speaker is a 'show off'.	0.627	2.50	0.854
Q22. I feel uncomfortable when I hear a Hong Kong person who sounds like a native speaker.	0.617	2.21	0.816
Q32. If we study English at a local school, we can never acquire a native English accent.	0.467	2.47	0.832

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.2.10 Factor 8: Perception of learning English

Q30 and Q33 were strongly loaded in factor 8, which represents the participants' perception of learning English in the Hong Kong context. In Table 7.9 (also see Appendix 7.8), both statements attain a mean score of lower than 2.5 (Q30: 2.25; Q33: 2.27) suggesting that not only did the participants tend to reject the adoption of a HKE pronunciation model, but that they also tended to disagree with the inclusion of features of varieties other than American and British English. In the interview data, some interviewees had pointed to the impracticality of learning 'all the English varieties' in their study (see chapter 9), despite their difficulties in understanding some NNS accents. It is also noted that although Q31 (i.e. 'Features of the Hong Kong English accent should be corrected because they are pronunciation errors') (mean: 2.78) also had a loading of 0.342 on this factor, it is discussed in factor 6 where it was more strongly loaded. As mentioned earlier, the participants, in line with the two statements in factor 8, tended to think that features of HKE accent are errors that should be corrected.

Table 7.8 Perception of learning English (factor 8) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
Q30. Hong Kong English pronunciation can replace the existing teaching model.	0.602	2.25	0.800
Q33. Apart from American and British English, secondary school students should learn features of other English varieties (e.g. Singapore English).	0.737	2.27	0.843

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.2.11 Factor 9: Speaking a local accent

As WE and ELF research has illustrated that NNSs might wish to express their local identity through the local form of English in the outer circle and international settings respectively (e.g. Kachru, 1986; Jenkins, 2007; see also Ferguson, 2009), factor 9 comprises questionnaire statements that reveal the participants' perception of speaking a local accent (Table 7.10; Appendix 7.9). Q18 attained a relatively low mean value (2.20), but those of the other two statements were above 2.5 (i.e. Q21: 2.99; Q34: 2.73). That is to say, on the one hand, the participants seemed not to want to retain their local accent when speaking with NNSs while, on the other hand, they seemed also not to mind if people could identify them as a Hongkonger from their accent. Furthermore, they also tended to agree with Q34, i.e. 'it is not necessary to imitate native English speakers' accent as long as our English is intelligible'. This accords with the interview responses by the participants (in chapters 9-12), who regarded speaking with an NS pronunciation as having an additional value but, at the same time, tended not to recognise the HKE accent as expressing their local cultural identity (see also the VGT results in chapter 8; also Lai, 2007).

Table 7.9 Speaking a local accent (factor 9) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loadings	Mean	SD
Q18. I want to retain my local accent when speaking with non-native speakers.	0.460	2.20	0.783
Q21. I don't mind if people can identify me as a Hongkonger from my accent.	0.763	2.99	0.734
Q34. It is not necessary to imitate native English speakers' accent as long as our English is intelligible.	0.664	2.73	0.776

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.2.12 Factor 10: Hong Kong Identity

The only statement in factor 10 sought to further explore Hong Kong people's local identity as compared to the mainland Chinese. The design of this question is inspired by the possible English-speaking situation in the international setting where both Hong Kong Chinese and mainland Chinese as well as other NSs/NNSs are present. In this respect, Table 7.10 (also Appendix 10) displays a relatively high mean (3.17) in Q24, which suggests that most of the participants identified themselves as a 'Hongkonger' rather than Chinese (see Brewer, 1999; Ladegaard, 2011 for the discussion of a Hong Kong identity). By comparing the result with Q18 (i.e. 'I want to retain my local accent when speaking with non-native speakers'), however, their recognition of a 'Hongkonger' identity may not imply that they wanted to retain their local accent. Some additional information was provided in the interview data in that the participants tended to only regard their mother tongue, i.e. Cantonese, as a marker

of their Hong Kong identity but not their accent (see chapters 9-12 for more examples). These participants further suggested that either other people could recognise their Hong Kong identity based on their appearance or they could introduce themselves as coming from Hong Kong at the first place. Overall, both the quantitative and qualitative results seem to contrast with the attitudes of English speakers in the outer circle (e.g. Singapore), where the local variety of English has constructed their sense of solidarity due to its extensive use in people’s social life (e.g. Cavallaro & Ng, 2009).

Table 10 Hong Kong Identity (factor 10) (factor loading > 0.45)

Statement	Loading	Mean	SD
Q24. I would identify myself as a ‘Hongkonger’ rather than Chinese.	0.527	3.17	0.838

(Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree)

7.3 Differences among secondary students

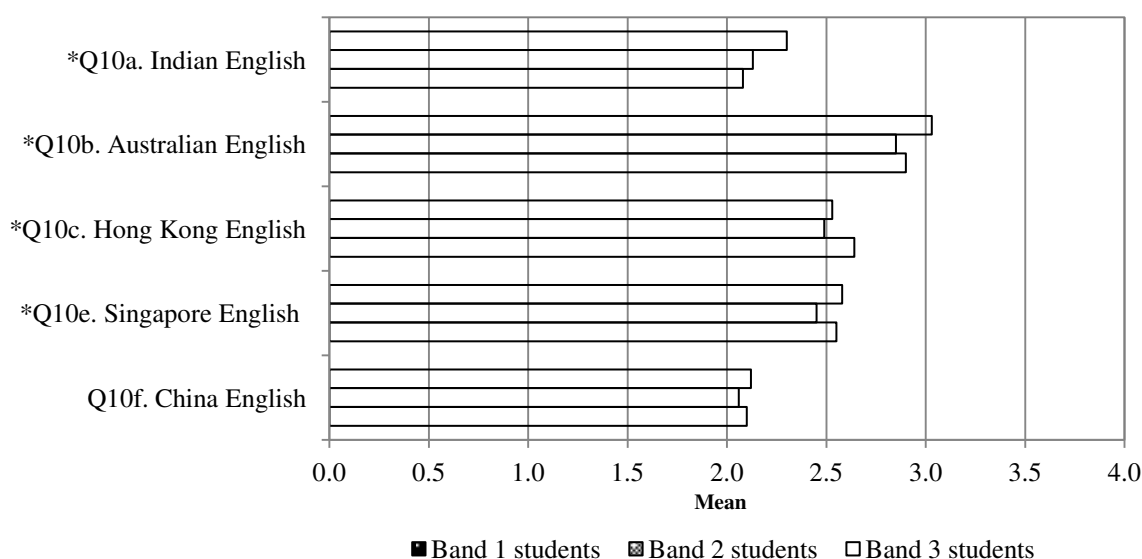
Given the comparable sample sizes among the three groups of secondary students (bands 1-3), this section centres on the differences in their responses in the aforementioned 10 factors from the questionnaire survey. As suggested in the method section (section 4.5), these students differ in their academic ability which is associated with numerous interrelated aspects such as their learning motivation, family background and life experience. Furthermore, they were also exposed to different degrees of English in their EMI content-area and ELT lessons (as well as other English-related measures) based on the corresponding autonomous school-based

policy. In general, there were more EMI subject lessons in schools where students had a higher banding. Based on the results of the one-way ANOVAs, the (*) in the figures indicate a statistical mean difference among these three groups of students for the corresponding statements. Follow-up Tukey's (or Games-Howell) post-hoc tests were used to further differentiate any differences among specific groups.

7.3.1 Recognition of 'non-standard' English varieties

Generally speaking, students' the recognition of the five 'non-standard' English varieties was in the descending order of 'Australian English' (inner circle variety), 'Hong Kong English'/'Singapore English' (outer circle variety), 'Indian English' (outer circle variety) and 'China English' (expanding circle variety). A more detailed comparison of their recognition of these English varieties among the three groups of students is illustrated in Figure 7.3, which suggests significant differences in the mean values among groups for Indian English (Q10a), Australian English (Q10b), Hong Kong English (Q10c) and Singapore English (Q10e). These students, however, seemed to show a lack of divergence in their mean scores for China English, which attained the lowest mean value among all these varieties. Further pair-wise post-hoc tests suggest that the mean values of band 1 students were statistically higher than those of the other two student groups for Indian and Australian English. The mean scores of band 2 and 3 students for all these three cases were found to be not

significantly different. Interestingly, there was a reverse result for the recognition of HKE in that band 3 students scored a significantly higher mean value than the band 1 and 2 counterparts. As for the case of Singapore English, the mean score of band 2 students was statistically lower than the other two groups whose mean values were not different significantly.



Factor 7.3: Recognition of ‘non-standard’ English varieties (secondary students) (factor 1)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

(*Q10a: F(2, 1276)=10.178, p<0.01; *Q10b: F(2, 1276)=6.679, p<0.01; *Q10c: F(2, 1276)=3.223, p<0.05; *Q10e: F(2, 1276)=3.262, p<0.05)

7.3.2 The legitimacy of NS varieties

The results of following three statements in factor 3 generally point to the students’ view on NS English being a legitimate variety, among which they particularly agreed that ‘British English is a variety of English’ (Q10d). Figure 7.4 shows the varying degrees of agreement among the bands 1-3 students with respect to the three

statements. The one-way ANOVA results suggest that there were statistical mean differences among group for Q9 and Q10d but not Q8, which reveals their similar views on the statements that ‘English belongs to the UK/USA and other English-speaking countries (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland)’. In contrast, while the mean value of Q10 of band 1 students was noticeably higher than those of the band 2 and 3 students (whose mean scores were not significantly different), these two groups of students rated Q9 statistically higher than the former one. That is to say, the band 1 students tended to agree more that ‘British English is a variety of English’ whereas the band 2 and 3 students tended to agree more that ‘a standard English pronunciation means the pronunciation of a native speaker of English’.

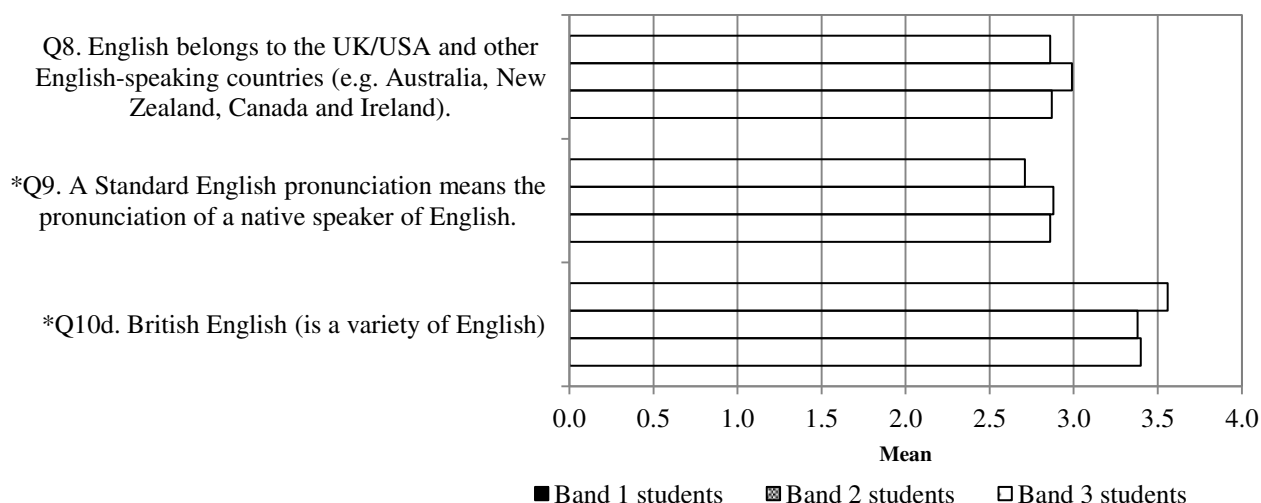


Figure 7.4 The legitimacy of NS varieties (secondary students) (factor 2)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

(*Q9: $F(2, 1289)=5.869, p<0.01$; *Q10d: $F(2, 1289)=8.625, p<0.01$)

7.3.3 Exposure to NS accents in multi-media

Figure 7.5 shows the students' exposure to English accents in multi-media, a higher mean value of which represents their (perceived) higher frequency of encountering NS accents in TV programs (Q15a), the Internet (Q15b) and films (Q15c) respectively. Overall, the students tended to be exposed more to NS accents than to the NNS ones for all these media, especially in films, probably due to the impact of the Hollywood film industry. Based on the one-way ANOVAs as well as further post-hoc tests, there were no statistical mean differences among all the student groups for Q15a and Q15b but for Q15c, the significantly higher mean values by the band 1 and 2 students perhaps signal their greater tendency to watch movies involving NSs than the band 3 students. There was, nevertheless, a lack of statistical mean difference between the band 1 and 2 students. Without further information, it could only be expected that these students' differing family backgrounds, socio-economic statuses and life styles might have some influence on their choice of films in their daily life, e.g. whether they are international or local ones.

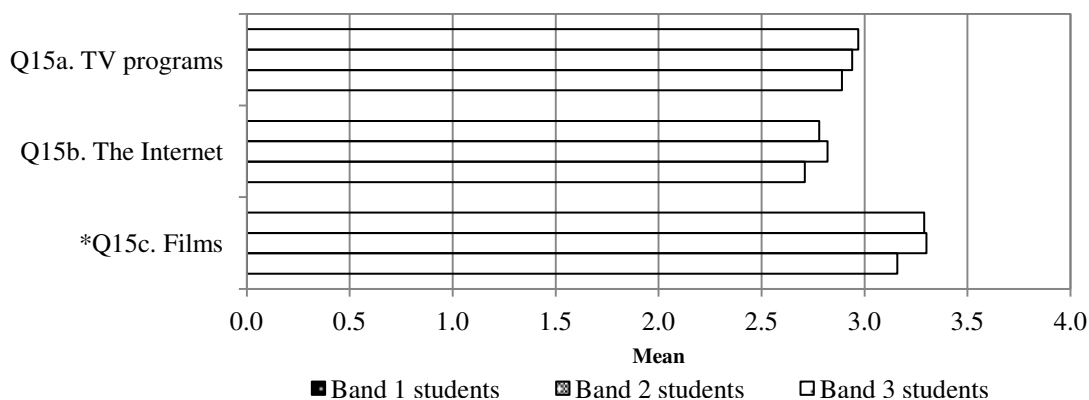


Figure 7.5 Exposure to NS accents in multi-media (secondary students) (factor 3)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

(*Q15c: $F(2, 1280)=4.798, p<0.01$)

7.3.4 Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study

In the school setting, while it could be assumed that students are to a greater extent exposed to their local teachers' accents, both in ELT or EMI content-area lessons (see chapter 6), the students' self-reported responses for Q15d quite surprisingly reveal mean values of slightly over 2.5, suggesting that they thought they tended to encounter NS accents more frequently. There was also a lack of significant difference in the mean scales among the three groups. This surprising finding can perhaps be explained by their responses in focus groups where, based on their impression of daily English use, they very often referred to talking with their NS English teachers whenever they thought they spoke English. It was only once they reflected more deeply that they realised that they were frequently exposed to local teachers' EMI

teaching (see chapter 11). This finding somehow reveals students' underlying (mis)conception that they speak English mainly when they encounter an NS.

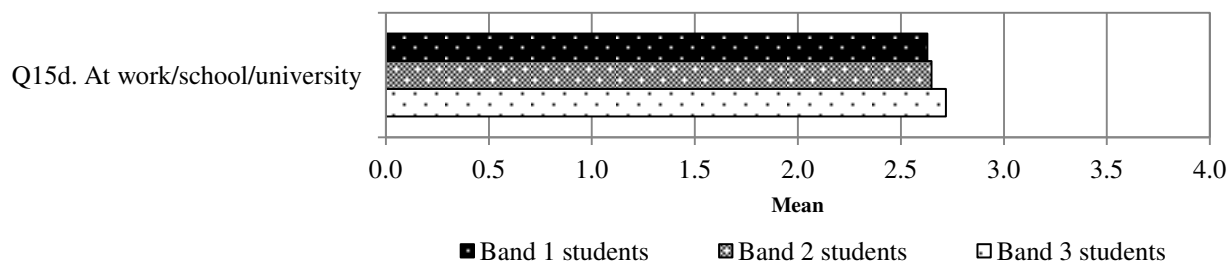


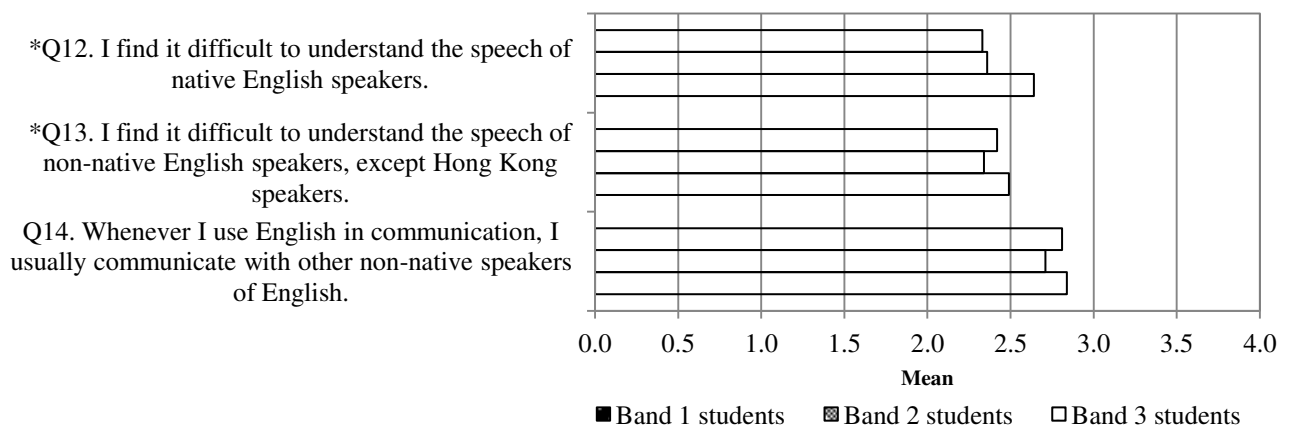
Figure 7.6 Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study (secondary students) (factor 4)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

7.3.5 Communicating with NSs/NNSs

In factor 5, the statements Q12-14 asked for the students' experience of communicating with NSs and NNSs in English (see Figure 7.7). Quite contrary to the above results (Q15a-d), the survey results show a mean value of over 2.5 for Q14: 'whenever I use English in communication, I usually communicate with other non-native speakers of English' and there was little difference in the mean values among groups. This contradictory result perhaps, again, reflects the students' unclear but rather intuitive thoughts about the role of interlocutors in their daily use of English. For this reason, the interview data in chapter 11 (as well as the data log sheets in chapter 6) would probably generate values by providing more in-depth information about their everyday language use. With respect to their difficulties in understanding the speech of NSs and NNSs, the band 3 students tended to give a significantly

higher mean value for the results of Q12 (than the band 1 and 2 students) and Q13 (than the band 2 students) but a lack of noticeable mean difference was found between the band 1 and 2 students). The band 3 students, who are presumably academically weaker, also tended to agree with the statement ‘I find it difficult to understand the speech of native English speakers’ (mean >2.5) but not particularly with the other statement: ‘I find it difficult to understand the speech of non-native English speakers, except Hong Kong speakers’ (mean about or slightly less than 2.5). The band 1 and 2 students, however, tended to slightly disagree with these two statements. Apparently, the band 3 students felt that it is more difficult to understand NS’s speech than that of their NNS counterparts.



Factor 7.7 Communicating with NSs/NNSs (secondary students) (factor 5)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

(*Q12: F(2, 1284)=21.617, p<0.01; *Q13: F(2, 1284)=3.842, p<0.05)

7.3.6 Preference for NS accent

Figure 7.8 shows the mean scores of the responses of the three student groups for the questionnaire statements in factor 6, four of which (i.e. Q25, Q26, Q28, Q29) have significant differences in their mean values among groups. As these statements were associated with their preference for the NS accent in various aspects, students' positive results for all of them indicate their Anglophone-centric attitudes towards an NS pronunciation from the education (e.g. Q20, Q23, Q31, Q35), occupational (e.g. Q19) and affective perspective (e.g. Q26, Q29). This is particularly true for the relatively high score of Q19 (> 3.0), where the students tend to believe that 'having a native-like English accent is advantageous for job hunting and career development'.

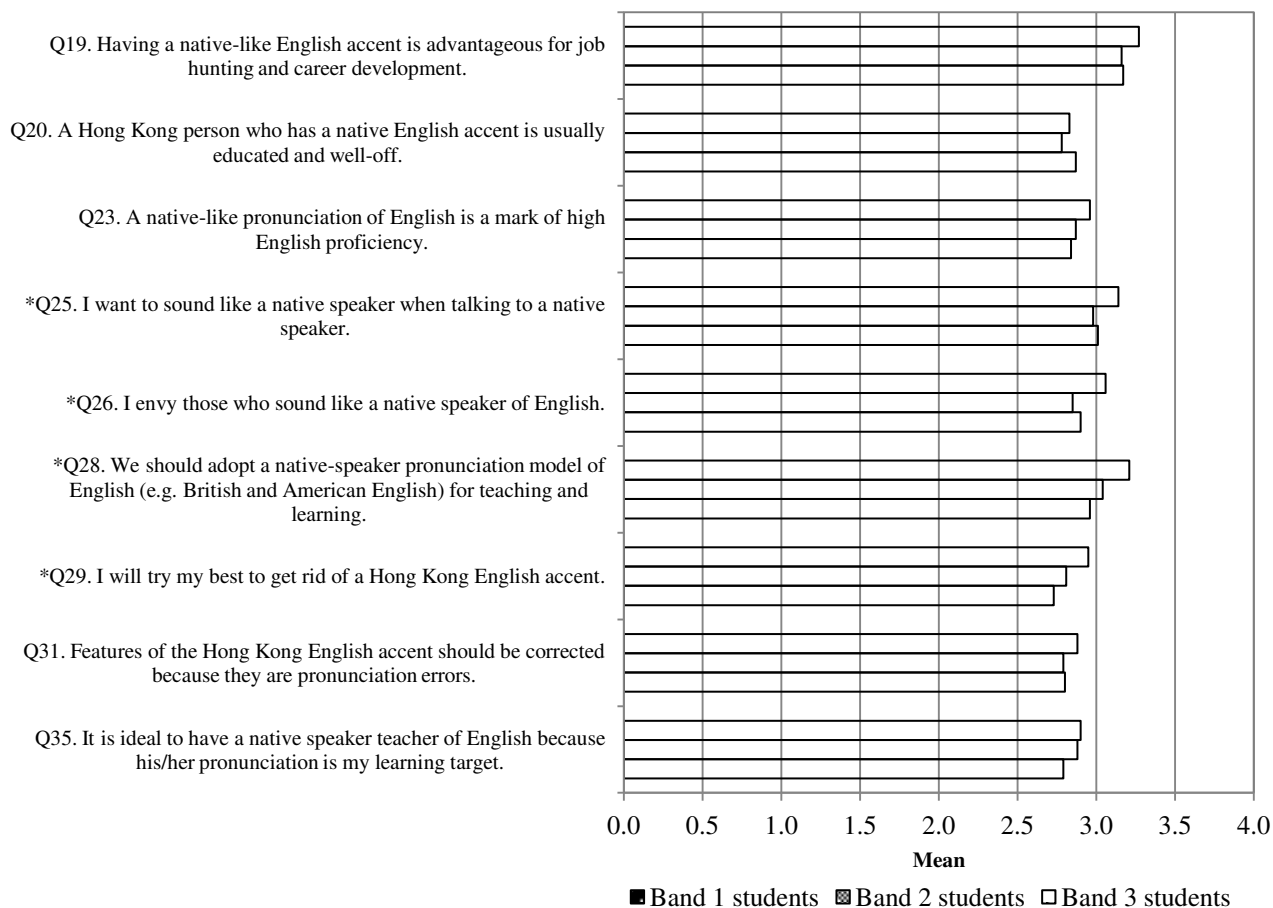


Figure 7.8 Preference for NS accent (secondary students) (factor 6)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

(*Q25: $F(2, 1256)=4.824, p<0.01$; *Q26: $F(2, 1256)=6.738, p<0.01$; *Q28: $F(2,1256)=12.632, p<0.01$;
*Q29: $F(2,1256)=7.705, p<0.01$)

In the four statements in which the three student groups rated differently, the band 1 students tended to display a particularly strong preference for an NS accent whereas there were no statistical differences in the mean values among the band 2 and 3 students. Three of these statements are explicitly associated with their personal choice of speaking, namely, ‘Q25. I want to sound like a native speaker when talking to a native speaker’, ‘Q26. I envy those who sound like a native speaker of English’ and

‘Q29. I will try my best to get rid of a Hong English accent’, and the remaining one refers to responses about their preference for an NS pronunciation model: ‘Q28 We should adopt a native-speaker pronunciation model of English (e.g. British and American English) for teaching and learning’. These findings somehow imply that an NS model is more desirable for students who are more academically capable, probably due to the NS standard being an implicit (or even explicit) learning target in school. As also revealed in the focus groups, students’ aspiration for an NS target was dependent upon their learning ability and, subsequently, their perceived attainability of such target (see chapter 11).

7.3.7 Hong Kong people speaking with an NS accent

Regarding the results for factor 7, which generally corresponds to students’ perception of Hong Kong people speaking with an NS accent, there was no marked difference among the band 1-3 students for all the three statements (Figure 7.9). The mean scores of two of these statements (Q16, Q32) were close to the mid value (2.5) and that of Q22 was smaller than 2.5. This perhaps reflects their rather divided opinion on whether ‘a Hong Kong person who speaks like a native speaker is a ‘show off’ as well as the attainability of a NS accent if they ‘study English at a local school’. Alternatively, most of them tended not to feel uncomfortable when they ‘hear a Hong Kong person who sounds like a native speaker’. One possible reason for this result is

the increasing number of NSs (or bilinguals) with an Asian appearance in Hong Kong as well as any other contexts owing to highly mobilised world in contemporary society.

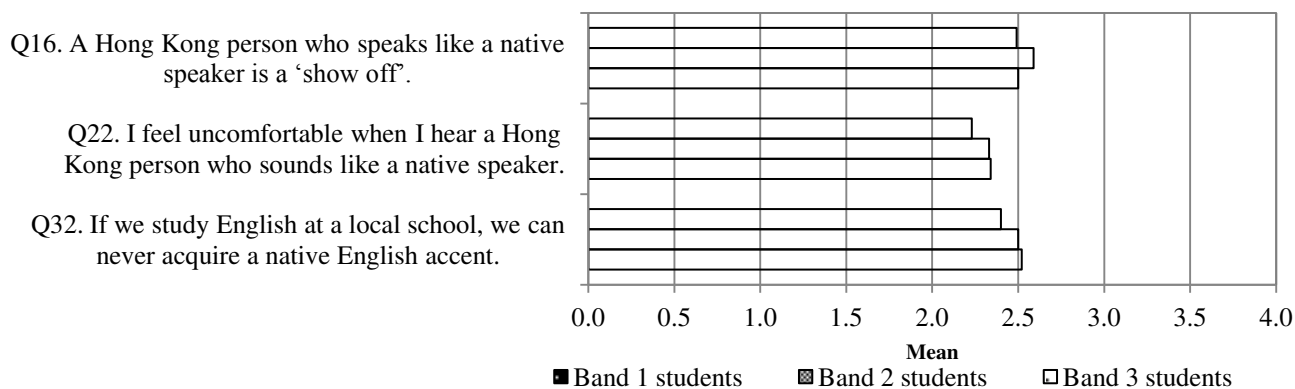


Figure 7.9 Hong Kong people speaking with an NS accent (secondary students) (factor 7)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

7.3.8 Perception of learning English

There were statistical mean differences among the three student groups for statements in factor 8, which includes two statements: ‘Q30. Hong Kong English pronunciation can replace the existing teaching model’ and ‘Q33. Apart from American and British English, secondary school students should learn features of other English varieties (e.g. Singapore English)’. Nevertheless, the overall negative results for the following two statements in Figure 7.10 suggest that the students tended to disagree with adopting the HKE pronunciation as the teaching model in addition to incorporating features of other English varieties in the secondary school. Given the salient differences in their mean scores, this disagreement was seemingly associated with

their academic level (i.e. banding of the students), where the higher the students' academic ability, the lower their acceptance of accents of the local or other NNS varieties. The results accord with the responses of both the academically 'brighter' and 'weaker' students in the focus groups: the 'weaker' students tended to be less concerned about their accent because they were paying attention on (and facing the challenges of) 'how to convey their meaning by making a (grammatically error-free) sentence' whereas the 'brighter' students considered an NS accent as a goal with a higher proficiency level (see chapter 11).

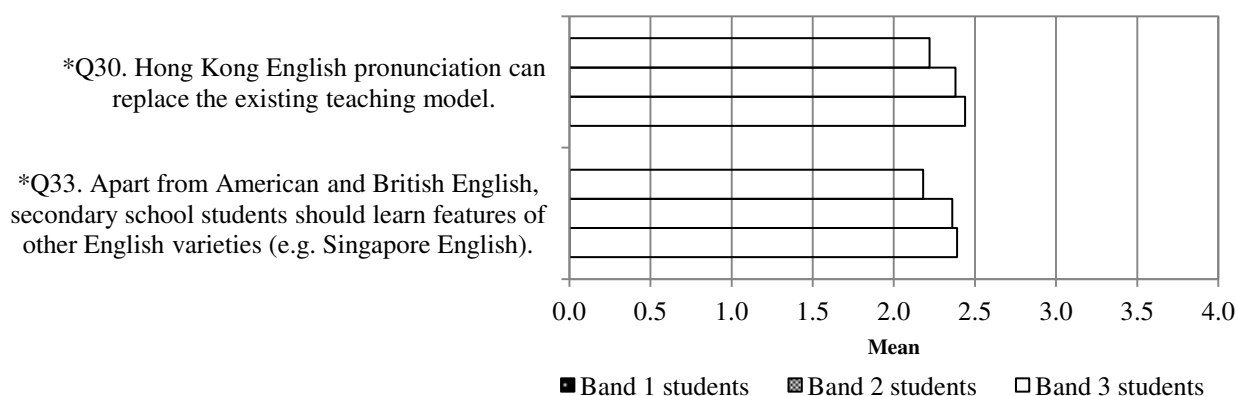


Figure 7.10 Perception of learning English (secondary students) (factor 8)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

(*Q30: $F(2, 1278)=9.790, p<0.01$; *Q33: $F(2, 1278)=7.882, p<0.01$)

7.3.9 Speaking with a local accent

As mentioned earlier, Q18 and Q25 ('I want to sound like a native speaker when talking to a native speaker') is a pair of statements that were designed to examine if the students want to alter their accent when facing the NS vis-à-vis NNS interlocutors

as it does have profound implications for the choice of accents in WE or ELF settings where the majority of the speakers are NNSs. However, the results (mean: Q18<2.5; Q25>2.5) appear to suggest that the students tended to be favourable towards speaking with an NS pronunciation in both situations. On the basis of the factor analysis, Q18, together with Q21 and Q34, have a strong loading on factor 9, which is mainly about students' views on speaking English with a local accent. As illustrated in Figure 7.11, the results were generally positive (2.5) for the statements, 'Q21. I don't mind if people can identify me as a Hongkonger from my accent' and 'Q34. It is not necessary to imitate native English speakers' accent as long as our English is intelligible', but the reverse was found for 'Q18. I want to retain my local accent when speaking with non-native speakers'. Similar to the results of statements in factor 8, all these statements were rated with a statistically mean difference among the three groups of students and an attitudinal pattern has apparently emerged along with their differing bandings. Specifically speaking, there seems to be a tendency that students with a lower academic capability (1) were less reluctant to retain their local accent when speaking with non-native speakers, (2) care less about being identified as a Hongkonger from their accent and (3) were less concerned about imitating native English speakers' accent as long as their English is intelligible.

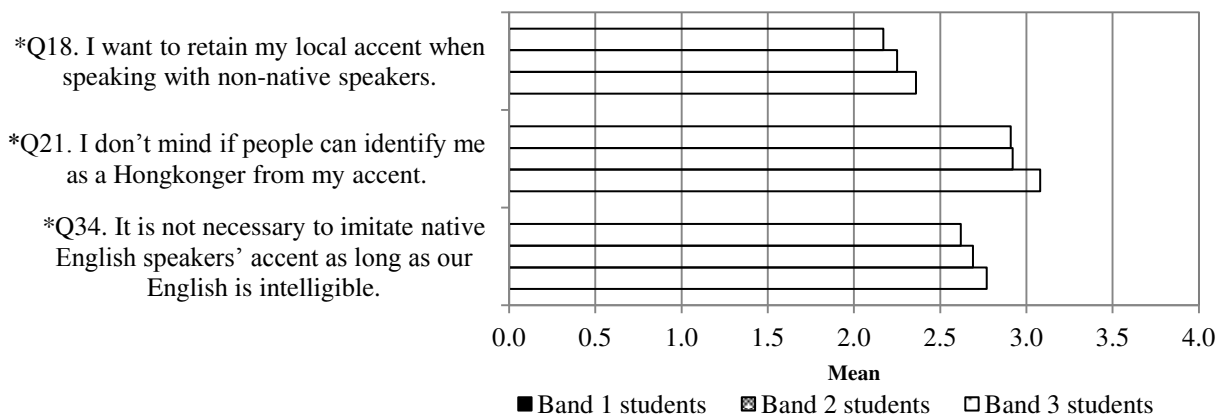


Figure 7.11 Speaking a local accent (secondary students) (factor 9)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

(*Q18: $F(2, 1275)=6.388, p<0.01$; Q21: $F(2, 1275)=6.756, p<0.01$; Q34: $F(2,1275)=4.321, p<0.05$)

7.3.10 Hong Kong identity

Q24, the only statement in this last factor, was designed to evaluate the students' sense of local identity in contrast to their Chinese identity. A high mean score for Q24 suggests that the students tended to agree with the statement, 'I would identify myself as a 'Hongkonger' rather than Chinese' and there is no significant mean difference among the students. As suggested earlier, the result of this statement can be used to compare to Q18, which indicated that the students tended not to retain their local accent when speaking with NNSs despite the recognition of their own Hong Kong identity. More information about this issue is discussed later with reference to the students' responses in the focus groups (see chapter 11).

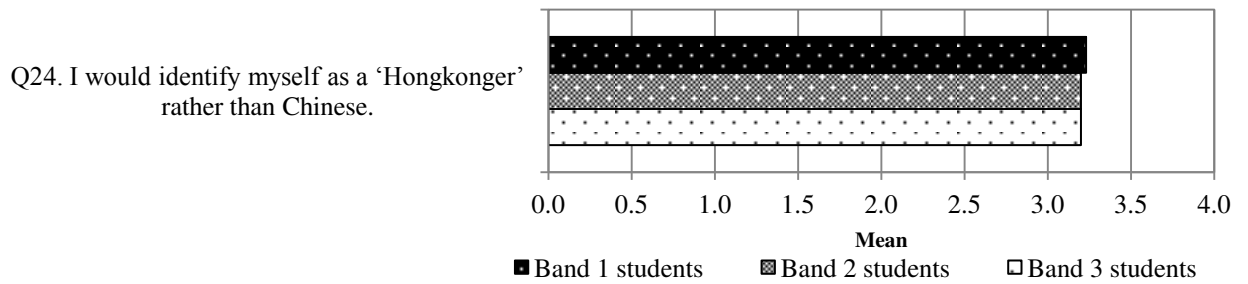


Figure 7.12 Hong Kong Identity (secondary students) (factor 10)

Scale: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-agree; 4-strongly agree

7.4 Summary and pedagogical recommendations

This chapter has reported on the quantitative survey data which directly elicited the participants' perceptions of their daily English use as well as attitudes towards accents and pronunciation teaching/learning. Given its large sample size and inclusion of the major key stakeholders of this issue in Hong Kong, the survey has arguably produced highly generalisable results corresponding to the various aspects of the questionnaire based on factor analysis. As the overall findings reveal, some aspects tended to be less controversial among the participants whereas rather diverging opinions were found to occur with other aspects. Quite clearly, most participants were exposed more to NS (than NNS) accents in media such as TV channels and films and there was a tendency that they rated NS English(es) (particularly the British English) rather positively as they were perceived to be a legitimate variety, the owners of the language and a standard. Subsequently, many participants associated NS accents with high education

and English proficiency, wealth and, particularly, better career, which made them the best pronunciation model for teaching and learning. In contrast, they tended to regard the HKE accent as errors that needed to be corrected and should not be adopted as a teaching model. Many of them also felt that students did not need to learn features of NNS varieties.

Apart from the high pragmatic value of NS English, however, some issues in the questionnaire apparently did not reach a consensus among the participants, e.g. whether HKE (or Singapore English) is a variety of English, whether they encountered more NSs or NNSs at work or study, whether an NS accent is attainable and whether sounding like an NS means that someone is a 'show off'. As a quantitative survey only gives a broad-brush picture of an issue, specific differences in their views among individuals and the corresponding reasons need to be further investigated by other indirect (e.g. VGT in chapter 8) and direct methods (interviews and focus groups in chapters 9-12). Nevertheless, the one-way ANOVA analyses of responses from the three groups of secondary students (i.e. bands 1-3) did discover one important parameter, namely their academic ability, that determined students' views on the questionnaire statements. Generally speaking, the more academically capable the students were, the higher their aspiration for an NS accent as well as NS

target was. Quite reasonably, the academically less able students felt that it was more difficult to understand the speech of both NSs and NNSs.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Exploring attitudes towards accents and their contextual variation using a verbal-guise test

8.1 Introduction

The present investigation of major stakeholders' attitudes has adopted a multiperspective approach, which triangulated the societal treatment approach (i.e. document analysis in chapter 5) as well as indirect and direct methods (i.e. structured questionnaire survey in chapter 7 and interviews in chapters 9-12). This chapter draws on data derived from an indirect verbal-guise test (VGT) that examined local Cantonese-speaking English learners'/users' (N=488) attitudes towards English accents from three interrelated perspectives: (1) their awareness of accents, (2) their perception of accents in relation to the dimensions of status and solidarity, and (3) their choice of accents in various local language-using contexts (see section 4.8, Appendice 4.9 & 4.10 for the procedure). These stakeholders included 164 junior secondary students, 89 senior secondary students (SS), 133 full-time university students (FTU) and 102 young professionals (P).

The overall findings of responses from all these participants are first discussed in section 8.2 with respect to the three perspectives, followed by a comparison among

the three groups of full-time English learners (section 8.3), who were English learners at differing stages of study and presumably had different perceptions of English based on their prior knowledge, learning experience and exposure to English. The data from the professional group were not included for the statistical comparison due to its complex composition involving participants from very different backgrounds disciplines, English learning experience and exposure to English. A more in-depth understanding of their views and use of English could therefore only be elicited via qualitative means (e.g. interviews) in which individual professionals could (see chapters 9-10) describe their own perceptions and English-using situations in greater detail. Based on the findings, section 8.5 discusses the potential for the design of language awareness tasks in ELT materials and assessments for secondary school as a crucial step to initiate attitudinal changes.

8.2 Overall findings of VGT

8.2.1 Awareness of accent variation

In the VGT, all the participants were asked to write specifically where they thought the speaker of the each audio sample came from (see section 4.8, Appendice 4.9 & 4.10 for details). The findings accord with previous studies that indicate Hong Kong people are most familiar with the local accent (Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Luk, 1998)

(Figure 8.1). The results also indicate that the HKE accent was the most likely to be recognised (56.6%), followed by the British (45.2%) and American (36.1%) accent. The Australian accent (10.7%) was least recognised by the participants, even when comparing to all the NNS accents. These results probably stem from the fact that the participants were more exposed to these two NS varieties, either in the audio-recordings of teaching materials at school or the mass media such as English TV programs and Hollywood movies. As Hong Kong was formerly governed by Britain, residents might also be more familiar with the British pronunciation due to the higher visibility of British people in colonial and post-colonial Hong Kong. Among the three foreign NNS accents (CHI: 15.4%; IND: 15.2%; PHI: 22.1%), the participants tended to be more familiar with the Philippine accent, presumably because the Filipinos (mostly domestic helpers) contribute to the second largest population in Hong Kong (Census & Statistics Department, 2011).

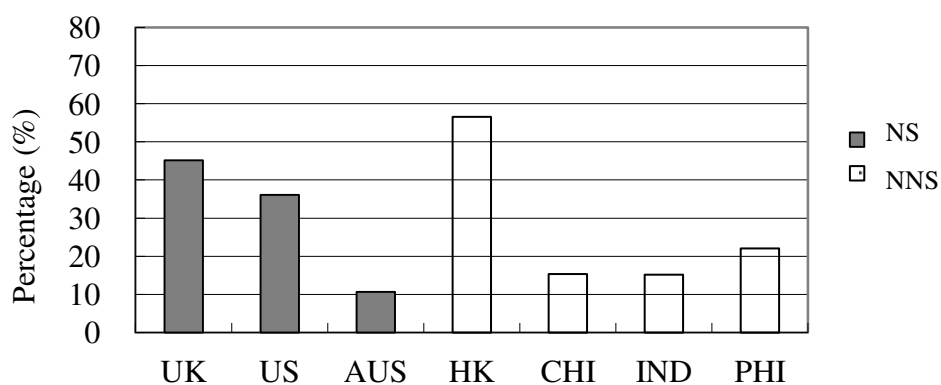


Figure 8.1 Recognition of accents (overall results)

What is particularly interesting is the participants' ability to distinguish between NS and NNS accents. As Figure 8.2 illustrates, despite their difficulty in identifying a specific accent which they were not familiar with (e.g. Australian accent and other NNS accents), most of them (over 60%) were able to identify whether the accents belong to the NS or NNS category, presumably based on their noticeably different linguistic features.

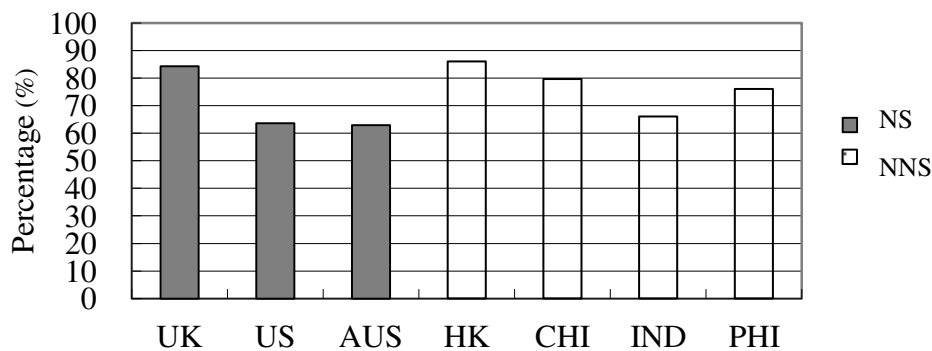


Figure 8. 2. Ability to distinguish between NS and NNS accents (overall results)

Another interesting finding is how the participants thought their own pronunciation was similar to that in the recordings, which, as depicted in Figure 8.3, was in the descending order of UK (mean=2.32), US (2.27), HK (2.11), AUS (2.04), PHI (1.87), IND (1.85) and CHI (1.79). That is to say, regardless of their real accents, the participants tended to believe that their accent was closer to the RP and GA than the HKE accent and other NNS and NS varieties. One possible reason for this perception that the former two varieties of accent was their learning target which they had been

approaching in their years of English learning while, at the same time, they might think that they no longer spoke (some) features of the typical HKE accent along with this learning process.

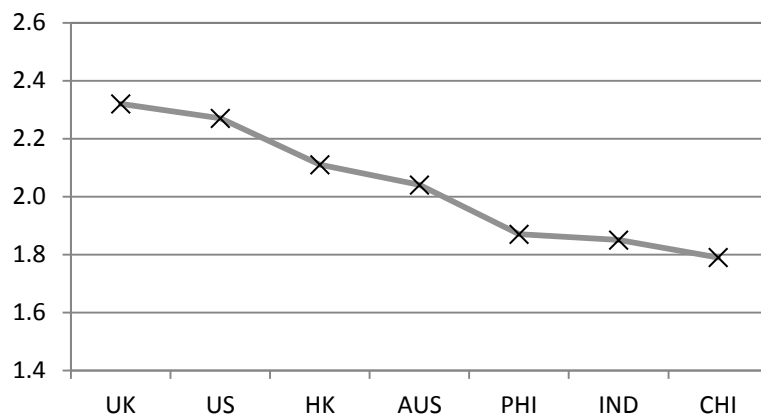


Figure 8.3 Similarity with participants' accent (overall results)

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

The VGT also examined the participants' assessment of the relative intelligibility of each accent (Figure 8.4). The results show that the participants found all the NS accents easier to understand than the NNS accents including the local HKE accent, which, according to the data (see Figure 8.1), they were more familiar with. Among the four NNS accents, the HKE accent was rated higher (mean 2.48) than the accents of Chinese (2.44) and Philippine (2.42) speakers but surprisingly lower than the Indian accent (2.63). While it is uncertain whether their ability to distinguish NS from NNS accents would affect their judgment, their relatively higher awareness of and exposure to NS than NNS pronunciations in their previous English learning

experience might be one possible explanation. Nevertheless, as local Chinese presumably have greater exposure to the HKE accent, the findings perhaps reveal a discrepancy between the nature of ‘perceived intelligibility’ and that of actual intelligibility. In this regard, the former might only refer to the participants’ ‘initial impression’ about the audio speech rather than their ability to recognise each word in the speech sample. In other words, the participants might have the conception that NS accents (as they were able to identify) were by nature more intelligible than NNS accents. Further investigations need to be conducted to determine which factors would affect listeners’ ‘impression’ when they first hear a speaker. Despite the lack of a clear explanation from the quantitative findings, we shall see in the later analysis that the scores of the Indian accent often lay between the NS and remaining NNS accents. This may indicate that the Indian-accented speech adopted in the VGT was perceived by the participants to have some similarities with the other NS speech samples.

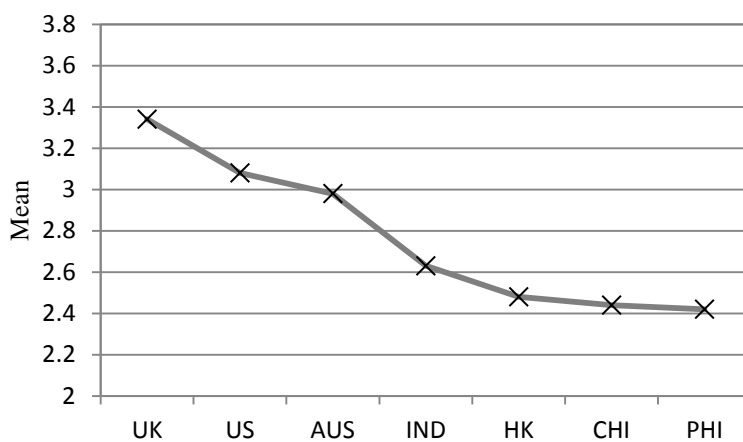


Figure 8.4 Perceived intelligibility of accents (overall results)

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

8.2.2 Attitude towards accents: Status and solidarity

8.2.2.1 Principal Component Analysis

The first section of the research instrument resembled a typical MGT/VGT in which the participants were asked to rate eight traits on a six-point semantic-differential scale for each of the seven speakers in the audio clips. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was undertaken to determine the factors involved in the mean evaluations of these traits for the speakers for each group of the participants. Although previous studies tend to suggest that PCA often yields two evaluative dimensions (which are often labelled status and solidarity) from the traits (e.g. McKenzie, 2008), the same result was only revealed in our data for the SS and FTU groups, but not the JS and P group. This has perhaps also led to a lack of two evaluative dimensions for the overall results. Using Varimax rotation, the analysis indicated the two components, with eigen values greater than one, which accounted for 73.5% and 80.9% of the total variance for the SS and FTU groups, respectively (cf. Cavallaro & Ng, 2009; Hiraga, 2005; McKenzie, 2008). The Bartlett test of Sphericity (JS, SS, FU, P: $P = 0.000$, i.e., < 0.05) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (JS: 0.919; SS: 0.873; FU: 0.899, P: 0.920, i.e., > 0.5) suggested that the explanatory factor analysis was within acceptable levels. As shown in Table 8.1, the eight traits were clearly divided into two factors for both the SS and FTU groups: 'intelligent', 'rich', 'educated' and

‘successful’ loaded strongly on one factor (i.e., component 1) whereas ‘considerate’, ‘kind’, ‘friendly’, ‘honest’ loaded strongly on another one (i.e., component 2). As in previous studies, these two components were labelled ‘status’ and ‘solidarity’ respectively.

Table 8.1 The rotated component Matrices for SS and FTU groups; loadings greater than .5 are in bold

	Senior secondary (SS) students		Full-time university (FTU) students	
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 1	Component 2
	Status	Solidarity	Status	Solidarity
Intelligent	.859	.276	.856	.206
Rich	.815	.311	.850	.236
Educated	.828	.356	.850	.317
Successful	.804	.284	.882	.370
Considerate	.384	.798	.380	.704
Kind	.202	.893	.258	.852
Friendly	.203	.889	.223	.870
Honest	.336	.686	.428	.702
% of variance explained	59.1	14.4	66.5	14.4

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.

The presence of only one component from the responses of the JS group (explaining 68.0% of the variance) might have signalled that they had not yet developed the senses of status and solidarity regarding accent variation. In addition, with respect to the relatively lower correspondence of the solidarity component to the total variance for the SS and FT groups, it is worth recalling findings in prior attitudinal studies about languages in Hong Kong, which have pointed to people’s perception that

Cantonese is the language of solidarity, as it is the dominant language in the local society (Lai, 2007, 2012). As for the Professional group, there was again a lack of information to account for their perceptions about the status vis-à-vis solidarity value of the accents. In any case, this issue is revisited and explored in greater detail in the interview data in chapters 9-12, which somehow suggest that Cantonese rather than the an accented English of a Hong Kong speaker marks their Hong Kong identity. Even in an English-speaking situation, some of them suggested that they could simply tell the interlocutors that they were from Hong Kong.

8.2.2.2 Overall perceptions of status and solidarity

An overall score for these two dimensions was obtained by summing up the corresponding means of traits for each participant, followed by the calculation of their mean scores for each variety of accents. Individual one-way ANOVAs were employed to determine whether there are significant differences among these mean scores, followed by pair-wise comparison analysis. In Table 8.2, the mean scores of each accent were prioritised for the dimensions of status and solidarity respectively. The positions where there are statistical differences ($p < 0.05$ or 0.01) between the ratings of accents are underlined. In terms of status, the results reveal a clear hierarchy in which all the NS accents (particularly RP and GA) were rated higher than the NNS

counterparts. Quite surprisingly, a similar ranking was also found for the dimension of solidarity, except for the finding that the Australian accent was rated highest. In both cases, however, the HKE accent was rated very low or the lowest. Given the results of the principal component analysis that these two dimensions of attitudes emerged from the data of SS and FTU students but not the overall data, the participants' attitudinal patterns are further discussed in section 8.3.2, when the comparison is made among three student groups.

Table 8.2 Rankings of accents for status and solidarity (overall results)

Status	Solidarity
F(6, 3312) = 217.06, p < 0.01	F(6, 3314) = 49.516, p < 0.01
UK	AUS
<u>US</u> (<0.01)	UK
<u>AUS</u> (<0.01)	<u>US</u> (<0.05)
<u>IND</u> (<0.01)	CHI
<u>CHI</u> (<0.01)	IND
HK	<u>PHI</u> (<0.01)
PHI	HK

8.2.3 Overall attitudinal pattern in contexts.

8.2.3.1 Differences in acceptability of varieties of English

In the second part of the VGT task, the participants' attitudes towards the seven accents were evaluated with respect to seven English-speaking situations in Hong Kong. These situations varied in degree of formality, patterns of interactions, and the role of interlocutors. The overall results of the participants' rating on a four-point scale are illustrated in Figure 8.5, where there were statistical mean differences (with

*) among the varieties in all contexts. A high mean value indicates a high degree of acceptance of the accent in the corresponding context and the vice versa.

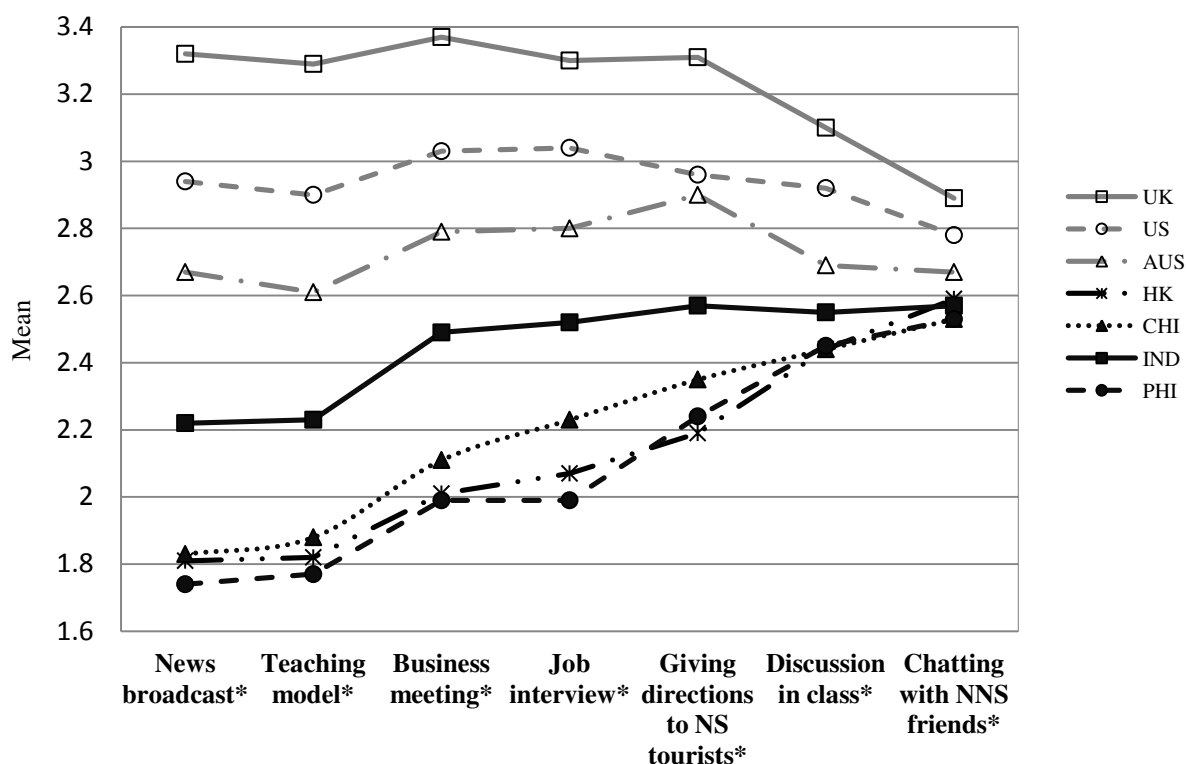


Figure 8.5 Contextual variation in accent acceptability among varieties (overall results)

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

(News broadcast*: $F(6, 3258) = 247.72, p < 0.01$; Teaching model*: $F(6, 3258) = 231.24, p < 0.01$;

Business meeting*: $F(6, 3258) = 202.91, p < 0.01$; Job interview*: $F(6, 3258) = 174.12, p < 0.01$;

Giving directions to NS tourists*: $F(6, 3258) = 122.96, p < 0.01$; Discussion in class*: $F(6, 3258) =$

46.06, $p < 0.01$; Chatting with NNS friends*: $F(6, 3258) = 13.69, p < 0.01$)

The mean values of all the responses to NS accents are generally higher than those of the NNS accents, which indicates a high preference for NS accents in all English-speaking contexts. While these findings seem to accord with the Anglophone-centric attitudes among NNSs noted in previous attitudinal studies (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu, 2006; Jenkins, 2007;

Rivers, 2011), there is in fact a degree of difference between the NS and NNS mean values among the various contexts. Interestingly, the participants were more tolerant of the NNS accents in more informal settings, particularly if the interlocutors are also NNSs. All the NNS pronunciations attain a mean value slightly above the average (2.5) for the situation 'chatting with NNS friends'. Conversely, the use of an NS pronunciation is less important to the participants in more casual contexts such as 'giving directions to NS tourists', 'discussion in class' and 'chatting with NNS friends'. Nevertheless, the one-way ANOVA results illustrate a significant difference in the mean values among groups of diverse accents in all English-speaking contexts.

Further Tukey's (and/or Games-Howell) post-hoc comparisons suggested that the participants' preference for RP was significantly higher than any of the other NS and NNS accents, except for 'chatting with NNS friends', in which their preference did not differ statistically from GA (see Appendix 4.11). Probably due to Hong Kong's colonial history, this preference might slightly vary from people's attitudes in countries such as Japan (e.g. Rivers, 2011) on which the US has exerted greater economic and cultural influences since the end of World War II. In this case, the American pronunciation might be more desirable as the pronunciation 'standard' among the general public. Nevertheless, given Hong Kong people's increasing

exposure to American English and culture in the media such as Hollywood movies and TV programs in recent years, it is hard to predict whether the US accent might become more popular in the future. In the findings, there were also noticeable mean differences between GA and the Australian accent for situations such as ‘news broadcast’, being a ‘teaching model’, ‘business meeting’, ‘job interview’ and ‘discussion in class’ (despite their similar patterns), possibly because Hong Kong people are more familiar with the American accent.

Furthermore, a more intriguing finding is the absence of mean differences in almost all the language-using contexts for the Chinese, HKE, and Philippine accents, the only exception of which lies in the use of Chinese and Philippine accents in ‘job interviews’. The Indian accent, for uncertain reasons, had a medium score lying between other NS and NNS varieties. Its mean values for four out of the seven English-speaking situations (viz. ‘job interview’, ‘giving directions to NS tourists’, ‘discussion in class’, ‘chatting with NNS friends’) were greater than 2.5 and that for ‘business meeting’ was also 2.49. A lack of clear distinction was found for the mean scores of ‘chatting with NNS friends’ among all the NNS and Australian accents. This converging pattern echoes results of previous attitudinal studies, as well as in the previous section, in that NS accents are closely associated with a high social status

(e.g. Lindemann, 2003; McKenzie, 2008). However, what has been less discussed in the literature is people's acceptance of NNS accents in English-speaking contexts in which the speakers might be less concerned about the issue of status. In addition, the smaller social distance between the speaker and the interlocutors (e.g. friends, classmates) in these contexts might also lead to a higher acceptance of the NNS accents (see Holmes, 2008).

8.2.3.2 Differences in acceptability of NNS and NS accents

Given that the NNS accents were generally rated lower than the NS ones for all the English-speaking contexts, the mean scores of the seven accents were averaged based on their corresponding NS and NNS categories for a further analysis (see Figure 8.6). This has yielded two clear attitudinal patterns: the first referred to the highly rated NS means that dropped slightly in less formal 'discussion in class' as well as casual 'chatting with NNS friends'; the second signalled an increasing acceptance of NNS accents by the participants in more interactive, informal settings. The participants' different degrees of acceptance of NS and NNS pronunciation is seemingly associated with the level of formality and the nature of interaction as well as the role of interlocutors in the specific English-speaking contexts. Although there seems to be no clear difference in the mean values of NS pronunciations in most of the contexts, the

results reveal that their desire for an NS pronunciation is weaker in two of the more casual situations where NNSs are involved (i.e. ‘discussion in class’ and ‘chatting with NNS friends’). As can be seen in Figure 8.6, the ratings for NNS pronunciation vary from context to context. The general trend is that the less formal and more interactive the situation, the less adverse the reaction towards the NNS pronunciation displayed by the participants. The results from one-way ANOVA nevertheless indicate a significant difference between the mean values of participants’ preference for NS and NNS accents in all designated contexts, despite the converging attitudinal pattern between the two groups.

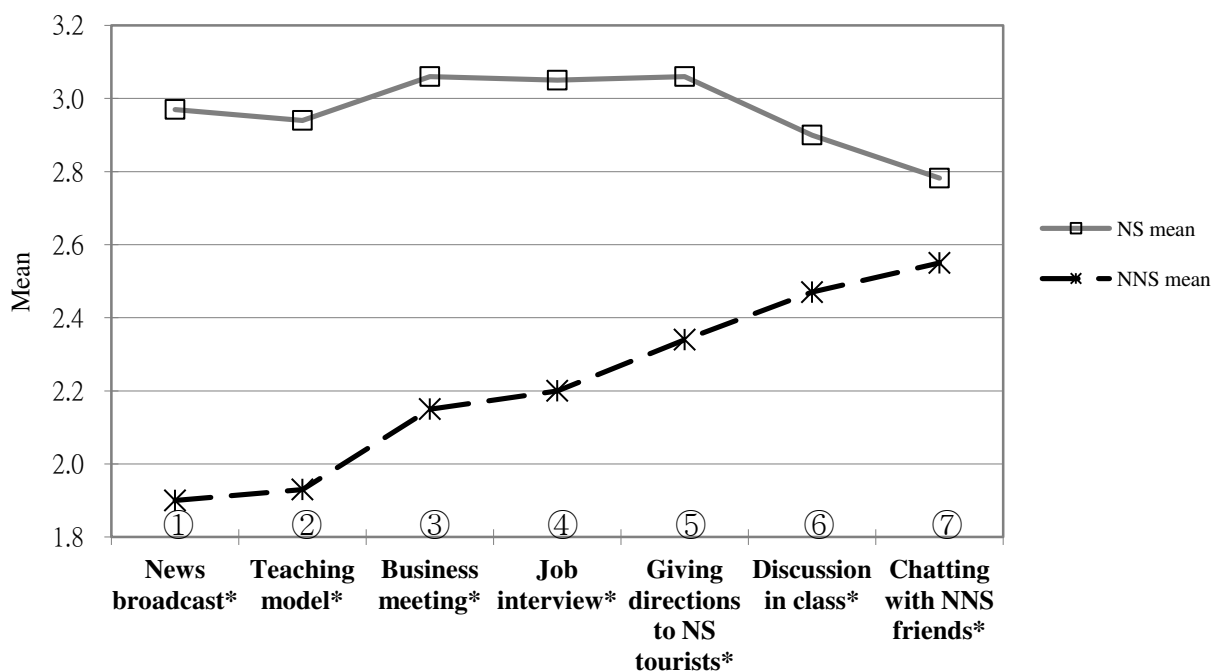


Figure 8.6 Contextual variation in accent acceptability between NS and NNS varieties (overall results)

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

(News broadcast*: $F(1, 3263) = 1.383E3, p < 0.01$; Teaching model*: $F(1, 3263) = 1.071E3, p < 0.01$;

Business meeting*: $F(1, 3263) = 932.08, p < 0.01$; Job interview*: $F(1, 3263) = 805.37, p < 0.01$;
Giving directions to NS tourists*: $F(1, 3263) = 598.37, p < 0.01$; Discussion in class*: $F(1, 3263) = 209.04, p < 0.01$;
Chatting with NNS friends*: $F(1, 3263) = 62.82, p < 0.01$)

The NS norm is the uncontroversial option for the teaching model (1), which signals adherence to a native-proficiency ideology. This NS-correctness attitude can in fact be explained by the qualitative findings (in chapters 9-12, also the survey results in chapter 7) in that many participants associate American or British English (but not Australian English) with the ‘original version’ of English, ‘Standard English’ and an ‘accurate accent’. A similar explanation might also apply to the case for news broadcasts (2) as a native ‘standard’ is generally regarded as a prerequisite in this official context (also see Bolton & Kwok, 1990). More importantly, the ‘spoken’ English presented by the news reporter is indeed scripted English, and in other words a written discourse, in which audience might have a higher expectation of the speaker’s English proficiency, i.e. the native ‘standard’. While the NS pronunciations are undoubtedly the preferred options for the above official and unidirectional English-speaking contexts, the participants’ reactions are slightly different for situations involving more interactive communication, namely (3) business meetings and (4) job interviews. Their slightly more positive responses to the NNS accents in these cases perhaps reflect participants’ recognition that intelligibility, rather than the choice of accents, is the key factor for negotiating meanings among interlocutors in

face-to-face communication contexts, where the use of language is more spontaneous and unpredictable.

One of the most interesting discoveries in the VGT is the participants' increasing acceptance of the NNS accents in more informal and interactive contexts, especially if the majority of the interlocutors are NNSs. A narrower difference (in mean values) has been found between the NS and NNS accents in terms of the three more causal English-speaking situations, i.e. 'giving directions to NS tourists' (5) (difference in mean value 0.72) > 'discussion in class' (6) (0.43) > 'chatting with NNS friends' (7) (0.23). These findings may also stem from the participants' consideration of the formality of particular contexts and the interlocutors involved. The explanation might be three-fold. First, in casual conversations with NNS friends, people might tend to focus on negotiating meaning rather than projecting the image of high English proficiency. As a result, NS accents might not be the only option whereas there is the possibility that local people might like to express their self-identity as described in the literature on WE (Kachru, 1986; Kachru & Nelson, 1996) and ELF (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2010). Second, it is also reasonable to expect that interactants in English-initiated class discussion in Hong Kong are mostly Hong Kong people and/or with small proportions of NNSs (e.g. the mainland Chinese and other Asian students)

or NSs particularly in post-secondary education. In these circumstances, the issue of intelligibility rather than the choice of pronunciation is likely to be the key concern in the discussion tasks. The possible difference between the use English in class discussion and casual conversation is the relatively higher formality in the former case.

Third, the major reason for the distinction between the context ‘giving directions to NS tourists’ and the former two contexts is perhaps less the degree of formality than the role of the interlocutors. As Ferguson (2009) points out, some ELF speakers might prefer to sound like an NS or NNS on different occasions. The present findings apparently support this assumption that the participants pay more attention to accuracy (in both pronunciation and grammar) when conversing with NSs than with NNSs but it is probably owing to the ‘perceived pressure’ from the NS interlocutors (as revealed in the interview data, see chapters 9-12) rather than the expression of ethnic identity as WE researchers often suggest. As evident in Rogerson-Revell (2008), NNSs tend to be inactive in business meetings in the presence of NSs despite their overall positive linguistic performance as well as appropriate use of interactive resources and strategies. A possible explanation is that NNSs feel disempowered in

English-mediated business contexts where NSs are perceived as being as an (unfair) advantage (see Rogerson-Revell, 2007; Evans, 2013a).

Although the evidence provided by the VGT might not immediately yield a systematic alignment between people's choice of pronunciation and the formality of the various contexts, their strong association seems to be undeniable. The result is significant as it not only suggests the desire for an NS pronunciation in formal contexts, but also the acceptance of an NNS accent (including the HKE accent) in less formal and more interactive English-speaking situations.

8.3 A comparison of findings among three student groups

We now turn our attention specifically to the findings of the three groups of students (i.e. junior secondary, senior secondary and full-time university students). As they were at differing stages of English study, a comparison of their findings provides valuable information about the association between peoples' education level (as well as their corresponding prior knowledge, learning experience and English exposure) and their attitudes towards accents. One-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether there were statistical differences in the mean values of the students' preferences among all varieties of English, NS and NNS accents, and the differing

participating groups. They were then subjected to follow-up Tukey's post hoc tests (or Games-Howell tests) to further determine any mean differences among groups (Rietveld & van Hout, 2005). The symbol (*) or (#) in the figures indicates cases where there were statistical mean differences among groups (see Appendix 4.11 for details). The discussion in the following sections only focuses on the difference in the attitudes among these groups of students (JS, SS, FTU).

8.3.1 Awareness of accents among students

The students' awareness of accents were elicited by the only open-ended question in the VGT, in which they were asked to write down which country they thought the speakers in the speech samples came from. As shown in Figure 8.7, the university students were apparently better at identifying most of the accents than their secondary counterparts, with the Philippine accent being an exceptional case. If people's exposure to accents aligns with their ability to recognise a variety of accent, the result can perhaps be explained by the fact that university students are more readily exposed to diverse accents in their life experience but, particularly in the Hong Kong context, some secondary students may have a Filipino domestic helper in their family, which in turn increases their opportunity to listen to the Philippine pronunciation (see Leung, 2012). This might also account for the secondary students' relatively limited ability to

recognise the Australian, Chinese and Indian accents to which they might have little or no exposure. In contrast, some university students in Hong Kong might no longer have a Filipino helper in their family (as many of them might have only been responsible for childcare) and have less exposure to the Filipino accent.

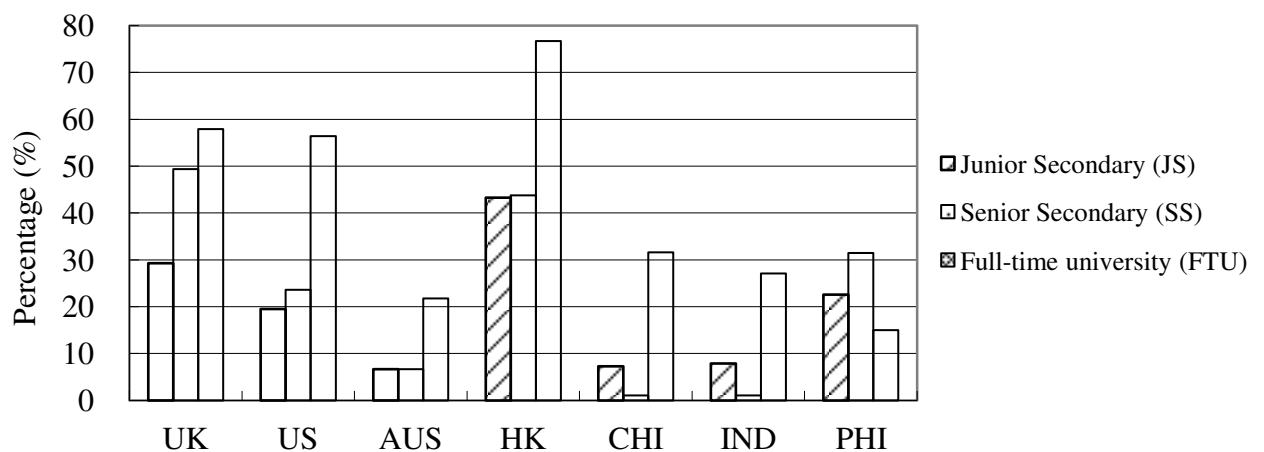


Figure 8.7 Recognition of accents (students)

As for the question about whether they thought their accent was similar to that in the recordings, the university and secondary students seem to have reacted differently with regard to NS and NNS accents. In Figure 8.8, the varieties with a (*) indicates that there was a statistical difference in the mean values among the three student groups, most of which (based on results from post hoc tests) were between the university and all the secondary students (i.e., US, AUS, CHI and HK). There was, however (for an unknown reason), a lack of statistical mean difference between the FTU and JS groups (but between FTU and SS) for the case of UK. The mean values

for all these cases were not significantly different between the junior and senior secondary students. Apparently, the full-time university students tended to believe that their own pronunciation is closer to NS varieties than the secondary students but the reverse was found to be for the cases of China and especially the HKE accent, in which there was the greatest difference between the FTU and the two secondary groups (JS and SS).

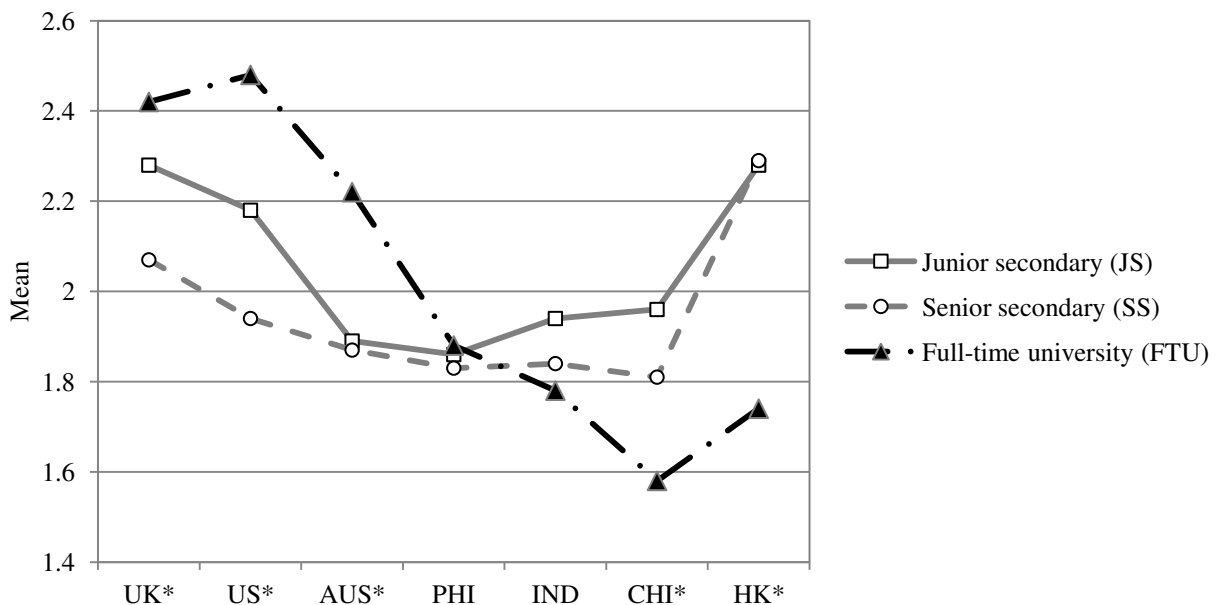


Figure 8.8 Similarity with students' accent

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

*Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups

Four possible reasons might account for the above results. First, secondary students might recognise that they also speak some kind of HKE, though they might also be aware that they are learning an NS accent as exemplified in the teaching materials. Second, as the university students were majoring in English and thus would be

expected to possess a high level of English proficiency, they might want to avoid or have successfully eliminated some of the typical HKE pronunciation features heard in the local speech sample. Third, as female students are typically the majority in the English department, research has shown that females prefer to use more of the 'standard forms' than males (Holmes, 2008, p.160). Forth, some of the participants might perceive themselves as having some NS as well as HKE phonological features, which are quite different from those in the speech sample of the HKE speaker.

In terms of the students' perceived intelligibility of the accents in the recordings, the results in Figure 8.9 demonstrate a similar pattern shared by the three student groups in their perception about intelligibility of accents, i.e., in the ranking of the British, American, Australian, Indian and Philippine accents, but statistical analysis suggested that there were mean differences among the groups (with *). As shown in the figure, all the participants tended to believe that NS pronunciations are more intelligible than the NSS ones, which in fact runs counter to the empirical findings about true intelligibility (see Nelson, 2011). Furthermore, probably because of their higher English proficiency, the FTU group rated the perceived intelligibility of the above varieties higher than the JS and SS groups. Interestingly, there was no significant

difference in mean values among the three groups for the cases of the HKE and China accents ($p>0.05$), which were rated quite low (JS and SS) and the lowest (FTU).

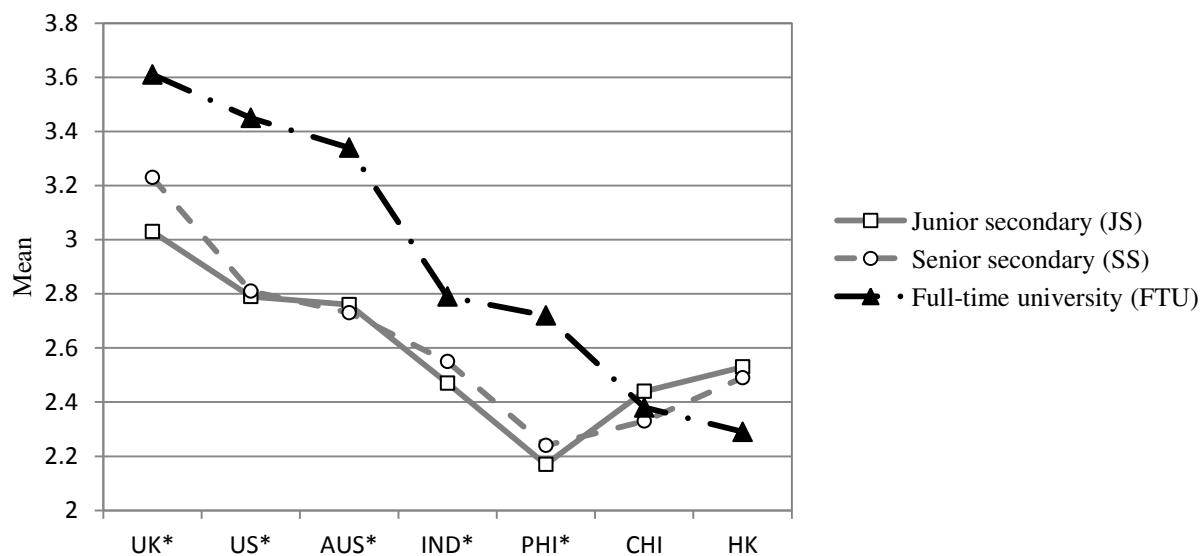


Figure 8.9 Perceived intelligibility of accents

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

*Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups

8.3.2 Students' perceptions of status and solidarity

The principal component analysis resulted in two evaluative dimensions (i.e. status and solidarity) from the 8 traits for the SS and FTU groups. For a comparison of the results among students, Figure 8.10 and 8.11 illustrate the scoring of the seven speakers for status and solidarity, respectively. In terms of status, the general finding suggests that NS accents were always rated the highest (in the order: UK, US, AUS), especially for the case of RP. Statistical analysis showed that there were score differences among the various groups only for the British and HKE accents (with *).

In particular, the university students rated the HKE pronunciation notably lower than

both the junior and secondary students, and the status score of RP for the JS group was lower than those of the other two groups (i.e., SS, FTU). The results perhaps imply that these English-majoring university students, in comparison to the junior and/or senior secondary students, tended to associate RP with a higher status while having a more negative attitude towards the HKE accent, even if many of them recognised it (Figure 8.7). In contrast, the secondary students in fact rated HKE higher than some other NNS accents (e.g. CHI, PHI). Although there is little information to fully account for the higher status score for RP by the senior secondary than the junior secondary students, it is possible that their longer time span of studying English at school, as well as their goal of studying for public examinations, might have some influence on their attitudes towards the British accent.

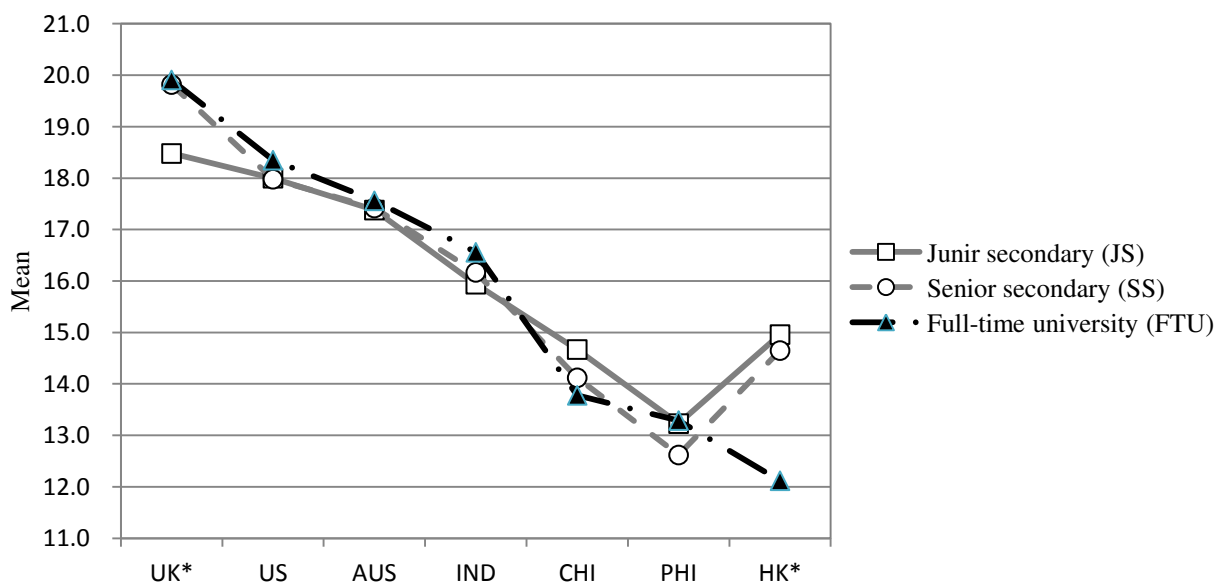


Figure 8.10 Scores of status for the seven varieties

Scale: 4 = Lowest; 24 = Highest

*Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups

Regarding the scoring of solidarity, it appears that the NS accents were still rated high but, quite interestingly, the Australian accent replaced RP at the highest position in the data of all the three groups. In contrast, the score of the HKE pronunciation by the FTU group remained the lowest and, again, significantly lower than those among the junior and secondary students. There were also statistical differences in the mean scores of Australian and American accents among the groups. The results seem to be contrary to previous research findings indicating that a local accent serves as a marker of solidarity in countries such as Japan (e.g. McKenzie, 2008) and Singapore (Cavallaro & Ng, 2009). While it is uncertain why the Australian accent was afforded comparatively higher social attractiveness than all NS and NSS accents, the overall scores of status and solidarity might raise a question as to whether Hong Kong people have an increasing tendency to adhere to NS norms while stigmatising a local model when they study English further in the education system. As for the relatively low solidarity scores of the HKE accent, it is possible that the solidarity value of Cantonese perceived by Hong Kong people (see Lai, 2007) might not have extended to that of HKE. This issue about HKE's value of solidarity is further discussed in chapters 9-11, reporting on the results using direct methods (i.e. interviews and focus groups).

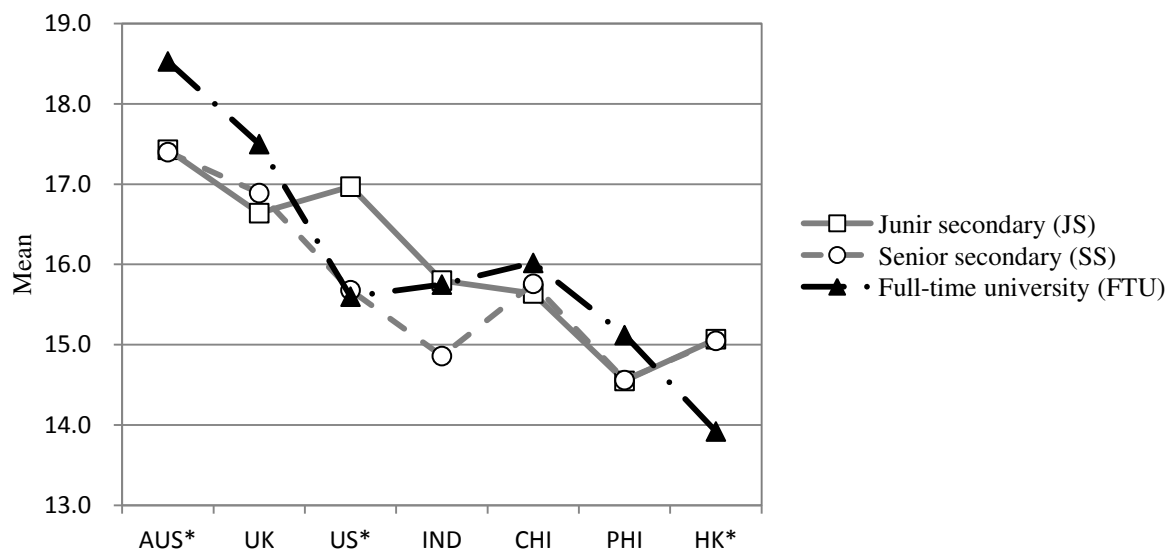


Figure 8.11 Scores of solidarity for the seven varieties

Scale: 4 = Lowest; 24 = Highest

*Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups

8.3.3 Students' attitude towards accents in contexts

As the overall attitudinal patterns of the participants' attitudes accents in contexts have been reported in section 8.2.3, the discussion centres on the differences among students' attitudes towards NS vis-à-vis NSS accents in various contexts. Figure 8.12 illustrates the two strands of attitudes (for NS and NSS accents) in various contexts with respect to the responses of the JS, SS and FTU groups. The contexts with a (*) and (#) indicate the presence of statistical differences in the NS and NNS means, respectively, among these groups of participants. One important discovery is the university students' stronger preference for NS accents than the two groups of secondary students in nearly all English-speaking contexts (except for 'news broadcasting'). However, these university students also, at the same time, rated

particularly lowly the use of NNS accents for ‘news broadcast’ as well as being a ‘teaching model’.

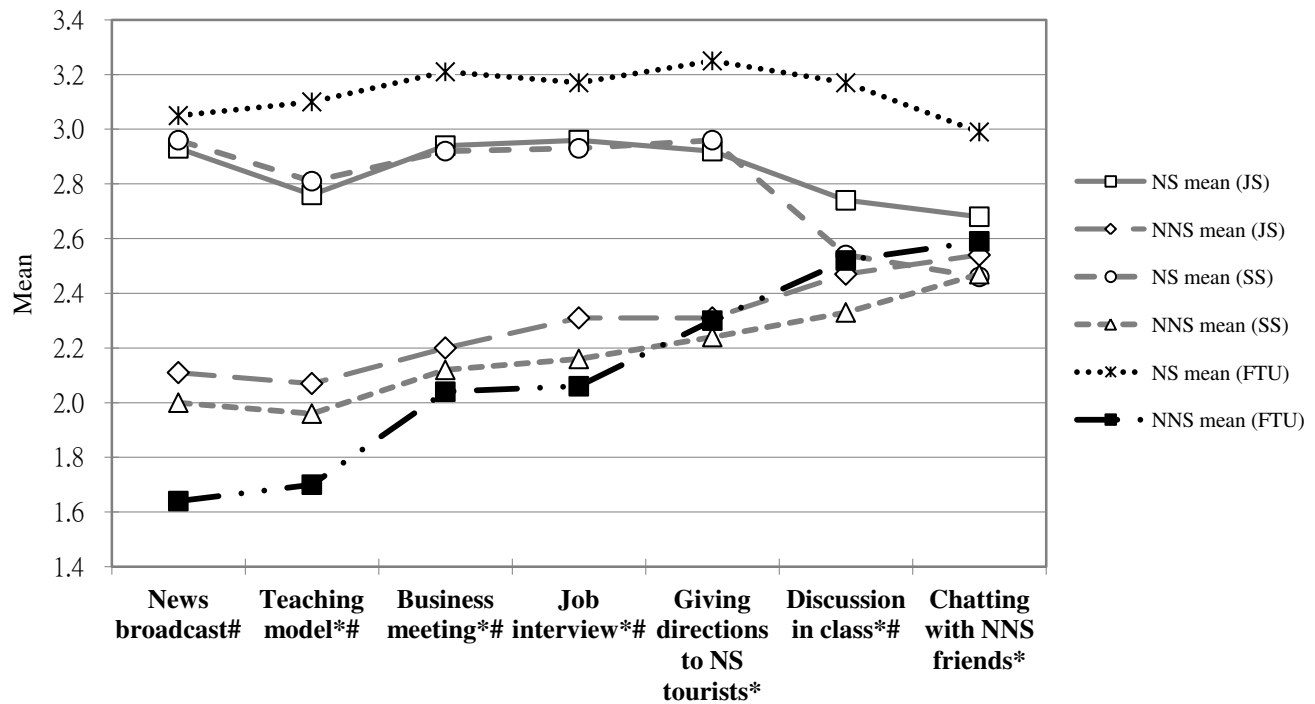


Figure 8.12 Attitudes towards NS and NNS accents in contexts

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

*Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups for NS means

#Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups for NNS means

The data relating to the two most relevant varieties of accents, i.e., HKE and RP, to the Hong Kong context was extracted for a more detailed analysis. The result for the British pronunciation is illustrated in Figure 8.13, which suggested significant mean differences among the three groups of participants regarding all the designated contexts (with *). Their variations mainly stemmed from the university students’ particularly positive view about RP. Pair-wise post-hoc comparisons indicated their

noticeably higher preference than all secondary students in the contexts of ‘business meeting’, ‘directing NS tourists’, ‘discussion in class’, and ‘chatting with NNS friends’. The FTU means also differed significantly from those of JS in the remaining three situations (i.e., ‘news broadcast’, being a ‘teaching model’, ‘job interview’) but not from the SS means, probably implying some similarities between university and senior secondary students’ perception of this NS norm, particularly in high-stakes situations. In addition, although the SS means appeared to be higher than the JS means in five contexts (as opposed to the reverse result in the other two), their mean scores for most of these contexts were in fact not different statistically, apart from the case of ‘news broadcast’.

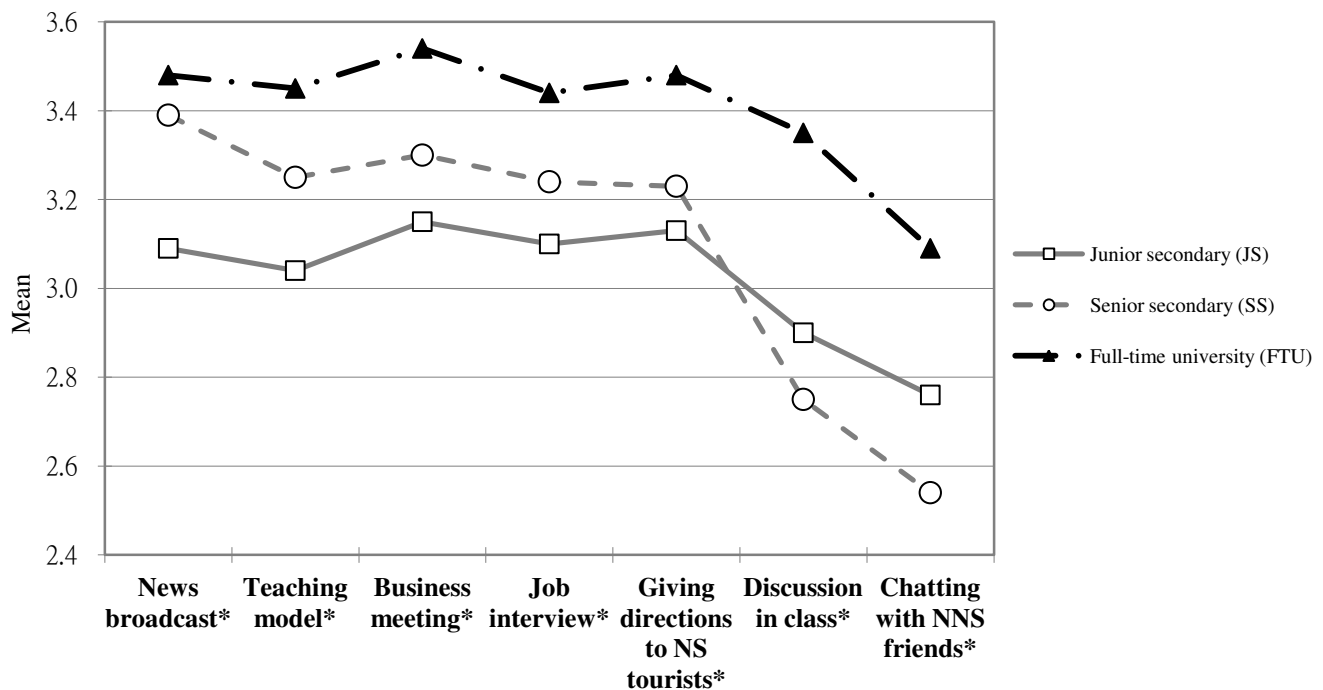


Figure 8.13 Attitudes towards RP in contexts

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

*Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups

More interesting findings have emerged from the participants' acceptance of the HKE accent in various contexts. Three clear lines were sketched corresponding to the means of the three participating groups in Figure 8.14, which shows that the junior secondary students always rated HKE higher than the SS group, followed by the FTU group, for all situations. More crucially, these traces converged towards less formal and more interactive communicative contexts, and there was no statistical difference in their mean values in casual 'chatting with NNS friends' (as opposed to those of the other six contexts with *). Further post-hoc analyses suggested that the FTU group rated differently from the SS group in terms of the relatively higher-stakes settings, namely, 'news broadcast', being a 'teaching model', 'business meeting', and 'job interview'. Furthermore, statistical differences among junior and secondary students only lay in applying the HKE accent to 'news broadcast', being a 'teaching model', and 'job interviews'. In other words, what could be deduced from this attitudinal pattern seems to be the development of students' sense of negativity towards HKE in more high-stakes/formal situations when they graduate from junior secondary to senior secondary and to university levels.

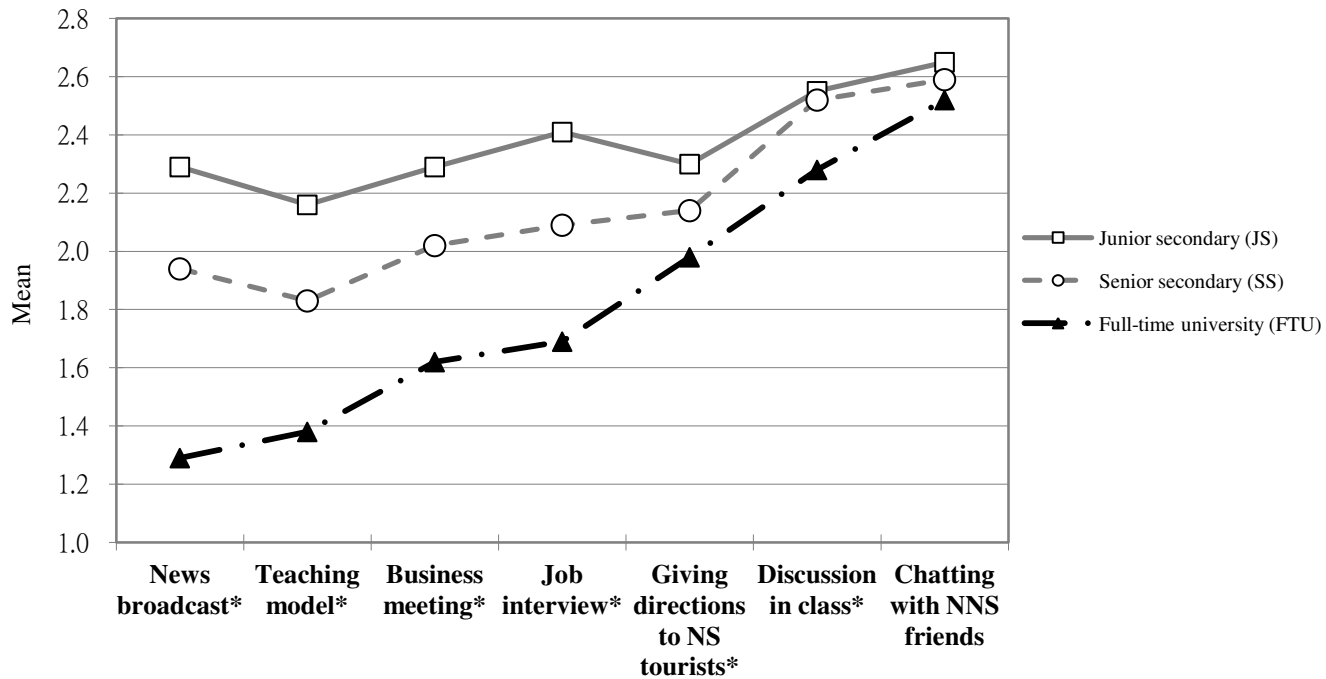


Figure 10 Attitudes towards the HKE accent in contexts

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

*Cases where there are statistical mean differences among groups

8.4 Summary and pedagogical implications

The VGT reported in this chapter has explored, within the Hong Kong context, the fundamental issue of NNSs' attitudes towards English accents from three main perspectives, namely, (1) their awareness of accents, (2) their perception of accents in relation to the dimensions of status and solidarity, and (3) their choice of accents in various local language-using contexts. Not only did it include a large sample size of the major stakeholders of English users/learners in Hong Kong (comparing to most VGT studies), but it also compared the attitudes of students at their different stages of English studies. In addition to shedding light on questions related to responses to

accents, the findings have implications for contemporary pronunciation teaching, such as the choice of a pedagogical model, the foci of assessment, and design of teaching materials while potentially offering insights for future attitudinal research in terms of approach and methodology.

First, the VGT confirms findings from previous VGT studies (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Luk, 1998) that many Hong Kong people are capable of identifying the local accent and further extends the result that most of them are able to distinguish NNS from NS accents. Nevertheless, many of the participants believed that their pronunciation was closer to RP and GA than to the HKE one probably because they regarded the former two as their learning target towards which they had been working. While it is reasonable to deduce that people's greater awareness of accents might have contributed to their ability to understand the accents, all of the participants believed that they understood NS better than NNS accents (even for HKE). This was surprising because it would have been expected that Hong Kong people were more familiar with and frequently exposed to the local accent. The findings might therefore suggest that their perceived intelligibility of a particular accent was rather attitudinal, yet not necessarily determined by their rationality and recognition of accents. As for the differences among students of various levels, the findings point to the university

students' greater ability than secondary students to recognise specific varieties of accents and to distinguish between NS and NNS accents. Perhaps owing to the presumably high level of English proficiency among the university students, they tended to believe that their accent resembled NS varieties (but was not similar to the HKE accent), whereas secondary students thought that their accent was also similar to the HKE one.

Second, the results revealed that the participants rated NS accents higher than NNS accents in terms of both the status and solidarity factors, though the NS accents attained a comparatively lower solidarity rating than their status scores, and the reverse was found to occur for the NNS accents. These results imply that Hong Kong people tend not to regard the HKE accent as a symbol of solidarity, unlike another outer circle country, Singapore, in which Singaporean English has been widely used among their citizens in their daily social life (Cavallaro & Ng, 2009). The high status accorded the NS accents, however, might be due largely to their high instrumental value in specific situations in Hong Kong (e.g. business and academic discourses), particularly if they are believed to be associated with a high level of English proficiency (see chapters 7, 9-12). What seems noteworthy in our findings is the indication that the more educated the students in the local context, the more prominent

their Anglophone-centric attitudes (especially towards RP) as well as increasing negativity toward the local (or other NNS) pronunciation(s).

Third, notwithstanding the recurring theme in the literature that NNSs prefer NS to NNS varieties of English, our data has provided an additional perspective, namely, that attitudes towards accents vary according to contexts. As will be discussed below, this might inspire further thoughts about the teaching of pronunciation for NNSs. More precisely, it highlights an attitudinal pattern in which the participants had less adverse reactions to NNS accents in less formal and more interactive situations. In high-stakes English-speaking situations, however, the findings again revealed diverging opinions among the three different groups, who showed a stronger preference for NS accents if they were at higher academic levels.

Moving to pedagogical implications arising from the study's findings, given the relationship between the locally educated students' attitudes and their education background, it could be assumed that their previous English language learning experiences, possibly involving frequent corrections of mother-tongue-influenced phonology against standard British/US English models, have fostered a conservative mindset of adhering to NS norms (see chapter 12 for teachers' self-reported teaching

practices). This has important implications for pronunciation instruction. Specifically, how English pronunciation is taught at secondary (or even junior secondary) level is of paramount importance if we hope to overcome the dilemma in the present education system, which has been reproducing new generations who continue to aspire to an unrealistic and inappropriate goal of NS pronunciation. While this study has focused on Hong Kong, that dilemma is one which may well exist in other settings. As revealed in the findings, the English-majoring university students have seemingly already established a belief in the NS standard (especially RP), whose status is virtually unquestionable. They also tended to label the local variety as one with low status and solidarity, and one that is deemed to be inappropriate in most English-speaking contexts. At the secondary school level, there were traces of evidence indicating that the senior secondary students had similar thoughts about accents, at least for some situations. These similarities were possibly influenced by the examination-oriented curriculum and teaching that are potentially guided by NS norms. However, this perspective of aiming for an NS target might not be particularly helpful in their future use of English in international cities like Hong Kong, where NNSs might play an equally or even more important role (see Kirkpatrick, 2010a; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Although local textbook publishers for secondary schools often claim to have incorporated some kinds of authentic tasks aiming to simulate real-life language-using contexts (e.g. interviewing international exchange students), few (or none) of them have indeed implemented the proposal made by WE/ELF scholars (see Jenkins, 2009). In other words, most listening tasks in Hong Kong's commercial teaching materials are still based on an NS Anglophone standard but fail to raise learners' language awareness of the global use of English by including examples of NNS accents (see chapter 5). In the present VGT, while the participants maintained that NS pronunciations should be used in high-stakes situations such as being a 'teaching model' and 'news broadcast', their lower level of reservations about the use of NNS accents in more casual and interactive settings might somehow give the green light to designing ELT tasks involving such scenarios. As changes in attitudes tend to occur slowly, if at all, a good starting point for pronunciation instruction is perhaps to first embed (semi-)authentic listening and speaking tasks in teacher materials that correspond to local English-speaking contexts and, secondly, include the relevant speakers as well as their pronunciation features as examples. In the local setting, the local accent (i.e., HKE in this case) is undoubtedly the most prominent variety used by the majority of the local English speakers and should reasonably be incorporated, along with other NNS varieties which are potentially also present in international

communication in Asia's World city. Alternatively, this design of including NNS accents in the locally authentic English-speaking situations (perhaps starting with informal discussions or causal chats) could also be applied to audio listening tasks in assessments for students and, if possible, also English teachers (e.g. LPAT in Hong Kong) because they exert immense washback effects upon ELT particularly in the Asian context. In this respect, as local teachers also play a crucial role in the development of students' attitudes towards English in their everyday school life, it is pertinent that they should be aware or informed of the true language needs in society. Due to the high degree of validity of such task design, it seems reasonable to expect that students (or other stakeholders) might gradually understand the realities of English language communication in the highly globalised world of the 21st century.

PART III

Views from the professionals

After discussing the quantitative questionnaire results that reveal the participants' overall awareness of and attitudes towards accent variation in Part II, the qualitative data reported in Parts III and IV further explore their views so as to provide an explanation. The data consist of the responses of three main groups of participants (i.e. the professionals, secondary students and teachers) on the basis of individual and focus group interviews. For each party, the discussion of results centres on two main aspects: (1) their experience of English use and learning/teaching; (2) their views on accents, spoken English as well as pronunciation teaching/learning. Part III reports on the interview data of the first group of key stakeholders, namely, English users in different professions who have diverging experience of language use depending on their occupational backgrounds. Many of them were young professionals who recently graduated from or further studied in the university. With respect to the aforementioned two foci of investigation, the professionals' English using experience (as well as how they learn English in higher education) and their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning are discussed in chapters 9 and 10 respectively.

CHAPTER NINE

Professionals' self-report experiences of English language use in

Hong Kong

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the interview data of 18 carefully-selected professionals from a wide range of occupational domains, and at different levels (e.g. junior, senior, managerial), such as marketing, overseas education consultancy, investment banking, diamond selling, programming, accountancy, secretary, dentistry, government sector, social work (for local ethnic minority), financial consultancy and academia. Many of them were young professionals as they had recently graduated from university and some of them were at the time further studying at master's level in diverse university programs (e.g. sciences, business, social sciences and humanities). A particular focus in the discussion is given to their authentic everyday English-using/learning experience, which is essential to their choice of a pedagogical model. This kind of information, however, is often lacking in particular sociolinguistic settings probably due to the difficulties to access the relevant participants. The qualitative data reported in this chapter mainly centred on Questions 1-5 in the interview protocol (see Appendix 4.3) in which the participated professionals were asked to describe their experience of language use in detail in their daily life in terms of the four modes of

English (i.e. writing, reading, speaking, listening) and the identity of interlocutors (e.g. NSs versus NNSs) (see section 4.4). Given the scope of the present investigation, only responses concerning their use of spoken English are discussed. To enhance readability, excerpts of the speech of each participant in specific interviews are included alongside corresponding identity codes such as PF1 and PM2, which indicate their group nature (i.e. P: professional), gender (F: female; M: male) and identification number.

To provide some background information about the general use of English in Hong Kong, the chapter commences by referring to census data that record the composition of Hong Kong's population and visitors to Hong Kong (section 9.2). Based on the interview data, section 9.3 discusses the professionals' use of spoken English both in their workplace and daily life, followed by a more detailed account of their exposure to English accents as well as the challenges they encountered in section 9.4 and 9.6 respectively. The perspective is also taken to discussing these professionals' use of English and exposure to accents in their previous or current study in higher education (in section 9.5). The last section (9.7) of the chapter summarises the key findings and furthermore seeks to draw on their relevance to WE and ELF research as well as the choice of a pronunciation target in Hong Kong.

9.2 Use of English in Hong Kong based on Census data

One of the key arguments against the adoption of an NS standard in applied linguistics is its inappropriateness and irrelevance in multilingual settings, where NSs are no longer dominant or in fact the minority. English in contemporary society is mainly used for international (Seidlhofer, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2010a) or intra-ethnic communication (Kachru & Nelson, 2006), both of which mostly involve interlocutors who have a different L1 from English. In other words, to contextualise a learning target, the most pertinent step is to investigate the sociolinguistic reality in the community regarding how English is used as well as who uses it. In the Hong Kong context, some clues could be drawn from the two sets of government's census data, namely, (1) the population of Hong Kong by nationality (Census & Statistics Department, 2011) and (2) review of visitors in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2012a, 2012b).

The 2011 census report about Hong Kong's population composition reveals that, among the over seven million people, the overwhelming majority of the people are ethnic Chinese (93.2%), followed by Indonesian (1.9%), Filipino (1.9%), British (0.5%) and Indian (0.4%) (Census & Statistics Department, 2011). This suggests that Hong Kong resembles other expanding circle contexts, where English is not the

major language for intra-ethnic communication. In this case, Cantonese is the lingua franca among most local citizens. The relatively high proportion of Indonesian and Filipino is mainly because of the popularity of hiring domestic helpers in Hong Kong from these countries. Despite a small proportion of inner circle speakers residing in the city (British, 0.5%; American, 0.2%; Australian, 0.2%), it can be expected that the role of English in Hong Kong is mainly for international communication given its status as an international centre of business and finance.

In this respect, some detailed information about foreigners visiting Hong Kong in 2012 is provided by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (2012a, 2012b). Based on the two review reports, mainland Chinese contributed to 71.8% of the tourism industry (total: over 48 million visitors) in terms of population in 2012, most of whom travelled to Hong Kong for vacations (60.0%) and visiting friends/relatives (23.0%). However, it is likely that interactions between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese would be in Putonghua (or Cantonese for those in Guangdong Province) rather than English, as would be the case of communicating with Taiwanese visitors (4.3%, second most visitors). Having excluded these two groups of Chinese-speaking visitors, Figure 9.1 illustrates the proportions of visitors to Hong Kong in 2012, who did not come from a Chinese-speaking territory. That is to say, people with these nationalities probably

represent the interlocutors Hong Kong people might encounter and speak English with. Quite surprisingly, though NSs are often argued to be the minority in international (or ELF) interactions, they comprise over a quarter (from America: 11.1%; Australia: 5.9%; Britain: 5.0%; Canada, 3.7%; New Zealand: 0.9%; Ireland: 0.3%) of the total population of non-Chinese-speaking visitors. This perhaps stems from Hong Kong's British colonial background and the frequent business transactions between international companies in Hong Kong and the Anglophone countries. In addition, there have been an increasing number of Hong Kong people who have emigrated to or studied in Australia and Canada (also Britain and the US for some cases) in the past decade and/or might have returned to Hong Kong. Nevertheless, a large number of non-Chinese visitors (73.4%) did come from the outer (e.g. Singapore: 6.8%, the Philippines: 6.6%, Malaysia: 5.8%) and expanding circles (e.g. Japan: 11.7%, Korea: 10.1%).

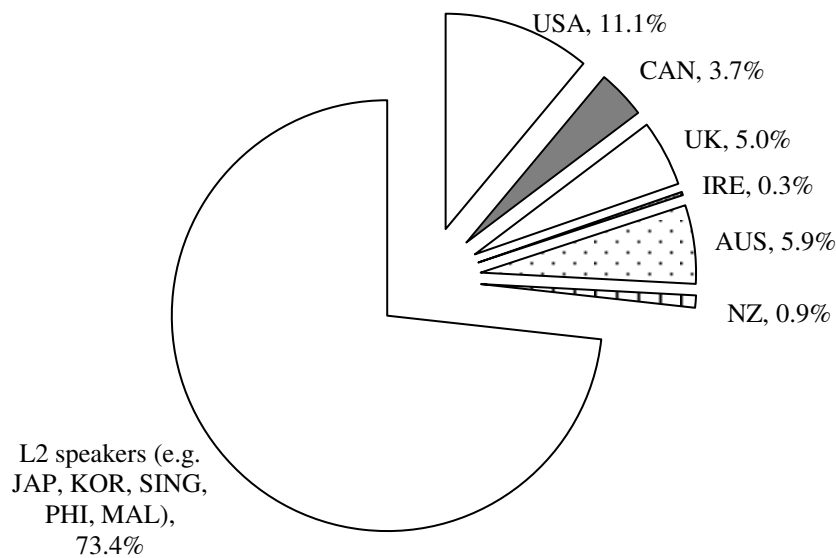


Figure 9.1 Percentages of visitors to Hong Kong among non-Chinese-speaking population
(adapted from Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2012a)

As shown in Figure 9.2, the purposes of overnight visitors to Hong Kong mainly include vacations (60%), visiting friends/relatives (18%), business/meetings (15%) and stopping en route (3%). By a more detailed analysis of the purposes of the L1 visitors, we shall however discover that a sizeable proportion of them (Figure 3), especially for the US and UK visitors, indeed travelled to Hong Kong for business purposes (USA: 34%; UK: 30%), alongside vacations (USA: 40%; UK: 45%). There are also considerable proportions of visitors from Canada, New Zealand and Australia, who purposefully came for business/meeting (CAN: 19%; NZ: 16%; AUS: 19%), visiting friends/relatives (CAN: 19%; NZ: 12%; AUS: 12%), apart from mainly for vacation (CAN: 51%; NZ: 53%; AUS: 59%). While these government records

apparently point to the presence of ELF communication between Hong Kong people and the relatively high proportion of NNS visitors, it somehow also suggests that the use of English with NSs in Hong Kong might not be overlooked, particularly in the business sector. Nonetheless, it is only by further investigations that the real language-using situations of the relevant stakeholders could be uncovered.

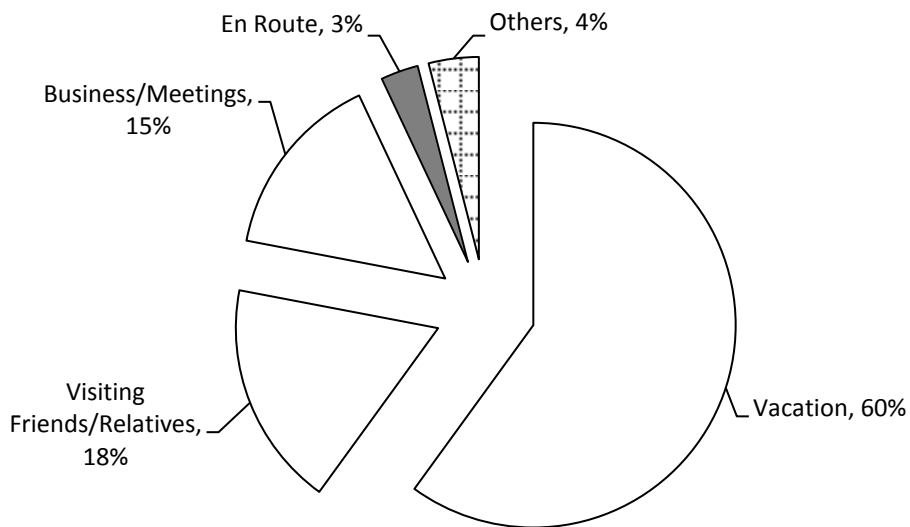


Figure 9.2 Purposes of all overnight visitors in Hong Kong

(adapted from Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2012b)

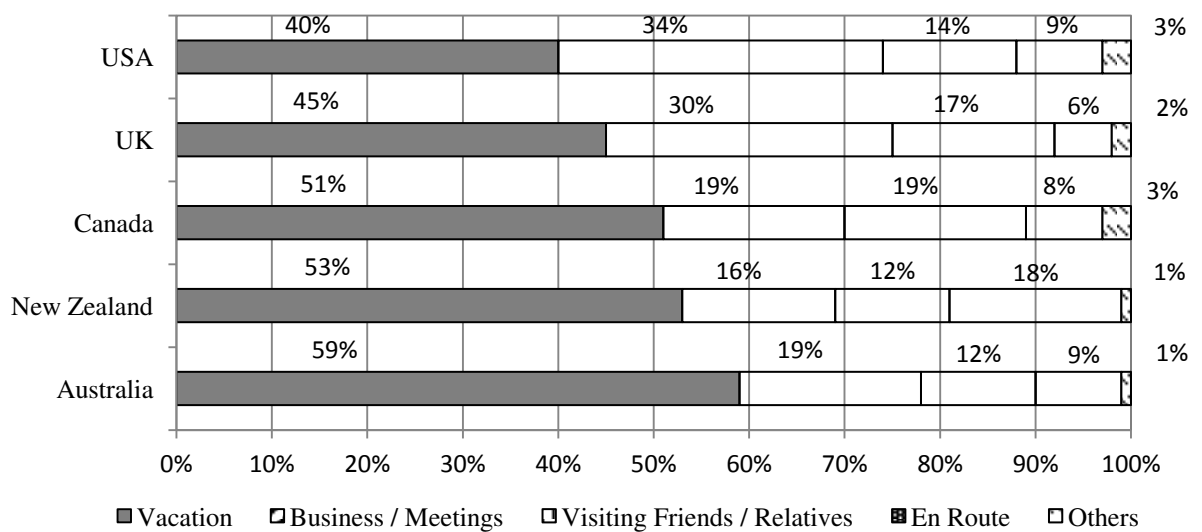


Figure 9.3 Purposes of overnight visitors from the inner circle

(adapted from Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2012b)

9.3 Use of spoken English by professionals

Although some scholars have argued that there has been little societal basis for the use of English in Hong Kong, (e.g. Luke & Richards, 1982; Cheung, 1984; Li 1999, 2009b, 2011a; Pang, 2003; Poon, 2010), our interview data tend to accord with the large-scale survey conducted by Evans (2010; 2011a), which reveals that English indeed plays an important role in the business and professional domains especially for professionals who work in a/an ‘international’ or ‘multinational’ company (e.g. PF4, PM5, PF10, PF11, PF12, PM13, PF16). Particularly, most interviewees suggested that they used written English (e.g. writing and reading documents and emails) noticeably more than spoken English (e.g. PM2, PF6, PF7, PF10). The use of written English was explained by some participants as ‘to enable efficiency at work’ (PF4), ‘a habit’ (PF4) or ‘being inherited from Hong Kong’s colonial history’ (PM3). Nevertheless, other participants suggested that the use of written vis-à-vis spoken English (and also other languages, e.g. Putonghua) depended on the situations, interlocutors as well as their language proficiency (PF7, PF8, PF10).

Based on the participants’ interview responses, the English-using situations in its written and spoken forms suggested by the professionals in their workplace are categorised and summarised (see Appendix 9.1). It should be emphasised that these

usages of English do not necessarily account for (both quantitatively and qualitatively) all the situations where English has been used in their work, but they reflect which situations were perceived to be most salient by these professionals. In terms of spoken English, as most residents in Hong Kong speak Cantonese as their first language, there seems to be little room for the use of (spoken) English for intra-ethnic communication. However, given Hong Kong's status as an international city of business and finance, many professionals did indicate that they spoke English face-to-face externally with their customers (number of participants who mentioned it: 9) or internally with their colleagues or bosses (7). Telephoning (8) using English was also quite frequently reported especially when talking with clients. Apart from these three major uses, other English-speaking situations mentioned in the interviews included video conferences (5), interviews (5), presentations (4), meetings (3), seminars/conferences (3), casual chats with colleagues (2) and (conducting) questionnaire survey (1). It is noted that these categories were mainly based on the interviewees' choice of words, despite some potentially overlapping categories. As can be imagined, the professionals mainly spoke English when it was needed for international communication, i.e. in the presence of non-Cantonese-speaking foreigners. In some cases, the interviewee suggested that the use of spoken English was not limited to people with high academic levels but also their junior staff whose

English was ‘very bad’ (PM5). The necessity to use English in his company was because their ‘boss’ was an Indian. PM5 explained that his colleagues were only often required to speak English specifically related to their job duties (e.g. ‘accountancy’) and, therefore, a high qualification was only needed for senior staff who communicated with the Indian boss.

Apart from the use of workplace English, Evans’s (2011b) large-scale survey has highlighted Hong Kong people’s use of English in their leisure life in both written (e.g. emails, instant messaging, social networking sites, SMS, websites, books, personal letters, blogs, newspapers) and spoken discourses (film, music, travelling overseas, television). In the present study, the professionals were also asked for their use of English outside work (see a summary in Appendix 9.2). Quite contrary to the survey findings, more interviewees tended to talk about their experience of listening to or speaking English in their daily life than reading and writing in English. While this might reflect a reality that spoken English was used frequently in their daily life, another possibility is that these participants tended to initially associate the use of English with speaking English in the first instance. Some of their spoken English-using situations they mentioned included ‘watching TV programs’ (3) or

films (1), 'talking with (Filipino) domestic helper' (3), 'relatives' (2), 'friends' (1) or 'foreigners on the street' (1), 'travelling' (1) and 'playing computer games' (1).

9.4 Exposure to accents by the professionals

As discussed above, the proposal of the three pedagogical models was on the basis of particular sociolinguistic settings, which correspond to various language needs such as for intra-ethnic communication (i.e. the endonormative nativised model) and international communication (i.e. the lingua franca approach) (see Kirkpatrick, 2007a).

The choice of these models crucially points to the identity of the interlocutors in which the interactions take place. In terms of spoken English (which is also the key focus of ELF research so far), the heart of the question lies in whether they encounter NSs or NNSs more often in their everyday English interactions at work. This issue about the interlocutors' identities was hence highlighted in the interviews when the participants discussed their experience of using English both in their workplace and daily use.

One interview question was to ask the participants whether they thought they encounter NSs or NNSs more often at work and in leisure time, followed by an elaboration on their experience of English interaction. Notwithstanding the general

perception that Hong Kong, as an international city, resembles most ELF settings where NNSs rather than NSs are the major interlocutors, many of the interviewed participants tended to have the opposite experience. Specifically speaking, there were more interviewees who reported that they met NSs (number of participants: 9) more often than NNSs (3). Seven interviewees, however, either were not sure or did not mention who they encountered more frequently (see Appendix 9.3 and 9.4 about the proportion of their exposure to NS and NNS and perceived origin of the interlocutors respectively). One professional (PF11) in an airline company who frequently speaks English indicated that the identity of her interlocutors differed in internal and external communication. In contrast, in the responses about the interviewees' experience of speaking English in the leisure time, NNSs were mainly the interlocutors in their interactions with the domestic helpers (e.g. Filipino) (PF8, PM18) and non-Chinese on the street (e.g. Arabian) (PF6) as well as when travelling (e.g. Thai) (PF7). A further investigation of the interviewees' experience of English interactions reveals that many of them indeed encountered NSs such as British (8), Australian (4), Canadian (3), American (2), Scottish (1) and Irish (1) in their work. Several participants (4) also suggested that they sometimes communicated with the so-called 'ABCs', i.e. Chinese people who were born or stayed for a long time in an NS country and were in fact native speakers of English. Although English is their first language,

many of them are also bilinguals. Three professionals stated that they were unable to specify the interlocutors' origin of country but only suggested that they should have come from an NS country. Furthermore, the NNS interlocutors mentioned by these professionals were from a wide range of outer and expanding circle nation-states, which included India/Pakistan (8), Japan (4), Hong Kong (4), Singapore (3), the Philippines (3), mainland China (3), Taiwan (3) as well as many others across various continents such as Asia, Europe, Africa and South America (see Appendix 9.4). It is worth noting that the participants suggested that they sometimes also spoke English with the mainland Chinese, Taiwanese and even local Hong Kong people in international context, though Mandarin or Cantonese was often the common language.

The English-speaking situations involving speakers of different backgrounds are described in greater detail below, which reveal diverse sophisticated scenarios. One major factor for this divergence stemmed from the nature and base of the company or organisation that determined the nationality of the clients externally or staff internally. Probably owing to Hong Kong's status as an international city and, more crucially, its association with many of the traditionally strong economic markets (e.g. America, Britain) since the colonial period, many participants suggested that their companies had been based in and/or targeted the inner circle territories. Several participants even

reported they had completely different exposure when they changed their job along their career. The following records some of the more representative cases (see more cases in Appendix 9.5).

PM3 (civil servant)

A civil servant (PM3) currently working in the government's Planning Department shared in detail his varying working experience in his career facing English speakers from different regions. He began his career in the technological industry (as 'a phone tester'), where he claimed that 'the bosses and people in the company were all foreigners' who he described as 'real British'. In external communication, he also frequently talked to foreigners in their 'partner companies' such as those from Singapore. After moving to the government sector, spoken English was also needed in his department in which he needed to contact with the 'town planners or surveyors' through some agents who were mainly Australian. He explained that it was because there was 'a degree program in Town Planning in Australia'. Nevertheless, his experience of spoken English use, as he described, was quite different from some of his colleagues in another sector:

PM3: There is an 'Execution and Control Sector'. They are mainly responsible for checking if there is any illegal change of land use in the New Territories. They use English mostly because there are 'coloured people' in Kim Tim such as those having a/an African and

South-Asian ethnicity. Many of them are hired in the Scrapyard and you might need to caution them. In legal terms, people who are cautioned can choose the language they are most familiar with because they need to clearly understand what they are charged for.

PF12 (manager in marketing communication department)

It could be expected that professionals in marketing might encounter various customers or partners depending on the different companies. In the interview data, PF12 in a multinational company suggested that ‘90% of their business are sales abroad’ and therefore her staff members would meet foreign customers from a wide range of regions such as ‘Britain’, ‘Middle East’, ‘Asia’ and ‘Australia’ and with different accents. Though she personally met more European customers from countries such as ‘France’ or those in ‘Eastern Europe’, she stressed that the nationality of clients her colleagues encountered varied based on their specific job duties.

PF10 & PF16 (marketing executive/council executive)

PF10 and PF16 were both in the field of marketing, the first of whom (PF10) had less use of spoken English but the second (PF16) very frequently spoke English. PF10 explained that only the personnel at the managerial level had a greater chance to speak English (also mentioned by PF6). Occasionally, she suggested that she might need to

communicate with ‘ABCs’ (generally referring to English-speaking Chinese) in ‘crossover or join-promotional jobs’ using ‘formal English’. In contrast, PF16 encountered a great variety of English speakers in places such as ‘Brazil’, ‘Ireland’, ‘Germany’, ‘Luxemburg’, ‘Croatia’, ‘Russia’, ‘the Philippines’ and ‘Taiwan’ because she travelled to exhibitions around the world. She then moved to working in a chamber of commerce as a council executive, whose duty was to organise functions for the senior personnel in different companies. In this job, she suggested that she occasionally met foreigners depending on the duty nature.

PM13 (education consultant)

PM13 provided a different perspective based on his bilingual background but having a local Hong Kong identity. Specifically, he suggested that English was his first language and he learnt Cantonese as an additional one when he studied in an international school in Hong Kong, followed by his further study overseas. After returning to Hong Kong, he worked in an educational consultancy, which offered agency services for customers who wanted to study overseas. He suggested that the majority of his colleagues were NSs (around ‘80%’) but he also frequently talked with local Hong Kong or mainland Chinese clients (mainly students and parents). His overseas clients were however personal in ‘educational institutions’, ‘universities’,

‘boarding schools’ and ‘state schools’ usually in inner circle countries (‘95% as he claimed; also a small proportions of institutes in countries such as ‘Switzerland’, ‘Japan’ and ‘Korea’). One clue about the use of spoken English revealed in his case is that some Hong Kong people might choose to study overseas in an NS country probably owing to the high popularity of colleges and universities in the English-speaking countries.

PF11 (senior staff in corporate communication department in airline company)

Another interesting profession in which spoken English has an important role is the aviation industry, given that English is the unquestionable lingua franca. It is expected that pilots and flight attendants might encounter people of different ethnic and language backgrounds in different regions depending on their flights. However, working in the corporate communication department in the airline company, the participant in our interview (PF11) revealed a very different group of NS and NNS interlocutors in internal and external communication respectively. For internal communication, she suggested that most of her interlocutors were from ‘Australia’ and ‘Britain’ but there were ‘not many American people in the airline industry’:

PF11: There were more NSs because of my job nature. I needed to organise company visits. By organising company visits, I needed to communicate with people from different departments for the arrangement. The senior personnel in other departments were all NSs,

such as, what I have said, in flag operation, the department of the cadets or the pilots, in flight engineering, in flight attendants...

On the contrary, she needed to communicate with mainly Asian people externally because Asia was the region she was responsible for. She also discussed her differing experiences when she worked in two different airline companies.

PF11 (in company A): I was mainly responsible for the Asian region. The farthest place was only in North Asia such as Japan and Korea. There would also be countries such as India, Bangladesh and Nepal in the Pacific region... also Malaysia. Others were mainly from the mainland.

PF11 (in company B): In B Airlines (company name), I worked in marketing communication. Yes, I would face more kinds of people than when I worked in A Airlines (company name). You would have more contact with the Westerners.

Though Putonghua may be commonly the medium of communication between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese, this interviewee suggested her need to speak English with her mainland colleagues if non-Putonghua speakers were present or as she did not speak Putonghua well. She added that the choice of language also varied depending on the formality of the situation or how close she and her colleagues was. The following records her choice of language with her Taiwanese colleagues as an illustrative example:

PF11: It depended on when you were only facing the Taiwanese. It depended on how close you are. You might have been cooperating

with some of them for several years. They might come to Hong Kong to attend some training courses with you together. If they understood your language standard and felt more comfortable, they might speak to you in Putonghua [R: So you usually speak English first with whom you were not close to] Yes. We used English first if we were not so close. We regularly had some business training courses in our company. Everyone usually came to the head office to attend them. You might not have known some of the colleagues. You might have met some of them two years ago. Some of them might be new like you and you didn't know them before on that occasion. In this situation, we spoke English even if both of us were Chinese.

PM15 (social worker)

Despite the apparent lack of association between social work and the use of (spoken) English in Hong Kong, a social worker (PM15) did share his experience of communicating with domestic helpers in Hong Kong when he was supporting them for their rights. He also had various exposure to NNS accents such as those of Japanese and Korean in his previous part-time job in the exhibition centre and those of British, American and German English speakers in some of his work-related seminars.

9.5 English use and exposure to accents in higher education

We now move to discussing these professionals' use of and learning of English in their current or previous study at higher education level as they might have a great impact on their understanding of the role of English in the world and attitudes towards

accents and pronunciation teaching. It is also noted that these young professionals graduated from local and overseas universities in diverse disciplines (e.g. marketing, accountancy, science, engineering, social science, language), which hence illustrate the various experiences of how people use and learn (spoken) English. In higher education, English is often medium of communication in the era of globalisation as it involves a great variety of international academics and students (Doiz, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2013). This also applies to the universities in Hong Kong, where English is the medium of instruction. Though it might also be expected that spoken English is commonly used among the students, the interview data seems to have revealed a reverse scenario. Most participants associated their uses of spoken English in higher education to lectures (9) and presentations (4) (which tend to be rather receptive in nature) but only a few of them mentioned their interactions with classmates (2), teachers (1) and in class discussion (1). This might indicate that monologues rather than interactions were more common spoken discourses in their learning experience. The interviewees' responses are discussed below with respect to the programs they studied (e.g. sciences, business, social sciences and humanities).

9.5.1 Sciences programs

PM 18 who studied a degree in engineering in Hong Kong suggested that he mainly spoke English in presentation but ‘would not speak English after the lessons’. Another former science-major student (PM9) also recalled his experience that ‘there was not much chance to speak English, unless you asked the professors some questions, talked to your classmates who speak English or give presentations’. Nevertheless, the amount of interactions depended on the teaching approach in the course. A former dentistry undergraduate (PM14) suggested that the ‘problem-based learning approach’ (PBL) was most commonly adopted in his study in which class discussion was the key component. He also added that English was the medium for communication in his placement with the overseas professor, though he, at the same time, also spoke Cantonese with the patients (PM14).

In addition to the use of English as the medium of communication in the classroom discourse, English language courses were also provided such as for a former engineering student (PM18) who suggested that they had ‘role plays’ in the course, which required them to ‘pretend to work on a project’ and ‘write proposals and reports’. This interviewee also shared his experience about his university teacher correcting their English pronunciation: ‘we have always been pronouncing ‘de’ for

‘the’ but in fact there is a ‘z’ sound. This was not taught in the past’ (PM8). Interestingly, he seems to have valued his university teachers higher than the secondary counterparts. PM18 lamented that these kinds of pronunciation features were not taught when she studied at school because ‘the teacher did not know them’. However, he seemed to feel regretful that he could no longer ‘change’ his English by the time he studied university: ‘Teachers in the university did teach better (than the secondary ones) but they could not have changed me. My English has already been “formed”’ (PM18).

In the science degree programs, there were also similar English courses that aimed to develop students’ skills in ‘presentations, group discussions, writing reports, writing CVs, writing complaint and business letters’ (PM9). Nevertheless, PM9 also complained that these courses were not helpful for his future career. He attributed his improvement in English proficiency to the study of his second degree in social science where he had frequent contact with other English speakers.

9.5.2 Business programs

In the business programs, students in higher education were also required to undertake some English enhancement courses, most of which focused on the practical and

profession-specific English-using skills. Having studied in commerce, PF7 suggested that some of her courses aimed to develop their ‘presentations skills’ and ‘communication skills’ such as in ‘face-to-face’ and ‘telephone’ interviews. In accountancy, a former university undergraduate (PF6) recalled that her courses for ‘business communication’ mainly centred on ‘how to write in English in business so as to sound more professional’ as well as presentation skills. These courses however were deemed to be not particularly useful when she later worked as an accountant (PF6: ‘Presentations are not for people at our level but the managers’). This kind of complaint about the inapplicability of English enhancement courses was also expressed by a former marketing undergraduate (PF10) who basically learnt what was needed at work on her own:

PF10: In fact, I didn’t learn English at school [...] I learn from the dramas, seriously, particularly in terms of pronunciation and rhythm. I learnt by watching dramas and listening more rather than how much you have learnt in the classroom.

Alternatively, another former marketing-majoring student (PF16) suggested that training in presentation skills was important: ‘It’s a channel to present externally. You might need to present in your future work’.

9.5.3 Social sciences and humanities programs

A graduate of social science (ST14) nevertheless suggested that they tended to learn ‘how to write essays’ as well as ‘some grammar elements’ in the English courses provided by her university (cf. PM9 above). The teaching of presentation was downplayed in these courses as there were required to give presentations in other content subjects. As one might expect, there might be more training in language programs in which PF8 (formerly studying in bilingual studies) suggested that she received more in-depth training through ‘practical skills’ such as ‘playing drama’, ‘writing an autobiography’ and doing ‘advertising project’. Nevertheless, as a graduate of an English language program, PM2 claimed that although he was trained in all four aspects of English (i.e. writing, reading, speaking, listening), his way of learning English was rather ‘non-standard’:

PM2: I watched TVB Pearl (an English TV channel in Hong Kong) every day when I was very small. Watching western movies... because my family members always watch films, listen to foreign songs, watch ‘X-File’ and ‘ER’ in TVB Pearl. I learnt English through these channels. So I said my grammar was not that good. The things I wrote were what I learnt while watching but not learnt in a standard way. My grammar was very bad in the past. I haven’t learnt anything like that in the English lesson. I didn’t really learn English at school.

9.5.4 English as a lingua franca in higher education in Hong Kong?

Though presentation and communication skills were often the pedagogical foci in the English language enhancement courses in higher education, the issue of a pronunciation target seems to be less relevant because there might be few specific instructions on how to pronounce English (except for PM18; see above). In this regard, their perception of and knowledge about accent variation around the world might be only confined to their exposure to varieties of accent in the campus. Notwithstanding the use of spoken English in higher education as a major domain in ELF research (e.g. Mauranen, 2006a; Jenkins, 2013), this typical use of ELF might only be partly applicable to institutes in Hong Kong because there are seemingly relatively few international students they encountered during their university studies. Considerable interviewees indicated their perception that universities in Hong Kong lacked an international environment because their classmates were ‘all Hong Kong people’ (PF7) (also PF6: ‘around 90% were Hong Kong people’) and ‘some were from the mainland’ (PF6). In his years of studying in the dentistry department, PM14 specified that there was only ‘one westerner’ and ‘one mainlander’. In this respect, his major exposure to accents might be only limited to those of the presenters or the course teachers, who in many cases were also local English speakers. While some participants recalled that all or most of their teachers in higher education were Hong Kong people (PF7, PF10,

ST14, PM15), a few of them mentioned that some teachers were from mainland China (or Taiwan) who have studied overseas (e.g. the US) (PM9, PF6). In particular, PM9 suggested that he encountered lecturers of ‘Malaysian Chinese’ and ‘Jew’ from the US and those from Denmark and Pakistan (a lecturer who was born and grew up in HK). In the social science department, the two interviewed graduates indicated that their department head was a westerner from the US (PM9) and another lecturer was a Singaporean Chinese (ST14). Alternatively, there were also more foreign teachers in specific courses or programs such as Japanese (PF1, PM14) or French studies (PM2) and bilingual studies (PF8). PM2 clearly stated that less than ‘10%’ of his teachers were NNSs (e.g. Singaporean) but most of them were from the NS countries such as the US and UK (PM2: ‘they tend to hire those from the UK and the US’). He also added that he did have some NS classmates who were Chinese returning from studying in an inner circle country such as Canada. In contrast, having studied in bilingual studies (French and English), PF8 revealed that there were ‘two French’ and ‘several British’ lecturers as well as some students from Korea, Japan and mainland China.

Apart from studying locally, several interviewees also had the experience of overseas study (4), participating in exchange programs (1) and studying in international school

(1), which were more likely to involve interactions with foreigners. In their experience, these foreigners mostly refer to NSs in inner circle countries (e.g. PF8: Britain; PF16: America; PM18: Australia) and teachers in the international school (PM13) (except for PM14 who participated in exchange programs in Italy, Switzerland and Canada). Comparatively, it appears that they encountered more varieties of NNSs than those who have had studied in Hong Kong. For instance, a former undergraduate studying in accountancy in Australia (PM18) reported that he had the chance to meet French, Singaporean, Malaysian, Japanese, African and most of his friends were Australian-born Asians. All the lecturers were Australian in the courses he attended. A similar experience was also shared by a former high school student (PF16) moving from Hong Kong to the US since secondary 5 in that she met NNS classmates (or friends) from a wide range of countries such as Germany, Norway, France, Italy, Belgium, Venezuela, Chile and Brazil. She also reported that there was a large group of NS Koreans who were born and grew up in the US. In the similar vein, PF8 also reported that she was the 'only Chinese' among her friends when she studied both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the UK, where she encountered people of a wide range of nationalities including British, German, Greek, Japanese, Singaporean, Korean, Taiwanese, mainland Chinese, people from Dubai (i.e. Arabian), Filipino and Indian.

The above experiences shared by the interviewees have illustrated the complex English-using reality in the globalised world alongside the increased human mobility. As higher education institutes in the inner circle have been attracting a large number of overseas students due to the tremendous demand for a high English proficiency worldwide, international students might have a greater opportunity to encounter NNSs of other nationalities or ethnicities in addition to the local NSs. In contrast, these students might have a different experience of NS-NNS and NNS-NNS interactions with those studying in local institutes. Given the high demand for English in Hong Kong, and also many outer circle and expanding circle contexts, international schools have become increasingly popular for local people, especially the wealthier families (e.g. PM13).

9.6 Challenges facing the professionals in English communication

One major objective of the study is to investigate any difficulties facing the professionals in their daily communication using English as this provides important information for English education at both higher and secondary levels. Despite pronunciation being the focus of this research, the interviewees were allowed to express themselves freely if they had any challenges in their daily use of English. However, given the scope of the investigation, only comments related to spoken

English are discussed. Nevertheless, in the first instance when the interviewees were asked to discuss their difficulties in English communication, many of them generally highlighted that they were relatively weak in speaking and listening probably due the pedagogical foci on ‘grammar’ and ‘textbook English’ (PF7) in their previous English learning as well as a lack of vocabulary (PM3) (e.g. PF7: ‘I cannot express what I want to express’; also PM3, PM15). For the purpose of discussion, the challenges facing individuals in speaking and listening as well as how they dealt with these challenges are discussed case-wise followed by an end-of-section summary. Due to a large quantity of data, the following only reports the more representative responses while some of their other interesting responses are included in Appendix 9.6.

PM15

Difficulties: NNS accents, unfamiliar vocabulary, short attention span

One recurring theme in the interviews was the issue of NNS English (and accents) being difficult to understand in English communication (see also PM9, PM14, PF16 in Appendix 9.6). In the local context, a social worker (PM15) found it difficult to understand the accent of some local minorities (e.g. Nepalese, Indonesian, Filipino), though these ethnic minority did know a little bit of Cantonese:

PM15: A group of Nepalese also participated in the function. I didn’t understand. I could not distinguish between the Nepalese language and

English. English of the Filipino and Indonesian are okay. I understood their English probably because they deliberately spoke more slowly. So I understood. However, I really could not communicate with the Nepalese... just like we were talking in a different language.

To overcome this difficulty, he exemplified with the Japanese's English that he gradually understood a foreign accent when he had been exposed to it for a longer time:

PM15: In fact, you would gradually understand when you listen to their speech more. Sometimes you might not understand because of their foreign accents. For words such as 'death note', the Japanese would pronounce as 'death not'. I was thinking whether s/he was pronouncing 'note' as 'not'. Until I listened to it several times, I could get used to it. However, as the Nepalese got used to roll their tongue, I couldn't listen to their English clearly. I didn't notice they were speaking English.

In addition, he pointed to his difficulty in understanding unfamiliar words when listening to a seminar speech regardless of the nationalities of the speakers (e.g. German, British, American). He admitted that he 'did not have much patience to listen to them' and that he often 'neglected many things when listening' (PM15).

PF7

Difficulties: NNS accents, unfamiliar vocabulary

In face-to-face interactions however, problems in communication often need to be addressed simultaneously. In her previous working experience as survey conductor in the airport, PF7 reported that the speakers (from Bangladesh and Japanese) sometimes might need to draw pictures, write down the key words or speak slowly to help convey or negotiate their meanings:

PF7 (talking with a Bangladeshi): I didn't know this word ('Bangladesh') at that time. S/he told me that s/he was from this country but I tried to spell this word based on the pronunciation because I really didn't know this country. S/he drew on the picture about where s/he came from [...] S/he wrote the name for me but I still didn't know this word. So, s/he drew a map, something like a map, and circled it, saying that this is the place.

PF7 (talking with a Japanese): The skill I learnt when talking to the Japanese is that you cannot speak fast. Otherwise, they won't understand. You need to speak slowly. They will only understand if you speak slowly.

PM3

Difficulties: NNS accents, high rate of NS speech, NNSs' lack of fluency

In the government sector, PM3 recorded a case where his colleague failed to communicate with a group of local minorities from Africa as their 'not very pure and

accurate English accent' was 'very difficult to understand'. In such a scenario, he suggested that a translator might be required in spite of its undesirability in terms of budget from the government's perspective. Indeed, communication problems occur not necessarily only when talking with NNSs but sometimes also with NSs as they spoke English too fast. In his former company where many of his colleagues were British, PM3 suggested that because they 'spoke English very fast', he needed to ask for repetition, check the dictionary, write to communicate or, if everything failed, ask someone for help. Nevertheless, he stressed that sometimes he preferred to talk with his clients (who were mainly Australian) on phone in his current job:

PM3: Actually it is easier to do it on phone because you can ask the person nearby when you don't know how to say. Or you can think in advance how you can say it. On the contrary, it is more difficult for face-to-face interaction because you may not be able to think of how you can say something in English simultaneously [...] I think listening is more difficult because they get used to speaking English without accommodating the others. If we speak more slowly, it is in fact easier for them to understand.

PM3 stated that pronunciation in international communication was 'more important than things such as grammar and vocabulary' and he faced difficulties understanding accents of other NNSs such as the Singaporean's (PM3: 'It was very different from how the "real" British speaks English. You would feel that their English was a bit like direction translations from Chinese'). Though he suggested that at the beginning, he

might need to ask their interlocutors to ‘speak slowly or repeat’ when they failed to communicate, he gradually ‘got used to it’ and was able to ‘understand what they said or what they were trying to express’. In contrast, he said that the English speech of Hong Kong people was not problematic to the Singaporean. In another occasion, PM3 found that there were fewer problems communicating with the Taiwanese in English. Comparing the English proficiency of the Hong Kong people and Taiwanese he had encountered, he suggested that the latter was better because apparently the Taiwanese spoke English ‘more fluently’ and ‘faster’ (PM3: ‘In terms of both expression and communication, they spoke more fluently and faster. English they spoke was also easy to understand’) (see also PM14 in Appendix 9.6).

PF4 & PM5

Difficulties: NNSs’ lack of confidence & low English proficiency, NNS accents, telephoning

One of the interviews involved two interviewees (PF4 & PM5), both of whom were senior personnel in two different international companies. In an investment company where the boss was an NS, PF4 observed challenges facing new employees in speaking English. One main reason she suggested was that because they were ‘afraid of speaking English’, they thought that ‘the shorter (they speak) the better’ (e.g. ‘yes’, ‘no’, ‘okay’) while trying to ‘hide their weakness by avoiding talking to the boss’ (PF4). Nevertheless, she also suggested that some of her colleagues gradually

improved their English proficiency after immersing into the English-using environment in her company and accumulating experience (PF4: 'If you need to speak English for 8 hours every day, you would be able to speak it even if you haven't finished secondary 5'). Despite her years of working experience, she also acknowledged that she did have difficulties understanding some varieties of English such as 'Indian English' (which she said she only 'relied on guessing') but not those of clients from 'Switzerland', 'Britain' and 'Canada'. Along the same lines, PM5 who worked in an Indian company also had a similar experience but, because of his frequent exposure to Indian English, he could specifically pinpoint some of their pronunciation features:

PM5: The most important thing is that the Indian do have the aspirated sounds. They will change all the aspirated sounds into... 'Table' (non-aspirated 't'). Or 'coffee and tea' is pronounced as 'go-ee and dea'. That is, 't' is changed to 'd', something like that. You only have to change back all their sounds, you will know what they are saying. [R: How long did you take to get used to it?] How long did I take to get used to it? As long as you know their sounds are like that, you would be able to understand. For example, previously s/he asked me to go to the Chong King Mansion in Tsim Sha Tsui, s/he said 'zhong ing'. I completely did not understand at that time but later I knew what it was when I changed them into aspirated sounds. So if you ask me whether you are able to identify the Indian accent, I must be able to identify it.

More importantly, he highlighted that mutual understanding and tolerance is most crucial in communication regardless of any linguistic features in English. He further

discussed that communication with NNSs via telephoning is particularly difficult due to reasons such as the absence of visual clue (e.g. the speakers' facial expression, objects for discussion) and voice quality of telephoning (see also PF16 in Appendix 9.6):

PM5: If it is on phone, where is the problem? First, you really have to follow the grammar as you can't imagine what they want to say based on their facial expression or body language. Second, it is the environment. For example, you ask your boss to go to the show room where, as I sell diamonds, there is a diamond. Your boss will begin to be attuned to it. All the terms and knowledge about diamonds would begin to appear in his/her mind. S/he will get rid of all the words about accountancy [...] Third, the most important thing is that there is disturbance on phone. It would be relatively unclear. So you need to be more concise. In other words, you really need to know what s/he is saying. Taking accountancy as an example, you can take out a pile of 'account statement' and point to it when talking to him/her. But on the phone, you cannot. You need to express purely in English.

Supplementing PM5's difficulties in phone conversation, PF4 suggested that these challenges would have been complicated when the interlocutors were Indian (but not NS) because of their unfamiliar linguistic features (PF4: 'It is really difficult to distinguish between "thirteen" and "fourteen" (spoken by the Indian)'). To overcome these problems in communication via telephoning, both the two participants suggested that they used new technology such as 'skype' to enable 'face-to-face' communication (PF4) and 'whatsapp' to 'take a photo of the receipt and whatsapp to the boss' to facilitate discussion (PM5). Furthermore, PM5 detailed the differing

communication skills he adopted to communicate with NSs and NNSs respectively and, particularly for the latter, he suggested that he might need to use simpler expressions while grammatical correctness might become less important:

PM5: I can give you a few examples. The first example is about the amount of money. Let's take \$1.56 million as an example, I would say 'one, five, six, o o o o o...'. It is better to say it in this way rather than telling the whole number. It would become very clear. The second thing is when there are some expressions that you can't make the others understand, there are in fact two reasons. The first reason is that your English is not really good. The second reason is that English of the listener is also not really good. These situations are very interesting. If one person is an NS and the other is not, their communication on the phone would be better because the NS can lead the discussion in English. When you speak unclearly, s/he can repeat one more time using his/her language. If both are not NSs, what is the solution? The simplest way is to get rid of the unnecessary grammar. For example, 'I want to watch a movie with you tonight'. In an exaggerating way, s/he can simply say it as 'you', 'me', 'movie', 'tonight'. This is clear enough. However, if you speak a very lengthy sentence: 'I want to go with you...', the others may not understand. So when both the two speakers are not very good at English and they don't understand each other on phone, you rather say each word one by one. It would be clearer.

At this point, PF4 responded that communicating with an NS is relatively easily because they would try to ask for clarification, whereas NNSs might choose to 'let it pass' without out sorting out the problem, if any, explicitly (cf. Firth, 1996). PM5, however, suggested that Chinese might be linguistically more similar to other languages than English, which sometimes make NNS-NNS communication easier (e.g.

‘tone-enhancing features such as “ma” and “lor” in “you go lunch ma?”’). Nevertheless, based on their experience of talking with NSs, both of them acknowledged that there was a tendency that the NSs would accommodate them in NS-NNS communication by using ‘simpler English’ or ‘more general terms’ and ‘avoiding lengthy descriptions’ (PF4, PM5).

PF8

Difficulties: Situational difference in speaking English, cultural differences

Having encountered many NNSs in her previous overseas study in Britain and had a NS boss after returning to Hong Kong, PF8 seemed to have more opinions and experience regarding situational variation in NS-NNS and NNS-NNS interactions. When communicating with her NS boss (who was British), it appeared that she was more concerned with linguistic correctness (e.g. ‘tenses’) and choice of vocabulary as she wished to project a more ‘professional’ image. As for her communication with the NNSs, she suggested that she also wanted to give a better impression to new acquaintances by speaking more like a Briton but might gradually ‘relax’ later on. In this sense, her differing ways of speaking English seemed to be a pragmatic issue, where the power difference between interlocutors and their social relationship are decisive factors (see also PF10 in Appendix 9.6):

PF8: It depends on who the interlocutors are. If you are talking with local Hong Kong people, you will be unable to understand each other using simple English. Sometimes if you... for example, when I talk with my boss who is an NS, he sometimes will use some more professional terms. You may not be able to understand his meaning. You also want to modify your spoken English to one that can be comparable to him, though it is not possible. My English is not professional enough [...] when I am talking to my colleagues in Hong Kong, we just speak English normally using simple English as long as we both understand. If we don't understand, we discuss together what this term means. If I am talking to my boss, I will try to speak better English. However, when I was in the foreign country, the others would not mind if you spoke English badly. It's okay as long as you can communicate. Sometimes you can speak English freely [...] When talking with NNSs, you would want to give a better impression to the other at the first place. As I have studied in an overseas country, I should have learnt something. I will speak (English) with some accent, carrying a little British accent. We first communicated in this way and gradually you could relax. We accommodated each other.

She however stressed that it was less a problem of communication than that of cultural differences (e.g. 'living habits') among people she met when she was staying in Britain (see also PM17 in Appendix 9.6).

PF11

Difficulties: Cultural differences, NNS accents, situational difference in speaking English

In the workplace, cultural (and pragmatic) problems were also emphasised by PF11 previously working in two airline companies, where she frequently encountered NSs internally (e.g. American, Australian) but NNSs externally (e.g. Thai, Filipino). She

specifically highlighted that ‘people from Southeast Asia are most difficult to communicate with’ and ‘they didn’t understand what you were doing’ (PF11). The following two excerpts recorded her experience and comments regarding her interactions with these two parties respectively:

PF11 (communicating with her Australian/US bosses): Usually I needed to approach bosses who were at a more senior level than me. As we have a different nationality, there might be some cultural issues. For example, you might not have approached them or asked them for something in the right time. There might also be difficulties when explaining the project to them and asking them to cooperate. It might also be because of language problems.

PF11 (communicating with colleagues from Southeast Asia, e.g. Thailand, the Philippines): For example, we called each overseas office a pot. We sent the same thing to the different pots but we found out that some people’s work was okay but some was not. Maybe people in the newly developing regions... once they have got used to the mode of communication after a longer time, there would be no problem. Usually, there would be problems for the new ones. The new one wouldn’t understand even if you have written, spoken or explained to them what you wanted. They completely didn’t get what you wanted. I didn’t know it’s the problem with the project or the use of language.

Nevertheless, she also suggested she found it easier to communicate with NSs than the NNS counterparts such as the Japanese, Korean and Thai due to their ‘not very accurate’ English and ‘unusual’ accents (PF11). In contrast, she suggested that the HKE accent was not found to be problematic in her work and, in her view, other NNSs may even consider Hong Kong people as speaking English better, except for

Singaporeans who she thought their English was good. In addition, she added that grammar correctness (e.g. ‘tenses’) was not very important in international communication ‘if the aim was only to achieve the purpose of communication’. After all, she suggested that her NS colleagues would not ‘criticise’ her ‘using wrong words’ as long as she could ‘communicate and express meanings’. Her improvement in English proficiency was via frequent practice of spoken English with her clients (PF11: ‘Gaining your experience by speaking and listening’), which was training that had not been provided at school. Although she claimed that she tended to speak English in the same way talking to both NSs and NNSs, she highlighted she would accommodate towards people whose English proficiency was relatively low:

PF11: If I speak English, I personally would require myself to speak it well, regardless of whether you are a male or female. Shouldn’t it be like this? On the other hand, if I sense that a person is relatively new, is a newcomer or doesn’t speak English very fluently, I will accommodate her in my speech. But I won’t do it the other way round with the people I am closed to.

PF12

Difficulties: NNS & NS accents, situational difference in speaking English, cultural differences, telephoning, NNSs’ lack of confidence, low English proficiency & lack of fluency
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As a manager in a multinational company, PF12 described challenges both facing herself and her colleagues when talking with a wide range of ELF speakers (e.g. from ‘Britain’, ‘the US’, ‘Middle East’, ‘Asia’ and ‘Australia’). The first and foremost

issue she mentioned was again accents of speakers from different regions that were difficult to understand. One of the effective strategies she highlighted was the replacement of oral communication by written one (e.g. 'emails') and in cases of face-to-face interactions, she might have to guess widely. Comparing the accents of various English varieties she and her colleagues encountered, she revealed that not only NNS accents were sometimes found to be problematic, but quite surprisingly some varieties of NS accents, such as the Australian (e.g. 'data' in Australian accent) and Scottish accents (with 'a very strong Gaelic accent'), were reported to be even more difficult to understand than accents of people such as from the Middle East. In contrast, she felt that 'the Singaporean English was quite easy to understand' because 'it is in fact quite like the Chinese's English'. In her experience, the English speech of Hong Kong people was generally not problematic to the interlocutors, except for some Middle East people who might think that their English was poor. On some occasions, she felt difficulties understanding some 'non-standard' British English spoken by the 'younger generations' as 'they tended to "have eaten some sounds" and "mix the words together"'. This perhaps indicates that NS accents other than the textbook ones (e.g. RP, GA) might equally cause intelligibility problems in ELF interactions. Nevertheless, PF12 stated that her customers from NNS countries 'tended to show tolerance with each others' and 'use whatever methods' to

communicate 'as English is not their native language'. Alternatively, when communicating with the NSs, she suggested that she would be more conscious with her use of appropriate English (e.g. 'choice of vocabulary', 'slangs') because, in her experience, her British colleagues 'made jokes' of her use of language.

According to her (rich) working experience as well as observations in her company, employees in her company were quite aware of culture differences among people of differing nationalities. For instance, she suggested that she could 'say more jokes in front of the British' but she 'didn't quite dare to say many jokes in front of the Asians who are duller' (PF12). Some other cultural issues she mentioned however were not directly related to the use of language:

PF12: Some customers like bringing their business cards but some do not. This is not related to speaking. Some like to do so but some don't like it very much. Some like shaking hands but some don't. For example, we won't send a female colleague to meet a Middle East customer. We certainly would send a male. They won't welcome you if you are a female, like the Iranian [...] Don't talk about religious issues with any customers, especially with the Middle East customers. That's too sensitive.

She added that 'whenever you visit a country, you need to know about their cultural background and taboos so that you won't be offensive' or 'feel embarrassed'.

Especially for the case of meeting Japanese clients, she suggested that communicative

problems were even more serious due to their ‘poor English’ and ‘very difficult business culture, which made her company difficult to ‘access to their market’.

Echoing the responses of PF4 and PM5, PF12 reported that face-to-face communication and video conferencing (e.g. using ‘Skype’) were easier than telephoning due to the presence of visual clues such as ‘body language’ and facial expression (e.g. ‘the shape of the speaker’s mouth’) that the listeners could refer to.

Furthermore, to cope with communication problems in phone conversations, she recommended that the Hong Kong speaker should have some psychological preparation regarding the nationality of the interlocutors. In addition, she suggested that strategies such as repetition, asking for clarification, speaking more slowly and writing were also helpful. In contrast, she highlighted that the British she encountered often tended to accommodate them by speaking more slowly as they understood that

NNSs might not be able to follow their speech:

PF12: In fact, if I know where they come from, I would have already known that it might be difficult for them to make me understand. Then, I might ask them to repeat many times. Those people might also understand. For example, some of the British would speak more slowly. They would also have expected us that we could understand. I am not sure. I think the British would have expected that we understand and they tend to speak more slowly. Even if the Middle East people have repeated many times, they won’t be unhappy or angry. I don’t know. Maybe they already understand that it is difficult for us to communicate. That’s okay. However, finally we would also send

emails for safety reasons, to make sure something when doing business.

As the manager of the marketing department, PF12 observed that communication problems sometimes also stemmed from Hong Kong people's low English proficiency and their lack of confidence in speaking (see also PM14, PF16 in Appendix 9.6). Comparing the spoken English of the locally and overseas educated employees in her company, she commented that the former 'were not active enough', 'were a bit afraid of speaking English', 'often hesitated', 'had a low English proficiency' and 'spoke English mechanically' (i.e. 'just like reciting sentences') whereas the latter noticeably 'were more confident', 'had a higher English proficiency' and 'spoke English more fluently'. Therefore, as an interviewer for employment in her department, she acknowledged the advantages of these overseas graduates for meeting foreign customers (apart from some local ones who had greater confidence) because they 'were accustomed to their way of socialising' and 'could more easily get along with them', yet the local counterparts were considered to be 'relatively more shy'. Nevertheless, despite the aforementioned problems in communication, she observed that her colleagues gradually overcame them by accumulated experience, regardless of whether the interlocutors were NSs or NNSs.

PF16

Difficulties: NNS accents, NNSs' high rate of speech & low English proficiency, cultural differences
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In the marketing field, PF16 also encountered both cultural and linguistic problems on business trips, where she needed to communicate with foreigners from many different countries. Again, accent variation was one of the first issues she had identified along with the speed of their speech, in which case she needed to ask for repetition:

PF16: For example, one of my Russian clients was an Indian. His/her English was really difficult to understand and s/he spoke very fast. They also had a strong accent. It's difficult to understand [...] If you didn't understand, you asked them to repeat again and again. Basically, you can generally guess the area of what they were talking about. You could guess what they were saying.

Despite their recognisable accents, PF16 suggested that most of her clients 'had a relatively high education level' and there were indeed different degrees of difficulties in understanding diverse accents. Among those that she encountered was the Indian English accent, which she thought was most difficult to understand. She, however, suggested that 'there was no problem with the German and Filipino'. Comparing her experience of communicating with NSs and NNSs, she suggested she 'felt more comfortable' talking with the NSs as they were eager to 'slow down their rate of speech when talking to NNSs', although she was also aware of the existence of different NS varieties (e.g. 'Englishes of the UK, the US, Australia and Ireland'). This has probably pointed to the importance of mutual accommodation in communication.

Interestingly, she complained that although some of her clients spoke English very fluently, they did not realise that their non-standard linguistic features might have been problematic to her. She lamented that it was indeed a matter of respect more than their language proficiency though it was also deemed to be important:

PF16: They thought they spoke very fluently. Indeed, they were very fluent but their accent was really difficult to understand. They won't accommodate to you at all [...] In fact, it depends on whether the person knows how to respect you. So far, among the people I have encountered, even if their English was really bad, they would use whatever ways such as speaking more slowly, drawing and using facial expressions to help you understand if they respected you. As mentioned just now, the Indian client spoke very fluently. The reason why I found it so difficult to understand was that s/he didn't care about you but just finished what s/he wanted to say. S/he didn't even care how much you understood but s/he just kept talking. There was something s/he wanted to express. S/he had her/his own purpose when speaking. I felt that it's so meaningless. After you have finished talking, you didn't care how much I understood. Why were you talking? So, every time after I listened to him/her, I asked him/her whether s/he meant so. For many people, I didn't even need to do this [...] If you ask me whether vocabulary and grammar are important, it's very difficult to judge. It's okay as long as you can communicate. If you really lack vocabulary... you know so few vocabularies, it would really influence you ability to express. You can't say that's not important.

In her another marketing job, she also experienced the same kind of cultural issue with clients from the Middle East, who again hardly accommodated to her in their ELF interaction. In some extreme cases, she was unable to process the conversation on the phone and she had to continue their communication via email, especially when

there were no clues to the topics the clients were referring to at the beginning of a telephone conversation:

PF16: I really didn't understand at all. There's no way when you found out that you didn't understand no matter how they spoke. Also, you couldn't trace what they were saying. There was not a specific topic. In another job, there was a general range of topics [...] Maybe they were talking about the design of a mould or a can. Maybe they were talking about the problem of loading your products on the shelf. Maybe they were saying that your products have been broken when they arrived. There would be many different conditions. So I couldn't even guess. Also, their English was much more difficult to understand in comparison to the Indian's. Much more difficult to understand... In fact, after talking for one or two sentences, you would already know whether you could understand. Even though I didn't know whether they understood what I was saying, I would ask them to email me. I didn't know whether they understood but I hung up.

She therefore attributed the degree of difficulty in ELF interactions to both the language proficiency and personality (or culture) of the interlocutors. Furthermore, among the various parameters of judging one's English proficiency (e.g. use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation), she acknowledged that pronunciation was the main problem. Nevertheless, even though she suggested it could be overcome gradually by frequent exposure to the corresponding accents, it might take much time to be accustomed to many varieties of accents (PF16: 'If you only face one person, you might not be affected by their English. If you face 10 people, it might take half a year to understand all of them'). In this regard, she suggested that for anyone who

wanted to take her job position, it would have been important to have more exposure to accent varieties.

Based on her working experience, PF16 further commented that the English proficiency of Hong Kong people in the international context was generally 'okay', yet the major obstacle of her junior colleagues was, again, their 'lack of confidence' in addition to 'insufficient vocabulary' (see also PF12). Having recognised Hong Kong people's generally high listening ability (to NS English), she recommended that some interactive activities in their previous training might help enhance their confidence in speaking English. Comparing the English speech of Indian and Hong Kong speakers, she believed that the HKE pronunciation was more intelligible, particularly because the Indian spoke English too fast, which indicated that speaking slowly was important in ELF interactions: 'When both the speakers do not speak English as their first language, you shouldn't speak so fast even if you speak very fluently, unless you are sure that the interlocutor has a similar English proficiency as you do' (PF16).

PF1 & PM2

Difficulties: NNSs' insufficient vocabulary & content in causal chat, NNS accents, situational difference in speaking English

Apart from linguistic and cultural issues, PF1 and PM2 in the same interview stated that they found it more difficult to converse casually (e.g. 'socialise' or 'speak English naturally' (PF1)) than speaking formally in English (e.g. 'meeting' (PF1), 'presentation' (PM2)) mainly due to their limited opportunity to speak English in their daily life and prior training that focused on formal/academic English:

PF1: I think it is not the most difficult to speak English in the meetings but in daily conversation such as in the pantry. This is most difficult because you are not accustomed to using this kind of routine, daily-life English for communication... I think. Because when you were learning English at school in the past, you were only taught some formal English such as how to ask a question in a complete sentence and answer in a complete sentence. Also you may lack something (vocabulary) you may see in your daily life...

PM2: If, let say, you are giving a presentation, there should be no problem because you would have prepared for it. Or there should be no problem for a meeting because you would have prepared for it. In contrast, if you suddenly meet someone.... You don't know how to speak.

On these occasions, they suggested that 'grammar is not a major problem; instead it's the wordings' (PM2), 'vocabulary', 'expression', 'styles and formality' (PF1). Nevertheless, they somehow tended to associate the appropriate style of speech with that of NSs being the interlocutors: 'Style is something that... maybe we are not too conscious of but we know that we might be saying something which, from the "eyes"

of the NSs, is too formal' (PF1). As for their experience of listening to foreign accents, PM2 claimed that he could 'understand the European accents' because 'he has got used to it' as he claimed that he studied French in his associate degree where he encountered English speakers coming from France:

PM2: We didn't understand his/her English (the French) at the beginning. We didn't understand him/her in the first half a year [...] After half a year, we were trained because we knew the French pronunciation system. Then gradually you would understand. As languages such as French and Italian are similar, I had comparatively fewer obstacles [understanding the English speech of the Italian].

This professional also recalled his experience of being taught by a Singaporean in his higher education, whom he claimed had a 'taste of Singlish' (PM2). Nonetheless, he suggested that he hardly had any problems understanding NNS accents because he tended to be able to adapt to them (PM2: 'I can "tune" myself into them'). In a similar vein, he also stated that he did not find it difficult to understand English spoken by mainland Chinese. In addition, PF1, in the same interview, suggested that though her Japanese teachers 'had their own accent', she would 'speak more slowly' so as to make her students easier to understand. Based on their experience, these two professionals believed that Hong Kong people needed to listen to English accents of different varieties, which, however, was deemed not to be 'something that could not be coped with without prior training' (PF1).

According to their experience of ELF interactions, PM2 suggested that the HKE pronunciation was less a problem (PM2: ‘people around the world can better understand [the HKE pronunciation]’) than grammar and vocabulary (e.g. ‘phrases, sentences and structures’) to their interlocutors. Nevertheless, PM2 also reported that they had various considerations when talking to NSs and NNSs respectively. He claimed that he would try his best to ‘tune’ his English to ‘sound more native-like when talking to the westerners’ to avoid the projection of a bad image but ‘tend not to speak in such a native way [with the Chinese and Hong Kong friends] because it would be so strange’. In his interview responses, it appeared what he called ‘Chinglish’ had a negative connotation of being ‘wrong’. In addition, he also revealed his lack of confidence facing NSs as he was worrying about making mistakes that might cause intelligibility problems (PM2: ‘I am afraid that the NSs would not understand what I say because I may have spoken something wrongly’). However, this concern with linguistic correctness did not apply to his communication with NNSs (PM2: ‘both of us might not understand [each other]’), to whom he felt more ‘relaxing’ speaking. His contrasting views on communicating with different interlocutors have perhaps suggested that psychological factors were most prominent, which were associated with the perceived social distance or distance in status among the interlocutors:

PM2: If I am talking to the NSs, I will correct my mistakes immediately after I have realised that. As for the NNSs, I would leave it. They will understand why I have made the mistakes. The NNSs will already understand why I would have made the mistakes [...] If I am facing the NSs, I will never speak English which is very HKE-like. In contrast, I tend not to make mistakes. If I make mistakes, I would be afraid that, first, they don't understand and, second, they will think that our English is bad.

On the contrary, PF1 tended to care less about grammar and vocabulary when conversing with NSs because she assumed that they could understand. Based on his previous experience of communicative with some Japanese, she exemplified that language mistakes (including what she claimed 'HK-like English') might cause greater problems in NNS-NNS interactions:

PF1: When you are talking to NSs, I won't care about the grammar or vocabulary so much because I think they would be able to understand, though I would also try my best not to make mistakes. Rephrasing is only used when I need to express some very complicated concepts. Certainly you will do it with NSs and NNSs when you are afraid that they don't understand. As for talking with NNSs, I think [...] I remember that when I was talking to the NNSs who are Japanese or so, some of the mistakes we made were based on our own (first) language... the mistakes stem from the difference in our native language. Then I would think that maybe they would not understand. For example, if I speak some HK-like English, maybe they will not understand.

Nevertheless, both the participants apparently had the consensus that whether they paid attention to language correctness also depended on the formality of the

English-speaking situation as well as the degree of social pressure. For example, PM2 claimed that he was 'frightened' that he might 'make mistakes in front of the boss'. Although PM1 stated that she 'would not have much pressure psychologically when talking to a tourist asking questions', she interestingly suggested that pressure might be exerted on her if she 'met an NS on the street while having a friend' besides her. This finding about contextual variation in their use of English echoes the results of the VGT in chapter 8, which reveal that the participants had fewer reservations about the use of NNS accent in less formal and more interactive English-speaking situations.

PM13

As the interviews included a bilingual professional (PM13) whose first language was English, his experience in English communication with NNSs in the Hong Kong context might provide a valuable perspective. As an NS, he commented on the intelligibility of English spoken by the Hong Kong people he encountered, in that, in his experience, the HKE accent rather than grammar correctness tended to be the major source of problems, especially in telephone conversations. His experience from an NS perspective was contrary to PM2 who worried about making grammatical mistakes that might cause communicative problems when facing NSs:

PM13: I do have problems... I do have problems I mean because there's been many situations where I've had to speak to a person with a

HKE accent and there're things that I mean it can be as ... it can be as worse as not being able to understand 60% of what they have said... The worst case... worst case I have come across literally [R: Is it because of their accent or is it because of their other aspects of English?] I think accent plays a very strong role because if you said... I mean even if what they've said is grammatically incorrect, I think if you ask an NS to say what they've said you know about that sentence, I would be able to make sense of it so to say. So I think in situations where I can't see the person kind of thing... I'm on the phone or something and I can't use visual cues to kind of make sense of something and I'm only relying on you know what I hear in terms of them speaking English. I think so... you know... the accent plays a very big part.

He supplemented that the Hong Kong people he encountered in his company in fact did not have a very low proficiency. Interestingly, even though this bilingual professional was able to speak and understand Cantonese, he did not think that it helped him understand English spoken by Hong Kong people whose mother tongue was also Cantonese:

PM13: I don't think it helps. I don't think it helps because they are not speaking... because the way they pronounce the words, it doesn't sound like Cantonese. So they're not you know I mean they're not... it doesn't help I mean I think if I was in that situation, I'll prefer the kind of use of mix-code. So it'll be better if maybe they supplemented something they didn't know how to speak in English.

In his own experience in communicating with Hong Kong people, he revealed that he would not have altered his way of speaking English to accommodate the NNS

interlocutors. This perhaps reflected his lack of awareness of mutual accommodation in ELF communication (see Jenkins, 2000).

9.7 Summary and implications

Based on the experience of and difficulties facing the interviewed professionals from a wide range of occupational and educational backgrounds, we can identify a number of observations in English-speaking situations involving Hong Kong people. In terms of their use of English, the findings generally accord with previous studies (Evans, 2010a; 2011) in that spoken English is often used among professionals in Hong Kong in their workplace and sometimes in leisure time. Further to these findings was our discovery that these professionals were exposed to diverse NS and NNS accents depending on the nature of their occupations. In addition, what seems to be contrary to the typical NNS-dominant ELF reality is that, probably owing to Hong Kong's colonial history (and its sustained business relationship with NS Anglophone countries), many interviewees reported that NSs were frequently the interlocutors in English communication, together with some participants who also communicated with NNSs. In the academic discourse, most of the professionals revealed that they had little experience of ELF interactions (i.e. communicating with NNSs), except for (from a rather receptive perspective) attending lectures conducted by NSs or NNSs.

Therefore, from a pedagogical perspective, if pronunciation teaching and modelling in the ELT classroom seek to reflect the sociolinguistic reality in Hong Kong, a complete shift to an ELF approach based on the NNS-dominant empirical findings is apparently not appropriate due to the high possibility of both NNS-NS and NNS-NNS English communication in the workplace. Nevertheless, as the professionals did reveal challenges facing them more frequently in ELF communication than in NS-NNS communication based on their working experience, the incorporation of some elements of the ELF approach in ELT teaching is seemingly necessary. Some of the major discoveries related to their difficulties in English communication in their daily workplace situations are listed below.

- Some Hong Kong people were relatively weak in listening and, particularly, speaking due to their insufficient training at school/university. In turn, they might lack confidence in speaking English.
- Accent variation was a major source of problems in communication, although it depended on the specific varieties of accent (e.g. Indian). The HKE pronunciation however tended not to cause intelligibility problems.
- Cultural differences caused communication problems, especially for people with a particular ethnicity (e.g. Middle East).
- Communication via telephoning was more difficult than in face-to-face

interactions.

- Communication problems occurred in both NS-NNS and NNS-NNS interactions.

In response to some of these challenges, the interviewees also highlighted several important observations or recommendations that we could take account of when reviewing our current approaches to ELT teaching:

- The English proficiency of the speakers (e.g. choice of vocabulary, fluency) played an important role in mutual understanding but grammatical correctness was less important in real (especially NNS-NNS) communication.
- Communication problems could be addressed by using written clues (or drawing), speaking slowly, asking for repetition and clarification, using simple English, mutual accommodation and advanced technology.
- Communication strategies adopted in NS-NNS and NNS-NNS were different.
- Technological advancement helped resolve problems in telephone communication.
- The ability to understand a non-standard accent could be enhanced by accumulated experience.
- Some people tended to sound like an NS to project a professional image when facing certain groups of people (e.g. NS or people with a higher social status) but

not necessarily for all people.

- People who graduated in an overseas university had a higher level of spoken English.
- Understanding cultures of people of different nationalities might benefit international communication.

In accordance with the pedagogical proposals of WE and ELF scholars, these observations somehow point to the importance of focusing on communication and accommodations skills in ELT teaching, rather than linguistic correctness. In the Hong Kong context, however, the pedagogical foci should be placed on both NS-NNS and NNS-NNS communication. As for the issue of pronunciation modelling, given the complex sociolinguistic reality where no accent was found to be dominant in real communication (except for the local variety as in any local settings), one important principle is perhaps to offer learners a real choice of a English-speaking target as long as it is intelligible to both the NS and NNS parties. Following the findings in this chapter, further investigation is needed to explore the real language practices of professionals as well as the issue of intelligibility. Meanwhile in the next chapter, the choice of a pronunciation target by these professionals is discussed in great detail.

CHAPTER TEN

Professionals' choice of a pronunciation target and attitudes towards pronunciation learning

10.1 Introduction

Following the professionals' self-reported data about their use of spoken English and exposure to accents in chapter 9, this chapter presents a more in-depth evaluation of Hong Kong people's choice of their pronunciation target. The discussion mainly draws on findings derived from the second part of the interviews (i.e. Q6-10 in Appendix 6.3), which was mainly guided by the following question:

Which of the following choices would be the learning target of your spoken English (also Putonghua)? Why?

- (a) I would like to sound like a native speaker of English (e.g. an American or a British);
- (b) I would like to sound like an educated English speaker of Hong Kong (e.g. my English teacher);
- (c) It doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners?

It is noted that this interview question was followed by a similar question (in some interviews) that centred on the pronunciation of Putonghua for a comparison to probe further ideas from the interviewees. This is because Putonghua has become an increasingly important language in Hong Kong due largely to its tight relationship with mainland China, particularly in the political, economic and education domains

(see Lai, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2013). Again, the discussion of the interviewees' responses is case-wise according to their choice (a-c) and, for each case, a summary of their reasons is first provided. Apart from the discussion of the most representative and information-rich cases, some supplementary and repeated responses by the interviewees are included in Appendix 10.1. In general, option (a) (i.e. NS English) was most popular among the interviewees and all the remaining participants stressed that mutual understanding was of paramount importance in workplace communication (i.e. choice (c)). As none of them selected choice (b), this chapter therefore only discussed their reasons for choosing (a) and (c) in relationship to their working experience in sections 10.2 and 10.3 respectively. In section 10.4, these factors are summarised to discuss any pedagogical implications.

10.2 Choice (a): a native speaker of English

PF4 & PM5

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| - NS English as the ultimate target | - Attainability depending on age and family |
| - NS accents as a bonus for career | background |

While it is uncertain whether the participants' attitudes were influenced by their English learning experience, PF4 and PM5, as a senior professional in the business field, clearly conformed to NS norms. Particularly, PF4 argued that learners should learn English in a 'traditional way', which regarded NS English as a 'base' that

represented a necessary foundation for English learning. This perhaps resembled how she previously learnt English in Hong Kong by the former ELT teaching approaches (e.g. targeting an NS standard and correcting non-standard ‘errors’) (see Howatt with Widdowson, 2004):

PF4: I think when you’re learning, you must learn in the traditional way. After you have learnt the traditional things, you can choose not to use them. But once you don’t have that ‘base’, there would be some problems whatever you are doing. [...] You can’t be that short-sighted. In Hong Kong, you can use a ‘less good’ pronunciation but you can still communicate with the others. However, you might not just be staying in Hong Kong. You may also need to face the international world. One day, if you reside in the UK, would it be easier for you to pick up others’ accent when you have the ‘base’ than learning their language from the beginning? Because learning this (the base) is useful for your whole life... when you go to France, you don’t necessarily have ‘the base’ in English because they have the French accent. But the issue is once I move from France to Britain, I don’t need to learn it again because I already have ‘the base’.

From her argument above, we could perhaps see her perception that learning NS English as a point of departure would benefit her future use of English particularly when communicating with NSs. What she called a ‘base’ of English was also argued to be useful in adapting to other accents: ‘You can add something to the NS pronunciation and it becomes the American accent. You can also add some other things to it and make it become another accent’ (PF4). Although research has suggested that ELF (or WE) speakers might want to retain their local linguistic

features to preserve their cultural identity (see Jenkins, 2007), it appeared that PF4 did not regard HKE as her identity marker as she argued that speaking with an NS pronunciation could hide her identity:

PF4: Let's use Singapore as an example. After they have learnt 'Singlish', other people can easily recognise that they are Singaporean based on their speech. People would know which country they come from based on their English. If you speak an NS-like pronunciation, no one would know where you come from. If you speak very fluent NS-like English, you are not necessarily an NS. You can be a Chinese.

Nevertheless, PM5 pointed out that a pronunciation target varied according to different factors such as the age of the learners, their family background, the kinds of school and identities of teachers, all of which corresponded to the degree of attainability. The three options for him were regarded as 'various goals' he wished to achieve at different stages of study with choice (a) being the ultimate one (see also PM17 & PM18 in Appendix 10.1):

PM5: I think there are two situations regarding these three learning targets. The first situation is that if I have a child or my friend has a child, s/he would already have started to use only English if the financial conditions allow [...] Another group of people would not be like this. They cannot achieve this if they are less wealthy. This is the first area which is different. The second area is like me, who is already an adult. I could no longer be trained again from the kindergarten level. It is impossible for me to be taught by an NS in the kindergarten, primary and secondary school. Then, I would think the most important thing among these three choices is C. The first point is whether my English can be understood by the interlocutor. If I can achieve this, and I also think that I can do so, I would start to want to speak English like

a local English teacher (i.e. option (b)) [...] If you ask me about these options, in fact, A, B and C are the various goals I want to achieve when I have reached different levels. I won't say that I would achieve A at the beginning. This is not quite possible. I can probably achieve this unless I now begin to study from a kindergarten, where they are NS teachers.

In response to this age issue for the target for English, PF4 argued that an NS goal should be adopted as early as in primary education because she believed that students would already have found it difficult to change their way of speaking English at the secondary level (PF4: 'The primary students are in fact a piece of "white paper" - they would change into whatever you like based on what you give them'). Her belief interestingly accords with the concept of fossilisation in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories in that complete acquisition of the NS competence is virtually impossible after the critical period (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In this regard, she argued that, in Hong Kong's education system, the quality of a school where the students were admitted to was highly decisive for the nurturing of their English proficiency:

PF4: There are band 1 and band 3 secondary schools and their difference is great. There is completely no problem to set the NS goal for band 1 schools. As you might observe, students' English proficiency in many band 1 schools is very high. As for band 3 schools, the students' English proficiency is basically not high. In Hong Kong now, it is not what you want but what the schools want to give the students. What the schools can give to the children. Once you have entered a school, it has already determined your 'trajectory' of learning.

Whether your English is good or bad depends on which school you enter.

On top of this, she argued that it was impossible for the government to set an ‘appropriate’ goal for the students (which presumably in her view was a less demanding target than an NS one) because of the immense parental demands (PF4: ‘Even if the government has set the average (target), the parents would also ask the students to attend tutorials and to do many other things’). To deepen the discussion, the interview topic was subsequently shifted more specifically to assessment criteria for English pronunciation. As shown below, what they claimed to be acceptable regarding HKE was ‘a pass’ in the assessment while the highest score was equivalent to ‘accuracy’ adhering to NS norms for the differentiation among students:

PM5: If you could pronounce the rising and falling tones accurately, ‘(grade) C’. If you also pronounce the final sound accurately, ‘B’. You get an ‘A’ for accurate pronunciation of everything with rising and falling tones. Why do I suddenly have such a thought? If you are attending an examination for the pilot, captain, you would be given a book (in English) but you are not studying the English words in it. When you sit for the examination for the XXX Airlines (an airlines company), you need to pronounce [the sentences in] past tense so as to evaluate whether you pronounce the final ‘t’ and ‘ed’ sounds accurately. So you can imagine that the requirement is stricter for pilots. If you ask me how you should set a standard for an examination, I think both PF4 and I would say that the grade you attain depends on your English proficiency level. You get an ‘A’ if you pronounce all sounds correctly. If you omit some final sounds, ‘B’. You would certainly fail if you miss one syllable out of four.

As for the pragmatic value of NS accents in workplace situations, both PF4 and PM5 (as senior professionals) stated that they would not have recruited an employee solely because of his/her NS accent but an array of factors such as his/her ‘background’, ‘working experience’, ‘communication skills’, ‘attitudes’ (PF4) and the nature of occupations (PM5, see below):

PM5: If I am recruiting a PR whose duty is specific to meet the foreigners, I would need one with accurate pronunciation so as not to influence the company’s reputation. On the contrary, if I am hiring a salesman, like me who sells diamonds, I would first look at whether he knows about diamonds.

PF12

- | | |
|--|---|
| - NS accents as a bonus for job interviews | - NS English as an achievable goal |
| - NS accents as a standard | - NESTs (especially British) as better teachers |

Their attitudes towards job recruitment generally echoed another professional (PF12) at the managerial position, who was experienced in hiring new employees and had detailed their selection criteria (e.g. ‘having some knowledge in IT’, ‘being able to write and speak in Chinese and English’). Although she suggested that the employees ‘did not need to be excellent in English’, she highlighted that they needed to ‘be able to communicate with the customers, the vendor or foreign magazine reporters’ and ‘should not make grammatical mistakes’ (PF12). Furthermore, she claimed that NSs were somehow better because of their ‘greater confidence’ and ability to ‘chat

casually with the customers'. As an experienced interviewer, she argued that somebody who had an NS-like accent did not necessarily have a high English proficiency. Interestingly, after meeting many interviewees, she realised that although they might give a good impression to the interviewer because of their NS-like accent, whether they had a high working ability was another matter:

PF12: I have interviewed some students who have studied overseas. They have studied for quite a long time. Their accent was quite NS-like but it doesn't mean that their English was very good. You are referring to speaking? Their speaking was okay, with an NS-like accent. However, when you ask them to write something, that was rubbish. There were many grammatical mistakes. Writing and speaking are two different matters. They spoke very well but they made a lot of mistakes in writing [...] I won't hire them just because they have that kind of accent. Would I have a better impression? You probably would wrongly get the impression that their English is very good. You might think that their English is very good. However, as we have hired too many... the turnover rate of our company is very high... I have begun to get used to the fact that even if they sound like an NS, their English might not be particularly good.

PF12 further compared the working ability of locally educated Hong Kong people and those who studied (or lived) overseas. Although she suggested that the former 'could be said to be hard working' and 'very focused', which might be appropriate for the 'R&D department', she tended to 'hire those who have returned from an overseas country' as they needed 'to face a lot of overseas salespeople' (PF12). Previously, they have also recruited 'people of different ethnicities', such as (two) Indians, whose

English she claimed was ‘very good’ and they ‘performed well when facing foreign (or especially Indian) clients’ (PF12). Instead of attaining an NS-like proficiency, she suggested that ‘knowing another language’ (i.e. being bilingual) was in fact of an additional advantage. From an education perspective, PF12 stressed that the key issue was that learners ‘need to establish a good foundation (of English) in the primary and secondary school, where she recommended ‘hiring more NESTs to communicate with them’ and ‘giving them more projects and presentations’ so as to ‘train up their confidence in speaking’. Alternatively, she observed that ‘English of a child is better if there is a Filipino domestic helper at home’ as she believed that learners needed to ‘practise since they are small’. Interestingly, she was not concerned that the domestic helpers’ Filipino accent would affect their English learning due to her focus on communication:

PF12: In fact, it’s fine as long as you can communicate. I think language is universal. Don’t bother whether you have an accent. As long as you can communicate, you can do business. I won’t refuse to do business with you because of your accent [...] If there is a Filipino domestic helper at home, you can ask her to train their children’s English. So you can foresee that the English proficiency of the future primary school students who graduated from the kindergarten now will be high. Their spoken English will be okay as the parents of this generation have a high expectation of them.

Nevertheless, as the mother of a new-born child, even though she acknowledged that communication was most important, she seemed to prefer her child to be taught by

NESTs (see also PM9 in Appendix 10.1), preferably Britain, as their English was perceived as ‘the standard’. From this perspective, she believed that NS-like proficiency might be achievable if a child could be exposed to NS English in their early childhood, especially at the stages of kindergarten, primary and secondary education but not necessarily at university level where understanding of ‘concept and theorise’ became most crucial (see also PM3 in Appendix 10.1) :

PF12: As I have studied in Britain in the past, I think the NESTs are best to be British [...] I would think that they can learn some traditional and standard English but I won’t discriminate against them if they are not British as I am also not. If I can choose for example a tutorial teacher in the tutorial centre, I will choose British English among those who promote Australian or British English [...] Rather than letting your child listening to someone who speaks very characteristic Chinglish, I think they can learn and pick it up fast if you let them listening to the speech of an NS. I don’t know. This is just my feeling. I think sometimes the English teachers in the kindergarten and primary school may not speak English correctly based on their English proficiency. This is little chance that an NS will speak and teach English wrongly. In terms of the teaching of phonics and pronunciation, a Hong Kong person may not pronounce the sounds accurately.

PF8

- NSs as the native and standard English	- Personal goal differing from assessment criteria
Benefits of local English teachers	(-Avoiding a native Putonghua accent to preserve a Hong Kong identity)

Having graduated from an English program, PF8 argued that the adoption of an NS target would be advantageous for Hong Kong’s prospect as an international city in long terms but, practically speaking, an NS target was quite ‘difficult to achieve’ and

it was basically a personal choice (also see PM17 & PM18, PF11 in Appendix 10.1).

Nevertheless, in examinations, she highlighted that the students needed to be consistent with their pronunciation (either conforming to the American or British pronunciation) but she thought that the assessment on accents tended to merely rely on the impression given to the examiners:

PF8: In a broad direction, if you want to increase the status of Hong Kong in the world, you need to integrate with the world anyway. The broad direction is that you follow the others... but personally, this is a personal matter. [...] If you speak an American accent, you need to be consistent. You need to be consistent... using the American accent. If you have the 'r' sound, then you speak it throughout your entire speech. If you speak a British accent, you neglect the 'r' sound. So, you don't mix the American and British pronunciation. I think in assessment, this is a matter of impression. Accent is a matter of impression. Your impression for the examiners is very important. They will give you some positive marks for this.

Probably due to her preference for an NS accent, PF8 suggested that the inclusion of more native English teachers at school might benefit the teaching of pronunciation as 'they teach a more native and standard English' (see also PM3, PM9, PM17 & PM18 in Appendix 10.1). Despite this, she also acknowledged that when she was studying at the secondary school, it was not necessary because 'English of the English teachers was really not bad' and 'they had no problem teaching oral'. She supplemented that additional advantages of local secondary teachers were that they 'have their own

experience and examination techniques' and they 'follow the teaching schedule and local syllabus better'.

Although PF8 suggested that she personally preferred the NS British English accent, she seemed to possess a different perception when the same question was changed to focusing on a Putonghua learning target. Interestingly, she rejected the idea of adhering to a standard Beijing accent because she wanted to preserve her Hong Kong identity. Having commented on the difference in her choice between an English and Putonghua target, she argued that it was associated with the language originality as well as the fact that 'Hong Kong is part of China':

PF8: In order to preserve the Hong Kong people's identity, the identity of the southern people or Canton people... I think we should not follow the mainland Beijing accent. I can speak Putonghua. You must learn Putonghua and be able to understand but I don't think you need to roll your tongue more like the dialect of the Beijing people. You don't need to do it in that way. I think you can sound more like the Taiwanese, because it is more difficult to Hong Kong people to follow the accent of the Beijing people. The southern people have their own accent.

PF10

- | | |
|---|--|
| - NS accent as an advantage for job hunting | - Learning pronunciation via frequent exposure to NS accents |
| - NS pronunciation being unteachable | - Situational difference in adjusting accents
(- Putonghua being less important than English) |

Based on her working experience, PF10 suggested that the employers generally prefer to hire people who sounded like speaking good English: ‘They would prefer to hire the person once they heard that s/he speaks good English’ (see also PM3, PM9, PM17 & PM18, PF11 in Appendix 10.1). In her impression, she felt that native English-speaking Chinese (e.g. ABC - ‘American-born Chinese’) had additional advantages for career as compared to their local counterparts as they apparently spoke ‘good English’:

PF10: If both of you have the same working experience and apply for a marketing job, an ABC is more likely to be hired and with a higher salary. This is the ‘deadly spot’ (critical factor) in our field. You will be fine as long as your English sounds good. As you don’t have much opportunity to demonstrate how good you are in writing, speaking is the only way and this can be discovered in the interview.

Based on her interview experience, sounding like an NS would be beneficial though it might not necessary correspond to ones’ working ability: (PF10: ‘Sometimes people would equate your high English proficiency with high ability, unless they found out there’s problem with your working ability after a long time of working’). Yet, in fact she suggested that people who spoke English like an NS apparently delivered presentations better in comparison to those speaking ‘Chinglish or in a Hong Kong

way'. She described 'Chinglish' as lacking connectivity in pronunciation while projecting an image that the presenters had insufficient confidence:

PF10 (explaining what she claimed 'Chinglish'): When you say one word by one word. You don't speak 'it_is' but 'it is' (without connectivity). Some people really speak in this way. That's the difference. When you listen to this, you would always feel a lack of confidence for unknown reasons. You would always feel that the person sounds better gives a better presentation.

However, her departmental manager apparently did not like her colleagues speaking like an NS as it was deemed to be 'a kind of showing off' and, hence, PF10 claimed that she would 'tend to avoid doing so': 'When you say "marketing executive" (in GA), s/he would think that you are showing off with the accent; so you would just say 'marketing executive' (with a tonic HKE accent) in front of him/her' (PF10). She regarded GA as the correct pronunciation and argued that one's English proficiency could be 'adjusted' when communicating with different interlocutors (i.e. NSs or NNSs):

PF10: It does make a difference. You would be afraid that people (e.g. the manager) think that you are showing off [if you speak like an NS]. So there is a bit of difference between talking to an NS and NNS [R: When facing the NS, you will?] For example, if the word really has the 'r' sound (e.g. 'marketing'), you will pronounce the 'r' sound as it were. Otherwise, it depends on who the interlocutor is. I think your English proficiency can be adjusted. You can adjust it to a higher or lower level.

In fact, PF10 lamented that she did not learn much about English ‘pronunciation’ and ‘rhythm’ in her prior education, particularly at university. Alternatively, she acquired English pronunciation via ‘watching dramas’ and argued that a native-like pronunciation was ‘unteachable’ in the local context:

PF10: It’s about the feeling. Even if I teach you all the syllables... are they called syllables? They won’t understand if they don’t get it. It depends on how you catch the feeling of the language. That’s why I said that watching dramas would work. As I had a great desire for performance when I was small, I imitated how people speak English after watching the dramas. [...] It is unteachable, unless you keep practising. In fact, it is your environment. You need to immerse yourself into the environment. In Hong Kong, you lack this immersion environment. No one would do it. The reason why the ABCs sound so NS is because of their environment where everyone speaks English. You were trained in that way. Your vocal cord would not be different.

Furthermore, she highlighted that the acquisition of an NS pronunciation was difficult, which depended on ‘people’s sense of a language’ and ‘talent in learning a language’.

Turning to the comparison between the importance of English and Putonghua, she suggested that a high Putonghua proficiency as well as a native-like proficiency of Putonghua might be less demanded because ‘people have less demand for a high Putonghua proficiency though they might think that it’s good that you speak good Putonghua’, which she claimed was ‘a bonus’ while ‘being good at English is even better’. In her experience, the interviewers (for jobs) might have a lower expectation of the interviewees’ Putonghua proficiency as they also did not attain a very high

level of Putonghua (PF10: ‘As both of us only spoke Putonghua fairly, they might feel embarrassed to challenge me’).

PF1 & PM2

- | | |
|---|---|
| - NS pronunciation being unteachable | - Communication ability being more important and should be the pedagogical foci |
| - Dissociation between an NS English target and its attainability | (- Putonghua being less commonly used worldwide) |
| - NS accents being attainable if taught by NESTs | (- The lower instrumental value of Putonghua than English) |
| - Learning of cultural issues being useful but not necessary | |

In the same interview, PF1 and PM2 who both selected option (a) seemed to dissociate the attainability of NS English from a learning target (e.g. PM2: ‘it can be said to be a target for your learning process but whether you can really achieve it...’).

Particularly, PF1 revealed her ambivalent attitude towards this NS target in that she, on the one hand, wanted to achieve it but, on the other hand, did not want to deliberately imitate the speech of an NS (PF1: ‘I would want to achieve it but in daily speaking, I won’t do it deliberately’). These two professionals also described situations where they might alter their way of speaking English depending on the interlocutors (see chapter 8). In spite of their preference for NS English, they did not have a strong negative feeling about English spoken by the educated HKE speakers. A case in point in the discussion was that of the government officers (e.g. Donald Tsang, Hong Kong’s former Chief Executive), particularly in the older generations, whom

they believed had a ‘very good English foundation’, ‘spoke English fluently’, ‘tended to use NS-like expressions and structures’ (PF1) and ‘made good use of vocabulary’ (PM2). These descriptions of an educated form of HKE, however, mainly referred to the HKE pronunciation but NS-like use of grammar and vocabulary.

Commenting on their previous English learning experience (e.g. in which ‘the teacher only taught using the blackboard’ (PM2)), they recommended that there should have been more ‘contact between teachers and students’, ‘group discussion’ (PM2), ‘activities for conversation’ and ‘presentation’ (to establish their confidence) (PF1). Interestingly, these recommendations seemingly did not align with their goal of an NS pronunciation target but rather to enhance communicative ability. Apart from these pedagogical proposals, both of them preferred to be taught by the NS teachers (e.g. PF1: ‘My ideal English teacher must be the NSs’) and they believed that an NS pronunciation would have been acquired if they have had such a teacher since their childhood. In terms of assessment, PF1 and PM2 also tended to conform to an NS standard. Even though PM2 argued that ‘it (the target) doesn’t have to be NS-like but people need to know the meaning of words you are pronouncing’, both of them tended to believe that in order to attain a full score, the candidate should not ‘pronounce the words wrongly’. Some features they mentioned included the correct

position of word stress (e.g. 'image') and word connectivity. Further the discussion, however, PM2 did acknowledge the difficulty in regarding an NS pronunciation as the standard due to accent variation among inner circle English varieties: 'I think what is native-like is very controversial; For example, the Australians think that being NS-like would be the Australian pronunciation and the British, American, Canadian...'

(PM2). From this perspective, PF1 suggested that the current assessment criteria might need to be revisited to focus on the candidates' communicative ability rather than an NS-like pronunciation:

PF1: Just now I have said that I think the purpose should be for communication. You don't need to be NS-like. But I also understand in some international examinations, they have their own agenda and so with such a criterion. So that's unavoidable. But I think the practical use is for communication. There might be a new test, or the test may be gradually changed in the future according to what I preferred, i.e. you don't have to include the NS-like element.

In addition, the cultural aspect of English was also an issue of discussion in this interview. Both of them agreed it was important for learners to have some knowledge about other's culture but there was a difficulty in the selection of appropriate resources (e.g. 'Education TV', 'newspaper') as well as that of people from different nationalities (e.g. 'British', 'American'). PM2 argued that the British and American culture must have been included as they were 'most popular'. Nonetheless, both of

them tended to believe that the inclusion of some culture elements in teaching could be useful but not necessary:

PF1: I think it does you no harm as well if you don't give a hug when you meet a person. This is not so obvious. As you just said, it might be important to know some of the taboos in some countries but not for the British, American, Australian and New Zealanders [...] And also even if we meet people from countries with more taboos, we meet them in Hong Kong. They might also have a lower expectation of you in case you have offended them carelessly. I think they might not feel too offensive or they might even understand that they are not in their own country. Some people may not understand. But maybe when you visit others' countries, it might be more serious if you do that.

PM2: If you ask me whether it would have a great influence, I would say it won't influence much. This is just very minor.

As for the choice of a Putonghua target, PF1 suggested that she had an even 'higher expectation' (sounding like a native speaker of Putonghua). Both PM1 and PM2 observed that there have been more varieties of English accent but only one dominant Beijing accent for Putonghua which was more restrictedly used in China (e.g. PM2: 'Because Putonghua is most often used in China, we usually will usually use the Beijing accent but there are already too many places in which English is used'). Again, they dissociated their target of a native 'Beijing' Putonghua standard from its attainability (PF1: 'Honestly, my target is really the Beijing one but, again, you won't have the chance to acquire it') but, in contrast, they also felt that speaking with a Beijing Putonghua accent was 'unnatural'. Nevertheless, PF1 and PM2 seemed to

have slightly different views about whether a Beijing accent corresponded to ‘good’ Putonghua. PM2 argued against its relevance (PM2: ‘Just like when you are in the mainland, people won’t think that your Putonghua is bad if you speak with a different accent, not a Beijing accent’) whereas PF1 argued that if there was a standard for Putonghua, this standard was likely to become privilege in the society. Her observation aligned with the scholarly claim in applied linguistics from a critical perspective (e.g. Phillipson, 1992a; Pennycook, 1994), which suggests that the dominance of English, as well as a single standard, might create inequality for certain groups of English speakers. The following recorded PF1’s comment on the presence of a nationwide examination basing on a Putonghua standard:

PF1: Isn’t it in China, they also have a standard Putonghua for their teaching? [...] So different people would have a different grade for the examination. I think if there is such an examination with the different grades, would there be a privilege for... if your boss hears how you speak Putonghua in comparison to how s/he speaks Putonghua. I am not sure... [PM2: I think the Beijing accent is predominating] Not predominating but more privilege.

At this point, PM2 suggested that although sounding like a native speaker of Putonghua was his target, he personally found choice (c) acceptable, i.e. as long as others could understand. He highlighted the instrumental value of being native-like in Putonghua: ‘I think it is good for work if you sound like them. Your boss will think that your Putonghua is very good’ (PM2). PF1, however, argued that this advantage

might be less salient than that of English because local people found it harder to distinguish between standard and non-standard Putonghua than the English counterpart: ‘I think Hong Kong people tend to be able to distinguish between NS and NNS English but they might not be able to distinguish whether that is standard Putonghua in a Beijing accent’ (PF1). The relatively lower instrumental value of Putonghua is perhaps also associated with their perception that Putonghua was an important language but has yet to reach the status of English (PF1: ‘So far, English is still more important’; PM2: ‘There won’t be a very big change... so far. It won’t be the case that we all need to speak Putonghua suddenly because English is still most widely used in the world’).

PM13

- NS accents as an indicator of high English proficiency
- RP being most intelligible to NNSs
- Dissociation between an NS English target and its attainability
- Inaccurate pronunciation by local teachers

From an NS’s perspective, PM13 (a Hong Kong born Chinese who was an NS) believed that learners in ‘Asia’s World City’ should have had a ‘higher aim’, which in the Hong Kong context referred to an NS standard (also what he claimed a ‘stereotype’ in Hong Kong), regardless of its attainability.

PM13: I think if Hong Kong continues to claim itself as an international... as Asia’s World City... as an international city, we cannot let standards slip any further. [...] They should always aim high.

I think in terms of setting targets you have to set your target high because if you don't set your target high, then you're not... you know you are going to end up aiming low. Whether it is achievable is another matter [R: What I'm asking is that whether a high standard means having an NS-like accent?] I think... I think in Hong Kong, people tend to link the two together. I think unfortunately in Hong Kong but I think in ... personally I have come across like I said earlier I have come across people who don't have native English accents but are really professional in the language. But I think this is a very... very small minority.

While this apparently contradicts his view in the later discussion that expecting everyone to speak RP was 'unrealistic', he argued that RP was the most feasible goal because it was deemed to be intelligible by NNSs (PM13: 'It's easier for NNSs to understand you compare to say Yorkshire accent or whatever or the Irish accent sort of thing') (See also PM9). Moving to the discussion of HKE, he exemplified with the former SAR Chief Executive (Donald Tsang)'s English, arguing that he spoke a mixture of HKE (particularly the intonation) and NS English:

PM13: I think it is a very interesting mix of ...because if you listen to what he... you know how he pronounces English, some of it comes across as you know instantly you hear and you say it's HKE pronunciation. But sometimes his pronunciation sounds native as well. So I think there is a mix sort of thing [...] His intonation is definitely non-native because if you listen to his speech, whether he is doing a TV interview or you know whether he is answering questions in LegCo, his intonation is really monotonous and so I think that's non-native.

Although he acknowledged that this could be claimed to be HKE and it was intelligible to him as an NS, he insisted that this should not be a pronunciation target for the students. As an NS, he complained that local English teachers failed to teach the accurate English pronunciation as they also did not pronounce accurately themselves. He therefore recommended that the government should allocate more resources to teacher training, not to mention the introduction of a small number of NS

English teachers to schools:

PM13: The teachers themselves might have been misinformed when they were taught and these old habits die hard and they you know pass from one generation to the next. And I think you know that's why it is important that the government actually makes more of an effort and investment and invest more resources into teacher training in terms of in English. It has to start... I mean you can't... I don't think you can expect NESTs to change everything overnight. I personally think that NESTs are only here more in an advisory kind of role.

Furthermore, in his own company (an education agency), he observed that the employers did prefer to recruit someone with an English or American accent, which served as an indicator of overseas studying and presumably high English proficiency:

PM13: I think it is very important especially in a place like Hong Kong where I hate to say but people still judge people... other people on the kind of accents they have when they speak English [R: Do you have any first-hand experience?] Yeah, well... the thing is I have met a lot of people who do say that they do prefer their staff to have either an English accent or an American accent but not you know a Hong Kong English accent. And I think some people tend to assume that oh you

know if you have a British accent or an American accent, you must have been educated overseas.

PM14

- | | |
|---|--|
| - NS accents as a marker of solidarity among NSs | - Preference for NESTs for teaching speaking |
| - English learning target as a personal choice | - Learning of cultural issues being less important than that of linguistic forms |
| - NS accent resulting in higher scores examinations | - Learning of local cultural elements is important |
| - HKE as an unavoidable learning outcome | (- Speaking native-like Putonghua being considered a show off) |
| - HKE being negatively connoted but acceptable as long as people could understand | |

PM14 felt that ‘it (an NS accent) sounds better and cooler’ and interestingly stressed that sounding like an NS had an additional function of establishing solidarity among the NSs (PM14: ‘Also, people would feel that your English sounds like the people there. They would think that you are one of them’). In practical terms, he believed that an NS accent not only would give people ‘a sense of pride’ but also ‘an advantage in job interviews’, though he suggested that ‘personally speaking’, he ‘just wanted to be fluent’. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that Hong Kong learners would most likely have developed a HKE if they had studied in Hong Kong:

PM14: That’s from the practical perspective. On the other hand, people want to have a sense of pride by speaking NS-like English. As an ultimate target, everyone wants to sound like an NS. For example, on ETV (Education TV), you won’t want a Hong Kong person to speak and teach you English. You want an NS to teach you the native English but then you continue to speak English in a Hong Kong way [...] During the learning process, you would gradually develop your HKE. There is no relationship. If you live here, 90% of the people speak HKE. If you begin by learning HKE, you would develop to speak something else, which might be not English.

Alternatively, PM14 associated HKE with (negative) descriptions such as ‘inserting particles in the end of a sentence’, ‘grammatical mistakes’ and ‘accents which don’t sound good’. However, he clarified that although NS English was perceived to be better, HKE or any other varieties of English was also ‘acceptable’ because ‘there is no other way’. In particular, he suggested that this kind of HKE was also spoken by his former English teachers, whose English he claimed was ‘quite good’. Furthermore, he suggested that ‘everyone would understand a standard HKE, though it’s uglier’ and ‘people would immediately know that the person comes from Hong Kong’ (PM14), yet it was not his concern as long as people could understand:

PM14: In fact, I think it doesn’t really matter. You can see that there are many successful people who speak English in an ‘ugly’ way. This doesn’t matter. As long as you can read and speak fluently while others understand, that’s okay.

From a pedagogical perspective, not only did he suggest that there should be more ‘causal chat’ practices for students to develop their communicative ability, he also recommended that assessment should focus on ‘fluency’ and ‘choice of vocabulary’ (PM14: ‘I actually only think fluency is important. You are correct as long as you speak fluently and use the right vocabulary’). However, he also suggested that learners should have ‘tried their best’ to correct the HKE pronunciation features even

if it was not achievable (PM4: 'It's impossible. It's absolutely not possible'). In his impression, examiners were also prone to give higher scores to candidates who sounded like an NS:

PM14: I think the examiners must have been biased if the candidate sounds more like the speech in the audio teaching materials [...] I think the teachers must think that that person sounds more like an NS. However, sometimes I think the teachers will also give high scores to students who speak very fluently. Some of the teachers... But 'shallow' teachers would prefer the NS-like speech.

In this regard, PM14 seemed to prefer the native English teachers to local ones although he acknowledged that his 'local English teacher's academic English was so good that students could also benefit from it' (PM14):

PM14: Academically, I think English of the local teachers is more useful. At work, if you need to talk casually with your colleagues, the teaching of the NEST is certainly more useful. You need to be able to communicate with the others, not just for work. You should be able to make friends with the people.

Furthermore, shifting to the discussion of the teaching of cultural elements in the ELT classroom (as it is a key component in WE and ELF research), PM14 worried that there might not be enough time teaching them in daily-life teaching, though he also suggested that the teaching of the local culture might be important as 'learners might need to talk about it' in normal conversation:

PM14: You need a bit of them but they don't need a lot because you don't have time to learn it. You need to learn academic English. You need to be fluent and you need to learn a lot of vocabulary. If you also need to learn their culture, that's too much.

When the interview question was replaced by a learning target of Putonghua, PM14 also had the same preference for a native speaker's Putonghua, despite its perceived unattainability: 'My ultimate target is to be a native speaker of Putonghua but practically speaking you can't achieve it'. In spite of this 'ultimate target', he suggested that he did not imitate the pronunciation features of a native speaker of Putonghua (e.g. the 'er' sound) but retained his Hong Kong Putonghua accent in a situation where there were both Taiwanese and mainland Chinese. He explained that he was afraid that the Putonghua speakers might think that he was 'trying to show off', unless he sounded 'really like a native speaker of Putonghua' (PM14). His use of Putonghua apparently contradicted his previous argument that speaking like a native speaker of English could establish rapport with the English speakers, rather than, in the case of Putonghua, it was deemed to be showing off (see above).

10.3 Choice (c): it doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is

understandable by the listeners

As suggested at the beginning of this section, the remaining interviewees did not choose option (b) (i.e. sounding like an educated Hong Kong speaker of English) but (c) (i.e. it doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners) as their English learning target. As the statement revealed, choice (c) did not explicitly refer to any model of pronunciation, yet the focus was on how to ensure the listeners understand their speech. Even though these interviewees mainly centred on the crucial matter of mutual understanding in communication, many of them in fact did not reject the perceived privilege and advantages of NS English as mentioned above.

PF7

- | | |
|---|---|
| - NS accents being advantageous for job interviews | (- High attainability of native-like Putonghua) |
| - English learning target as a personal choice | (- Speaking native-like Putonghua being more |
| - Low attainability of native-like English | important for intelligibility than native-like |
| - NESTs being more preferable for teaching oral | English) |
| - Fluency and pronunciation being main foci in assessment | |

PF7 believed that '(c) is enough' and explained that she did not 'need to be so professional (in a Hong Kong style) as if sounding like a teacher'. Although she thought that 'speaking with a Hong Kong feeling' was acceptable, she believed that 'people prefer somebody who speaks English fluently and with an NS accent' (PF7).

Recalling her experience of attending job interviews, PF7 observed that ‘what the interviewer focused on most was not your content but whether you speak fluently’. Another impression she had was that job interviewees who had studied or stayed in an overseas country would ‘give the interviewer a feeling’ that they had ‘greater confidence’. From an assessment perspective, she therefore suggested ‘fluency’ and ‘pronunciation’ should be given a high priority while the use of ‘vocabulary’ was less important. She further explained that her selection of choice (c) was only a matter of personal preference but it could be different from the standard in the assessment, which represented the highest score (PF7: ‘This target (c) is enough for my target but what I think whether your English is good depends on your fluency and pronunciation’). In terms of teaching, PF7 revealed her preference for native English teachers because she thought that ‘oral is more important than grammar’ but ‘the local teachers tend to focus on teaching grammar’.

In the interview, the same question was also applied to the target of Putonghua in which PF7 provided a different answer, namely choice (a) a native speaker of Putonghua. She elaborated that accurate pronunciation was particularly pertinent (in comparison to English) owing to the presence of considerable similarly sounding words in the Putonghua language:

PF7: Because it is easy for you to express the meaning in Putonghua but sometimes it becomes a completely different meaning if you pronounce a slightly different sound. The interlocutor will not understand. I think it is better that you speak Putonghua accurately than English. The sounds of English words are less similar. You don't need to speak in such an NS way.

Commenting on the attainability of the two languages, PF7 suggested that NS English could not be achieved but 'it might be possible for Putonghua because there are more mainlanders now' in Hong Kong. Furthermore in the interview, this professional did not think that speaking HKE helped express her cultural identity as she argued that the interlocutor 'will directly ask me where I come from'.

PF6

- | | |
|--|--|
| - Advantages of NS accents depending on people | (- Unattainability of native-like English and Putonghua) |
| - Local English teachers being more preferable | |
| - Communicative ability being more important in job interviews | |

The issue of unattainability of a native-like proficiency in English (and Putonghua) was addressed by PF6, who hence selected option (c). Particularly for English, she stressed that as an NNS, learners should not have felt wronged about not being able to sound like an NS (PF6: 'You are nevertheless not an NS. Why do you have to feel that you are wrong?'). Although she thought that there was 'not much problem' with the HKE accent, she did acknowledge, however, that an NS accent might have 'some

influence on the first impression'. She further suggested that it depended on different people:

PF6: It depends on how you see this. I think there wouldn't be quite an advantage. I won't feel so as long as you can communicate. But some people would think that NSs are greater. The Hong Kong people who are more western-oriented might think so.

From an educational point of view, she preferred the teaching of local English teachers to native English teachers as she saw the latter as 'useless' and 'a waste of time' due to their inappropriate way of teaching: 'S/he (the NEST) always regarded us as "babies", using some kindergarten English'. She therefore recommended that NESTs should only have been assigned to English teaching at junior secondary rather than senior levels. Based on her (job) interview experience, she suggested that 'many interviewers would just evaluate whether you can communicate in English by talking with you in several sentences' (PF6). In recently years, she observed that there had been a tendency that Putonghua also became the language of evaluation. She revealed that during the interview she attended, language proficiency was in fact less the focus than other aspects such as 'education qualification' and 'working experience' while the interviewers only 'examined if your language proficiencies (in English and Putonghua) have any problem'. She applied the same attitude to the choice of a Putonghua learning target: 'it is okay as long as you can communicate'. In contrast,

she described Beijing-accented Putonghua as only ‘sounding better’ but there was no problem with speaking a Cantonese-accented Putonghua unless the inappropriate expression was used (PF6: ‘It is okay to have an accent but sometimes if you also add into some Cantonese, that’s a problem’).

PM15

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Learning English for communication | - Difficulties in acquiring an NS-like proficiency in the Hong Kong context |
| - NSs not necessarily speaking better English | - Local English teachers being preferable |
| - No standard for a language | |
| - Desire to retain his own linguistic characteristics | |

PM15 chose option (c) because he believed that ‘the purpose of speaking is to enable others to understand’, although he tended to perceive this option as ‘a lower requirement’. On top of this, he argued that ‘the NSs might not speak English particularly well’. The following excerpt recorded his argument about the difficulty of attaining a native-like English proficiency in the Hong Kong context:

PM15: It’s very difficult. I think that (a native-like proficiency of English) cannot be achieved. Nowadays, people who speak English well do so mainly because they have a Filipino domestic helper at home or their parents talk to them in English. However, their family members might also speak English with the HKE features. Otherwise, those people might grow up in a foreign country but not Hong Kong. So I think this is very difficult.

Given this focus on communication, he argued that supporting measures should be provided by the government, particularly for people from a ‘lower social class’, to

promote an ‘English-learning environment’. In terms of teaching, PM5 preferred a local teacher to an NS teacher due to their shared local cultural background, which could cater for the students’ needs in learning a second language:

PM15: Why I think we don’t need to hire the NSs? The Hong Kong people know the local cultural background whenever in speaking or writing. They can also cater for the students’ needs in term of their language. If an NS doesn’t know Chinese, it’s not good when the students don’t understand.

In contrast, he cast doubt on whether an NS spoke ‘purer’ or ‘better English’ (PM15: ‘It seems that we always think that English spoken by NSs is purer and better but English of which country is better?’) (see also PM3 in Appendix 10.1). In the interview, PM15 argued for retaining his own pronunciation of English: ‘I think we should speak English with our own characteristics’. As for his Putonghua learning target, PM15 also opted for choice (c) as he found it difficult to ‘roll the tongue’, which he thought was important in the Beijing Putonghua accent. In terms of assessment, he rejected the idea that a local accent should be penalised both for the two languages and further argued that this was only cultural difference that should have existed and no one should set a language standard:

PM15: This is the cultural difference. It should exist. There is not such as a sacred standard for English, isn’t there? In Putonghua, it might not be the best that people pronounce the ‘er’ sound. Maybe it’s also good without it. No one can set the standard. A language is used for communication and for mutual understanding.

PF16

- | | |
|---|---|
| - NS English meaning a high English level | - NS English being important to establish rapport with foreigners |
| - NS accents being advantageous for job interviews but not necessarily for work | - NESTs being more beneficial for pronunciation and vocabulary learning
(- Native-like English being more attainable than native-like Putonghua) |

Among all the professionals, PF16 was the only one who had a different target depending on situations: ‘At work, I would choose (c). Personally speaking, I would choose A.’ Despite her varying choices, she also associated NS English with a high English level: ‘It certainly would help if your English was improved to this level (NS English) from a very low level’. Furthermore, she believed that speaking like an NS would be advantageous for job interviews but not necessarily for work, where being able to communicate would be more important:

PF16: It must be helpful for job interviews. At work, I can’t think of anything. I think there might be some help. I think (c) is more important. Actually, it’s not just more important but much more important. In fact, the purpose at work is to be able communicate.

From an educational viewpoint, however, she argued that ‘(c) is not acceptable’ for being a teacher. Also, she preferred an NS teacher as she thought in this way learners could acquire their English pronunciation as well as their way of using vocabulary: ‘You can naturally “copy” their

pronunciation. They would also enhance your listening ability. You might even learn more vocabulary' (PF16).

When Putonghua replaced English for this question, PF16 selected (c) as her only choice as she suggested that 'it's not useful even if you are a native speaker of Putonghua'. Considering her difficulties in attaining a native-like proficiency of Putonghua (in comparison to that of English), she believed that it was not necessary to achieve this goal:

PF16: In fact, I have the perception that being a native speaker, you speak fluently without thinking too much. For Putonghua, I have many thoughts in my mind. I think it's so distant that I can achieve that in Putonghua. So I think I don't need to pay a lot of effort to achieve this [...] I think it must be achievable but I don't think it's necessary. As I have been learning English for a long time, I don't need to pay any effort to achieve that. I would certainly choose (a) if I can choose.

By comparing the advantages of sounding like a native-speaker of English vis-à-vis Putonghua, she further argued that the acquisition of the former would be more important in establishing rapport with the foreign interlocutors (see also PM14):

PF16: Because the nativeness of English will greatly affect my communication with the foreigners, it would affect my relationship with another person much. As for Putonghua, I think it's less important. The language is less important in establishing the relationship among Chinese.

10.4 Summary and implications

This chapter has discussed the interviewed professionals' preference for an English learning target based on their self-reported explanations in the interviews, which entailed numerous inter-related issues such as attainability of NS English, its intelligibility, instrumental (and social status) vis-à-vis integrative values. Among the three given English learning targets, most of the interviewees opted for choice (a) ('I would like to sound like a native speaker of English'), several of them selected choice (c) ('It doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners') but none of them claimed that they wanted to sound like an educated Hong Kong speaker of English. This perhaps reflected their perception that an educated form of HKE could not serve as an ultimate learning target while the other two choices either conform to a traditional NS standard (i.e. (a)) or focus on the function of English for communication (i.e. (c)). These two choices tend to correspond to the paradigms of SLA and ELF respectively.

Notwithstanding their differing choices of a pedagogical target, the majority of the professionals associated an NS accent with an advantage for career advancement (e.g. PM3, PF4, PF5, PF7, PF8, PF10, PF11, PF12, PF16, PM17, PM18), a language standard (e.g. PF12, PF8) and high fluency and English proficiency (e.g. PM9, PF16),

which indicate its unquestionably high social status and instrumental value. This finding is not particularly surprising as the high status of NS English has been a recurring theme in attitudinal studies globally (e.g. Li, 2009b, Jenkins, 2007, also chapters 7-8). As reported in the findings in chapter 9, many of these professionals were indeed aware of accent variation in ELF communication. Furthermore, many of these interviewees in fact recognised a lack of attainability of an NS target particularly in Hong Kong's Cantonese-speaking environment (PF1, PM2, PF7, PF10, PF11, PM14, PM15, PM17, PM18), yet still regarded it as their learning target towards which they wished to develop. This perspective is likely to correspond to the long-established SLA paradigm in which the 'ideal goal' of learning the language is to attain the native speaker's 'competence', 'proficiency' or 'knowledge' (Stern, 1983, p.341). For many of these participants, HKE was deemed to be 'acceptable', and perhaps unavoidable, but in their experience could be understood by the interlocutors. In this respect, their perception of HKE resembles an 'interlanguage' based on SLA theories, which refers to an L2 speaker's competence lying on a continuum at some point between their L1 and L2 (see Selinker, 1972, 1992; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In the Hong Kong context, this SLA perspective might not be entirely invalid (though not necessarily attainable and appropriate), especially as some professionals revealed that they frequently encountered NSs in the daily life and workplace (see chapter 9).

Nevertheless, several professionals were aware that some NSs indeed paid less attention to linguistic correctness in real communication and they did not necessarily speak accurate or better English (e.g. PM3, PM15).

Even though both WE and ELF research centre on the preservation of people's local cultural identity when speaking English, this theme was found to be less prominent (or even not mentioned) in the interviews. Few professionals suggested that they wished to retain their local features when speaking English (only PM15) but, on the contrary, some of them wanted to establish rapport with the 'foreigners' by sounding like an NS (e.g. PM14, PF16). Some interviewees also suggested that they might want to adjust their accent when facing interlocutors of different nationalities (e.g. PF10).

When this issue about a suitable pronunciation target was extended to Putonghua for a comparison, our findings interestingly reveal that the participants' differing choices were again related to factors such as its attainability, social status, instrument value and the issue of cultural identity but with a different explanation. Considerable interviewees did not opt for a native-like Putonghua target mainly because it has a lower instrumental value worldwide (or is less widely-used) than English (e.g. PF1, PM2, PM17, PM18, PF10), despite its perceived higher attainability (e.g. PF7). In contrast, there were also reverse cases in which the professionals found it more

difficult to attain (e.g. PF6) or believed that native-like Putonghua was more crucial for intelligibility than NS English (PF7). One particularly interesting finding is that some professionals did want to avoid a native-like Putonghua accent to preserve their Hong Kong identity but not for English (e.g. PF8). This argument is found to be most salient in the responses of the secondary students as we discuss their responses in chapter 11.

From a pedagogical perspective, given that many interviewees opted for an NS target, they also preferred a native English speaker teacher mainly for the teaching of oral so as to acquire their pronunciation (and vocabulary) (e.g. PF7, PM9, PM14, PF16). Some of them nevertheless also acknowledged the benefits of local English teachers such as their strength in teaching academic English and understanding of student's difficulties (e.g. PF6, PF8, PM15), which largely accord with the literature on the advantages of local multilingual teachers (e.g. Seidlhofer, 1999; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Braine, 2010; Mahboob, 2010a). Although intercultural communicative competence has been argued to be vital in international communication in recent studies (e.g. Alptekins, 2002; Wen, 2004), most professionals seemingly only regarded cultural elements as a bonus rather than necessity in ELT teaching (e.g. PF1, PM2, PM14). However, in alignment with the

WE pedagogical recommendations, they did believe that learning of their own local culture in English was necessary (e.g. PM14, PM13).

As the findings in chapter 9 reveal that Hong Kong people have the opportunity to communicate with both NSs and NNSs in their daily life and workplace, the issue of whether to target an NS norm, as some professionals emphasised, is perhaps merely a matter of personal choice (PF7, PF8, PM14, PM17, PM18) on the condition that this target enables learners to communicate effectively in English-speaking situations (whoever the interlocutors might be). From this viewpoint, although Hong Kong's ELT curriculum, assessments and textbooks do apparently focus on fostering learners' communicative competence (see chapter 5), they in fact fail to provide a real choice of pronunciation for students because they did not inform them of the true English-using situations (which involves people of diverse language backgrounds) but, in contrast, are still conceptually guided by an NS standard in the listening and speaking tasks. More specifically, the provision of a real pronunciation choice for students should (1) incorporate (semi-)authentic ELT listening (and speaking) tasks so as to raise students' awareness of the real use of English in Hong Kong and in the global context and (2) cease penalising their localised linguistic features that do not interfere international intelligibility while focus on their communicative ability

(and/or also accommodation skills in ELF, see Jenkins, 2006). Given the complex sociolinguistic reality of spoken English use in the Hong Kong context, further investigation should centre on the intelligibility of the educated HKE phonological features with reference to the potential NS and NNS listeners (see chapters 6 and 9).

PART IV

Views from secondary students and teachers

This final part of the findings and discussion continues to explore the participants' views based on the interview data, in this case stakeholders in educational contexts, namely secondary students (chapter 11) and teachers (chapter 12). Again, the discussion centres on their daily use of English and attitudes towards pronunciation learning/teaching. Particularly for the two groups of teachers (ELT and subject teachers), the findings also include their pedagogical foci on teaching spoken English, expectations for students as they contribute in different degrees to students' learning of and attitudes towards (spoken) English in their everyday school lives.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Students' exposure to English and attitudes towards pronunciation teaching

11.1 Introduction

Having discussed the professionals' use of English and attitudes towards accents in their workplace (and also in higher education), we now shift our attention to those of students at secondary level. This is pertinent because students' learning of English at this stage has a fundamental impact on their perception of English variation, especially that of NS vis-à-vis NNS varieties of English (see the VGT in chapter 8).

This chapter mainly centres on the findings derived from 25 focus groups, which involved 75 and 46 junior and secondary students respectively (see section 4.4 for the data collection procedure, also Appendix 4.5 for the interview protocol). Though these secondary students were studying in a former Chinese-medium instruction (CMI) school, the government's 'fine-tuning' medium-of-instruction (MOI) policy has given individual schools the autonomy to decide on their school-based MOI policy since 2010 (EDB, 2010). Therefore, the interviewed students were exposed to different English accents in their English-medium instruction (EMI) content-area and English language lessons. Against this background, this chapter commences by reporting on students' use of (spoken) English at school vis-à-vis in their leisure life (section 11.2).

The major part of this chapter is devoted to discussing the students' choice of an English learning target (section 11.3) as compared to that of a Putonghua learning target (section 11.4) with respect to students' corresponding explanations. In section 11.5, these findings are readdressed and summarised to account for the factors that influence a students' choice of a language target. It is noted that when referring to the participating students' responses in the discussion, the identity codes of the corresponding focus groups are provided, such as 1G2, which indicates their grade level (e.g. 1=S1) and group number (e.g. 2) respectively.

11.2 Use of English

Students in each focus group were asked to describe how and where they used English and, if applicable, to whom they talked (i.e. the nationality of the interlocutors). Based on their responses, it appeared that students had a tendency to initially associate their 'use of English' with 'speaking English', without noticing the fact that they might read English on many occasions in Hong Kong. For this reason (as well as the scope of the present research), the content of discussion mainly focuses on their use of spoken English in their everyday life.

11.2.1 English use in the education context

Quite surprisingly, in response to the question: ‘what is the use of English in your daily life?’, the first reaction of most of the students tended to be that they did not use English at all. It was only after some deeper thinking that they suggested that they did indeed use English frequently in the education context (see a summary in Appendix 11.1). Students in the majority of the focus groups reported that they used English not only in ELT lessons but also in EMI content-area subject lessons such as integrated science (IS), mathematics, history, computer and information technology (CIT), Geography and Business, Accounting, and Financial Studies (BAFS) (students in 15 groups mentioned this). Other English-using contexts they mentioned at school include talking with NESTs (9) and exchange students (8), attending English tutorials (6), participating in activities on English-speaking days (3), doing online English exercise (required by teachers) (2), participating school admission interviews (1), performing drama at school (1), doing revision (1) and taking examinations (1). In addition, there was also one occasion where the students met one of the NESTs’ wife from Thailand, whose English was apparently ‘not particularly accurate’ (2G2).

What is worth recalling from the focus groups was the presence of a Danish and Norwegian exchange student in the school, who were assigned to two classes (one

junior and one senior). According to the school principal, the introduction of these students aimed to provide students with an English-speaking environment because students (and the teachers in the classroom) would need to use English as the lingua franca for communication. Furthermore, the principal also suggested that new native English speaker teachers (NESTs) were recruited every two years (replacing the previous ones) so that the students would have the experience of communicating with various NESTs with different language and cultural backgrounds, even though all of them came from an inner circle country (e.g. Australia, Britain, New Zealand). Indeed, students in some focus groups found the presence of exchange students beneficial to their English learning as they needed to speak English, e.g. 'When they (the exchange students) come, you need to speak a few sentences with them in English even if you don't know English. This is in fact useful' (5G2). The students also suggested that the Danish exchange student's English was 'good' (e.g. 5G1: 'She ranks number 1 in our form'). Although they claimed that the Danish student did not 'use difficult words', their conversation 'usually did not last for more than five minutes' (and only involved the use of 'very simple English words'). This might reveal the students' reluctance to talk to the exchange student probably due to their lack of confidence and/or perceived low English proficiency of themselves (e.g. 5G1: 'Our English is rubbish').

11.2.2 Use of English outside school

Outside school, the students also reported a wide range of English use, many of which accord with Evans' (2011b) large-scale survey on young people's use of English in their leisure time. Some frequently mentioned English use include activities associated with the internet (10), talking with domestic helpers (9), directing foreigners (9), talking with relatives (8), singing/listening to songs (7), overseas travelling (7), watching English TV programs/drama (7), watching films (7), talking with foreigners (4) and participating in overseas exchange programs (4) (see Appendix 11.2 for further information). On these various occasions, the students indeed suggested that they were exposed to a great variety of English speakers (see also Appendix 11.2). For instance, in the era of globalisation, one major medium for English use by the students was via the internet, where they reported that they had the experience of listening to diverse varieties of English (e.g. 'Taiwanese' and 'Korean English') or chatting with foreign friends (e.g. 'American', 'Japanese', 'German', 'British') through social networking (e.g. 'Skype', 'Facebook', 'MSN', 'Raidcall'). The following excerpt reveals some students' awareness of accent variation around the world based on videos they had watched:

2G2

S: The English of the Taiwanese is of a relatively lower pitch.

S: When did you hear the Taiwanese English?

S: You will know if you browse online, download and watch their variety shows.

S: And also Korea.

R: How is it about the Korean?

S: For example, they will pronounce 'fighting' as 'kwighting'.

Ss: 'kwighting', 'kwighting', 'kwighting'...

S: And also Taiwanese's English is very bad.

R: Why?

S: If you occasionally watch a Taiwan TV program, you can't understand if you don't look at the subtitle. When speaking Putonghua, they suddenly said an English word. I don't know what that was.

Quite typical in the Hong Kong context, students in many of the focus groups (9) claimed that they encountered domestic helpers mainly from the Philippines as well as a few from India or Indonesia. In fact, some of the students were unable to distinguish the nationality of the domestic helpers (e.g. 3G1, 4G1). If these students had a foreign domestic helper at home, it could perhaps be assumed, and also suggested by the students, that English would be the medium for communication unless the helpers (e.g. some Indonesian) were able to speak Cantonese. Although some students reported there were sometimes problems in communication (e.g. 2G3: 'Sometimes she doesn't know what I am saying'; also 1G3), some students suggested that they could use 'body language' (1G1) to facilitate communication (also 5G2: 'As we've been talking for many years, she can sometimes guess what I want to say even if my grammar, sentence structure and pronunciation might be wrong'). In some cases, the students explained that as their parents wanted them to 'learn more English', they were 'forced

to communicate with them (the domestic helper) in English' (4G1). Nevertheless, despite their frequent contact with their domestic helper, some students suggest that they would not have learnt their pronunciation: 'Sometimes English spoken by the domestic helper... their accents are not accurate... if I follow her... I think it's not good for my English' (1G1). Alternatively, the following student regarded it merely as a chance to practice his English and correct their own habitual mistakes:

5G2: Actually it has just provided an opportunity for me to speak and listen to English. Although my 'bad habits' still cannot be changed even if I already know them, you may have the chance to correct them when discovered by the others. This is nevertheless better than the situation where you don't even know them (your bad habits) if you completely don't speak English.

Given the large number of visitors in Hong Kong, the students in the focus groups also stated that they had the experience of directing foreigners (e.g. 'American', 'Korean', 'Japanese') such as in local buses or train stations (4G2, 5G3) and even in Shanghai, where a westerner regarded a student as a local Shanghai resident (2G3). Some students also claimed that they met some non-Cantonese speaking local people such as American missionaries and ethnic minorities (e.g. 'Pakistani', 'Indian', 'South Asian') (4G1). Based on their experience, some of them seemed to have a negative impression of the Korean's English (also the Japanese's) mainly on account of their accent: 'Their (the Korean's) pronunciation is twisted. For example, they said 'pour'

instead of 'four'. I don't know what s/he was saying' (3G3). Furthermore, a certain number of students in the focus groups did report that they sometimes talked with their relatives (e.g. 'cousins', 'aunts'), friends and neighbours in English, many of whom had emigrated to an inner circle country (e.g. 'Canada', 'Britain', 'America'). Several students in the focus groups suggested that their parents talked to them in English (1G3, 3G3) to enhance their English proficiency. In addition, many of the students also had the chance to travel to a wide range of overseas countries (e.g. 'Japan', 'Germany', 'America', 'Australia', 'Britain', 'Thailand', 'France', 'Korea', 'Singapore') or participate in overseas exchange programs. Based on their travelling experience, some of them claimed that they failed to understand the foreign interlocutors and they attributed this to their English proficiency (e.g. 2G2: 'The Japanese's foreign language is not very good') and foreign accent (e.g. Japanese-accented and German-accented English in 1G1). Sometimes, the use of body language was found to be useful (e.g. 3G3: 'Using your figure to point to the food you want'). Probably owing to their experience of using English, it is evident that some students have become more aware of pronunciation variation. While some students 1G1 regarded the Scottish accent as being 'not quite accurate' and some kind of 'countryside' accent (similar responses also in 5G6 for the case of Bangladesh English), those in 2G3 explicitly highlighted that 'the Japanese could not roll their

tongue’, tended to ‘pronounce the /r/ sound as a /w/ sound’ and ‘stress the /d/ sound heavily in words such as “red”’. One of the students in 2G2 was also aware of the inevitable phenomenon of accent variation as a language develops: ‘As different languages have emerged in different places, different languages must have different accents [...] As time passes, their accents must be different’ (2G2).

The secondary students were also exposed to spoken English through several rather receptive channels such as listening to English songs (though it is less a matter of accent) and watching English TV programs, dramas and films. This domain of popular culture seemed to be dominated by inner circle countries especially the US and UK. Nonetheless, several students mentioned that they have encountered some kind of Indian English (e.g. ‘Three Idiots’, 4G1) and Singaporean English (e.g. ‘I Not Stupid’, 5G4) in films and/or dramas. Based on their responses, the speech of the Indian English speakers was ‘very fast’, ‘unclear’ and ‘very difficult to understand’ (4G1) whereas Singaporean English was felt to be ‘so funny’ (5G4). Students in 5G4 even observed that ‘they (Singaporeans) use Singaporean English when talking among local people but they speak English normally when facing people outside’. Together with their other comments mentioned above, it appeared that students had a

rather negative attitude towards NNS English varieties not only affectively, but also owing to their inability to understand them.

11.2.3 Perceived use of English after graduation

Apart from their daily use of English, the focus group interviews also elicited students' perceived or imaginative future English-using situations after they graduated from secondary school (see Appendix 11.3 for a summary). Students in the majority of the focus groups (20) associated their future English use with workplace English, particularly in the field of business and service encounters, where the students thought they might speak with customers, colleagues and bosses in English. Their expectation of future English use generally accords with the responses of some of the interviewed professionals who claimed that they mainly use English in the workplace (see chapter 9). Furthermore, the students considered English as the major medium for (job) interviews (8) or job hunting (3). Apart from workplace English, a considerable number of students also expected that they might speak English when communicating with foreigners (or friends) (13) and going travelling (8). Though their impression of future English use apparently did not significantly differ from its real use as described by the professionals, what has been essential to the discussion of WE and ELF is the identity of interlocutors in reality vis-à-vis those in the students' mind. This is a

particularly interesting theme in the focus group because the students apparently did not have a very clear idea of who the so-called ‘foreigners’ are when they discussed their perceived future use of English. One clue about their initial impression of the potential interlocutors was revealed in some students’ use of a Hong Kong Cantonese vocabulary ‘gwailo’ (鬼佬) (translated as westerner in the transcript) instead of ‘foreigner’ when they referred to whom they spoke English with:

3G4: I think because English is a world language, one of the major languages, if you cannot communicate with the westerners, you can only be a cleaner (sweeping the street) in Hong Kong. Even the cleaners need to speak English now.

5G1: Maybe you will meet a customer who is a westerner.

5G7: Depending on which occupation you are doing. When you meet customers, you need to talk with the westerners.

This notion of ‘gwailo’ is a Cantonese slang commonly used by Hong Kong people to represent mainly foreigners from western countries, particularly white people. As this term has no association with any Asian races, it perhaps reflects their (mis)conception that westerners (or NS speakers) are their key interlocutors. Alternatively, it might also imply that they lacked the awareness of ELF in which they might encounter speakers from around the world including Asian people. In cases where the students used a more neutral term ‘foreigner’ (外國人), they were asked to further define it for clarification. Some synonyms or descriptions they adopted in their explanatory

responses include ‘non-Chinese’ (2G1, 5G1), ‘non-local people’ (2G1), ‘people who don’t know Chinese’ (3G1, 5G1), ‘people who are not from this country’ (3G6), ‘outsiders’ (3G6), ‘native speakers of English’ (2G1, 2G3), ‘people with English as their mother tongue’ (2G1, 3G1, 5G1), ‘people who speak English’ (3G1, 3G6), ‘people with blonde hair’ (2G3), ‘people with different eyes’ (5G1), ‘British’ (2G3), ‘American’ (2G3), ‘German’ (2G3) and also ‘people who don’t speak English’ (2G3).

These examples have revealed that some students might have a lack of knowledge in the use of English in the global setting. As these students were at both junior and senior secondary levels, it has probably signalled insufficient (or inaccurate) information provided to students about the use of English as an international language in school teaching (see chapter 5). The results crucially point to the necessity to enhance students’ awareness of language use in contemporary society in school education for their needs after graduation.

11.3 Students’ choice of an English learning target

While the first part of the focus group centred on students’ use of English in their daily life, the second part focused on their choice of an English learning target (and also Putonghua learning target for a comparison). The discussion of this issue during the focus group was facilitated by the following question (see Appendix 4.5):

Which of the following choices would be the learning target of your spoken English (/Putonghua)? Why?

(a) I would like to sound like a native speaker of English (e.g. an American or a British);

(b) I would like to sound like my English teacher;

(c) It doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners.

As students in each group might have different views on the issues, the value of this data collection method was that it facilitated students more thoughts when they discussed on or debated over a specific choice. The following subsections therefore highlight the reasons that account for their choices.

11.3.1 High status of NS English versus attainability

11.3.1.1 Junior secondary students

Two main issues were found to initially account for their choice of an English learning target, namely, the high status of NS English and the attainability of such a target. For instance, at the junior level, some students argued that they 'certainly would like to speak like an NS but there were many factors which would affect whether you can achieve it in practice' (1G1) (see below for this issue of attainability).

Many students who chose option (a) highlighted the high status of NS English that was found to consist of multiple meanings. Generally speaking, successful achievement of NS English indicated a high English proficiency, which internally would provide students with a sense of pride (e.g. 1G1: 'I think if you can speak like an NS, when you go to other places such as the mainland, I would feel a bit proud if

the mainland Chinese hear us speaking with a foreigner'). From a practical perspective, NS English was thought to be 'easier to understand' (1G1) and 'enhance the opportunity to get a job or gain admission to university' (1G1, also 3G5: 'It is easier to get a job if I speak better English'). Though the opinion-eliciting question only referred to an English learning target generally, some students in 3G5 particularly associated the advantage of NS English with its pronunciation rather than grammar as it was perceived to affect mostly people's impression: 'It gives others a better impression if you speak better English, disregarding the grammar or other things' (3G5). In contrast, some students in 1G2 were worried that failing to 'pronounce accurately' (i.e. conforming to NS standard) might give foreigners an impression that they 'did not learn English seriously'. This perspective of regarding NS English as the standard was also adopted by students in considerable focus groups such as 3G1, 3G2, 3G4.

Being aware of the importance of English in their future career, these students perceived 'accurate pronunciation' (3G1) as a pertinent requirement for communication with the westerners (i.e. 'gweilo' in Cantonese). As mentioned earlier (see section 11.2), the use of 'gweilo' in Cantonese mainly refers to foreigners other than Asian races and here might refer to the NSs being their perceived interlocutors.

Furthermore, some students felt that speaking English with a ‘bad’ pronunciation might be embarrassing in front of these ‘westerners’ (3G4). Nevertheless, they generally did not associate this ‘bad’ pronunciation with that of their English teachers, who were perceived to be able to communicate in international setting (3G4: ‘I think English spoken by the teachers can be used to communicate with foreigners’). Choice (b) was therefore also a learning target of some students. Although NS English was often associated with a high status, some students in 3G6 found it quite ‘weird’ or ‘exaggerating’ to sound like an NS, like their NESTs (also 2G3: ‘The nasal voice of [NESTs] is so heavy’; ‘It is very difficult to listen to their speech clearly’). However, at the same time, some of these students also thought that ‘the accent of Hong Kong people is weird’ and they therefore chose option (b) as their English target (3G6).

As option (b) in the interview question was explained by referring to English spoken by their English teacher, a few students in 1G2 aligned the speech quality of an NS with their English teacher as she sounded like an NS to the students: ‘The English of our teacher is so original. It is like her native language’; ‘Yes our English teacher. It’s like her native language’ (1G2; also 2G3: ‘Our English teacher’s English is enough - her English is very close to [the NS’s]’). Their comment that English spoken by their

English teachers was similar to that of NSs was further elaborated by students in another focus group:

2G3: English spoken by our English teacher has not much difference with an NS. It seems that there is no much difference in her pronunciation. She always pays attention to the final sounds.

Although students in this group underlined the minimal difference among their local teachers' and NSs' English, some students still targeted an NS pronunciation:

2G3: I want to sound like them (NSs) because I pay quite a lot of attention to the English pronunciation. For example, even if others understand, I sometimes don't understand myself. I feel a bit bad.

In contrast, students who chose target (b) appreciated the 'very accurate and good pronunciation' of their local teachers but found it quite difficult to understand the speech of their NESTs, who they claimed to 'have a heavy nasal voice' (2G3). At this point, some students in the group pointed to the higher attainability of target (b) than (a) for them: 'I think I can practice to be like (b) but target (a) is more difficult to learn [R: Target (a) is more difficult to achieve?] Because not only does he have a heavy nasal voice, but his speech is also very fast' (2G3). In some focus groups (e.g. 1G2), the students were aware that 'there are different kinds of NSs' who 'would have a different pronunciation in different regions' (1G2). They therefore argued that learning English was to 'make others understand': 'You can't know all of them. So you always repeat similar speech content. Such as if you speak Cantonese, you always

‘speak Cantonese’ (1G2). Some of them therefore thought that they did not ‘need to be so good at English’ and therefore chose option (b) as their target at ‘an average level’ (1G2).

Despite the perceived high status of NS English, some students in 2G2 argued that the acquisition of NS English in the Hong Kong context was not possible: ‘If I was born and grow up in Hong Kong, I would have learnt the local English language, it doesn’t make sense we can change into an NS in short terms’ (2G2) (similar responses also in 1G1). Their views about the difficulties in acquiring NS English echoed those of some students in 1G1, who emphasised that target (a) ‘could not be achieved’ unless under conditions such as ‘communicating with NESTs more frequently’, ‘studying in an international school in Hong Kong’ and ‘studying overseas’ (1G1). In this respect, some students in 3G1 suggested that NS English might be attainable by ‘working very hard’ and ‘listening to songs online’, both of which required people’s high motivation (cf. Davies, 2002). Alternatively, other students in 1G3 argued that the attainability of NS English in the local context highly depended on the background of their English teachers (‘whether they have studied overseas’) as what they learnt was ‘their teachers’ pronunciation’ (1G3).

In fact, this issue of the (un)attainability of NS English contributed greatly to some students' choice of their own speaking target from a practical perspective. In most other focus groups, there were students selecting choice (c) as they claimed that 'my target is only to speak English' (3G6). In 3G1, some students acknowledged that 'the original purpose' of speaking is for 'the understanding of the others' (i.e. choice (c)) and they did not expect themselves to 'pursue the best', but to achieve their own target that could 'make others understood' and without 'making a lot of mistakes' (3G1) Some students opted for choice (c) because they regarded it as a lower standard: 'I'm so lazy that I don't want to practice... so as long as others can understand, it's fine' (1G1; also 1G3: 'we have a low learning ability'). Similarly, the students in 1G3 clearly identified choice (c) as a medial level of English proficiency which is appropriate for the secondary level whereas NS English (i.e. target (a)) was a goal 'in the next step':

1G3: Because so far I don't think I need such a high expectation of myself. Because we are now only at secondary level, it's fine if people can understand my speech. Maybe when we study at university level, or others, we may really need the English pronunciation of NSs. Hope we can sound like them.

More specifically, students in 3G7 tended to believe that the three choices of learning target corresponded to three English proficiency levels in the descending order of choices (a), (b) and (c) (also 3G1, 3G4). While some of them suggested that 'it is

impossible to achieve target (a)' because they were originally 'not an NS', they also acknowledged that they 'could not reach the high standard of target (b)', so 'only target (c) would be left' for them (3G7). In this regard, some of these students furthered the discussion by raising the question: 'Target (c) is complicated. Who are the interlocutors?' (3G7) (this issue associated with intelligibility in English communication is discussed further later).

In some focus groups, there might be very different opinions among the students. In 3G2, whereas one student suggested that they 'don't need to sound like the NSs as long as people can understand', another student argued that they needed to sound like an NS so that the NS interlocutor could understand. This probably implied that the latter students perceived NSs as their intended interlocutors in English communication, which might not be true in most ELF situations (Seidlhofer, 2011). There was also a student in 3G2 who considered sounding like an NS was 'showing off' but another student believed that whether NS English was useful depended on who they talked to:

3G2: It depends on who you are talking with. If you are talking to the American and British, you have no options but are 'forced' to do it. It won't if you are talking to Hong Kong people. We don't even speak English.

11.3.1.2 Senior secondary students

Similar thoughts about the high status of English were also shared by the senior secondary students. For instance, some of them also mentioned that people should have their ‘ambition’ by choose choice (a) and that the acquisition of it would be ‘cool’ and give them ‘a sense of pride’ (5G1). Other students believed that NS English was the ‘original one’ and were afraid that they would be ‘easily laughed at by the foreigners’ if they spoke English with ‘the feeling of China’ (5G10). From a practical perspective, the instrumental value of NS English was highlighted particularly in ‘job interviews’ and ‘business communication’ (5G4; also 5G2: ‘If you speak very fluently, the boss will look at you with quite different eyes’). Some students suggested that sounding like an NS was advantageous for socialising (5G3: ‘It would be friendlier when you talk to the foreigners’) and for their career (5G3: ‘There would be more choices for occupations’). More specifically, students in 5G5 associated the high instrumental of NS English with attaining good results in the international examination, IELTS, which was emphasised by their teachers as crucial for their future job opportunities:

5G5: The school said that in order to get a job, you need to attend that examination (IELTS) so as to prove your English proficiency. You need to attend that every 2 or 3 years. If you are better at English, of course you will attain higher score and more people will hire you.

In some focus groups, students have provided more supportive information for their choice for target (a) based on their daily experience and perceived future use of English. In 4G1, some students not only believed that sounding like NSs was ‘better’, they also regarded ‘studying abroad’ (like what their friends did) as being more beneficial for job hunting because of the perceived prestigious status of the overseas universities (e.g. in Australia) as well as the perceived high English proficiency of their students:

4G1: When comparing a university student from Hong Kong and a student who comes back from studying in a university in Australia, people certainly will select the Australian one [R: Why? The university might not be very prestigious] No, frankly speaking, if people hear that you came back from studying in an Australian university, people would already think that you are a very great person.

In contrast to this perceived high status of NS English, students commented that their local English teachers sometimes made ‘grammatical and pronunciation mistakes’ (5G4). Particularly, one student suggested that s/he made this judgement based on his/her tutorial teacher who was Spanish but came from the US. This perhaps revealed that this student regarded NSs (or even in this case a westerner coming from an NS country) as a more reliable authority than their Hong Kong teacher in terms of linguistic correctness:

5G4: My tutorial teacher comes from America. S/he is also a foreigner, Spanish. S/he told me not to learn from s/him (the teacher). S/he was wrong... haha... So you know... [R: So you think they are not very

reliable?]) Truly speaking, when you are not a native speaker, your language might not be very reliable.

A more interesting case of students regarding the ‘foreigners’ judgement as greater authority than their local English teacher’s was found in another focus group, in which there was an exchange student from Norway in the class of the interviewed students. Although the exchange student and the English teacher pronounced the word ‘advertisement’ in GA and RP respectively, the interviewed students tended to believe that former was the correct one: ‘Our class has a foreign student. Sometimes, she is so nasty, pointing to the English words which the teacher has pronounced wrongly [...] When the teacher pronounced ‘advertisement’ (in RP), the foreign student said that it should be pronounced as ‘advertisement’ (in GA)’ (5G6). Similarly, not only did some students think that learning a target other than NS English was incomplete, they also made judgement on their local English teachers’ teaching of pronunciation with reference to their NESTs, arguing that the words they taught were incorrect: ‘When I pronounced the words [to the NEST] in the way our [Hong Kong] English teacher taught us, s/he would teach us another sound. S/he said that mine was wrong’ (5G8). Subsequently, the students questioned that ‘as the [Hong Kong] teachers don’t speak in that way, how could I have learnt it as I listen to them every day?’ (5G8). Again, some students in this group also believed that the learning target (a) was not achievable unless they ‘study overseas for a period of time’ (also 5G10). Along the

same line, this lack of an English-speaking environment in the Hong Kong context was argued by students in 5G1 to be the major reason for the inattainability of NS English. Their observation accorded with what Li (2009: 72) describes as ‘the absence of a conducive language-learning environment’ for students to practise and use English outside the classroom: ‘It is difficult in Hong Kong... because there is no such environment for you to speak English. You have the environment to speak English in overseas countries’ (5G1). In addition, although some students in 5G4 also argued that an NS pronunciation was ‘very difficult’ to attain because it was not their ‘mother tongue’ or ‘native language’ (also 4G1), they believed that ‘it must be attainable if you keep drilling and work very hard or have a lot of tutorials’ (5G4). Concerning this issue of attainability, two opposite opinions in 5G4 are recorded below:

S1 (in 5G4): In fact, it won’t be difficult if you have the ‘heart’ (determination) to do so. For example, if you want to listen to the foreign English, you can switch to the TVB pearl channel (English Channel). Their pronunciation is standard foreign pronunciation.

S2 (in 5G4): There is no real chance to speak English, unless your family members are foreigners or really, as he says, you keep drilling or having a lot of tutorials. But you don’t have so many chances in Hong Kong.

As with the junior secondary students, not only did some students (e.g. in 4G2) believe that target (a) sounded ‘the best’, ‘most fluent’ and must be understood by

‘everyone’ (also 5G2: ‘a higher aim’), but they also prioritised the three options in the order of (a), (b) and (c), where target (b) was perceived as the middle level (4G2: ‘(b) is only in the middle of (a) and (c)’; also 5G3: ‘In the middle of (a) and (c), you don’t need to pursue the pronunciation of NSs but you need to be like the English teachers who speak quite well.’). They also commented that some of their teachers spoke ‘too fast’, did not ‘pause appropriately’ and lacked ‘fluctuations in their intonations’ (4G2). Based on their discussion in the focus group, target (c) corresponded to ‘the basis for communication’ whereas target (a) was perceived to be the ‘ideal’ choice as ‘everyone would want to achieve most native when learning a language’ (4G2). Alternatively, target (b) was perceived by some students as an attainable target (also 5G4):

5G8: Setting a target which I can achieve first. Don’t set a target which is too high. If it is too high, I won’t have any expectation of myself and won’t have the motivation to do it [R: Do you think it is acceptable if you finally achieve (b)?] I should feel very satisfied but I haven’t even reached (c).

Nevertheless, a considerable number of students in the group also opted for choice (c) because they thought ‘it’s fine as long as other people could understand’ (4G1; also 5G5). Alternatively, some students were aware that NSs might not be the most common interlocutors in the Hong Kong contexts (see chapter 9): ‘Because people around us are usually not NSs, they may not understand if we speak in a ‘too English’

way' (4G1). In addition, probably because of their greater experience of learning and using English, some senior students (in 5G7) were aware that people's accent was 'fostered' since childhood and it was impossible to learn all accents of people with different ethnic backgrounds:

5G7: I heard from others that accent is fostered since your childhood locally. Also, like in the foreign countries, people have different accents in different regions. It is not quite possible learn all the westerners' accents.

Some students (in 5G2) were also aware that NSs might not speak 'correct' English all the time, so the most important thing in communication was 'mutual understanding':

5G2: The ultimate purpose of oral language is for communication. What you need is that others can understand. Even the NSs won't speak 100% correct in their speech. They may also say something wrong when speaking fast. The most important thing is mutual understanding. I think that would be enough.

Overall, the aforementioned two perspectives of selecting an English learning target (i.e. the high status of NS English versus its attainability) were commonly found to be adopted by students almost in each of the focus group discussion. There was a tendency that students in the 'better' classes (i.e. presumably having a higher academic ability) preferred an NS standard while those in the 'weaker' classes aimed for a target that allowed them to be understood by the interlocutors as they considered it as more achievable, albeit inferior to an NS one. Many of these students claimed

that it was acceptable ‘as long as I can communicate with others’ or ‘if people can understand my English’ (e.g. 1G1, 1G2, 1G3,3G2, 4G1, 5G5). However, some students would criticise students possessing this view for their ‘lack of self-expectation’ (e.g. 1G2; also 1G3). Furthermore, as suggested in the literature, female students tended to aspire to the ‘standard forms’ than the male counterparts (see Holmes, 2008, p.160).

11.3.2 Hong Kong English

11.3.2.1 Junior secondary students

The theme of Hong Kong English (HKE) also emerged from many of the focus group interviews. When this notion of HKE appeared in the discussion, the students were asked to elaborate on the definition of and feeling about it. In many cases, it was associated with the Cantonese-influenced form of English in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. This kind of HKE was often negatively connoted, and was deemed to be ‘not acceptable’ (3G3) or a flawed variety of English (e.g. 1G2: ‘If s/he directly translates Chinese into English, s/he will be wrong [in grammar]’). Students in 1G2 also argued that HKE should not be spoken or taught by the English teachers (e.g. 1G2: ‘How could s/he teach if s/he speaks HKE? We would have complained about her/him’).

Some junior secondary students exemplified HKE with some expressions, which were directly translated from Cantonese to English on a word basis such as ‘laugh die me’ (from 笑死我 ‘siu sei ngoh’ to ‘laugh die me’; meaning extremely funny, 1G1), ‘people mountain people sea’ (from 人山人海 ‘yan saan yan hoi’; meaning many people, 1G1, 2G2, 3G3), ‘do die people’ (from 做死人 ‘jo sei yan’; meaning burning out due to too much workload, 2G2), ‘milk tea’ (2G3), ‘chicken egg son’ (i.e. eggette, 2G3), ‘walk out’ (行開 ‘haag hoi’; meaning moving aside, 2G3), ‘blow water’ (meaning casual chat; 3G5, 3G6) and ‘add oil’ (3G5, 3G6). Some of them suggested that these expressions might lead to failure in mutual understanding (2G2: ‘Some people may not understand’). In the Hong Kong context, these expressions were frequently reported by the mass media negatively (as extreme cases which cannot be understood by the foreigners) and it might have an adverse impact on people’s impression on this kind of English used by some Hong Kong people. Nevertheless, it is uncertain the extent to which these expressions were commonly used by the general public especially in international communication while it is possible that they were only used informally among local people for amusement. As can be observed in 1G1, the students clearly did not associate HKE with English spoken by their teachers unless when ‘joking’ (also suggested by students in 3G4). In addition, some students in 3G4 supplemented that HKE also involved the inclusion of ‘Chinese words’ in an

English sentence, which seemed to refer to code-mixing rather than HKE but they did not provide any further explanation.

In terms of pronunciation, students' responses generally accord with our findings in the case study, which reveals that most local English and content-area teachers spoke some kind of HKE phonologically in their daily lessons (see chapter 6). Some students acknowledged that locally educated teachers (especially the content-area teachers) inevitably had some kind of HKE accent (1G3, 3G5) unless for some teachers who 'have studied overseas' (3G3). Sometimes, this HKE accent, even if pronounced by their teachers, was considered to be 'not accurate enough' (3G7). Nevertheless, some students also suggested that their teachers spoke English 'very well' and 'very purely' and would constantly 'correct' their HKE pronunciation features (3G7). From this perspective, many students defined HKE as corresponding to the mother-tongue-influenced accent (1G1, 1G2, 1G3, 2G3, 3G7). More specifically, some students in 2G3 identified a few typical linguistic features of HKE as in the literature (see chapter 6), such as the 'syllable-timing' of the HKE phonology (e.g. 1G3: 'I-am-chow'), missing final consonants (e.g. /s/) and the replacement of 'th' with 'f' sound (2G3: 'The pronunciation without an "s"; The "th" sound is pronounced as "f" sound'; 3G7: 'The sound is mixing with Chinese such as "fank

you”’). Several students also pointed to their content-area teachers’ HKE, which they thought was awful (2G3).

11.3.3 Senior secondary students

At senior secondary level, students also had a similar understanding of HKE to their junior counterparts but they explained more elaborately. For example, students in 4G1 further elaborated that the expression ‘people mountain people sea’ was directly translated from Chinese, in which ‘people’ referred to ‘yan’ (人 in Cantonese) originally. They also suggested that this kind of HKE was not and should not be taught by the English teachers (4G1: ‘They cannot work as a teacher if they teach HKE’). Some more examples were given by other students who referred HKE mainly to Chinese-translated English in terms of grammar (e.g. ‘to give you some colour to see see’, an Chinese idiom meaning ‘I’ll make you see the stars’; ‘inch you’, meaning to mock you, 5G5, 5G10; ‘give you some... car food see see’, meaning let you take a look at some food; ‘piano piano green’ (琴琴青), meaning being very hurry, 5G4; ‘blow water’, meaning causal talk, 5G6).

Regarding spoken English, some students thought that the HKE accent was ‘ugly’ (5G1) and was ‘not pure’ (5G1) and ‘sounded bad’ (5G6) and might give the

customers (at work) a negative impression (5G1: ‘If your accent is not pure, the customer will not have a good impression when they hear you speaking with a HKE accent’). In this regard, they compared HKE with ‘Japanese English’ and suggested that some of their teachers also spoke HKE (5G1: ‘Some teachers will speak HKE’; ‘Just like the English teachers in Japan. They all have that kind of sound’). More specifically, HKE, in its spoken form, was not only associated with Cantonese-influenced phonology such as the missing final consonant (e.g. ‘t’, 5G9) and the syllable-timed rhythm (e.g. ‘like elongating the sound in their speech’, 5G1; also, 5G9), but also more broadly included other features in spoken discourse such as the addition of extra particles in the end of a sentence (e.g. ‘la’, ‘lor’, ‘jor’, 5G1, 5G8), the use of Cantonese discourse markers for hesitation (e.g. ‘er’, ‘ah’, 5G8), code-mixing (5G8: ‘mixing Chinese and English’) and the use of ‘Chinese pinyin’ on social media (e.g. ‘ni’ referring to ‘you’, 5G8). Commenting on their teacher’s English, the students exemplified that they pronounced ‘actually’ often with a rising tone and that ‘they emphasise much on the pronunciation of the “th” sound’, which students admitted that they ‘could not pronounce’ (5G8). Although some students suggested that the English teachers did not speak this kind of HKE (e.g. 5G1, 5G9), some of them in fact disregarded HKE phonology as not being problematic because of its apparent lack of attainability:

S1 (5G5): There is no problem with the accent. Probably because of our own grammar, I feel like our English was spoken in a reversed way [R: So it is mainly to do with the grammar?] Maybe when you translate it to Chinese, you may pronounce slightly differently because it is a bit difficult (to change).

S2 (5G5): There is no way you can think entirely in the foreigners' mindset and think how a sentence should be pronounced.

Overall, the interviewed students mainly associated HKE with the Cantonese-translated English expressions, which in fact do not correspond to the discussion of HKE in the existing literature (e.g. Bolton, 2003; Cummings & Wolf, 2011). Probably because these so-called HKE expressions were often stigmatised in the mass media, most students had a very negative feeling about them. Nevertheless, some students tended to have a less adverse attitude towards the HKE accent as it was perceived to be inevitably influenced by their mother tongue.

11.3.3 Intelligibility of NS versus NNS English

11.3.3.1 Junior secondary students

The issue of intelligibility was closely related to option (c) (i.e. It doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners) in the interview question, which initiated further discussion in the focus groups concerning both the identity of the interlocutors as well as the English-speaking contexts. Some students who selected this option did not explicitly associate choice (c) with a lower level target (cf.

section 11.3.1) but highlighted the functionality of English for mutual communication rather than ‘sounding beautiful’ (1G3: ‘Even if you sound beautifully, it is very bad if people do not understand’) or being ‘too professional’ (2G1: ‘You just need to make others understand. It is not that useful to be so professional’). From this viewpoint, however, some students believed that English spoken by NSs could be understood by most people (1G3: ‘Is it possible that people don’t understand the English of NSs?’). In this respect, some students were concerned about the HKE accent being unintelligible to English speakers from Britain and America (1G3: ‘At least you won’t speak English in the HKE accent in countries such as Britain and America. They may not understand’). This perhaps implied that the students regarded NSs as their potential listeners when speaking English while making the judgement that the HKE accent could not be understood by NSs. Some students even thought that the ‘foreigners’ (in the case they were referring to NSs) ‘might not accept the tone of HKE’ and they might remind them of ‘how the sounds should be pronounced’ (2G1). Alternatively, some students specifically highlighted the importance of NS grammar, which was necessary to ensure that mutual intelligibility was maintained:

2G1: I think if I can sound like an NS, most people can understand what I say. If you don’t pursue the NS grammar but only pack words into a sentence, people need to think for a while so as to understand your speech. This is unlike when you are facing a person you are familiar with, you can understand them immediately.

Nevertheless, the opposite opinions were also generated by some students, who tended to think that the HKE accent could be understood by the ‘foreigners’ and even ‘more easily’ understood by themselves because they ‘listen to it more frequently’ (2G1). The students believed that HKE was ‘problematic’ for its expressions such as ‘people mountain people sea’ but there was ‘no problem’ with its phonology as they were aware that ‘there are so many accents in other countries’ (2G2). As the notion of ‘foreigner’ was often mentioned by the students as the listener in English communication, they were asked specifically for who these ‘foreigners’ were in their impression. Initially, students tended to suggest that they referred to people who ‘know English’, ‘speak English’ and ‘speak English well’ (2G2), but it was not until further (more explicit) discussion that they in fact were aware of the high possibility of encountering NNSs in international settings (2G2: ‘people in the minority countries need to learn English’). This perhaps pointed to the necessity of increasing their awareness of the international use of English in ELT teaching, which seems to receive little attention in the local commercial textbooks (see chapter 5).

11.3.3.2 Senior secondary students

At senior secondary level, students sometimes recalled their experience of communicating with ‘foreigners’ when discussing the issue of intelligibility. In these

cases, they suggested that problems tended to stem from the accents of NNSs (e.g. ‘Korean’, ‘Japanese’, 5G4; 5G6), which were not fully intelligible to the students. As for the HKE accent, some students suggested that the listeners ‘won’t be unable to understand’ but ‘might only think that “oh, why do you speak in this way”?’ (5G9). In contrast, some students in 5G7 did provide evidence that the HKE accent might not be intelligible to the ‘foreigners’ who, in this case, were likely to be NSs as the communication took place in Britain: ‘I heard from my uncle saying that when he went to a foreign country, the foreigners didn’t understand what he said in his previous accent’ (5G7). Some students further pointed out that people might not understand their accent (though they might adopt a ‘less-it-pass’ attitude, see Firth, 1996) if they did not conform to a correct form of pronunciation:

5G4: Sometimes it is difficult to understand when people have different accents. The others seem to pretend that they understand but they in fact don’t understand [R: The others’ accent?] They don’t understand our accent. When sometimes we don’t pronounce accurately and pronounce the wrong words, people will misunderstand.

Based on the above discussion, the slightly differing opinions among the junior and senior secondary students regarding the issue of (international) intelligibility seem to lie in the greater experience of international communication of the latter, who were apparently more aware of the important role of NNSs in ELF settings. As their knowledge about the identity of interlocutors in international communication might

have great influence on their perception of the intelligibility of HKE and their attitude towards it vis-à-vis the NS accent, our findings again underline the need to inform students of the sociolinguistic reality of Hong Kong in the process of their English learning.

11.3.4 Cultural identity

11.3.4.1 Junior secondary students

One of the recurring themes in the literature of WE and ELF was that people might want to preserve their unique cultural identity by retaining their L1-influenced linguistic features when speaking English (Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Jenkins, 2000, 2007). In addition, Ferguson (2009) also suggested that learners may wish to alter their way of speaking English depending on the interlocutors (e.g. NSs or NNSs) and English-speaking contexts. In our findings, this theme did not seem to be particularly salient when the students discussed their choice of an English-learning target. The issue of cultural identity hardly emerged from the data until the students were asked more explicit questions regarding their cultural identity. However, quite contrary to previous studies in other contexts (see Jenkins, 2007), the students in some focus groups seemingly did not want to reveal their identity by their English while some of them suggested that they would simply tell the others where they came from (2G2:

‘you would tell the others where you come from when you talk with them. This is politeness’). Some students even said that they would ‘feel ashamed’ of their country if they spoke English ‘badly’ while some of them believed that people could recognise that they were from China based on their appearance: ‘They must be able to see from our face that we are from China’ (2G2).

These students were then invited to express their feelings in various conditions, namely, being regarded as an NS (e.g. an American), a Hongkonger or a mainland Chinese on the basis of their spoken English. More specifically, some of them felt ‘very happy’ if they were regarded as an American but did not have a strong feeling about being identified as coming from Hong Kong (2G2). Given its status as an international city, they were aware of the presence of people in Hong Kong from around the world (2G2: ‘I don’t mind because Hong Kong is an international city. All kinds of people are here’). However, the students did want to have a clear distinction between local Hongkongers and mainland Chinese either by their language or behaviour probably because they had a rather negative feeling about the behaviour of mainland Chinese in Hong Kong recently, which had been frequently reported by the mass media: ‘It’s fine as long as they don’t misunderstand our behaviour and mix us up Hong Kong and mainland Chinese... They “poo” and “piss” everywhere’ (2G2;

also 3G1) (see Brewer, 1999; Mathews, 2001; Lam, Chiu, Lau, Chan & Yim, 2006; Ladegaard, 2011). These students specified that they did not want to be ‘mis-regarded’ as the mainland Chinese because of the negative impression they had on their behaviour in Hong Kong recently either based on their own experience or the multimedia:

2G2: The mainland Chinese are like Barbarians. They don’t know politeness (courtesy). As I live in Sheungshui, I often travel by train. In Low Wu where there were many people coming out, the people... I’m not sure whether they were transporting illegally imported goods... crashed with and collided on the others. They ran away very quickly without saying ‘sorry’. I think they were really impolite. They didn’t even say ‘sorry’...

Some of the ‘rude’ behaviour they highlighted also include ‘putting on their facial mask while lying on the train’, ‘pooing and pissing on the train’, ‘putting their things on empty seats (on the train)’, ‘sitting on the ground’ and ignoring Hong Kong people who ‘generously remind them not to eat on the train’ (2G2). For these reasons, many of the students suggested that they would claim themselves a ‘Hongkonger’ rather than ‘Chinese’ when introducing themselves (2G2: ‘Of course I would say: “I am come from Hong Kong”’), despite HKSAR politically being part of China. This interview finding echoes the result for one of the questions in the structured questionnaire survey, namely, the participants’ agreement with the statement:

‘Q24. I would identify myself as a ‘Hongkonger’ rather than Chinese’ (also see Q18, Q21, Q34 in chapter 7). Although some students in 3G1 also tended to emphasise this distinction between a local Hong Kong and mainland Chinese identity, they suggested that the listeners could distinguish their identity by their differing English accents or, otherwise, they would simply tell them their identity.

11.3.4.2 Senior secondary students

The negative feeling about the mainland Chinese was also expressed by students at the senior secondary level, some of whom claimed that they would ‘mind’ or were ‘afraid’ that foreigners would regard them as mainland Chinese in the international context (e.g. 5G1, 5G4, 5G6). Some students further explained that there was ‘a distance’ between people in the Hong Kong and mainland China, where they thought people of the latter did not have ‘a good image on the global stage’:

5G4

S: It is not a question of discrimination first of all but you would think personally there is a distance. There is a distance.

R: What is the distance?

S: Normally, you can see there is a great difference between the attitudes of how the mainlanders treat people and how Hong Kong people do. First, you would feel that they are very greedy. Second, you will think they are very snooty.

R: And you? Why do you mind [being regarded as a mainlander]?

S: I think that China doesn't quite have a good image on the global stage. And also Putonghua is not yet popular around the world.

R: And you? Why do you mind?

S: Their behaviour recently is not that good.

In 5G1, some students even described the visiting of mainlanders as 'the problem of locusts' (a negative connotation initially used in the social media in Hong Kong to describe the bad influence brought by the mainland visitors). They stressed that they would introduce themselves as Hongkongers rather than Chinese. Some students in the focus group either did not think it mattered or wanted others to identify them as British.

In the Hong Kong context, research has shown that Cantonese rather than English or Putonghua is the language of solidarity among Hong Kong people (Lai, 2007; Gu, 2011). Given Hong Kong's colonial history and international status, Tsui (2007) has argued that English also serves as 'the linguistic habitus of Hong Kong people and a marker of the identity of Hong Kong' (p.131) in addition to solely an economic capital (see also Chan, 2002; Bolton, 2011). Based on our interview findings about students' cultural identity in relation to their use of spoken English, students apparently have not extended the solidarity value of Cantonese to HKE, although they might to some extent also want to preserve their Hong Kong identity, which was unique from that of a general Chinese (also see the quantitative VGT data in chapter

8). As Bolton (2011) argued that Cantonese and English have been harmoniously co-existing in the Hong Kong context, the tension between Cantonese and Putonghua is likely to be a more contentious in Hong Kong's recent socio-economic and political environment. Probably because of this, more discussion about the interviewed students' view on the construct of their local cultural identity was initiated when they were asked to choose their own Putonghua learning target (see below).

11.4 Choice of a Putonghua learning target

For the purpose of determining factors that influence students' choice of a learning target, students were asked the same question about their Putonghua learning target for a comparison. In other words, they were again invited to discuss the three choices, namely, whether they would like to sound like (a) a native speaker of Putonghua (e.g. a Beijing Putonghua speaker), (b) an educated Hong Kong speaker of Putonghua (e.g. a local Putonghua teacher) or (c) it doesn't matter as long as the pronunciation is understandable by the listeners.

11.4.1 Junior secondary students

Derived from the interview findings, although some major reasons for their choice of a Putonghua target were also found to be related to its instrumental value as well as

the issue of intelligibility, attainability and cultural identity, the instrumental value of Putonghua was apparently perceived to be less salient than that of English. Alternatively, other issues such as intelligibility, attainability and, particularly, their cultural identity frequently emerged from their discussion when making their choice. For instance, some junior secondary students selected option (b) or (c) for Putonghua because they were afraid that if they spoke Putonghua 'too well', they would be 'regarded as mainland Chinese or being discriminated against' (1G2; also 3G3, 3G6). Some students even stressed that 'I don't want to follow (the speech of) the locusts' (1G1; also 1G3: 'We need to expel the mainland Chinese'), when they discussed their Putonghua target. Owing to this negative impression about the mainland Chinese, they showed that a native Putonghua speech did not represent a sense of prestige as for the case of NS English (1G3).

To further elaborate their discontent with some of the mainland Chinese people, some students had referred to news reporting on recent conflicts between Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese. More specially, as this period had witnessed a large number of mainland Chinese non-citizen pregnant women who deliberately came to Hong Kong and gave birth in the local hospitals for their children's Hong Kong citizenship, a few of them highlighted that they wanted to 'persuade the non-citizen

pregnant women to return Hong Kong people the bed vacancies in the hospital' (1G1).

Another incident raised by students (1G3) was the comments of a professor, Kong Qingdong, at Beijing University in a television program at that time, who claimed that many Hongkongers were 'bastards', 'dogs' and 'thieves'. The students' responses have somehow illustrated an ingroup-outgroup identity distinction between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese, in which there was a negative stereotype of the latter based on recent incidents of conflicts between the two groups in the Hong Kong context. As a result, these students tended to only perceive Putonghua as a means to cater for the increasing demands for communication with the large population of Putonghua-speaking Chinese people. Furthermore, stereotype of the mainland Chinese people was advanced to the political level by some students, who claimed that 'I don't dislike China but I dislike the Chinese communists' (1G3). In this regard, the distinction between the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese identity was argued to be marked by Cantonese and Putonghua respectively (see also Lai, 2007, 2012):

1G3: Because you will feel that there is a difference. In today's society, people will think that [mainland] Chinese speak Putonghua but Hongkongers speak Cantonese. They are different. The difference in languages makes them look as if they are from two countries.

3G1: I feel disgusted about China. I don't want to learn their language.

However, there was also one student who dissociated their way of speaking Putonghua from their Hong Kong identity, which he believed was based on his better

‘moral conduct’: ‘I am not afraid [that people would regard me as a mainlander if I speak pure Putonghua] because we have better moral conduct than they do. We won’t spit on the street like them’ (3G4).

The theme about Putonghua’s attainability vis-à-vis its instrumental value also recurred in the students’ responses but in a different manner as compared to the case of English. Putonghua was perceived by many students as having a higher attainability because of the greater linguistic similarity between Cantonese and Putonghua (e.g. 1G1, 1G2, 1G3, 3G4, 3G7). In terms of intelligibility, they suggested that a non-standard Putonghua accent might also be understood by the native Putonghua speakers because some sounds in Cantonese were close to those of Putonghua. Here are some examples

1G1: Putonghua is easy to master, and also I started to have some contact with Putonghua since kindergarten. It’s easier for me to speak Putonghua.

1G2: To the Americans, it is also difficult for them to learn Putonghua.

1G2: Putonghua is similar to Cantonese.

1G3: Because the pronunciation of Cantonese originated from the sounds in China but it’s only twisted a little bit. They would still understand even if we say it a bit wrongly.

Although most students tended to think that it was easier to learn Putonghua than English owing to the shared linguistic features between Cantonese and Putonghua,

some students thought that Putonghua had a lower attainability than English based on their Putonghua (and English) learning experience (2G3, 3G6):

2G3: My Putonghua is very bad. I always feel that it is difficult to speak.

2G3: Speaking unnaturally. For example, the native speaker (of Putonghua) speak Putonghua fast, accurate and others can understand. We not only speak slowly, but also flatteringly.

3G6: It is very tedious to speak with the rolling tongue.

Furthermore, many students argued that English was ‘more important than Putonghua’ (1G2) in the Hong Kong contexts, where English was perceived to be ‘needed at work’, ‘in society’ and ‘for communication’ (but Putonghua was ‘rarely used’ (1G2). The higher global status and wider use of English (than Putonghua) were frequently mentioned by students in various focus groups (e.g.1G1, 1G3, 2G2, 3G5):

1G1: I want to choose (c). In fact, for example, if you talk with the mainland Chinese, it’s fine as long as they can understand. We don’t need to speak Putonghua so fluently and accurately. You are good if you speak English very fluently and accurately. I think it is not particularly good to speak Putonghua so fluently and accurately. Also, as English is the global language, it is good to speak better English. Putonghua is just used for communication with the mainland Chinese. It’s fine as long as they can understand.

2G2: Because Chinese is our mother tongue... We basically know the fundamental knowledge. It’s better to learn better English. Also English is the international language. People around the world need to

know it. You will be poor if you don't learn English. Putonghua is not the international language.

2G2: Whenever it is about economy, commerce or travelling, Putonghua is more common in China. But if people don't speak Putonghua, you can supplement with English.

3G5: English is facing the whole world but Putonghua is only facing the whole China.

Nevertheless, having considered the growing market of China, several students had the opposite opinion about the increasing instrumental value of Putonghua:

2G2: Many products are made in China. Even if you don't need to do business with the 1.3 billion [Chinese] people, some other people in the foreign countries will contact you. They will speak Putonghua.

3G4: They (the mainland Chinese people) are so rich now. If they become my big customer when I can communicate with them, I can earn lots of money and I will be very happy.

In a few cases, students did opt for target (a) as they felt that the Beijing Putonghua accent (which they referred to as NS Putonghua) sounded 'quite beautiful' (1G1).

Alternatively, some students who opted for target (b) wanted to eradicate the 'Hong Kong Putonghua accent' or any regional accents (e.g. 'Chaozhou', 'Hakka' accents, 1G2), which probably implied that they regarded any accents as a non-standard form of Putonghua. Nonetheless, some students in this group did have the awareness of accent variation in terms of Putonghua: 'In fact, different people speak Putonghua with a different accent. There is no such thing as the legitimate' (2G2; also 2G3). In

addition, they also suggested that the Beijing Putonghua accent, even if it referred to that of a native speaker (of Putonghua), might not be intelligible to the listeners (2G2: ‘If your Beijing accent is too heavy, people may not understand’; ‘Previously I went to Beijing. I didn’t understand [their speech]’; also 2G3). At the same time, they wanted to eliminate their Cantonese-influenced Putonghua features for business purposes (2G2).

11.4.2 Senior secondary students

At the senior secondary level, the aforementioned factors about their choice of a Putonghua learning target also emerged in the corresponding focus groups. The theme of cultural identity was again dominant in the discussion, in which some students were concerned about being regarded as the mainland Chinese if they sounded like a native speaker of Putonghua (e.g. 4G1). Specifically speaking, some students also associated the mainland Chinese people with the notion of ‘locusts’ (5G1) and some others pointed to the mainland Chinese’s ‘misbehaviour’ in Hong Kong that contributed to students’ negative impression (also 5G5: ‘People can guess that you are not a mainland Chinese by your behaviour’):

4G1: Sometimes the foreigners may discriminate more against the mainland Chinese [...] They normally think that the mainland Chinese would spit onto the street. They squat down on the street.

With respect to their Hong Kong identity, students in this focus group thought that language is not the key indicator of people's identity (5G4: 'I think the language is not most important to differentiate where you come from') but their 'cultural quality' and/or behaviour (5G4: 'It is not just about the language in your speech but you can also see some traces from your behaviour'). Further to this, one student in 5G10 clearly suggested that it was a matter of their identity recognition in that they did not want to be identified as one of the mainland Chinese (also 5G5: 'I hate the China government'):

5G10: It's about the recognition of identity. I am afraid that I would be despised by the others. Now the mainlanders are being despised. You would be said as the locust.

This affective perspective of choose a learning target for Putonghua was particularly salient in 5G7, in which many students shifted from option (a) to (b) when the question changed from the goal of English to Putonghua. The students compared the different accents between Putonghua (or Mandarin) spoken by the mainland and Taiwan Chinese and suggested that they did not want to sound like a Beijing Putonghua speaker as they claimed that they would 'feel embarrassed' as it sounded 'bad' to them (5G7). One of the students even admitted that he had 'strong prejudice against China' (5G7). Alternatively, they felt that the Taiwanese's Mandarin sounded better (also see 5G9):

5G7: Actually, you can hear that there is a big difference between mainlanders' and Taiwanese's Putonghua. The mainlanders force themselves to roll their tongue [...] But the Putonghua in Taiwan sounds much better ... Sounding better than singing.

5G9: In fact, Taiwan people's accent is very accurate but for the mainland ones... people might think that 'are you a mainlander?' As for the Taiwan one, people will think that it sounds quite good.

To explain their choice for the Taiwanese's Mandarin (or even the Chinese language), some students exemplified that their Chinese language teacher spoke with 'the Taiwanese-accented Mandarin' and that 'traditional Chinese characters are used in Taiwan while simplified Chinese characters are used in the mainland' (5G9). In contrast, one of the students suggested that people would think that they were 'wealthy customers' if they spoke 'pure' Putonghua (5G1) and a few others did acknowledge their national Chinese identity and therefore did not mind being regarded as a mainland Chinese:

4G1: It is great that people regard you as a mainlander. You are originally a Chinese. Why should we mind being regarded as a mainlander?

From a practical perspective, some students also stressed the restricted use of Putonghua in other countries and therefore thought that target (a) was not necessary (5G1: 'Because Putonghua is only restricted in one place, you won't speak with people [in Putonghua] when you go to Britain'). As for English, they explained that they wanted to achieve an NS proficiency because 'English is the first widely-used

language' (5G1; also 5G7: 'English has a higher global status'). Because of the perceived higher status of English than Putonghua, the students in 5G6 felt that sounding like a native speaker of Putonghua was not particularly 'professional' but argued that English was more useful than Putonghua (5G6: 'I just think that it is really not as useful as English. In comparison, English seems to be very important. Putonghua is second'). In addition, some of the senior students (who apparently had some awareness of accent variation) suggested that the Beijing Putonghua accent was only a regional one and there was inevitably pronunciation variation in Putonghua across the entire China (e.g. 5G9: 'there are many accents such as the Beijing and southern ones'; also 5G5). However, when referring to a standard for English, the students highlighted the well-established system and long history of English:

5G2: [R: Do you want to speak with a Beijing accent?] You mean a regional accent? No, I think the most important thing is that people can understand. The most important thing is for mutual communication both for the Southern and Northern languages in terms of pronunciation variation in Putonghua.

5G4: Putonghua... it is used in China. There are different versions of Putonghua in different provinces in China. How would there be a standard? [...] If you go to China, target (c) is enough. People speak Putonghua differently. Who would listen to whether you speak in a standard way? But there is a clear system and history in English.

In contrast, some of them also highlighted the increasing importance and hence popularity of Putonghua globally: 'People in America, Europe and Australia are all

learning Putonghua' (4G1). Nevertheless, some students also argued that English was less achievable than Putonghua (also 5G3, 5G7: 'Putonghua is less difficult to learn'):

4G1: We Hong Kong people have got used to reading Chinese characters. It is very difficult to adapt to English words where you need to both speak and write.

Nevertheless, this perceived high attainability of Putonghua also contributed to some students' greater confidence in achieving a native-like proficiency (5G8: 'Maybe Putonghua is easy to pronounce but English is not. It is easier to pronounce English inaccurately'). Furthermore, students who chose option (a) tended to believe that the native-speaking proficiency was the ultimate goal for learning a language and/or was the indicator of a high Putonghua level (4G1: 'If you learn that language, of course you learn it the best'; also 5G3, 5G5, 5G9). In this regard, they suggested full acquisition of it represented a sense of success: 'You will have a sense of success. You would feel very happy if you speak very fluently' (4G1). Alternatively, students who chose target (c) as their Putonghua learning target remained that the purpose of learning any language was for communication (also 5G2, 5G5; 5G7: 'It seems that it is fine if we can communicate in Putonghua but I want to pay more attention to English'):

4G1: I think whatever languages you are learning, it is fine as long as the others can understand. You don't need to pronounce the sounds particularly accurately.

11.5 Summary and implications

This chapter has discussed secondary students' daily use of English and their choice of a learning target. The findings suggest that these students were mainly exposed to English at school but many of them were also exposed to English in their leisure time, especially when talking with their foreign domestic helpers. By comparing the students' choice of learning target for English and Putonghua, we could generally identify numerous factors that contributed to their decision, namely, (1) the intelligibility of the language goal, (2) its attainability with reference to their self-evaluated learning ability, (3) its status and pragmatic value, (4) its projection of their cultural identity. However, the findings have shown that these factors exerted differing degrees of influence on their choices both between the languages and among individuals. Firstly, being intelligible was considered by most students to be the basis for the purpose of learning both languages while some of them regarded it as the minimum requirement. However, this notion of intelligibility in English communication was interpreted differently by some students in terms of their perceived interlocutors, who in their first impressions were often NSs. Their (mis)conception of the use of English as an international language might be influenced by their limited access to the English reality in their daily life and, more

crucially, the information provided in their English learning process based the ELT curriculum, textbooks and their teachers (see also chapter 5).

Secondly, based on their own language ability, many students tended to target a language learning goal which they believed was achievable to them as it would affect their motivation and confidence. In this respect, more of the interviewed students regarded a native-like Putonghua proficiency as an attainable goal than a native-like English one owing to the shared linguistic features between Putonghua and Cantonese especially in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Thirdly (and fourthly), apart from these two factors, the perceived status and solidarity value of the language seemingly accounted for a greater proportion of their choice of a English vis-à-vis Putonghua learning target. More specifically, the immense instrumental value and high status of English have been a major rationale for students, who targeted NS English as it signalled a sense of prestige, professionalism and high education level that could benefit their career. In contrast, HKE (though not HKE as described in the literature) was stigmatised by many students as incorrect or second class but not a marker of their local cultural identity.

As for the case of a Putonghua target, fewer students regarded a native-like proficiency of Putonghua as their ultimate learning goal partly because of its perceived lower status than English worldwide. On top of this, although they did not suggest that they want to speak a local form of Putonghua to express their local identity, many students clearly showed their reluctance to give the listeners an impression that they came from China by their language because of their negative feelings about the (rude) behaviour of the mainland Chinese as well as China. The findings largely confirmed previous studies about the identity construct of Hong Kong people in that two main languages, namely Cantonese and English, mark a distinct Hong Kong identity (e.g. Lau & Kuan, 1988; Chiu & Hong, 1999; Mathews, 2001; Sullivan, Schatz & Lam, 2004; Lai, 2005, 2007, 2011; Gu, 2011). While the former serves as a language of solidarity as it is the mother tongue of the majority of the Hong Kong people, the latter functions as an indispensable tool for upward social mobility. Given the increasingly close relationship between Hong Kong and the growing economic power of China, Putonghua has become another important language in Hong Kong as well as in the global context. Despite the implementation of the 'trilingual biliterate' policy in Hong Kong since the handover, it appeared that students did not regard Putonghua as having the same instrumental value as that of English or the integrative value as that of Cantonese (cf. Lai, 2005, 2007, 2001). On

the contrary, given recent conflicts between Hong Kong residents and mainland Chinese visitors, the Hong Kong identity might have been intensified into one that differentiates them from mainland China, especially among the younger generation as these incidents have been widely discussed on the Internet.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Teachers' exposure to English and teaching of pronunciation

12.1 Introduction

The last group of stakeholders being investigated were the school teachers, who, as discussed in chapter 6, are the major sources of English exposure in the students' daily school experience. This chapter reports on the interview data of two groups of teachers, namely 8 ELT teachers (ETs) and 7 subject teachers (STs), mainly under the themes of their daily exposure to English (section 12.2) and their practices of teaching English (section 12.3). As these teachers had different academic backgrounds, prior teacher training and purposes and foci of teaching based on the subjects they taught, they were likely to have different attitudes towards the nature of English, the use of English and the choice of a learning target for the students. In the school setting, these teachers might have immense impact on the students' perception of English as they are role models in their critical stage of learning English. At the end of the chapter, the responses of these teachers are summarised for pedagogical implications (section 12.4). It is noted that while most teachers in the interviews were either ELT or subject teachers in the English-medium classroom, two of them (ST5, ST14) were currently not teaching English-medium classes (reported in Appendix 12.3 as addition cases). Furthermore, two of the ELT teachers taught in a primary school (ET1, ET12,

reported in Appendix 12.3 as addition cases) whereas others were all secondary school teachers.

12.1 Exposure to English

One important question in the semi-structured individual interviews with the teachers was their prior experience of using English and exposure to English outside the classroom. This information was crucial to understand how their knowledge about English use around the world (and in Hong Kong) was constructed based on their experience, as compared to that of the students and professionals. If the purpose of English education at school is to prepare students for their future needs, it seems important that the teachers should have some understanding of these ‘needs’. Upon a content analysis of the interview transcription, the English-using contexts the teachers mentioned were identified and categorised, following by a more detailed discussion of their responses.

12.2.1 English language teachers

Like other professionals in Hong Kong, school teachers spent most of their time in their working environment. Many of them admitted that they have relatively little use of English apart from using it as the medium of instruction in the classroom. The

written use of English they mentioned included reading newspapers (number of teachers who mentioned it: 2) and magazines (1), surfing the internet (2) and reading fiction (1) whereas their use of spoken English consisted of talking with native English speaker teachers (NESTs) (4), university classmates (3), relatives (2) and friends (2), temporarily staying in an NS country (3), travelling (4), attending lectures (3), participating in exchange programs (3) and church gatherings (2) as well as watching films (2) and TV programs (1) (see Appendix 12.1 for further details). Notwithstanding their general lack of opportunities (or time) to speak English outside school, most of the ELT teachers did observe the necessity for them to be constantly exposed to English (e.g. ET6, ET9, ET11, ET16). One reason suggested by the teachers was that they were concerned about their declining English proficiency:

ET6: As you teach for longer time, your English proficiency will become the same as the students. Sometimes, you also have doubts about yourself. I will probably write ‘there have’ (a non-standard form of English often used by the students) in the future (joking). I think the teachers should have expectations of themselves in this regard. I think there are many chances in Hong Kong if you are willing to do so. It is easy to use oral English in Hong Kong and to make improvements.

In addition, ET6 tended to have more social contact with one of the NESTs in her school such as when going for hiking together:

ET6: You can chat with her (the NEST) but then we stop chatting when we feel tired. You know hiking is tiring. We chat probably because we are at a similar age and we have similar interests. If you ask me whether chatting can improve your English, I don’t aim for that

when hiking with her. But I think if you get contact with these people, at least it won't be like facing the students in there would be bad influences on your language. As every school in Hong Kong has NESTs, it is easy for us to do so in this respect.

According to ET9 and ET11, English teachers needed to constantly use English in the daily life because public examinations often required senior secondary students to write about recent social issues. As ET11 suggested, 'there are often some new words such as "non-citizenship pregnant women" that did not exist in the past' and 'especially in the HKDSE (the school-exit public examination), students are required to use some vocabulary related to their daily life'. However, this teacher also argued that it was indeed difficult to inform students of the real language-using situation in Hong Kong at school until they later work or study at the university because spoken English was hardly used in their daily life (cf. Li, 2009, 2011 about the use of spoken English in Hong Kong):

ET11: You always tell the students that English is a language for communication but they don't feel it. They can't feel it at the school [R: What do they think English is? A subject?] Yes, a subject. They don't recognise its importance. People who work might start to know... Some of the graduated students know. They feel that English is very important as they were admitted to university.

In terms of the teachers' exposure to English varieties, NSs were often reported to be the interlocutors. For instance, the NESTs they encountered were from Australia, Britain and New Zealand (ET1, ET6, ET9, ET16). Some teachers had studied or

stayed for a long period of time in an English-speaking country such as Britain (ET1) and Australia (ET2, ET3, ET6) and they still had contact with friends from the corresponding countries (ET1, ET3, ET6). Particularly, ET16 encountered NSs more frequently not only because she previously participated in an overseas exchange program, but she also went to church regularly, where the majority of the participants were America-born Chinese (whose mother tongue was English). While most of the ELT teachers suggested that they had limited experience of encountering NNSs (or even NSs) in the previous or present university study (e.g. ET11), ET16 mentioned that she was quite active to approach the ‘foreigners’ to practice her English. Interestingly, ET9 stated that she sometimes talked to her nephew from the US in English and she realised that she in fact lacked knowledge about some daily-life vocabulary:

ET9: When people ask me something related to the daily life, I feel my English proficiency is not sufficient. For example, the daughter of my elder sister grew up in the US and she has come to Hong Kong. I feel that I have difficulties staying with her. She uses much everyday English.

From a receptive perspective, NS English tended to be also dominant in the mass media (e.g. TV sports programs as mentioned by ET3) and Hollywood films (ET6, ET16). In other words, these ELT teachers apparently have relatively little experience of ELF interactions in their daily life involving NNSs. Without a clear description of

who they encountered, some possible ELF settings they mentioned included overseas travelling (ET2, ET11, ET16) and meeting foreign classmates such as from Japan (ET16) and Germany (ET9) at university. ET7 also revealed that she sometimes spoke English with her daughter in order to help her learn English at an earlier stage. Based on their previous language-using experience, many ELT teachers even felt that the universities in Hong Kong were 'not so internationalised' (ET1) as most of their classmates were Hong Kong or mainland Chinese (e.g. ET1, ET11, ET12). In this regard, ET1 perceived English as mainly used in the workplace:

ET1: The professionals or F.7 graduates or above may need English mainly in their workplace. Privately, you would hardly meet friends who come from a foreign country. You may meet more [foreign friends] after your university study. For example, if you have studied overseas, you might need English for socialising among friends... Not much chance anymore.

ET1 did have the experience of using ELF in a religious exchange camp involving people from Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Korean and Hong Kong. Among English spoken by these participants, although she said that she 'found it difficult to understand the Singaporean's pronunciation because they mixed with their regional accent', she prioritised their English proficiency as the highest, followed by that of people from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea and Japan: 'If you only compare among the university students, the Singaporean spoke the best English, followed by the Hong Kong people, Indonesian, Korean and Japanese' (ET1). Based on her experience, she

mentioned that she had great difficulties communicating with the Japanese (also suggested by ET2) and, in such as a scenario, writing might be necessary:

ET1: The Japanese's English is really bad. They had an electronic dictionary so that they could check up the words for the pronunciation [R: Wouldn't that be very inefficient?] For one word or the whole sentence. If there were some words in our speech that they didn't know, we would write down the words for them.

Owing to her lack of opportunities to use English, ET7 acknowledged that the way they used English might not truly reflect how English was used in other occupational fields such as in the business domain (ET7: 'I think as a teacher, our exposure to English may be a bit different from people in other fields such as Business English'). She argued that the students nowadays have much less exposure to English especially at school, unlike during the colonial period when they were students:

ET7: In the colonial period, you had more contact with English. You could see a lot of English around you. Now there is much Chinese. In the past, all subjects were compulsorily taught in English except Chinese and Chinese History.

While most participants (both the interviewed teachers and professionals) highlighted that (spoken) English was mainly used in workplace situations, ET16 observed that the commercial English textbooks were 'designed for academic rather than workplace purposes' because they specifically catered for the public examinations (ET16). She explained that the aim of secondary education should serve a dual purpose to enable students to deal with 'some simple communication at work' (and 'job hunting') and

‘pass the examination’ for further study. However, she observed that there were insufficient elements of workplace English in the curriculum because ‘the examination aims to screen off people for university admission’. On the contrary, she reported that her graduated students worked in a wide range of disciplines such as services encounter in hotel and Disneyland, police and civil service, which required different degrees of workplace English or, potentially, some communication skills in ELF interactions. Although ET16 suggested that students needed to learn the culture of the language (which in her view apparently referred to the NSs’), she acknowledged the difficulties in teaching it in the classroom as the teachers might not have sufficient knowledge in this regard:

ET16: Like Koala and Kangaroo in Australia... maybe only they (the local people) would know that Koalas can be kept as pets in Australia. This is something which only they would know.

Commenting on this relationship between the textbook design and the real language needs in society, ET9 observed the improvements in current textbooks (also suggested by ET7), which adopted content more relevant to Hong Kong in comparison to the textbooks they used previously:

ET9: Some time ago, we used a textbook called GS, grammar spectrum. We used it for teaching around two years ago. That’s a textbook published in Britain. The name of the airport ‘Heathrow’ is written in it. It includes names of places such as Manhattan...that’s in the US... places in Europe and Britain and with the British background. The students were so puzzled with it. This year, we used a textbook

published by Longman. You can see that all the content is related to Hong Kong and the Hong Kong living environment. Then they understand.

ET9 suggested that even though the New Senior Secondary (NSS) ELT curriculum recommended that students learn about cultures in other countries, the students were unable to imagine and understand them:

ET9: In the NSS curriculum, there is one topic about Africa. The students were unable to imagine it. It suggests that football there is like the traditional Chinese one. They don't understand and I couldn't have explained it to them. The chapter also discusses their local cultural issues such as their housework and work using a hoe. They students could not imagine them. There is a cultural distance. Knowing the words doesn't mean that you understand these issues.

This enthusiastic teacher was aware of the importance of the cultural elements in learning a language and she was eager to share her experience with the students when travelling, which somehow suggests that the teachers' self-knowledge is also important:

ET9: I love travelling very much. I can share with the students what I have experienced. For example, some English words are originally Japanese. Sometimes, I will explain to them why the Japanese use those words and why they pronounce the words in such a way. I also explain to them the cultural environment sometimes influences a lot.

Quite interestingly, ET9 revealed that she did not in fact experience real use of English until the first time she travelled to the UK:

ET9: There was one incident where I was looking for the British Museum in the UK. I wanted to know where it was. Then someone

told me: 'go straight, turn left'. The first time in my life that someone said this sentence to me... hahaha. I was 20 something already at that time.

In order to raise the students' awareness of English varieties around the world, ET9 deliberately played a video clip to the students about South Africa. However, her good intention was disappointed by the students' complaints about the video clip being difficult to understand: 'First, they (the students) were so angry that they didn't understand. Second, they would never have known where those places are' (ET9). Like ET9, ET2 also revealed that she had not experienced real English communication until she participated in immersion programs to the inner circle countries (as part of her teacher training):

ET2: I first realised that English is for communication in the immersion program. I went to Australia. I didn't speak anything in the first week. I realised that I have been learning English for so long but I didn't speak in the first week. I was not aware that I need to speak with the westerners, though I knew I have learnt English for a long time. I didn't understand what the foreigners said. I realised that I needed to be attuned to them. I think the immersion program was really useful but I think this is just for playing if it is for the secondary school students [...] I felt very happy when I participated in the immersion program studying at university. I participated twice, the first time to Australia and the second time to New Zealand. I no longer had much feeling when I participated the second time. I was deeply impressed at the first time that English was really for communication... I think it becomes 'alive'.

Comparing her experience of communicating with the NSs in Hong Kong and in the NS country, she suggested that the former spoke English more slowly:

ET2: Our NESTs speak English more slowly. The westerners seriously speak English faster. During the immersion program, you found that they spoke English very fast. Even in the radio program, they all speak English very fast [R: Was it very difficult to listen to the English in the radio program?] Yes, even the speeches on TVB pearl (an English TV channel in Hong Kong) are already much slower. The others are very fast. So, it is less real. Until you are really living in places like Australia, you really cannot be attuned to their speed.

12.2.2 Subject teachers

In comparison to the ELT teachers, the content-area teachers apparently had relatively limited use of English in their daily life. In the interviews, they mentioned that they wrote or read English in emails (2), newspapers (1), letters (1), books (1), examinations (1) and documents (1) but rarely spoke English outside school (see Appendix 12.2). As all the interviewed (ELT and subject) teachers previously studied in English at secondary school and university, the content-area teachers often referred to their prior English use in the academic discourse such as attending lectures (4), giving presentations (2) and talking with (a few) university classmates (1) probably because they had little use of spoken English in their daily life since working. It is also reported that most of the university students in the non-language programs were mainly Hong Kong people (ST5, ST14, ST15) and, in some situations, the university lecturers might be from countries such as Pakistan (ST8), Malaysia (ST13) and Singapore (ST14). Among all these subject teachers, ST10 possibly had more

experience of using English because she previously studied in a university in the US, where she met people of different nationalities such as American, Filipino and Taiwanese. In their everyday life, the subject teachers might watch films (1) and TV programs (1) in English, talk to the NESTs in their school (3), attend job interview (1) using English. Particularly, ST5 suggested that she sometimes met parents of the students coming from places such as Pakistan and the Middle East. In this kind of ELF situation, she highlighted that accent variation was a major problem, in which writing became the only alternative channel for communication:

ST5: It's very hard to understand what they say because of their accent [R: Do they understand what you say?] They understood what we said but we didn't understand their speech. You could guess what they were trying to ask but I sometimes didn't understand their pronunciation of some words. I have the experience that I really didn't understand [R: What did you do at last?] Ask him/her to write. S/he wrote while I answered him/her in English. S/he was asking something such as when we were going to teach a topic. I really did not understand a word. So what could I do? I could only ask him/her to write it down. As s/he could spell the word, we could then understand by reading it so that we could answer him/her.

Apart from these occasions, most subject teachers admitted that they generally do not speak English in their daily life. From this perspective, ST8 did have the awareness that their use of English might significantly differ from people working in other companies involving foreigners of diverse nationalities:

ST8: My life has been all around the school. However, if I work outside or for some of friends.... there are in fact some westerners in their company. I can see that there are many foreigners from different countries.

Similarly, ST15 also admitted that she hardly used English apart from teaching at school or talking with the NESTs. Reflecting on her previous experience, she suggested she did not have a lot of exposure to spoken English even though she studied in a so-called English-medium instruction (EMI) school:

ST15: In my secondary school, we were taught in English. I should say the textbooks were in English. All textbooks were in English. After that, there might be some Chinese. At that time, there won't be that much English in every lesson. Apart from the English class, the teacher might not have insisted on speaking English. The most important thing was to finish the teaching.

This lack of English exposure was because of the fact that her secondary school teachers were most concerned with the content knowledge and it was not until her university studies that she was exposed to more spoken English because the lecturers were mostly foreigners who spoke English:

ST15: Because some of them don't understand you speaking Cantonese. They are foreigners, the professors. So when you talk to them, you need to use English. It's good for listening that there wasn't any Chinese. There wasn't any Chinese. Every lesson was in English.

Apart from teaching science subjects in English at both junior and secondary levels, ST13 reported that she had more opportunities to talk with an NEST in the previous years, who was the co-class teacher with her in the same class:

ST13: As she (the NEST) was the class teacher of my class last year, we talked in English a lot. There wasn't one day that you could escape from her. She kept asking me questions. She also complained a lot about the students. That was a good opportunity. As I am sitting far away from her this year, I feel my oral English has become poorer. I can't practise.

In her prior English education, she stated that she was highly motivated and frequently watched English TV programs even though there were no NESTs in her secondary school:

ST13: We didn't have any NESTs in the past. I had a teacher who had studied overseas but her accent was also 'Chinglish'. However, she was good. As she knew that her accent was not 'NS-like' enough, she let us listen to or watch many foreign things such as songs and foreign TV programs. She always encouraged us to watch TV. At that time, I watched a lot of English TV programs. I think my listening ability was better in the past. Now, I'm lazier because there are subtitles now. I'm really lazier now.

During her undergraduate studies, she had increasing awareness of accent variation worldwide as well as its challenge in terms of intelligibility as there were many foreign lecturers in her department from places such as Scotland, Malaysia and China:

ST13: The people in my department were mainly foreigners. We found it difficult to understand their speech because they were from different countries such as Malaysia and Scotland. I didn't understand them at all. They didn't even use PowerPoint slides but transparencies. I just didn't know what they were talking about after a 3-hour lesson. I think this is a good thing. As there are people with different accents, we got used to listening to them. There was somebody speaking with a Mainland accent. That's a pity. The teacher didn't speak Cantonese. S/he either spoke Putonghua with a Sichuan accent... or English, which we also didn't understand.

12.3 Pedagogical foci on teaching spoken English

A second important theme in the individual interviews with teachers was their views on setting a learning goal of spoken English for students. For ELT teachers, the discussion was extended to how they taught students spoken English and assess their English ability while interviews with the subject teachers mainly centred on their requirement for students' language when they taught content-area knowledge in the classroom. These teachers responses' are reported case-wise in following sub-sections (12.3.1, 12.3.2).

12.3.1 English language teachers

Notwithstanding the fact that all the interviewed ELT teacher taught the same ELT syllabi in Hong Kong, it was quite surprising that they had diverging opinions on the target of a spoken English particularly with respect to pronunciation.

ET3

Even though ET3 did not have a preference for local teachers or NESTs, he clearly regarded RP as the model that should be adopted in the ELT classroom.

ET3: I think it doesn't matter who teaches English as long as they can produce any of the referencing accents. It is okay as long as they have

this ability... or someone who is qualified. I think you should not discriminate against anyone, whether or not you are an NEST, as long as you have the capability to speak RP or an RP-like accent. I think this is a theory. This is a system for you to follow but not something that you can change freely.

While it was uncertain whether his previous undergraduate studies in Australia (for four years) had any influence on his perception of English, ET3 tended to regard NS English as a static linguistic system which learners should aim for. Nevertheless, he highlighted that the pursuit of an NS pronunciation was at a 'higher level' and students should learn phonetics as the basis: 'I think pronunciation is already at a higher level. One level lower is that you can produce. They don't know phonetics and don't know what they mean' (ET3). Furthermore, ET3 showed appreciation of the 'very helpful NESTs' at his school, who made teaching materials for oral lessons. He explained that teaching materials made by NSs are 'better in quality' (ET3), which indicates his strong adherence to the NS standard as well as their authority on linguistic correctness. In terms of his way of teaching oral, ET3 tended to first focus on fluency rather than pronunciation correctness so as to develop their confidence in speaking the language:

ET3: I will teach them fluency. First, I won't correct their pronunciation as it is to some extent related to your accent, which is difficult to change. Also, the issue of accent is controversial. They might prefer RP to GA but I prefer GA. Therefore, I would neglect this. I will teach them fluency. In my former school, as well as in other schools which I heard from my friends, they teach 'linking words'. For

example, ‘well’ and ‘like’. These words in fact would improve your fluency but no teachers teach them [...] When you teach oral English, you have to develop their confidence. You also need to teach them the connected speech. For example, if the ending of a word is ‘h’, then you can neglect it.

In terms of public examination, he believed that sounding like an NS would ‘absolutely score a higher mark’ because the examiners would ‘subconsciously’ have such a preference, even if this requirement was not explicitly written in assessment criteria (see chapter 5):

ET3: If you think about the mainlanders who speak Cantonese inaccurately and with hesitation, what would you think even if you can understand? Do you think their Cantonese is good? It is very simple. You would think that their Cantonese is not good. [R: So it is a matter of general perception. Even if it is not written in the public examination, is it still the case?] Yes, it is not good to carry a strong HKE accent. If it is really not an issue, why would you have the NESTs. Why would you have the preference of hiring English teachers who returned from studying’ living in an overseas country?

In the school practice, although ET3 suggested that the school-based examination did not penalise students for their HKE accent, he would require his students to imitate his pronunciation or that in the audio recording so that they could eradicate it:

ET3: I won’t say it explicitly that their accent has a problem. I will ask them to follow my pronunciation or that in the audio recording. But the message is the same. You need to change their accent. It just depends on how explicit you are.

ET16

ET16 did not perceive an NS standard as necessary but highlighted that students should focus on ‘clarity’, ‘fluency’, ‘use of vocabulary’ and ‘content of their speech’, depending on the students’ academic ability:

ET16: For the more capable classes, apart from fluency, you would also expect them to be better in the use of vocabulary and content. As for the less capable students, I think as long as they speak clearly, that’s fine. Then, it’s the content.

In classroom practice, ET16 highlighted that a skill-based approach to teaching (e.g. ‘group discussion’) was appropriate but it was inevitable that the weaker students were required to memorise some formulaic phrases (e.g. ‘I disagree with you’). As also revealed in our focus group interviews with the students (see chapter 11), ET16 did not associate HKE with pronunciation but only some L1-influenced grammatical features as well as the use of mix codes:

ET16: [R: When assessing students’ speaking ability, what do you think HKE is?] ‘There have’... they always use this both in writing or speaking or ‘have many people’. I think it’s their first language interference. Some weaker students might say ‘Ng Hai’ (唔係) (i.e. meaning ‘no’) when they are nervous speaking English [...] In the middle of the conversation, they say ‘Ng Hai’ and then they change to English again. I think this is quite special.

In terms of pronunciation, ET16 suggested that she would correct students’ non-standard features and ask them to ‘imitate’ her pronunciation but she was satisfied as long as the students ‘maintain clarity’ and ‘accuracy’ as they were deemed

to be ‘most important for communication’. Despite this, her following response indeed revealed that she assessed her students against an NS norm:

ET16: They have to be accurate. You can’t allow them to mix the words. But we won’t have a rubric but a general impression [R: There is something called a ‘good accent’ (in the assessment criteria). How do you define this?] Whether they sound like the westerners (NSs) or have a high and low intonation.

Probably because she conceptually regarded NS pronunciation as the ultimate target, she suggested that ‘NESTs are better for teaching speaking and culture awareness raising’ while ‘local teachers are better at establishing their foundation in grammar, teaching listening skills and ways of thinking’ because they understood the ‘areas that might be more problematic to the students’ based on their experience (ET16).

ET2

From a more holistic viewpoint about the school’s ELT arrangement, ET2 suggested that ‘at the junior level, speaking is for fun’ and ‘at the senior level, the curriculum focuses on skills and drilling for examination skills’. More specifically, the junior secondary school-based syllabus for speaking mainly centred on teaching phonics and language arts (e.g. drama, poems) and more NESTs were assigned to teach the junior secondary students (ET2, also mentioned by ET7). Though ET2 was aware that the

teaching of phonics was essential to students so that they could make connections between word sounds and spelling, she explained that there was insufficient lesson time to help students establish this foundation. Personally speaking, however, she believed that an examination-oriented approach to teaching (i.e. focus on examination skills, drilling past examination papers) was effective for the students based on her teaching experience:

ET2: I give them what they need. There is no fun. If you can cope with English, I will give you fun. For listening, I sometimes do it. For example, I play songs in the listening class at junior secondary level. Through listening to the popular songs they like, they listen to what the songs are about.

From this perspective, ET2 was quite satisfactory with the localised ELT textbooks which she claimed were 'very examination-based'. Furthermore, she suggested that cultural issues were not particularly important but it only served the purpose of raising students' interest: 'If there is no examination, it is okay for their interest. But as we now need to focus on their examination, we have no way but to make a choice' (ET2). Nevertheless, she complained about the requirement of the ELT subject in the public examinations being 'unreasonable' on the ground that English, in her view, was only learnt as a subject at school and students have little exposure to English outside the classroom:

ET2: This is impossible. If you look at what the HKDSE or HKCEE (the major public examinations in Hong Kong) requires students to

learn at junior and senior secondary levels, you are expecting a student who has already been using English for communication since childhood. This is basically not ‘balanced’. I don’t know whether it is reasonable to put it this way. What do you expect the students who learn English as a subject?

More specifically, she argued that expecting a Hong Kong student to sound like an NS was simply ‘unfair’ and ‘meaningless’:

ET2: As you have been in a Chinese-speaking environment since your childhood, I think it is unfair and meaningless to ask a student to learn an NS accent. What’s the meaning? If you want to imitate the pronunciation of an NS, you would learn it naturally. Honestly, if you ask the students to pretend [an NS accent], what are you expecting? You are going to be an NS? Why do you need this? I think this is meaningless. But I know some people would focus much on the correctness of pronunciation.

Based on her observation at school, different ELT teachers had a different standard of marking for students’ pronunciation: ‘Some of them may be more generous when assessing pronunciation and some of them focus much on correctness such as the “r” and “th” sounds but I don’t think it is necessary’ (ET2). From her perspective, being able to communicate was more crucial than accurate pronunciation:

ET2: What do you learn a language for? You learn a language for communication, not to evaluate yourself regarding pronunciation. It is also not for reading aloud like a story teller. Even if you are good at pronunciation, not every student can do this. So it is okay as long as you can communicate. For example, the F.1 students can actually communicate with a foreigner only by using some vocabulary. It is not a problem.

However, she did acknowledge the fact that sounding like an NS did help students attain a better result in external examinations:

ET2: I don't require it (an NS pronunciation) but people do require this outside (in external examinations). If you are good at pronunciation, you automatically will get a higher score in oral examinations.

She then argued that this was only based on the impression of the examiners and, therefore, as an examiner, she tended to be 'very generous with this' as she felt 'sympathetic' with the students. Given that most of the students in her school belonged to band 2 (i.e. average academically among students in Hong Kong), she lamented that her students were disadvantaged because an NS accent was hardly attainable by them:

ET2: You would be at a great disadvantage if you don't have the NS accent. The issue here (in our school) is whether our students can speak English fluently and are able to communicate. Some of them can speak fluently but are unable to communicate.

In the interview, ET2 emphasised that the acquisition of 'an NS tongue' was 'unreasonable' while students could still 'earn a living' even if they spoke with an HKE accent. Nonetheless, she did acknowledge the high instrumental value of an NS accent (as well as people who had studied overseas) for some occupations:

ET2: In my field, people all speak English well. But for some occupations which you need to face people, such as being a receptionist, this (sounding like an NS) is very important. Honestly, when you are in a restaurant, no matter whether the people speak English very well [demonstrating: rell, rell, rell], they are also speaking

English. Is it a disadvantage? I think it is not because they have their training [R: Do you think that people who studied overseas would have the advantage because they sound better or they have a better personality?] In the educational field, I don't know. I don't know. I don't even know what happens out there because I don't have any contact. But they would have more opportunities to get the jobs. For example, there are now many foreign organisations... consultancies such as 'oxford', 'Wiseman', 'English builder'. Many of them prefer to recruit people who have studied overseas and have returned to Hong Kong because their English proficiency is higher. There was also an effect of making them like a famous brand. People will think that they are better. So they would have more opportunities. But once they work, you can see their performance. So you also need to look at their performance. Some of them are so lazy. Even if you are good at English, you can't work if you are so lazy.

In practical terms, although she valued for NESTs being 'a source of NS English for listening', she explained that it was not appropriate for them to teach students with lower academic ability mainly owing disciplinary issues:

ET2: For example, Mr X (an NEST) did teach class D and E (with academically less capable students) several years ago but problems arose. The students were like crazy. You can imagine that it is not fair to ask a foreigner to face these naughty students while he doesn't know Chinese. I think you can ask them to teach listening and speaking as you are also listening to English in the listen lessons.

ET6

As an experienced ELT teacher, ET6 believed that the students in their school tended to be better at speaking among the different aspects of English (e.g. writing, reading, listening) (also mentioned by ET2, ET9), regardless of their (NS) linguistic correctness and rather limited range of content they could speak:

ET6: The students in our school seem to be okay in speaking but you don't expect to correct their grammatical mistakes. If you ask them to speak, they will be able to say something. They won't be stuck and fail to say anything. Also, within a context, you know what they are talking about. It is a pity actually. It is only because you are familiar with the context, you understand what they say. If we are talking with a new topic, I wonder whether you will understand what they are saying.

ET6 attributed the students' better speaking ability to the communicative approach adopted in ELT at primary and secondary levels as well as the measures implemented by their school that encouraged students to speak English:

ET6: I think it is related to the communicative approach when they learnt English previously. Probably in their primary school, their teachers have trained their speaking ability. Though there aren't many chances for every student to speak in the secondary school, the school has many measures for the teaching of speaking. For example, they are split into small classes in the oral lessons. There are also male and female foreigners at the school. The male NESTs are assigned to be the class teacher of three form 1 classes. They need to speak English anyway. They also think that no one will give them a cross if they speak English mistakenly. No one will stop them or ask them to do corrections. I believe that they don't quite know that they make mistakes when they speak.

In terms of pronunciation, she stressed that she 'wanted to focus on it very much' but teachers 'couldn't expect much of it' considering the ability of the students, whose pronunciation was considered to be 'very poor' (ET2: 'When they read, there are many words they fail to pronounce'). Nevertheless, in the speaking examination, she tended to downplay the importance of pronunciation while focusing on intelligibility.

Although she insisted that she did not expect her students to sound 'very close' to an

NS, she suggested that students should avoid making pronunciation mistakes at word level. As she was aware of the differing accents of English varieties such as those spoken by the Indian and Singaporean, it is possible that she tended to dissociate an accent from word-level pronunciation in which the former was not mistaken. In other words, the NS correctness of the segmental (but not suprasegmental) pronunciation features might still be the pedagogical foci by this teacher (see below). As Jenkins (2000) also suggested, NS-like suprasegmental features are hardly manageable in the local ELT classroom.

ET6: There isn't much focus on pronunciation. For example in TSA (Territory-wide System Assessment), there is one descriptor about delivery, whether they speak clearly or whether others find it easy to understand. This is only one component for their score [R: I saw in the document that it has mentioned 'good intonation and accent' but I think this concept is quite vague.] That's one of the criteria in pronunciation and delivery. A very 'small' requirement. There are also many things in this component so that they can get the other marks. You need to ask them to fulfil many things in order to get a high score in this component [R:Do you think this should be strengthened or not?] I think what they speak is HKE. Some students can speak more closely to the NS. They 'pick up' the tone and accent better. However, I don't think they really need to speak very closely to the NS accent if they don't pronounce the words mistakenly and others can understand. There are so many accents around the world. The Indian also don't speak in a very NS way.

ET6 did not explicitly teach intonation but only allowed the students to model how she or the NESTs spoke English. She admitted that as she did not have an NS accent, she would not expect the students to speak in such a way:

ET6: We in fact don't have much time to teach intonation. It depends on how the students pick it up when the teachers speak, especially the speech of the NESTs. Some students are good and smart. They can imitate more closely to it.

Once again, ET6 emphasised that the focus should be on 'communication rather than whether they (the students) sound like the NESTs' (ET6). In assessment, however, she suggested that the judgement on students' pronunciation tended to be an impression rather than a detailed evaluation of their phonological features. In such cases, an NS accent was considered to be comfortable to listen to, though this might not be her expectation for the students:

ET6: Of course, that (sounding like an NS) would be good. You feel that it is more fluent and comfortable when listening to it. You won't find it hard or struggle. Sometimes you need to adjust yourself, just like adjusting a channel on the radio. Originally, you have got used to listening to it (the NS accent). The channel has been just right and you feel it is natural. However, when they (the student) pronounce in a different way, I have to adjust the channel again so that I would be able to understand what they say. It would certainly be harder but is it the most important issue? To me, it is not. I would have felt very happy already if they can speak English. The most important thing is that I understand what they are talking about and they can express themselves using some better English.

Based on her teaching experience, her students found it very difficult to acquire the English sound system because they regarded all English words as isolated linguistic items with a distinct pronunciation but failed to apply the 'basic English sounds' to all the words. She therefore shared with the researcher her teaching practice which

involved frequently reminding the students of the shared phonological features among words:

ET6: I guess the students fail to learn English because they regard learning English as learning word-by-word. I told them that there are millions of words in English. You can learn them one by one slowly. Not only are there millions of words, but there are also millions of sounds or at least half a million of sounds. You can never memorise them. Then why don't we only learn the basic sounds of English? [...] Every time when I teach pronunciation, I would ask them how this 'a' (letter in a word) is pronounced. They just try the pronunciation by chance. I told them that they don't need to do it by chance. I have written a symbol for them, either it is long or short sound, /a/ or /o/. The students who understand this system know how to pronounce the sounds [R: So you would use the IPA symbols?] I won't really write the phonetic symbols. I think I try to mix it with phonics. I will draw a line for 'a'. I will draw a symbol for the short sound of 'e'. I will put two dots for 'a' and write a /o/ sound for 'o'. There are only very few symbols. If they understand what the symbols represent and use them to pronounce each part... the syllable, they will think that English is not difficult.

Turning to discussing the importance of learning cultural issues, ET6 associated the English culture with the NS ways of thinking and speaking and argued that it could only be gradually understood unless there was a certain degree of exposure to the language in diverse channels:

ET6: This is very subtle. Unless you learn a language to a certain level, you would not understand the way they think. As long as you know how others think, you will know how to use the language. Personally, I think this cannot be taught. You need be exposed to the language in various channels so that you can approach their culture from being very far away to closer. You will then start to understand how they think, how they express themselves and how they speak the language.

She further commented that the local commercial ELT textbooks ‘did not foster cultural understanding’ but they only allowed the students to ‘be familiar with some themes or topics so that they know what kinds of vocabulary are applicable to the topics’ (ET6). In this regard, she highlighted the positive influence brought about by the introduction of NESTs in the school as they have created an English-speaking environment:

ET6: If you want the students to feel that English is a part of their school life, I think those people (the NESTs) are very important. At least, they use English naturally and the students also feel natural to listen to, speak and use English. I think you need to provide a holistic English-speaking environment for them so that they can feel that they are in an English-speaking environment. In such a case, they would have no choice but to speak English.

ET9

In her many years of teaching, ET9 claimed that she was ‘most confident in teaching speaking’: ‘we read aloud together. I also ask for their opinion... ask them to share their ideas about the theme’ (ET9). One crucial component in her teaching was to establish students’ confidence by methods such as reading aloud with students so that students could model the teacher’s intonation and pronunciation. Nevertheless, she suggested that she did correct the students’ non-standard pronunciation after their oral presentation:

ET9: I pay much attention to intonation and pronunciation. They are important. I think reading aloud in the classroom is one way of building up their confidence [R: In their presentation, would you correct their pronunciation?] I will do it after they have finished. Otherwise, I will correct their pronunciation immediately when they read aloud mistakenly. For presentation, I will tell them after it. For example, why do you always get the subject-verb agreement wrong? Why have you missed an article? As for the content, I train them how to think in daily lessons.

In terms of assessment of pronunciation, ET9 referred to the rubrics in the marking scheme which included the parameters of 'fluency', 'intonation' and 'pronunciation'.

Again, without a scientific measure, she suggested the assessment was based on the teachers' 'hearing' (ET9). Because of this, she observed that there was a different judgement between the local ELT teachers and NESTs in the school-based assessment and therefore there would be a 'standardisation process' for marking:

ET9: The Hong Kong teachers are in fact stricter. We might think that if the accent is clear, we would... but the NESTs might be more lenient as they think that their tone is already quite comfortable for them [R: The evaluation of accent is based on feeling?] The Asians are probably stricter in this regard. They would think that you need to achieve 'this' so as to get a higher score. However, the NESTs might think that they already speak fluently, they have some facial expression or their intonation can attract them.

Personally speaking, ET9 had a different expectation for different students, especially for those with a low academic ability (also ET7). For these students, the teaching of some communication skills might be more useful than focusing on linguistic accuracy:

ET9: When I was teaching the DE classes (with a lower academic ability), I expected the students to at least get a pass. It means that they need to know they must have eye contact. They cannot keep silent. They might be able to say 'I agree with you' when others invite them to speak. We think that they at least need to know all the basic skills such as how to begin, end and make interactions. They might not be able to express the content in their real performance. It can't help. However, at least, when they don't understand what others are asking them, they can say 'I don't agree with you', 'I don't think so' or repeat others' ideas. This was what I taught the DE classes. For the BC classes (with higher academic ability), I teach them how to invite the others, how to help the weaker candidates and how to elaborate on other's ideas.

Having understood the ability of her students, although ET9 acknowledged that an NS-like proficiency was not attainable, she believed that it was pertinent to help students to pronounce 'correctly'. This correctness in her views in fact meant to eradicate their HKE accent:

ET9: They cannot achieve it (NS-like proficiency). I have a student in 5C who advanced from the 4E class. He can only speak with a Cantonese-influenced accent but he tries to make me satisfied with his content. In this year, I am still telling him that I am much satisfied with his content but I really hope that he can improve his (Cantonese-influenced) accent so as to get a better grade. Even if I teach him the accurate pronunciation, if he doesn't work hard to pronounce it more correctly, there is nothing we can do.

In the interview, ET9 exemplified how she taught (NS) pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental levels:

ET9: I teach them how to pronounce the 'r' sound (in the word 'environment'). Can you perform as if you carry a foreigner's accent? I ask them to try 'en-viro-' and they will follow but after that, they can't

sustain [R: How do you teach intonation then?] As I said just now, I teach them while we read aloud together. I told them in fact I could read aloud in a Hong Kong way: ‘to-day is...’ (with a tonic HKE accent) but this is the HKE accent. Can you hear that? Now I am teaching you: ‘Today is...’ (NS-like). I really imitate the pronunciation for them and ask them to follow me. Some students pronounced in a very exaggerating way and we all laughed. There is such a process. Some students really try to do it after you teach them.

From an affective perspective, she observed that students in fact had divided opinions on learning an NS intonation: ‘Some feel embarrassed and some feel that it’s cool. Some students could not withstand the others with this intonation, thinking that they are pretending to be cool’ (ET9).

ET7

In terms of assessment, ET7 interpreted the descriptor ‘good accent’ in speaking as ‘accurate intonation’ and ‘pronunciation’, which was likely to correspond to NS correctness. This target was however different from her expectation of her (relatively weaker) students in that the basic requirement was to be able to ‘say some simple sentences’, ‘express themselves’ and ‘use the vocabulary’ as they are essential for communication in their future work. In assessing the students’ pronunciation, although she mentioned that some of the parameters included ‘word pronunciation’, ‘intonation’ and ‘pauses’, she suggested that the students would not ‘score higher’ for sounding like an NS but would ‘listen to whether their pronunciation was accurate’

and 'whether they have pronounced words mistakenly'. This notion of 'accuracy' was, nonetheless left undefined. From a teaching perspective, ET7 pointed out that NESTs were more advantageous for pronunciation and oral teaching and they 'could bring some new ideas in oral teaching' based on their 'different ideas and experience'. She stressed that NESTs were particularly beneficial for the 'brighter students' as they tended to 'teach English more interestingly' (ET7). In contrast, she suggested that NESTs might not be suitable for students with a lower academic level due to disciplinary issues (also ET2):

ET7: Maybe there is some [advantages] but I think it may not be that effective [for the weaker students]. On the contrary, I think they will discourage the NESTs for their teaching as they cannot teach the naughty and weak students. I think it will discourage them. I think it is better for them to teach the better students.

ET11

Notwithstanding the difficulties in teaching and assessing NS suprasegmental phonological features (e.g. stress and intonation), ET11 did focus on these features in their classroom teaching:

ET11: We teach pronunciation in the oral lesson. For example, we teach them how to position the intonation. In a long sentence, how they could break it down and read... such as the intonation of questions. Also, which word should be stressed and which word should not be stressed.

In terms of assessment, she apparently also conformed to NS correctness for segmental features but not necessarily the NS suprasegmental ones (also ET7). She clearly specified some segmental features (e.g. final consonants, clusters) that should be pronounced clearly in speaking, in addition to other criteria such as the content, projection of voice and eye contact:

ET11: It depends on their content. They also have the delivery marks, such as projection of voice, eye contact... something like that. If you just refer to pronunciation, they need to pronounce the words clearly. They shouldn't mix the words. The 'ed' for past tense and 't' consonants should be clear.

As for her evaluation of the NS suprasegmental features, she suggested that the students did not need to imitate an NS pronunciation but should speak English 'naturally':

ET11: You need to be natural. If you imitate, I think it would be even worse. If you do it too deliberately, you won't get a higher score but your marks will be deducted [R: Do some students here speak in this way?] In the real examination, they won't. In the lessons, they may play with it. In the discussion, they will play with their intonation and exaggerate it. However, in the real examination, they won't do this. I would tell them to be natural. Don't try to pretend the others. You can say in this way if you originally say in this way but don't pretend the others.

Again, this requirement seems to be quite vague and it perhaps highly depends on the teachers' personal judgement, though she stressed that, in SBA (School-based

Assessment), students would not receive a lower score for their Cantonese-influenced intonation if they maintained ‘clarity’ in their speech.

12.3.2 Subject teachers

The key pedagogical purpose of a non-language subject (e.g. science, geography and history) is clearly to deliver content knowledge but, under the fine-tuning medium-of-instruction (MOI) policy, an additional aim of adopting English as the MOI in many of these subjects has been to develop students’ English proficiency via using the language. As discussed in chapter 6, not only did the local subject teachers serve as a pronunciation model as they taught in English, but they might also sometimes focus on some specific linguistic items so as to assist them learning English for the subject. In the interviews, the participating subject teachers were invited to discuss their perception of the role of English in the non-language subject classroom as well as any pedagogical concerns.

ST10

As a CIT (Computer and Information Technology) teacher, ST10 clearly acknowledged that her major expectation was that the students learn the knowledge in the CIT subject: ‘I am not teaching the English language subject. I just require them to

be able to show their knowledge of my subject' (ST10). Regarding the issue of an English learning target, she suggested that it was not necessary and it was 'impossible to sound like an NS' (ST10). For these reasons, she only required her students 'to be able to express themselves (and their thoughts) using simple English'. In practical terms, she reported that she encouraged more interactions in English in the classroom:

ST10: We encourage more interactions in English. You require them to answer questions in English, though there are guided questions. You guide them to answer the questions so that they know what they need to answer.

This description about the classroom language use has perhaps reflected that this kind of English-medium content-area classroom was in fact an authentic English-using situation. However, to accommodate students' English proficiency, ST10 suggested that she might consider in advance how her language could be simplified so that the students could more easily understand (also ST15). This strategy of using more simple English also applies to real (ELF) communication:

ST10: The teachers will need to think what language, sentences or words they should use in order to let students understand. For example, in the textbooks, it is suggested that 'computer is a set of programs that instruct the computer to do something'. We simplify this statement to 'it is a set of commands to tell the computer what to do'. The teachers need to think in this regard.

Although the subject teacher suggested that content knowledge was her key concern in the CIT lesson, she did focus on grammar correctness in the written form in the

examination (i.e. mark deduction for grammatical mistakes) and in verbal communication classroom: ‘For example, “it is a set of commands (emphasised) that tells (emphasised) the computer what to do”. If they miss the “s”, I will correct them and ask them to repeat’ (ET10). As the learning of vocabulary was a major component in studying the subject, the CIT teacher often helped the students to establish the relationship between the pronunciation of a word and its spelling:

ST10: Very often you write the word on the blackboard and show them how to break down the word into pieces for the pronunciation [R: Can the students do it?] I can see some of the students are able to break down the words but of course not everyone can do it.

ST13

ST13 suggested that students’ learning of vocabulary was critical, particularly as they needed to be able to spell the words in order to answer questions in the examination. Under the whole school policy of her school, the new secondary one students were required to learn phonics during the summer (before the first school term commences) in the hope that they could learn vocabulary better in both English and non-language subjects. In her daily teaching, ST13 reported that she continued this pedagogical focus of linking the word pronunciation to its spelling by strategies such as modelling and syllabification:

ST13: I would highlight or draw lines on my PowerPoint slides or the blackboard to break down the words and pronounce them for students. I won’t ask them to spell the word after me but they can pronounce it

following me. When they listen to my pronunciation more often, they will know. However, some teachers might only read the word 'neutralisation' and ask the students to follow them saying 'neutralisation' several times. The students won't get it in this way. They won't remember how many sounds there were after going home. In fact, once the children know how many sounds there are, they will know the pronunciation.

By frequently demonstrating how to pronounce a word based on its spelling (and also some encouragement for the students), this experienced teacher observed that the students gradually were able to pronounce the words

ST13: I always tell the students that they must pronounce the words. It doesn't matter if they pronounce some strange sounds. The most important thing is that they know how many syllabuses there are. For example, they learnt photosynthesis previously. Some students could not pronounce 'photosynthesis' but 'photosynthesis' (a bit different) and I told them that's fine. You are not taking the oral examination. It's okay in this way and the most important thing is that they can spell the word. Gradually, they discover that once they can break down the words, they can spell them.

Despite the teachers' intention to teach students how to relate the pronunciation of the spelling of a word via syllabification, ST13 suggested that some of her colleagues either failed to do it 'appropriately' or explained each word too elaborately.

ST13: But I saw some teachers who don't do it in this way. They took out every word and explained. I ask the teacher if you take out all the words for explanation, what do you expect the students to do? They would be 'dead' (discouraged) and wouldn't memorise any of the words at last. I think sometimes the teachers don't quite do it in an appropriate way.

This evidence indicates that the increased proportion of English-in-subject education has benefited the students' pronunciation at the word level. As shown above, the quality of pronunciation teaching highly depended on the subject teachers' own pronunciation, English proficiency and strategies of teaching. During lessons, this science teacher also addressed the issues of how to strike a balance among whether or how to correct the students' inaccurate English use, to maintain their confidence and to focus on the subject content:

ST13: I will correct some of their language if I can do it. I also don't use English very accurately... not just them. The most important things are the keys and concepts. I try not to make them care too much [about language correctness]. But certainly, if I see something like subject-verb agreement, I will also teach them.

Although the fine-tuning MOI policy had largely expanded students' use of English in the content-area lessons, this was more restricted to listening rather than speaking as the classroom became more teacher-centred than encouraging teacher-student and student-student interactions. As the head of the science department, ST13 observed that science teachers at the school were quite good at English but they lacked the language awareness of how to accommodate junior secondary students' ability using simpler English. Instead, they used 'university English' and difficult vocabulary (e.g. 'launch', 'spacecraft') which was neither important nor necessary for the topic (ST3). One consequence she suggested was that 'they failed to respond to the students in

class' and 'students speak in Chinese' because 'it became more difficult after they [the teachers] explained the word'. She continued to explain teachers' reluctance to include more activities in the classroom:

ST13: ...deep in their mind, the teachers believe that they cannot do activities with the students. Not only do they think that the students cannot speak, the teachers might think that they can't speak spontaneously as well. To avoid trouble, they simply don't do it. That's what I see.

While most participants (teachers, professionals and students) tended to highlight that a major advantage of NESTs was their NS pronunciation, ST13 adopted a slightly different view. She pointed to the different mother tongues between the NESTs and the students, which 'force' them to use English for communication (ST13: 'As long as that person doesn't speak Chinese...our language... the students have to speak with him/her in English'). From this viewpoint, she argued that their role could be replaced by any teachers who did not share the same first language with the students (ST13: 'I think it's okay even if that's a Korean, as long as they need to find some ways to communicate with him/her'). Her view in fact echoed the principal's intention to introduce NESTs and exchange students of different nationalities to the school. In alignment with her aforementioned views on English learning, this teacher argued that the NS pronunciation was not necessary:

ST13: I think it doesn't really matter whether your pronunciation is like this (an NS pronunciation). I think we could never have that accent

anyway. If so, I won't push myself to pursue it. I think to me, the most important thing is whether you can speak and communicate with the others. Like when we see the foreigners speaking Cantonese, we wouldn't expect them to speak in the same way as we do. We won't laugh at them. And I don't think we can't live with them in this way.

ST15

The pedagogical focus on vocabulary teaching and its spelling via syllabification was also adopted by ST15. She suggested that some students were able to remember the spelling and sound of a word, but those who failed to do so memorised letters of a word like meaningless codes or numbers:

ST15: Though I have helped them to break down the words, they might not be able to memorise the sounds or in which positions they should break down the words. However, the students need you to pronounce the words for them so that they can write the spelling based on the pronunciation. Some students already know how to do it [R: Some of them?] Some of them do. Of course more students in the better classes can do it. Some students in DE classes (academically less able) can do it but some still regard them as codes.

Whereas this teaching strategy of relating vocabulary spelling to its pronunciation in principle helped students to memorise a word, one further outcome of it was that students gradually became aware of word-level pronunciation as demonstrated by the subject teachers. At the suprasegmental level, they might (sub)consciously model how the subject teachers spoke English in the classroom. As our interview data in chapter 11 revealed that many students were aware of the accent variation among teachers, they might have selectively acquired the suprasegmental features of particular

teachers. Quite expectedly, the adoption of English as the MOI in the content-area lessons has increased students' opportunities to negotiate meanings in English in the classroom. In her junior secondary class, ST15 said that students at least were asked to answer questions in English during the lessons:

ST15: If you ask them questions, they certainly need to speak. They can say some very simple things in English. Though they might have answered in Chinese at once, I would ask them what that is in English. In the better classes, students can even answer in sentences. I might not have taught them but they can link up the words for some sentences. They speak quite a lot. When you ask them, they have to answer me with some words. At least, they need to tell me some words.

Given this English-speaking context (and the fact that this was a science lesson), mutual understanding was more crucial than linguistic correctness. Although ST15 revealed that inaccurate grammar would not cause mark deduction in the examination, she suggested that she would also correct their 'mistakes' when marking their papers: 'We will write the correct sentence but we won't deduct their marks because of some grammatical mistakes such as the omission of "s" and "ed" ' (ST15). Regarding her own use of English in the classroom, ST15 supplemented that she was indeed quite concerned with the linguistic accuracy of her own speech such as her pronunciation, grammar and choice of vocabulary:

ST15: I also hope that the students can listen to the accurate pronunciation of some words. So, I would also pay attention to this. I would think about which tenses I should be using when I ask a

question. Do I need to add something after a word? Which word should I use?

ST4

From a practical perspective, ST4 suggested that she tended to ‘focus on the subject more’ and therefore tailor-made some worksheets to help students develop the (written) linguistic ability that was necessary to answer subject related questions in exercises or examinations:

ST4: They (the students) basically have no much problem in writing a complete sentence. There are tasks of different degrees of difficulties in the worksheets: from the least to most difficult. For the less difficult tasks, I will give them the sentence structure and ask them to fill in the blanks. So they will know the sentence structure. The other questions might require them to write the whole passage.

Again, the learning of vocabulary also appeared to be important in her subject, Geography, in which she adopted strategies such as ‘using images’, ‘comparing and contrasting similar words’ and ‘breaking down words into different parts’ to help students memorise their spelling (also regular dictation exercises mentioned by all the interviewed ELT and subject teachers). At the senior level, ST4 tended to pay even more attention to teaching subject matter and developing the relevant linguistic knowledge (mainly in written English) so as to help students cater for the high-stakes public examination.

ST8

From an examination-oriented perspective, ST8 highlighted that the key thing was to enable students to ‘interpret the questions’, ‘understand the words in the question’ and ‘memorise subject knowledge’ (ST8). In her daily teaching, she encouraged the students to answer the questions by explaining to the students that accuracy in spelling and grammar was not so necessary if they could they could convey their meanings with the relevant scientific knowledge. Throughout her experience of teaching science subjects in English, ST8 noted that there was a change in her attitudes towards her use of spoken English. In the past, she tended to be more conscious with language accuracy and have more preparation for the lesson whereas, at present, she simply only focused on how to teach:

ST8: At the beginning, I will [pay much attention to my language] but now I have got used to it. I don’t really care about this now. Previously, I was teaching in an EMI (English-medium instruction) school. I would read once the textbooks for myself first. As it is written language in the textbook, you would get the concept after reading it once. It would be easier for me to teach this concept in the classroom later. Now, I don’t really care. It’s fine as long as I can teach it.

As English was not her mother tongue, she further explained her difficulties of teaching biology in English, especially in terms of ‘presentation skills’:

ST8: The biology content is in fact quite related to the daily life. Probably because my English is not good, it is very difficult to express what I really want to say in my mind. If you need to speak English for the whole class, I would prefer not to talk about the daily life examples

as you have your limitation. So I think it is difficult to present. If my English is very good, I think it won't be a big problem.

From a practical perspective, ST8 suggested that the attainability of an NS pronunciation 'highly depended on the teachers' and 'how they were previously trained' (ST8). Without the relevant 'professional training' and experience of 'living in a foreign country', she believed that it might not be achievable. While she acknowledged that she had never worked outside the educational field, she did not think that sounding like an NS was an advantage but, instead, people's really work performance should have been most crucial.

12.4 Summary and pedagogical implications

To summarise, the major use of English by both the ELT and subject teachers was in two stages of their life: the first being when they were studying in the English-medium secondary schools and university; the second being at the school where they currently worked. The ELT teachers generally had greater experience of communicating with NSs previously and in daily life such as staying in an NS country and meeting NSs friends. As many teachers did not previously work in other disciplines, they might have relatively little experience of ELF communication, apart from on a few occasions in their daily life such as travelling. In other words, their knowledge about the genuine use of English in Hong Kong as well as in international

settings might be mainly accumulated based on their prior English learning experience in their primary, secondary and tertiary education and teaching training. This perhaps highlights the importance of teacher education that should inform teachers of the sociolinguistic reality of English use.

An NS Anglophone-centric attitude, like many participants in the other groups (e.g. students, professionals) was evident in some ELT and subject teachers, who tended to regard NS English, particularly in terms of grammar and pronunciation, as the authoritative guide (cf. Tsui & Bunton, 2000). This adherence to NS English also applied to the NS culture, which the teachers believed was not as important as linguistic matters. This indicates that teachers lacked awareness of intercultural variation in ELF communication. However, based on their teaching experience and understanding of students' ability, most ELT teachers in fact did not expect the students to attain an NS pronunciation (or sometimes even correct grammar) but to be able to negotiate meanings, maintain fluency and use the appropriate vocabulary. As the content-area teachers were mostly concerned with the subject knowledge, their teaching goal and pedagogical foci regarding language were clearly to equip students with the English ability to cater for the language needs in the subject such as listening

and speaking in the English-medium lesson and answering questions in the examination.

In terms of pronunciation teaching, the dictionary NS standard was claimed to be adopted and modelled by the ELT teachers but only at the word level. As there was a lack of a standard description of the suprasegmental features of NS English, the ELT teachers only required the students to imitate their English speech (e.g. intonation, stress). At both levels, students were in fact modelling the ELT teachers' pronunciation, which inevitably had some degrees of HKE accent (see chapter 6). In the view of some of the ELT teachers, accents were more associated with suprasegmental rather than segmental phonological features and, therefore, they believed that learners did not necessarily need to conform to an NS accent. Their rather vague concept of the suprasegmental features has perhaps further complicated their assessment of students' pronunciation, which, according to the interviewed teachers, was mainly based on their own impression and therefore might have a diverging judgement (see also Sewell, 2013b). Notwithstanding their differing pedagogical foci, the subject teachers also contributed greatly to pronunciation teaching not only in terms of English exposure in the EMI classroom but also explicit teaching and modelling of word-level pronunciation. Given the importance of

vocabulary learning in content subject, they were aware that knowing the pronunciation of a word was essential to remembering its spelling. As a result, the teaching of pronunciation of key vocabulary in the subject had become a primary focus in the classroom. At the suprasegmental level, the subject teachers might only influence the students' acquisition of English pronunciation subconsciously owing to the high proportion of EMI content-area lessons in their weekly timetable under fine-tuning MOI policy (see chapter 6).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Conclusion

13.1 Restatement of issues, problems and research purposes

Over the last few decades, World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) research have highlighted the need to reform contemporary English language teaching (ELT) curricula for non-native speakers (NNSs) of English worldwide so as to enable learners to adapt to the communication demands of a rapidly globalising world. One major argument put forward by proponents of these two streams of research is the choice of a localised pronunciation target over a traditional native speaker (NS) exonormative norm, e.g. Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA), which is seen as unrealistic and inappropriate in most English language classrooms in multilingual settings (Kirkpatrick, 2007a). As phonological variations are a naturally-occurring phenomenon among both NS and NNS varieties, at the heart of the discussion has been the question of which target best suits the functions and needs of English in specific sociolinguistic contexts. As a result, two other pedagogical alternatives have been proposed by World Englishes (WE) (e.g. Baumgardner, 2006) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) scholars (e.g. Jenkins, 2000) respectively, namely the endonormative nativised model and the ELF approach which potentially

are more appropriate in the outer circle and international settings respectively (see Kirkpatrick, 2007a).

Against this background, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the appropriateness of adopting the aforementioned two pedagogical proposals in the ELT classroom in Hong Kong, where English serves as an important instrument for international communication. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it has explored the (dis)connection between the sociolinguistic reality and school practices in Hong Kong in two dimensions: (1) the stakeholders' experience of using/learning spoken English and (2) their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation teaching. These stakeholders included students (of different academic levels), teachers (using English to teach ELT and content-area subjects), and the professionals (in diverse disciplines) who contribute to the real use and long-term development of English in Hong Kong. More specifically, the investigation sought to answer the following four research questions:

1. How is spoken English used among different social groups in Hong Kong? More specifically, under what circumstances do people speak English and what varieties of accent do they use and encounter? How do they feel about these accents in their everyday lives?
2. What challenges do people face in comprehending English accents? What do

people think they should learn at school to overcome these problems related to pronunciation in Hong Kong?

3. Which model of pronunciation is being taught/promoted at secondary level?

Which varieties of accent are students exposed to in their secondary education?

In what contexts do students learn spoken English?

4. How does the school curriculum reflect the sociolinguistic reality of English

needs in Hong Kong in terms of the choice of pronunciation model? Is an exonormative or endonormative model of pronunciation more appropriate? Why

is this model more suitable?

In order to capture a more holistic picture of the issues being investigated, the study adopted a mixed-method approach which enabled the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative methods included structured questionnaire surveys and the verbal-guise technique (VGT) whereas the qualitative methods consisted of semi-structured focus groups/individual interviews, document analysis and a school case study. Findings derived from these qualitative and quantitative methods have addressed specific research questions Q1-Q3, which contribute to answering the fundamental research question, i.e. (Q4) the implications for choice of pronunciation model in Hong Kong's ELT classroom.

13.2 Major findings

The analysis of findings has been detailed in the four parts of the findings and discussion sections. The first part has focused on the education reality of pronunciation teaching and modelling at both policy and practice levels via the document analysis of the most recent ELT curricula, public assessments and three sets of local commercial textbooks (chapter 5) as well as a school case study, which recorded students' exposure to English accents at school (chapter 6). The second part has drawn on findings derived from large-scale structured questionnaire surveys (chapter 7) and VGT (chapter 8), which have provided an overview of the stakeholders' English-using experience and their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation learning. A more in-depth comparison of the participants' English using/learning experience in relation to their attitudes towards a learning target among the various groups of stakeholders are discussed in parts three (the professionals in chapters 9 and 10) and four (English learners in chapter 11 and teachers in chapter 12) based on findings of semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In the following subsections, these major findings are summarised with respect to the four research questions.

13.2.1 English use in Hong Kong and attitudes towards English varieties (Q1)

The first research question centres on the stakeholders' use of spoken English, exposure to varieties of accents as well as their attitudes towards these accents. The overall results were derived from the quantitative research methods, namely, the structured questionnaires survey and VGT. As reported in chapter 7, the large-scale survey suggests that most participants (involving secondary and university students, professionals and teachers) were exposed more to NS than NNS accents in the media such as TV channels and films but there was a lack of consensus among them as to whether they encounter more NSs or NNSs at work or study (and perhaps also on the internet). Like most previous attitudinal studies (e.g. Timmis, 2002; Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu, 2006; Jenkins, 2007; Li, 2009a), NS Anglophone-centric attitudes were found among the participants, who tended to perceive NS pronunciations as a legitimate variety and a standard, and NSs as the owners of English. There was also a tendency that they associated this NS standard with high education, high English proficiency, wealth and a better career. In contrast, the HKE accents were generally regarded as errors that needed to be corrected and not being a teaching model. By comparing the responses of students of different academic ability, it was discovered that the more academically capable the students were, the higher their aspiration for an NS target.

In chapter 8, the participants' general attitudes towards English accents were also determined via the indirect VGT from the perspectives of (1) their awareness of accents, (2) their perception of accents in relation to the dimensions of status and solidarity and (3) their choice of accents in various local English-speaking contexts. The results generally accord with findings from previous VGT studies (e.g. Bolton & Kwok, 1990; Luk, 1998) that many Hong Kong people are capable of identifying the local HKE accent, but our findings further suggest that most of them are able to distinguish between NS and NNS accents based on the speakers' features of speech. However, many of the participants believed that their pronunciation was closer to RP and GA than to the HKE accent and that NS pronunciations were more intelligible than the NNS counterparts. Furthermore, the VGT findings also revealed that the participants rated NS higher than NNS accents in terms of both the dimensions of status and solidarity. The results probably imply that Hong Kong people tend not to regard the HKE accent as a symbol of solidarity, unlike the case of other outer circle countries such as Singapore, where Singaporean English has been widely used among their residents in their daily social life (Cavallaro & Ng, 2009). Another pertinent discovery in the VGT is an emerging attitudinal pattern in which the participants had less adverse reactions to NNS accents in less formal and more interactive situations. It was also found that the more educated the students in the local context, the more

prominent their Anglophone-centric attitudes (especially towards RP) as well as increasing negativity towards the local (or other NNS) accents.

Details of the stakeholders' use of spoken English and attitudes towards accents were further discussed based on the qualitative interview (or focus group) data of the corresponding participated groups, namely, the professionals, secondary students and teachers. In terms of the use of English, the findings generally confirm previous studies (e.g. Evans, 2010; 2011a) in that spoken English is often used among professionals (of diverse disciplines) in Hong Kong in their workplace and sometimes in their leisure times. Nevertheless, quite different from the typical NNS-dominant ELF settings (e.g. continental Europe, Seidlhofer, 2011; ASEAN, Kirkpatrick, 2010a), the interview data revealed that both NSs and NNSs were the interlocutors in English communication, depending on the nature of and position in their occupations. This is probably owing to Hong Kong's colonial history and its sustained business relationship with NS Anglophone countries. In the academic discourse, however, most of the professionals reported that they had little experience of ELF interactions in their prior education in the local institutes (except for listening to the speech of NS/NNS lecturers), despite it being a key domain in ELF research (see Mauranen, 2003).

On the basis of their experience of using English, the explanations for their choice of a pronunciation target were related to four main issues, i.e. the attainability of NS (versus NNS) English, its intelligibility and its instrumental vis-à-vis integrative values. While the majority of the professionals recognised NS English's unquestionably high social status and instrumental values, many of them indeed underlined a lack of attainability of an NS target in Hong Kong's Cantonese-speaking environment. In terms of intelligibility, HKE was deemed to be 'acceptable' (and unavoidable) as it could be understood by the listeners according to the professionals' experience. Even though both the WE and ELF paradigms centre on the preservation of people's local cultural identity when speaking English (see Pennycook, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2009), this theme was found to be less prominent or even not mentioned in the interview data. This perhaps indicates the high status of NS English might have overridden their desire to express their local cultural identity when the professionals chose their pronunciation target.

In contrast, secondary students' daily use of English was mainly limited to the school context in addition to some of their English use in their leisure time, such as when talking with their foreign domestic helpers (e.g. Filipino) (see chapter 11). Due to the significant proportion of English-medium instruction (EMI) teaching adopted under

Hong Kong's newly implemented medium-of-instruction (MOI) policy, the pronunciation of EMI subject teachers has also become an equally important source of linguistic inputs alongside that of ELT teachers (see chapter 6). As for their choice of a pronunciation model as discussed in chapter 11, the same four factors were also found to account for their decision but with different degrees of influence as compared to the professionals (see above). First, being intelligible was considered by the students to be most crucial for English communication, and yet many of them regarded NSs as the interlocutors in their first impression. Second, having considered their own language ability, many students tended to target an English learning target which they believed was achievable. Third (and fourth), the high instrumental value and high status of English were again a major rationale for students, who targeted an NS pronunciation. In contrast, HKE was stigmatised by many students as incorrect or second class but not a marker of their local cultural identity. Nevertheless, this form of HKE, in their view, was not the same as that described in the literature (see Benson, 2000; Hung, 2000; Setter, 2008; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Groves & Chan, 2010; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010; Sewell & Chan, 2010; Cummings & Wolf, 2011) and, furthermore, often did not apply to the mother-tongue-influenced phonological features, which, as revealed in the case study in chapter 6, were generally spoken by their subject and ELT teachers.

As reported in chapter 12, secondary school teachers also used little English in their daily life, such as the domains of school teaching and studying in the previous secondary and tertiary education. The ELT teachers had greater experience of communicating with NSs previously and in daily life than the content-area teachers, but both the parties apparently had little experience of ELF communication. Again, most teachers tended to regard NS English as the authoritative guide, particularly in terms of grammar and pronunciation (and also the NS culture) (see Tsui & Bunton, 2000). However, based their teaching experience and understanding of students' learning ability, most ELT teachers did not expect the students to attain an NS pronunciation but require them to be able to negotiate meanings, maintain fluency and use appropriate vocabulary. Although the subject teachers were mostly concerned with teaching subject knowledge, they also focused on equipping students with the English ability to cater for the language needs in the EMI subjects.

13.2.2 Challenges facing professionals in English communication (Q2)

The second research question concerns the professionals' difficulties in using (spoken) English with the particular focus on accent variation. This question has been mainly addressed by their interview responses reported in chapter 9, which not only revealed challenges facing these professionals from various disciplines according to their

first-hand experience, but also highlighted some of the observations and recommendations they provided about how these problems could be resolved. As also detailed in chapter 9, the professionals' difficulties in English communication in their workplace situations are listed below:

- Some Hong Kong people were relatively weak in listening and, particularly, speaking due to their insufficient training at school/university. In turn, they might lack confidence in speaking English.
- Accent variation was a major source of problems in communication, although it depended on the specific varieties of accent (e.g. Indian). The HKE pronunciation however tended not to cause intelligibility problems.
- Cultural differences caused communication problems, especially for people with a particular ethnicity (e.g. Middle East).
- Communication via telephoning was more difficult than in face-to-face interactions.
- Communication problems occurred in both NS-NNS and NNS-NNS interactions.

On the basis of these challenges, some of their observations or recommendations that could inspire improvements for our current ELT teaching are summarised as follows.

The implications of these findings for the teaching of spoken English are discussed in section 13.3.

- The English proficiency of the speakers (e.g. choice of vocabulary, fluency) played an important role in mutual understanding but grammatical correctness was less important in real (especially NNS-NNS) communication.
- Communication problems could be addressed by using written clues (or drawing), speaking slowly, asking for repetition and clarification, using simple English, mutual accommodation and advanced technology.
- Communication strategies adopted in NS-NNS and NNS-NNS were different.
- Technological advancement helped resolve problems in telephone communication.
- The ability to understand a non-standard accent could be enhanced by accumulated experience.
- Some people tended to sound like an NS to project a professional image when facing certain groups of people (e.g. NS or people with a higher social status) but not necessarily for all people.
- People who graduated in an overseas university had a higher level of spoken English.
- Understanding cultures of people of different nationalities might benefit

international communication.

13.2.3 The current pronunciation model(s) at secondary level (Q3)

While research questions 1 and 2 explore the sociolinguistic reality of how (spoken) English is being used in Hong Kong, research question 3 centres on the education reality in which students acquire their own English pronunciation in their everyday school life. The purpose of the investigation in this regard was to evaluate whether the pronunciation(s) modelled at school level respond(s) to the societal needs as mentioned earlier. In our study, this pronunciation model refers to linguistic inputs provided to students when they learn spoken English. Nonetheless, their pronunciation acquisition process is subject to differing levels of the ELT policy implementation process which, in our investigation, comprised the ELT curricula and assessments, commercially-published textbooks (see chapter 5) and classroom teaching and modelling (see chapters 6 and 12).

In chapter 5, the issue of pronunciation teaching and modelling was examined via a document analysis of the ELT curricula, examination papers and (junior and senior secondary) ELT textbooks. These documents were investigated under three interrelated themes in association with the WE and ELF paradigms: (1) cultural

understanding and values, (2) teaching of speaking and pronunciation models and (3) language and society (see Jenkins, 2006a, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Seidlhofer, 2009). First, it was found that elements of cultural issues and values are mainly incorporated in the junior secondary ELT curriculum and textbooks whereas the school-exit public examination (which is mainly based upon the senior secondary curriculum) mainly focuses on the English language and its usage. Probably influenced by the WE paradigm, all the ELT textbooks are locally contextualised in which themes and tasks are designed to be from Hong Kong students' perspective (see Tam, 2002). Nevertheless, their textbook design seemingly has not been extended to taking account of the ELF realities involving cultures and people of diverse NNS and NS backgrounds. As for the description of a learning target, although the ELT curricula claim that they aim for communicative competence while downplaying the importance of NS correctness for pronunciation, there is indeed a lack of clarity of which pedagogical ideologies the curricula conform to, but they are apparently still conceptually guided by NS norms. In the listening examination, one breakthrough is the inclusion of a small proportion of local HKE speakers, despite the majority having an NS accent. However, in the rather conventional design of the ELT textbooks, not only are typical HKE phonological features stigmatised (or regarded as errors) in the speaking tasks, but their listening tasks also fail to fulfil the curricula' suggestion of

exposing students to various English accents. More specifically, there is clearly a disjunction among the language-using situations (e.g. ELF), the identity of speakers (mainly NNSs) and their accents (i.e. mainly RP) in the audio recordings in the listening textbooks.

Notwithstanding this prominence of NS pronunciation in all the ELT textbooks, the school case study in chapter 6 indicated that their major source of English exposure in the classroom was local teachers' English pronunciation (>70% of classroom time over a week) rather than the generally perceived NS models. Under the fine-tuning MOI policy, they include both content-area and ELT teachers who, based on students' self-reported data, contributed to similar proportions in terms of time exposure in their weekly school schedule. By comparing the phonological features of these two groups of teachers, our data revealed relatively high proportions of HKE consonant and vowel features in the subject teachers' speech than the ELT teachers', but there were also numerous HKE features shared by all teachers. This somehow indicates that these forms of HKE are already practising pronunciation models as teachers are presumably the role models of the students in the school context. Even though subject teachers might not teach English pronunciation explicitly owing to their key concerns on subject matters, students might subconsciously have modelled parts of their

pronunciation, especially for some content-specific vocabulary and language that only appear in the subjects.

In chapter 12, the ELT teachers have further shared their pedagogical foci of pronunciation teaching in the interviews, which revealed that they tended to emphasise more on the dictionary NS standard at word level than that at suprasegmental level (e.g. intonation, stress). Furthermore, there was also a tendency that these teachers associated the concept of accent with suprasegmental rather than segmental pronunciation, and they believed that learners did not necessarily need to conform to the former. At both levels, however, students were in fact modelling the pronunciation of the ELT teachers, who inevitably speak some degree of HKE. Another intriguing finding in the interview is that the content-area teachers also contributed largely to the teaching of word-level pronunciation when they taught an EMI subject because they were aware that being able to pronounce a word was essential for the students to memorise its spelling, especially in the examination.

13.3 Pedagogical implications: Choosing an appropriate pronunciation model in the ELT classroom

As suggested earlier, while research questions 1-3 set out to explore the potential gap between the needs of (spoken) English in the Hong Kong context and students' learning at school, the ultimate purpose of this study is to bridge this gap based on the aforementioned major findings, i.e. (Q4) to choose an appropriate pronunciation model in the ELT classroom. This pronunciation model not only narrowly refers to the (explicit) learning target for students as required in the ELT syllabus, but also implicitly corresponds to any inputs during their English learning process such as their exposure to accents and knowledge about English and cultures. The implementation of such a pronunciation model entails multiple levels, i.e. the government policy (macro), school and classroom (meso) and stakeholders (micro) (see Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). While specific pedagogical implications derived from findings are discussed in individual chapters in this study along with these levels of implementation, including the ELT curricula, assessments, teaching materials, approaching to teaching and teacher education, a summary is given below in three main dimensions: (1) benchmarking of an endonormative pronunciation target, (2) the portrayal of the English-using society and (3) pedagogical foci of spoken English and assessments.

13.3.1 Benchmarking an endonormative pronunciation target

Considering Hong Kong's status as an international city, Kirkpatrick (2007b) proposes the adoption of what he calls 'local institutional bilingual targets' (p.379) in the ELT classroom from an ELF perspective, which regard multilingual ELT teachers as the most suitable role model (see also Kirkpatrick & Chau, 2008). In setting a benchmark for an endonormative pedagogical target, Kirkpatrick (2007b) suggests that the key step is a codification process which targets the features of the educated HKE phonology with reference to the LFC (see also Sewell, 2009). This benchmark is arguably more appropriate and attainable than an exonormative NS standard in multilingual settings and, at the same time, it enhances both teachers' and learners' self-confidence and self-esteem, hence promoting their own local cultural identity (Kirkpatrick, 2007a). Despite Hong Kong people's general negative attitudes towards HKE (as shown in our findings), it is expected that social acceptance would gradually be shifted upon codification and subsequently standardisation of this localised variety of English (*ibid.*).

To initiate this codification process for an endonormative model in the outer circle classroom, WE scholars have suggested that it is vital to identify the 'acrolect' (the educated form) of a nativised English variety, which is positioned on a linguistic

continuum with the ‘basilect’ (the bazaar form) at the other end (e.g. Bamgbose, 1998). In the Hong Kong context, notwithstanding groundbreaking research in describing typical HKE phonological features (e.g. Hung, 2000; Setter, 2008; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010), little has been done to identify such an ‘acrolect’ with respect to who speaks it as well as the specific linguistic features involved. In this regard, Sewell and Chan (2010) have taken an intermediate step to prioritise the prominence of certain consonantal features in HKE phonology among educated English speakers in local television programs (e.g. politicians, civil servants, NGO spokespeople, journalists). This study has furthered this prioritisation of prominent pronunciation features of educated HKE speakers by evaluating the authentically, simultaneously produced speeches of local ELT and content-area teachers, who were evidently role models for learners. As illustrated in chapter 6, although an overview of the classroom model has been provided in terms of the prioritised HKE vowels and consonants, further investigations are needed to explore phonological variations among educated English speakers with diverse backgrounds so as to better portray this educated variety of HKE.

Returning to the benchmarking of an endonormative pronunciation model, the next important phase from a linguistic perspective is perhaps to associate the educated

HKE features (based on the prioritisation) with the relevant intelligibility findings for codification (e.g. Jenkins, 2000; Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Kirkpatrick, Deterding & Wong, 2008). Part of this work has been conducted by Sewell (2009) who passes features of HKE phonology (as suggested in the literature) through what he calls an ‘intelligibility filter’ with reference to Jenkins’s (2000) LFC, yielding HKE phonological features that might (and might not) cause intelligibility problems in ELF communication. Notwithstanding this apparently sound approach to identifying core features for pedagogical foci, the application of the ELF empirical findings seems to be based on the assumption that Hong Kong is a typical ELF-using context, where NNSs of different first languages and cultures (rather than NSs) are the majority. However, this might have oversimplified the sophisticated sociolinguistic reality in the Hong Kong community, which, according to our interview (chapter 9) and questionnaire findings (chapter 7), involves significant proportions of both NS and NNS interlocutors especially in the workplace. In real English communication, the interlocutors highly depend on the nature of the occupation and the position of the employers.

In other words, if the codification process centres on the issue of intelligibility, further studies should be conducted to evaluate the intelligibility of the Hong Kong

phonological features with respect to a wider range of audience (cf. Kirkpatrick & Saunders, 2005; Kirkpatrick, Deterding & Wong, 2008) and the adoption of multiple research methods (see Pickering, 2006; Munro & Derwing, 2011). In addition to the controversies about the validity of the LFC and its applicability of all varieties of English in the literature (e.g. Deterding, 2010a; Osimk, 2010), investigations on intelligibility should also take account of the intelligibility-comprehensibility-interpretability scheme (also known as the Smith paradigm; see Smith and Resized 1979; Smith 1992; Smith and Nelson 1985), which, Nelson (2008, p.307) argues, have been ‘a good, solid frame on which to hang our investigations and analyses of Englishes as they are spoken’. In this respect, even though Jenkins (2000) argues that native-like suprasegmental features are either ‘non-manageable’ in ELT classrooms or less important to intelligibility in ELF, future intelligibility studies might also focus on how (or whether) the HKE suprasegmentals influence the understanding of listeners from diverse backgrounds.

13.3.2 The portrayal of English-using society

The major purpose of the study is to uncover any disconnection between real-life English use and English education in the Hong Kong context. In terms of pronunciation modelling, as the ELT curricula, assessments and teaching materials

tend to be still guided by NS norms (despite minimal influences from WE research, see chapter 5), there is a clear discrepancy between the limited NS accents adopted in the audio recordings in the listening tasks (i.e. mainly RP) and the large variety of NS and NNS accents people might encounter in their real English communication (as discussed in chapter 9). The design of only incorporating NS pronunciations in the examinations and ELT textbooks not only does not cohere to the emphasis of the contemporary ELT curricula on the role of English as a global language, but it is also contrary to the fact that NNSs play a vital role in ELF settings (see chapters 5 and 9). Subsequently, this may lead to two main drawbacks. First, the inaccurate portrayal of English-speaking situations in the audio listening tasks is limited in simulating the real-life English use. The over-emphasis on NS accents (and particularly RP) in English education fails to equip learners with the ability to cater for one of the major sources of communication problems in the Hong Kong context as reported in chapter 9, namely, accent variation. In a similar vein, although the professionals in our data revealed that cultural differences also caused communication problems, this issue of intercultural communication is underplayed in both the assessments and ELT textbooks (see Alptekins, 2002; Wen, 2004).

Second, the rather inauthentic English-speaking tasks might also be misleading to learners as they do not reflect their future English use. This may result in learners' misconception of the use of English in the global context and therefore influence their attitudes towards English varieties. More specifically, the continuing emphasis on NS English pronunciations in the ELT curricula and materials might lead to a 'vicious circle' of reproducing learners who lack global awareness of accent variation but continue to believe in the myth of NS correctness. According to our findings, many secondary school students instantly associated their potential interlocutors in English communication with the NS foreigners (chapter 11) and an Anglophone-centric attitude was found to be among the majority of the participants (e.g. students, teachers, professionals) particularly in terms of the high status and instrumental value of NS English (chapters 7-12). In contrast, HKE was stigmatised or generally regarded as second class, even though its pronunciation was reported to be less a problem in international communication (see chapter 9). This adherence to NS norms and negativity towards the HKE (or other NNS) accents were evidently more prominent among students who were at a higher level in the education system (chapter 8). While it cannot be assured that raising students' awareness of accent variation could automatically alter their attitudes towards NS vis-à-vis NNS accents, the NS-based curricula, assessments and teaching materials in fact do not offer learners a real choice

of their own English learning target because students are not informed of the genuine role of English in their English education. Given school teachers' rather limited experience of ELF (see chapter 12), they might also have fostered such a misconception of NS importance in their prior education. This might subsequently have undesirable influences on the students to whom teachers transmit their knowledge and conception of English (either consciously or unconsciously) in their daily teaching.

In response to the aforementioned disadvantages of the contemporary English education, one crucial principle is to present learners with the sociolinguistic reality in the local setting during their English learning process. In practical terms, the role of English in the local context needs to be recognised and reflected in the local ELT curricula, public examinations and teaching materials, especially in Asia where the washback effect is particularly prominent. In other words, the design of speaking and listening tasks should take account of the real-world English-using situations (e.g. ELF), the identity of speakers (i.e. NSs versus NNSs) and the corresponding accents and cultures (see chapter 9 for the identities of these speakers in the Hong Kong contexts). In addition, as the VGT findings in chapter 8 suggest that Hong Kong people have fewer reservations about the use of NNS accents in more casual and

interactive English-speaking contexts, the inclusion of these accents in the (semi-)authentic tasks might be less controversial. Moreover, this task design of addressing the local language needs should also apply to teacher education as well as assessments for teacher qualifications (e.g. LPAT) because English teachers are the main conductor of knowledge for students at school. Due to the high degree of validity of such task design, it is likely that students and teachers (as well as other major stakeholders) would gradually understand the realities of English language communication in the highly globalised world.

Nevertheless, despite the importance of raising learners' critical awareness of language variation, Janks (2004) reminds us of the cautiousness required in designing this kind of language-awareness raising activities. In her discussion of 'the access paradox', while it is acknowledged that providing students with access to the dominant variety of English might result in its continuing and increasing dominance, denying students' access, however, is likely to marginalise them in a society, where this variety in fact possesses a prestigious status (see also Janks, 2000). From this perspective, the purpose of revealing real-life English use in the above task design is not primarily to alter learners' existing hierarchical attitudes towards accent varieties, but to allow them to understand linguistic diversity, respect people with extensive

multilingual repertoires and acknowledge that inner circle English(es) is/are not intrinsically superior to other varieties. On top of this, further emphasis should be placed on successful communication rather than NS linguistic forms by means of strategies such as mutual accommodation.

13.3.3 Pedagogical foci of spoken English and assessments

Apart from the design of (semi-)authentic tasks to raise students' awareness of real-world English use, another key area that needs to be reconsidered is the pedagogical foci of spoken English both in everyday teaching and assessments. While Hong Kong's ELT curricula apparently accord with the pedagogical proposal of WE and ELF research that highlights communicative competence (and downplays NS correctness), its implementation in the examinations and ELT textbooks is still (implicitly) guided by an NS standard (see chapter 5). However, not only is this NS target difficult to achieve in the local context, but it is also evident that NS linguistic correctness (especially in terms of pronunciation) is largely irrelevant to international communication. Training from this perspective hence offers little assistance to students, who are likely to encounter problems such as accent variation, telephoning and cultural differences in their future use of English (see the professionals' responses in chapter 9). In this respect, given the time constraint in any ELT syllabi, it seems

more efficient and effective to equip students with the ability to cope with these challenges in English communication which, in the Hong Kong context, involves a great variety of both NSs and NNSs. According to our interviewed professionals in chapter 9 (and chapter 10), some areas that needed to be focused in teaching spoken English comprised the use of vocabulary, speech fluency, communication and accommodation skills (e.g. using written clues, speaking slowly, asking for repetition and clarification, using simple English) and understanding cultures and accents of people from different nationalities.

Given the uncertain English use in one's future life depending on their occupations (see chapter 9), it should be stressed that an English learning target should remain a personal choice of individuals as long as they are able to communicate with the interlocutors. As can be summarised from the interview data (chapters 10-12; see also chapter 7), the participants' choice might be subject to factors such as the status and pragmatic values of the language goal, its intelligibility, its perceived attainability with reference to their own learning ability, but not necessarily its solidarity value for the case of English. Subsequently in assessments, the requirement of highlighting intelligibility rather than an NS standard should be explicated, so does in daily ELT teaching. As the HKE pronunciation was perceived by most participants to be less a

problem in international settings, only phonological features that cause communication problems should be the focus of examinations and teaching. As mentioned earlier (in section 13.3.1), these features could be identified via a codification process with reference to empirical intelligibility findings. Nevertheless, while segmental features tend to be the main subject of investigation in previous intelligibility and HKE phonology studies (e.g. Hung, 2000; Setter, 2008; Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Kirkpatrick, Deterding & Wong, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010), there seems to be little discussion on the intelligibility of suprasegmental features of HKE from the perspective of both NS and NNS listeners. In current practices, teachers in fact only have a rather vague idea of how to teach and examine suprasegmental features but usually only require the students to imitate their only stresses and intonations (see chapter 12; see also Sewell, 2013). Upon further investigation on the intelligibility of HKE, English teachers should therefore be informed, probably in their teaching education, of how they should teach and evaluate pronunciation based on intelligibility studies, be aware of the global use of English and understand the core principle that students could make their own choice of a pronunciation target on the condition that they are able to communicate with any English speakers from any L1 and cultural backgrounds.

13.4 Significance and limitations of the study

Over the past three decades, notwithstanding groundbreaking scholarly work in WE and ELF to describe the emerging English varieties in the outer circle and shared linguistic features among English speakers in international settings respectively (see chapter 2), there is relatively little discussion on whether and how these empirical findings, as well as the relevant pedagogical proposals, could be applied to specific sociolinguistic contexts. From this perspective, this large-scale study is probably the first in the field that illustrates how the potential gap between the research-induced proposals for pronunciation modelling and its suitability for the local ELT classroom could be explored using a mixed-method, multi-perspective approach, which has yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. By triangulating measures, methods and observers, the study argues that the direct implementation of these research proposals and research findings to the Hong Kong context might not be appropriate due to its immensely complex sociolinguistic reality, where individuals' language needs and attitudes towards a pronunciation target are highly diversified depending on their occupational status and education backgrounds. Some of these English-using situations also evidently do not accord with typical WE or ELF contexts in which the empirical data are based on. While this study has centred on Hong Kong, such a gap between theories and practices may well exist in other settings owing to inevitable

differences among specific communities based on factors such as their historical and cultural background, geographical location, population composition and first languages. This uniqueness of individual societies echoes critiques of categorising Englishes into the three circles in the post-colonial globalised era (e.g. Bruthiaux, 2003; Rajadurai, 2005; Ferguson, 2006; Jenkins, 2009a). That is to say, sociolinguistic investigations are necessary to understand specific context so as to determine how empirical data could be applied to a particular setting and/or discipline, which in this case refers to pronunciation teaching at school.

Whereas the complex local sociolinguistic reality revealed in this study has somehow readdressed the limitation of Kachru's (1985) three-circle model in the era of globalisation, the findings about people's varying choices of accent in correspondence to specific language-using contexts tend to be in alignment with the model of language variation recently proposed by Mahboob (2014), who contextualises language choices in the dimensions of the (1) users of Englishes, (2) uses of Englishes, and (3) modes of communication. More specifically, this three-dimensional model takes account of the users' local/global (or low/high) social distance, the differing purposes of language use ranging from everyday/causal to specialised/technical discourses and the channels (e.g. aural, visual, mixed) and ways (e.g. speaking,

writing) where communication takes place, the combination of which affects individuals' diverse choices of language use in a particular situation (see also Mahboob & Barratt, 2014). Mahboob (2014) argues that such model allows the mapping of language variation according to certain domains and, thus, enables systematic analyses in future studies (see p.5).

Another strength of this study is the inclusion of a large quantity of participants from diverse backgrounds (i.e. students, teachers, professionals), together with the investigation at multiple education levels (junior, secondary and tertiary). Whereas the quantitative data that targeted the most relevant stakeholders in Hong Kong have yielded highly generalisable results, the qualitative data (also on a large scale) have elaborately explained these stakeholders' underneath views on the issues. The detailed investigation has uncovered areas of incoherence across different levels of policy implementation in the local education system and, subsequently, has identified factors which might affect ones' perceptions of English, especially when students advance along various academic levels. Such richness of information has enabled the proposal of specific pedagogical implications for the ELT curricula, assessments, teaching materials and teacher education (as suggested in section 13.3) and, if applicable, has also provided valuable insights for further investigations. From a linguistic

perspective, the study highlights the need to identify, codify and benchmark the educated form of HKE phonology with reference to intelligibility studies based on a more comprehensive framework that harmonises with the local sociolinguistic context (see section 13.3.1). On the basis of the needs analysis regarding the use of spoken English in Hong Kong, the recommendation of adopting more authentic listening and speaking tasks in the teaching materials indeed requires more thorough investigation into English use in different professions, in which research methods such as case studies and observations (and/or accompanying recordings) are most valuable. Furthermore, as the ELT teachers and teaching materials evidently play a critical role for students' learning in the school context, future studies might centre on how teachers perceive and use these teaching materials in their daily teaching, followed by the investigation of the influence of such teaching approaches on the students and how they actually acquire the English language. It is believed that a better understanding of teachers' practices and perceptions could benefit further the development of teacher training courses, which are fundamental in any education reform. Moreover, despite the focus of this study on spoken English and, particularly, pronunciation modelling, it is highly replicable for written English (and other aspects of English) considering its much wider use in the Hong Kong community (see Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008; Evans, 2011a, 2011b).

Given the richness of data, however, it should be noted that parts of the issues and findings have not been fully discussed or explored in this single monographic report. For instance, while the document analysis in chapter 5 focuses on the three main themes (i.e. cultural understanding and values, teaching of speaking and pronunciation models, language and society) in the ELT curricula, examination papers and textbooks, the investigation of other aspects such as the adoption of task-based learning approach is also crucial as it in principle fosters students' communicative ability. As this study mainly adopts a sociolinguistic perspective, the identification and prioritisation of HKE pronunciation features produced by the content-area and ELT teachers in the case study in chapter 6 only seeks to illustrate how this approach could be applied to the codification process of a teaching model. Further studies might continue this process by including local educated English speaker in other disciplines. The use of a case study in this chapter also shows its value in detailing how English is used (both quantitatively and qualitatively) among a particular social group. In chapters 7 and 8, although the quantitative VGT and questionnaire survey have provided a broad-brush picture of the participants' daily exposure to and perception of English, the discussion is only limited to the overall results but has not been extended to exploring any differentiation in the results based on other parameters such as gender, age, academic level and occupational status. Similarly in chapters 9-12, the

discussion of interview data is also only restricted to numerous interview questions whereas responses surrounding other themes such as their perception of NS vis-à-vis NNS ELT teachers and their perceived importance of speaking in learning/using English have not been reported. All in all, while this study set out to conduct a sociolinguistic inquiry on a local education issue, its outcomes have demonstrated a sound research framework that mingles linguistic and sociolinguistic research, bridges the gap between theories and practices and may also inspire engaging research projects in the future.

ENDNOTE

¹ The estimated population of English speakers has increased exponentially from around 5-7 million in the early 17th century to 700 million in the 1980s (Crystal, 1985, 1997, 2003; Jespersen 1938/68, cited in Pennycook, 1994, p.7) and further to possibly as many as two billion at present (Graddol, 1997, p.10; Crystal, 2008; Jenkins, 2009a, p.2).

² Jenkins (2009a, p.5) suggests that the first diaspora has resulted in new mother-tongue varieties of English whereas the second diaspora has led to the development of a number of second language varieties (i.e. New Englishes).

³ In his modification of the Kachruvian model, Yano (2001; also see 2007, 2009a, 2009b) has sought to overcome its limitations by considering English varieties from a three-dimensional sociolinguistic perspective rather than the two-dimensional perspective in the previous model. This modified version includes a vertical element based on the level of linguistic variation within a particular variety, i.e. acrolect (the educated variety), mesolect (the semi-educated variety) and basilect (the bazaar variety) (see Strevens, 1983a, 1983b; Kachru, 1985, 1992b; Bamgbose, 1998; McArthur, 1999; Ferguson, 2006 for the discussion of these distinct levels). Yano suggests that the use of English for international communication tends towards the acrolectal while domestic and private use may tend towards the basilect. However, his model is also challenged by Pennycook (2009), who argues that it does not take into account the fragile distinction between the outer and expanding circles. Pennycook discounts the third dimension in Yano's work and instead proposes a 'real 3D model' by offering a third lateral dimension, which involves both the users and contexts. It seeks to represent the relationship among language varieties or resources as used by certain communities (the linguistic resources users draw on), the contextual uses of language (the use of these language resources in specific contexts) and language users' relationship to language varieties (the social, economic and cultural positioning of the speakers).

⁴ The Honolulu conference in 1978 resulted in a number of statements directing future WE research in terms of the nature of English as an international language, pedagogical foci based on sociolinguistic reality and the adoption of a descriptive rather prescriptive approach to investigation (Kachru, 1992b).

⁵ A number of ELT approaches have been widely adopted at different times and in different parts of the world (see McKay, 2002; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Harmer, 2007; Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010 for detailed discussion): the grammar-translation method (mainly in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth), the direct method (also known as the 'Berlitz Method', since the late nineteenth century), the structural-situational approach (also called 'situational language teaching' or the 'oral approach', from the 1920s onward), the audio-lingual method (the so-called 'Army Method', since the 1940s), the audio-visual method (in the 1950s), the communicative approach (at the beginning of the 1970s, see Hymes, 1972; Breen & Candlin, 1980; Nunan, 2003; Littlewood,

2007) and a recent important development within the communicative approach, i.e. task-based learning (e.g. Crookes & Gass, 1993; Ellis, 2003, 2006; 2009; Nunan, 2004; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Thomas & Reinders, 2010).

⁶ Considering the use of English in international contexts, Quirk's proposal was to retain a 'single monochrome standard form' based on the native English varieties for non-native learners for fear of the loss of international mutual intelligibility (Quirk, 1985, 1988). Quirk (1990) maintained that learners should 'acquire English precisely because of its power as an instrument of international communication' and that 'Standard English is alive and well, its existence and its value alike clearly recognised' (p.10). He further questioned the WE paradigm (which he describes as liberation linguistics in Quirk, 1990) of the uncodified and non-institutionalised non-native varieties and insisted that non-native English teachers (NNESTs) should be 'in constant touch' with the native language (Quirk 1990, p.13-4). Kachru (1991), on the other side of the debate, referred to the former position as 'deficit linguistics' and addressed the flaws in Quirk's assumptions based on the neglect of sociolinguistic reality, i.e. the failure to link the language to one's own multilingual, sociolinguistic and sociocultural context (Kachru, 1985, 1991). In response to Quirk's idea that NNESTs should be in 'constant touch' with the native language, Kachru (1991) argued that, first, it is practically impossible because of the lack of resources and overwhelming NNS inputs in the local context and, second, it is functionally unreasonable since local norms and speech strategies based on the institutionalised varieties best serve local needs in (outer circle) contexts where English is primarily used for intra-ethnic communication. In his later article, Kachru (1996) regards the SLA paradigm as the 'marginalisation' of the majority of the language users in three dimensions, namely 'paradigm myopia' (i.e. the short-sighted view of the fast-increasing English using speech community in the new contexts of diaspora based on the flawed assumption of monolingualism and monolingual norm) (p.242), 'paradigm lag' (i.e. the resistance to taking into consideration linguistic and sociolinguistic contexts which entail modification or alteration of hypotheses) (p.243) and 'paradigm misconnection' (i.e. the misconnection between hypothesis and its generalisation and the relationship of both to sociolinguistic contexts and the historical realities of language use) (p.246).

⁷ Firth and Wagner (1997) in their groundbreaking article initiated a cognitive-social debate by urging a re-conceptualisation of SLA research. They argue that 'methodologies, theories, and foci within SLA reflect an imbalance between cognitive and mentalistic orientations, and social and contextual orientations to language, the former orientation being unquestionably in the ascendancy' (p.285). Ten years after Firth and Wagner's (1997) publication, Magnan (2007) reemphasised the validity of their previous arguments in the present language teaching practice in a focus issue in *Modern Language Journal*, 91, entitled *Second Language Acquisition Reconceptualized? The Impact of Firth and Wagner (1997)*. She began the issue by restating two key questions in Firth and Wagner's work: (1) Is acquiring a second language essentially a cognitive process situated in the mind of the individual learner? (2) Is it

a social process because language learning necessarily occurs through interactive use with target language speakers? In this issue, Firth and Wagner (2007) address some critics' reactions to their previous work and further discussed some undeveloped themes in the field, i.e. mainly the interrelationships between language use, language learning and language acquisition. In the same issue, Larsen-Freeman (2007) also argues that the goal of language learning should be successful use in contexts relevant to the language learners rather than the traditional cognitive goal of attaining native-competence according to the SLA theory. This desire to reconceptualise the language learning objective has at the same time challenged traditional approaches (e.g. error analysis in Richards, 1974) to the study of NNS's English.

⁸ Two key conclusions were drawn from Davies's (2000) exceptional second language learners: (1) NS attainment is achievable; (2) an alternative standard can be established based on these successful learners if they are accorded the status of prestige speakers.

⁹ Davies (2000; see also Medgyes, 1996) proposed a continuum between NSs and NNSs, which places emphasis on language proficiency, communicative competence and linguistic competence. Similarly, a nativeness transcending continuum was also suggested by Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001), who argue that national identity should not form the basis of classification of speakers of an international language. Instead, identity-formation is essential to the social process of identity-assignation in the local context (*ibid.*).

¹⁰ Based on previous studies, some advantages of NNESTs are summarised as below:

- Only NNESTs can serve as imitable models of the successful learner of English (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 2007a)
- NNESTs can teach learning strategies more effectively as they have learnt the language they teach via the same concepts (grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, cultural, etc.) that they employ to induce learning in their students (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Seidlhofer, 1999; Benke & Medgyes, 2005).
- NNESTs can provide learners with more information about the English language as they have usually developed a high degree of conscious, or declarative, knowledge of the internal organisation of the language (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Seidlhofer, 1999).
- NNESTs are better able to anticipate the language difficulties of the learners (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 2007a).
- NNESTs can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 2007a).
- Only NNESTs can benefit from sharing the learners' mother tongue (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Seidlhofer, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 2007a).

¹¹ The research instrument mainly included a listening comprehension questionnaire and a total of nine tapes representing educated speakers from Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and the United States (Smith & Rifiqzad, 1979). Apart from the finding that NSs were the least intelligible speakers among others, the American accent was rated in the bottom three. In contrast, the Japanese accent was rated in the top five (*ibid.*).

¹² The term ‘lingua franca’ in its original sense was not associated with any particular language but it literarily means ‘a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different’ (Pearsall, 1998; see also Kirkpatrick, 2011a for the brief discussion of the term). Prior to this notion were other terms such as ‘contact language’, ‘auxiliary language’, ‘trade language’ and ‘trade jargon’ which had been used to describe the same or similar function (see Samarin, 1978). Throughout history, many languages have been lingua francas, many of which have been discussed in Ostler’s (2005) informative account. According to Knapp and Meierkord (2002, p.9), the first explicitly-labelled lingua franca was a pidgin language spoken along the south-eastern coast of the Mediterranean from the 15th to the 19th century and it was likely to be based on certain Italian dialects with elements of Arabic, French, Greek, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish. As Thomason (2001, p.269) elaborates, lingua franca is by definition learnt as an L2 by at least some of its speakers while some lingua francas are also learnt as a first language by some speakers. Lingua francas can also occur in any situation as long as a common language (including a transplanted language) is used by speakers from different language backgrounds in a specific community, domain or focus (Friedrich & Matsuda, 2010). The term ‘lingua franca’ thus comprises a plurilinguistic and hybrid composition from its early history (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011).

¹³ Seidlhofer explains the choice of ELF over EIL: ‘The term International English is sometimes used as a shorthand for EIL, but is misleading in that it suggests that there is one clearly distinguishable, codified, and unitary variety called International English, which is certainly not the case [...] In fact, the term ‘International English’ is sometimes employed for the English used in territories where it is a majority first language or an official additional language (see Trudgill & Hannah, 2002). The same approach is also taken by the International Corpus of English, or ICE (see Greenbaum, 1996).

¹⁴ In her important article, Jenkins (2006b) maintains that though the two approaches might have the same linguistic outcome, characteristics of NNS English are regarded as deficient and errors in EFL but variants in ELF. In addition, Jenkins argues that EFL is informed by theories of L1 interference and fossilisation (e.g. Selinker, 1972) whereas ELF is underpinned by theories of language contact and evolution (e.g. Mufwene, 2001). Jenkins (2006b) concludes that ELF is not the same as EFL, nor is it deficient ENL and it can be said to occupy its own space between them, a ‘third space’ (see Bhabha, 1994), or perhaps a ‘third culture’ (see Kramsch, 1993a) or ‘third place’ (see Kramsch, 1993b).

¹⁵ Owing to the variability and instantaneity in international interaction, Canagarajah (2007b, p.926) stresses the hybrid linguistic nature of LFE in that '[t]he language features words, grammatical patterns, and discourse conventions from diverse languages and English varieties that speakers bring to the interaction. Participants borrow from each other freely and adopt the other's language in their interaction with that participant.'

¹⁶ Among the three most common languages spoken by EU citizens, English is most widely spoken (including both L1 and L2 speakers, 51%) followed by German (32%) and French (26%) (Dröschel, 2011, p.105).

¹⁷ Seidlhofer (2004, p.215) explains that this gradually accumulating body of work is being undertaken preliminarily on spoken data for two main reasons: 'first, the language is at one remove from the stabilizing and standardizing influence of writing, and second, spoken interactions are overtly reciprocal, allowing studies to capture the online negotiation of meaning in the production and reception of utterances, thus facilitating observations regarding mutual intelligibility among interlocutors.'

¹⁸ The data collection process was undertaken in mixed-L1 classrooms and social settings by means of field observations, recordings of different L1 pairs and groups of students engaged in communication tasks and an investigation into production and reception of nuclear (tonic) stress of a group of NNSs of different L1s (Jenkins, 2000).

¹⁹ The notion of 'stress timing' describing the rhythm of a language is a debatable one. While stress-timed (e.g. French, Japanese and Cantonese) and syllable-timed rhythm (e.g. the UK, the US and Australian English) are the two generally agreed categories (McArthur, 2001), Jenkins (2000) tends to regard stress and syllable-timing as different points on a timing continuum. Nonetheless, Barrera-Pardo (2008) defines stress-timing as simply the alternation of stressed and reduced (unstressed) element (see also Marks, 1999).

²⁰ This idea of a phonological core can indeed be traced back to Ogden's (1930) 'Basic English' and Hockett's (1958) subsequent proposal on the existence of a common core based on mutual intelligibility among L1 dialects. Later on, Gimson (1978) suggested the simplification of the RP phonemic inventory for an artificial phonological core namely the rudimentary international pronunciation (RIP). Quirk (1981) and Jenner (1989) also attempted to identify the common core among NS of all varieties for pedagogical purposes. Nevertheless, the originality and importance of Jenkins's (2000) LFC is the shift in attention to the sociolinguistic profile of NNSs in the ELF context.

²¹ Walker's (2010) book includes a CD with a wide range of recordings of speakers from Malaysia, German, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Argentina, China, Spain, Japan, Morocco, Brunei, and many other places. The book also incorporates classroom activities which help develop students' accommodation skills such as paired dictation and transcription activities between two students.

²² Ranta (2009) contends that ELF should not, in any sense, be perceived as the deficit notion of 'learner English' because the grammatical features found in her ELF spoken data are also readily observable in L1 spoken English varieties worldwide, which comprises the speech of educated native speakers.

²³ In Seidlhofer's (2004, p.220; see also Seidlhofer, 2002a; 2002b) brief account of empirical ELF work, some preliminary features of ELF at the lexicogrammar level include:

- Dropping the third person present tense '-s'
- Confusing the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
- Omitting definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL, and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- Failing to use the correct form in tag questions (e.g. *isn't it? Or no? instead of shouldn't they?*)
- Inserting redundant prepositions (e.g. *we have to study about...*)
- Overusing certain verbs of high semantic generality (e.g. do, have, make, put, take)
- Replacing infinitive-constructions with that-clauses (e.g. *I want that...*)
- Overdoing explicitness (e.g. *black colour* rather than just *black*)

²⁴ As the major achievement of the ELFA project, the ELFA corpus is a one-million-word corpus of spoken academic lingua franca English (completed in 2008) which comprises university lectures, seminars, PhD thesis defences, conference discussions and presentations, where speakers from various different mother tongue backgrounds (51 different L1 backgrounds) use English as their shared language. The corpus captures a wide range of disciplinary domains (i.e. social sciences, technology, humanities, natural sciences, medicine, behavioural sciences, and economics and administration), of which both monologues (33% of data) and dialogues (67%) are included. Like other ELF research, the ELFA corpus only includes naturally occurring data with the limited presence of NSs. Mauranen, Hynnirrn and Ranta (2010) explain that the focus on the academic spoken discourse is valuable because the speaking mode, as it is spontaneous and unedited, reveals much about language change in progress and that already-established corpora lack this perspective of either a spoken discourse in the academia or NNS-dominant contexts (cf. the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English – MICASE and British BASE corpus). Therefore, the ELFA project aims to identify and describe 'successful' ELF speech, which in the minimal case means that the goals of the event are reached and communication does not break down (ibid., p.185).

²⁵ As suggested on the ELFA homepage, SELF sets out to provide research-based evidence on present-day ELF with a focus on academic discourses in university settings (i.e. English-medium university studies) (ELFA project website). The data collection process of this project began in 2008, following a pilot in the previous year, and it includes recordings of a number of courses, interviews with participants (e.g. teachers, students and researchers) and written students texts together with teachers' and students' comments on them (Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta, 2010). By combining the corpus-based and discourse analytic approaches, the project adopts a microanalytic ethnographically influenced perspective on the social contexts of ELF, which seeks to achieve a well-rounded understanding of ELF in university usage.

²⁶ The recently-developed project WrELFA seeks to collect and analyse both published and unpublished academic texts written in ELF, which also includes evaluative reports, such as examiners' and peer reviewers' reports.

²⁷ From a historical perspective, the standardisation process of English in its early stages was mainly in the form of (spoken) dialects as the English language often competed with (or in many cases was inferior to) Latin and French as a means of communication (Görlach, 1990). In medieval England, these three languages coexisted, yet served different functions: commerce in English, administration in French, and learnt discourse in Latin; so an important role of a standard language was to take over and unify the three domains (Halliday, 2006). Görlach (1990) elaborates that standardisation in the English language area hardly took place entirely from scratch but it tends to make improvement on existing means of expression by making it uniform, complete, logically consistent and sociolinguistically adequate. In his important monograph, Görlach devotes one chapter to account for this historical development ranging from the various stages (e.g. Old English, the influence of the spread of standard to the literary language, Middle English, the Renaissance, restoration and Enlightenment, i.e. 1660 – 1800, and the 19th and 20th centuries) to the numerous areas of standardisation (e.g. orthography, pronunciation, morphology, syntax, vocabulary) as well as a wide range of geographical locations (e.g. Scotland, Ireland, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, some regions in the Caribbean, Nigeria, India and the EFL countries). Some recurring themes that emerged in these regions include problems for the expansion of a language, attitudes of the speech community, the part played by institutional language planning and the distribution of domains (see also Freeborn & Freeborn, 2006 for a detailed account).

²⁸ On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence announced that colonies in America were no longer under the rule of the British Empire and they have the right to determine and establish a cooperative union, namely the United States. Accompanying American independence were the calls for the new political autonomy in parallel with linguistic autonomy as pronounced in Webster's (1789, p.20) famous statement: 'As an independent nation, our honour requires to have a system of our own,

in language as well as government. Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language we speak, should no longer be our standard.' This political agenda, together with Americans' rising nationalism, initiated the codification and thus standardisation of the American English in the academia. In the preface of his groundbreaking dictionary, Webster (1828) maintains that 'although the body of the language is the same as in English, and it is desirable to perpetuate that sameness, yet some differences must exist'.

²⁹ Although Trudgill (1999) tends to downplay the spoken form of a standard (particularly in terms of phonology), Cheshire (1999) and Carter (1999), in the same edition (entitled *Standard English: The widening debate*) provide empirical evidence of some syntactic features which are likely to be present in spoken Standard English.

³⁰ In his pioneering article, Kachru (1985, p.258) states that 'I do not believe that the traditional notions of codification, standardisation, models, and methods apply to English any more. The dichotomy of its native and non-native users seems to have become irrelevant.'

³¹ Kirkpatrick (2003) believes that if local norms based on the shared ELF features become established in Southeast Asia, local English users will sooner develop a sense of ownership in the language and, subsequently, the confidence of NNESTs (as well as the learners and users) will be greatly enhanced.

³² Details of Kirkpatrick and Chau's (2008, P.40) modified Canadian bilingual model for Hong Kong are as follows:

- Putonghua is the immersion language (a Chinese language as the L2 immersion language ensures that children will become literate in Chinese);
- The immersion curriculum parallels the local (Cantonese) curriculum;
- Overt support is given to the L1 (Cantonese);
- English is taught as a medium of instruction for subjects such as cross-cultural understanding and communication;
- The program aims for additive bi-(tri-) lingualism;
- Exposure to the L2 immersion language is not confined to the classroom, as Putonghua is not commonly used in various domains in Hong Kong;
- Students enter with similar (limited) levels of L2 proficiency;
- The teachers are trilingual;
- The classroom is that of the local L1 community.

³³ This description, based on Fishman's (1972) definition, refers to the existence of 'two or more speech communities united politically, religiously, and/or economically into a single functioning unit notwithstanding the sociocultural cleavages that separate them' (p.98). In the case of Hong Kong, these

two speech communities during colonial period represent the Chinese community and the native English-speaking expatriate community respectively.

³⁴ This ‘falling standards myth’ is one of the three ‘myths’ in Bolton’s (2003) detailed discussion of English based on the sociolinguistic background of Hong Kong, with the other two being the ‘monolingual myth’ (i.e. referring Hong Kong to a Cantonese-speaking only city) and the ‘invisibility myth’ (i.e. the non-existence of HKE).

³⁵ In fact, Hong Kong’s history did witness a number of major changes in language policy. For example, since the enactment of the Official Languages Ordinance in 1974, Chinese has been made a co-official language with English in all the four domains (and as the medium between the government and public), except in the judiciary domain because it is impossible to establish a satisfactory and acceptable Chinese language version of the common law (Johnson, 1994; Webster, 2009). When Hong Kong returned to mainland China in 1997, the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law (Hong Kong’s mini-constitution) also further enhanced the status of the Chinese language by stating that ‘[i]n addition to the Chinese language, English may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary’ (Consultative Committee for the Basic Law, 1990, p.7). This indicates that the status of Chinese has gradually overtaken that of English and has become the primary official language in the HKSAR (see also Evans, 2010). Another observable change since the handover has been the slightly greater use of Cantonese in the government domains. While the principal medium of internal communication is still, to a great extent, written English, a steady increase in the use of Chinese in external written communication is noticed in the legislature (Li, 1999; Evans, 2010, 2014).

³⁶ A case in point is Singaporean English, which he claims ‘has gone through a vibrant process of structural nativisation’ (p.158) and ‘clearly reached phase 4 of the cycle’ (p.160). In demonstrating Singaporeans’ positive attitudes towards the local vernacular form of English, Schneider points to the public’s vigorous reaction against the ‘Speak Good English Movement’ launched by the government in 2000 and the popularity of local TV comedies with Singlish-speaking characters (see Rubdy, 2001; Shepherd, 2005; Wee, 2005). However, the criterion of local acceptance has yet to be fully realised because of policy makers’ reservations and the public concern about Singlish being a sign of falling standards. As a result, there is still considerable reluctance to regard it as the local linguistic norm.

³⁷ The central argument that the HKE accent is highly intelligible in international contexts was discussed in Kirkpatrick, Deterding and Wong (2008), who evaluated the extent to which HKE is intelligible, intelligent and likeable among students in two universities in Singapore and Australia respectively. By comparing the intelligibility results with earlier Singaporean intelligibility research (Kirkpatrick & Sauders, 2005), the study concluded that the Hong Kong speakers appear to be more

intelligible than their Singaporean counterparts, a widely acknowledged outer circle variety of English among international scholars.

³⁸ For instance, two diglossic varieties of Singapore English, namely Singapore Standard English (SSE) (i.e. acrolect) and Singapore Colloquial English (SCE) (i.e. basilect), are generally agreed to be spoken in the Singaporean community (e.g. Platt, 1977; Richards & Tay, 1977; Richards, 1983; Pakir, 1991; Gupta, 1989, 1994; Bao & Hong, 2006) although in reality the variation is more continuous than discrete (Alsagoff, 2007; Cavallaro & Ng, 2009). However, as these two main varieties serve different functions (i.e. solidarity and status) in diverse social contexts in Singapore, Singaporean people tend to possess a different attitude towards SSE, SCE as well as ‘standard’ English (e.g. Tan & Tan, 2008; Cavallaro & Ng, 2009; see also Chia & Brown, 2002).

³⁹ In the 1980s, the NET scheme (which in its earlier form was known as the Expatriate English Teacher Scheme, EETS) aimed to encourage secondary schools to switch from EMI to CMI (Boyle, 1997a). The EETS scheme only allowed the employment of NSs from Britain with the help of the British Council and it was later expanded to recruit NSs also from other inner circle countries (Boyle, 2004). At the time (and this is also valid at present), the implementation of such a scheme was found to be hindered for reasons such as the large budget cost, the inability of NESTs to effect change in the schools, the problem of language at staff meetings, the lack of NESTs’ involvement in extra-curricular activities, differences in teaching approaches between NESTs and local teachers and the disciplinary problems faced by NESTs in the classrooms (Johnson & Tang, 1993; Boyle, 1997a). Weighing the gains and losses of the EETS scheme, Boyle’s (1997a, p.180) concludes that ‘[i]t would have been much better if the large sums of money spent on the EETS had been spent on providing more support and better conditions for Hong Kong’s local teachers of English.’

⁴⁰ Having reviewed three themes in the history of ELT in Hong Kong, namely the change in MOI policy, the Native English Teacher (NET) scheme and the imposition of the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT), Boyle (2004) concludes that linguistic imperialism by the colonial government was applicable only to selected episodes whereas compulsion has been more a feature of Hong Kong’s language policy under the post-colonial government. This irreplaceable role of English, as Halliday (1998, p.29) argues, is ‘not because Hong Kong was founded as a British colony, but because of its international role’.

⁴¹ Prior to the return of Hong Kong to mainland China in 1997, the colonial government’s laissez-faire policy resulted in over 90% of the students attending secondary schools which claimed to use English as the MOI (EMI) (Evans, 2013c). However, as most students (and sometimes teachers) did not have the language ability to ‘fully function’ in EMI lessons, code-mixing and switching were often used by teachers and students to negotiate meanings of difficult terms and concepts (Lin & Man, 2009). With

the belief that mixed-mode instruction fails to develop students' proficiency in both their mother tongue and English, in September 1998, the Education Department (1997; see also Education Commission 1990) implemented a compulsory mother tongue streaming policy aiming to provide high quality education for both subject knowledge and language proficiencies (Poon, 2010). Under such a policy, only 114 of the 421 secondary schools remained EMI schools whereas the majority of the schools were compelled to switch to CMI at junior secondary level (Tsui, Shum, Wong, Tse & Ki 1999). Although the findings in the Education Commission (2005) report confirmed that the mother tongue is the most effective MOI for students, the dual-stream MOI policy created a labelling effect in that only the 'best' students were permitted to study in English in 'elite' EMI schools (Choi, 2003) whereas the majority of students were 'deprived of the chance to receive bilingual education' (Poon, 1999, p.142). Furthermore, a major study by Tsang (2009), whose findings were widely reported in the press, found that 'CMI students' chances of meeting the minimum qualifications of admission to local first-degree programs were only about half of those of EMI students'. These findings created immense social discontent among principals, teachers, students, educators and the general public. As a result, CMI schools were generally perceived to be second-class and some of these schools faced the crisis of a low student admission rate and therefore the prospect of closure. In order to resolve this dilemma between pedagogical concerns and societal demands, the Education Bureau (EDB) (2010), in May 2009, announced the fine-tuning MOI policy, which upholds mother-tongue teaching but at the same time seeks to enhance students' proficiency in both Chinese and English by offering more flexibility to individual schools. Crucially, it also seeks to regain the trust of the general public as it no longer classifies secondary schools into 'CMI schools' and 'EMI schools' (see also Kan & Adamson, 2010; Kan, Lai, Kirkpatrick & Law, 2011). In practical terms, individual schools could adopt diversified MOI arrangements at the junior secondary level mainly through three approaches: (1) Mother-tongue teaching complemented with various modes of Extended Learning Activities (ELA) in English, (2) Chinese or English as their MOI by subject and (3) Chinese or English as their MOI for all non-English subjects, conditioned by certain criteria proposed by EDB (2010).

⁴² From the employer's perspective, Au (1998), the Chief Executive of the Hang Seng Bank Limited, argues that it should be secondary/primary schools, not the employer's role, to offer sufficient language training to resolve the problem of declining standards. Though 'efficient and effective service delivery (comprising 75% of the labour force) depends on the successful communication of the product knowledge, responsiveness and courtesy of front-line staff' (p.179), he observes that many employees fail to 'express themselves fluently or confidently' (p.181).

⁴³ The emergence of the Hong Kong identity can perhaps be traced back to the first generation of Hong Kong-born children in the 1960s whose parents emigrated to Hong Kong to escape from the political instability (and/or the communists) in the North (Mathews, Ma & Liu, 2008). In Britain's early colonial government, Tsui (2007) observes that '[t]he oppressive colonial rule from the beginning of

colonization to the late 1960s could be characterized as a process of desinicization, which is a form of denationalization involving the establishment of English hegemony, historical deprivation, deculturation, and depoliticization' (p.125). This period witnessed outbreaks of social unrest mainly triggered by non-political issues, colonial oppression and widespread corruption within the civil service until the colonial government's attempt to settle the social problems. One major contributor during the time was Governor, MacLehose, who publicly established the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), alongside the successful anti-corruption campaign, which greatly enhanced the credibility of the government (Tsang, 2004). To promote Hong Kong citizenship, the government also paid particular attention to public housing policy and the education system. Some important measures include the provision of government or government-subsidised housing for almost half of the population by the end of the 1970s (Lee & Yip, 2006) and the introduction of compulsory primary education in 1971 and subsequently the implementation of compulsory 9-year education in 1978 (Evans, 2009). Furthermore, the local culture was also found not only to sustain the traditional Chinese festivals but also integrate festivals unique to Hong Kong, e.g. Chinese New Year, Labour holiday, the mid-autumn festive, the dragon-boat festival, Ching Ming, the Hong Kong festival, etc. (Tsui, 2007).

⁴⁴ The unforgettable scenes in the Tiananmen Square incident on 4th June 1989 where the Chinese government brutally suppressed the student demonstration also substantially deepened Hongkongers' apprehension over the Chinese rule in 1997 (Tsui, 2007).

⁴⁵ The following lists some of the measures proposed by the government (and also through the media) to strengthen local people's national and cultural identity in the previous decade (see Tsui, 2007):

- The mother-tongue education policy was implemented and enforced in the majority of secondary schools (though it has been 'fine-tuned' recently due to the unpopularity of the mother-tongue policy) (see section 3.6.3)
- The teaching of Chinese culture and history was specifically mentioned in the school curriculum (in 1997)
- The cultivation of national identity and patriotic education have become priority areas in school curriculum (in 2001)
- Specific instructions were given to schools on when and how to hoist the national flag
- The teaching of Putonghua as a compulsory subject was formally introduced for Primary 1 to Secondary 3 (in 1998) and it became an elective subject for the school leaving public examination (in 2000)
- Putonghua has been adopted as the MOI (particularly in Chinese language and culture education) in some primary and secondary schools
- A series of TV programs on a hundred years of Chinese history were launched.
- The Chinese national anthem is played on the main television channels every evening (right before the news broadcast) as well as one minute broadcasts of a series 'Our Home Our Country'

- Informal school programs such school tours to the mainland have become popular and, in the long term, the government aims to ensure every Hong Kong student can enjoy at least one sponsored visit to mainland China.

-The introduction of Moral and National Education as a compulsory subject in the future primary and secondary school curriculum has also been proposed by the government recently in spite of the vigorous debate, among the general public, over its hidden political agenda for nurturing nationalism.

⁴⁶ Having argued that a sense of Chinese ethnicity is only one element (out of three) of the local identity, Vickers and Kan (2003) cast doubt on the recent changes to the history curriculum in that (in the absence of democratisation in the Hong Kong's political system) they have tended to 'stress the homogenous Chineseness' of the region at the expense of the many other elements that have shaped its past' (p.449). In a sense, Vickers and Kan argue that the formal education under the contemporary political environment has prevented the future generations of Hongkongers from being exposed to any account of the local and national past that differs from the Beijing-approved version. Echoing their claim was GPA (Government and Public Affairs) teachers' belief that politics should be taught critically and with no appeal to the emotions so that it neither enhances students' sense of national identity nor their patriotism (Yuen & Byram, 2007). Fairbrother (2008) observes that policy documents and government statements have tended to prioritise nationality over other themes in citizenship education.

APPENDICES

Appendix 4.1: Interview consent form

Project title: The use of English in Hong Kong

Principal investigator: Mr. Jim Yee Him Chan

The English Department would like to find out how people in Hong Kong use English in their everyday life. The information will help our investigation into the local English curriculum and policy planning.

You are invited to participate in an interview of about 30 minutes and it will be audio-recorded with your permission. The interview might involve questions about your personal views and information. Please sign this consent form to indicate whether you do decide to participate in this research. All information obtained will be used for research purposes only. Participant will not be identified by name in any report of the completed study. Participation is entirely voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact Mr. Jim Yee Him Chan (27667010).

If you understand the contents described above and agree to participate in this research, please sign below. Your help is very much appreciated.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

研究題目： 在香港使用英語的情況

首席研究員：陳以謙先生

香港理工大學英文系邀請您參與由陳以謙先生主理的研究調查。
這是一項關於社會語言學及應用語言學的學術研究，旨在探討香港人使用英語的情況。

您將完成一個約三十分鐘的面談訪問，訪問內容將在閣下同意之情況下被錄音。在面談訪問過程中，部分問題可能涉及閣下的私隱和價值取向。是次研究並不為閣下提供個人利益，但所搜集數據將有助我們研究本地英語課程及政策的發展。是次參與純屬自願性質，您可隨時終止參與是項行動，有關決定將不會引致任何不良後果。所收集的資料只作研究用途，個人資料將絕對保密。如您對是項研究有任何問題，請現在提出。

如日後你對是項研究有任何查詢，請與陳以謙先生聯絡(27667010)。

如你明白以上內容，並願意參與是項研究，請在下方簽署。

被訪者姓名：

被訪者簽名：

日期：

Appendix 4.2: Parent/Guardian research consent form

Dear Parents,

The English Department is carrying out a research study to find out how people in Hong Kong use English in their everyday life. We would like to invite your child to participate. This is a study of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics which aims to explore Hong Kong people's (including students) daily use of English and the difficulties they face in using the language. The information will help our investigation into the local English curriculum and policy planning.

Students who participate in this research may take part in an English listening activity, interviews and questionnaire surveys. Some of the results will be shared with the school which would help understand the difficulties students face in learning English or learning a subject through the medium of English and, in turn, help students' learning in the future. Please complete and return the reply slip below by 6th March to indicate whether you would allow your child to participate in this research. Participation is entirely voluntary. All information obtained will be used for research purposes only and will be treated in the strictest confidence. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact the principal investigator Mr. Chan Yee Him (Tel no.: 27667010; email address: egjim.chan@). Attached please find a research questionnaire for your reference. We would appreciate if you could also complete the questionnaire.

Your help is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Yee Him Chan

Principal Investigator
Department of English
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

敬啟者：

香港理工大學英文系正進行一項有關香港人每天使用英語的調查研究，並邀請 貴子弟參與。這是一項關於社會語言學及應用語言學的學術研究，旨在探討香港人(其中包括中學生)使用英語的情況及遇到的困難。研究所得資料可以有助我們研究本地英語課程及政策的發展。

被邀請的同學或於課餘時間(如：小息、午飯時段)參與一項英語聆聽活動，會面訪談及問卷調查。是次研究結果將與學校分享，將有助學校更了解學生學習英語或以英語學習術科的困難，從而幫助同學學習。請閣下填妥以下回條，於三月六日交回學校，以表示你是否同意 貴子弟參與是項研究。參與純屬自願性質，所收集的資料只作研究用途，一切資料將會絕對保密。希望閣下能對此研究給予支持，讓貴子弟參與其中。如閣下對是項研究有任何查詢，請與首席研究員陳以謙先生聯絡(電話: 2766 7010；電郵地址: egjim.chan@)。現附上研究問卷供閣下參考，並邀請閣下完成問卷。

此致
XXX 中學家長

香港理工大學英文系
首席研究員

陳以謙謹啟

二零一二年三月一日

家長回條

學生姓名：_____ 班別：_____ 學號：_____

本人 ** 同意 / 不同意 子弟參與是項研究。
(**請刪去不適用者)

家長姓名：_____

家長簽署：_____

日期：_____

Appendix 4.3: Interview protocol (Professionals)

Use of English

1. Which aspects of English do you usually use (e.g. writing, reading, listening, speaking)? Please give examples (e.g. leisure life, workplace, higher/tertiary education).
2. Under what situation do you usually use English? (Which varieties? Which channel? To whom?) Please give examples.
3. What difficulties do you face when using (spoken) English in your daily life?
4. In spoken English, which aspect(s) do you think is/are most important (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communication skills, culture)? Why?
5. In lingua franca situation, do you identify yourself as a Chinese or Hongkonger? Does it tell from your English (or Putonghua)?

Expectations of learning (spoken) English

6. What do you think is needed to prepare students for the use of English (spoken) in Hong Kong?
7. Which of the following choices would be the learning target of your spoken English (also Putonghua)? Why?
 - (a) I would like to sound like a native speaker of English (e.g. an American or a British);
 - (b) I would like to sound like an educated English speaker of Hong Kong (e.g. my English teacher);
 - (c) It doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners?
8. Do you think speaking like an NS would help in your future prospect (cf. Putonghua)?
9. Do you think an educated Hong Kong English pronunciation is acceptable?
10. Do you prefer a local teacher or native speaker teacher to teach (spoken) English? Why?

Appendix 4.4: Interview protocol (Teachers)

Use of English

1. What is the use of English in your daily life vis-à-vis in higher/tertiary education? (Which varieties? Which channel? To whom?)
2. How do you think will students use English after they graduate from secondary school? (In what situations? To whom?) What difficulties do you think they would have?

Fine-tuning MOI policy [for subject teachers only]

3. Which aspect(s) of English do you think is/are most difficult when students study a content-area subject (e.g. Science, Mathematics) using English (e.g. writing, reading, speaking and listening)? Why?
4. What difficulties do you face when using English to teach a subject?

English teaching [for ELT teachers only]

5. In teaching Spoken English, which aspect(s) do you think is/are most important (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communication skills, culture)? Why?
6. How do you teach spoken English/pronunciation? What difficulties do you face?
7. Do you prefer local teachers or native speaker teachers to teach (spoken) English? Why?

Learning target

8. What is the learning target of (spoken) English for your students?
9. How do you assess their ability of (spoken) English?
10. Do you think an educated Hong Kong English pronunciation is acceptable?
11. Do you think speaking like an NS would help in their future prospect?

Appendix 4.5: Interview protocol (students)

1. What is the use of English in your daily life?
你平日一般在甚麼情況下會使用/接觸到英語?
2. What is the use of English do you think after you graduate from secondary school?
你認為你在中學畢業後，會在甚麼情況下會使用英語?
3. Which of the following choices would be the learning target of your spoken English (/Putonghua)? Why?
以下哪一項是你英語（/普通話）口語的學習目標？為甚麼？
 - (a) I would like to sound like a native speaker of English (e.g. an American or a British); 我希望能像英語母語者般說英語；
 - (b) I would like to sound like my English teacher; 我希望能像我的英語老師般說英語；
 - (c) It doesn't matter as long as my pronunciation is understandable by the listeners. 不要緊，只要我的英語能被對方明白便可。
4. In learning spoken English, which aspect(s) do you think is/are most important (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communication skills, culture)? Why?
學習英語口語，你覺得哪（些）方面最重要（如文法、詞彙、語音、溝通技巧、文化）？
為甚麼？
5. Who do you prefer to teach you English, local teachers or native speaker teachers? Why?
你較喜歡誰作為你的英語老師？本地老師還是英語母語老師？為甚麼？
6. Have you ever listened to any non-native speakers speaking English? How do you feel about them?
你有否聽過其他非英語母語者說英語？你覺得他們的英語怎樣？

Appendix 4.6: Bilingual questionnaire (Speaking English in Hong Kong 在香港使用英語交談

The English Department would like to find out how people in Hong Kong speak English in their everyday life. The information will help our investigation into the local English curriculum and policy planning. The information that you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence.

香港理工大學英文系正進行一項有關香港人每天使用英語交談的調查研究。閣下的資料可以有助我們研究本地英語課程及政策的發展。是次收集的數據只供研究之用，一切資料將會絕對保密。

Personal information 個人資料

Please answer each item by filling in the appropriate number or by writing down the relevant information in the space provided. If you choose 'other', please specify your answer. 請選擇適當的數字，或在空線上填寫有關資料。如選擇「其他」，請註明答案。

1. Gender 性別: 1.Female 女 2. Male 男

2. Age 年齡: 1.14 or below 2. 15 – 19 3. 20 – 24 4. 25 – 29 5. 30 – 34
 6. 35 – 39 7. 40 – 44 8. 45 - 49 9. 50 – 54 10. 55 or over

3. First language 母語:
 1. Cantonese 廣東話 2. Putonghua 普通話 3.English 英文
 4. Other 其他 (Please indicate 請註明): _____

4. Highest academic level achieved 最高教育程度:
 1. Form 1 - 4 中一至中四 2. Form 5 中五 (HKCEE)
 3. Form 7 中七 (HKALE) 4. Form 6 中六 (HKDSE)
 5. Diploma/Certificate 文憑/證書
 6. Associate Degree/ Higher Diploma 副學士/高級文憑
 7. Bachelor's Degree 學士 8. Master's Degree 碩士
 9. Doctoral Degree 博士

5. Current role / occupation 現時的狀況/職業:

1. Secondary school student 中學學生
2. Full-time university student 全日制大學學生
3. Teacher 老師 (□ English 英文科/□ Other subject(s) 其他科目)
4. Professional/ Business person 專業/商業人士
5. Other 其他: _____

6. Which accent of English do you think you speak? 你認為你的英語屬於哪種口音?

1. Not sure 不確定
2. Australian 澳洲
3. American 美國
4. British 英國
5. Hong Kong 香港
6. Other 其他: _____

7. Have you lived or worked in an English-speaking country? 你有沒有曾經在英語國家生活或工作?

1. No 沒有
2. Yes 有

Country 國家	Total time spent 逗留時間	Purpose 目的
	year(s) 年 month(s) 月	① Studying 讀書 ② Working 工作
	year(s) 年 month(s) 月	① Studying 讀書 ② Working 工作
	year(s) 年 month(s) 月	① Studying 讀書 ② Working 工作

(If your answer is 'yes', please provide some information about the English-speaking country you lived or worked in. 如有, 請提供有關你曾經生活或工作的英語國家的一些資料)

How far do you agree with the statements below? Please fill in the appropriate number. 你同意以下的陳述嗎? 請以適當數字表示你對以下句子的同意程度。

(Strongly disagree 極不同意 1 < < > > 4 Strongly agree 極同意)

Views about English(es) around the world 對英語在世界的看法

8. English belongs to the UK/USA and other English-speaking countries (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland).
英語屬於英國 / 美國或其他以英語為母語的國家 (如澳洲, 新西蘭, 加拿大和愛爾蘭)。
9. A Standard English pronunciation means the pronunciation of a native speaker of English. 標準英語發音是指以英語為母語者的發音。
10. The following is a variety of English: 下列各項均為一種英語類別。
(a) Indian English 印度英語
(b) Australian English 澳洲英語
(c) Hong Kong English 香港英語
(d) British English 英國英語
(e) Singapore English 新加坡英語
(f) China English 中國英語
11. I can distinguish non-native from native speakers by their English accent.
我能從別人的英語口音分辨他們是母語或非母語者。
12. I find it difficult to understand the speech of native English speakers.
我感到難以理解英語母語者的英語。
13. I find it difficult to understand the speech of non-native English speakers, except Hong Kong speakers.
除了香港人, 我感到難以理解非英語母語者的英語。
14. Whenever I use English in communication, I usually communicate with other non-native speakers of English.
每當以英語溝通, 我的對象主要是非英語母語者。

15. I encounter native English accents more than non-native English accents in the following English-mediated situations:
在以下使用英語的情況，我較多接觸到英語母語口音。
- (a) TV programs 電視節目
 - (b) The Internet 互聯網
 - (c) Films 電影
 - (d) At work/school/university 工作間／學校／大學
 - (e) On overseas trips 海外旅行

Perceptions of English pronunciation 對英語發音的看法

16. A Hong Kong person who speaks like a native speaker is a ‘show off’.
香港人使用帶有英語母語口音的英語是一種炫耀的表現。
17. Foreigners will not understand me if I speak with a Hong Kong English accent.
如果我的英語帶有香港口音，外國人不能明白。
18. I want to retain my local accent when speaking with non-native speakers.
與非英語母語者交談，我希望保留我的本地口音。
19. Having a native-like English accent is advantageous for job hunting and career development.
擁有英語母語口音，有利於求職和職業發展。
20. A Hong Kong person who has a native English accent is usually educated and well-off.
擁有英語母語口音的香港人通常受過較多教育和比較富裕。
21. I don’t mind if people can identify me as a Hongkonger from my accent.
我不介意人們能從我的口音知道我是香港人。
22. I feel uncomfortable when I hear a Hong Kong person who sounds like a native speaker.
我聽到香港人說帶有英語母語口音的英語感到不自然。
23. A native-like pronunciation of English is a mark of high English proficiency.
英語母語口音是英語水平高的表現。
24. I would identify myself as a ‘HongKonger’ rather than Chinese.
我會稱自己為香港人多於中國人。

25. I want to sound like a native speaker when talking to a native speaker.
與英語母語者交談，我希望我的口音能像英語母語者。
26. I envy those who sound like a native speaker of English.
我羨慕他人的口音像英語母語者。
27. I feel shy about trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation in front of local people.
在本地人面前，我對模仿英語母語口音感到害羞。

Learning English pronunciation 學習英語發音

28. We should adopt a native-speaker pronunciation model of English (e.g. British and American English) for teaching and learning.
我們應該以英語母語的發音（如：英國和美國英語）作為教學的典範。
29. I will try my best to get rid of a Hong Kong English accent.
我會盡力擺脫香港英語口音。
30. Hong Kong English pronunciation can replace the existing teaching model.
香港英語的發音能取代現有的發音作為教學典範。
31. Features of the Hong Kong English accent should be corrected because they are pronunciation errors.
香港英語的口音特點應該加以糾正，因為它們是錯誤的發音。
32. If we study English at a local school, we can never acquire a native English accent.
如果在本地學校學習英語，我們永遠不能擁有英語母語口音。
33. Apart from American and British English, secondary school students should learn features of other English varieties (e.g. Singaporean English).
除了美國和英國英語外，中學生應該學習其他英語種類的特點（如：新加坡英語）。
34. It is not necessary to imitate native English speakers' accent as long as our English is intelligible.
只要我們的英語發音能被理解，我們毋須模仿英語母語者的口音。
35. It is ideal to have a native speaker teacher of English because his/her pronunciation is my learning target.
以英語為母語的老師是理想的老師，因為他們的發音是我們的學習目標。

36. We would like to explore some of the issues in this questionnaire through interviews. If you are interested in taking part in an interview, please leave your name, telephone number, and email address.

我們希望就問卷的問題進行更深入的訪問。如果你有興趣接受訪問，請留下您的姓名，電話號碼和電郵地址。

Name 姓名: _____

Tel. number 電話號碼: _____

Email address 電郵地址: _____

Appendix 4.7: The Hong Kong Polytechnic University research subject informed consent form

Project title: Exploring secondary school students' exposure of English under the 'fine-tuning' MOI policy in Hong Kong

Principal investigator: Mr. Jim Chan Yee Him

Introduction

XXX secondary school is invited to take part in this research project. It is known that the school has, since its establishment, been introducing innovative and effective measures to maximise students' exposure to and use of English in their learning experience at the school, with the ultimate goal to increase their English proficiency. Under the newly implemented 'fine-tuning' medium-of-instruction (MOI) policy, it is expected that students are offered more opportunity to learn English. The present research project aims to explore students' learning experience of English, namely their exposure to English, in a government-aided secondary school as a case study.

This Participant Information and Consent Form provides the key information about the research project. It explains what is involved to help the participants decide if they wish to take part.

Please read the information carefully. You may ask questions about anything that is unclear or you would like to know more about. You can of course also raise questions during the course of the research project by contacting the principal investigator.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If any participant does not wish to take part, s/he does not have to.

If you decide to take part in the research project, you may be asked to sign the consent section. By signing it you agree that you:

- understand what you have read;
- consent to take part in the research project;
- consent to be involved in the procedures described;
- consent to the use of information about the school as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information and Consent Form to keep.

What is the purpose of this research project?

The globalisation of English in recent decades has thrown a spotlight on the function and use of English in international settings. Increasing scholarly attention has been focused on how English education could better equip students to meet the challenges of communicating in a rapidly globalising

world. In the Hong Kong context, considerable reform in education has been initiated since the handover, with special attention to the teaching and learning of English. One important measure is the implementation of the ‘fine-tuning’ MOI policy, in which schools are given the autonomy to opt to teach some or all non-language subjects in English at junior secondary levels. Students might thereafter be provided alternative pathways to learn English at school.

The present investigation is a part of a more wide-ranging, multifaceted PhD research project, supported by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, which seeks to bridge the gap between the educational context and sociolinguistic reality in the role and use of English in Asia’s self-styled World City. This case study of the school centres on one aspect, i.e. the educational reality where students, in their teenage years, have most opportunity to experience and use English. More specifically, it aims to explore:

1. the ‘amount’ of English students’ are exposed to in their learning experience at school.
2. the various modes (i.e. writing, reading, speaking and listening) and varieties of English (e.g. British English and American English) students are exposed to in diverse learning contexts..

What does participation in this research project involve?

The investigation might involve the help of the principal, teaching staff, students and (if possible) some of the parents, provided that they are willing to participate. The procedures include document analysis, questionnaire surveys, focus group and/or individual interviews and classroom observations. Details of each procedure are described below:

Document analysis

The collection of document records in relation to students’ learning of English in the school is the core component of the study. These documents might provide useful information about the school-based language policy (e.g. timetables of different classes and school policy documents), the teaching of English and other English-mediated subjects in the classroom (e.g. English teaching materials and school-based syllabi), the school-based examination (e.g. exam/test papers), the role of Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs) and any other activities which help students learn English outside lesson time.

Questionnaire survey

A bilingual questionnaire is designed for both students and teachers (both English and subject teachers). The questionnaire will contain 5 pages and require no more than 15 minutes to finish. If possible, it is hoped that the questionnaires could also be distributed to some of the parents as their opinion about English education is equally pertinent.

Focus group/individual interview

Focus groups or individual interviews with students and teachers will be conducted to explore their views on their experience of teaching and learning English at the school. The format and language choice (Cantonese or English) in the interviews are to a great extent flexible depending on the preference of the participants. If the participants permit, they will be audio-recorded.

Classroom observation

A few classroom observations of both the English and English-mediated academic (e.g. I.S.) subjects are valuable for the research project. With the approval of the corresponding teachers in advance, part of the lesson might be audio-taped.

How long will the study last?

The participation of the principal researcher in the school will last for 2-4 weeks depending on the progress of the investigation. After the school visit, the researcher might contact the corresponding teaching staff for any additional information if necessary.

What are the possible risks?

The presence of the researcher and some data collecting procedures might cause inconvenience to some of the teachers and students. For example, class teachers might be requested to conduct the questionnaire survey. Students and teachers might need extra time to participate in some focus groups and interviews. In addition, some participants might not feel comfortable during the classroom observation.

The researcher will ensure that all procedures begin only if the permission of the corresponding participants is sought in advance. In the case of a focus group, interview and classroom observation where a digital record is needed, audio-recording rather than video-recording might be more appropriate as it minimises the disturbance to the participants. The researcher will also ensure a casual and comfortable atmosphere during the process.

What are the possible benefits?

The present research project is one of the most recent studies to connect the educational context with sociolinguistic reality in Hong Kong. The data gathered in this investigation is of particularly high value as little research has explored the extent to how much English students are exposed to in a local secondary school setting, especially after the implementation of the new MOI policy.

The findings of the study are expected to significantly contribute not only to curriculum and language policy planning in Hong Kong but also the school-based curriculum, which might lead to improvement in English education. Further, the investigation also looks closely into the language and contexts across

several English-mediated subjects which, most probably, will provide valuable insights into the development or modification of the teaching materials for the future academic years.

Does anyone have to take part in this research project?

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If any participant does not wish to take part, s/he does not have to. If s/he decides to take part and later changes his/her mind, s/he is free to withdraw from the project at a later stage.

For the case of the questionnaire survey, if any participant does consent to participate, s/he may only withdraw prior to the questionnaire being submitted because the survey data will be anonymous.

For the case of a focus group, if any participant does consent to participate, s/he may only withdraw prior to the focus group beginning because the members in the focus group in the record will be anonymous.

For the case of an interview, if any participant does consent to participate, s/he may only withdraw prior to the approval of the interview transcript because the transcript will be anonymous.

Participants' decision whether to take part or not, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect their relationship with the researcher(s) or the university.

What will happen to information about the participants?

Any information obtained for the purpose of this research project that can identify the school and any participants will be treated as confidential and securely stored. It will be disclosed only with their permission, or as permitted by law.

In any publication and/ or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the school or the participants cannot be identified, except with their permission.

Can the participants access research information kept about them?

The corresponding participants have the rights to access the information collected and stored by the researchers about them. They may contact the principal researcher if they would like to access the information.

In addition, the information collected in this research project will be kept for at least 3 years. The participants must be aware that the information collected about them may at some point not be able to be identified once the identifying information has been removed. Access to information about them after this point will not be possible.

Consent

I have read and I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of this research project as described within it.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I, on behalf of XXX secondary school, freely agree to participate in this research project, as described.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

Mr. XXX

Date

The principal of XXX secondary school

Declaration by researcher: I have given a verbal explanation of the research project, its procedures and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Mr. Jim Chan Yee Him,

Date

The principal investigator,

Department of English,

The HK Polytechnic University

For further information or appointments:

If you would like any further information concerning this project or if you have any problems which may be related to participants' involvement in the project, you can contact the principal researcher on 2766 7010 (office) or through the email address: egjim.chan@

Appendix 4.8: A sample of the data log sheet

Time 時間	Total time 總時間	Activity 活動	Use of language 使用語言		Key concept(s)/ knowledge that you have learnt in the lesson. 你在該課堂所學到的主要概念/ 內容
			Chinese 中文	English 英文	
S1 (Monday 星期一)					
8:10 – 8:30	20 分鐘	Morning Assembly 早會	分鐘	分鐘	
8:30 – 8:50	20 分鐘	Reading Period 閱讀節	分鐘	分鐘	
8:50 – 9:30	40 分鐘	Maths 數學	分鐘	分鐘	
9:30 – 10:10	40 分鐘	DT/HE 設技/家政	分鐘	分鐘	
10:10 – 10:30	20 分鐘	Recess 小息	分鐘	分鐘	
10:30 – 11:10	40 分鐘	DT/HE 設技/家政	分鐘	分鐘	
11:10 – 11:50	40 分鐘	C. History 中史	分鐘	分鐘	
11:50 – 12:30	40 分鐘	English 英文	分鐘	分鐘	
12:30 – 1:30	60 分鐘	Lunch 午膳	分鐘	分鐘	
1:30 – 2:10	40 分鐘	Chinese 中文	分鐘	分鐘	
2:10 – 2:50	40 分鐘	Chinese 中文	分鐘	分鐘	
2:50 – 3:30	40 分鐘	I.S. 科學	分鐘	分鐘	
3:30 – 3:45	15 分鐘	Class Teacher 班主任節	分鐘	分鐘	

Appendix 4.9: Verbal-guise test (Part 1)

How do you feel about this speaker? Please fill in the appropriate number.

1. Not intelligent << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Intelligent

2. Not considerate << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Considerate

3. Not kind << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Kind

4. Not rich << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Rich

5. Not friendly << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Friendly

6. Not educated << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Educated

7. Not successful << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Successful

8. Not honest << ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ >> Honest

Appendix 4.10: Verbal-guise test (Part 2)

How far do you agree with the statements below? Please fill in the appropriate number.

<u>Statements</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<	<	>	>	<u>Strongly agree</u>
1. This accent is easy to understand.	①		②		③	④
2. My English accent is similar to this speaker's.	①		②		③	④
3. This accent should be adopted as the teaching model in an English class.	①		②		③	④
4. This accent is appropriate in the following situations:						
(a) Job interview	①		②		③	④
(b) Chatting with friends who are <u>non-native speakers</u> of English	①		②		③	④
(c) Business meeting	①		②		③	④
(d) News broadcast	①		②		③	④
(e) Giving directions to tourists from <u>English-speaking</u> countries	①		②		③	④
(f) Discussion in class	①		②		③	④

Where do you think the speaker comes from? Please write down the name of the country/city.

_____.

Appendix 4.11: One-way ANOVA results for VGT

Post-hoc comparisons: Contextual variation in accent acceptability among varieties (Figure 8.5)

News broadcast			Teaching model			Business meeting			Job interview		
Variety		Sig.	Variety		Sig.	Variety		Sig.	Variety		Sig.
AUS	PHI	.000	AUS	PHI	.000	AUS	PHI	.000	AUS	PHI	.000
	HK	.000		HK	.000		HK	.000		HK	.000
	UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000
	CHI	.000		CHI	.000		CHI	.000		CHI	.000
	IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000
	US	.000		US	.000		US	.000		US	.000
PHI	AUS	.000	PHI	AUS	.000	PHI	AUS	.000	PHI	AUS	.000
	HK	.867		HK	.988		HK	1.000		HK	.763
	UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000
	CHI	.583		CHI	.539		CHI	.356		CHI	.000
	IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000
	US	.000		US	.000		US	.000		US	.000
HK	AUS	.000	HK	AUS	.000	HK	AUS	.000	HK	AUS	.000
	PHI	.867		PHI	.988		PHI	1.000		PHI	.763
	UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000
	CHI	1.000		CHI	.973		CHI	.524		CHI	.068
	IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000
	US	.000		US	.000		US	.000		US	.000
UK	PHI	.000	UK	PHI	.000	UK	PHI	.000	UK	PHI	.000
	HK	.000		HK	.000		HK	.000		HK	.000
	UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000
	CHI	.000		CHI	.000		CHI	.000		CHI	.000
	IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000
	US	.000		US	.000		US	.000		US	.000
CHI	AUS	.000	CHI	AUS	.000	CHI	AUS	.000	CHI	AUS	.000
	PHI	.583		PHI	.539		PHI	.356		PHI	.000
	HK	1.000		HK	.973		HK	.524		HK	.068
	UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000		UK	.000
	IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000		IND	.000
	US	.000		US	.000		US	.000		US	.000
IND	AUS	.000	IND	AUS	.000	IND	AUS	.000	IND	AUS	.000
	PHI	.000		PHI	.000		PHI	.000		PHI	.000
	HK	.000		HK	.000		HK	.000		HK	.000

	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	US	.000
US	AUS	.000
	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000

	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	US	.000
US	AUS	.000
	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000

	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	US	.000
US	AUS	.000
	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000

	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	US	.000
US	AUS	.000
	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000

Giving directions to NS tourists		
Variety		Sig.
AUS	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000
	US	.899
PHI	AUS	.000
	HK	.999
	UK	.000
	CHI	.251
	IND	.000
	US	.000
HK	AUS	.000
	PHI	.999
	UK	.000
	CHI	.091
	IND	.000
	US	.000
UK	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000
	US	.000

Discussion in class		
Variety		Sig.
AUS	PHI	.002
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.210
	US	.000
PHI	AUS	.002
	HK	.999
	UK	.000
	CHI	.999
	IND	.657
	US	.000
HK	AUS	.000
	PHI	.999
	UK	.000
	CHI	1.000
	IND	.341
	US	.000
UK	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000
	US	.027

Chatting with NNS friends		
Variety		Sig.
AUS	PHI	.127
	HK	.707
	UK	.001
	CHI	.121
	IND	.454
	US	.383
PHI	AUS	.127
	HK	.944
	UK	.000
	CHI	1.000
	IND	.994
	US	.000
HK	AUS	.707
	PHI	.944
	UK	.000
	CHI	.943
	IND	.1000
	US	.005
UK	PHI	.001
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000
	US	.325

CHI	AUS	.000
	PHI	.251
	HK	.091
	UK	.000
	IND	.001
	US	.000
IND	AUS	.000
	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.001
	US	.000
US	AUS	.899
	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000

CHI	AUS	.000
	PHI	.999
	HK	1.000
	UK	.000
	IND	.311
	US	.000
IND	AUS	.210
	PHI	.657
	HK	.347
	UK	.000
	CHI	.311
	US	.000
US	AUS	.000
	PHI	.000
	HK	.000
	UK	.027
	CHI	.000
	IND	.000

CHI	AUS	.121
	PHI	1.000
	HK	.943
	UK	.000
	IND	.994
	US	.000
IND	AUS	.454
	PHI	.994
	HK	1.000
	UK	.000
	CHI	.994
	US	.001
US	AUS	.385
	PHI	.000
	HK	.005
	UK	.325
	CHI	.000
	IND	.001

One-way ANOVA results: Similarity with participants' accent (Figure 8.8)

Accents	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
UK*	6.331 250.179	2 378	3.165 .662	4.783	.009
US*	15.720 265.362	2 377	7.860 .704	11.167	.000
AUS*	9.784 200.216	2 379	4.892 .528	9.261	.000
CHI*	10.831 217.916	2 381	5.416 .572	9.469	.000
HK*	25.788 310.422	2 378	12.894 .821	15.701	.000

One-way ANOVA results: Perceived intelligibility of accents (Figure 8.9)

Accents	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
UK*	25.677 224.832	2 378	12.839 .595	21.839	.000
US*	36.254 264.533	2 377	18.127 .702	25.834	.000
AUS*	30.412 216.740	2 379	15.206 .572	26.590	.000
IND*	7.895 249.858	2 378	3.948 .661	5.972	.003
PHI*	24.072 198.973	2 376	12.036 .529	22.744	.000

One-way ANOVA results: Scores of status for the seven varieties (Figure 8.10)

Accents	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
UK*	176.532 4774.113	2 369	88.266 12.938	6.822	.000
HK*	638.345 5618.564	2 371	319.172 15.144	21.075	.000

One-way ANOVA results: Scores of solidarity for the seven varieties (Figure 8.11)

Accents	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AUS*	102.115 4236.189	2 365	51.058 11.606	4.399	.013
US*	118.250 6231.707	2 372	59.125 16.752	3.529	.030
HK*	109.610 6235.278	2 371	54.805 16.807	3.261	.039

One-way ANOVA results: Attitudes towards NS and NNS accents in contexts (Figure 8.12)

Contexts	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teaching model*	25.537 899.602	2 1112	12.768 .809	15.783	.000
Business meeting*	18.205 764.632	2 1112	9.103 .688	13.238	.000
Job interview*	11.787 791.697	2 1112	5.893 .712	8.278	.000
Giving directions to NS tourists*	23.662 770.756	2 1112	11.831 .693	17.069	.000
Discussion in class*	67.107 795.796	2 1112	33.553 .716	46.886	.000
Chatting with NNS friends*	46.622 819.267	2 1112	23.311 .737	31.640	.000
News broadcast#	64.291 1072.803	2 1475	32.146 .727	44.197	.000
Teaching model#	40.391 1010.998	2 1475	20.195 .685	29.464	.000
Business meeting#	7.293 1138.551	2 1475	3.646 .772	4.724	.009
Job interview#	18.272 1083.923	2 1475	9.136 .735	12.432	.000
Discussion in class#	7.122 1059.063	2 1475	3.561 .718	4.959	.007

One-way ANOVA results: Attitudes towards RP in contexts (Figure 8.13)

Contexts	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
News broadcast*	12.170 222.726	2 372	6.085 .599	10.164	.000
Teaching model*	12.244 260.572	2 372	6.122 .700	8.740	.000
Business meeting*	11.396 195.473	2 372	5.698 .525	10.844	.000
Job interview*	8.306 245.123	2 372	4.153 .659	6.303	.002
Giving directions to NS tourists*	9.112 211.144	2 372	4.556 .568	8.027	.000
Discussion in class*	22.754 248.979	2 372	11.377 .669	16.999	.000
Chatting with NNS friends*	16.928 290.821	2 372	8.464 .782	10.827	.000

One-way ANOVA results: Attitudes towards the HKE accent in contexts (Figure 8.14)

Contexts	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
News broadcast*	64.857 250.275	2 361	32.428 .693	46.775	.000
Teaching model*	42.522 238.871	2 361	21.261 .662	32.131	.000
Business meeting*	32.545 244.452	2 361	16.273 .677	24.031	.000
Job interview*	36.845 251.515	2 361	18.423 .697	26.442	.000
Giving directions to NS tourists*	6.376 278.907	2 361	3.188 .773	4.126	.017
Discussion in class*	5.438 256.571	2 361	2.719 .711	3.825	.023

Appendix 5.1: Culture-related activities recommended in the curriculum guide (CDC, 2002)

Target learners	Task name	Examples of culture-related activities
S1-2	Project learning: ‘charities and helping others’ (p.E6-E9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners watch videos to learn about how a couple of teenagers attempted to bring about changes in the lives of some disadvantaged people in Africa and India’ (p.E6) - Learners discuss and decide to do something to help some of the less fortunate children in China (p.E6) - Learners plan and organise a ‘Jumble Charity Sale’ to raise funds through activities in English (e.g. making announcements at morning assemblies, sending letters to parents and past students and commercial firms to request for donations of items for sale, making posters and pamphlets, designing and sending thank-you cards) (p.E6)
S1	Promoting the use of information technology for interactive English language learning: ‘Mother’s Day’ (p.E29-E31)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners read a story entitled ‘The Story of Mother’s Day’ on the Internet and complete a worksheet (p.E29) - Learners browse some websites with examples of Mother’s Day poems about Mother’s Day and design or look for e-cards from the internet to go with the poems (p.E30) - Learners imagine that they have a sister who is studying in the USA. They write an email message to her, telling her what they plan to buy for their mother, what they plan to do with their mother on Mother’s Day and why (p.E31)
S2	Making use of community resources and Making connections between formal and informal curricula (p.E38-E31)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners listen to stories about explorers who struggled to conquer the summit of Mount Everest and engage in discussions on (1) how difficulties were overcome, and (2) the different attitudes towards Mount Everest between Tibetans and Westerners (p.E39) - Learners make use of information collected at the exhibition and complete worksheets which ask for facts as well as personal views about the history of modern China (e.g. ‘What makes you proud of China? What are your hopes for China?’) (p.E41)
S1-3	Using imaginative and literary texts to develop creativity, critical thinking and cultural awareness: ‘Where go the boats?’ (p.E46-E48)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In groups, learners collect pictures and information about rivers in different parts of the world to find out the features of rivers and the activities near them (p.E46) - Learners discuss based on their understanding of rivers and the life and activities of the people living nearby (p.E46) - Learners read the poem, ‘Where Go the Boats?’ by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) (p.E47) - Learners compare the river described in the poem with one of the rivers they have discussed earlier and present the differences and similarities of the rivers to the class (p.E48) - Learners write four lines creatively on one of the rivers they came across earlier, based on the model of the first stanza, and present their poems with pictures. Their peers respond by giving reasons for their appreciation and preferences (p.E48)

Appendix 5.2 Tasks and topics in HKDSE examination paper 4 (speaking)

Sets	Tasks	Topics
1	Discussion of what to include in a report	Professional internships in Hong Kong
2	Discussion on the tradition of giving mooncakes	The tradition of giving mooncakes
3	Discussion of what to include in a presentation	Cosplay in Hong Kong
4	Discussion on organizing a Stephen Chow festival at school	Stephen Chow, the king of comedy
5	Discussion of what to include in an article for the school magazine	The usefulness of (smart) technological products
6	Discussion on the use of diaries by students	The use of diaries by students
7	Discussion of what to include in an essay for a class assignment	Cross-harbour swimming race in Hong Kong
8	Discussion on the pros and cons of going on a study tour	A one-month summer study tour to England
9	Discussion on organizing a welcoming event for new members of the Japanese Cookery Club	The Japanese Cookery Club
10	Discussion on a group project	The lack of space in Hong Kong
11	Discussion of whether to promote the 'Take a Brake' Low Carbon Action scheme at school	'Take a Brake' Low Carbon Action
12	Discussion of what to include in the presentation	3D movies in Hong Kong
13	Discussion of what to include in a letter to a local newspaper	The destruction of Hong Kong's heritage
14	Discussion on raising public awareness about the impact of economic development on the survival of the Chinese white dolphin	The impact of economic development on the survival of the Chinese white dolphin
15	Discussion on whether to teach good money management skills through cartoon	Teaching good money management skills by showing the <i>Cha-Ching Money Smart Kids</i> cartoon
16	Discussion on writing reviews of different restaurants	A project on restaurants in Hong Kong
17	Discussion on how popular reality TV shows are in Hong Kong	Popular reality TV shows in Hong Kong
18	Discussion on what to include in a blog	English lessons in Hong Kong
19	Discussion of whether home swapping is a good idea for a family vacation	Home swapping being a family vacation
20	Discussion of what to include in a project	Change changing trends of toys and games in Hong Kong
21	Discussion on choosing a career in a guidance course offered by the careers department of the school	Problems faced by young people when choosing a career
22	Discussion of what to include in a letter to the editor	Views about outdoor music festivals
23	Discussion of what to include in a project	Men seeking plastic surgery
24	Discussion of what to include in a presentation	Memory training

Appendix 5.3 Segmental features introduced in OE

Segmental features	Description	Examples
-ed endings	Pronouncing as /t/ after a voiceless consonant, e.g. /p/, /k/, /f/, /s/	stop <u>ped</u> , walk <u>ed</u> , laugh <u>ed</u> , miss <u>ed</u>
	Pronouncing as /d/ after a vowel or voiced consonant, e.g. /n/, /v/	explain <u>ed</u> , liv <u>ed</u> d <u>ied</u> , tri <u>ed</u>
	Pronouncing as /ɪd/ after /t/ or /d/	start <u>ed</u> , want <u>ed</u> , decid <u>ed</u> , end <u>ed</u>
-s endings	Pronouncing as /s/ for nouns & verbs ending in a voiceless consonant, except /s/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/	ghost <u>s</u> , firework <u>s</u>
	Pronouncing as /z/ for nouns & verbs ending in a voiced consonant, except /z/, /dʒ/	origin <u>s</u> , card <u>s</u> , carol <u>s</u>
	Pronouncing as /ɪz/ for nouns and verbs ending in /s/, /z/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /dʒ/	goddess <u>es</u> , priz <u>es</u> , witch <u>es</u> , wish <u>es</u> , orange <u>s</u>
Pronouncing /v/ and /w/	Your front teeth should touch your bottom lip to pronounce /v/.	/
	To make a /w/ sound, your lips should be more rounded.	/

Appendix 5.4 Suprasegmental features introduced in OE and LE

Features	Description	Examples	Source
Word stress	Stressed syllable	alien, <u>tentacles</u> , <u>produce</u> (n), <u>appearing</u> , <u>imaginary</u> , <u>incredible</u> , <u>bamboo</u> , kangaroo, <u>produce</u> (v), <u>puppet</u> , <u>puppeteer</u> , <u>comedy</u> , <u>comedian</u>	LE
		advantage, <u>product</u> , <u>promotion</u>	OE
	Unstressed or not pronounced syllable	different, interesting, laboratory, temperature	LE
Word linking	Pausing briefly after each 'thought group'	There are many things individuals can do, (pause) like switching off computers. (pause) Left on standby, (pause) computers still use energy. (pause) Not only is this a waste of electricity, (pause) it also leaves them open to hackers.	LE
	Word linking (when the second word begins with a vowel sound)	can <u>also</u> , problem <u>of</u> , for <u>example</u> , laws <u>about</u> , fuel <u>in cars</u> this <u>secret</u>	LE OE
Sentence stress	Stressing content words/ words that carry important or new information/ to show focus	- I <u>don't</u> believe in aliens. - I think it's good to have <u>some</u> musical performances, but we should have <u>other</u> types of performances too. - What about <u>poetry reading</u> ?	LE
Intonation: Meanings	Showing the speaker is certain: falling tone	- Mr Li holds a Guinness World <u>Record</u> . - The air <u>is</u> cleaner in Singapore.	LE
	Giving a command: falling intonation	- Stop <u>talking</u> .	LE
	Giving a warning: falling intonation	- Be <u>careful</u> .	LE
	Expressing disapproval or displeasure: falling intonation	- Her new hairdo looks <u>awful</u> . - Hong Kong's air quality is <u>poor</u> .	LE
	Making a request: rising intonation	- Will you help <u>me</u> ?	LE
	Seeking approval: rising intonation	- My presentation was <u>OK</u> ?	LE
Intonation: Feelings	Showing excitement/happiness: rising tone at the beginning and end of a statement	- <u>Really</u> ? - <u>That's</u> a good <u>idea</u> !	OE
	Showing disappointment	- <u>Really</u> ?	OE
	Showing boredom: monotone/pausing between the words	- Oh really?	OE

	Showing anger: falling tone	- What did you <u>say</u> ?	OE
	Expressing surprise: rising intonation	- You sewed that skirt <u>yourself</u> ! - Hong Kong's air quality is <u>poor</u> .	LE
Intonation: Statement	Voice going down at the end	- Nelson Mandela is a great <u>man</u> . He fought more barely for freedom than anyone I <u>know</u> . - I think it's good to have some musical performances, but we should have other types of performances <u>too</u> .	LE
Intonation: Wh-question	Voice going down at the end	- What's your <u>opinion</u> ? - Why should we nominate that <u>person</u> ? - What about poetry <u>reading</u> ?	LE
Intonation: Tag question	Asking for agreement (tag question): falling intonation	- The weather's good in winter, <u>isn't it</u> ? - Westminster isn't far away from the London Eye, <u>is it</u> ?	OE
	Asking for confirmation (tag question): rising tone	- There's a tube station near Trafalgar Square, <u>isn't there</u> ? - There isn't a discount, <u>is there</u> ?	OE
Intonation: Yes/no question	Voice going up at the end	- Do you <u>agree</u> ? - Can you think of anyone else to <u>nominate</u> ? - Are you going to make new <u>friends</u> ? - Will you do this before <u>Christmas</u> ?	LE OE

Appendix 5.5 Communicative strategies and sample phrases introduced in three junior textbooks

Sample phrases	Communicative strategies	Source		
		OE	AS	LE
Greeting		OE	AS	
Starting a conversation/beginning a discussion		OE	AS	LE
Expressing feelings		OE		
Talking about personal experiences		OE		
Expressing opinions		OE	AS	
Giving suggestions		OE	AS	
Talking about changes		OE		
Expressing surprise		OE		
Expressing anger and disappointment		OE		
Expressing feelings of being hurt		OE		
Achievements		OE		
Personal information		OE		
Suggesting amount			AS	
Like and dislike			AS	LE
Expressing information and ideas			AS	LE

	Describing costs and effects			LE
Communicative strategies	Taking turns	OE		LE
	Giving (counter) suggestions/recommendation	OE	AS	LE
	Speaking with volume	OE	AS	
	Encouraging contributions from others	OE		
	Asking for clarification	OE		LE
	Asking for repetition	OE		
	Making comments	OE		
	Speaking with an even pace	OE	AS	LE
	Speaking with pause	OE		
	Saying contractions	OE		
	Using stress to show focus	OE		
	Improvising	OE		
	Agreeing and disagreeing	OE	AS	LE
	Expressing compliments	OE		
	Using synonyms for variety	OE		
	Reporting what others have said	OE	AS	
	Expressing opinions with reasons	OE	AS	LE
	Encouraging others to participate	OE		
	Summing up discussion points	OE		
	Giving feedback	OE	AS	
Expressing thanks	OE	AS		
Using appropriate degrees of formality	OE		LE	
Keep the discussion on track		AS		
Expressing encouragement		AS		
Body language	Making eye contact	OE		LE
	Using facial expressions	OE		LE
	Using gestures	OE		LE
	Maintaining friendly body language	OE		
	Look at audience and smile		AS	
	Be polite		AS	

Appendix 5.6 Pronunciation of diphthongs in ESNSS

Diphthongs	Starting sound	Ending sound	Examples
/eɪ/	/e/	/ɪ/	Age, late
/aɪ/	/ɑː/		Buy, nice
/ɔɪ/	/ɔː/		Boy, toy
/ɪə/	/ɪ/	/ə/	Clear, year
/eə/	/e/		Air, where
/ʊə/	/ʊ/		Poor, tour
/əʊ/	/ə/	/ʊ/	Grow, phone
/aʊ/	/ɑː/		Loud, proud

Appendix 5.7 Common pronunciation errors highlighted in DSNSS

Segmental features	Examples
Commonly mispronounced words	addict, anxiety, arrange, campaign, career, chef, chief executives, child, children, choose, cosmetics, daughter, debt, diving, divorce, donor, evening, exhibition, festivals, games, injury, kettle, lack, Mong Kok, nephew, novel official perform, plant, present, relatives, respect, snack, soccer, spy, stomach, stranger, survey, trail, trend, unique, warm
Pronouncing final consonants such as /d/, /t/ and /s/	accident, attract, bad, build/built, called, dentist, effect, experience, eyes, food/foot, ghost, guess/guest, recent/ reason/ rent, resident, socks, spend/spent
Similar sounding words	bear/beer, career/carrier, cruel/cool, depreciation/depression, edge/age, fruit/foot, help/hell, host/horse, raise/rise, rapid/rabbit, snacks/snakes, strange/strong, terrorists/tourists, trail/trial
Pronouncing /n/, /r/ and /l/	fight/flight/fright, film/firm, four/fall, free/fee, lack/nack, light/night, name/lame, near/lear, net/let, price/pie, road/load, roll/row
Voiced and unvoiced consonants at the beginning of words	fan/van, fast/vase, ferry/very, few/view, leaf/leave, shoe/Sue, show/sew, there/dare, they/day, thin/fin, thought/fought, three/free, through/fool, throw/flow
Pronunciation of past simple ‘-ed’ ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - /t/ or /d/: landed, reported, ended - unvoiced consonant except /t/: faxed, walked - vowel or voiced consonant: fried, mentioned, aired, enjoyed

Appendix 5.8 Segmental features highlighted in LENS

Segmental features	Examples
Sound endings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - /d/ and /t/ (bird, cat) - /g/ and /k/ (dog, duck) - /b/ and /p/ (crab, sheep)
Consonant clusters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginning with /t/ (tree, twin, threat) - Containing /l/, /r/ or /w/ (slow, create, swim) - Containing /l/ at the end of a word (silk, twelve, valve)
Long/short vowel	list/marine, trap/part, lot/caught, hunt/food, put/fur

Appendix 5.9 Scenarios about international language use in LE

Scenarios of international language use	Examples
Travelling	<p>My visit to India</p> <p>Winning a trip to London</p> <p>Vincent Chan's trip in Osaka (Japan)</p> <p>Journal entry about a trip to Malaysia</p> <p>Planning two-day holiday to Tokyo (e.g. Mount Fuji, Harajuku, Palette Town, Ghibli Museum, Ueno Park, Sanrio Puroland, Ginza, Jiyugaoka Sweets Forest, Ice Cream City)</p> <p>Mona Lisa in Louvre Museum (France)</p> <p>An adventure tour in Canada</p> <p>Shopping in Macau (e.g. Grand Canal Shoppes, Senado Square)</p> <p>Shopping in Shenzhen: (e.g. Lo Wu Commercial City, Mix Mall, SEG Electronics Market)</p> <p>Brother travelling in Australia (e.g. Cairns, Darwin, Great Barrier Reef)</p>
Contact with friends/relatives	<p>An email from friend in Toronto</p> <p>Postcard about Singapore</p> <p>Conversation with friend in London</p> <p>Uncle in the US coming to HK</p> <p>Exchange students from UK</p> <p>Letter from your cousin in Canada</p> <p>Teenagers from around the world (e.g. Sydney, London, Tokyo, Johannesburg)</p> <p>Voicemail from your brother in Australia</p> <p>Interviewing Japanese students</p>

Appendix 5.10 Themes about issues and knowledge around the world in LE

Themes	Examples
Travelling	Flyer (Japan Holiday Ltd) and Blog with information about hotels, itinerary, tours, food, tourist spots
Festivals	(See Table 5.6; also in OE and AS)
Films	US/UK: Song of music, Transformers, Lion King, Cameron's Titanic, Pretty woman, Speed, X-men: The last Stand, The Perfect Storm, Nightmare on Elm Street, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Evita, Bruce Almighty
Celebrities	Barack Obama from the US, David Beckham from the UK, Li Na from China
Food	Taste of Taipei 'Sawdust Pudding' (Macau)
Extraordinary things	Ordinary or 'odd-inary': Brazil, Finland, China, New York, Jellyfish crop circle in England, Polar Bear (example in Canada)
Incredible people	Adventurer Jessica Watson from Sydney, Mark Zuckerberg from the US, Yao Ming in China, Bilaal Rajan from Toronto to South Africa, India, South America, China: Vera Wang, Lang Lang, Li Ning, the US: Michael Phelps, Stephen Hawking, Barack Obama, Bill Gates, Dr. Jonas Salk, UK: Rowan Atkinson, Russia: Aung San Suu Kyi, France: Alain Robert, HK: Karen Mok, NZ: Nick Vujicic
Environmental issues	Environment: Landfills and 'wastescrapers' in India Waste reduction in Taiwan
Jobs	Dolphin trainer, coffin maker, ice cream taster, dinosaur cleaner, doll doctor, Lego model maker? US: waterside tester, UK: Golf ball diver, HK: Performance artist; Lending a hand: build houses for earthquake victims, take care of babies at a home, spend an afternoon walking dogs, raise money by walking 100 km, HK (reaching out to help others)
Pop culture	US/UK: Song of music, Phantom of the Opera, Cats, Transformers, Lion King, Swan Lake, Zaia in Macau, Cameron's Titanic, Macbeth by William Shakespeare, House of Dancing Water in Macau, Edinburgh Festival Fringe , Hip hop dance in New York; Films: Pretty woman, Speed, X-men: The last Stand, The Perfect Storm, Nightmare on Elm Street, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Evita, Bruce Almighty, Mime in Ancient Greece, Stand-up comedy in US/UK, Opera, Circus performance, Puppet show, Ballroom dancing, recital
Places	Between Hawaii and California (the great pacific Garbage patch) Photo essay (US, Spain)

Appendix 6.1 Details of English enhancement measures

Morning assembly

The target school, like many secondary schools in Hong Kong, includes a morning assembly in the playground (or in the hall) as the first ‘class’ for students in that important announcements about recent events are made in either of the two official languages (Chinese and English). Although, quite understandably, information about school affairs or important logistic arrangements is usually not announced through the medium of English, the code-choice of English is indeed deliberately adopted on numerous occasions. For instance, a roughly five-minute session called ‘a word a day’ is included every day in the morning assembly, the purpose of which is to provide opportunities for senior form students to deliver a short English speech to introduce an English word or phrase to all students under a specific theme. On other occasions, class representatives, together with English teachers, class teachers or sometimes NESTs, give a talk or share their ideas in the assembly. The scripts of their speech are then uploaded to the school website. Notably most English teachers are prone to deliver their speech in English in their announcement to set a role model for the students.

Nevertheless, not all the students attend the morning assembly every day. Sometimes the morning assembly is replaced by a morning seminar session for specific forms which invites teachers to give a speech (mainly in Chinese) on a particular topic such as civil rights, time management and career planning. For some students (e.g. S3, S6 and S7), this period is often taken for a 20-30-minute quiz in preparation for the public examinations, the code choice of which depends on the subjects. Another essential arrangement that aims to increase students’ speaking and listening ability is the insertion of a ‘Morning Chat’ session in parallel to the morning assembly. As its name indicates, this morning session allows various groups of students to take part in a short chat with one of the three NESTs, who come from Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Morning reading period

The aim of including a morning reading period, for many secondary schools, is to encourage students to read more Chinese and English books and, furthermore, to develop a reading habit among students in their leisure time. At junior secondary level, LACC in this school has developed sets of reading comprehension worksheets that correspond to the content knowledge in various non-language subjects such as Integrated Science (IS), Computer and Information Technology (CIT) and Geography. Senior form students, however, retain the ordinary reading practice of reading Chinese and English books or newspapers.

One key measure to consolidate students’ learning in EMI non-language subjects at the junior level is the so-called ‘Wednesday Dictation’, which takes place every Wednesday during the morning reading period. With the belief that recitation and memorisation of vocabulary and sentences would enhance

students' language proficiency, weekly dictation is carried out for subjects involving English teaching elements (e.g. Geography, History, IS, CIT). In every Wednesday morning, junior form students are required to recite a number of sentences (or vocabulary) related to the content in the EMI content-area subjects, which is synchronically being taught during the week. Although Chinese is mainly the medium of instruction in these morning reading periods, some ELT teachers in fact insist on speaking English with their students.

Recess and lunch time

During recess and lunch time, teachers are also encouraged to talk with students using English so as to create an English-speaking environment. In a few contexts, students might feel the necessity to speak in English, such as when communicating with NESTs, exchange students from overseas and simply requested by their teachers. Sometimes, students of different levels stay in the library, English room and English Garden to enjoy various kinds of English-related activities such as reading, scrabble competition and lunchtime movie shows. Especially during western festivals such as Halloween, Thanks Giving Day and Christmas, additional English activities are held during the recess, lunch time and after school. Like many other secondary schools, 'English speaking day' is organised weekly (i.e. Tuesday in the present school), in which students are encouraged to talk to teachers or student ambassadors in English. In some months, English weeks are held.

Occasionally, individual students or particular classes in junior forms might be required to attend supplementary classes (e.g. remedial or enhancement classes) during lunch time (and also after school), especially before the examination. This practice has become regular for senior secondary students, who basically need to attend extra classes of different core or elective subjects nearly every day because teachers have realised inadequate lesson time for both subject knowledge teaching and examination skills practice. Compulsory supplementary lessons are also included during school holidays, such as Chinese New Year and Easter holiday. In these supplementary classes, the teachers might feel that the MOI requirement is less strict and, therefore, they might use mainly Cantonese to explain (or repeat important ideas about) knowledge, theories and examination skills.

Class teacher's period

The 15-minute class teacher's period is the last (official) session every day when students and their class teacher meet to cope with class affairs. For effective communication, their mother-tongue is often the code choice unless in the presence of an NEST, who is also one of their class teachers. In other cases, English teachers (as students' class teacher) might deliberately speak in English in the class to increase students' exposure to English. Sometimes, especially before the school examinations, short uniform quizzes of different subjects also take place in the class teacher's period. Again, the language choice is highly associated with the subjects.

Appendix 6.2 Details of EMI arrangements for teaching

EMI arrangements at junior secondary level

To examine the EMI arrangement of the ‘finely tuned’ subjects, it is vital to first understand the class allocation policy the school proposes to cater for the different academic needs of the students - a major challenge faced by this kind of ‘medium’ or ‘high’ academic level former CMI schools with band 1, band 2 and band 3 students. At the junior level, all classes are divided into three categories on the basis of students’ school academic results. For clear distinction, we shall name these categories as ‘category A’, ‘category B’ and ‘category C’ in which students in ‘category A’ generally have a higher overall performance in school examinations whereas students in ‘category C’ are perceived as ‘weaker’ students academically. Classes in each of these categories, even before the implementation of the new MOI policy, follow three curricula of different levels in almost all subjects.

According to EDB’s fine-tuning guidance, schools could choose to (1) allocate EMI lesson time across a number of different subjects, (2) to adopt full EMI in a maximum of two subjects or (3) to adopt full CMI/EMI in all subjects (if they fulfil certain criteria). The selected school mainly opts for the second approach by adopting EMI teaching fully in two subjects, namely IS and CIT. According to the teachers, there are two reasons: (1) these two subjects are closely associated with subjects at the senior level which are also taught in English and (2) vocabulary in these two subjects are, in the school administrators’ view, more commonly found in one’s daily life and would presumably be more useful in students’ future life whether or not they would choose the relevant subjects as electives at senior secondary level. Given that full implementation of EMI learning and teaching are particularly challenging for students with lower academic ability, students in ‘category C’ study a relatively simpler (or shorter) syllabus in these two subjects and, in the school examination, the test papers contain questions of two levels carrying different weightings.

Apart from these two designated EMI subjects, differing proportions of English elements are also included in various class categories in other non-language subjects including Mathematics, Geography and History. According to the school documents, this so-called inclusion of English elements indeed has no significant difference from the arrangement of the fine-tuning core subjects (i.e. I.S. and C.I.T) as it also involves the use of English materials as well as EMI teaching. Officially, these EMI proportions imply the proportions of English content in the subject syllabi and teachers should adopt EMI when teaching this content. In practice, however, we shall see in the later sections that this partial implementation of EMI teaching is in fact quite different from that in the former two subjects where teachers seem to follow the MOI policy more strictly. Interestingly, this practice of constant insertion of English elements (e.g. including English vocabulary items) in non-language subjects has been a practical measure to enhance students’ English ability in this school (and, crucially, a sound promotional strategy) even when they were classified as a CMI school before fine-tuning.

To be specific, the school-based policy allows ‘category A’ classes, the elite students in this school (some of whom are band 1 students), to adopt 50% of EMI teaching in Mathematics, Geography and History (but it does not require any EMI teaching in other content subjects). As for ‘category B’ students, 30% of the syllabi is allocated to EMI teaching while for the less able students, i.e. ‘category C’, only 10% of English elements is included. With respect to the teaching content, English teaching materials are used for certain chapters or parts of a chapter for students in ‘category A’ and ‘category B’ and for students in ‘category C’ usually some English vocabulary items are included. Subsequently in school examinations, two sets of papers are designed to assess students’ learning outcomes in different classes and they differ only in language but not in content. The basic principle is that subject content taught in English is to be assessed in English in the examination papers. In addition, ‘category A’ and ‘category B’ students answer the same examination paper including 30% of English (i.e. 30% of the total score) whereas the paper for ‘category C’ students comprises 10% of English. Based on this class allocation arrangement, the present study only focuses on two junior secondary classes, i.e. S1 and S2, from ‘category B’ and ‘category A’ respectively because they are the major stakeholders in the school-based MOI arrangement. Figure A6.1 summarises the proportion of EMI teaching adopted in each subject in the three categories proposed in the school-based MOI policy.

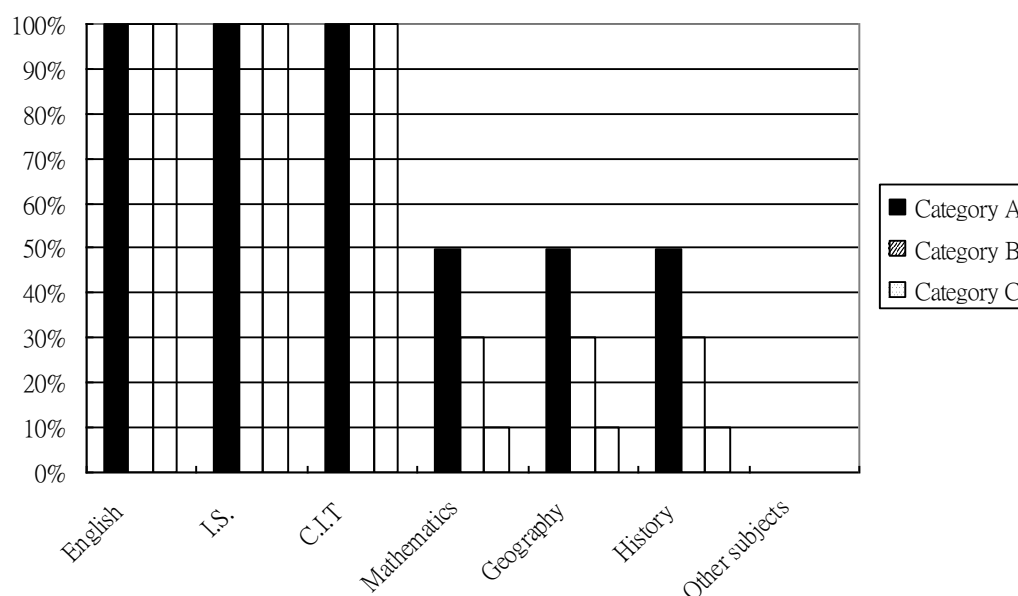


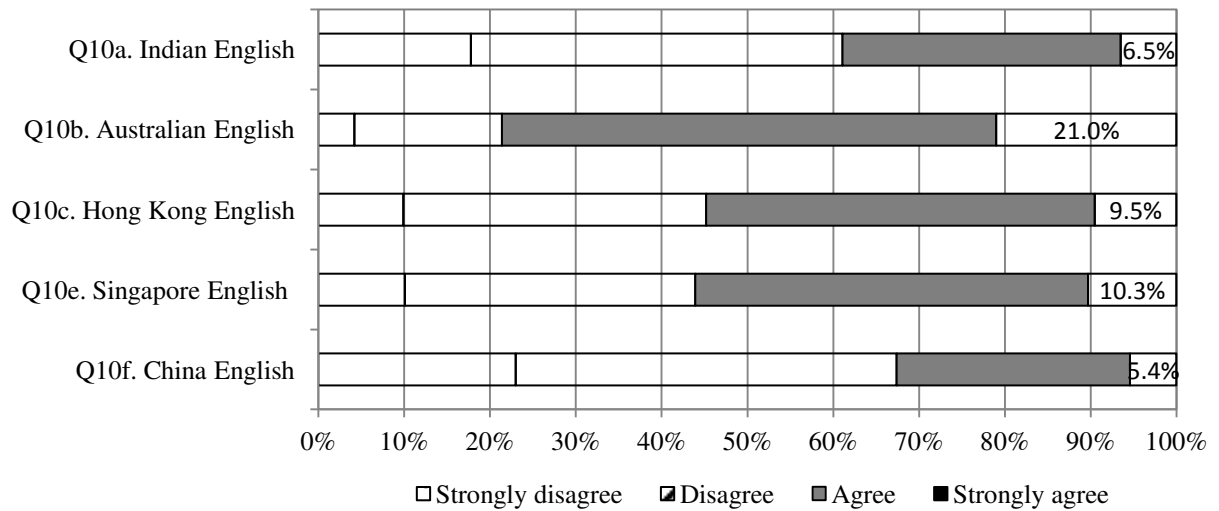
Figure A6.1 Proportion of EMI teaching in each subject at junior secondary level (S1-2) under the school-based policy

EMI arrangements at senior secondary level

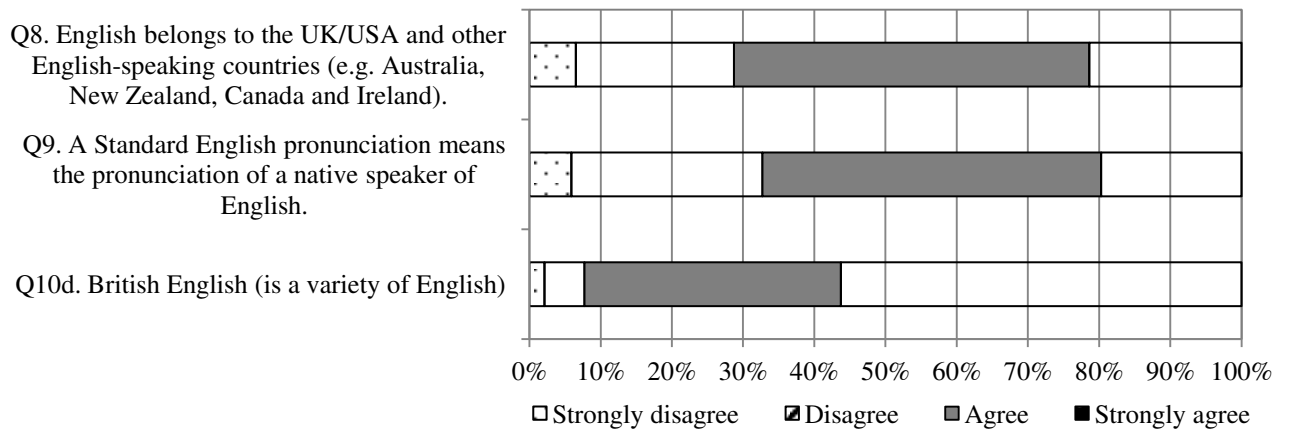
At senior secondary level, which does not fall within the ambit of the fine-tuning policy, the language of the electives is closely related to the fine-tuning subjects (i.e. IS. and CIT) at the junior level. Among the four core subjects in the senior secondary curriculum (i.e. English, Chinese, Mathematics

and Liberal Studies), Mathematics is the only non-language subject taught in English for the elite class but it is a CMI subject in other classes. As for non-core subjects, 5 out of 14 subjects, viz. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Information and Communication Technology (ITC) and Business, Accounting and Financial Studies (BAFS) are EMI subjects. Unlike junior form students who attend almost all lessons together, senior form students only sit for the selected electives (and also the core subjects) and they might self-study in the library when there is no class. Nonetheless, according to the teachers, senior secondary students sometimes may choose to or are recommended by teachers to opt out of some electives or switch to studying the Chinese version of the EMI subjects in the middle of the academic year, which possibly results in a classroom consisting of both CMI and EMI students. In a practical sense, these students might be judged to be less capable of studying the subject in English and in turn might achieve better results by attending the Chinese version of the public examinations. Under such circumstances, subject teachers might often switch to mainly mother-tongue teaching, in which sometimes code-mixing/switching occurs as it is necessary for the (especially less able) CMI learners (see also Low & Lu, 2006). It is noted that the selected S4 class in the present study involved students who tended to have elected the aforementioned EMI subjects.

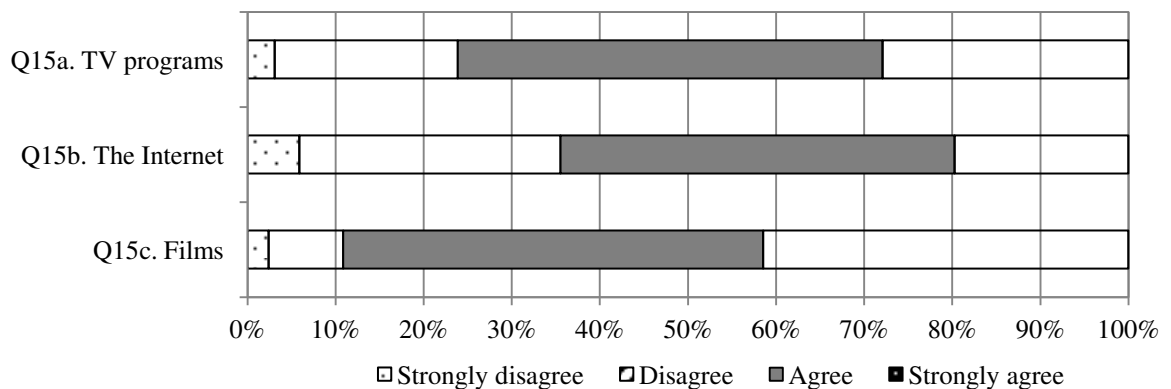
Appendix 7.1 Recognition of ‘non-standard’ English varieties (factor 1)



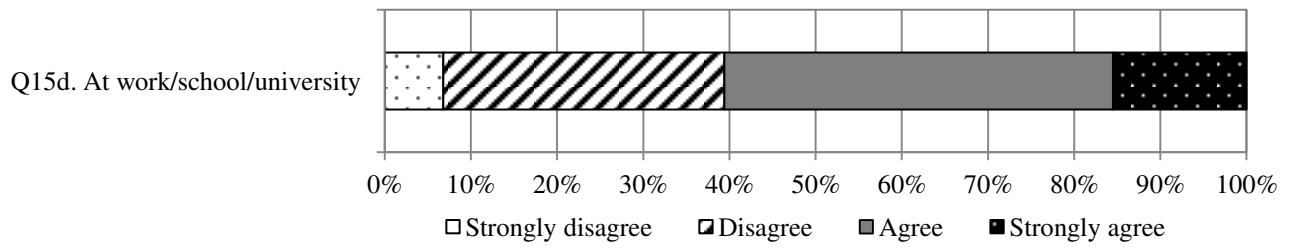
Appendix 7.2: The legitimacy of NS varieties (factor 2)



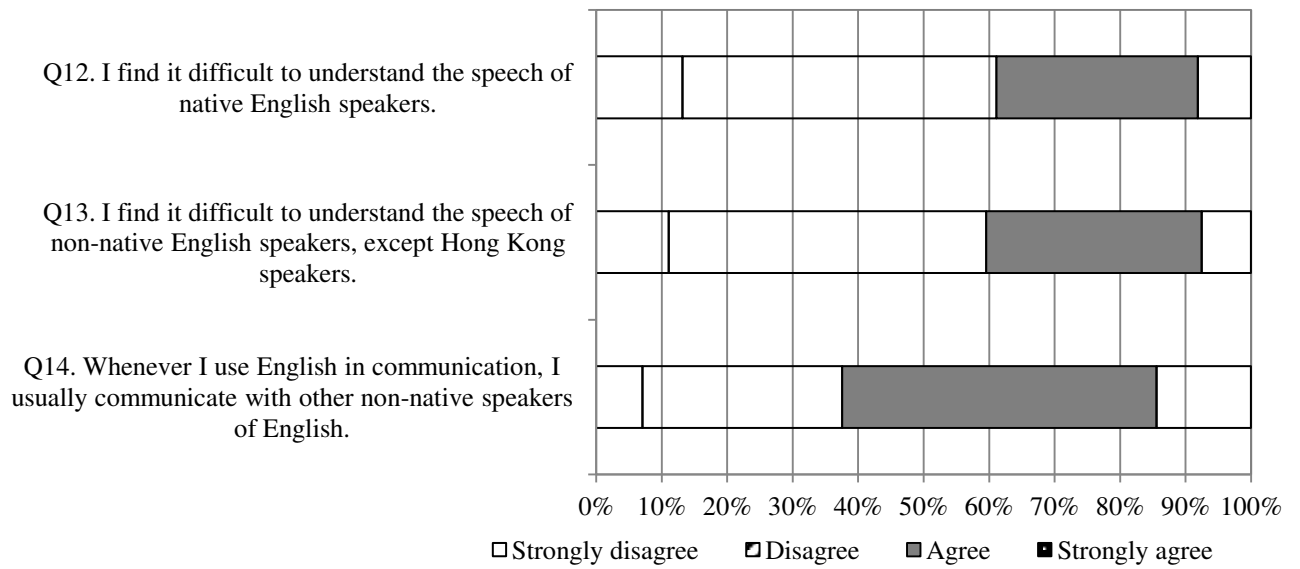
Appendix 7.3: Exposure to NS accents in multi-media (factor 3)



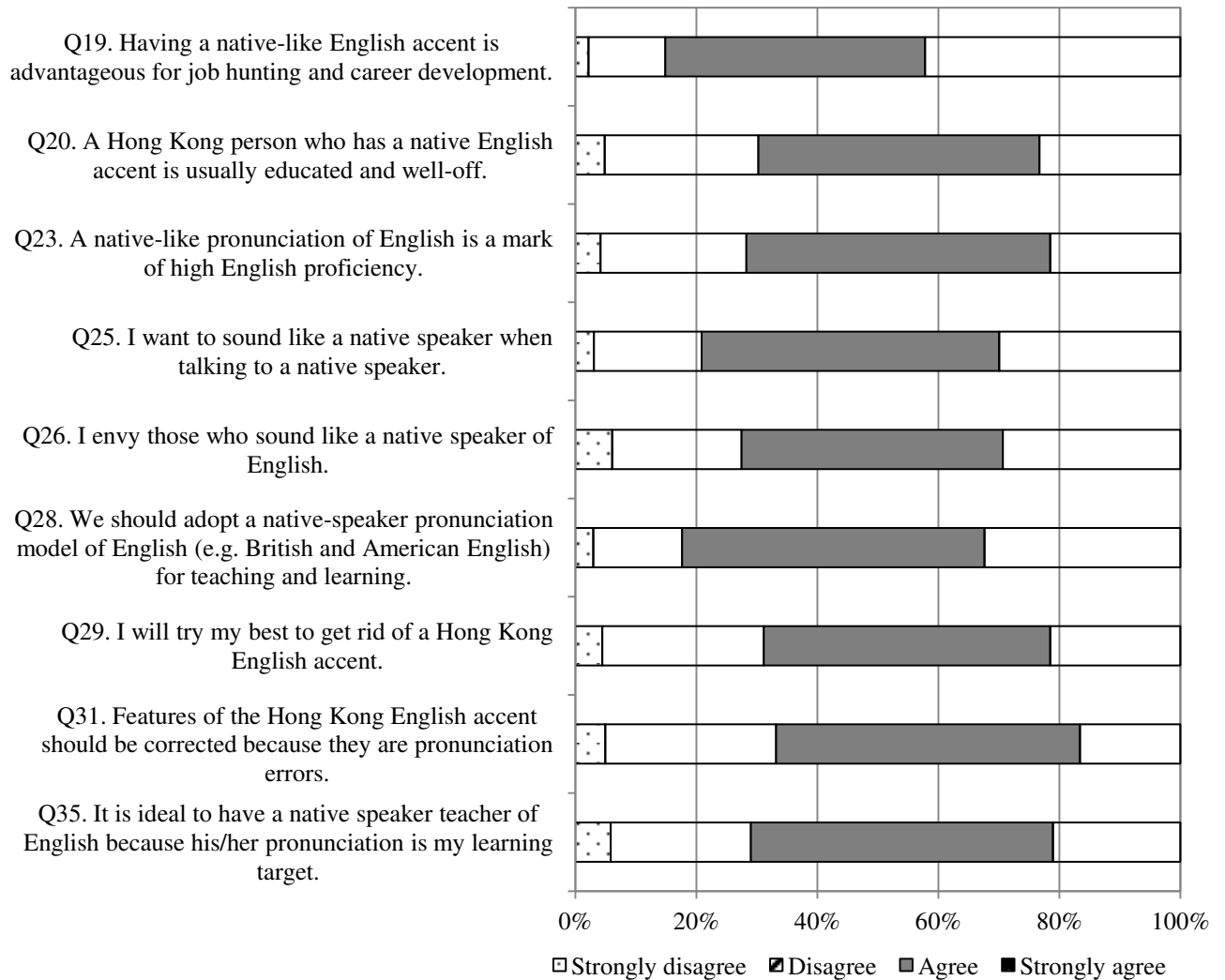
Appendix 7.4 Exposure to NS accents in place of work/study (factor 4)



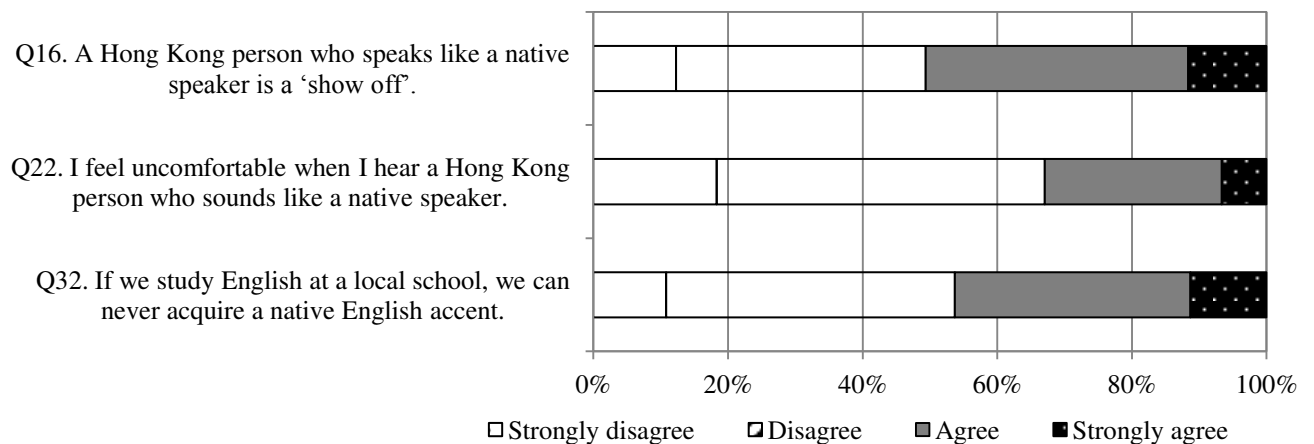
Appendix 7.5 Communicating with NSs/NNSs (factor 5)



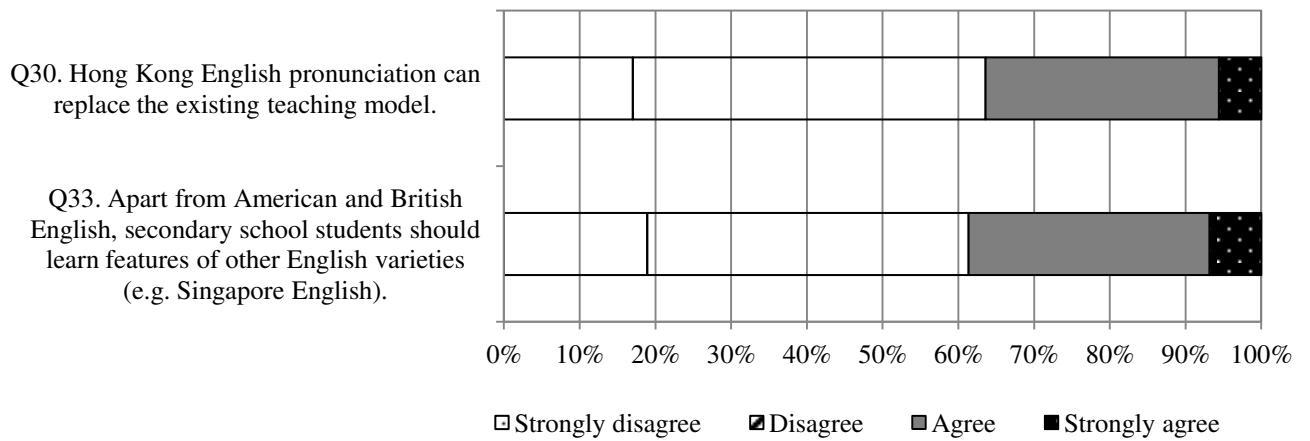
Appendix 7.6 Preference for NS accent (factor 6)



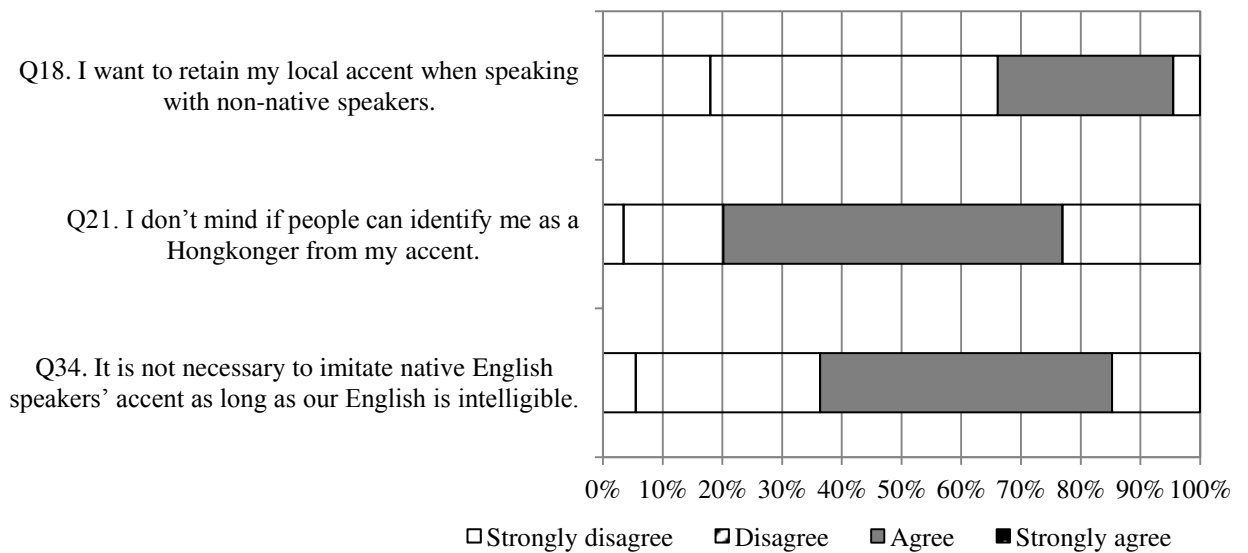
Appendix 7.7 Hong Kong people speaking an NS accent (factor 7)



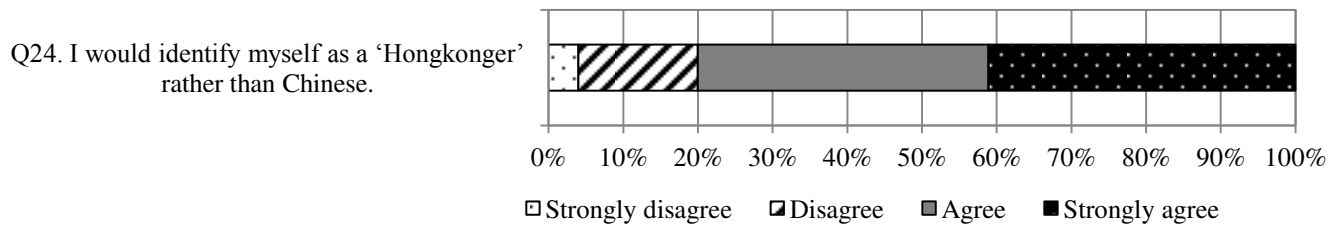
Appendix 7.8 Perception of learning English (factor 8)



Appendix 7.9 Speaking a local accent (factor 9)



Appendix 7.10 Hong Kong Identity (factor 10)



Appendix 9.1 Use of English at work by the professionals

Written English	Identity codes	Number	Spoken English	Identity codes	Number
Emails	PF1, PM2, PM3, PF4, PF6, PF7, PM9, PF10, PF11, PF12, PF16, PM17, PM18	13	Face-to-face interaction with customers	PF1, PM2, PM3, PF10, PF11, PF12, PM13, PM15, PF16	9
Documents	PM3, PF4, PM5, PF6, PF7, PF8, PM9, PF10, PF11, PM18	10	Face-to-face interactions with colleagues or bosses	PM3, PF4, PM5, PF6, PF8, PF11, PM13	7
Reports	PF6, PF11, PM17	3	Telephoning	PM3, PF4, PM5, PF7, PM9, PF11, PF12, PF16	8
Articles/books	PF1, PM2, PM14	3	Video conferences	PM3, PF4, PM5, PF6, PF12	5
Promotional materials	PM9, PM12	2	Interviews	PM3, PF7, PF8, PF12, PM15	5
Program writing	PM3, PM18	2	Presentations	PF6, PF10, PF11, PF12	4
Whatsapp	PM5, PM18	2	Meetings	PF1, PF6, PF16	3
SMS	PF10, PM18	2	Seminars/conferences	PF1, PM2, SF14	3
Letters	PF7	1	Casual chat with colleagues	PF6, PM2	2
Memos	PM18	1	(Conducting) questionnaire survey	PF7	1
Websites	PM9	1			
Manuals	PM18	1			
(Completing) questionnaires	PF7	1			

Appendix 9.2 Use of English in leisure time by the professionals

Written English	Identity codes	Number	Spoken English	Identity codes	Number
Proofreading sister's homework	PF8	1	TV programs	PM3, PM9, PM17	3
Social media	PF8	1	Talking with domestic helpers	PF8, PM13, PM17	3
Newspaper	PM9	1	Talking with family members/relatives	PM13, PF16	2
Webpage	PM9	1	Casual chat with friends	PF8	1
Computer games	PM14	1	Films	PM9	1
Manuel	PM14	1	Talking to foreigners on the street	PM9	1
			Travelling	PF7	1
			Computer games	PM14	1

Appendix 9.3 Exposure to NS vis-à-vis NNS by the professionals

	Identity codes	Number
NS > NNS	PF7, PM3, PF4, PM9, PF10, PF11 (internal communication), PF1, PM2, PM13	9
NNS > NS	PF5, PF11 (external communication), PF16	3
Not sure/not mentioned	PF6, PF8, PF12, PM14, PM15, PM17, PM18	7

Appendix 9.4 Perceived origin of interlocutors by the professionals

NS	Identity codes	Number	NNS	Identity codes	Number
Britain	PF1, PF7, PM3, PF4, PF8, PF11, PF12, PM14	8	India/Pakistan	PF4, PM5, PF6, PM9, PF11, PF12, PM14, PF16	8
Australia	PF1, PM3, PF11, PF12	4	Japan	PF7, PF11, PM14, PM15	4
'ABC'	PM9, PF10, PF12, PM13	4	Hong Kong	PF7, PF8, PM12, PM13	4
Canada	PF4, PF7, PM15	3	Singapore	PM3, PF11, PF12	3
(NS countries)	PPF6, PM13, PF16	3	The Philippines	PF11, PM15, PF16	3
America	PF7, PF12	2	Mainland China	PF8, PF11, PM13	3
Scotland	PF12	1	Taiwan	PM3, PF11, PF16	3
Ireland	PM15	1	Asia	PM3, PF11, PF12	3
			Europe	PF12, PM14, PF16	3
			Korea	PF11, PM14	2
			Bangladesh	PF7, PF11	2
			Nepal	PF11, PM15	2
			Switzerland	PF4, PM13	2
			Germany	PM15, PF16	2
			Brazil	PM2, PF16	2
			Croatia	PF12, PF16	2
			Africa	PM3, PF16	2
			Middle East	PF12, PF16	2
			Malaysia	PF11	1
			Vietnam	PF10	1
			Thailand	PF11	1
			Luxemburg	PF16	1
			Spain	PF8	1
			France	PF10, PF12	1
			Italy	PM2	1
			The Netherlands	PM2	1
			Sweden	PM14	1
			Russia	PF16	1
			Saudi Arabia	PF16	1
			South America	PF12	1

Appendix 9.5 Exposure to accents by the professionals (additional cases)

PF4 (senior staff in fund investment firm)

PF4 highlighted that they needed to contact the personnel in banks worldwide mainly involving foreigners from Britain, Canada and India. Her boss was an Indian who had been educated in Britain since kindergarten and, hence, s/he was perceived by the interviewee as not having a different accent from the British. Interestingly, she also regarded her clients in Switzerland as NSs, having acknowledged that many of them were multilingual speakers (who according to PF4 ‘speak 3-4 languages’).

PM5 (senior staff in diamond company)

Working in an Indian diamond company, the boss of PM5 was also an Indian who had studied overseas for a short time but had retained his/her Indian accent. PM5 was also exposed to other English accents (by his Hong Kong and mainland Chinese colleagues) during his work.

PF6 (accountant)

An Indian was also reported to be present in the workplace experience of PF6, who suggested that the content of their conversation had been extended from work-related issues to social ones gradually (e.g. talking about their holiday plans). She then explained that Indians were hired in their company because ‘their salary is low and their English is good’. In her company, she recognised that the CFO was from overseas but she was uncertain about his nationality.

PF7 (secretary)

PF7 suggested that ‘they (the clients) were mainly from Britain, America and Canada because the head office of company is also there’ and that the proportion of these foreign clients to Chinese was ‘seven to three’ (PF7). She later worked in another company with the same position, yet her clients were mainly Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese. PF7 also recalled her experience of taking a part time job as a questionnaire survey conductor at the airport, where she interviewed people from other countries such as Bangladesh and Japan.

PM9 (financial consultant)

PM9 sometimes encountered ‘ABCs’ (generally meaning English-speaking Chinese) and local Indian/Pakistani clients and English-speaking domestic helpers (usually Filipino or Indonesian in Hong Kong) on the phone. In his company, he suggested that a few of his ‘ABC’ colleagues (who grew up in Australia and had returned to Hong Kong) were specifically responsible for English-speaking clients.

PF8 (researcher)

The use of ELF seems to be more typical in academia involving a variety of English speakers worldwide. Though the interviewed researcher (PF8) suggested that her boss was from Britain, she also spoke English with colleagues from France and Bangladesh as well as NNS interviewees from China and Hong Kong when she interviewed candidates for recruitment.

Appendix 9.6 Challenges facing the professionals in English communication (supplementary comments)

PM9

Difficulties: NNS accents

Commenting on the accents of NNS English varieties, PM9 revealed that, in his university studies, he had problems particularly in understanding the speech of scholars from the mainland but not from Hong Kong or America, whose English speech was ‘clearer’:

PM9: English of the professors was very difficult to understand in the Physics department. I didn’t understand what they were talking about [...] They had a heavy accent but you can barely understand what they said. Two or three mainland professors were like this. There were also many local professors in the Physics department.

PF10

Difficulties: NS vis-à-vis NNS accents affecting other people’s impression

The situational difference between interactions with NSs and NNSs was discussed by PF10, who claimed that she would alter her English pronunciation with different interlocutors, i.e. sounding like an NS when talking to NSs but avoid it when talking with Hong Kong people as they might think it was a ‘show off’:

PF10: You will sometimes speak with NSs with a different intonation or rhythm because you would want to sound like an NS. However, when you are facing an NNS, it highly depends on who the interlocutor is. For example, my manager doesn’t like Hong Kong people sounding like an NS. S/he thinks that it is a kind of showing off because s/he is not that good at English. So it’s like showing off if you speak with him in this way. S/he won’t like it. I would tend to avoid doing so.

PM14

Difficulties: NNS accents, NNSs' lack of fluency & low English proficiency

PM14 pointed out that the degree of difficulty in understanding the speech of English speakers depended on their English proficiency, which, as he described, was mainly a matter of vocabulary and fluency as he tended to understand the speakers' 'strange' accent unless their proficiency was low. He stressed that 'fluency' and using the 'right terms' were most important in spoken English. The following two excerpts recorded how PM14 evaluated English spoken by people in Switzerland and Italy respectively:

PM14 (talking with the Swiss): The Swiss didn't mainly speak English. So they were unable to express something they wanted to express. Sometimes, we didn't understand what they were trying to express. [R: Was it difficult to understand their English?] It can be understood. English is the lingua franca. That's the only way to communication. However, the English proficiency of older people was lower. But generally speaking, their English standard was quite high.

PM14 (talking with the Italian): Their English proficiency is much lower in Italy. [R: Any example?] Very often, when you asked them in English, they replied to you in Italian. So they didn't really speak English. Their English proficiency was lower but you could still understand. The English proficiency of the Swiss was higher.

PF16

Difficulties: Telephoning, NNS accents, NNSs' low English proficiency

Same as PF4, PM5 and PF12, PF16 highlighted that telephoning was more difficult than face-to-face communication in the kind of ELF situations she encountered as 'body language' was not applicable. Based on her experience, she again suggested some strategies she adopted when dealing with communicative problems such as 'speaking more slowly', 'asking for clarification' and 'wide guessing':

PF16: First, you would speak more slowly. You might talk about what had been mentioned first, asking them what they had talked about previously and whether they were talking about a specific issue. You made sure whether you were referring to the same issue first. Basically, you traced back the topics which have been discussed and found out if they have changed the topic that you completely didn't understand [...] If you completely didn't understand what they were saying. You could guess widely.

Are you talking about this? Are you talking about advertising? Are you talking about the display of the shop? Are you talking about problems with the products?

In fact, PF16 had quite a lot of experience in international communication and it could be traced back to her overseas study in the US since his secondary education in Hong Kong. At that time, her major problem was speaking rather than listening as people 'would deliberately speak more slowly and clearly' to accommodate her. Among people she encountered, she recorded that she faced difficulties understanding English speakers coming from countries such as France, Italy and Belgium because they were, in her view, unable to 'correct' their strong English accent even after studying in the US for one year. Interestingly, she claimed that despite her failure in communicating with some foreign English speakers, it did not limit the development of their friendship even if they did not talk. She suggested she sometimes imitated their mother-tongue for better communication:

PF16: Quite a large group of them (Korean) was born and grew up there but I don't know why there were so many. I don't quite understand. Others were basically American. I haven't contacted with many other people... also some other exchange students. They either completely couldn't speak English or could speak fluent English. I remember well that there were people from Germany and Norway. The Norwegian spoke English very well. However, even after one year of staying in the US, I still didn't understand Englishes of people whose mother tongue was French or came from Italy and Belgium. That was one whole year. After one entire year, I still found it very difficult to understand them [...] They could have corrected their accent. Their accent was so strong that I couldn't understand. Even if I was watching the shape of their mouth, I was unable to understand [R: How did you communicate with them then?] I didn't communicate with them. We didn't communicate using the language. We would dance, play music, have barbeque or go swimming. Even if you couldn't communicate using language, it would hinder the development of your friendship.

In contrast, she stated that those who learnt English from scratch had developed better English and, at the same time, she also realised that she had naturally altered her own way of speaking English. She claimed that she did not understand why some of them could not have 'corrected' their accent:

PF16: On the contrary, the people learnt much better if they have known nothing about English previously. In fact, I was wondering why I was unable to communicate with the Italian and Belgian after one year. They didn't speak very good English but after one year, their English, their English was still not so good. Maybe they have learnt much in terms of grammar and amount of vocabulary. Still they couldn't have

corrected their accent [...] I don't feel that they were particularly unwilling to or didn't put effort on learning English. Still they couldn't have corrected it [R: So you think the accent cannot be...] However, this is not the case for me. I corrected much of my pronunciation but I didn't deliberately correct it. When you heard how people speak, you naturally would follow them. I was thinking why they wouldn't have...

PM17

Difficulties: Cultural differences

This issue of cultural differences was also mentioned by PM17, who had returned from studying in Australia. He stated that though 'there were difficulties at the beginning', 'after living for several years, there would be no problem'. He highlighted that 'it's never a problem of the language' but 'problems about culture' (e.g. 'drinking at Friday night')

Appendix 10.1 The choice a pronunciation model by the professionals (supplementary comments)

PM3

- NS accents an advantage for job interviews	- NS interlocutors focusing on understanding rather than linguistic accuracy
- NS accents as high fluency and a high English proficiency	
- NS accents being attainable	- NSs not necessarily speaking English linguistic accurately

PM3 chose option (c) as his English learning target based on his experience of communicating with his UK bosses at workplace, though he noted that the pronunciation of most Hong Kong people was ‘wrong’ including him:

PM3: Maybe as I have communicated with the ‘real British’ bosses, what was important to them was that whether the others can understand such as when joking. Apart from work, I would also go out with them in ‘happy hours’, drinking and chatting. We would also ask them whether our English was bad or very bad that we couldn’t communicate. They often said that as long as it can be understood, it didn’t matter.

He agreed with the advantage of sounding like an NS because he believed that the interviewers ‘would think that this person speaks English quite fluently’. He also suggested that ‘if others hear you speaking English like an NS, people would think that your English is very good in societies like Hong Kong’ and that ‘your English is a lot better.’ However, in his job interview experience, the British interviewer tended to centre on their ability to communicate using English:

PM3: Actually, I just think that they looked at whether you can basically speak English. In the first company, they asked me explicitly whether I had the confidence to communicate with their heads because that was a British invested company, a very British company. The entire interview was conducted in English without any Chinese.

He added that he did not follow any specific variety of English but ‘one that sounded natural’ to him. Interestingly, reflecting on his working experience involving some British colleagues, he was aware that the English speech of an NS might not be always linguistically accurate (e.g. PM3: ‘I have encountered some British - their English sentences were all wrong’). In the school context, however, it appeared that PM3 preferred the local teachers of English because ‘they would make it easier for the students to understand’ as ‘they know the problems of the Hong Kong people and where their weaknesses are’ while the native English teachers might benefit their learning of ‘pronunciation’, ‘vocabulary’ and ‘the different cultures which would influence their style of speaking English’ (e.g. Australian, British, American). In response to the attainability of NS English in the Hong Kong context,

PM3 exemplified its possibility with one of his friends, who graduated from a highly-ranked secondary school and was highly motivated. He suggested that his friend attained a near NS proficiency via frequently chatting with NSs as well as listening to and watching the British programs.

PF4 & PM5

- Declining NS English standard in Hong Kong

PF4 discussed the attainability of this NS target in the local settings, in which she had a different expectation between English education in the past and at present. She argued that an NS target ‘must be achievable’ in the past as she recalled her experience of listening to English speakers in the older generations (‘many lawyers’, ‘retired senior officials’) whose English was described as ‘beautiful’, ‘traditional’ and ‘very accurate British pronunciation’, which she felt ‘very comfortable to listen to’. In contrast, she had the impression nowadays that ‘NS English is deteriorating in Hong Kong’ and that people tended to ‘speak completely in the Hong Kong way’ and people (e.g. ‘the boss’) could easily identify their Chinese identity. In other words, this might have depicted numerous underlying thoughts by PF4. Affectively, it seems to have shown her aspiration to NS English whereas, from a practical viewpoint, she perceived HKE as unintelligible to NSs, which somehow pointed to her perceived interlocutors as also being NSs when speaking English. PF4 continued to explain the apparent declining English standard in Hong Kong in association with the lower quality of teachers over generations, some of whom were considered ‘not deserving to be a teacher’. She also highlighted that the majority of teachers (perhaps in the better schools) or the government senior officials in Hong Kong’s colonial period were NSs and English was more frequently used during this period.

PF4’s perception of a declining English standard echoes what Evans (2009) describes the ‘complaint tradition’ in Hong Kong that can be traced back to the 1850s and it also occurs in other outer circle contexts (e.g. India, Singapore) (see also Bolton, 2008). This claim of a declining standard, however, was contrary to the census data which has recorded a steadily increasing percentages of population who has claimed to be able to speak English (from 9.7% in 1961 to 44.7% in 2006) (Lee & Collins, 2006; Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008; Evans, 2009; Lau, 2009). Presumably, this has been due largely to the expansion of mass education, especially compulsory schooling since the 1970s (Bolton, 2002; Evans, 2000, 2006, 2009). From this perspective, the government officers with very high English proficiency described by PF4 were likely to be the small proportion of elites in the colonial era having a better education. In the same interview, we shall see that the claim about declining English proficiency in Hong Kong was challenged by PM5 (another senior personnel), who argued that English education in the past was indeed not as good as that at present and that people nowadays should have had a greater English exposure along with the increasingly wealthier community and technological advancement:

PM5: There are two things regarding the English proficiency in the past and at present. The first thing is that we spoke British English in the past while British and

American English are both acceptable now. The reason is simply that people have become richer. Watching a film in the cinema or on a rented DVD is very common. You can also encounter English online. People actually use English more frequently nowadays, comparing with people in the past. Why was English of some people in the past better? It is because they speak a pure British accent. There are both advantages and disadvantages. A disadvantage is that they cannot accept the American pronunciation. The second thing is that just now you said that English of people in the past was better while people nowadays are poorer in English. There could be two sides of it. I think that the English proficiency in the school PF4 studied in the past was quite high. The English proficiency in my primary and secondary school was very low. If you evaluate the teachers in my former primary and secondary school now, I think they can only marginally teach kindergarten or primary 1 or 2 [...] I think it has two extremes. On one side their English is very good. For example, the children of some of my friends have been already studying in international schools since kindergarten. Moreover, many EMI kindergartens have hired some English foreign teachers. In the past, this cannot be done. In the past, if you teacher is good at English, you will be good at English. If your teacher's English is not good, your English would be worse.

PM9

- | | |
|--|--|
| - NS accents as an advantage for job hunting | - NS English corresponding to high fluency and English proficiency |
| - NS accents as more intelligible | |
| - NSs as the interlocutors when speaking English | - NESTs being necessary in pronunciation teaching |

PM9 claimed that in spoken English it was most vital to maintain 'clarity in pronunciation' and that 'other people could understand what you say'. Owing to the learners' uncertain occupational needs in the future, PM9 suggested that achieving an NS standard was most valid (PM9: 'It is inevitable that you would communicate with the NSs. You certainly want to achieve the standard of an NS'). In addition, he apparently associated 'sounding like an NS' (i.e. choice (a) of the interview question) with 'high fluency in English' which 'indicates you have got used to using English and having been encountering people speaking English' (PM9). Particularly in the Hong Kong context, he further suggested the advantage of people who had studied overseas during job hunting:

PM9: I think there must be some benefits for job hunting for those who have studied overseas and speak with an NS accent. If I am from the HR department or I have to hire a person, I would certainly want to hire somebody who can speak fluent English if the jobs require him/her to face the foreigners.

When commenting on HKE, he suggested that it mainly referred to the accent (PM9: ‘Just like you are speaking one word after one word’) and it was only suitable for ‘daily’, ‘unprofessional’ use of English, despite its apparent intelligibility at least to the NS speakers (PM9: ‘I think at least most of the people can understand you. At least the NSs are able to understand our English’). His response below seemingly confirmed the VGT results in which there was contextual variation in Hong Kong people’s attitudes towards NS vis-à-vis NNS accents (see chapter 8):

PM9: It depends on what you use English for. If it is for daily, normal, unprofessional, use of English such as asking for directions, I think this is okay but your target is certainly to sound like an NS. You never know whether your occupation will need it.

Probably because of this NS target, PM9 recommended that NESTs were necessary in school teaching: ‘There should be some (local) teachers who focus on the examination whereas the NS teachers should be responsible for the daily activities, communication or some other relaxing events’ (PM9). Unlike the responses of PF8, PM9 also regarded a native speaker of Putonghua as his learning target: ‘I think when learning a language, your target is certainly to be similar to the native people’s.’ He further pointed out that he did not need to speak Putonghua with a Hong Kong accent to express his cultural identity because he could simply say ‘I come from Hong Kong’.

PF11

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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Speaking an NS accent being advantageous for employment- Low English proficiency of local teachers- An learning target not necessarily 100% achievable |
|--|

PF11 equated NS English with ‘better English’ (PF11: ‘I want to speak better English so I want to sound like an NS’) and suggested ‘by adding into some accents, people would think that you are more prestigious’. More specifically, she exemplified the advantages of having studied overseas and sounding like an NS by referring to ‘a trend’ of how employees were selected in her airline company:

PF11: Let’s take an example. There are two positions. One is ground check-in. You face the customers every day at the front desk. The other one is a flight attendant. You also face the customers every day. They speak more than they write. Certainly, they should have a certain academic level. And then you need to speak English well. There are two people who are both university graduates. Maybe one speaks English very fluently, has studied overseas or sounds like an NS female, ABC (America/America-born Chinese). Another one is a Hong Kong university graduate. Both are very beautiful. I would probably choose the one who speaks English well.

In the middle of the discussion, PF11 shifted the topic to the declining English standard in Hong Kong. Both as a working professional (in the airline company) and an (part-time) English teacher at the

university, she complained that the students she encountered spoke some kind of HKE, which, in her view, was more a problem of grammar than pronunciation and potentially would cause communication breakdowns (e.g. ‘Their sentences are broken in meanings’). As recommendations, she argued that English-medium education should be gradually implemented as early as in primary education (PF11: ‘starting with 50% EMI teaching’) so as to cater for their future language needs. Based on her working and teaching experience, she argued that choice (b) (i.e. an educated Hong Kong speaker of English) was not acceptable as the English target if it referred to ‘the pronunciation of English teachers’, who were likely to be the university students she previously encountered. Although she acknowledged that target (a) might not ‘100%’ achievable, she believed that learners should ‘work towards it’, just like one of her locally-educated friends who had successfully acquired a native-like English proficiency by working hard:

PF11: Not 100% but you can work towards it. You can achieve it on your own. I have a friend who was born and brought up in Hong Kong. She has this target. She practised much in front of the mirror when she was small. She achieved this through practice. Now, after she has graduated from university, she works as an NEST teaching English at school. The advertisement was to hire an NS. Though she is not a NEST but a local born Hong Kong person, because of her accent...

PF12

- Declining NS English standard in Hong Kong

As PF4 suggested, PF12 also claimed that there was a declining English standard among the interviewed university graduates she met over 30 years. One indicator she suggested was that many of her recent interviewees tended to have taken ‘syllabus A’ of the English language examination, which was an easier version of the school-exit public examination (as compared to ‘syllabus B’). Based on her observation, the English proficiency of the interviewees varied among the diverse universities in Hong Kong. Though some of them ‘spoke English very fluently’, she said that all of them spoke with a HKE accent. She imputed this perceived lowering English proficiency of the interviewees to the divisive EMI/CMI language policy since the handover, where the majority of the junior secondary students studied content-area subjects in Chinese rather than English (see Evans, 2013; also chapter 6):

PF12: We discovered that their English was quite bad, particularly writing. As I discussed with my friends later, it is higher possible that this group of people were products of the government’s CMI schools under the EMI/CMI language policy. In my era, there was not a distinction between EMI and CMI schools. We were probably forced to study in English. Our English proficiency would not be that low. I am not sure whether this is related but I thought it looks valid because this group of graduates is in that range of age.

PM17 & PM18

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|---|--|
| - NSs as the origin of English | - Difficulties in acquiring NS accents |
| - NS accents as an advantage for upward social mobility | - Personal goal differing from assessment criteria |
| - NS as the presumed interlocutors | (- Putonghua being only a tool of communication) |
| - NS accent as the ultimate goal | |

The position of setting an NS standard as the ultimate target was indeed endorsed by numerous participants, despite their slightly differing rationales. In the interview involving two professionals (PM17, PM18), PM18 argued that there was a priority in learning English, ‘being able to speak English’ was the primary goal whereas ‘acquiring the (NS) accent’ was the next important step. To be able to speak English, he stressed that his ‘Filipino helper’ at home did offer some help. Alternatively, PM17 argued that ‘studying overseas’ was necessary as what he did in his previous education. During the interview, these two participants clearly possessed differing perceptions of learning English. PM18 focused on the functional use of English for communication (e.g. ‘to be able to communicate with an NS’) and regarded the acquisition of NS accents as a ‘high level’ which is not necessary but PM17 tended to perceive NS English as having ‘an advantage for advancing to the high social class’. In addition, PM17 argued that speaking like an NS could ensure that the interlocutors felt ‘more comfortable’ so as to establish rapport (and ‘easy to make friends’), indicting his underlying perception that NSs were the main interlocutors. Despite PM18’s emphasis on communication in learning a language, he also acknowledged that speaking NS English was indeed advantageous for job application from the employer’s perspective:

PM18: It gives you a lot more advantages for some jobs. In the simplest sense, the interviewers are westerners. In Hong Kong, most of the bosses would hire the westerners. They are western-oriented or whatever. Let’s put it in another way. If I am to hire an employee one day, I would hire someone who speaks pure Cantonese. If you talk to me with a Guangzhou or mainland Chinese accent, I’d rather someone who speaks pure Cantonese because we can communicate. At least they understand what I say [...] For job hunting, I think it is still better to train your accent as they don’t care what you are talking about. That’s really true that in the interviews, people don’t care what you are talking about, especially English. As both of us are not foreigners, what are they examining? They are just listening to your ‘vowels’... is that right?

Nevertheless, PM18 highlighted that many people failed to acquire an NS proficiency for two main factors, the first being the learners’ ‘mother-tongue influence’, the second being their ‘living environment’, which was deemed to be ‘more important than the first factor’. Quite interestingly, he pinpointed that ‘it’s easier to speak the American accent but it’s easier to understand the British accent’ (PM18).

Turning to the pedagogical perspective, PM18 proposed that ‘vowels and final sounds (i.e. consonant) could be taught separately’ and ‘there should be more focus on vowels than on the final sounds’. Even though he argued that his personal learning target was ‘to be practical’, he admitted that the assessment of pronunciation ‘must be more picky’ in that the articulation of final consonants such as the ‘k’ (e.g. think) and ‘s’ sounds as well as ‘intonation’ could be used as ‘a distinction between grades A and A++’. This seems to have indicated that NS English was prioritised higher than other non-standard varieties of English. In this regard, his view apparently did not significantly differ from that of PM17:

PM17: For an ultimate target, you can only assess against a standard achieved by someone whose English is the best. In terms of assessment, if the student can reach a level of practicality, there is no problem. S/he can get a ‘C’. However, somebody can override this level. That’s the ultimate target.

The slightly different views between PM17 and PM18 lay in the requirement for pronunciation at different education levels in relation to its (un)attainability and effectiveness in communication. In their discussion, while PM18 argued that ‘not everyone can reach the most difficult level’ in secondary education as ‘pronunciation of vowels’ was regarded as ‘very advanced or an additional thing’, PM17 suggested that an ultimate target needed to ‘reflect the societal needs’, that is ‘an NS standard’. In the later part of the discussion, PM18 further supplemented that the teaching of communication skills should be prioritised higher than the NS accent because of its greater importance and easiness of mastering. PM17, on the contrary, argued that pronunciation was the basis of a language, the teaching and learning of which could not be avoided.

PM18: It’s easier to teach [communication skills] than accents. In my personal opinion, you should correct your accent after you are good at communication. In fact, communication is different from the ability to express. Your Chinese can also be poor even if you speak Cantonese.

PM17: The problem is that if you learn a language, it is impossible that you don’t learn the pronunciation. If you learn a language, pronunciation is the basis. They cannot be separated.

As revealed below, their discussion on assessing learners’ spoken English ability has developed into a very interesting debate, where the two interviewees seemed to hold positions that resemble the SLA and ELF paradigms respectively. PM17 tended to accord with the former arguing that NS accuracy was most crucial (also PM17: ‘the origin of English is an NS of English’) whereas PM18 insisted that being able to communicate with people worldwide was the goal of learning a language and, hence, the requirement for pronunciation could be relaxed. The following records PM18’s awareness of ELF communication where NS pronunciation might become less relevant:

PM18: I think English is used as an international language. It's meaningless to correct the pronunciation at the end. When people ask you for directions, people understand if I say 'turn left'. I can say 'here, there, go, go, right, right, left, left'. They must be able to understand even if I miss all the final sounds. I have achieved the goal of an international language [...] Though they might feel more comfortable when listening (to NS English), I still have had helped him... In terms of accents, if I say 'turn left, you go there' all without the final sounds... I can express myself and they understand, then I have completed the purpose of an international language [...] For example, you are facing a mainland Chinese. His/her pronunciation is not accurate. Should I just ignore him/her? On the contrary, maybe my pronunciation is very accurate but it's too accurate for him/her to understand. What's the meaning? I have rolled my tongue (like an NS) but s/he doesn't understand.

As for the question of a Putonghua target, both interviewees agreed that speaking a 'pure' Putonghua accent would be an advantage. However, PM18 maintained that 'the most important thing is to be able to communicate' but regarded a native Putonghua accent as an additional 'skill set'. One advantage he mentioned was to be able to communicate with 'Northern Chinese people' if he acquired the native Putonghua accent (including the 'er' sound in the Beijing accent). The most salient divergence in their position was apparently that PM17 tended to believe that an NS-like target was needed rather than other 'biased criteria' but PM18 emphasised the communicative function of a language. Nonetheless, both of them acknowledged the limited resources to ensure all learners acquired a native-like Putonghua proficiency. Comparing the functionality of native-like English and Putonghua, PM18 argued that 'English is currently more important than Putonghua' but PM17 tended to believe that they were equally important and might vary in different situations. Unlike NS English which the participants usually thought was useful to job interviews, the case of Putonghua was deemed to be different. Particularly, PM18 suggested that speaking like a native speaker of Putonghua might not be necessary in the interview as the interviewers would focus on the 'presentation skills' rather than pronunciation (PM18: 'If they interview you in Putonghua, they just want to see if you are a good salesperson, that is your presentation skills').

Appendix 11.1 Students' use of English in education contexts (focus groups)

Context	Identity code (with description)	Number
Lessons	1G1 (other subjects), 1G3, 2G1 (IS, Maths), 2G2 (IS, History, CIT, Geography), 3G3, 3G4 (IS), 3G6, 4G1, 4G2, 5G1, 5G2, 5G3, 5G4, 5G6 (BAFS, Maths), 5G8	15
Talking with NESTs	1G1, 2G2 (also the NEST's wife: Thai), 3G6, 3G7, 4G1, 5G2, 5G3, 5G8, 5G10	9
Talking with exchange students	2G1, 3G7, 4G2 (Danish), 5G1 (Norwegian), 5G2, 5G3 (Danish, Norwegian), 5G6 (Norwegian), 5G8 (Norwegian)	8
English tutorials	1G1, 1G3, 2G3, 4G1, 5G4, 5G7	6
Activities on English speaking day	1G1, 2G3, 3G4	3
English Builder (Online English exercise required by teachers)	3G4, 3G7	2
English Camp	1G2	1
Interviews for school admission	1G3	1
Drama	2G3 (school)	1
Doing revision	3G1 (home)	1
Examination	5G8	1

Appendix 11.2 Students' use of English outside school (focus groups)

Context	Identity code (with description)	Number
The internet	1G1 (Skype: German, British), 2G1 (Wikipedia, Facebook), 2G2 (Youtube; Taiwanese/Korean English), 3G3 (MSN), 4G1 (Surfing the internet, e.g. Google), 5G1, 5G2, 5G3 (Japanese), 5G4 (Skype, Raidcall: American, Taiwanese), 5G10 ('English Times' - a computer software)	10
Talking with Domestic helper	1G1 (Filipino, Indonesian), 1G3 (Filipino), 2G3 (Filipino), 3G1 (India/Indonesia), 4G1 (Filipino/Indian), 4G2 (Filipino), 5G2 (Filipino), 5G5, 5G10 (Filipino)	9
Directing foreigners	2G3 (in Shanghai), 3G1, 3G3 (Korean, Japanese), 3G7 (American), 4G1, 4G2 (in Bus/Training station), 5G3 (in bus station), 5G4, 5G9 (black American)	9
Talking with relatives	1G1 (cousins from America), 1G3 (parents), 3G3 (parents, aunts), 3G4 (from Canada), 3G6 (parents, relatives in Canada/Britain), 4G1 (brother), 5G2 (father who is a teacher), 5G10 (aunts)	8
Song	2G1 (e.g. Lady Gaga), 2G2 (e.g. when singing), 3G1 (e.g. AKB28), 3G3, 3G5, 3G7 (Korean), 4G1, 5G2	8
Overseas travelling	1G1 (Japan, Germany, America, Australia), 1G3 (Japan, the UK, Thailand), 2G2 (America, Japan, overseas McDonald's), 2G3 (Japan, Australia, Shanghai), 3G1 (Japan, Thailand, America), 4G1 (France), 5G4 (Korea, Japan, Singapore,	7

	Thailand)	
English TV programs/drama	2G2, 3G5, 3G7, 4G1 (Dr. Who, Modern Home, Bones), 4G2 (news report), 5G1 (news report), 5G7	7
Films	3G3, 4G1 (Twilight, 127 hours; Three Idiots (India)), 4G2, 5G1 (Indian films), 5G2 (e.g. Inception), 5G4 (Singaporean TV drama: 'I not stupid'), 5G10	7
Talking with foreigners	1G3, 4G1 (local American Missioners; in the public library; Pakistani, Indian, South Asian in HK), 5G2 (in the library), 5G4	4
Overseas exchange programs	1G1 (Scotland); 5G6 (voluntary work in Bangladesh); 5G7 (summer courses in Canada, Japan, Korea); 5G8 (competition; meeting Thai/Indonesian)	4
Talking with neighbours	3G1, 3G3 (American), 5G5 (Japanese, French)	3
Chatting with friends	2G1 (American), 3G6 (British), 5G7 (phone/online)	3
Restaurant	1G3 (Parents running a French restaurant), 2G2 (with the waiter), 3G5 (in Starbucks)	3
Reading books	2G3, 5G7, 5G10	3
Playing computer games	3G3 (online), 3G5 ('Draw Something'), 5G4 (American), 5G6, 5G7, 5G9 ('Life Craft')	3
Reading newspaper	5G1, 5G6	2
Reading English on the street	2G2	1
Talking to kindergarten teachers	3G5 (when picking up cousins)	1
Conducting survey	4G1 (at peak: British, Australian, American)	1
Announcement at train station	4G2	1
Idols	4G2 (Japanese)	1
Listening to Foreigners on street	5G3 (American in MTR)	1
Animations	5G4 (Japanese)	1
Whatsapp	5G7	1
Receipt	5G10	1

Table 11.3 Students' perceived future use of English (focus group)

Context	Identity code (with description)	Number
Work	1G2 (e.g. American Banks), 1G3 (meeting customers), 2G1, 2G2 (accountants; meeting customers; reception), 2G3, 3G2, 3G4 (communicating with customers; salesperson, McDonald (at peak)), 3G6 (doing business), 3G7 (bosses/colleagues/customers), 4G1 (Central people: meeting; doing business; with boss; in hotel), 4G2 (typewriting, with boss), 5G1 (doing business; meeting foreigner customers), 5G2, 5G3 (selling things, meeting customers), 5G4 (meeting customers), 5G5 (e.g. writing emails), 5G6 (meeting customers, e.g. McDonald's), 5G7 (documents; meeting westerners), 5G8, 5G10 (as secretary - writing minutes; servicing jobs; with customers/boss)	20
Communicate with people/Foreigners	1G1, 1G2, 2G1, 2G3, 3G1, 3G2, 3G6, 4G1, 5G1 (socialising), 5G2 (friends), 5G3 (socialising), 5G4 (e.g. with local people), 5G7 (socialising)	13
Travelling	1G2, 1G3 (travelling for work in 'Europe'), 2G3, 3G1, 3G4, 3G6, 3G7, 4G2, 5G4, 5G6, 5G8	11
Study	1G1 (university), 1G2, 3G3 (overseas study in Canada), 4G1 (university), 4G2 (law), 5G2 (university; overseas study in Britain), 5G4 (university), 5G6 (university), 5G7 (overseas study), 5G9 (university)	10
Interviews	1G3 (Job), 2G1, 2G2, 2G3 (Job), 3G1 (Job), 4G1 (Job interview with foreigners), 5G1, 5G7 (job interview)	8
Job hunting	3G2, 3G3, 5G6	3
Marrying a foreigner/meeting a partner	4G2, 5G1, 5G2	3
Reading	5G3, 5G9 (documents)	2
Examination	3G1, 5G6	2
Directing foreigners	2G1	1
Writing programs	2G3(programs/apps)	1
Doing investigations	2G3	1
Buying things	2G3	1
Multimedia	2G3	1
Talking with friends	3G3	1
Talking with relatives	3G3 (from Canada)	1
Social Media	3G3 (MSN)	1

Doing projects	3G6	1
Written reports	3G6	1
Writing application letters	4G2	1
Playing computer games	5G5	1
Reading newspaper	5G5	1
Talking with domestic helper	5G8	1
Exchange programs	5G8	1
Presentations	5G9	1

Appendix 12.1 ELT teachers' use of English outside classroom

Written English	Identity codes	Number	Spoken English	Identity codes	Number
Newspapers	ET7, ET11	2	Travelling	ET2 (Italy), ET9 (UK), ET11, ET16	4
The internet	ET7, ET1	2	Talking with NESTs	ET1, ET6, ET9, ET16	4
Fictions	ET6	1	Staying in an NS country	ET1 (UK), ET3 (Australia), ET6 (Australia)	3
Magazines	ET9	1	Exchange program	ET1, ET2 (Australia, New Zealand), ET16	3
			Attending lectures	ET1, ET11, ET12	3
			Talking with university classmates	ET9 (from German), ET12 (Japanese), ET16	3
			Talking with friends	ET1, ET3, ET6	2
			Talking with relatives	ET7 (daughter), ET9 (nephew)	2
			Films	ET6, ET16	2
			Church gathering	ET2, ET16 (America-born Chinese)	2
			TV programs	ET3	1

Appendix 12.2 Subject teachers' use of English outside classroom

Written English	Identity codes	Number	Spoken English	Identity codes	Number
Emails	ST4, ST5	2	Attending lectures	ST8 (lecturers from Pakistan), ST14 (Singapore, Germany), ST15 (Hong Kong, foreigners), ST13 (Malaysia, Scotland, mainland China)	4
Newspapers	ST5	1	Talking with NESTs	ST4, ST5 (from Britain), ST13	3
Letters	ST5	1	University presentations	ST4, ST14	2
Books	ST5	1	Job interviews	ST5	1
Examination	ST5	1	Films	ST5	1
Documents	ST14	1	TV programs	ST13	1
			Talking to students' parents	ST5 (Pakistan, Middle East)	1
			Talking with university classmates	ST13	1
			Overseas study	ST10 (US)	1

Appendix 12.3 Teachers' pedagogical foci of teaching spoken English (additional cases)

ET12

While most ELT teachers tended to discuss (in detail) their pedagogical foci when teaching spoken English as well as pronunciation, ET12 (a primary school teacher) centred on the (un)attainability of an NS standard in the Hong Kong context. That is to say, despite the perceived importance of teaching the 'correct pronunciation', she admitted that the local teachers inevitably spoke a kind of 'HKE' (ET12: 'I think though pronunciation is very important, we only speak HKE in Hong Kong'). Therefore, she argued that students should have been only required to attain a certain proficiency so as to ensure that the NSs would understand: 'I think you don't need to achieve the NS standard. You can be nearly... at least you need to speak with a certain (English) standard. When the NSs listen to you, they would say it's okay' (ET12). She further argued that especially in the 'business sector, it would be acceptable as long as others could understand you' (ET12).

ET1

As another primary ELT teacher, ET1 recognised the value of NS English in local society as it was perceived to be 'purest' and 'superior'. She suggested that it is 'best' to achieve an NS-like proficiency while it 'would already be very good' if one could convey their meaning. In her school, she lamented that the English proficiency of other ELT teachers was 'not very good', particularly regarding their grammar and pronunciation: 'I think they don't speak very well and some of their grammar foundation is not so good. For some extreme cases, their grammar is very bad [...] They don't teach phonics accurately' (ET1). According to her observation, there was a clear distance between the English proficiency of teachers of the older and younger generations, both of whom had not achieved an NS proficiency:

ET1: For some of them, I have the feeling that they should not have taught English. But some of their English is good: the younger generation. English of the older generation is worse. The younger generations who have passed LPAT (Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers) would be better but I don't think their English is extremely good. They haven't reached the highest standard. Maybe my definition of a high proficiency is that you sound like an NS.

Notwithstanding her rather negative evaluation of the teachers in her school, she in fact acknowledged the advantages and disadvantages of both the local ELT teachers and NESTs (ET1: 'It's best that you can be taught by different teachers, both the local teachers and NESTs'). Based on her own personal experience, 'the foreigners tended to focus on the daily-life use of English whereas the local teachers tended to teach grammar and strategies' (ET1).

ST5 & ST14

In the interviews with the following two subject teachers (ST5, ST14), although Cantonese rather than English was the medium of instruction in their present teaching of content-area subjects, their perceptions of spoken English learning and language target are discussed for a comparison. Probably because English played a less important role in her daily life, ST5 believed that it was not necessary to imitate NSs' accents if there was no problem in communication, even though she acknowledged that it sounds more professional:

ST5: I think as long as you can speak English, why do you have to 'copy' other's accent? I also understand that it sounds more professional if you speak with a British/American accent. There is a feeling of being more professional. However, is it really necessary? I don't think I want to pursue this much. A language is for communication. As long as others can understand, that is fine. There isn't any problem as long as we both understand each other.

As mentioned in section 12.2 about the teachers' daily exposure to English, it is noted that ST14 occasionally encountered parents from regions such as Pakistan and the middle East. In this ELF situation, speaking an NS accent might not be particularly helpful to ensure mutual understanding. Possibly for this reason, the preference of ST14 for her English learning target mainly concerned the issue of attainability. Although she thought that sounding like an NS would give people the impression that 'your ability to learn a language is higher', this goal was deemed to be 'difficult'. She therefore wanted to pursue a more 'realistic' target, namely an educated form of English spoken by the local people (e.g. that of an English teacher). In terms of examination, however, she suggested that 'it is not acceptable that you have a strong Cantonese accent' (ST14). Towards the end of the interview, ST14 stated that the introduction of NESTs could benefit students' learning of the NS culture: 'They can bring in their culture because learning a language is also learning other's culture' (ST14). This perhaps again indicates the teachers' rather narrow perception of regarding the NS culture as the target culture when learning a language but neglecting the needs for intercultural communication in the global setting.

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