Proceedings

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Compiled and published by the Chartered Institute of Linguists Hong Kong Society, School of Humanities and Languages of the Caritas Institute of Higher Education, the Department of English Language and Literature of Hong Kong Shue Yan University, School of Education and Languages of the Open University of Hong Kong, School of General Education and Languages, Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, and Division of Languages and General Studies, Hong Kong College of Technology.

ISBN: 978-988-77932-2-9

Preface

We are very pleased to publish the e-*Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Linguistics and Language Studies* (ICLLS 2019). The Conference aims to promote studies in language and linguistics. It serves as an international forum for researchers, scholars, educators, practitioners, postgraduate students and experts in relevant fields to exchange ideas, research results and good practices. It will also provide an opportunity for building academic networks and for exploring possibilities of research collaboration between institutions at both regional and international levels.

ICLLS 2019 addresses a diversity of key issues in linguistics and language studies. Papers cover the following areas:

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We would like to thank all authors for their contributions. We are also very grateful to members of the Programme Committee of ICLLS 2019 for their diligent work in reviewing all submissions.

Editors
Emily Ge, Patrick Lee, K C Li, Catherine Wong
June 2019

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(Papers arranged alphabetically by name of first author)

The Vietnamese Tones Variation in Closed Syllable of the Viet Kieu in Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand

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Abstract. Nakhon Phanom Province of Thailand was the gateway for the leaders of the Vietnam Restoration League and was also one of provinces in Thailand that the Vietnamese Nationalist Group used as an overseas military base to fight against France. The Vietnamese community in Nakhon Phanom is the largest immigrant group with Vietnamese heritage in Thailand, commonly referred to as the 'Viet Kieu'. Although this portion of the Vietnamese diaspora can speak Thai, they still mostly use Vietnamese in their community. This ethnic diversity also has an impact on the diversity of language, especially for tonal languages, in which tones determine meaning, as in both Thai and Vietnamese languages. This paper aims to analyze the variation in Vietnamese tones and tendency of tone changes by four generations of the Viet Kieu in Nakhon Phanom. The 30 word lists of closed syllables by eight informants from four generations between 20 to 90 years old. The Praat program was used to conduct an acoustic analysis of the phonetic characteristics. It was found that age and residence influenced the tonal contour, pitch range and voice quality of Vietnamese tones: the sắc (high-rising tone) has varied to mid/high-rising tone; the nặng (low-dropping creaky tone) has varied to high-falling with hardly/lightly creaky tone in the third and fourth generations. The results clearly showed the tendency of tone changes of sắc and nặng in closed syllables in Vietnamese were gradually varied by tonal simplification, language interference and regional variety.

Keywords: Language Interference, Thai, tones, variation, Vietnamese

1. Introduction

Language variation is an important part of sociolinguistics, to the extent that it requires variation in social factors. Language variation can vary from one place to another, from one social group to another, and from one situation to another. In other words, more than two forms of a language, for example in terms of words, sounds or grammatical constructions, can be used in place of each other but still retain the main meaning. The main factors which influence the variations in language use are social factors namely: gender, age, education, habitat, social class, occupation or language context.

This paper aims to study the variation of Vietnamese tones by Vietnamese people of Thai descent, commonly referred to the by Vietnamese who live outside of Vietnam as the 'Viet Kieu'. The study area is Muang district in Nakhon Phanom province of Thailand. This paper is qualitative research, focusing on F0 (Fundamental frequency) and voice quality. The F0 was measured because it is one of the key acoustic correlates that represent the tonal contour and pitch range. This study is based on age factor and habitat. Age is a social factor which shows changes in the overall image of Vietnamese tones, and this can be an indication of how these tones might change in the future. Habitat is another social factor which influences tone variation and language behavior. Habitat has been shown to have more influence than homeland. A single language in a given Country may display variation due to geographical subdivisions.

1.1 Background

Vietnamese belongs to the Austro-Asiatic language family, the Mon-Khmer language group, and the Viet-Muong branch. Some current languages that belong to this family include the Mon, Khmer and Vietnamese languages. There are a total of six tones, one of which, ngang (high-even tone) also referred to as không dấu (non-symbol tone), does not have a diacritic. The other five tones, which have diacritics are: huyền (mid-falling tone), ngã (high-rising broken tone), hỏi (low-falling rising tone), sắc (high-rising tone), and nặng (low-dropping tone). For example:

ma /ma:^{1} / (ghost); mà /ma:^{2}/ (but, which, that); má /ma:^{3}/ (mother); mả /ma:^{4}/ (tomb); mã /ma:^{5}/ (horse); mạ /ma:^{6}/ (rise seeding). The Fundamental frequency (F0) and tonal contour of Vietnamese tones are shown in Figure 1.

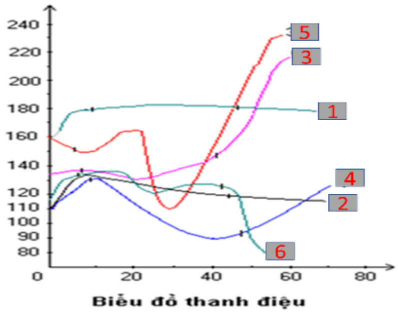

Figure 1. Fundamental frequency (F0) and tonal contour of Vietnamese tones
(Đoàn Thiện Thuật, 2016, p.87)

The syllable comes in four types in the Vietnamese language, as well as in Thai language. The two main types of syllable are closed and open, moreover, they are branching in each of these, half-closed syllable and half-opened syllable. Therefore, it can be said that there are four types in total, namely:

a. Closed syllables (âm tiết khép) are syllables which finish with non-voiceless plosive final consonants: /p, t, k/. For example in Vietnamese: chết /ce:t^5/ (die), tắc /tak^5/ (block). In Thai: **อาบ** /ʔa:p2/ (take a shower), **ยาก** /ja:k3/ (difficult).

b. Half-closed syllables are syllables which finish with nasal consonants: /m, n,ŋ/. For example in Vietnamese: bảng /ba:ŋ^2/ (board), tôm /tom^1/ (shrimp). In Thai: **กิน** /ki:n^1/ (eat), เสี่ยง /siaŋ^2/ (risk).

c. Opened syllables are syllables which finish with vowels. For example, in Vietnamese: sông /soŋ^1/ (river), cam /ka:m^1/ (orange) etc. In Thai: **มา** /ma:^{1}/ (come), **ใน** /nʔj^1/ (in).

d. Half-opened syllables are syllables which finish with semi-vowels: (/w, j/). For example, in Vietnamese: vua /vuə/ (king), mỏi /mɔj^4/ tired. In Thai: **เคี้ยว** /khiaw^4/ (chew), สวย /suaj^5/ (beautiful).

Tones in Vietnamese and Thai indicate functionally distinct words, not different from consonants and vowels, but it can be difficult to determine where tones are located in syllables. Tones determine the meaning of unit in language and occur with whole syllables, or more correctly, tones occur in the whole part of the syllable. It means tones spread over the whole syllable and express at same time other segmental phonemes which are unique characteristics of suprasegmental units, and so it is not possible to determine the exact positions of tones in syllable. They are therefore suprasegmental units. When combining these functions of tone and syllable, there are four Vietnamese tones: ngang, huyền, ngã, and hỏi which not are able to occur in closed syllables. Only sắc and nặng able to occur in this way, for example as in sách /sɛk^3/ (book) - sạch /sɛk^6/ (clean), bắt /băt^3/ (to catch) - bặt /băt^6/ (completely silent), cấp /kɤp^3/ (level) - cập /kɤp^6/ (to land) etc. However, sắc and nặng still occur in other types of syllable as well as ngang, huyền, ngã, hỏi. In the Thai tonal system, there are only three tones: low-level tone (aek), high-falling tone (tho) and high-rising tone able that occur in closed syllables (Pankhuenkhat, 1982).

2. Methodology

2.1 Area

The study described here is part of a Doctoral Dissertation. The locations are in Muang district, Nakhon Phanom province of Thailand, which was the gateway for the leaders of the Vietnamese Restoration League and was also one of the provinces in Thailand that the Vietnamese Nationalist Group used as an overseas military base to fight against France. Furthermore, there was asylum of President Ho Chi Minh, the first president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, from 1928 to 1929. Therefore, the Vietnamese community in Nakhon Phanom is the largest immigrant group with Vietnamese heritage in Thailand.

Nakhon Phanom is the border province in the Northeast of Thailand in Figure 2. with red line. It is located on the bank of the Mekong River and is across from Kham Muon Province of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. It covers a total area of 5,512 km^2, and is situated 740 km from Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. The West connects to Kusuman and Akat Amnuai District of Sakon Nakhon Province. The study of Wongthed (2012) about the history of Nakhon Phanom since prehistorical times up to the present, and the study of Thanaratluesakol (2012) describe the myths of this province and clarify the reasons why Nakhon Phanom became the province of multiple identities.

Nakhon Phanom is comprised of seven ethnic groups, namely; Nyaw, Phutai, Saek, So, Kha, Kalueng and Lao. Moreover, Vietnamese and Chinese people immigrated to this province and further add to the diversity

Figure 2. Map of Nakhon Phanom (NKP) province (cited by Terry Moore)

2.2 Informants

The informants were asked to complete a language background questionnaire form before the recording to achieve backgrounds that were as similar as possible. The first, second and thirds generation informants had spoken Northern Vietnamese with their families in the past. The fourth generation informant was not from a Northern Vietnamese family, but they learned Northern Vietnamese language from their education background. Eight local informants who are residing in Muang district, Nakhon Phanom province were chosen for analysis, four male and four female, from four different generations: first generation informants were more than 80 years old; the second generation was between 60-80 years old, third generation was between 40-60 years old; and the fourth generation was between 20-40 years old. The names of these informant groups in the paper are as follows: M1 (male, first generation), M2 (female, second generation), M3 (male, third generation generation), and M4 (male, fourth generation), F1 (female, first generation), F2 (female, second generation), F3 (female, third generation generation), and F4 (female, fourth generation).

2.3 Word List

The study used 30 words with closed syllables (Table 1) that only occur with the two tones are sắc (high-rising tone), and nặng (low-dropping creaky tone) and use the fifteen Vietnamese vowels; the twelve monophthongs: i /i/, ê /e/, e /ɛ/, a (ach, anh) /ɛ /, ư /ɯ/ , u /u/, ô /o/, o /ɔ/ , ơ /ɤ/ , â /ɤ/, a /a/, ă, a (au, ay) /ă/ and three diphthongs: iê (yê, ia, ya) /ie/, ươ/ua /ɯa/, uô/ua /uə/. These vowels were then embedded in /t/ for initial consonant. The target words were collected using two methods: interview and pronunciation. The interviewer created the dialogue to collect the target words which have meaning. For the wordlist of words without meaning, the informant had to pronounce those words in a dialogue of this format: 'Đây là …(target word)… nhé' that means 'This is …(target word)…'. Therefore, the total number of items analyzed totaled 240 items.

Table 1. Vietnamese word lists in closed syllable

Tones / Vowels	sắc (high-rising tone)	nặng (low-dropping creaky)
i /i/	tích /tik^3/	tịch /tik^6/
ê /e/	tết /tet^3/	tệt /tet^6/
e /ɛ/	tép /tɛp^3/	tẹp /tɛp^6/
a (ach, anh) /ɛ/	tách /tɛk^3/	tạch /tɛk^6/
ư /ɯ/	tức /tɯk^3/	tực /tɯk^6/
u /u/	túc /tuk^3/	tục /tuk^6/
ô /o/	tốt /tot^3/	tột /tot^6/
o /ɔ/	tóc /tɔk^3/	tọc /tɔk^6/
ơ /ɤ/	tớp /tɤp^3/	tợp /tɤp^6/
â /ɤ/	tất /tɤt^3/	tật /tɤt^6/
a /a/	táp /tap^3/	tạp /tap^6/
ă, a (au, ay) /ă/	tắt /tăt^3/	tặt /tăt^6/
iê (yê, ia, ya) /ie/	tiếc /tiek^3/	tiệc /tiek^6/
ươ, ua /ɯa/	tướp /tɯap^3/	tượp /tɯap^6/
uô, ua /uə/	tuốt /tuət^3/	tuột /tuət^6/

2.4 Equipment

The times and locations for recording were chosen by the informants. They were asked to interview first and then pronounce the wordlist paper using a microphone connected to the laptop for audio recording at a 22,050 Hz sampling rate with 16-bit/mono by Cool edit Pro. The words were edited with the audio program Audacity, and analyses were conducted by the Praat program.

3. Results

The results in Figure 3 show that the sắc tone in tích /tik^3/ was significantly pronounced in a deviant contour by participants M2, M3 and M4. The pitch of M2 and M3 is lower at the beginning and gradually higher to the end. In contrast, the pitch of M4 is gradually high from the beginning to the end. The pitch range of M2 (5 Hz), M3 (7.4 Hz), M4 (19.9 Hz) is significantly narrower than that of M1 (54.8 Hz). The tonal contour of M1 is completely similar as the sắc tone in that it starts at high pitch and has a rising pitch feature.

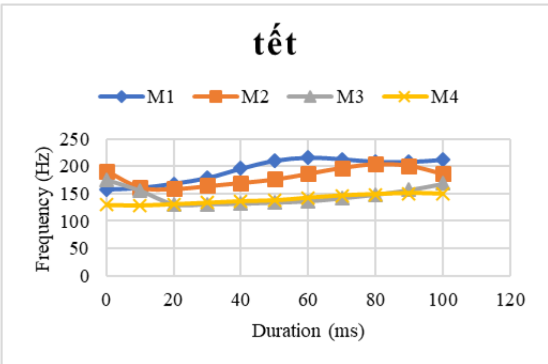

Figure 3. Tonal contour of sắc in tết /tet^3/ by four generations of Viet Kieu male speaker

The other result of the nặng tone in Figure 4. shows that the tonal characteristics in tách /tɛk3/ of M3 and M4 are significantly distinctive. the pitch range of M3 (2.4 Hz) and M4 (4.5 Hz) is noticeably narrower than that of M1 (18.5 Hz) and M2 (20.5 Hz), while the tonal contour is flat, and the pitch is constant. In contrast, the pitch of M3 is lower at the beginning and gradually goes higher to the end, which differs from the tonal contour of M1, where the contour is gradually higher at the beginning and lower in 70s before going up at the same pitch 196.8 Hz and falling slightly again at the end.

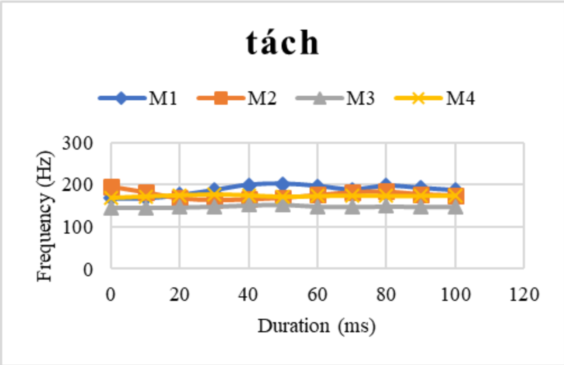

Figure 4. Tonal contour of sắc in tách /tɛk^3/ by four generations of Viet Kieu male speaker

The result in Figure 5 shows the nặng tone in tịch /tik^6/ was significantly pronounced in a deviant contour by M4. The tonal contour of M4 is gradually lower from the beginning to the end. Despite M4 being pronounced with a falling contour, it was not to the extent of the dropping tone of M1, M2 and M3.

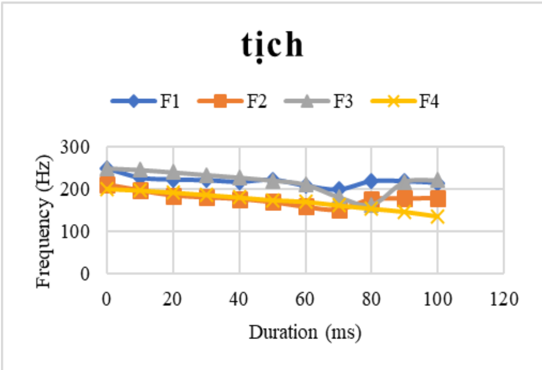

Figure 5. Tonal contour of nặng in tịch /tik^6/ by four generations of Viet Kieu female speakers

The other result shows the noticeable distinctive characteristic of the pitch range of nặng in tợp /tɤp^6/ as in Figure 6. The pitch range of M3 (19.7 Hz) and M4 (22.1 Hz) are more narrow than in M1 (66.5 Hz) and M2 (48.2). Moreover, the tonal contour of M3 and M4 is flat at the constant pitch. On the contrary, the tonal contour of M1 and M2 is falling tone with dropping sharp drop at the end of M1, while M2 is gradually falling.

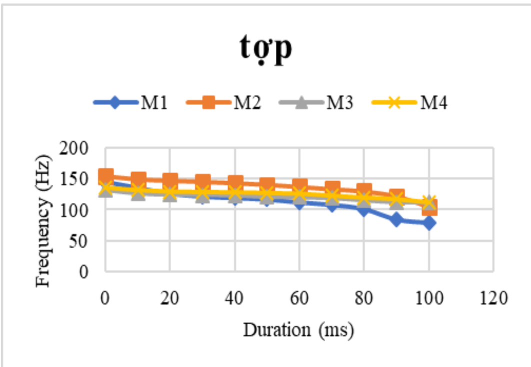

Figure 6. Tonal contour of nặng in tợp /tɤp^6/ by four generations of Viet Kieu male speakers

The one distinctive feature of the nặng tone is a creaky voice sound, the results found an exceedingly creaky voice demonstrated by M3 and M4 as in Figure 8. much more than that seen in M1, where it can be seen that the tonal contour in Figure 7. and the spectrogram in Figure 9 at the end period of syllable will be slightly falling before ending. Moreover, the results also found a gently creaky voice by F4 as in figure 10.

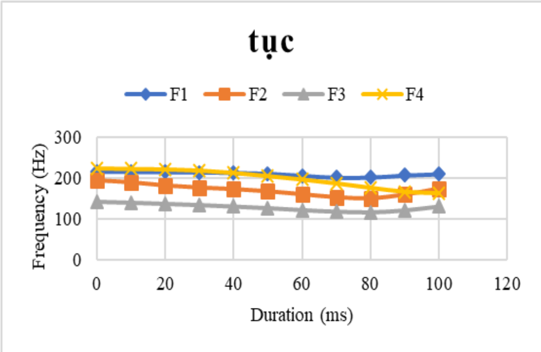

Figure 7. Tonal contour of nặng in tục /tuk^6/ by four generations of Viet Kieu male speaker

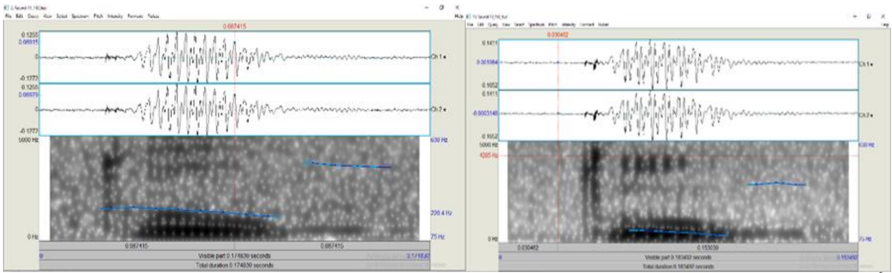

Figure 8. Waveform, spectrogram, and pitch track of hard creaky voice of nặng in tục /tuk^6/ by M3 (left), M4 (right)

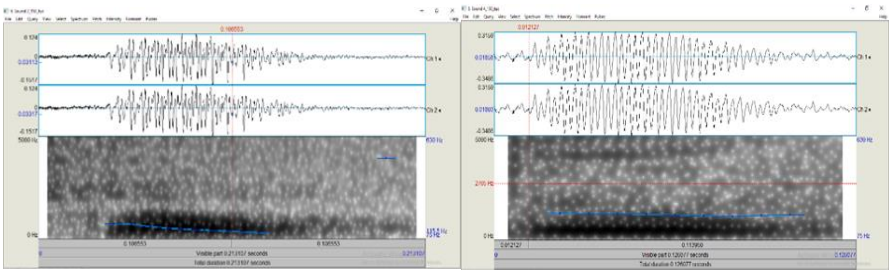

Figure 9. Waveform, spectrogram, and pitch track of creaky voice of nặng in tục /tuk^6/ by M1 (left), F1 (right)

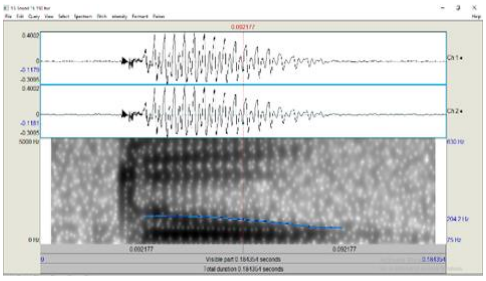

Figure 10. Waveform, spectrogram, and pitch track of light creaky voice of nặng voice in tục /tuk^6/ by F4

4. Conclusion

The results of the descriptive transcription of the phonetic characteristics by four generations of the Viet Kieu in Nakhon Phanom province in Thailand demonstrated the following main trends. The tonal contour of sắc by respondents M2, M3, M4 in closed syllables varied as in Figure 3., and even the tonal contour by M2 and M3 was falling slightly at the beginning before gradually going up to the end. Only respondent M1 still demonstrated the distinctive characteristic of sắc. In addition, the pitch range of sắc by M3 and M4 shown in Figure 4. was noticeably narrower than M1 and M2, which is similar to the tri (high-rising tone) in Thai as shown in Figure 10. In contrast, Đoạn Thiện Thuật (2016) explained the characteristic of sắc is closed in that it starts approximately at high tone as thanh ngang, with a flat contour tone that partly covers half of the rhyme. After that it goes up and ends at a higher pitch than ngang a half of note which significantly differed from M4's pronunciation.

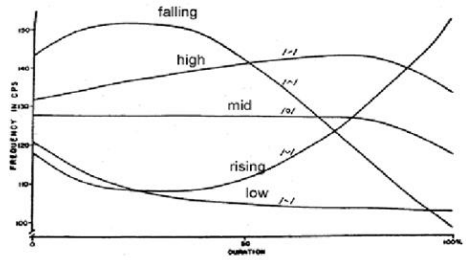

Figure 10. Fundamental frequency (F0) shapes of Standard Thai tones in the second period (Abramson A. S., 1961)

The tonal contour of nặng demonstrated by M4 was varied to falling tone, similar to the aek (low-level tone) in the Thai tonal system, where tonal contour is gradually falling down from the beginning point to the end point. In contrast, the tonal contour of M2, M3, M4 was sharply falling or it had a dropping tone at the end point of the syllable as in Figure 5. Moreover, the pitch of nặng by all generations both in tịch /tik^{6}/ and in tợp /tɤp^{6}/ as Figure 6. shows the starting point is varied to high pitch, but it starts typically from low pitch. For creaky voice, which is the distinctive characteristic of nặng, this proved to be difficult for the fourth generation. They pronounced nặng with an exceedingly creaky voice because they were concentrating too much and the result also resulted in a lightly creak voice as well.

There is a tendency among the fourth generation speaker in Thailand to simplify the difficult tones that have complicated tonal contours by using tones which have simpler contours. This was seen in the complicated tones, such as nặng (low-dropping tone). Based on the results, the study found that two distinctive features of the sắc tones are mid-rising tone and high-rising tone. And two distinctive features of the nặng tones are high-falling hardly creaky tone and high-falling lightly creaky one. Therefore, the results clearly showed the tendency of tone changes of sắc in closed syllable in Vietnamese were gradually varied to mid-rising and high-rising tone by language interference from Thai language. The nặng tone gradually varied to high-falling uncreaky tone by tonal simplification which may cause specific characteristics of nặng to disappear in the future.

The distinctive usage of languages seen in different ages indicated the changes that are in progress in this community. Furthermore, the differences in each generation in one community may be predict the language form of dialect in the future. The social factors or background of the informants such as gender, age and habitat have an impact of the tone variation and have a great influence on the language variation, including education. The fourth generation in this study are more educated than the first three generations. Therefore, even the members of the fourth generation rarely communicate in Vietnamese, but some of them able to speak like a native speaker. However, language interference has significantly influenced their Vietnamese tonal pronunciation. In addition to the standard Thai language which is the formal language of Thailand, Vietnamese tonal pronunciation was also influenced by the Northeast Regional dialect of Isan language, which is used in Nakhon Phanom, as well as by the Lao language from Laos which is adjacent to this Province. Therefore, it is not only tonal simplification and language interference which influences the variation in Vietnamese tonal pronunciation in Nakhon Phanom, but also the influence from regional variety as well.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Assoc. Pro. Dr. Vu Kim Bang from the Institute of Linguistics, Hanoi and Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Binh from the University of Humanities and Social Science, Hanoi National University for their academic advice and valuable comments on this work as part of a Ph.D. dissertation entitled "An Error Analysis in Vietnamese Tone Pronunciation of Viet Kieu in Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand".

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A Trajectory-based Analysis of Identity Reconstruction and Linguistic Practice of Hong Kong Returnees

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Abstract. With the changing and hybrid status of their citizenship, the people of Hong Kong have a long history of grappling with their identity (Lam &Cooper, 2018). Since the first large-scale wave of emigration in 1980s, a new trend was reported by the Hong Kong census and statistics department in 2000: 118, 400 people have returned from overseas and resettled in Hong Kong for better economic opportunities. For these returnees who do not align themselves with a pan-ethnic Chinese identity or local Hong Kong identity, it is difficult for them to reconstruct their identities, given the current socio-political context of rapid China – Hong Kong integration. Nevertheless, little has been done on investigating the trajectory of identity reconstruction and how it manifests through linguistic practices. This study employs the approach of linguistic ethnography to investigate how Hong Kong returnees negotiate and (re)construct their identities with their transnational experience. 10 participants with at least 2 years of overseas living and studying experience were invited to semi-structured interviews, which aimed to explore their experiences and self-identification in three different trajectories, namely, pre-sojourn, during the sojourn and post-sojourn. The results indicate that returnees (re)construct and negotiate their identities discursively via a continuous process of alignment/disalignment, positioning/repositioning towards larger social context, values, manoeuvre and manifest through their language use. Moreover, the results also build on Chen's (2005, 2008) findings to suggest that transnational identity is not only manifested performatively through multilingual practices but is also constructed discursively with transnational experience and social positioning through new identity attributes.

Keywords: identity reconstruction, linguistic ethnography, alignment

1. Introduction

The nexus of migration and identity has highlighted the significance of language in constructing transnational identities. Globalisation and the "late modernity" allow people to move and settle around the globe and expose to different cultures, which transcends the traditional view of fixed community (Canagarajah, 2012). Given this new nexus, identity is considered to be fluid and performative, rather than fixed in a certain status, as it was perceived traditionally. Most scholars in the field of language and identity believe that identities are negotiated, expressed and (re)constructed through linguistic practices discursively during the process of migration (Bucholtz, 2005; Zhu, 2016). That means, transnational identification is a process of negotiation in which participants can negotiate and construe their identities regarding their transnational trajectories. Negotiation and construction are about alignments in between self-oriented identities and identities perceived by others, and further reflect on power relations and social structure. Alignments happen only when the self-oriented identities match with the identities perceived by others; if not, there will be disalignments and the process of negotiation of identities happens (Zhu, 2016). Research on transnational identity negotiation and (re)construction often draws on the approach of linguistic ethnography, which provides a framework for analysing how social actors negotiate meanings and construct identities via language use influenced by social and historical elements that shapes these micro language use (Pérez-Milans, 2015). Linguistic ethnography allows researchers in this area to better understand how individuals negotiate and construct their identities with the transnational experience, and how the negotiation and identity construction are expressed via individual language use.

This study draws on the linguistic approach to analyse how Hong Kong returnees negotiate and (re)construct their identities within three different trajectories in their sojourn, namely, pre-sojourn, during the sojourn and post-sojourn. 10 participants with at least two years of sojourn experience were invited to semi-structured interviews to investigate how they identify and negotiate their identities within these three trajectories during their sojourn. In order to understand the identity (re)construction and trajectories better, some analytic toolkits are also used to support this analysis, including indexicality (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Zhu, 2016), positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), stance (Du Bois, 2002) and alignment/disalignment (De Fina, 2016; Pérez-Milans & Soto, 2016). These theoretical toolkits facilitate this research on analysing how returnees reconstruct their identities discursively via their linguistic practice and cultural manifestation on a continuous process of positioning and repositioning, alignment and disalignment.

1.1 Background of the Study

The following sections review some major research and theories used in the area of language and transnational identity, and how the approach of linguistic ethnography facilitates the research in this area. The second part reviews the issues of Hong Kong returnees, revealing the current situation of returnees in Hong Kong, and the significance of this research on addressing the issue of Hong Kong returnees.

1.2 Migration, Language and Transnational Identities

In the early 1990s, the nexus of migration and language aroused researchers' interest in thinking what role language plays in the transnational practices. The theory underpinned this realisation of significance in migration and language is the concept of "late modernity", which refers to a social condition that involved socio-economic, institutional, cultural and linguistic changes (Bauman, 1998; De Fina, 2016; Giddens, 1991). The intensification and development of cultural and linguistic diversification led to further shift in sociolinguistics in which mobility became the key for causing this shift (Bloomaert, 2014). Previously in the sociolinguistic area, scholars considered speech community to be homogenous, bounded and only shared among unified speech groups. Since the notion of "late modernity" has emerged, scholars started to shift from the stable and fixed concept of speech community to the non-binary, fluid and socially constructed concept (De Fina, 2016; Pérez-Milans, 2015). Based on the notion of transnationalism and fluidity in identification, scholars consider mobility as an important factor in affecting language and identity, and how language and migration lead to the changes in transnational identities, such as negotiating identities in intercultural setting (Li Wei & Zhu Hua, 2013; Zhu Hua, 2010, 2015a, 2015b); reflexive self-identity as a mean to negotiate the relationship between self and social structure (Chaffe, 2016; Giddens, 1991; Pérez- Milans, 2015).

Previous research on migration and identities usually takes an ethnographic approach, which focuses on individuals' communities and social networks by using participant observation, interview and questionnaires. Linguistic ethnography is an interdisciplinary framework used in the research of language and identity (Copland & Creese, 2015, Pérez-Milans, 2016) which aims to investigate how individuals negotiate meanings and construct identities. Linguistic ethnography is based on the view that our social reality is constructed, reproduced, naturalised and revised discursively in the process of socio-economic transformation. The focus of this approach has been placed on the instability, difference and mobility in which social actors negotiate meanings and stance by positioning themselves and others under the influence of transnational socio-economic, sociolinguistic and cultural conditions (Pérez-Milans, 2015, 2016). Usually, linguistic ethnography research categorises individuals in term of three types: language learners, general members of communities and migrants from the perspectives of out-group members (De Fina,2016). Through investigating the linguistic/communicative conventions, including turn talking, language choice, and different choice of using text in interaction, researchers can investigate how individuals construe social relations within themselves regarding the material conditions in everyday practice. Different analytic tools are used as instruments to understand the identities and trajectories changes regarding the migration process. Analytical tools include: indexicality, stance, positioning and alignment. In the following sections, I will brief explain the concept of each tool and how they are used in the analysis.

1.2.1 Indexicality

Indexicality refers to linguistic elements that individuals use to evoke certain associations with identities, such as a (group) persona, social values or characteristics. Linguistic elements used as indexes include, for example, accent, code-switching, address terms and culturally specific terms, (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Zhu, 2016) Indexicality allows researchers to connect communicative practice to the macro scale of social structures and patterns profoundly. In Hong Kong, Chen (2008) uses code-switching as an index to examine how Hong Kong returnees reposition themselves via the distinctive way of using language, and further to reveal the negative stereotype toward them.

1.2.2 Positioning

Positioning often use in identity research to differentiate and highlight how individuals choose or orient to a certain identity by evaluating of their and other's roles, ideas or actions (De Fina, 2016; Zhu Hua, 2016). Scholars later further develop the kind of positioning into: first and second positioning, performative and accountative positioning, moral and personal positioning, self and other positioning, interactive and reflexive positioning and tacit and intentional positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999); direct and indirect positioning (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005); explicit and implicit positioning (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2013).

1.2.3 Stance

Stance is a notion closed to indexicality and positioning, which defined by Du Bois (2007:163) as " a public act by a social actor, achieved through overt means, of evaluating an object, positioning the self and aligning with other subjects in respect of any salient dimension of the stance field." Indexicality often involves stance, which is defined as the manifestation of orientation, such as evaluation, affection and episteme in discourse (Du Bois, 2002). Stance taking can lead to bigger identity categories, for instance, gender, and form ideologies of corresponding interactional practices.

1.2.4 Alignment

Alignment originates from the concept of interdiscursivity, which refers to social actors align and identify meanings that occurred and negotiated recurrently via a series encounters with their network and communicative encounters from their patterned trajectories (Pérez-Milans & Soto, 2016). That means, through alignment, individuals can project and negotiate meanings via aligning/dis-aligning to a certain value, behaviour, or persona, etc., and though alignment/disalignment, they construe their meanings and identities based on the agreement/disagreement they make on the traits aforementioned.

1.3 Hong Kong Returnees: Migration, Reposition and Identity Reconstruction

Although some of Hong Kong's residents had migrated previously back in 1950s and 60s, Hong Kong witnessed the first large-scale wave of large-scale of emigration in 1980s, which was locally called "brain drain". The 2000 statistic census report carried out by the Hong Kong government suggested that the number of returnees in Hong Kong was 118,400. However, the number was probably under-reporting due to the limitation of the research methods and also the different definitions of "returnees".The Hong Kong government defined "returnees" as Hong Kong/Mainland China/Macau born residents who returned to reside in Hong Kong regularly after having resided ordinarily in another country for at least two years in the past decade. However, this definition itself is vague, as explained by the Hong Kong government later in the report: the definition of "returnees" in here also includes "return emigrants", which means Hong Kong residents who had lived and emigrated to another country and returned to reside currently in Hong Kong. It's difficult to clarify the difference, due to the lack of commonly-accepted definition of "returnees" and also depends on the time and other factors that affect the residency of people in Hong Kong/other country (Government of Hong Kong, 2000). In terms of resettled countries, 34.5% of returnees has resided in Canada for at least two years, and 22.4% in Australia and New Zealand, 12.3% in The United Kingdom, 11.4% in The United States and 9.4% in other Asian countries. A similar report followed in 2001 by the Statistics and Census department indicated the same pattern (Government of Hong Kong, 2001). Even though the same issue of under-reporting on the number of returnees still exists, yet several sources suggested that the number might have constituted a small minority (Ley & Kobayashi, 2005). Until now, an official, clarified definition is still made unclear by the Hong Kong government. In academia, the same issue of defining "returnees" is also shared among researchers. Sussman (2011) initially uses "return migrant", "remigrant" or "returnee" to maintain a neutral ground regarding this matter. This neutral definition has been shared among other researchers (Chen, 2005, 2008, 2015; Ley & Kobayashi 2005).

Given the population of Hong Kong returnees, however, literature regarding the issue of Hong Kong returnees is very limited. Most researchers interest in understanding the returnees from the perspectives of psychology (Sussman, 2011), and geography (Ley & Kobayashi, 2005; Slaff, Wong & Greve, 2010). Reasons for the lack of research might, perhaps, due to three facts: under-reporting numbers of returnees and the neglection from the government, and also, stereotypes towards returnees. Profoundly, in the area of language and identity of returnees, Chen's work (2005, 2008, 2015) has extended of discrimination towards returnees by examining and differentiating the two different styles of code-mixing between Hong Kong locals and Hong Kong returnees. She identified the two different styles of code-mixing as indexes to different identities, and through altitudinal studies, she discovered that how Hong Kong returnees are perceived, and discriminated as outsiders in which their ethnic and cultural identities are de-authenticated and their unique style of code-mixing as linguistic practice is being excluded.

Chen's research (2005, 2008, 2015) has inspired other researchers to further investigate what else could possibly be counted for as indexes for identity construction. A case in point will be the status of English in Hong Kong, as both Chen (2008) and Sussman (2011) briefly mentioned, Hong Kong returnees consider English as linguistic repertoire in maintaining their identities, while Hong Kong locals desire to speak native accents like them yet reject the way they speak since it is socially inappropriate. Moreover, the literature points to English as a prestigious language in Hong Kong (Kirkpatrick; 2007; Bolton 2008; Evans 2011) as well as its importance as a component of Hong Kong identity (Hansen Edwards, 2015, 2016; Lai, 2005, 2012). However, in contrast to this literature, the further integration of China and Hong Kong and the continued promotion of Putonghua, the status of English may no longer carry the same prestige. Hansen Edwards (2015, 2016) work takes the current socio-political climate into consideration; however, her work only examines English among Hong Kong university students. For these reasons, the role of English in Hong Kong needs to be re-examined, as well as whether English still remains a key component for returnees' identity reconstruction.

2. Methodology

This study employs interview as its mean for data collection. 10 participants were recruited to conduct interview with. Each interview lasted about one hours. Before the interview, the researcher debriefed the purpose of research and asked for consents before starting the recording session. The demographic information of 10 participants are listed in Appendix A. After the interview, recordings are transcribed into transcripts in the format of conversation analysis which allows the researcher to further code and identify linguistic features for analysis.

2.1 Research Design

The interview questions are developed based on studies conducted by Sussman (2011) and Zhang (2014), which aims to better understand the sojourn experience and effects on the positioning of self and other, and how identities are constructed and negotiated in different phrases of transnational trajectory. Generally, the interview protocol consists of three parts. The first part aims to investigate Hong Kong returnees' identity reconstruction, and is further divided into three periods: pre-sojourn, during the sojourn and post –sojourn, which allows the researcher to understand the process of identity reconstruction and understand how identities are constructed through linguistic practices in different phrases. The second part focuses on returnees' work/life style, which aims to investigate how they maintain their identity through daily linguistic and behavioural practices. The third part aims to investigate the change of language use, and the importance of language use in maintaining identity. During the interview, interviewees were free to choose the languages during the interview as they preferred. The interview questions were both open-ended and semi-structured.

2.2 Selections of Participants

Based on the definitions aforementioned and previous research, generally, criteria on selecting participants focus on these aspects: a. time amount of spending aboard, b. current residence in Hong Kong, c. relevant language ability. Due to the uncertainty of future residence, this research will not consider it as a significant component; however, the issue of future residence appeared during the interview but will only use as reference for prediction on future trajectory.

Total 10 participants were recruited by the researcher to conduct interviews with. Employing the "snow ball" sampling, the researcher recruited the first two interviewees, and they were in charge of recruiting the rest of interviewees. Participants are selected based on the following criteria: (1) have lived in other English-speaking countries before, (2) spent at least 2 years in the previous decade overseas, (3) currently living and working in Hong Kong, (4) were born in Hong Kong, (5) received education in Hong Kong prior to sojourn, and (6) speak Cantonese as first language. The rationale for participants selections are developed and based on the aforementioned three aspects.

3. Data Analysis

The interview data were transcribed into words and coded in the software NVivo, which allows me to isolate each participant's story and different stages of sojourn based on the fashion of research in this area (Chen, 2005, 2008; Jackson, 2008) and interview protocols. The interview data is divided into three parts, namely, pre-sojourn, during the sojourn and post-sojourn, which provide understandings on the trajectories of their sojourns and how their experiences have impacted on their identification, linguistic practice and adjusting.

The theories supported the analysis include indexicality (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Zhu Hua, 2016), positioning (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), stance (Du Bois, 2002), and alignment (Pérez-Milans & Soto, 2016). By using combination of the supportive theories aforementioned, I hope to examine the details of participants' trajectories in three different phases of their sojourn, and how their identity and linguistic practices change along with their sojourn experiences.

3.1 Backgrounds of Participants and Data Arrangement

Total 10 participants were recruited to conduct interview with. Among the participants, 4 of them are male and 6 of them are female. 3 of them have lived in Canada, 4 in the UK, 1 in the USA, 1 in Australia and 1 in both the UK and Australia. Within the Canadian returnees, 2 of them moved to Canada before the return of sovereignty in 1997. They were both born in Canada and returned to Hong Kong right after a few weeks of their birth. The reason as reported, was due to the fear of the change of sovereignty in 1997 and their family decided to gain the Canadian passport before 1997. The rest of them immigrated overseas mainly for the purpose of receiving better education, except for one participant immigrated for the purpose of working in the UK. For those who immigrated before 1997 and to get the Canadian passport and returned to Hong Kong right after birth, later in their lives they left for their born country, Canada, again for education. In this case, these two participants are also categorised for education purpose regarding the reason of sojourn. The table below illustrates the descriptive data of average, maximum and minimum years of staying aboard (See. Table 1.)

Table 1. Descriptive Data of Age and Years in Three Sojourn Periods

Means	n=10 / Males: 4 / Females: 6
Age	Average = 28.3 / Max.= 46 / Min.= 22
Age before sojourn	Average = 15.9 / Max.= 22 / Min.= 11
Years spent in the resettled countries	Average = 7.9/ Max.= 24 / Min.= 2
Age when returned to Hong Kong	Average = 23.9 / Max.= 37 / Min.= 18
Years of returning	Average = 4.5 / Max.= 9 / Min.= 1

Based on the descriptive data, the average age before the sojourn is 15.9 (n=10), which fits with the purpose of sojourn was for education, as the interview data implies. The average years spent overseas is 7.9 years, with maximum 24 years and minimum 2 years. The average time spent overseas includes, as most of interviewees reported, the time from high school to university. The average time for years of returning to Hong Kong is 4.5 years, indicating interviewees already had time to re-adjust in Hong Kong after their sojourn and experienced in resettlement and identity reconstruction, which qualified for the purpose of this research.

3.2 Pre-sojourn

For people who immigrated overseas for the education purpose, prior to their sojourn, the sense of disalignment has already shown towards local values, behaviours and the local education system, further led to their inquest and question for their identities in Hong Kong. The extract lines below illustrate the case:

Table 2. Extract 1 Joyce's Story

PAR: Umm… I wasn't doing really well at school. Because the school I went to, it really focused on…academic? So…even though your conduct is fine, um, if your results are not doing well, then you will be considered like, just, um, "Oh, you are not doing so well, blah, blah, blah". And I didn't like the culture of that school. It was a girl school, and there were so many back-stabbing, um, back-stabbing drama going on, that I witnessed, that I (saw) people would do to each other at that age, so I think I was quite lucky actually. I think I was just being talked about or being talked behind the back…nothing being too damaging. But I could see some girls like, how purposely alienated each other. At the expense of, you know, another people's happiness. And that's, I don't know, quite unhealthy actually. But just…I don't know, just the culture there, THAT SCHOOL, that school I went to was quite toxic. I wasn't happy and I didn't quite like myself back then? Because I-I had known, I think (when) I was a teenager, I had a sense of "Oh I want to belong to somewhere". And then I felt like, I couldn't. So, what do I do? I can't talk to people about that. And then just-just like, kind of overwhelmed, and then school, and test results and all that, because I wasn't slacking off, just because I wasn't a "punk". I wasn't a punk but that (was) just a fact that me like, emotionally, that attachment to the city, to my peers, and then I was telling my mom, "hey you know, maybe I can, I don't know whether it's possible, maybe I will feel or do better if we switch the geography of me finishing high school?" And then my mom, she has a friend from Vancouver, and then, um, so I called her my aunt, I guess? But not relative, not blood-relative, just a close friend of hers. She has been living in Vancouver for a year >so she can help us to settle down<. Yeah. So, that's how I settled down in there.

Extract 1 shows the rationale behind the pre-sojourn experience. From line 1 to line 9, the participant Joyce (pseudonymous) was giving out reasons why she didn't like the school culture, which was made salient from line 3 to line 6 while she was addressing to the culture in the school by using repetition of the phrase "back-stabbing". Then she commented on line 5 to line by calling herself as "lucky" and on line 6 "nothing being too damaged", which implied a strong disalignment by detaching herself from the school culture as she witnessed before the sojourn.

From line 10 to line 13, the impersonal disalignment emerges through two key segments: her searching of belonging and her self-positioning. In line 11 and line 12, she described her situation of not belonging to the school, and this kind of feeling reappeared again in line 12 in which she described her "attachment" to the city and peers.

By describing her feelings and attachment, she disaligned herself and took the opposite stance towards the local education system and her peers at school, which eventually led to her sojourn to Canada. In line 12, she reinforced her disalignment by using an indexical noun “punk”, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005) suggest, addressing term can be used as identity index. The repetitive address term “punk” reinforced her self-identification of not being a failure, which forms a strong disalignment to the belief in local education system for equalizing not doing well in exam to be a failure, a “punk”. By negotiating and taking a difference stance against the Hong Kong education system and her peers at school, Joyce displayed an awareness of self-identification which prompted her to leave for Canada.

The identity and cultural disalignments were the underlined prompt for Hong Kong returnees to leave initially, even they didn’t realise the disalignment themselves. The following extract takes linguistic repertoire as an example, in this case, the participant revealed her feelings of not belonging via her use of language prior to sojourn:

Table 3. Extract 2 Stephanie’s Experience of Speaking English in a Local School

	PAR: Yeah, I remember even in primary school, I started to speak English already. And people would think that I’m a “show-off”, because I used =
	INV: =show off? In Hong Kong?
	PAR: Yeah. Because you look Chinese, why you speak English right? You should speak Cantonese.

In this extract 2, Stephanie was asked to describe her life in Hong Kong prior to her sojourn. She attended a local school before she moved to Canada for higher education. In her description, she was asked how other people at school perceived her, and she provided an example through her linguistic preference in English. The word “show-off” that she mentioned indicated how she was treated in the local school, which constitutes an accountative positioning forced upon her by her peers at school. And her following statement reinforced this accountative positioning by drawing on people’s judgement on her look as Chinese and criticised her for speaking English in a local school. This accountative positioning construes a disalignment from others on Stephanie’s linguistic repertoire.

3.3 During the Sojourn

The second part of the interview aims to explore how the self-identification changed in the new resettled countries. Generally, all 10 participants reported they have gone through a phase from further disalignment to alignment with the cultures and values in their resettled countries. The shift in cultures and values further led to their changes in terms of their identification and linguistic repertoire.

Initially, when they arrived in the new resettled countries, often to find in the transcribed data is that participants tended to further disailgn with their peers. Extract 3 below was taken from a participant who moved to Australia and she was asked to describe her relations with her Hong Kong peers in Australia:

Table 4. Extract 3 Emily’s Experience with Other Hong Kong Peers in Australia

INV: Yeah. Have you met other people in Australia and they also came from Hong Kong?
PAR: Yeah, yeah. There was a handful international students in there.
INV: Did you hang out with them?
PAR: No. I don’t. Because, like, I’m not really native to local people and the funny thing is though, back in Australia, when all the Hong Kong international school students, they just stick together and hang – yeah, so, basically, it’s like moving the whole secondary high school to Australia. Still the same Hong Kong dynamic. Whereas me, I, actually all my closet friends they are Australian-born-Asians, like there’s Korean, like my best friend is, her family is from Vietnam, and, um, most of them are Chinese. It’s different backgrounds. I think more (are) from mainland China, yeah.

The participant, Emily, was asked if she still hanged out with Hong Kongese back in Australia. From line 4 to 9, she gave a pretty firm answer on disalignment with local Hong Kongese. In line 4, she replied to the investigator’s question with a negative tone. Then she depicted herself as “not native to local people”, which indicates a strong sense of disaligning herself from the image of local Hong Kongese and her self-positioning opposite to Hong Kong locals. In the following lines 5 to 7, she further detached herself from Hong Kongese by giving the example from the Hong Kong international students. By criticising the behaviours of Hong Kong students in Australia “stick together and hang out”, “still the same Hong Kong dynamics”, she disaligned herself from her peers further detached from her Hong Kong background. In line 7 to 9, the disalignment was intensified by the reflexive positioning. The participants initiated the sentence by comparing herself to her peers from Hong Kong, which she claimed in the previous sentences as her peers tended to remain the “Hong Kong values” by hanging out together, she actually had more friends from different backgrounds. The reflexive positioning of her facilitated in her disalignment from her Hong Kong background and helped her construe the more open-minded, international image contrast to her peers, which laid the foundation for her latter identity construction in her resettled countries.

After the further disalignment from their Hong Kong peers, returnees often found it difficult to blend in the culture in their resettled countries as well. Extract 4 below follows the same trajectory of Emily and how she positioned herself after disaligning from her Hong Kong peers:

Table 5. Extract 4: Emily's Story of Her Intercultural Adjustment

INV: So, can you tell me about your experience in Australia? How was it liked to live in there?
PAR: Hmm…actually for the most part, it is strange though.
INV: Strange?
PAR: In Adelaide. That's why I felt more, uh, like an outsider, or like an immigrant, kind of feeling for where are a lot of Australians, Australian Caucasians, like an Australian thing. They do see you as an um, foreigner. Sometimes I don't even understand their culture, or even, if I can put in this (way), they are a little bit ignorant about your backgrounds, and sometimes they will even go up and talk to you or, yeah, they really see you as a foreigner. But in Sydney, that's really weird. Because in Sydney, I felt like I have this kind of "counter-culture" shock, where there are so many Asians, like when I //
//INV: So many Asians. Even Hong Kong locals?
PAR: Yeah. No, not only Hong Kong locals, but like, Malaysians, Vietnamese, like a, Sydney is a weird place. It's a harbour for different cultures. Like um, and they are really accepting for that. And I was really shocked by it because I was, I thought Australia was…my first impression for Australia was like Adelaide, still felt like a foreigner. But coming to Sydney, I really feel comfortable about it.

Emily then was asked about her experience of settling down in Australia. In this extract, she described two trajectories of her sojourn. In line 2, she used the word "strange" to evaluate her sojourn experience in Australia. Then she took an explicit stance by directing the conversation towards her experience in Adelaide. From line 4 to line 8, she described her experience in Adelaide and two direct positioning indicated via the addressing terms "Australian thing" (line 5) and "foreigner" (line 7) showed that she wasn't able to fit into the Caucasians cultures and she constantly felt she was an outsider. The two direct positioning further construed her disalignment with the dominant Caucasian culture in a border context, which explained through her experience in Sydney. From like 8 to line 14, she took another stance in describing her experience in Sydney. In line 8, she depicted her experience with evaluating the experience in the phrase "counter-culture shock" where she encountered with other Asians. Then in line 12 she used a metaphorical phrase "a harbour for different cultures" to align with the culture she experienced in Sydney. Line 13 and 14 construed an interactive positioning, as she compared the cultures in Adelaide and Sydney and direct to her evaluation as she felt "comfortable" in Sydney. The interactive positioning and stance together construct the alignment towards the culture in her sojourn trajectory in this case.

Noticeably, based on the interview data, none all participants identified themselves simply as "Name of resettled countries + returnees" as suggested and used commonly in previous research and daily life; rather, their identification changed during the sojourn towards a more "international" end. That means, they don't tend to assimilate with the dominant culture ("Caucasian culture" or "White culture" as returnees usually refer to), rather, they identify themselves as more "international" or "metropolitan". In the aforementioned case with the Australian returnee Emily, she didn't align with either the Hong Kong culture or the dominant "Australian culture"; however, her alignment changed towards an "international" side when she came to Sydney and experienced the different cultures from Asians resided in Sydney. Another example shown on extract 5 illustrated this kind of cultural alignment in Canada:

Table 6. Extract 5: Stephanie's Self-positioning

PAR: Ugh, like whenever I am here, I feel like Canadian. And whenever I'm in Canada, I'm from Hong Kong. So, when people asked me, "where are you from?" I don't wanna say I'm from Hong Kong. Because I'm not just from Hong Kong. But I-I can't say I'm from Canada. Because people will say "Oh then you must grow up there". Like, when you were a kid, you played hockey. I didn't do any of those things.

The participant was asked to compare her self-identification in Canada to her Hong Kong identity. From line 1 to line 3, two opposite stances were manifested via her deliberate self-positioning. She displayed a strong sense of self-consciousness of her identity in two different cultural setting. In line 3 and 4, her identity of being "international" was amplified by her disalignment towards the cultural setting manifesting through her cultural example, hockey. In this way, she construed her identity as non-binary, but somehow international.

3.4 Post-Sojourn

After returning to Hong Kong, returnees find it difficult to fit in Hong Kong. The values and cultures they have adapted in their resettled countries. During their sojourns, they have gone through the trajectory from disalignment to alignment. And when they have returned to Hong Kong, they started to experience the disalignment, which eventually lead to their identity reconstruction.

One thing being reported in the interview is that how they no longer fit into the Hong Kong context with the values and cultures they adapted from their resettled countries. Often, they find the contradiction in values has made them further disaligned with the local Hong Kongers. The following extract 6 provided an example when the returnee was asked to comment on how she felt after returning to Hong Kong:

Table 7. Extract 6: Stephanie's Readjustment after Her Sojourn

PAR: Yeah, I don't wanna say I'm just from Hong Kong. Because in many ways, I don't identify, um…=
INV: = The local culture?
PAR: Yeah. A lot of things people like to do, like shop, or eat, or just go to Japan for fun, or they work for 9 to 5 job, or they care about what other people think, or "Oh, I must obey my parents", no. I DON'T AGREE WITH THAT. So, in that sense, yeah.

During this short conversation, she displayed a strong sense of disalignment with the local culture. In the first line, she gave response to the question of how she responded to other's inquiry of her origin, she revealed her stance by stating "not just from Hong Kong", then positioning to her disalignment with the local cultures. From line 3 to 5, she evaluated the local cultures by giving examples on some typical cultural phenomena and stressed on disagreement with all those aforementioned values. In this way, she detached herself discursively from the Hong Kong locals and reconstructed her identity via disalignment.

Nevertheless, it's noticeably from the interview data that compare to their disalignment with locals prior to/during the beginning of their sojourn, they tend to evaluate and consider the Hong Kong local culture as a part of their heritage identity, even they don't agree with the cultural traditions for most of the time. The following extract 7 indicated how returnees labelled their identities by negotiating with their acquired culture and local Hong Kong culture:

Table 8. Extract 7: Emily's Positioning after Returning to Hong Kong

PAR: Well, I will definitely say, I'm like, uh, <just a weird combination> //
// INV: A weird combination?
PAR: Yeah. I'm not local enough, and then I'm also not extremely white. Like some people perceive me to be. But in some aspect, I can be very Asian. Yeah. Like I still keep some traditional identities, like my parents (drilled) me to, but I'm still young, I won't totally disregard my heritage. I remember there was one girl, I didn't even know she is Chinese, like >it took me one year to realise that she is (Chinese)<, actually, she is very, VERY WHITE. Um, like the way she acts and the way she thinks, I was like, "wow, she is really white." For me, I'm hybrid.

In this extract, Emily indexed herself initially as an "weird combination". From line 3 to line 5, she positioned herself as someone who is in between the two cultures, reinforced by her reflexive positioning "as some people perceive me to be". Then, she negotiated her identity by comparing and disaligning herself from another girl's behaviours to address the fact that she does remain the "Asian culture" side. In the last line, she identified herself as "hybrid". Compare to her pre-sojourn experience, she embraced her Asian culture side as a part of her identity via negotiating in between her rooted and acquired cultures. In fact, for other participants, they labelled their post-sojourn identity in a similar way, such as "blender", "international", "hybrid", "in between", which all inference a process of negotiating in between two cultures of Hong Kong and their resettled countries.

Additionally, it is reported in the interview that language choice, especially English, becomes returnee's linguistic repertoire and a significant part of maintaining their post-sojourn identity. However, the use of English as linguistic repertoire is also the reason why they are discriminated against local Hong Kongers, which is consistent with previous studies about language attitudes in Hong Kong (Chen, 2008, 2015; Hansen, 2016; Sussman, 2011). The following extract 8 illustrates on how the participant considered English to be a significant part of his identity compared to Cantonese, and how she was perceived by another local Hong Kongers:

Table 9. Extract 8: Harris' Language Attitude and Linguistic Repertoire

PAR: They think I'm a "fake gweilo" (fake foreigner). //
//INV: fake gweilo?
PAR: I'm trying to be different from them.
INV: Can you explain? Like how come?
PAR: Becau:se – because I think it's when, how to say that, (0.2) when the local sometimes they think speaking in English…is a superior language.
INV: English is a superior language?
PAR: Yeah. They never think it's a social and common language. Which is very, VERY SILLY. Actually, when you look at modern Cantonese, more than 20% of words are (from) English.
INV: Yup. Like the loan words. English loan words.

In this extract, the participant was asked how he was perceived by other Hong Kong locals after he returned to Hong Kong. He reported as a "fake gweilo" (fake foreigner), an accountative positioning of him being perceived. Then he explained it is because he speaks English frequently and he positioned English not as a "superior language". Then from line 8 to 10, he disaligned with Hong Kong local's attitudes by considering English as a "social and common language" but not a superior language. In the following line, he negotiated by exampling the English loan words in Cantonese to support his disalignment with the local language attitudes. From this extract, we can see that how he negotiated his identity by stressing on his linguistic repertoire, English, starting with the reflexive term and then directed to the language attitudes in Hong Kong in which he disaligned with the local belief of language. Through the negotiation, disalignment and positioning, he construed his post-sojourn identity via repositioning his linguistic repertoire.

4. Discussion

This study analyses how Hong Kong returnees (re) construct their identities via their sojourn experience and linguistic practice on a trajectory basis. Drawing on the definition from Bulcholtz and Hall (2005) of identity as a social positioning of self and other and it's negotiated and constructed discursively (Zhu, 2015a, 2015b,2016), this study further investigates how returnees' identities changed in three periods, namely, pre-sojourn, during the sojourn and post-sojourn. Using backbone theoretical toolkits of indexicality (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Zhu Hua, 2016), positioning (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Harré & Langenhove, 1999), stance (Du Bois, 2002), and alignment (Pérez-Milans & Soto, 2016), this study reveals how returnees negotiate and construct their identities progressively.

Based on their sojourn experience, for those who immigrated overseas for educational purpose in this study, their trajectories can be concluded as disalignment with local values and educational system prior to sojourn; during the sojourn period, the trajectory is further disalignment with peer Hong Kongers, disalignment with the dominant "Caucasian culture", and position themselves to be intercultural; and when they returned to Hong Kong, the disalignment against Hong Kong locals continues; however, compare to their pre-sojourn disalignment, they manifested willingness to embrace their Hong Kong cultural roots. The process of identity reconstruction is collided with their sojourn experience and continues when they returned to Hong Kong on the continuous "disalignment-alignment" process in cultural and linguistic development. As Chen (2008) points out, currently in Hong Kong the concept of "Hong Kong people" is problematic and iconised. For Hong Kong returnees who do not conform with the local cultural traits due to their overseas experience, they are often homogenized as "the West" and discriminated against. This study reveals certain things that are neglected by the academia in this area before: to begin with, before their sojourn, returnees have manifested a strong sense of disalignment with the local cultures, especially the local education system. And the disalignment has further continued during the very beginning of their sojourn, which has further disaligned them from their peers as an outcome of continuum from their previous education experience. Noticeably, during their sojourn, the trajectory of "disalignment – alignment" is not as sheer as it seems to be; however, through the very stage of alignment, returnees find it difficult to blend in with the dominant Caucasian culture, they developed their international identities through the interactions with other cultures and in this process, they started to form their positions.

After returning to Hong Kong, returnees find it difficult to blend in Hong Kong once again. For one thing, it is the values they adapted from their resettled countries separate them from the Hong Kong locals, and that is reason why they sometimes feel they are discriminated against. For another thing, English has become their linguistic repertoire in which they consider English is their daily language use. Prior to the interviews, interviewees were informed that they can use either Cantonese, English or whatever language they prefer for the interview. However, almost all of interviewees used English for the interviews; Cantonese were only used in a few occasions to explain some words that entail certain meanings only exist in Cantonese, for instance, "fake gweilo" (fake foreigner). The linguistic preference in this case has also indicated the status of English as linguistic repertoire for Hong Kong returnees. Nevertheless, as previous studies show, English is considered to be prestigious language in Hong Kong for Hong Kong locals (Hansen, 2015, 2016); for returnees, English is yet to be a common and social language as extract 8 shows. But for Hong Kong locals, they often position speaking English as daily language negatively, and position returnees negatively as “fake foreigners”, “show-off”. The delegitimating of returnees’ linguistic practice and their linguistic repertoire manifest how Hong Kong locals empowered over returnees through language ideologies. These aforementioned findings have been consistent and supportive with other research on Hong Kong returnees (Chen, 2008, 2015; Sussman, 2011).

Nevertheless, compare their trajectories of pre-sojourn and post-sojourn, it is clear to see that compare to their pre-sojourn experience, returnees actually tend to embrace and include their Hong Kong cultural roots as a part of their identities. When asked about their labels on post-sojourn identities, Hong Kong returnees tended to use neutral index such as “international”, “blender” and “hybrid” to depict their current cultural identities, as extract 7 shows. These labels as they self-explained comprised of two aspects: their performative cultural aspect of which they developed in their resettled countries; and their willingness to embrace their Hong Kong cultural roots. Their indexes are contrast to the common index from local Hong Kongers, for instance, “Canadian returnees”, which can be seen as a communicative practice to defy the social norms that have been imposed on them by other Hong Kong locals. In this case, their positioning is also different from other previous study and attitudes in Hong Kong to perceive them as being “entirely westernized”, they still retain their cultural roots as from Hong Kong. Future studies will be needed to investigate on how this kind of positioning affects their identities and linguistic practices.

Given the linguistic boundaries between Hong Kong locals and returnees are unclear, and lack of enough research in this area, this study analyses how Hong Kong returnees reconstruct their identities via a series of alignment/disalignment, position and index on various stages in their sojourns and how their identities are built upon these micro-interactions and negotiations in multicultural settings. In a boarder scene, this analysis also illustrates how individuals construct their social networks, negotiate and construe their identities in transnational settings by drawing on their linguistic manoeuvre and further project on the larger social and political structures.

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Appendix A: Demographic information of research participants

				Before sojourn	During sojourn			After Sojourn		
No.	**Pseudonymous Name of Participants**	**Age**	**Gender**	**Age/Year before leaving Hong Kong**	**Resettlement Country**	**Years spent in the resettlement country**	**Occupations in the resettlement country**	**Age/Year when returning to Hong Kong**	**Occupations back In Hong Kong**	**Years of returning**
1	Joyce	26	F	15/2009	Canada	3	High school students	18/2011	English teacher	8
2	Nicolette	46	(Trans) F	13/1986	Canada	24	Freelancer/Photographer	37/2010	Photographer/Company owner	9
3	William	26	M	13/2005	The UK	12	Air force/University student	24/2017	Fashion designer	2
4	Willy	22	M	18/2015	The UK	2	Freelancer	21/2018	Sales	1
5	Harris	26	M	11/2003	The UK	10	Student	21/2013	Fashion designer	6
6	Kim	35	M	22/2006	United States of America	6	University student/lecturer	28/2012	IT	7
7	Stephanie	25	F	17/2009	Canada	5	University Student	22/2016	Actress	3
8	Emily	25	F	16/2010	Australia	7	High school/University Student	23/2017	Graphic Designer	2
9	Linda	24	F	16/2011	The UK	4	High School student	20/2015	Marketing/Actress/English teacher	4
10	Grace	28	F	19/2010	The UK and Australia	6	High school/University student	25/2016	Marketing	3

Appendix B: Symbols in Transcriptions

Symbols used in the transcripts is developed by Gail Jefferson (2004) for conversational analysis, taken from Benwell and Stokoe (2006).

. Period indicates closing, usually falling intonation.
, Comma indicates continuing, slightly upward intonation.
? Question mark marks rising intonation.
Underline Underling indicates talk emphasises by the speaker.
>faster< 'Less than' and 'greater than 'signs enclose speeded-up or compressed talk.
<slower> 'Greater than' and 'less than' signs enclose slower or elongated talk.
LOUD Upper-case marks talk that is noticeably louder than that surround it.
( ) Empty single parentheses marks non-transcribable segment of talk.
(talk) Word (s) in single parentheses indicates transcriber's possible hearing.
// overlapping utterance
(0.1) Numbers in single parentheses marks the time of silence, usually in second.

Cross-Cultural Differences in the Refusal Strategies Employed Between English Native Speakers and Chinese EFL Learners

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Abstract. In the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, numerous studies have been attempted to examine the speech acts of requesting, complimenting and complaining, but there remains a paucity of evidence on the refusal speech act. This study investigated the cross-cultural differences in the employment of refusal strategies between English native speakers and Chinese EFL learners according to the social status and social distance of the interlocutors, as well as the social values that might influence the use of their refusal strategies. Altogether 30 English native speakers and 30 Chinese EFL learners participated in a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) containing ten different scenarios, and four participants (two English speakers and two Chinese) were further interviewed about their social values on employing refusal strategies. A total of 129 direct and 1130 indirect refusal strategies were identified from their responses according the taxonomy of refusal strategies proposed by Beebe et al. (1990). The indirect strategies were further classified into subcategories. Findings from analyzing the responses to the DCT and the interviews included: (1) Although the English native speakers tended to use more direct refusal strategies than the Chinese EFL learners did, they were more sensitive than their Chinese counterparts to influential factors of social status level and social distance; (2) The Chinese EFL learners employed *"Excuse"*, *"Statement of regret"*, and *"Statement of principle"* more frequently, whereas the English native speakers used more *"Promise of future acceptance"*, *"Statement of alternative"*, and *"Attempt to dissuade interlocutor"*; (3) Some social values such as "honesty" and "individual emotions" may influence speakers' employment of refusal strategies. Findings also have implications on the teaching of pragmatics in order to help Chinese EFL learners achieve rejected results in English and avoid miscommunications.

Keywords: cross-cultural pragmatics, refusal strategies, English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, social status, social distance

1. Introduction

The refusal speech act was introduced by Wang F.L. (2003) as an uncooperative language behavior towards others' request or invitation, so rejection has potential possibility to violate the hearers' faces. In order not to disrupt the harmonious relationship between the speaker and the hearer, the speaker take the hearer's feeling into consideration and adopt appropriate strategies to make refusals. Thus, implementing the refusal speech act successfully is inseparable from the use of refusal strategies.

Due to different cultural and social backgrounds, people from different countries have various even distinct habits or rules of refusal speech act (Wang F.R. & Liu, 2006). The aim of this research was to study how the differences occur in intercultural communication. Allami and Naeimi (2011) pointed out the lack of understanding on refusal strategies by people was the root of contributing to cross-cultural misunderstandings. Regarding this cross-cultural differences, this study focused on how the refusal strategies are employed in performing the refusal speech act. The findings of this research could be beneficial to speakers for how to use the refusal strategies appropriately to hearers who hold different social values.

More specifically, this study investigated the differences of the refusal strategies employed between China and Western Countries, which addressed the following three research questions:

(1) Are there any differences between Chinese EFL college students and native English speakers in employing refusal strategies to reject requestors? If yes, what are the differences?
(2) Is the way people reject requestors influenced by some factors, such as, social status of the requestors, and the social distance between speakers?
(3) How do these differences relate to the social values held by the two different groups of speakers?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Classification of Refusal Strategies

The refusal strategies employed in the refusal speech act can be categorized refusal strategy into three main types, which are direct refusals, indirect refusals and adjuncts to refusals (Beebe et al., 1990). More specifically, the direct refusal strategies means the speaker express the inability in a direct statement, such as “No”, “I can’t”, and “I won’t”. The indirect refusals include eleven strategies, such as “statement of regret”, “wish”, “excuse”, and etc. As for the adjuncts to refusals, which act on the function of expression politeness that cannot exist in isolation (Morkus, 2009). Table I summarizes the classification of these strategies with semantic formulas.

2.2 Cross-cultural Variability in Production of Refusal Strategies

Research on the cross-cultural differences of refusal strategies from the perspective of types and frequencies have been investigated by some scholars. Through a comparative study Lyuh (1992) concluded that compared to American English speakers, Korean speakers were more indirect and less straightforward, with by nearly no direct refusal strategies such as “no” and “I can’t”. Liao and Brenahan’s (1996) also revealed that the types of strategies used by American English speakers are richer than Chinese speakers.

In another comparative study, Umale (2011) studied refusals produced by British speakers and Omanis and the results indicated that both British and Omanis speakers used more indirect refusal strategies and “*Expressing regret*” and “*Showing consideration to Interlocutor's feelings*” were offered by British and Omanis most frequently.

Table 1. Classification of Refusal Strategies (adopted from Beebe et al., 1990)

Type	Strategies	Semantic Formulas
I) Direct	Direct statement	I can’t; I won’t; I don’t think so.
II) Indirect	A) Statement of regret	I’m sorry; I feel terrible.
	B) Wish	I wish I could help you.
	C) Excuse	I have a headache.
	D) Statement of alternative	
	1. I can do X instead of Y	I’d rather do…; I’d prefer...
	2. Why don't you do instead of Y?	Why don't you ask someone else?
	E) Set condition for future or past acceptance	If you had asked me earlier, I would have…
	F) Promise of future acceptance	I’ll do it next time; I promise I’ll...
	G) Statement of principle	I never do business with friends.
	H) Statement of philosophy	One can’t be too careful.
	I) Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	
	1. Threat or statement of negative	“I won't be fun tonight” to refuse an invitation
	2. Criticize the requester	That’s a terrible idea!
	3. Let interlocutor off the hook	Don't worry about it; That’s okay;
	4. Self-defense	I’m trying my best.

	J) Acceptance that function as a refusal	
	1. Unspecific or indefinite reply	
	2. Lack of enthusiasm	
	K) Avoidance	
	Nonverbal	
	Silence and Hesitation	
	Physical departure	
	Verbal	
	Topic switch	Monday?
	Joke	I'll think about it.
	Repetition of part of request	I'm not sure; I don't know.
	Postponement	
	Hedging	
III) Adjuncts to refusals	A) Statement of positive opinions	That's a good idea…;
	B) Statement of empathy	I realize you are in a difficult situation.
	C) Pause filler	Uhh; Well; Uhm
	D) Gratitude/appreciation	

2.3 Influential Factors on Refusal Strategies

Researchers have also investigated the influential factors that can affect speakers' use of the refusal strategies, such as gender and social status and etc. Sa'd and Qadermazi (2014) concluded that no significant difference caused by gender, but social status did. The results of Hassani et al.'s study (2011) showed that Persian EFL learners offered more indirect strategies in their L1 (Persian) when they in the higher social status, while they adopted more direct strategies in L2 (English).

In another comparative study about American and Chinese speakers, Li's study (2007) addressed two main influential factors, which were social power (including superior-inferior social ranks, parents and children, and teachers and students) and social distance. Li revealed that the influence of social power played a more significant role than the influence of social distance in Chinese speakers, which American speakers were on the opposite.

2.4 Cultural Differences on Social Values

Language and culture are inseparable, and the different uses of refusal strategies reflect the different values (Gong, 2006). Xie (2005) concluded that the main cause of the style of Chinese refusal strategies were that Chinese society is essentially a hierarchical society. Chinese people attach importance to social status and pay attention to superiority and inferiority, so it is reasonable for teachers and superiors to treat students and subordinates more directly. Moreover, Chinese society advocates "respecting and filial piety" and the younger generation hold high esteem for the elder. Therefore Chinese do not dare to refuse the elder directly.

On the contrary, Xie (2005) concluded that there were three main reasons that contributed to the more straightforward" communication style of western people. Firstly, it is closely associated with the value westerners place on individualism. Secondly, western people prefer equality in interpersonal relationships, so they believe that they can treat everyone equally, including their children, parents, students, colleagues, friends and even strangers. Thirdly, western people are more likely to focus on the future. Influenced by future-oriented values, they seldom worship their ancestors, or respect their teachers as Chinese do.

Overall, it can be seen that how previous literature proved that the cross-cultural differences did exist, however, few scholars attempted to investigate both differences and influential factors across Chinese culture and Western culture. Moreover, some categories in previous research on classification of refusal speech act were absent. Therefore, this study will try to conduct a comparative study between Chinese EFL learners and English native speakers and present a better picture of different use of refusal strategies from a cross-cultural perspective and reveal the underlying reasons for the pragmatic differences.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

A total of 30 Chinese college EFL learners in UIC and 30 native English speakers participated in this study. More specifically, the age range of both groups was within 18 to 23 years old. Regarding the linguistic background of participants, Chinese participants spoke Mandarin or Cantonese as their mother tongue, and English as their foreign language. "Native English speakers" in this study referred to those people who were from western countries and spoke English as their first language.

3.2 Instruments and Procedure

Questionnaire survey. A questionnaire was designed to ascertain the participants' different uses of refusal strategies, using a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT, see the Appendix). The DCT was a modified version of Beebe et al. (1990), and it had been checked for its reliability and validity in previous studies (Beebe et al. 1990; Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Sa'd. & Qadermazi., 2014).

In the DCT, participants were asked to respond ten scenarios, including academic situations (Situations 1, 5 & 6), work place settings (Situations 2, 8 & 9), and everyday life situations (Situations 3, 4, 7 & 10). Based on Li (2007)'s study, different relationships between interlocutors were set up in these situations, involving the social status (teachers and students, boss and employees) and the social distance (friends or strangers). More specifically, regarding the social status factor, two situations (Situations 5 & 8) invited participants to answer as a higher social-status person, two (Situations 2 & 6) as a lower social status person, and two (Situations 1 & 9) as an equal-status person as the requestor. For the factor of social distance, two situations (Situations 3 & 7) required participants to speak to friends, and two (Situations 4 & 10) required them to speak to strangers.

The questionnaire was delivered in paper format, which was written in English. Participants finished within 10 minutes in order to get their natural responses without too much consideration. For the data analysis in questionnaire, the afore-mentioned taxonomy of refusal strategies by Beebe et al. (1990, see Table 1) was adopted to code and analyze the data collected through the survey. By employing quantitative approach, the percentages, frequency counts and Chi-square test were established to display the results.

Interview. The aims of the interview were to investigate participants' perceptions towards making refusals and their own social values that influenced the employment of refusal strategies. Two English native speakers and two Chinese EFL learners were selected from participants who completed the questionnaire survey randomly. In this interview, a consent form and an interview protocol were adopted. Participants would be asked the questions like "Participants were asked some questions like "Do you think your values affect how you reject others?" and "Have you ever experienced cross-cultural misunderstandings in a reject situation?"

The interview data were analyzed qualitatively using inductive coding approach. Answers from the interview were transcribed and generalized according to the categories of social values in the discussion section. Furthermore, this study also presented some examples offered by both groups for displaying more details in the discussion section.

4. Results

4.1. Questionnaire Survey Results

Frequency and Percentage Differences of Refusals Between Both Groups. In total, 664 refusal strategies were identified from the responses by English native speakers and 595 strategies were coded from Chinese EFL learners' responses. All refusal strategies, excluding adjuncts to refusals, were summarized in Table 2. As can be seen in Table 2, indirect refusal strategies were mostly adopted by both English native speakers (85% of the total number) and Chinese EFL learners (93%). Chi-square analysis of the relationship between both groups and refusal strategies use generated a value higher than the critical value (see Table 3). This indicated that there was a strong possibility that the refusal strategies use were affected by different speaker groups.

Table 2. Frequency of Refusal Strategies Employed by Both Participant Groups

	English Native Speakers Frequency (Percentage)	Chinese EFL Learners Frequency (Percentage)
Direct Refusal Strategies	86 (15%)	43 (7%)
Indirect Refusal Strategies	578 (85%)	552 (93%)
Total	664 (100%)	595 (100%)

Table 3. Chi-Square Analysis of the Relationship Between Both Groups and Refusal Strategies Use

Chi-square	Value	*df*	*Sigma*
Both Participant Groups	11.1836	1	<0.01

Note. Critical Value: 6.635

Table 4 presents the frequency of indirect refusal strategies used by both participant groups. As can be seen, both groups responded with similar patterns of indirect refusal strategies. The first two most frequent employment of indirect refusal strategies employed by both groups are "*Excuse*" (e.g. "I'm really in a rush.") and "Statement of regret" (e.g. "I'm so sorry."), which constituted more than 70% of total indirect refusal strategies use. Moreover, Chinese EFL learners appeared to employ "*Excuse*", "*Statement of regret*", and "*Statement of principle*" slightly more frequently than English native speakers do. On the contrary, these following three indirect refusal strategies occurred more frequently in English native speakers rather than Chinese EFL learners' responses: "*Promise of future acceptance*", "*Statement of alternative*", and "*Attempt to dissuade interlocutor*".

It could be seen from the data in Table 5 that English native speakers used adjuncts to refusal strategy more frequently than the Chinese EFL learners (68 versus 62) in total. More specifically, *"Statement of positive opinions"* topped the list with the figure of 20 and 32 respectively (e.g. "I'd love to"). Interestingly, above three adjuncts were used more frequently by Chinese EFL learners, while the rest adjunct "*Gratitude/appreciation*" was used more frequently by English native speakers (27 times), which was nine times as much as that on EFL group (3 times).

Table 4. Frequency of Indirect Refusal Strategies Used by both Participant Groups

Indirect Refusal Strategies	English Native Speakers Frequency (Percentage)	Chinese EFL Learners Frequency (Percentage)
Excuse	142 (35%)	178 (40%)
Statement of regret	138 (34%)	165 (37%)
Statement of principle	23 (6%)	34 (8%)
Promise of future acceptance	33 (8%)	18 (4%)
Statement of alternative	24 (6%)	24 (5%)
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	25 (6%)	13 (3%)
Acceptance that function as a refusal	14 (3%)	4 (0.9%)
Set condition for future or past acceptance	6 (1%)	4 (0.9%)
Statement of philosophy	2 (0.5%)	5 (1%)
Wish	2 (0.5%)	0
Avoidance	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
Total	410 (100%)	446 (100%)

Table 5. Frequency of Adjuncts to Refusals Used by both Participant Groups

Adjuncts to Refusals	English Native Speakers Frequency (Percentage)	Chinese EFL Learners Frequency (Percentage)
a) Statement of positive opinions	20 (29%)	32 (51%)
c) Pause filler	19 (28%)	24 (35%)
d) Gratitude/appreciation	27 (40%)	3 (4%)
b) Statement of empathy	2 (3%)	4 (6%)
Total	68 (100%)	63 (100%)

Influential Factors of Social Status in Employing Refusal Strategies. With regard to the factors of social status and social distance that may influence the employment of refusal strategy, Table 6 indicates the results of frequency of refusal strategies use according to the social status of the interlocutor (higher, equal or lower). Chi-square analysis of the relationship between social status and refusal strategies use by both participant groups generated the values of both groups higher than the critical value (see Table 7). This indicated that there was a strong possibility that the way of employing refusal strategies by both participant groups was influenced by social status. Moreover, the refusal strategies employed by Chinese EFL learners employed were more consistently influenced by the factor of social status when compared to the English native speaking group.

It can also be seen from Table 6 that the direct refusal strategies use is different considerably in frequency by two groups. The direct refusal was used most frequently when English native speakers were equal-status interlocutors (25 times), while the EFL group used direct refusals most frequently when they were interlocutors of higher social status (13 times). One significant difference was that "*Statement of regret*" was used by English native speakers most frequently in higher social status situation, while in lower social status situation by Chinese EFL learners.

Table 6. Frequency of Direct and Frequently Used Indirect Refusal Strategies Use According to the Social Status of the interlocutor

	Social Status of the Interlocutor							
	English Native Speakers				Chinese EFL Learners			
Refusal Strategies	Higher (S5 & S8) Freq (%)	Equal (S1 & S9) Freq (%)	Lower (S2 & S6) Freq (%)	Total Freq (%)	Higher (S5 & S8) Freq (%)	Equal (S1 & S9) Freq (%)	Lower (S2 & S6) Freq (%)	Total Freq (%)
Direct Refusal	19 (36%)	25 (47%)	9 (17%)	53 (100%)	13 (50%)	9 (35%)	4 (15%)	26 (100%)
Statement of regret	33 (38%)	26 (30%)	27 (31%)	86 (100%)	22 (21%)	36 (35%)	45 (44%)	103 (100%)
Excuse	17 (20%)	29 (35%)	37 (45%)	83 (100%)	10 (10%)	42 (43%)	46 (47%)	98 (100%)
Statement of principle	16 (89%)	2 (11%)	0	18 (100%)	25 (86%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	29 (100%)
Promise of future acceptance	0	1 (5%)	21 (95%)	22 (100%)	1 (7%)	0	13 (93%)	14 (100%)
Statement of alternative	2 (17%)	10 (83%)	0	12 (100%)	2 (15%)	10 (77%)	1 (8%)	13 (100%)
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	10	1	4	15 (100%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	10 (100%)

Note. S1, S2, S5, S6, S8 & S9 refer to the situations listed in the DCT (see the Appendix).

Table 7. Chi-square Analysis of the Relationship Between Social Status and Refusal Strategies Use

	Value	*df*	*Sigma*
English Native Speakers	64.0052	12	<0.01
Chinese EFL Learners	51.9701	12	<0.01

Note. Critical Value: 26.217

Influential Factors of Social Distance in Employing Refusal Strategies. Chi-square analysis of the relationship between social distance and refusal strategies use by both participant groups also generated the values of both groups higher than the critical value (see Table 9). The results indicated there was a strong possibility that the way of employing refusal strategies by both participant groups is influenced by social distance. Moreover, compared to Chinese EFL learners, English native speakers are more sensitive to the influential factor of the social distance.

As shown in Table 8, both participant groups used more direct refusals in the intimate people situation rather than unfamiliar people situation. However, English native speakers employ direct refusals in a relatively consistent and stable, which share the figures around 16 times, but there is a significant difference in EFL group, which were

12 and 5 respectively. Regarding to the indirect refusal strategies, the most frequently used were "*Statement of regret*" and "*Excuse*". When both groups spoke to people they are unfamiliar with, the indirect refusal strategy "*Statement of regret*" and "*Statement of alternative*" occurred more frequently. In contrast, when both groups spoke to people they intimate with, the indirect refusal strategy "*Excuse*" and "*Promise of future acceptance*" occurred more frequently.

Table 8. Frequency of Direct and Frequently Used Indirect Refusal Strategies Use According to the Social Distance of the Interlocutor

	Social Distance of the Interlocutor					
	English Native speakers			Chinese EFL Learners		
Refusal Strategies	Intimate (S3 & S7) Freq (%)	Unfamiliar (S4 & S6) Freq (%)	Total Freq (%)	Intimate (S3 & S7) Freq (%)	Unfamiliar (S4 & S6) Freq (%)	Total Freq (%)
Direct Refusal	18 (55%)	15 (45%)	33 (19%)	12 (71%)	5 (29%)	17 (100%)
Excuse	34 (58%)	25 (42%)	59 (34%)	44 (55%)	36 (45%)	80 (100%)
Statement of regret	12 (29%)	30 (71%)	41 (24%)	23 (37%)	39 (64%)	62 (100%)
Statement of alternative	2 (17%)	10 (83%)	12 (7%)	0	11 (100%)	11 (100%)
Promise of future acceptance	11 (100%)	0	11 (6%)	3 (100%)	0	3 (100%)
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	4 (36%)	7 (64%)	11 (6%)	3(100%)	0	3 (100%)
Statement of principle	0	1 (100%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	5 (100%)

Note. S3, S4, S6 & S7 refer to the situations listed in the DCT (see the Appendix).

Table 9. Chi-square Analysis of the Relationship Between Social Distance and Refusal Strategies Use

Chi-square	Value	df	Sigma
English Native speakers	30.8454	6	<0.01
Chinese EFL Learners	27.7885	6	<0.01

Note. Critical Value: 16.812

4.2 Interview Results

In total, two English native speakers (Speakers A and B) and two Chinese EFL learners (Learners X and Y) accepted the interview, who were selected from the participants who completed the questionnaire survey randomly, regarding their social values of employing refusal strategies. With regard to whether participants noticed people use language refusal strategies differently, three of four participants answered in the affirmative and only one English native speaker (Speaker A) provided a negative answer and he/she believed that "refusal strategies are the same across languages." Note that the selected extracts were shown below and the answers from Chinese participants were translated into English.

Both groups of participants' views and social values on refusal strategies. Regarding whether social values affect how participants reject others, Chinese EFL learners mentioned the concept of "face" and "social relations" that related to the traditional Chinese culture. However, both Learners X and Y mentioned that they put a higher priority on "individual emotion" rather than how to decrease the possibility of violating others' faces:

Moreover, one English interviewee showed an awareness of the importance of refusal strategies is that can "soften the situation by refusing softly" and "avoiding showing aggressive personality", while the other mentioned the value of "honesty" that may affect his/her use of refusal strategy:

- ***Example 1***

  Speaker A: "I think that if you value honesty you might be more direct with your refusal, however if you prefer to stop the other party from being hurt you might come up with an indirect way of refusing them."

Experiences on cross-cultural differences in rejecting or being rejected. As a result of previous experiences on cross-cultural differences, all participants mentioned there were not great cultural differences in the way of rejection and both English interviewees emphasized that they had not experienced such differences before. Interestingly, Learner X even mentioned westerners are less direct than she expected.

- ***Example 2:***

  Learner X: "I always thought the way of foreigners refuse others is very direct, but in fact it was very euphemistic. Of course, I'm not sure whether is a common phenomenon."

5. Discussion

5.1 Similarities and Differences in the Production of Refusal Strategies Use

Regarding the frequent used refusal strategies, the results indicated that "*Excuse*" and "*Statement of regret*", as two most frequently used indirect refusal strategies by both participant groups, obtained a considerable level of consistence with previous studies (Umale, 2011; Farnia and Wu, 2012; Allami & Naeimi, 2011). The current study also found that Chinese EFL learners were more likely to use "*Excuse*", "*Statement of regret*", and "*Statement of principle*", while the frequency of uttering "*Promise of future acceptance*", "*Statement of alternative*", and "*Attempt to dissuade interlocutor*" by English native speakers relative higher than that of Chinese EFL learners.

Moreover, for the adjuncts to refusals, the results in the current study revealed the most frequently used adjuncts by both groups is *"Statement of positive opinions"*, which was consistent with that of Sa'd. and Qadermazi (2014) who investigated the Iranian and English groups. However, one unanticipated finding in this study was that *"Gratitude/appreciation"* occurred more commonly in English native speakers' responses, which could be rarely seen in Chinese EFL learners' rejection, which has not previously been described.

5.2 The Influence of Social Status and Social Distance on Refusal Strategies

The results of Chi-analysis indicated social status and social distance had a strong correlation with both groups' use of refusal strategies. Although many other studies (e.g., Hassani et al., 2011; Xie, 2005; Allami & Naeimi, 2011) addressed that EFL learners were more sensitive to influential factors compared to English native speakers, in this study it was somewhat surprising that Chinese patterns for employing refusal strategies were more consistent regardless of social status level.

As for the factor of the social distance, this finding was unexpected and suggested that no obvious cross-cultural difference of refusal strategies use according the social distance between two participant groups. A possible explanation for the consistence of the English group's refusal strategies use might be that non-native English speakers lack enough linguistic and pragmatic competence to provide semantic formulas of refusal strategies as rich as native speakers (Tanck, 2004), so EFL group normally provided a relatively limited proportion of refusal strategies and more stable responses in rejecting others.

5.3 Implications

This finding has important implications for helping second language teachers to understand the cross-pragmatic language performance in making refusals and improve EFL learners' awareness of L2 sociocultural situation and greater pragmatic abilities in the employment of refusal strategies.

Farnia and Wu (2012) stated that Chinese EFL learners lack of enough acknowledgement of sociocultural and linguistic competences for conveying and achieving their rejected results, and the findings in Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's study (1998) also suggested if non-native speakers could spend more than one year in a target culture, they could achieve a higher pragmatic abilities of their L2. Accordingly, an implication of this study is the possibility that teaching the taxonomy of refusal strategies with basic semantic formulas in the real classroom.

As Hudson (2001) suggested the DCT and role-play activities could be adopted in the second language teaching in order to implement refusal strategies in a more authentic language context. In the speaking class, with the guidance of specific types and examples of refusal strategies, EFL learners can participant in the role-play activities about how to reject people who in different social distances and status in various scenarios, which help them practice in an interactional speaking to maintain harmonious social relationships. Moreover, DCT can be used in the writing class, and EFL students can be encouraged to mimic the semantic formulas of refusal strategies in responding the different requests and invitations.

5.4 Limitations

The major limitation of this study is the findings based on a small sample (a total of 60 participants) and the small sample size did not ensure the reliability of the main findings of the performance on refusal strategies used by English and EFL groups.

Additionally, the DCT that was adopted as the main methodology in this study might also limited the natural responses from participants. Their written answers might also differ from their oral speaking in the real situation.

6. Conclusion

This study compared the employment of refusal strategies by English native speakers and Chinese EFL learners in the DCT. The findings suggested that the main manifest difference was the frequency of the refusal strategies use according to the social status and distance. English native speakers used direct refusals more frequently than EFL group did and the refusal strategies patterns were more sensitive to the social status. Furthermore, the interview results suggested that the social values of "individual emotions" and "honesty" might influence the employment of two participant groups' refusal strategies. The present study may contribute to the understanding of cross-cultural differences on the way of refusing others, which not only help EFL learners to get a deeper insight to the different types of refusal strategies in English, but also have both groups to enhance their knowledge of sociocultural context. The second language teacher may also consider the findings in this study in the real classroom to help EFL learners to achieve rejected results. Further studies could be done to explore different semantic formulas of refusal strategies and more systematic taxonomy for both research application and curriculum development.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a revised version of the final year project for my BA TESL programme. I would like to express my deepest thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Edith Yan, for her keen and forceful academic instructions and valuable guidance.

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Appendix

Refusal Speech Act Completion Task

Introduction: Please read the following 10 situations. After each situation you will be asked to write a response in the blank. You imagine that you do **NOT** want to agree with their request, invitation, etc. Please respond as naturally as possible and try to write your response as you feel you would say it in the situation.

Situation 1

You are a student in college. You attend classes regularly and take good notes. Your classmate often misses class and asks you for the lecture notes, but you don't want to give the notes to your classmate.

Classmate: Oh! We have an exam tomorrow, but I don't have notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you about this, but could you lend me your notes once again?

You: ____

Situation 2

You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave the office.

Boss: If it's okay with you, I'd like you to spend an extra hour or two so that we can finish up with this work. Can you stay little longer in the office?

You: ____

Situation 3

You are at a friend's house watching TV. Your friend offers you a snack but you do not want to eat.

Friend: Hey, why don't you try this new flavor? I've been told you about!

You: ____

Situation 4

You are in a ticket office now. One unknown person asks you to keep an eye on his/her luggage but you do not want to.

Unknown person: Well, I want to go the washing room but I cannot bring so many luggages. Will you please keep an eye on my luggage?

You: ____

Situation 5

You teach English at a university. One of your students asks to you for delaying a quiz but you want to refuse him/her.

Student: Ah, excuse me! Some of the students were talking after class yesterday. We feel that the quiz would be better if you could delay it to next week.

You: ____

Situation 6

You are having a discussion with your professor on Friday afternoon. It is 5:30pm. You are planning to pick up a friend at the airport immediately after the meeting and must leave the university within 15 minutes.

Professor: Hey, it's getting late. Why don't we all go down to the cafeteria? We can finish up there while we eat dinner.

You: ____

Situation 7

A friend invites you to party, but you really don't like this friend's another friend who is also invited to go to the party and you do not want to go there.

Friend: How about coming to my house Friday night? We're having a small dinner party.

You: ____

Situation 8

You are a boss in an advertising company now. You fire one employee because his mistakes have resulted in the company suffers heavy losses. He comes to your office and wants you to withdraw your decision, but you want to refuse him.

Employee: I'm really sorry for my mistakes! I assure you that it will not happen again. Could you consider your decision again?

You: ____

Situation 9

You are a worker of a bookstore. One of your colleagues asks to exchange your duty time but you do not want to.

Worker: Well, I have some private business to deal with tomorrow and I know you are on duty tonight, so could you exchange your duty time with me?

You: ____

Situation 10

You are in the airport now. You call a taxi back to school and one unknown person asks you to share this taxi but you do not want to.

Unknown person: Well, do you want to arrive at X (near to your destination)? I cannot wait for another taxi. Would you mind sharing one taxi with me?

You: ____

A Research Proposal of Assessing the Effectiveness of a Take-home English Academic Essay Assignment for Associate Degree Program Students in a Local University

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Abstract. To assess students' academic writing ability, most local course designers adopt the take-home assignment approach for collecting the academic essays from English as a second language (ESL) students in the Associate Degree Program. However, whether the take-home academic essay assignment is more effective than the in-class academic essay assessment in evaluating students' academic writing proficiency is still under doubt. Little attention from the academic research has been paid to the investigation of the effectiveness of the take-home academic essay for students writing competence. On the one hand, the take-home assignment enables students to have more time and assistance from the professionals to revise and further improve their works. On the other hand, students may hire the academic professionals to complete their essays, which adversely affects the accountability and reliability of the assessment. In this research proposal, academic essays of a class of 24 students will be collected as the data for analysis. The essay can be considered as a high-stake and summative assessment since it occupies 30% of the marks of the coursework. To fill the aforementioned knowledge gap regarding the effectiveness of take-home assessment, the aims of the proposed study will evaluate whether the design of the take-home essay can accurately reflect the students' writing standards. A three-stage investigation will be adopted to evaluate the effectiveness of the collaboration between the course design and the assessment tool through re-marking the samples based on the Common European Framework of Reference, data analysis of the result from the questionnaires and focus group interviews as well as the semi-structured interviews of the course lecturers. The research project will also investigate the reliability of the marking rubrics as the assessment tool, whereby contributing to the scholarship in the particular field of educational evaluation and assessment.

Keywords: take-home English academic essay assignment, Associate Degree Program, educational evaluation and assessment

1. Literature Review

1.1 Take-home Assignment: Is it an Authentic and Fair Assessment of Students Written Abilities?

An authentic assessment takes the form chiefly of portfolios and performance-based tasks. They are designed to present a broader, more genuine picture of student learning (Zessoules & Gardner, 1991). In an epistemological sense, the take-home academic essay serves the purpose of an authentic assessment as it evaluates students' written abilities by their performance on the summative product of the academic essay submission. Unfortunately, the final work of the academic essay may be revised by the third party (e.g. editing or proofreading service company) which cannot truly reflect the actual writing ability of the students. As a result, another criteria of assessing the authenticity of academic essay assignment is to see how assessment can be combined with learning and instruction to provide a powerful instance of authentic assessment through the building, nurturing, and practicing of rich understandings (Zessoules & Gardner, 1991). Therefore, as an ongoing and educational process, an authentic assessment should be able to evaluate students continuous learning in view of their time and effort spent on the assignments in the classroom and beyond (Karahan, Kerkhoffs, Randelli, & Tuijthof, 2015; Zessoules & Gardner, 1991, p.73).

From the student perspective, as active learners, college students have to be self-initiated for completing their essays in authentic assessment after they successfully acquired the fundamental subject knowledge and mastered self-directed learning skills in the courses. Therefore, authentic assessment requires the examinees (i.e. college students) to demonstrate their abilities in posing questions, making judgments, integrating criticisms, reconsidering problems, and investigating new possibilities (Zessoules & Gardner, 1991, p.75). Moreover, in the assessment, students must show their capability to review their individual work and make timely reflections. They also need to recognize and build upon their strengths in their work and thereby diagnose and minimize their weaknesses. After they received the feedback of outlines from the lecturers or tutors, students have to make progression and improvement on their work by applying different essay writing skills, such as setting and answering questions, criticizing the topic, reflecting upon the issues involved, and offering recommendations. Thus, in authentic assignments, students certainly take the autonomous and independent role on their essay writing and become a key player in the process of the assessment (Stone-MacDonald, 2014).

In terms of the fairness of take-home assignment, Parsons and Kassabova (2002) believe that the marks allocated by the lecturer (in some take-home assignments) were based on criteria therefore the students were judged on their performances in relation to the criteria rather than in comparison to others; this is fairer than judging students on a norm referenced model. Hence, the question of 'the take-home academic essay assignment is a fair assessment of students' written ability?' is worth investigating.

1.2 Criterion-referencing as a Standard Setting of the Academic Essay Assessment

In reviewing the educational assessment literature, the idea of criterion-referencing emphasizes the absolute standards in which teachers determine students' mastery of materials and achievement based on a set of specific learning outcomes (Raju, 1982). It aims to provide the fairest and more objective measures of students' performance, given a particular range of skills and experiences required by academic programmes or disciplines (Santy & Mackintosh, 2000). In its entirety, the concept of criterion-referenced setting in assessment shares the similarity of grade related criteria which was defined by Sir Keith Joseph in a speech at the North of England Conference in 1984 as 'to define precisely for each subject, the skills, competences, understanding and areas of knowledge which a candidate must have covered and the minimum level of attainment he must demonstrate in each of them, if he is to be awarded a particular grade' (cited in Riding & Butterfield, 1990).

In the academic essay assessment, students have to attain certain level in different parts of their writings and thereby, the corresponding marks would be awarded for the assignment. For instance, in the introductory paragraph, two parts are appraised whether the student meets the basic requirement for a pass of the writing. For attention-grabbing strategies and background information aspect, students have to show their effort to attract readers' attention using the appropriate writing strategies. Students also offer background information for readers' understanding of the topic with vital points. On the other hand, in the thesis statement and planning of statement aspect, students have to present an effective thesis statement (e.g. the scope of content is not too broad or too narrow, not making an announcement, nor more than one idea given) and the development of the writing is clearly exhibited. Hence, the total mark of the work is given after teacher's discretion of the writing performance based on the proficiency of the writing (i.e. title, body paragraphs, conclusion, language, organization, documentation skills and use of references).

1.3 Content Validity of Academic Essay Assessment

The Content Validity approach involves the process of the inferences taken from the scores to determine the academic result of the students. The preset domain of examination (i.e. target domain) would be used as an indicator to estimate the attribute of interest. Samples would be drawn from the target domain as the data for further analysis of the scores. Circumstances of the observations are also used to support the interpretation of the test scores (Kane, 2006). Content validity refers to assessments that should represent the domain, form a large enough sample of the domain, and be appropriate and fair. Among the models for validity under the Content Validity approach, the Criterion Model is adopted by the take-home academic essay assessment. It emphasizes the correlation between the test scores and the criterion scores. In the academic essay mark moderation, each lecturer has to submit samples of low, medium and high achievers in each class for the approval from the subject leader. The circumstantial considerations by the subject leader include the mean score of the students in the mid-term examination (i.e. multiple-choice questions and a 350-word writing task). The median score of the essay has to align with the median score in the multiple-choice section in the mid-term examination and the expected GPA of the class. The judgment conducted by the lecturer is highly in accordance with the given marking rubric which is criterion-based. After receiving the feedback of the marking from the subject leader, the teacher has to revise the marking. As Messick (1989) suggested, the limitations of the Content Validity approach include its subjective look at the content of tests, lack of follow-up measures with the scores and their interpretation, bias towards confirming validity (i.e. the test-makers/ subject leaders typically making the content validity judgments), and its usefulness for domain representation arguments for assessment validity (Kane, 2006). In the academic paper assessment, the assessors evaluate students' performance in a subjective manner as different markers would have different judgments on the level of the writing tasks.

In this proposed research, the data used is the marking rubrics, the academic result and the academic essays of a class of Business-major students (24 students in a class) in the Associate Degree Program. The data is useful in evaluating whether the assessment is fair in assessing students' works and it is suitable to be used as the assessment tool in the future.

2. Identifying the Research Gap

To some extent, the proposed study can be regarded as an advancement of research on exploring the effectiveness of the take-home writing assignment on evaluating the writing capability of students. Based on the marking rubric, the tutor makes judgment for the students' writing performance by awarding the corresponding grade. Whether the scoring rubrics align with the course structure is significant for the assessment-related analysis. Although there is considerable research of assessments conducted in various fields, there is a lack of conclusive research on whether the assessment is reliable in evaluating whether the students actualize what they learnt from the course in their course work and the lecturers effectively differentiate the different standards of the writings using the marking rubric. It is paramount to design an assessment which can accurately reflect the learners' academic performance by applying what they learn in the course to prove that the assessment tool is proficient. This proposed study is thus intended to fill this important research gap. The research will focus on examining the assessment methods (i.e. cohort referencing method, content validity approach and criterion-referenced) applied on the take-home academic essays of the chosen class. The course outline, the essay guideline, the marking rubrics, the marking samples as well as the markings of some academic essays will be the assessment evidence. It is hoped that the assessment will be a more proficient assessment tool in generating the academic result and leading to more effective learning and teaching. The evaluation process of the academic essays will be investigated thoroughly to pinpoint any loopholes involved and room for improvement. Accordingly, a more effective assessment mechanism will be recommended.

The study's aim is threefold: first, to determine whether the take-home academic essay assignment accurately and authentically weigh the written works; second, to probe into the markings done by the lecturer using the marking rubric (i.e. the essay sampling procedure, the conferment of the final mark); and, third, to delve into the connection between the course design (i.e. the schedule, the course outline, the writing guideline). This research will appraise whether the assessment tool is successful in aligning the course design and the marking rubric as well as valid in evaluating the writing capability of the students.

2.1 Research Questions

In light of the aforementioned research gap, the following research questions are suggested.

1. Does the design of the take-home essay precisely exhibit the students' writing standards?
2. Does the marking rubrics serve its high reliability as an assessment tool?
3. Is the marking rubric in alignment with the course design?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A three-stage investigation will be adopted to evaluate the effectiveness of the collaboration between the course design and the assessment tool through re-marking the samples (i.e. based on the CEFR framework), data analysis of the result from the questionnaires and focus group interviews completed by the students as well as the semi-structured interviews of the course lecturers.

Prior to the submission of the academic essays, the researcher (i.e. the Visiting Lecturer of the course) will randomly select five marked scratch outlines from high-achievers, medium-achievers, and low-achievers respectively from the selected class of 24 students. They will be analyzed to see whether the feedback from the lecturer will improve students' writings in the final submission of the paper.

At the first stage, the marked scoring rubrics and the marked academic essays of these fifteen students will also be collected. The investigator will analyze whether the judgment conducted by the lecturer in the chosen score sheets is in strict accordance to the requirements set in the scoring rubric. It is to see whether the total marks of the writings can truly reflect the students' overall writing standards and distinguish the more high, reasonable and weak proficient students. The researcher will re-mark the fifteen writings to see if the original marking aligns with the new marking. Remarks will be given by the researcher to offer suggestions regarding the collaboration between the scoring rubric and the markings done by the tutor. Thus, the reliability of the marking rubric on evaluating the academic essays will be shown.

At the second stage, the researcher will examine the marked writings selected at the first stage in which the scores are within the mark deviation of 1-3 marks given by the original markers and the researcher. The researcher will look into the graded, selected written works to see if the writing performance is congruous with the course design (i.e. learning target for academic writing of the course, expected learning outcome of the assignment, and the scratch outline requirement). The investigator will inspect if the high proficient writings (i.e. the scratch outline and the essay outline) can fulfill most of the learning aims set by the course outline and assignment outline. Therefore, the relevance between the course design and the written works will be presented.

At the final stage, the investigator will take the Mid-term Test into consideration for analyzing the effectiveness of the academic essay assignment in reflecting students' written capability and its alignment with the course design. Out of the fifteen selected samples, their multiple-choice (i.e. MC) section score in the Mid-term Test result will be compared with their academic essay scores. It is to examine if students' performances are consistent in these two assessments. The original marker has to adjust the academic essay scores according to the man score of the MC section. If the mean score of MC part of the class is below mean, the academic essay result will be below average. It is to review the effectiveness of this mark alignment system. Another mark alignment conducted is the GPA result of the class. After the submission of the result of all the assessments in the course, the subject leader will request the lecturer to adjust the score of the academic essays. The score has to be aligned with the expected GPA of the class. Afterwards, the marks of the academic essays will be raised or degraded by raising or deducting the marks of the academic essays for the whole class. The investigator will further analyze if the final score of the academic essays (i.e. after the moderation of the GPA result) reflect the writing standard of the students.

The research adopts both the quantitative and qualitative approaches for data analysis. Questionnaires will be distributed to the 24 students. The students will grade the questions about whether the course design (i.e. the course schedule, the course outline, the assignment instruction, the scratch outline instruction and feedback, the marked scoring rubric) would assist their academic essay writing. A graphic organizer (e.g. pie chart) will be employed for the representation of the effectiveness of the academic essay assessment. Afterward, the focus group interviews will be conducted. Two students who give the highest, medium, and lowest grades for the assessment tool instrument will be interviewed respectively. The six students will elaborate how effective or ineffective the assessment tool work and express their learning experience (i.e. difficulties, achievements) of working on the essay assignment. Their interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed into scripts. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews with six selected course lecturers (i.e. two lecturers are chosen who teach the high, medium, and low capability classes respectively) will be conducted after the course. The lecturers will express their comment on the assessment tool. It will also be audio-recorded and transcribed into scripts.

3.2 Selection of Participants

A class of 24 students who is the Business majors in the Associate Degree Program will be chosen as the participants for this research. They are selected because the students are the average class in the cohort which can represent the general academic performance of the students. Their mean scores in the multiple choice (i.e. MC) sections in the Mid-term Test reflect their medium English capability among all students taking the course 'English for Academic Studies (Business) I'. The MC part tests students' mastery of reading skills, writing skills and grammar knowledge. Their mean score is 19.3 which is only 0.1 mark lower than the average mark of all classes in the cohort. As such, it can truly reflect how effective the academic essay assessment evaluates the students (of medium English ability) on their academic writing standard.

3.3 Data Collection

The course-related materials (i.e. course and assignment outlines, marking samples, marking rubric), marked scratch outlines (i.e. two pages for each student by filling in the gaps for the structure of the paper), marked academic essays (i.e. 450-550 words each), and the report of the MC section of the Mid-term Test will be collected as the research data. The investigator (i.e. also the course Lecturer) of the aforementioned medium-level class will garner this evidence. For the sake of confidentiality, the names of the students and the school will be kept anonymous.

3.4 Data Analysis

To investigate the effectiveness of using the take-home academic essay assignment to evaluate students' academic writing ability and its collaboration among the assessment, the course design, and the marking rubric, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) will be utilized to determine whether the assessment tool is proficiency in assessing the academic writing performance in a course-based context. The CEFR proposes its alignment with the assessment by categorizing the writing performance into six levels with descriptors. It has been gaining significance worldwide due to its holistic assessment approach. The Cambridge ESOL examination adopts the CEFR as well (Taylor & Jones, 2006). To inspect whether the take-home academic essay assignment is operative in differentiating students' academic writing standard, the researcher will look into the framework of CEFR and the take-home academic essay assignment procedure.

First, the marking rubric of the academic essay will be compared with the six scales descriptors of the CEFR to evaluate its authenticity on reflecting students' writing ability. Second, the specifications of the assessment will be explored based on the CEFR framework. For instance, the objectives of the course and the assignment, the assignment instructions, the scoring rubric, and the conferment of assignment grades. Third, the standardization methods of the assignment will be scrutinized. More specifically, the judging panels involved in the benchmarking and the standard setting of the assessment. Applying the CEFR, the researcher can professionally investigate the proficiency of the assessment tool, thereby strengthening the validity of the research findings.

4. Anticipated Outcomes and Significance

The anticipated outcomes of the proposed study can be summarized as follow. First, from a practical perspective, this thorough investigation can reflect the caliber and the inadequacies of the assessment tool. The study will identify the matters surrounding the assessment, namely the usefulness and deficiencies of the assessment through the CEFR framework analysis, response from the students and teachers in the questionnaires and interviews. After the completion of all interviews with students and teachers after the course ends, each interview will be transcribed word by word for further analysis. A number of meaningful interview excerpts and examples of assignments completed during the marking intervention will also be selected for further analysis. Since the interviews will be carried out in this study will take both the students' and teachers' perspectives on the academic essay assessment and the course design into consideration, thereby opening up a window for reflection by educators and academic researchers alike on the loopholes of the current assessment system. Second, the practical feedback would be helpful for revising the course design in the future so that a more fair and authentic assessment will be carried out. Finally, the data collected in the study will provide useful insights for educational policymakers (i.e. the Education Bureau, the managers in the higher education field) in Hong Kong, helping them to understand how assessment tool would be refined and transform the assessment approach in the forthcoming educational assessment policy and curriculum design. The end result could be a more practical and effective assessment tool. A more reliable assessment mechanism will be suggested which will enhance consistency in scoring or grading by improving the tests, refining the marking schemes, employing better examiners, and using the better systems.

5. Limitations

In conclusion, despite the significance of the proposed study's foreseeable outcomes, some constraints should not ignored. First, whether the effectiveness (i.e. authenticity and fairness) of the assessment tool will be deduced from the research is under doubt. The data gathered from the interviews with the lecturers and students would be subjective and partial. The lecturers may have different standards for students' written works. They may also be subjective of the structure of the course and the assignment. On the other hand, students will possibly provide feedback in the interview according to the grades of the assignment and the course. For those students who obtained satisfactory scores, they will predictably be affirmative about the assessment. For those students whose result is unsatisfactory, they will be critical of the assessment tool. Hence, the data collected from the participants are not impartial and objective. The implications of the data collected about the evaluation of the assessment tool may be limited, and the results will need to be treated with caution. Secondly, the assessment is a take-home assignment in which different students would spend different length of time working on their assignments. Their submitted writings may not reflect their actual academic writing standards. Instead, it reflects how diligent and devoted the students conduct research and revise their works to achieve better grades. For some cases, the students may employ the professionals to proofread or draft their works. The course lecturers cannot check whether the students complete their works only by themselves. Thirdly, the students do not have to upload the soft copies of their works for plagiarism inspection. They are only requested to hand in the hard copies of the academic essays. They may extract the ideas from others and plagiarize the sentences from other sources. Nonetheless, no penalty will be imposed on them. It is unfair for other students who finish the writings on their own. Fourthly, the mark adjustment of the marked take-home essay assignment is ultimately moderated according to the median mark of the class in the MC section of the Mid-term Test and the expected GPA score compared with other classes set by the college. The subject leader does not offer any specific feedback on the marked academic essays. There is no second marker in the process of the essay marking. Last but not least, the re-marking done by the researcher who is also the course lecturer may not be effective in judging students' works independently. Even though the lecturer conduct the second marking after half a year, she may still have the impression of the first marking and award the similar grades. Therefore, the validity of second marking as a more fair judgment on the students' essays will be limited.

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L2 Acquisition of English Verbs with an Unpronounced Cognate Object

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Abstract. English does not obligatorily need a pronounced cognate object after some specific verbs such as '*read, draw'* as in '*I read/draw every night before going to sleep'.* Instead, Cantonese needs a pronounced cognate object after those verbs (*tai-syu*, literally 'read-book'*; waak-waa,* 'draw-picture') in a non-anaphoric context. Many other examples include *zaa-ce* 'drive-car', *tong-saam* 'iron-clothes', etc. This contrastive difference reveals that those Cantonese verbs obligatorily need a pronounced cognate object whereas English does not. This paper attempts to study to what extent 85 adult Cantonese speakers of L2 English (with 22 controls) can acquire the use of five target verbs (*draw, drink, drive, read* and *iron*) across two experimental tasks: an oral task with verbal prompts, and a written task. The results reveal that 85 Cantonese speakers obtain a mean of 81.96% accuracy in the use of those target English verbs with an unpronounced object in the oral task whereas they obtain a mean of 79.77% accuracy in the written task. Specifically, the verb *drive* carries the highest percentage accuracy of 92.16% and 90.98% for the oral and written tasks. The verb *iron* carries the lowest ones of 72.55% and 73.73% for the oral and written tasks. The SPSS statistical results reveal that there is a significant strong and positive relationship (rho = 0.494, p = 0.000) on the use of those target verbs across tasks. The findings also reveal that the frequency effect subsumed in the usage-based approach cannot fully explain the use of those L2 verbs with an unpronounced cognate object. I would concur with Hawkins (2003: 613) and Rothman and VanPatten (2013: 251) that it is plausible that both input frequency and the poverty of stimulus may play a role in shaping L2 learners' acquisition. Admittedly, the number of target verbs in this study is limited, but this can be treated as an exploratory study.

Keywords: L2 acquisition, unpronounced cognate object, usage-based approach, verb learning

1. Introduction

Object drop or unpronounced object[i] has been widely discussed in the literature (see Cole 1987; Cummins and Roberge 2003; Huang 1984, 2009). Consider (1),

(1) Speaker A: Mali kan-le jintian-de baozi ma? (Mandarin)
Mary read-ASP today-POSS newspaper Q
'Did Mary read today's newspaper?'
(POSS=Possessive; Q=question particle)

Speaker B: ta kan le
She read ASP
'She read it.' (ASP = aspect marker)

The object *jintian-de baozi* 'today's newspaper' can be dropped in anaphoric contexts in Chinese whereas English requires a pronounced object 'it'. By contrast, English can allow another type of object drop in non-anaphoric contexts. Consider (2),

(2) David reads [*e*] every day. (English)

In (2) the unpronounced object [*e*] does not refer to any specific entity but to some entity, which, in the case of the verb *read* is a 'readable' object, such as a book or a magazine. Chinese, however, requires a pronounced cognate object *kan-shu* 'read-book' to exhibit the cognate interpretation. Cheng and Sybesma (1998) have already pointed out that a pronounced cognate object in Chinese as in *kan-shu* 'read-book' is equivalent to *read* in English. The following are examples where an unpronounced object in non-anaphoric contexts is found in English.

	Mandarin	English
(3)	kan-shu 'read-book'	read
(4)	kai-che 'drive-car'	drive
(5)	chi-fan 'eat-rice'	eat

Cheng and Sybesma (1998)

As far as I know, there are not much SLA studies investigating L2 acquisition of verbs with an unpronounced cognate object by adult Chinese. Importantly, in non-anaphoric contexts, a cognate object is unpronounced on surface syntax structure in English, one interesting SLA question is to investigate whether Chinese can acquire a construction involving a null constituent such as an unpronounced cognate object in L2 English, and if so, how they can acquire it. Therefore, the aim of this empirical study is to shed light on L2 acquisition of verbs with an unpronounced cognate object which is not instantiated in L1.

2. Literature Review on (Un)pronounced Cognate Object

It should be noted that English and Chinese have cognate object interpretation, but the only difference is that Chinese has to pronounce a cognate object (see Cheng and Sybesma 1998). In earlier literature of Chinese grammar, Cheng and Sybesma (1998) discuss cases of pronounced cognate objects required after a verb in Chinese as in *chi-fan* 'eat-rice', which is equivalent to *eat* in English. They analyze the pronounced object in *chi-fan* 'eat-rice' as a syntactic dummy. 'Dummy' briefly means that the pronounced object adds no semantic content to the verb phrase. It is a bare noun which is a nominal that does not introduce any discourse referent, and the readings that result are generally indefinite, and there is no effect on any particular object though the object is overt. Matthews and Yip (1994) also discuss that in Cantonese, they point out that the noun *che* 'car' in *zaa-che* 'drive-car' does not necessarily refer to any particular car. In fact, it does not have to refer to a particular type of vehicle. The car can be a private car, a truck or a mini-van. Summarizing, Chinese requires a pronounced cognate object in non-anaphoric contexts whereas English allows an unpronounced cognate object.

According to Cummins and Roberge's 'internal licensing', there is one rule which interprets the null argument as a cognate object and the rule works as follows. Instead of a full DP object, a verb, for example *read*, can have an object which is a minimal nominal argument. This object is assigned the interpretation of an existentially bound variable restricted by the meaning of the verb, as in (6a), where the V' has the structure in (6b), and where the object has the reading shown.

(6a) I read every night.

(6b)

V'

V [*e*]

read some x (x is readable)

The interpretation of the sentence is therefore as follows, in quasi-logical notation:

(6c) For every night y, there is some x (x is readable and I read x at y).

In more ordinary language, (6c) means 'I read some written materials every night', and the unpronounced cognate object refers to any kinds of books, magazines, or newspapers. Mandarin and Cantonese also have cognate objects. I assume they have the same structure as in English, and are interpreted by the same rule. However, unlike the case in English, they cannot be spelled out as null. Instead, Chinese and Cantonese have to supply a pronounced object to exhibit the cognate interpretation. For example, *kan-shu*, (literally 'read-book') in Mandarin can mean 'read books or magazines', which is equivalent to *read* in English. Each cognate object has a specific pronounced form.

Mandarin	**Cantonese**	**English**
kan-shu 'read-book'	tai-syu 'read-book'	read Ø
yun-yifu 'iron-clothes'	tong-saam 'iron-clothes'	iron Ø

The pronounced cognate objects in *kan-shu* 'read-book' and *yun-yifu* 'iron-clothes' in Mandarin mean 'something readable (any kinds of written materials)' and something ironable (any kinds of clothes). Unlike the situation in English, the object cannot be spelled out as null. Instead, Cantonese obligatorily needs a pronounced object *saam* 'clothes' in the context immediately adjacent to *tong* 'iron', etc.

3. Research Question

This study aims to investigate to what extent Cantonese speakers of L2 English can acquire the verbs with a constituent of an unpronounced cognate object (e.g. as in *David* ***reads*** *every night*), and if so, how they can acquire it. Or do they have to supply a pronounced object (e.g. as in *David* ***reads books/newspapers/something*** *every night*)?

4. Research Methodology
In this empirical study, two research tasks were developed[ii]: (i) oral task (with verbal prompts) and (ii) written task. Both oral and written tasks were used to elicit data on acquiring the verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in L2. An oral task was administrated prior to a written task and all tasks were completed on a one-to-one basis. The entire experiment took approximately 60 minutes to complete and there was no time limit for any single task.

4.1 Target Verbs and Distractors
As discussed earlier, Cheng and Sybesma (1998) have a list of an equivalence of pronounced cognate objects in Chinese to unpronounced objects in English. I adopted three verbs from the list (*drink(-alcohol), drive(-car)* and *read(-book)*) and added two other verbs (*draw(-picture)* and *iron(-clothes)*). In total, there were five target verbs with three tokens each in this study; the other five distractors for the written task include *buy, find, promote, repair and use*:

Mandarin	**Cantonese**	**English**
hua-hua 'draw-picture'	waak-waa 'draw-picture'	draw Ø
he-jiu 'drink-alcohol'	jam-zau 'drink-alcohol'	drink Ø
kai-che 'drive-car'	zaa-ce 'drive-car'	drive Ø
yun-yifu 'iron-clothes'	tong-saam 'iron-clothes'	iron Ø
kan-shu 'read-book'	tai-syu 'read-book'	read Ø

4.2 Experimental Task 1 - Oral Task (with Verbal Prompts)
This task used to elicit oral production data consisted of a set of verbal prompts as illustrated below.

Task design: Prompt words and the rule of minimizing the number of words
Participants were given prompt words including:

(i) a noun phrase as a subject (e.g. *David and his brother*) and

(ii) a target verb (e.g. *read*) and

(iii) a time phrase (e.g. *every night*) or time adverb (e.g. *always*) in each sentence.

David and his brother /	every night /	read (verb)

Participants were instructed to use all given prompt words. They were asked to make up one sentence in the shortest length, and immediately read it aloud to a recorder, and their oral production were recorded and later transcribed into English. Participants were clearly informed that they aim at minimizing the number of words they utter in each test item, with a condition that they have to use all given words. This rule imposed is to urge participants NOT to use any optional words so as to examine whether participants can learn a null arbitrary cognate object in English. This rule of minimizing the number of words in this circumstance was fully tested in pilot tests with Chinese and native English speaker controls.

4.3 Experimental Task 2 - Written Task
This written task also has the same research aim as that in the oral task, and this task consisted of five target verbs with three tokens each and 15 distractors. All test items were adapted from the occurrences with both target verbs and distractors from the British National Corpus (BNC).[iii]
Target verb: e.g. *iron*
(7) We are unwilling to pay someone HK$ 60 an hour to **iron**.

Task design: A pronounced object only for an incorrect test sentence
Task instructions (written task):

1. If you find that a sentence is INCORRECT, fill in the blank with appropriate words (maximum of 3 words).
2. If you found that a sentence was CORRECT, do NOT put any words in the blank, just put a '√'.

When participants found that a test item was correct, they were instructed to put a '√' above the line as in *The millionaire never cooks* __√__ *for his family.* Otherwise, they were expected to complete that sentence with any words they liked (maximum of three words).

4.4 Participants: Selecting Criteria

This study tested 85 adult Cantonese speakers of L2 English in Hong Kong, with 22 native English speaker controls in the United Kingdom. I target at selecting those Chinese who fulfilled all the following five criteria, and this aims to reduce differences in context of learning and to control for homogeneity of participants:

(a) they are Chinese and were born in Hong Kong and

(b) they are adult instructed English learners and

(c) they have not stayed in an English speaking country for more than two months and

(d) they use Cantonese as the first language and

(e) they use Cantonese to speak with family members and friends.

5. Data Coding

Both the oral and written tasks in this study aim to investigate to what extent participants can use the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object. Hence, the absence of a pronounced object is clear and valid to be counted as a token of an unpronounced object. For instance, an unpronounced object is counted in *David and his brother read [e] every night*. By contrast, when there is a pronounced object as in *David and his brother read books/magazines every night*, it is clearly that no token of an unpronounced object is counted. In addition, a term 'percentage accuracy' is used in findings and it results in getting the number of tokens of null objects divided by the total number of tokens in the oral/written task and multiplied by 100 (e.g. 10 tokens of an unpronounced object out of 15 tokens in the oral task = 66.67% accuracy). There were 15 tokens of target verbs in each of the oral and written tasks.

6. Choosing Statistical Tests: Non-parametric Mann-Whitney Test and Spearman's rho Correlation (non-normal Distribution)

All statistical analysis (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)) for this study was carried out using non-parametric tests: Mann-Whitney Test (its parametric counterpart is t-test for 2 independent samples) and Spearman's rho correlation (non-parametric statistics for correlation).

7. Results

The following are descriptive statistics for using the verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in the oral and written tasks by both Chinese and the controls.

7.1 Oral Task: Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for using the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in the oral task

Using the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in the oral task	Mean (% accuracy)	Std. Deviation	Min. (% accuracy)	Max. (% accuracy)
The entire Chinese group (N =85)	81.961	24.941	20.000	100.000
Controls (N = 22)	100.000	0.000	100.000	100.000

Table 1 indicates that the controls obtain 100% accuracy in the use of the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in the oral task. That is, the controls do not supply a pronounced object in any test items. As for

Chinese, the entire group (N =85) obtain a mean percentage accuracy of 81.96% in the use of the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in L2. The findings also show that more than a half (i.e. 43 out of 85 Chinese) obtained 100% accuracy in this investigated aspect.

7.2 Written Task: Descriptive Statistics

This is to triangulate the results of both oral and written tasks with the aim to enhance the reliability of the findings. The same population of Chinese participants (N = 85) and the same target verbs were used across those two tasks.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for using the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in the written task

Using the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in the written task	Mean (% accuracy)	Std. Deviation	Min. (% accuracy)	Max. (% accuracy)
The entire Chinese group (N =85)	79.765	18.183	13.333	100.000
Controls (N = 22)	95.152	6.234	80.000	100.000

Table 2 indicates that the controls obtain a mean of 95.15% accuracy in the use of the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in the written task while the entire Chinese group obtain a mean of 79.76% accuracy in this regard (i.e. 20.24% pronounced objects). The findings also indicates that 75.29% of Chinese participants (i.e. 64 out of 85 Chinese) obtained 73.33% - 100% accuracy in the use of the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object.

7.3 Oral and Written Tasks: Individual Verbs

With respect to the group of five target verbs, Chinese can use the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object in both oral and written tasks with the mean percentage accuracy of 81.961% and 79.765%. In what follows, I further examine the individual cases with respect to each target verb (*draw, drink, drive, iron and read*) and across two tasks.

Table 3. Percentage accuracy of using the target verbs with an unpronounced cognate object with respect to target verbs

All five target verbs	Oral task		Written task	
Using the target verbs with an unpronounced object	Chinese (N = 85) (% accuracy)	Controls (N = 22) (% accuracy)	Chinese (N = 85) (% accuracy)	Controls (N = 22) (% accuracy)
The group of five target verbs	81.96%	100%	79.76%	95.15%
Individual target verbs: (1= highest percentage; 5=lowest percentage)				
Iron	72.55% (rank 5)	100%	73.73% (rank 5)	98.49%
Read	79.61% (rank 4)	100%	76.47% (rank 4)	89.39%
Draw	81.96% (rank 3)	100%	78.43% (rank 3)	96.97%
Drink	83.53% (rank 2)	100%	79.22% (rank 2)	92.42%
Drive	92.16% (rank 1)	100%	90.98% (rank 1)	98.49%

Table 3 shows that Chinese results ranged from 72.55% to 92.16% accuracy on the use of those target verbs in the oral task; they include *iron*: 72.55%; *read*: 79.61%; *draw*: 81.96%; *drink*: 83.53%; *drive*: 92.16%. Table 3 also indicates that the written results for Chinese ranged from 73.73% to 90.98% accuracy on the use of those target verbs; they include *iron*: 73.73%; *read*: 76.47%; *draw*: 78.43%; *drink*: 79.22%; *drive*: 90.98%. The above results reveal that Chinese, across both tasks, obtain increasingly high percentage mean accuracy of using the target verbs in the same order of 'success' across the five individual target verbs. Specifically, the verb *drive* carries the highest percentage accuracy of 92.16% and 90.98% in the oral and written tasks whereas the verb *iron* carries the lowest ones of 72.55% and 73.73% in the oral and written tasks.

8. Concluding Discussion

The research question of this paper is to investigate to what extent Cantonese speakers of L2 English (with 22 controls) can acquire the use of those five target L2 English verbs with a constituent of an unpronounced cognate object. The results reveal that 85 Cantonese speakers obtain a mean of 81.96% accuracy in the use of those target English verbs in the oral task whereas they obtain a mean of 79.77% accuracy in the written task. To recap, the verb *drive* carries the highest percentage accuracy of 92.16% and 90.98% for the oral and written tasks. The verb *iron* carries the lowest ones of 72.55% and 73.73% for the oral and written tasks. The SPSS statistical results also reveal that there is a significant strong and positive relationship (rho = 0.494, p = 0.000, N = 85) on the use of those target verbs across tasks, pointing to the concluding fact that Cantonese speakers can consistently acquire those target L2 verbs with an unpronounced object.

In this study, another issue that I am concerned with is whether the "success" of acquiring the target L2 verbs with an unpronounced cognate object could be acquired by explicit teaching or on an item-by-item basis by observation of the L2 input, or whether it is under-determined by the L2 input (i.e. poverty of stimulus; see Chomsky 1980; Cook 1988, White, 2003, among many others). Considering explicit teaching of unpronounced cognate object interpretation for Cantonese learners of English, I would argue, on the basis of my knowledge of teaching materials and course curricula in Hong Kong,[iv] that this is very unlikely. This claim is also supported by Liu (2008)[v] and he points out that none of the fifteen major grammar books examined in his study offers a discussion of object drop in English. This may indicate that explicit teaching of unpronounced cognate objects (e.g. *draw, drive, read,* etc.) for Cantonese learners of English is lacking. Secondly, I argue that the "success" in acquiring those target verbs with an unpronounced object by Cantonese speakers cannot be fully explained as a result of item-by-item learning subsumed in usage-based model on the basis of input. The empirical results show that 43 out of 85 Cantonese speakers acquired those five target L2 verbs at a rate of 100%. It could be argued that Cantonese speakers can acquire those target verbs like *read* and *drive* due to high frequency of occurrence. However, as I will show directly, the target verb *iron* is not a high frequency verb, yet Cantonese speakers can also acquire that verb *iron* with an unpronounced cognate object at a rate of 100% in the oral task. I argue that if the frequency of occurrence for a target verb is found to be low, then this implies that the "success" in acquiring that target verb is under-determined by the L2 input. I have therefore investigated the frequency of occurrence for each target verb, based on British National Corpus (BNC).[vi] The results show that the frequency of occurrence for each target verb is significantly different: 16,575 for *read*, 5,823 for *draw,* 4,104 for *drive*, 2,981 for *drink* and 189 for *iron*. Among 100 million word collection in BNC, the verb *read* has 16,575 occurrences and the verbs *drink* and *iron* have only 2,981 and 189 occurrences respectively. More specifically, as for the verb *iron*, I further counted the occurrences of having *iron* as an objectless verb with a cognate object interpretation (e.g. *Do not iron*). There were only 16 out of 189 occurrences. If I assume that the frequency of occurrence obtained in the BNC holds, by and large, for the input that Cantonese speakers learning English receive,[vii] then a problem arises: How would Cantonese acquire the verb *iron* when the frequency of occurrence is so low? It should be noted that if we know that evidence of a particular grammatical feature F (in this study, F refers to that particular feature immediately follows a specific English verb that allows an unpronounced cognate object) is exceedingly rare in the primary data, then the probability that a learner has acquired F solely on the basis of input is correspondingly low. If not just one, but a group of learners, have independently acquired F, then the probability that they have all had access to the relevant input may be so low that we can legitimately assume that F is not acquired solely on the basis of input, and therefore that F may be argued to be acquired on the basis of the poverty of stimulus. The above seems to suggest that, in this study, Cantonese speakers have recourse to properties that are not instantiated in the L1 and their learning of this investigated aspect of grammar is under poverty of stimulus.

To conclude in this study, the frequency effect (also see Bybee and Hopper 2001; Barlow and Kemmer 2000) subsumed in the usage-based approach cannot fully explain the use of those verbs with an unpronounced cognate object. I would concur with Hawkins (2003: 613) and Rothman and VanPatten (2013: 251) that it is plausible that both input frequency and the poverty of stimulus may play a role in shaping L2 learners' acquisition. Admittedly, the number of target verbs in this study is limited, but this study can be treated as an exploratory study.

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[i] The terms unpronounced object and object drop will be used interchangeably in this study.

[ii] The oral task consisted of a set of verbal prompts and it aimed to elicit oral production data. The paper-based written task aimed to elicit written production data from no word to three words maximum in the experimental setting.

[iii] The British National Corpus (BNC) (1980s – 1993) is a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources. http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/.

[iv] I am a co-author on English grammar books for primary students in Hong Kong; see Chiu, K. M. and Lee, C. W. (2002).

[v] In Liu's (2008) study, the fifteen major grammar books are: Baker (1995), Barry (1998), Biber, Johnsson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999), Carter and McCarthy (2006), Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), Chalker and Weiner (1994), Curzan and Adams (2006), Dixon (2005), Downing and Locke (2002), Halliday (1994), Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Leech and Svartvik (2002), Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985), Parratt (2000), Wardhaugh (2003).

[vi] The British National Corpus (BNC) (1980s – 1993) is a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources. http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/.

[vii] In line with BNC, consistent findings about word frequency for five target verbs (draw, drink, drive, iron and read) were found from 'The Longman communication 3000'. It is a list of the 3,000 most frequent words in both spoken and written English, based on statistical analysis of the 390 million words contained in the Longman Corpus Network – a group of corpuses or databases of authentic English language (draw, drive, read (verb) – top 1,000 frequent words in spoken and written English; drink (verb) – top 1,000 frequent words in spoken English and top 1,000-2,000 in written English; iron (verb) – top 2,000-3,000 frequent words in only spoken English).

宗教背境對語言文化理解的影響 — 以理雅各《孟子》譯注為例

The Effect of Religious Background on Understanding Language Culture-using James Legge's Mencius English Translation and Commentary as an Illustration

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摘要: 理雅各是英國倫敦傳道差會差派來華的傳教士，因傳道關係致力翻譯中國的經典，成為漢學家。其著名的成就是將《中國經典》翻譯成英文本，《論語》、《大學》、《中庸》、《孟子》、《易經》、《書經》附《竹書紀年》、《詩經》及《春秋左傳》。《孟子》是他最看重的經典，每一冊《中國經典》的內頁都有《孟子》語：「不以文害辭，不以辭害志，以意逆志，是為得之。」由於理氏的宗教背境，他解釋《中國經典》的方法與中國傳統的經學家有所分別。本文以《孟子》為例子，指出理氏解釋中國經典的特別之處。第一是上帝觀念的移植，理氏把基督教的上帝觀移植過來，認為中國經典所講的上帝就是基督教的上帝，理氏使用 God 翻譯中國經典所講的「上帝」、或「天」，英文《聖經》如雅各王欽定本，God 都是指基督教的「上帝」。第二是基督教《聖經》的使用，理氏一共引用了六段《聖經》經文解釋《孟子》，證明《孟子》與基督教的思想有很多相同之處，有思想的對比，如哲學思想-人性論的對比，政治與社會倫理觀念的對比等。理氏使用這些西方觀念解釋中國的經典，但從積極的角度來看，為傳統中國的解經方式帶來不同角度的思考模式，對中國傳統解經造成新的刺激。但從消極的角度而論，理氏的解釋與翻譯，往往流於表層意義的理解，準確度也不足夠。

關鍵詞：理雅各　孟子　上帝觀　人性論　政治與社會倫理

Abstract. James Legge was a missionary of London Missionary Society, who arrived Hong Kong in 1843. He translated Chinese classics to English because of evangelism, however he became a sinologist. These four volumes collections The Chinese Classics English translation included Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, The Works of Mencius which called Four Books, The Shoo King attached with The Annals of the Bamboo Books, The She King and The Chˈun Tsˈew with The Tso Chuen. Mencius was his favourite. A Mencius saying :" may not insist on one term so as to do violence to sentence, nor on a sentence so as to do violence to the general scope" was printed on every inside cover page of The Chinese Classics. Because of Legge's religious background, his interpretation method on The Chinese Classics was different from the traditional Chinese scholars. This article based on Mencius' translation and commentaries to discussed Legge's characteristic interpretation. Firstly, transplanted the idea of God. Legge thought that the God of The Chinese Classics was the same as the Christian Bible. Secondly, Legge used six passages of Bible scriptures to explain and compare thinking of Mencius, such as human nature, political and social ethics. Thirdly, this method injected new ideas to study Chinese language, but the discussion was not in depth.

Key word: James Legge　Mencius　God human nature　political and social ethics

理雅各（James Legge, 1815-1897），原是倫敦傳道差會宣教士，在華傳道期間，認識到把中國的《四書五經》翻譯成英文的重要性。他翻譯的《中國經典》初版分五卷，第一卷是《四書》上卷包括《論語》、《大學》、《中庸》，第二卷《四書》下卷《孟子》，同於 1861 年出版，第三卷是《書經》附《竹書紀年》於 1865 年出版，第四卷《詩經》於 1871 年出版，第五卷《春秋左傳》於 1872 年出版。這套《中國經典》版本全是中英雙語對照本，有詳細的緒論和注釋。《中國經典》的英文全名是 *CHINESE CLASSICS:WITH A TRANSLATION， CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL NOTES，PROLEGOMENA， AND COPIOUS INDEXES*。所以本人使用了《中國經典譯注》的名稱以及《孟子譯注》的名稱。

理雅各於 1867 年出版《孔子生平與思想》(*The Life and Teachings of Confucius*)， 包括《論語》、《大學》、《中庸》的英譯木。1875 年出版《孟子生平與著作》(*The Life and Works of Mencius*)，這版本同樣是有詳盡的緒論和注釋，是英語本，沒有中文字。又於 1876 年出版修訂版的《詩經》(*The Book of Ancient Poetry*)，也是純英文版，而且是韻文版的譯本，同樣有詳盡的緒論與注解。

理雅各於 1893 再將 1861 年版的《四書》修訂出版，第一卷包括《論語》、《大學》、《中庸》。第二卷是《孟子》，於 1895 年出版。這版本同樣是中英雙語本，有詳盡的緒論及注解。這個版本的《四書》是對 1861 年版作出修訂和補充，補充了一些參考文獻。香港大學出版社於 1960 年 將這版本的《四書》與及由 1865 年至 1872 年出版的《書經》附《竹書紀年》、《詩經》、《春秋左傳》再版，這版本可說是最重要的版本。這版本現在由臺灣南天書局出版。現在由臺灣南天書室出版的《中國經典》將《四書》合為一冊變成四大冊一套。

本文選用《孟子譯注》作討論對象，因為孟子引用了不少中國經典表達其思想，所以，討論《孟子》也可以一併討論其他經典的文字。而且，理雅各很重視《孟子》，在他的《中國經典譯注》每一冊的內頁都有《孟子》這段文字：「不以文害辭，不以辭害志，以意逆志，是為得之。」

本文是用文獻分析與及文獻比較的方法進行論述，以《孟子》、基督教的《聖經》、理雅各的《孟子譯注》做基礎，查找出理雅各對中國先秦儒家經典所講的「上帝」、「天」的翻譯及解釋，與及探討他如何引用《聖經》與《孟子》做對比。

本文分三大段落，第一是把「上帝」譯做「God」的例子，當中包括了「god-神靈」與「God-上帝」的分別；也討論「天」翻譯做「Heaven」或「God」的例子。第二段是從《孟子譯注》考查出理氏先後引用六段《聖經》的經文與《孟子》做對比。第三段是討論理氏這種理解與翻譯中國古代經典的方式的優點和缺點。

一、上帝觀念的移植

理雅各翻譯《中國經典》時，把基督教的「上帝」觀念引入中國，《孟子譯注》的譯文與注解有不少名顯的例子，不單止把「上帝」一詞譯成基督教的「God」，更把《孟子》的「天」也當看「God」來理解。

(一)、把「上帝」譯作「God」之例

本文因篇幅關係，只能從《孟子譯注》選三個例子作討論。然而，在討論將「上帝」譯作「God」之前，首先分析理雅各對「god-神靈」與「God-上帝」的使用方式。

理雅各是基督教宣教士，跟隨了基督教《聖經》使用「上帝」、「神」、「god」與「God」的使用方式。現以 *Holy Bible* King James Version 為例子，《創世記》第 1 章第 1 節：「In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.」(*Holy Bible* KJV p.1)中文《聖經》的翻譯是「起初上帝創造天地。」(《聖經》和合本，頁 1)英文《聖經》使用「God」表示這是位創造天地的上帝，是至高無上的宇宙獨一的真主宰，是創造人類的「上帝」。

但是形容其他神靈的時候，會使用「god」例如《詩篇》第 16 篇第 4 節：「Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god.」(*Holy Bible* KJV p.347)中文《聖經》翻譯是「以別神代替耶和華的，他們的愁苦必加增。」(《聖經》和合本，頁 666)。此外《但以理書》第 5 章第 4 節：「They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.」(*Holy Bible* KJV p.522)中文翻譯是：「他們飲酒，讚美金銀銅鐵木石所造的神。」(《聖經》和合本，頁 1044)

這種文字的表達方式，是基督教的神學語言習慣，藉這種語言表達技巧，表示基督教的宗教信仰概念，基督徒藉之表示對所信的上帝表示敬虔，把基督教信仰所講的上帝與其他宗教或文化的神靈分別開來。

理雅各也承傳了這種文字語言的習慣，在《孟子譯注》的譯文與注解中可以看到理雅各用這種基督教文字語言表達方式，展示《孟子》所講的上帝就是基督教的上帝，有別於其他宗教的神靈。《孟子・離婁上》第 1 章第 1 節：「孟子曰：『離婁之明，公輸子之巧，不以規矩，不能成方員。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 123)。

理雅各《孟子譯注》注解云：「Kung-shû, named Pan ……He is now the god of carpenters」。(James Legge, 2011,p.288)。

公輸子又名魯班，魯國人，是春秋末年著名的巧手工匠(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 124)。後來被人奉為工匠的神靈。理氏的注解用了「the god of carpenters」形容魯班在中國民間信仰中的地位，其意就是眾神靈之一，而且，在理氏的理念之中，「god」這個字，無疑是說魯班是一位被奉為偶像的神靈，當然也說明魯班不是「上帝-God」。

1、第一例

《孟子》引用《尚書》所講到「上帝」一詞，理氏就使用「God」做翻譯。例如《孟子・梁惠王下》第 3 章第 7 節云：「《書》曰：『天降下民，作之君，作之師，惟曰其助上帝，寵之四方。有罪無罪惟我在，天下曷敢有越厥志？』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 32)。

這是《孟子》引用《尚書》的一段文字，理氏把「惟曰其助上帝，寵之四方。」譯做「with the purpose that they should be assisting to God, and therefore distinguished them throughout the four quarters of the land」(James Legge, 2011,p.157)，把「上帝」譯作「God」。而在其注解中，解釋「惟曰其助上帝」則云：「惟曰其助上帝,--Literally, ‘just saying,’ They shall be aiding to God.」(James Legge, 2011,p.157)，很明顯，理氏把《孟子》與《尚書》所講的上帝都理解為基督教的上帝，所以譯《尚書》的「上帝」做「God」。

2.第 2 例

《孟子》引用《詩經》提及「上帝」一詞，理氏同樣用「God」做翻譯。《孟子・離婁上》第 7 章第 5 節云：「《詩》云：『商之孫子，其麗不億。上帝既命，侯于周服。侯服于周，天命靡常。殷士膚敏，祼將于京。』(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 127)。這是《孟子》引用《詩經》的文字，理氏把「上帝既命，侯于周服。」譯做「God having passed His decree, They are all submissive to Zhou.」(James Legge, 2011,p.297)理氏不單止將「上帝」譯做「God」，也把「命」譯做「His decree」，用基督教的語言來講，就變成上帝之命， 是把基督教的上帝觀等同了《孟子》與《詩經》的上帝觀。

3、第 3 例

《孟子》講到祭祀「上帝」一詞，理氏也是將之翻譯做「God」，《離婁下》第 25 章第 2 節：「孟子曰：『西子蒙不潔，則人皆掩鼻而過之。雖有惡人，齊戒沐浴，則可以祀上帝。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 152)。理氏的翻譯是「Mencius said, 'If the lady Xi had been covered with a filthy head-dress, all people would have stopped their noses in passing her. Though a man may be wicked, yet if he adjust his thoughts, fast, and bathe, he may sacrifice to God.'」(James Legge, 2011,p.330)

西子名西施，戰國時代的美女，倘若這位美女用不清潔的頭巾蒙頭，所有人經過她身邊都會掩鼻而行。相反，一個大奸大惡的人，雖然面目可憎，只要思想改善且潔淨身體，都可以祭祀上帝(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 152)。因為商周時代，祭天、祭上帝的權利是在君主身上，平民百姓不得擅自祭上帝。從這個記載，可見孟子相當重視人的思想、心靈與及身體的潔淨。所以理氏解《孟子》此章云「By the laws of China, it was competent for the sovereign only to sacrifice to God. The language of Mencius, in connexion with this fact, very strikingly shows the virtue he attached to penitent purification.」(James Legge, 2011,p.330)這個例子很清楚顯示了理雅各在翻譯與註解都把「上帝」譯做「God」。

從上面引述的 3 個例子，說明了理雅各把《孟子》、《詩經》、《尚書》所記載的至高主宰「上帝」都翻譯成「God」。而那些屬偶像的神靈則翻譯做「god」 ，理雅各無異於把中國古代經典的上帝理解為基督教的上帝。

(二)、把天譯作上帝

理氏除了把「上帝」譯做「God」之外，也把《孟子》所講的天譯做 「God-上帝」。理氏對《孟子》所講的天有兩個層面的解讀，一是自然之天，譯做「heaven」。二是形而上之天，理氏則譯做「Heaven」，賦予宗教意義，將這個形上天理解做上帝。

1、第 1 例子

理氏將《孟子》的天翻譯做「Heaven」，《孟子》所講的天，有些是引述《詩經》、《尚書》的文字，有些是《孟子》對天的描述，理雅各如果認為是形上天，就會譯做「Heaven」，這些例子也不算少。本文只討論 4 個例子。

《孟子‧公孫丑上》第四章第 3 至 4 節便是一個很好的例子，其云：「《詩》云：『迨天之未陰雨，徹彼桑土，綢繆牖戶。今此下民，或敢侮予？』” ……《太甲》曰：『天作孽，猶可違；自作孽，不可活。』此之謂也。」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 63)。

《孟子》此章引用了《詩經‧國風‧豳風‧鴟鴞》第二章以及《尚書‧太甲中》的文字。〈鴟鴞〉的「迨天之未陰雨」之天，是形而下的自然天，即肉眼所見之天，理氏翻譯做「heavens」；而《尚書‧太甲中》的天，是形而上的天，理氏將之譯作「Heaven」理氏的翻譯云：

> It is said in the Book of Poetry, "Before the heavens were dark with rain, I gathered the bark from the roots of the mulberry trees, And wove it closely to form the window and door of my nest; Now, I thought, ye people below, Perhaps ye will not dare to insult me." …… This is illustrated by what is said in the Book of Poetry - Be always studious to be in harmony with the ordinances of God, So you will certainly get for yourself much happiness;" and by the passage of the Tai Jia, "When Heaven sends down calamities, it is still possible to escape from them; when we occasion the calamities ourselves, it is not possible any longer to live."'
>
> (James Legge, 2011,p.198-199)

這個例子很明顯的表達了理氏對《孟子》以至中國儒家經典所講的天，分開了形而上之天以及形而下之天，形而下的物理性之天譯做「heaven」，形而上的天譯做「Heaven」在理氏的觀念之中，這個「Heaven」等同「上帝(God)」。

2、第 2 例子

《梁惠王下》第 32 章第 2 至 5 節：「以大事小者，樂天者也；以小事大者，畏天者也。樂天者保天下，畏天者保其國。《詩》云：『畏天之威，于時保之。』」《孟子》這段文字，是講大國與小國的政治都與天脫不了關係，只不過是「樂天」與「畏天」的分別，並引用《詩經》作支持。《孟子》這段所講的天，趙岐解作「天道」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 31)。朱熹解作「天者理而已」。(朱熹，1985，怡府藏版頁)理雅各則把三個天字譯做「Heaven(上帝)」，其云：

> He who with a great State serves a small one, delights in Heaven. He who with a small State serves a large one, stands in awe of Heaven. He who delights in Heaven, will affect with his love and protection the whole kingdom. He who stands in awe of Heaven, will affect with his love and protection his own kingdom. It is said in the Book of Poetry, "I fear the Majesty of Heaven, and will thus preserve its favouring decree."'
>
> (James Legge, 2011,p.155.)

此外，理氏又在其注釋批評朱熹及其他研究中國經典的學者不將「天」解釋做「上帝」，「It is a good instance of the way in which he and others often try to expunge the idea of a governing Power and a personal God from their classics. Heaven is here evidently the super intending, loving Power of the universe.」(James Legge, 2011,p.155.)理氏之意是說，這是明顯的例子，中國的學者都不贊同上天的權能等於上帝的權能，當然，理氏所講的上帝權能是指基督教的上帝權能而言。理氏強調《孟子》所講「天」就是上帝對普世所施行的計劃與慈愛。

3、第 3 例

孟子與滕文公的對話，其中所講之「天」不是引述《詩經》、《尚書》而來，是孟子與滕文公的對話。〈梁惠王下〉第 14 章第 3 節云：「苟為善，後世子孫必有王者矣。君子創業垂統為可繼也，若夫成功則天也，君如彼何哉，彊為善而已矣。」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 46)朱熹解之曰：

> 創，造。統，緒也。言能為善，則如大王雖失其地，而其後世遂有天下，乃天理也。然君子造基業於前，而垂統緒於後，但能不失其正，令後世可繼續而行耳。若夫成功，則豈可必乎？

彼，齊也。君之力既無如之何，則但彊於為善，使其可繼而俟命於天耳。此章言人君但當竭力於其所當為，不可徼幸於其所難必。

(朱熹，1985，怡府藏版，頁 31。)

楊伯峻將此「天」解作「天命」(楊伯峻，1980，冊上頁)。《孟子》這個天，原無宗教的意思。《孟子》在此所講的「天」，代表了中國文化最普遍的天理觀，將一切人所無法掌握，無法控制的事物都歸之於天，君子可把功業傳之後代，但後代能否保存其功業或發揚光大，不是人可以控制的，有其天意所在。

理雅各英譯把這個天譯作「Heaven」，將之看為基督教的上帝，「 If you do good, among your descendants, in after generations, there shall be one who will attain to the royal dignity. A prince lays the foundation of the inheritance, and hands down the beginning which he has made, doing what may be continued by his successors. As to the accomplishment of the great result, that is with Heaven. What is that Chʿî to you , prince? Be strong to do good. That is all your business.」(James Legge, 2011,p.175.)而且，他的注解也是將此「天」譯作「Heaven」，「The reward to be realized in this world in the person of another, and the reference to Heaven.」(James Legge, 2011,p.175.)

4、第 4 例子

理氏更直接把《孟子》的盡心知性而知天的「天」解釋做「上帝(God)」《孟子‧盡心上》第 1 章第 1 至 3 節：「孟子曰：『盡其心者，知其性也。知其性，則知天矣。存其心，養其性，所以事天也。殀壽不貳，修身以俟之，所以立命也。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 228)。理氏把這段文字的兩個「天」譯作「Heaven」又將「命」譯成「Heaven-ordained」，其云

> Mencius said, 'He who has exhausted all his mental constitution knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven. To preserve one's mental constitution, and nourish one's nature, is the way to serve Heaven. When neither a premature death nor long life causes a man any double-mindedness, but he waits in the cultivation of his personal character for whatever issue; this is the way in which he establishes his Heaven-ordained being.'
>
> (James Legge, 2011,p.448)

理氏的注解，索性將這個盡心知性知天的「天」解讀做「上帝(God)」，其云：「盡其心 is, I conceive, to make one's self acquainted with all his mind, to arrest his consciousness, and ascertain what he is. This of course gives a man the knowledge of his nature, and as he is the creature of Heaven, its attributes must be corresponding. It is much to be wished that instead of the term Heaven, vague and indefinite, Mencius had simply said ‘ God.’ I can get no other meaning from this paragraph.」(James Legge, 2011,p.448)

(三)、把「命」解作「上帝之命」

除了把《孟子》的「天」理解與翻譯成「上帝」之外，理氏也把《孟子》所講的「命」理解做「上帝」之命。本文只討論兩個例子。

1、第 1 例子

《孟子‧滕文公上》第 3 章第 12 節：「《詩》云：『周雖舊邦，其命維新。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 91) 。理雅各的《孟子》注解云：「其命 ‘the appointment,’i.e. which lighted on it from Heaven.」(James Legge, 2011,p.243.)換言之，「其命」就變成「上帝的任命」，其涵義是周代的王帝都是由基督教的上帝所任命。

2、第 2 例子

《孟子‧公孫丑上》第 4 章第 6 節的：「《詩》云：『永言配命，自求多福。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 63) 。理氏的翻譯是：「This is illustrated by what is said in the Book of Poetry - Be always studious to be in harmony with the ordinances of God, So you will certainly get for yourself much happiness. 」(James Legge, 2011,p.199)這「命」也變成「上帝的命令」，理氏將中國經典的「天命」觀，解讀做「上帝的命令」，無疑是說基督教的上帝早已在中國古代管治著中國。

(四)、夢與上帝

理雅各把《尚書》所講的夢理解成上帝對人的啟示。《孟子・告子下》第 15 章第 1 節云：「孟子曰：『傳說舉於版築之閒。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 223)。《孟子》所載的典故，出自《尚書・說命》，茲引述之云：「高宗夢得說，使百工營求諸野，得諸傅巖。……恭默思道，夢帝賚予良弼，其代予言。乃審厥象，俾以形，傍求於天，說築傅嚴之野，維肖。爰立作相，王置諸其左右。」(《尚書正義》，1981，頁 223)。

理雅各的《孟子》注解云：「Fu Yueh,—see the Shu-ching, Pt. IV. Bk.VII，where it is related that the sovereign Kao Tsung having 'dreamt that God gave him a good assistant,' caused a picture of the man he had seen in his dream to be made, and ' search made for him through the kingdom, when he was found dwelling in the wilderness of Fu-yen (傅巖之野).'」(James Legge, 2011,p.446)。

理氏用「God」翻譯「帝」，這個帝在理雅各的文字涵義是基督教的上帝，可以估計到他的理念是上帝藉夢向商高宗啟示「傳說 」的樣貌，高宗於是使人畫了傳說的樣貌，在傅嚴之野求到這個得力助手。理雅各是用基督教《聖經》的理念理解《尚書》所載的夢，《聖經》記載不少例子是上帝藉夢向人啟示祂的旨意，例如雅各從夢中得到啟示，上帝會使他的後裔多如塵沙。(《聖經・舊約全書》，頁 33。)約瑟少年時期已從夢得到上帝啟示，將來會受到眾哥哥的下拜。(《聖經・舊約全書》，頁 47)。 約瑟坐牢的時候，先後為酒政、膳長與法老王解夢，夢的內容都是上帝對這些人的啟示(《聖經・舊約全書》，頁 47)。先知但以理也先後兩次向巴比倫王尼布甲尼撒解夢(《聖經・舊約全書》，頁 1039-1043)，但以理自己也有從夢中知道上帝的指示(《聖經・舊約全書》，頁 1048)。耶穌的父親從夢中得到指示，帶著耶穌逃往埃及(聖經・新約全書》，頁 2)。

人在夢中得到上帝的啟示，據基督教《聖經》所載，是普通的經驗，理雅各將中國古代的上帝理解成《聖經》所講的上帝。

理雅各把基督教的「上帝」等同中國先秦儒家經典的「上帝」，並不止於傳教的原因。基督教初來到中國，要在中國經典中找一個與基督教相對應的名詞，以便向中國人表達基督教所信的上帝，這個是必要的。早於利理竇的《天主實義》已經把儒家經典的上帝等同天主教的「天主」，其云：「吾國天主即華言上帝」(朱維錚編，2001，頁 25)。「吾天主，乃古經書所稱上帝也。……歷觀古書，而知上帝與天主，特異以名也。」(朱維錚編，2001，頁 25-26)。

然而理雅各將中國的上帝等同於基督教的上帝，已經不是因為傳教的理由，而是他的神學觀的理解，他所著的《中國人關於神靈的觀念》(The Notion of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits)記載了他與其他西教士對中國神靈觀念的爭論，他堅持中國的「上帝」就是基督教的「God」。他不使用「神」或「天主」這個術語，一定用「上帝」這術語向中國人傳道，他認為只有這個詞與「耶和華」和諧一致，古人用這個「上帝」表示造物主、統治者、和宇宙萬物的掌權者。(理雅各，2018，頁 212-213)。

至於把中國經典的「天」等同基督教的「上帝」，也是由來已久，利瑪竇《天主實義》云：「如以天解上帝，得之矣。」(朱維錚編，2001，頁 27)。利瑪竇對中國「天」的理解，也如理雅各一樣，把天分為形上天與形下天，形下天者「蒼蒼有形之天，有九重之析分，烏得為一尊也。……天之形，圓也，而以九層斷焉。」(朱維錚編，2001，頁 27)。利氏稱形上天為「先天」，「智者乃能推見至隱，視此天地高廣之形，而遂知有天主主宰其間，故肅心持志，以尊無形之先天。孰指茲蒼蒼之天，而為欽崇乎？」(朱維錚編，2001，頁 27)。

「天(Heaven)」等同基督教的「上帝(God)」這個理念，在理氏的著作《中國人關於神與靈的觀念》(*The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*)，說得很清楚。這個理念，也是不少基督教宣教士對中國形上天的理念。理氏引述文惠廉的〈辨護文〉云：「對至高主宰的敬拜，是敬拜『廣袤之天』。很明顯，上帝恰恰就是這『廣袤之天』祂以至高主宰之名受人敬拜。」(理雅各，2018，頁 163)。

理氏又引用衞三畏對中國人祭太廟的理論證明中國人祭天不是祭形而下的天，是祭形上天。衞三畏認為中國人祭太廟，不是向太廟獻祭，因為太廟是為先祖之靈而設，所謂祭太廟就是祭先祖之靈，所以理氏將之類比於祭天，他說：「當中國人以類似於獻祭的方式向天祈說時，他們所指的並非是『形質之天』，而是指向那最高存在，根據《聖經》，祂的寶座安定在天。」(理雅各，2018，頁 165)。

與理雅各同時代的在華西方傳教士，有贊成其講法，也有反對這種「上帝論」。故此，筆者只能將理雅各這種「上帝論」看作是在華西教士其中一種神學理論，而不是傳統的基督教教義的上帝觀，他的「上帝論」是值得商榷的。

理氏把基督教的上帝等同了中國經典的上帝，是停留在文字語言的表層涵義，沒有掌握到文字語言在表層涵義之上的更高層次的文化涵義。中國經典的「上帝」與及「天」，有形而上的涵義，是至高無上的、受人參拜、有創生力的、覆育萬物、管治萬類羣生的力量。這些文化涵義的特點，基督教的上帝都有，這是不爭的事實。

然而，基督教的「上帝(God)」純粹用文字語言的表層涵義來理解，是不能理解基督教的上帝的特性。應該從基督教的宗教文化涵義理解才可以知道「上帝(God)」的意思。例如在《創世記》所載，形容上帝創造萬物的過程，是中國經典所無的，而且「上帝說」這種創造方式更是基督教上帝的創造特性，基督教上帝的創造能力是很實質的顯示出來，有別於中國的上帝創生的講法。而且，在十誡第三誡說「因為我耶和華你的上帝是忌邪的上帝」(《聖經‧舊約全書》，第 93 頁)，忌邪可譯做「嫉妒」(丘恩處，1993，頁 388)，所以基督教的上帝是有性格的，感情很濃烈的，與人有密切的關係。中國的上帝無這些性格，也不是人性化的上帝，儒家的上帝是一「退隱的上帝」，上帝與人不是直接接觸，是一個間接思想之考慮、研究、分析的對象(方東美，2005，頁 165)。這些例子已說明，理雅各是忽略了這些文字語言的宗教文化涵義，對中國經典與基督教的宗教文化涵義無深入研究，只是片面式的解讀文字語言的表層涵義。

二、宗教經典的使用

理雅各除了「上帝論」有商榷餘地之外，他引用基督教《聖經》解釋《孟子》，也是一個值探討的問題。他既身為基督教的傳教士，引用基督教《聖經》解釋或與中國經典比較是自然不過的事。

(一)、引用《舊約全書》‧《創世記》、《約伯記》

理氏引使用了兩段《創世記》和一段《約伯記》的經文解釋《孟子》的「是非之心」，《孟子‧公孫丑上》第 6 章第 5 節：「是非之心，智之端也。」 (《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 66)。這是著名的「四端之心」的「智端」。

四端是指仁、義、禮、智，可歸之於善性之下，四端皆有其道德涵義。理雅各的《孟子》注解也順應四端的德性義而理解，也將之與三段經文比較，其云：「From the feelings which he has specified, Mencius reasons to the moral elements of our nature. It will be seen how to 智 ‘knowledge,' ‘wisdom,’ he gives a moral sense. Compare Gen. ii. 17,iii5-6;Job. xxxviii. 36.」(James Legge, 2011,p.203.)

茲引述理氏所提到的三段經文，《創世記》第 2 章第 17 節：「只是分別善惡樹上的果子、你不可喫、因為你喫的日子必定死。」 (《聖經‧舊約全書》，頁 2)。第 3 章第 5-6 節：「因為上帝知道、你們喫的日子眼睛就明亮了、你們便如神能知道善惡。於是女人見那棵樹的果子好作食物、也悅人的眼目、且是可喜愛的、能使人有智慧、就摘下果子來喫了‧又給他丈夫、他丈夫也喫了。」(《聖經‧舊約全書》，頁 3)。《約伯記》第 38 章第 36 節：「誰將智慧放在懷中、誰將聰明賜於心內。」 (《聖經‧舊約全書》，頁 655)。

理氏所引三段經文，與《孟子》：「是非之心」相比較，可謂大相逕庭，《孟子》所講的「是非之心」，在《孟子》出現了兩次，第二次是在《告子》第六章出現「是非之心，智也。」(朱熹，1985，卷 6 頁 4-6)， 是四善端之一，「端，緒也。因其情之發，而性之本然可得而見。」(朱熹，1985，卷 2 頁 15) 懂得分別是非是智慧之始，也是善端之始。這種是非之心是天生固存的，猶如人的四肢與生俱來一般 ，是內在於人的智慧，此自發之是非心及「是，知其善而以為是也。非，知其惡而以為非也。」(朱熹，1985，卷 2 頁 15)孟子所講「智」是引人向上發展的，以至發揮人的「善性」

理雅各所引三段「聖經」經文，人有了分別善惡的智慧，反而使人向下滑落，《創世記》所講的智慧不是人性向上提升的動力，《約伯記》所講的智慧,是從是從上帝而來，不是人天生固存的，人經過上帝改造，人藉此外來力量向上而善，與孟子所講相距甚遠。由此而言，理雅各仍然停留於文字語言的表面意義理解孟子的「是非之心」，未了解更上一層的文化涵義。

(二).引用《舊約全書‧詩篇》

理雅各引用《詩篇》比較《孟子》的天命與人道的關係，《孟子‧梁惠王下》第 14 章第 3 節云：「苟為善，後世子孫必有王者矣。君子創業垂統為可繼也，若夫成功則天也，君如彼何哉，彊為善而已矣。則天也。」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 46)。理氏注云:「Contrast Psalm xxxvii. 3,-- ' Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.'」(James Legge, 2011,p.175.)理氏是使用英文 King James Version 版《聖經》(*Holy Bible* K.J.V., 1977p.354.)，茲引述《舊約全書：詩篇》和合本的翻譯

云：第三十七篇第三節：「你當倚靠耶和華而行善・住在地上、以他的信實為糧。」(《聖經・舊約全書》，頁 683)。

《孟子》與《詩篇》的文字都強調行善，若依理氏的理解而言，毫無疑問認為孟子所指的是行上帝之善。但孟子原是勸滕文公行善政，至於功業流傳給後代，是否成功乃是天意，孟子所提倡的是德性義的善，也包含教導子孫行善，推行善政，不是宗教義的善。《詩篇》所講的善，是靠上帝行善，德性義包含於宗教義之內，是人與上帝的關係。

(三)、引用《新約全書・馬太福音》

理氏引用《馬太福音》解釋《孟子》的「赤子之心」，《孟子・離婁下》12 章：「孟子曰：『大人者，不失其赤子之心者也。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 144)。理氏為這個觀點可藉耶穌的話解釋之：「The sentiment may suggest the Saviour's words,— 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' But Christ speaks of the child's-heart as a thing to be regained；Mencius speaks of it as a thing not to be lost. With Christ, to become as children is to display certain characteristics of children. With Mencius, 'the child's-heart' is the ideal moral condition of humanity."」(James Legge, 2011,p.322.)

理氏所引用的「救主的話」，是出自《新約全書・馬太福音》第 18 章第 3 節(*Holy Bible* K.J.V., 1977p.573)，中文和合本《聖經》是：「我實在告訴你們、你們若不回轉、變成小孩子的樣式、斷不得進天國。」 (《聖經・新約全書，頁 25)。理氏認為，救主所講是重新得回赤子之心，而且更要顯示出小孩子的天真性格，但孟子則表不不要失去孩子的天真性情，而且這種童心是有道德意涵的。

理氏這裏說得比較中肯。孟子強調人保存其赤子之心，「赤子」是嬰兒，孟子認為這是未經污染的心，是最善良的心，是純一無偽之心，亦即人的本心，本此純一之心提升，便可成為大人，即是聖人。(王邦雄，2007，頁 71)。耶穌要求門徒回復赤子之心，用兒童的純真信靠上帝，沒有任何利益欲望信靠上帝，這樣才可以成為聖潔。

(四)、引用《新約全書・羅馬書》

理雅各引用了兩段《羅馬書》的經文解釋孟子。

1、《新約全書：羅馬書》第 5 章第 7 節

理氏引用《羅馬書》比較「以善服人」。《孟子・離婁下》第 16 章：「孟子曰：『以善服人者，未有能服人者也。以善養人，然後能服天下。天下不心服而王者，未之有也。』」 (《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 144)。理氏注解云:「Paul's sentiment, — "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die,"-occurs to the mind on reading it. But this is clashed with by its being insisted on that 養人以善 has no reference to the nourishing men's bodies, but is the bringing them to the nourisher's own moral excellence.」(James Legge, 2011,pp.323-324..)

理氏所引用的是《新約全書：羅馬書》第 5 章第 7 節(*Holy Bible* K.J.V., 1977p.664.)和合本中文《聖經》翻譯是：「為義人死、是少有的、為仁人死、或者有敢作的。」 (《聖經・新約全書，頁 214》)。但理雅各認為《羅馬書》與〈離婁下〉所講有些衝突，養人為善不是指養人的身體，而是指培養人的道德思。

孟子此段著重用「善」培養人，不是以善屈服人。趙岐注云：「以善服人之道治世，謂以威力服人者也。故人不心服。以善養人，養之以仁恩然後心服矣。」《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 144)。朱熹云：「服人者，欲以取勝於人。養人者，欲其同歸善。」(朱熹，《四書集註》，1985)。

理雅各在此引述意有未盡，因為還有《羅馬書》第 5 章第 7 節的經文「惟有基督在我們還作罪人的時候為我們死，上帝的愛就在此向我們顯明了。」(《聖經・新約全書，頁 214》)。這是基督教強調的愛人訊息，基督願意為人死，不是用威權使人屈服，而是用耶穌基督的死顯示愛心。

2、《羅馬書》第 13 章 1-4 節

另一段《羅馬書》經文是解釋「其助上帝」。《孟子・梁惠王下》第 3 章第 7 節云：「《書》曰：『天降下民，作之君，作之師，惟曰其助上帝，寵之四方。』」(《孟子注疏》，1981，頁 32)。這是孟子引用《尚書》的語，但用字有很大不同，理氏認為「其助上帝」的觀點可見諸《羅馬書》第 13 章 1-4 節。理氏之注云：「See the Shû-ching, V.i. Sect. I. 7, but the passage as quoted by Mencius is rather different from the original text. 惟曰其助上帝,--Literally, ‘just saying, They shall be aiding to God.’ The sentiment is that of Paul, in Rom. xiii. 1-4, ‘The powers ordained of God are the ministers of God.」(James Legge, 2011,p.157)

茲引《新約全書・羅馬書》中文和合本第 13 章第 1-4 節云：「在上有權柄的，人人當順服他。因為沒有權柄不是出於上帝神的。凡掌權的都是上帝所命的。所以抗拒掌權的，就是抗拒上帝的命。抗拒的必自取刑罰。作官的原不是叫行善的懼怕，乃是叫作惡的懼怕。你願意不懼怕掌權的麼？你只要行善，就可得他的稱讚。因為他是上帝的用人，是與你有益的。你若作惡，卻當懼怕。因為他不是空空的佩劍。他是上帝的用人，是伸冤的，刑罰那作惡的。」

理氏在此是把基督教的上帝等同於孟子所講的上帝。但《孟子》引述《尚書》之經文，乃可解做上天幫助百姓，為百姓設立君王，設立教化的師傅。只要這些君王與師傅體會天意，安撫人民使他們可安居。君王又要負起監察天下有罪與無罪的情況，天下就沒有踰越其心志的人，任何人都不敢超越其本分而胡作妄為。

《羅馬書》是勸勉第一世記的羅馬教會的信徒要順服當拳者，羅馬官長的政權都是由上帝所賜的。做信徒的要順服羅馬的官長，就算是猶太基督徒成員，也要順服外邦的官長。雖然二者的出發點有分別，但表達出人都有一個最高的統治力量在管理著。

三、這種方式的優缺點

理雅各這種解釋中國儒家經典的方法，為中國的學者帶來新的語言刺激，理雅各對儒家經典的「天」、「上帝」的解釋，是運了基督教的語言。雖然，將中國經典的上帝解釋成基督教的上帝(God)是存在爭議的(趙長江，2016，頁 142)。但是基督教的《聖經》就是使用了「上帝」翻譯「God」，而且在大量華人基督徒心目中，這是沒有問題的，因為經百多年的使用，已將中國本身的「上帝」一詞基督教化，賦予了特定的涵義，為中國的宗教語帶來新的刺激。

理雅各堅信經過苦讀與研究，認為中華民族的祖先是知道《聖經》所講的上帝，然後將這理念融入他的《中國經典譯注》裏面，同樣，這種解讀方式也是在存爭議，但是卻促使了中西方的宗教文流，中國學者可以藉此而重新檢視古代的信仰，作一翻考究。而且，引用《聖經》的經文與中國的經典相對照，也促使了宗教文化與語言的交流。

但是這種翻譯與注解，會導致「張冠李戴」的情況，例如把《孟子》的形上天解讀成人格神的上帝。為了宗教感情而對中國學者作無理的批評，是不合理的。

結論

理雅各將《孟子》所講的「上帝」翻譯做「God」，而其他神靈則譯做「god」，《孟子》用「上帝」這個詞，通常引自《詩經》或《尚書》。故此，理氏這個翻譯方式，表達了他對中國儒家經典的「上帝」的理解。而且，也又把《孟子》所講的形上天譯做「Heaven」，把天等同了基督教的上帝。這種翻譯及解說，反映了理雅各對中國古經典的「上帝」與「天」都是文字表層意義的理解，忽略了文字的深層意義，即文化涵義的理解。理氏引用了六段《聖經》的經文，與《孟子》做對比，其中有幾段經文與《孟子》原意不相符。這也顯示出對《孟子》的理解是處於文字表層意義的階段。但是，他的譯注為中國儒家經典的研究帶來新的刺激，使中國學者從另一角度理解儒家經典，例如對經典的宗教思想多做研究。也毫無疑問為中西社會帶來語言文化的交流。

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The Beginning Consonants in Vietnamese of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan, Thailand

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Abstract. Researching Vietnamese language in foreign countries is now a very interesting issue. Vietnamese language in foreign countries must face and be influenced by other languages in the new land. This paper aims to study and contrast the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan Province, Thailand which is considered one of the largest Viet Kieu communities in the Northeastern Thailand, with Vietnamese language in Vietnam. During the process of study, 460 words of the participants will be recorded and divided into 3 groups: The elderly: 60 years old and older (3 men, 3 women), the middle-aged group: 40-60 years old (3 men, 3 women), the young people: 20-40 years old (3 men, 3 women) with a total of 18 participants. To know the difference of Vietnamese language between two locations, the research result will be compared with the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of Binh Tri Thien dialect, because this is the native language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province. The contrastive result will find similarities and differences of the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language between two locations. Based on that result, we can see the change of some beginning consonants in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province, Thailand due to the influence and contact with the language in the new land, for example the variation of the beginning consonants /v/ to /w/, and /ʐ/ to /r/.

Keywords: Contrastive, Thai, Vietnamese

1. Introduction

Mukdahan province is located on the border of the Northeastern Thailand adjacent to Laos. This is a multi-ethnic place and is also one of the gathering places of large community of the Viet Kieu in Thailand. From the beginning of the twentieth century, a lot of Vietnamese people had to leave their homeland to emigrate abroad. This was partly due to the famine in 1945 and the cruelty of foreign invaders, which made Vietnamese people emigrate to foreign countries, especially the neighboring countries such as Laos and Thailand. In spite of settling in foreign place, miles away from their homeland, the Vietnamese people always look to their origin and always preserve the typical lifestyle of the Vietnamese people. The most special thing is the establishment of associations and the establishment of a Vietnamese language education system to eradicate illiteracy in the Viet Kieu communities in northeastern provinces of Thailand in general and in Mukdahan province in particular. This work has had a positive impact to preserve the lifestyle, culture and customs, especially to preserve Vietnamese language for descendants of the Viet Kieu.

Thanks to the process of preserving the lifestyle, culture and customs, up to now the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province has preserved the language characteristics by establishing Vietnamese classes. Because Mukdahan province is a gathering place for the Viet Kieu originated from many different localities, the Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province is very diverse. Moreover, Mukdahan province is located in the East-West economic corridor of ASEAN. There is R9 Road in Laos to connect Mukdahan province of Thailand with Quang Tri province and neighboring provinces in the Central Vietnam. This makes the travelling of the people of two countries become more and more favorable. At the same time, Vietnamese language has become one of the languages used more and more popularly and widely than before.

Therefore, doing research on Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province is very necessary and is not only useful in linguistics but also, based on the research results, clarifies the phonetic system in Vietnamese language here. In this paper, the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan Province, Thailand will be clearly presented. At the same time, the author also contrasts the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province with the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Vietnam to draw similarities and differences of the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language between two locations.

2. Relevant Studies

According to the concept of Prof. Dr. Hoang Thi Chau (2008), she stated that “The dialectic drift to another country has always been accompanied by the language contact which is considered as a condition to form a dialect, and can also be a new language. This dialect will have a life separate from the original language and be increasingly impacted by the language of the new homeland” (Hoang Thi Chau, 2008, p.245). Similarly, the concept of Werinreich (1961) showed that one person communicates in two languages at the same time and the two languages interact and influence each other, which are called the language contact. Its result is called Interference Phenomenon. Interference phenomenon always has influence on the two languages spoken by the speaker. Language interference can occur at the levels of phonology, grammar and vocabulary (Manasikarn Hengsuwan, 2017, p.234). Therefore, when Vietnamese people emigrated to Thailand, they brought a language from one country to another, making Vietnamese language be contacted to other languages. As in the concept of language contact, V.N. Jarceva (1990) stated that Language contact is the interaction between two or more languages, which has influence on the structure and vocabulary of one or more languages. The social conditions of language contact are specified by the need for mutual communication between members of ethnic groups and linguistic groups due to the promotion of economic, political, cultural and social demands (Nguyen Thi Xuyen, 2018).

Currently, there are few studies on Vietnamese language used in Thailand; although the Viet Kieu community in Thailand is very large, phonetic researchers in Vietnam have not been interested in doing research on Vietnamese language here. On the contrary, in Thailand, the research of Vietnamese language has been done for a long time, but there has been no research on Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province up to now. There are only research results of Vietnamese language in some other provinces of Thailand as follows:

Phatcharaphong Phubetpeerawat (2014) conducted a study on Vietnamese language in Nakhon Phanom province with the topic of “Surveying Vietnamese phonetic system of Thai people of Vietnamese descent in Muang district, Nakhon Phanom province (related to Vietnamese language in Vietnam)” with the following results: The phonetic system in Vietnamese language in Muang district, Nakhon Phanom province has 25 consonants including /p^h, b, t, t^h, d, ʈ, c, k, ʔ, f, v, s, z, ʂ, x, ɣ, h, l, ʐ, m, n, ɲ, ŋ, w, j/; 8 final consonants including /-p, -m, -t, -n, -k, - ŋ, -u̯ , -i̯ /; 11 single vowels including /i, e, ɛ, ɯ, ɤ, ɤ̆ , a, a:, u, o, ɔ/; 3 diphthongs including /ie, ɯɤ, uo/; and 6 tones including “Flat, high tone” (thanh ngang) /1/, “Flat, low tone” (thanh huyền) /2/, “Non-flat, high falling-raising tone” (thanh ngã) /3/, “Non-flat, low falling-raising tone” (thanh hỏi) /4/, “Non-flat, high raising tone” (thanh sắc) /5/, and “Non-flat, low falling tone” (thanh nặng) /6/. Vietnamese language in Muang district, Nakhon Phanom province has a lot of phonetic characteristics which are more similar and closer to Nghe Tinh dialect than Hanoi dialect. Most of the phonetic characteristics in Nghe Tinh dialect appear in the Vietnamese phonetic system in Muang district, except that /w/ and /j/ sounds do not appear in Nghe Tinh dialect.

Songgot Paanchiangwong (2011) in his doctoral thesis at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi with the topic of “Vietnamese language in the Northeastern Thailand (difference due to contact with Thai language)” stated that the use of Vietnamese language in Thailand has interference of phonetics, vocabulary and grammar. Phonetic interference has 3 types of interference: (1) Under-differentiation of phonemes is an interference that occurs with the pronunciation of two initial sounds ([k] and [k^h]), medial sound and “Non-flat, low falling-raising tone” (thanh hỏi). (2) Over-differentiation of phonemes occurs with the pronunciation of two final sounds (/ŋ/ and /k/). (3) Actual phone substitution occurs with the pronunciation of short vowels.

Jinda Ubolchoteit (1998) in the research thesis on Vietnamese phonetics in Khlung district, Thailand with the topic of *“A Phonological Study of Vietnamese at Tambon Khlung, Khlung District, Janthaburi Province”* summarized the phonetic system in Khlung town, Khlung district, Janthaburi province, Thailand. According to this study, Vietnamese language here has 21 beginning consonants including /b, d, ɣ, t, c, k, ʔ, p^h, t^h, ch, f, s, x, h, m, n, ŋ, ɲ, l, w, j/; 8 final consonants including /b, t, k, m, n, ŋ, w, j/; / l, w / are semi-vowels. In addition, there are 11 single vowels including /i, e, ɛ, ə, ʌ, ɯ, a, a:, u, o, ɔ/; 3 diphthongs including / i̯ə, ɯa, uə /, and 4 tones including “Flat, high tone” (thanh ngang) /no punctuation/, “Flat, low tone” (thanh huyền) /`/, “Non-flat, high raising tone” (thanh sắc) /´/, and “Non-flat, low falling-raising tone” (thanh hỏi) /’/.

Sujika Phuget (1996) in the master’s thesis at Mahidol University, Thailand, with the topic of *“A Phonological of Vietnamese in Aranyaprathet District, Sa- kaeo Province”* summarized Vietnamese phonetics in Aranyaprathet district, Sa-kaeo province, Thailand. Specifically, the thesis showed that Vietnamese here has 20 beginning consonants including /b, t, t^h, d, c, k, ɣ, ʔ, m, n, ŋ, ɲ, s, f, x, h, l, r, w, j/; 8 final consonants including /b, t, k, m, n, ŋ, w, j/. And consonant blends are often combined by /t, c, ɲ, x/ at the beginning and /r, w/ at the end. In addition, there are 11 single vowels including / i, e, ɛ, ə, ʌ, ɯ, a, a: , u, o, ɔ/; 3 diphthongs including /ia, ɯa, ua /, and 5 tones including “Flat, high tone” (thanh ngang) /no punctuation/, “Flat, low tone” (thanh huyền) /`/, “Non-flat, high raising tone” (thanh sắc) /´/, “Non-flat, low falling-raising tone” (thanh hỏi) /’/, and “Non-flat, low falling tone” (thanh nặng) /̣ /.

3. Objective and Hypotheses

1. To study the sound system of the Vietnamese language's beginning consonants pronounced among Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand.
2. To compare the sound system of the Vietnamese language's beginning consonants pronounced in Mukdahan province, Thailand, to one pronounced in Binh Tri Thien, Vietnam, referring to Vo Xuan Trang's findings.
3. To consider the factors that affect the adjustments of the Vietnamese language's beginning consonant sound pronounced among Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand.

Based on the research results, we will know the similarities and differences of the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan and in Vietnam. Furthermore, we expect to know that some beginning consonants have changed due to the influences and results of language contact such as the beginning consonant /v/ variable to /w/, and /ʐ/ variable to /r/.

The contribution of this research process will clarify the phonetic characteristics of Vietnamese language in Thailand in general and the characteristics of the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province in particular. At the same time, the similarities and differences of the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language between the two locations will be remarked. Moreover, based on the research results, it is possible to propose the measures to preserve Vietnamese language in foreign countries in general and in Mukdahan province, Thailand in particular.

4. Data Collection

To obtain materials for this research, we established a word list based on the Swadesh 200 Word List and the basic word list of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Our word list has 460 words. After that, we made a recording with the participants in Mukdahan province, Thailand with the Cool Edit Pro recording software with 22,050 Hz, 16 bits per sample in the WAV file format, then analyzed with Praat program. For the participants, we selected the participants who know and use Vietnamese language in daily communication at a relatively good level and can read and write Vietnamese. Then we divided the participants into 3 groups as follows and made the recording: The first group of the elderly: 60 years old and older (3 men, 3 women), the second group of middle-aged people: 40-60 years old (3 men, 3 women), the third group of young people: 20-40 years old (3 men, 3 women) with a total of 18 participants.

For the criterion of comparison, the research results will be compared with the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of Binh Tri Thien dialect as stated in the study of Vo Xuan Trang (1997) because Binh Tri Thien dialect (including Quang Binh province, Quang Tri province and Thua Thien Hue province) is the native language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand. According to the research results of Vo Xuan Trang (1997), the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of Binh Tri Thien dialect in Vietnam has 23 beginning consonants including /b, m, t, d, n, z, c, ɲ k, ŋ, ʐ, ʈ, ʂ, f, t^h, v, s, l, x, ɣ, h, ʔ, j/. After contrasting the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province with Binh Tri Thien dialect, the similarities and differences of the beginning consonant system between the two locations will be drawn. At the same time, the contrastive results will show how some consonants change compared to their native language.

5. Results

After having made recording and analyzed documents in the Viet Kieu community in Mukdahan province, Thailand, the research results showed that the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu here has now 26 beginning consonants, including / p^h, f, b, t, t^h, d, ʈ, c, k, ʔ, v, w, s, z, j, ʂ, x, ɣ, h, l, ʐ, r, m, n, ɲ, ŋ /:

Table 1. The beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand.

Method \ Unit			Bilabial	Labio dental	Apical		Palatal	Velar	Glottal
					Alveolar	Retroflex			
Plosive	Voiceless	Tenuis			t	ʈ	c	k	ʔ
		Flosive	p^h		t^h				
	Voiced		b		d				
Fricative		Voiceless		f	s	ʂ		x	h

	Voiced		v	z	ʐ	j	ɣ	
Lateral approximant				l				
Trill				r				
Nasal		m		n		ɲ	ŋ	
Semi-vowel		w						

Based on the research results of Vo Xuan Trang (1997) on Binh Tri Thien dialect in Vietnam as a criterion for comparison, the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Binh Tri Thien region has 23 beginning consonants, including / b, m, t, d, n, z, c, ɲ k, ŋ, ʑ, ʈ, ʂ, f, t^{h}, v, s, l, x, ɣ, h, ʔ, j /. After having contrasted the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province, Thailand with Binh Tri Thien dialect, the contrastive results are as follows:

The similarities of the beginning consonant system between two locations: The beginning consonants occuring in both locations include / b, m, t, d, n, z, c, ɲ k, ŋ, ʑ, ʈ, ʂ, f, t^{h}, v, s, l, x, ɣ, h, ʔ, j /. The contrastive results show that all of 23 beginning consonants in Binh Tri Thien dialect appear in the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan Province, Thailand.

The differences of the beginning consonant system between two locations: The beginning consonants only appearing in Mukdahan province, Thailand include /p^{h}, w, r/. The native language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province is Binh Tri Thien dialect which does not have these 3 beginning consonants. This can be explained as follows:

The consonant /p^{h}/ is a plosive, voiceless and flosive consonant made with both lips. This consonant only appears in the elderly group (60 years old and older) and only appears in 3 out of 6 participants of this elderly group while the participants of the middle-aged group and young group use the consonant /f/ instead of the consonant /p^{h}/.

Table 2. Variation of the beginning consonants /p^{h}/ and /f/ in the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand

Group / Vocabulary	Elderly group (60 years old and older)	Middle-aged group (40-60 years old)	Young group (20-40 years old)
Pha	/p^{h}a:^{1}/ /fa:^{1}/	/fa:^{1}/	/fa:^{1}/
Phê	/p^{h}e:^{1}/ /fe:^{1}/	/fe:^{1}/	/fe:^{1}/
Phí	/p^{h}i:^{5}/ /fi:^{5}/	/fi:^{5}/	/fi:^{5}/
Phở	/p^{h}ɤ^{4}/ /fɤ^{4}/	/fɤ^{4}/	/fɤ^{4}/

The consonant /w/ is the semi-vowel made with both lips. In the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province, /w/ only appears in the young group while the elderly group and the middle-aged group use the consonant /v/ instead of the consonant /w/.

Table 3. Variation of the beginning consonants /v/ and /w/ in the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand.

Group / Vocabulary	Elderly group (60 years old and older)	Middle-aged group (40-60 years old)	Young group (20-40 years old)
Vá	/va:^{5}/	/va:^{5}/	/wa:^{5}/
Về	/ve:^{2}/	/ve:^{2}/	/we:^{2}/
Vỏ	/vɔ^{4}/	/vɔ^{4}/	/wɔ^{4}/
Vỡ	/vɤ^{3}/	/vɤ^{3}/	/wɤ^{3}/

According to the research results, it can be seen that the consonant /v/ in the elderly group and the middle-aged group is varied into the consonant /w/ in the young group.

The consonant /r/ is a trill consonant made with tongue tip. The use of this consonant is also similar to the consonant /w/. The consonant /r/ only appears in the young group while the elderly group and the middle-aged group use the consonant /ʐ/.

Table 4. Variation of the beginning consonants /ʐ/ and /r/ in the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand.

Group / Vocabulary	Elderly group (60 years old and older)	Middle-aged group (40-60 years old)	Young group (20-40 years old)
Ra	/ʐa:^{1}/	/ʐa:^{1}/	/ra:^{1}/
Rẻ	/ʐɛ:^{4}/	/ʐɛ:^{4}/	/rɛ:^{4}/
Rõ	/ʐɔ^{3}/	/ʐɔ^{3}/	/rɔ^{3}/
Rủ	/ʐu^{4}/	/ʐu^{4}/	/ru^{4}/

Similar to the variation of the consonant /v/ into /w/, the consonant /ʐ/ in the elderly group and the middle-aged group is varied into the consonant / r/ in the young group. This phenomenon makes the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province have two new beginning consonants /w/ and /r/ while their original Vietnamese does not appear these two beginning consonants.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The research results showed that the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province, Thailand has 26 beginning consonants, including / p^h, f, b, t, t^h, d, ʈ, c, k, ʔ, v, w, s, z, j, ʂ, x, ɣ, h, l, ʐ, r, m, n, ɲ, ŋ /. After having compared with the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Binh Tri Thien region which is considered as their original dialect, there are 3 beginning consonants which do not occur in the beginning consonant system in Vietnamese language in Binh Tri Thien region, including /p^h, w, r/.

For the beginning consonant /p^h/, Prof. Dr. Hoang Thi Chau (2008) stated that *"The consonant* /p^h/ *is an ancient phoneme in Vietnamese and is kept by the people in Nghe Tinh and Binh Tri Thien regions; however, their new generation tends to pronounce into the sound* /f/*"* (Hoang Thi Chau, 2008, p.138). Based on the results of the study, it is shown that the beginning consonant /p^h/ only occurs in some participants in the elderly group. This proves that some elderly people still preserves the phonetic characteristics of ancient Vietnamese and characteristics of their original dialect before emigrating to foreign countries. For the next generations, ie the middle-aged and young people, Vietnamese laguage of the Viet Kieu is contacted and influenced by each other, and also influenced by Vietnamese language through teaching Vietnamese in the Viet Kieu community as well as mass media, so the consonant /p^h/ is gradually varied into the consonant /f/ in modern Vietnamese. Therefore, the appearance of the consonant /p^h/ has shown the characteristics of their original language that are preserved up to now.

The variation of the beginning consonants /v/ into /w/, and /ʐ/ into / r/ only occurs in the participants of the young group. The cause of this phenomenon may be because Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province, Thailand is contacted and influenced by Thai language in accordance with the concept of Prof. Dr. Hoang Thi Chau (2008) stating that *"The dialectic drift to another country has always been accompanied by the language contact which is considered as a condition to form a dialect, and can also be a new language. This dialect will have a life separate from the original language and be increasingly impacted by the language of the new homeland"* (Hoang Thi Chau, 2008, p.245). Similarly, the concept of Werinreich (1961) showed that *"One person communicates in two languages at the same time and the two languages interact and influence each other, which are called the language contact. Its result is called Interference Phenomenon. Interference phenomenon always has infuence on the two languages spoken by the speaker. Language interference can occur at the levels of phonology, grammar and vocabulary"* (Manasikarn Hengsuwan, 2017, p.234). In the Thai language as well as the dialect of the Northeastern Thailand, the consonant /r/ and semi-vowel /w/ appear as the beginning consonants. At the same time, the social context of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province cannot avoid language contact in a multilingual society. Especially, for the young people, Vietnamese language is not their native language like the elderly; Vietnamese language for the young people is only the second language while Thai language and the dialect of the Northeastern Thailand are the native language of the young people. Therefore, Thai language is a powerful language that has influenced and impacted Vietnamese language of the young people, making the variation of the consonant /v/ into /w/, and /ʐ/ into /r/ in the young people. This is the result of language contact and interference, which occurs at the phonological level in this case.

Based on the research results, it can be seen that the variation of some beginning consonants in Vietnamese language of the Viet Kieu in Mukdahan province occurs in the young group. The cause of variation is due to the language contact leading to the phenomenon of language interference. In the future, Vietnamese language in Mukdahan province will be increasingly influenced by Thai language, which makes Vietnamese characteristics here more and more variable than Vietnamese language in Vietnam.

Acknowledgements

This paper is part of a PhD-level study with the theme *"Vietnamese phonetic system of overseas Vietnamese in Mukdahan province, Thailand"*

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A **Study of Development of Wh-questions in Second Language Learners of English**

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Absract. Chomsky's concept of transformational generative grammar designed to represent adult native speaker's competence uses transformational rules in the derivation of wh- questions. These hypothetical transformational rules of wh- questions are not actualized in the speech of adults and hence not available for imitation. The present study intends to find out whether or not there is evidence in the elicited speech of second language learners of English, whose first language is Hindi that such rules also figure in their competence and correspond to the stages in their development of Wh- questions. The research to be described here is cross-sectional in nature and the principal data are transcriptions of the elicited speech of one hundred and fifty children. Klima and Bellugi (1966) paper has been taken as theoritcal framework. In order to elicit interrogatives, reading cards and role play method were used for data collection. In this method, children participated in pairs. One child acted as a teacher and other as his or her student. A pair of two children was given first story. The children read story one by one, so that both of them can understand story fully. Then one of them was told that he is a teacher and his partner is his student and was asked to put up some questions based on that story, and the other child was supposed to answer them. Next time with the same pair second story was introduced and their roles were exchanged. This method was chosen because it is very difficult to elicit natural data on interrogatives from children. The result shows that second language learners of English exhibit stages of development of Wh-questions which are similar to hypothetical transformational strings described in Chomsky's transformational generative grammar and suggests that there are some regularity with regard to the emergence of these rules in the speech of the children.

Keywords: Transformational Generative Grammar, Transformational rules, Acquisition, Wh-questions, structured role play

1. Introduction

How does a child acquire wh-questions has been a fascinating subject for language investigators. With the publication of Chomsky's Syntactic Structure(1957) and Aspects of the Theory of Syntax(1965) researchers in the field of First Language Acquisition and Second Language Acquisition started to investigate whether the concept of UG exists or not. In his Transformational Generative Grammar, Chomsky talks about surface structure and deep structure and provides some hypothetical strings for the actual realization of interrogatives, negatives, passives etc. These hypothetical strings are not present in the input to the children for the imitation. If these hypothetical strings appear in the speech of the children while they are trying to learn language Chomsky's hypothesis that "the child must possess a set of innate principles which guide language processing" (Ellis, 1986, p.14) could be true to some extent. Dato (1970) while differentiating the general L1=L2 hypothesis into three specific hypothesis says "L2 syntactic development is characterized by a learning sequence in which 'base structures' are learned first and then increasingly 'transformed structures' are acquired" (Dato, 1970 as cited in Richards ,1974, p.108) Keeping this in mind the researcher tried to find out whether these hypothetical strings or transformational rules delineated by Chomsky, which are operated on a deep structure or kernel sentence to produce a surface structure of wh-questions are reflected in the speech of the children or not. The research to be described here assumes that the stages in acquisition of wh-questions mirror the transformational derivatives in transformational grammar and expects to find sentences in the child's grammar that are basically of this nature.

In the past, a number of studies have focused on finding out the deep seated formal universals. Their real interest has been to find out the rules which are there in the mind of the native speaker which enable them to create language. Chomsky has been mainly interested in 'these rules and principles and feels that we can actually understand how the mind actually works if we understand how it produces language' (Rahman, 2010, p.69). According to Chomsky " sentences are present in the mind of the children at the two level, simple basic sentences consisting of ideas and rough meaning must be present at the deep level. The way these sentences are constructed at the deep level is known as deep structure. However we cannot see sentences at this level, we can only see or hear sentences at the surface level. This deep level would be operated upon by rules and changed into more complex sentences" (Rahman, 2010, p.69). Chomsky believes that "natural language are governed by highly complex rules that are not immediately evident in actual utterances or as Chomsky calls it 'surface structure'. If the child were totally reliant on the data available in the input, he would not able to acquire these rules' (Ellis, 1986, p.14).

When we make a comparative study of wh-questions of Hindi and English, we find slight variations. Hindi language follows the word order of Subject, Object and Verb, and in "general it has considerable flexibility in framing questions. In English yes/no questions are formed by inverting the subject and auxiliary in simple sentence and by introducing rising intonation towards the end of the question". If auxiliary is missing in a simple sentence, yes/no question is framed by support of dummy 'do'. (Which depending on the context can be changed to 'does' and 'did'). "In Hindi on the other hand yes/no questions are formed by using a Hindi word 'Kyaa'(a yes/no question marker) at the beginning of the sentence" (Agnihotri, 2010, p.28). For example:

Are you coming for the class? (English)
Kyaa aap Klaas ke liye aa rahe hai? (Hindi)

Besides this in Hindi, we do not have anything corresponding to 'do' auxiliary. For example:

Vah abhi skool gayaa. (Hindi)
He just left for the school. (English)
Kyaa vah skool gayaa? (Hindi)
Did he just leave for the school? (English)

Information questions in Hindi generally involve the use of one of the 'k- words' in Hindi as in English we need a wh-word to achieve the same goal. "The Hindi 'k-words' include 'kaun' (who), 'kahan' (when), 'kiska' (whose), 'kab (when)', 'kyon' (why), 'kyaa' (what) and 'kidhar'(which direction). These 'k-words' tend to appear where one would expect to find the answer but it is not uncommon to see Hindi 'k-words' getting attracted to the verb (Agnihotri, 2010, p.28) . In English wh-questions are formed by putting wh-word at the beginning and inverting the subject and auxiliary position, for example

Gaurisha kal dophar mridu ke saath dhire dhire rudra ke ghar gayee. (Hindi)
Gaurisha slowly walked with Mridu to Rudra's house yesterday afternoon. (English)
Kaun kal dophar mein mridu ke saath dhire dhire rudra ke ghar gaya? (Hindi)
Who walked slowly to Rudra's house yesterday afternoon? (English)
Gaurisha kab mridu ke saath dhire dhire rudra ke ghar gayee? (Hindi)
When did Gaurisha slowly walk to Rudra's house with Mridu? (English)

Transformational Generative Grammar aims to describe the grammatical competence of adult native speakers and proposes the employment of transformational rules in the development of interrogative sentences in English. Interrogative sentences are sentences which pose questions. Interrogatives are broadly of two types 1.Yes/No questions which provide answer in'yes' or 'no' 2. Wh-questions require specific answer and call for an answer which is an example of one of the major constituents of a sentence. Constituents to be called forth could be a subject NP, object NP or locative, manner or time Adverbial. For example:

Will India win today?
When will India win?

When we look at the grammar of yes/no questions from the perspective of Transformational Generative Grammar it is assumed that yes/no questions are derived from underlying statements by application of two transformational rules: 1. Yes/no switch rule, " this rule changes the relative position of two or more elements of underlying statements. This reverses the order of Noun phrase and some part of auxiliary. If auxiliary contains any optional helping verb then the tense and the first helping verb is moved in front of the subject noun phrase," (Lester, 1976, p.60) for example:

Statement: We can go.
Question: Can we go?

Statement: Mridu is crazy.
Question: Is Mridu crazy?

But when helping verb is missing and main verb is not 'be' a slightly different version of yes/no question is used, now only the tense element is moved before the subject. For example:

Mridu gave a ball. can be analysed as
Mridu-past-give a-ball. will become
Past-Mridu-give-a-ball.

Now the second transformational rule called 'do-insertion rule' is applied and after the application of flip-flop rule, following yes/no question is produced.

Past-do-Mridu-give-a-ball.
Do-past-Mridu-give-a-ball.
Did Mridu give a ball?

The second major type of question is called wh-questions which begin with a wh-word, for example: who, what, which, when, where, why, how etc. These questions are asked for specific information and not for agreement or disagreement. For example:

What are you doing?
Where are you going?
When are you coming?
Why are you going?

The question words call forth certain kind of answer." 'What' is used with non-animate noun phrases, 'who' with animate or human phrase, 'where' with adverbials of position and direction, 'when' with adverbs of time and so on" (Lester,1976, p.64). The constituents to be questioned could be a subject noun phrase, object noun phrase or the adverbial and a (wh) element will have been associated with it. Before lexical insertion an underlying string for a sentence would look like this:

Q-NP-AUX-V-NP-WH-ADV
Or
Q-Mridu-will- read- the book-when.

In this example, the constituent adverbial has been questioned, if a noun phrase has been questioned, we get either
Q-When Mridu will read what
Q-Who-will read the book.

To derive the normal wh-questions two transformational rules are required. 1. Question word switch rule which is called preposing and 2. The interchange of the subject of the sentence and auxiliary verb. We may call this transposing.

By rule one it will be changed to
What Mridu will read?
By further two into
What will Mridu read?

2. Relevant Studies and Theoretical Framework

In the past a number of pieces of research have been done to investigate these development sequences. In 1965, Klima and Bellugi studied the development of English questions in the speech of three children Adam, Eve and Sarah at Harvard. They recorded and transcribed two hours of speech every two weeks in a natural setting along with situational notes made to relate the meaning with the context. After the analysis, they have found successive development of interrogative forms and put them into three basic categories: 1. The most common version are some version of what's that? Where Nounphrase go? What Nounphrase doing?, where wh-words precede the noun head. 2. Inversion was noticed in yes/no questions but not in wh-questions. The auxiliary 'do' was absent in final shape of most of the wh-questions.3. Tense was also not marked. Questions that appeared in the speech of Adam, Eve and Sarah were of following types:

"Where my mitten?
What the dollie have?
You can't fix it?
Why not me drink it?
Does lions walk?
Did I saw that in my book?" (Klima and Bellugi,1966, p.204)

Brown (1968) was initially motivated to investigate the transformational rules in the derivation of wh-questions. He wanted to see "whether or not there is evidence in the spontaneous speech of pre-school children that such rules figure also in the child's competence" (Brown, 1968, p.279). For the study three children Adam, Eve and Sarah were selected. The data for the study were transcriptions of the child and mother and occasionally also his father in conversation at home. After analyzing the data he has found examples of preposing (wh-word is placed before noun head) but examples of transposing (where position of noun phrase and auxiliary is interchanged) have been not found. He confirms that the speech of these children to some extant confirms the hypothetical transformational derivations of wh-questions given in Transformational Generative Grammar. But he also suggests that it might be wise to have a second look at the empiricist explanation. Some of the examples of sentences produced by the children in Brown's study are as follows:

"Who will read the book?
What John will do?
When John will read?
Why you see seal?
Why not me break that one? " (Brown, 1968, p.284-287)

Ravem (1974a, 1974b) in his study tried to replicate Brown's (1968) study and to see whether transformational derivations of wh-questions are found in the acquisition of the development sequences of wh-questions or not. He has studied the acquisition of negatives and question forms of English by his two Norwegian speaking children, Rune and Reidun learning English as a second language . The data have been collected through tape recorded interviews and translational and imitation tests over a period of five months. With minor differences Ravem study confirms the stand taken by Brown and striking similarities between his study and Brown study have been found. He reports that Rune and Reidun speech contain examples of preposing weak and preposing strong but with the development of auxiliary system a few examples of transposing have been also found. It seems that at one stage his children oscillate between preposing and transposing, " although a couple of her affirmative wh-questions have inversion of do and the subject noun phrase, the translation tests show isolated examples of non inversion, example

Where we did livd for we come here? (for=before)" (Ravem, 1974a&b, p.148)

Another important study was the study carried out by Cancino et al (1978). This study described the natural acquisition of English negatives and interrogatives by the six native Spanish speakers, Data have been collected through experimental elicitation, spontaneous speech recording and preplanned socio-linguistic interaction. All the data have been recorded and along with the investigator a bilingual transcriber has always present to take notes. After the analysis of the data they come out with the conclusion that "1. Wh-questions appear in the uninverted form for all subjects.2.Un-inverted wh-questions do not necessarily appear prior to inverted wh-questions. 3. All subjects used uninverted y/n questions. 4. Uninverted y/n questions appeared prior to invrted y/n questions.5. There was no stage where wh-questions are inverted and y/n questions are not" (Cancino et al., 1978,p.119-220).

Besides these, results of L2 English German and Japanese indicate that learners with minute differences follow similar sequence of acquisition for interrogatives regardless of their L1s (Butterworth and Hatch, 1978; Itoh and Hatch, 1978; Wode, 1978 for German; Wagner-Gouch,1978).

A part from finding out the similarity between the development sequence of wh- questions of English another relevant question has been to explore whether process of question formation is same among all learners or not. "The meaning of process here is how the child constructs internal rules and how he adjusts them from stage to stage, rather than a descriptive it is an explanatory term” (Ellis,1986, p.46). Klima and Bellugi described the process by which Adam, Eve and Sarah acquired question patterns of English according to the rules of transformational generative grammar. Using this study as theoretical framework, in the present study the researcher wishes to explore the process of question formation given by transformational generative grammar for the second language learners of English whose first language is Hindi and to observe if such rules also figure in these children’s competence and correspond to the stages in the development of wh-questions .

3. Methodology

The research to be described here is cross-sectional in nature and the principal data are transcriptions of the elicited speech of one hundred and fifty children, whose first language is Hindi and are learning English as a second language, thirty children each from each standard of II,III, IV,V and VI. The subjects have been drawn from a pool of enrolled students at La Martiniere College and Cathedral Senior Secondary School of Lucknow, a city of India. Both the schools are reputed schools of Lucknow and impart instruction through medium of English. For the collection of data a testing instrument has developed and while designing the instrument method of natural communication task has been preferred to linguistic manipulation tasks because natural communication task permits one to make statement concerning the subjects normally developing subconscious grammar rather than child’s meta linguistic awareness. So the researcher has used ten reading cards as instrument. These reading cards are very short stories and clustered in the group of two for each standard. Children from class II, III, IV, V, and VI have been selected for data collection. In order to elicit interrogatives, reading cards and role play method have been used for data collection. In this method, children participate in pairs. One child acts as a teacher and other as his or her student. A pair of two children is given first story. The children read story one by one, so that both of them can understand story fully. Then one of them is told that he is a teacher and his partner is his student and is asked to put up some questions based on that story, and the other child is supposed to answer them. Next time with the same pair second story is introduced and their roles have been exchanged. This method is chosen because it is very difficult to elicit natural data on interrogatives from children. These one hundred and fifty children produced a total of two thousand four hundred and two utterances. For finding out the interrogative pattern a total of one thousand five hundred and twenty six utterances have been used. The remaining sentences have not been used as they are not the reflection of children’s interlanguage relative to interrogative patterns. A table of total interrogative utterances under study broken by class is given below

Table 1: Total interrogative utterances under study broken by class

Class	Used Utterances	Total Interrogative Utterances Included in the Study
II	358	198
III	395	232
IV	530	346
V	534	352
VI	585	398
Total	2,402	1,526

After this, entire data have been reviewed for finding out the developmental interrogative patterns in the elicited speech samples of the children. After reviewing, the researcher has come out with some regular patterns for wh-questions using frequency analysis. Finally the percentage of each pattern has been calculated and tabulated in the tables.

4. Results, Analysis and Discussion

Overall it can be said that the following pattern have been discovered in the elicited speech of the children

Table 2: Summary of the development sequences of wh-questions in the present research

For wh-questions	Examples
Wh-word+ declarative sentence pattern	Where he was running?

Inversion in wh-questions	Why was the crow thirsty?
Inversion in question with 'do' forms. In few sentences tense was marked twice	What did the dog bring? What did crow dropped in the water?

Along with this pattern following transformational rules of questions have been found in the present research

Table 3: Transformational rules investigated in the present research

stages	Transformational rules	Examples
1.	Base structure (declarative word order) with no inversion and no fronting	Dog is greedy?
2.	Preposing of wh-word without fronting In yes/no questions 'Do' was noticed	What Suma saw one day? Did Suma was clever
3.	Inversion in wh-questions with 'be' forms Inversion in 'do' forms	What were their names? What did Suma say to her friends?
4.	Inversion in yes/no questions	Was Neema the clever fish?

The researcher has found that the development sequences investigated in the elicited speech of second language learners of English whose first language is Hindi is more or less similar to other studies in the field of first and second language acquisition. The transformational rules of English wh-questions have been noted in the speech of the children. The most amazing fact in the present research is that children of the present study have inverted sentences with wh-questions prior to yes/no questions .

The development of wh- questions can be divided into three main stages. In the first case wh- word precedes the rest of sentences and wh+ declarative sentence pattern has been found.

What the jackal said?
What the ant brought?
What the mother said?

Even in day to day conversation these types of utterances are common. Many users of Indian English do not invert wh- word with auxiliary. In Klima and Bellugi research this pattern is also present, but instead of wh+ declarative sentence pattern, Adam, Eve and Sarah used wh-+ noun phrase.

Presence of this pattern shows that intermediate sentence type without inversion is a feature that is present in the speech of first as well as second language learners. From these examples it appears that transformational generative grammar has captured a stage in the child's development of wh-questions. Brown (1968) in his study while investigating the transformational rules of wh-questions, found preposing weak and preposing strong types of questions. Preposing weak type of sentences are those sentences which could have been learned as reduction of adult speech to 'telegraphese' as shown by the following examples:

What (do) you want?
How (will) you open it?
What (is) his name? (Brown, 1968, p.280)

On the other hand, preposing strong type of question can not be arrived at by telegraphic reduction, because here verb is inflected or the question includes auxiliary:

What he wants?
How he opened it?
What his name is? (Brown, 1968, p.280)

Children in the present study have produced preposing strong type of questions as they are cognitively mature and have acquired auxiliary system of English verbs and they also know that the what in "what the ant brought?' is the direct object of the brought and it is related to an indefinite pronoun in the declarative sentence pattern that is, 'the ant brought something'.

The next stage has been the stage of inversion or transposing. This stage is not present in Klima and Bellugi (1966) research and Brown (1968) research. Inversion is first noticed in wh-questions and then in yes/no questions as in:

Who was saved?
Where was Pinku?
Where was he going?

The rule is overextended to sentences with 'be' in embedded questions producing a number of examples such as 'I don't know what is he doing' which is also a common feature of Indian English and can be heard in the speech of adult users of English.

Unlike Klima and Bellugi (1966), Ravem (1974) and Brown (1968) research, in the present research in the third stage 'do transformations' have appeared. Hindi language unlike English does not involve 'do transformations'. In the present research it seems that children have acquired 'transposing transformation' and 'do transformation', for example:

Where did crow sat o the pot?
What did the dog brought?
What did both the ducks say?
However in few examples, sentences with 'non-inverted do' has also been noticed.
What they do to prepare the kheer?

The existence of these transformational rules in the elicited speech of the children suggests that such rules figure in the competence of the children and correspond to the stages in their development of yes/no and wh-questions of English. When we compare the findings of the present study with the other studies in the field it is found that grammatical development is partly a matter of growing competence (in the sense of underlying knowledge) and is partly a matter of increasing performance capacity and there is a possibility that all transformational rules of question formation of English appeared in the speech of these children because of these factors.

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Attitudinal Resources Employed in the Teacher Talk Given by Asian and Western Instructors

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Abstract. Though tremendous studies have so far probed the teacher talk in EFL classrooms, a few of them looked into the impact of its attitudinal resources upon the interpersonal relationships between students and the instructor. The present study attempted to fill in such a research gap by analyzing a western and an Asian instructors' attitudinal resources in their teacher talk given to Chinese students in an English-medium university using Martin's Appraisal Theory (2000), and students' responses towards these attitudinal resources. The current study also looked into the instructors' preference of using particular categories of attitudinal resources when explaining new course concepts. Classroom observations and interviews were conducted to collect data from the instructors and students. Stimulated recall was employed in student interviews to investigate students' perceptions towards the employment of the attitudinal resources in teacher talk. Findings suggested that there was an association between the instructors' preferred attitudinal resources and their social identities, whilst the attitudinal resources from different instructors affected the Chinese students differently. Based on the observed lessons, the Asian instructor intended to use negative Capacity and Composition resources for improving his authenticity and validity, while the western instructor was more likely to use positive Reaction and Composition resources for engaging the students to explore more perspectives to comprehend the course concepts. Results from stimulated recall interviews showed that while the Chinese students perceived the Asian instructor as prestigious and authorized, the western instructor was considered as more engaging, positive and kind. In this study, some pedagogical implications were drawn—the English-medium instructors can enhance their efficiency for teaching interculturally by employing the attitudinal resources appropriately. In this case, amid a specific sequence of attitudinal resources, the students can be motivated in delving into the knowledge points, whereas their critical thinking would be guided appropriately to avoid the wrong comprehension.

Keywords: teacher talk, Appraisal Theory, Chinese EFL classroom, western and Asian instructors

1. Introduction

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of the Appraisal Theory, which is adopted for construing interpersonal meaning. Recent developments in the field of Appraisal have led to increasing interest in its application among many Chinese linguistic scholars. For instance, attitudinal resources in Chinese junior high school EFL classroom teacher talk have been delved, which suggests pedagogical significance about the use of attitudinal resources (Gao, 2015). According to Cazden (1988), classroom discourse, which encompasses teachers' questions and feedback, could impact students' engagement in class. However, most studies in Appraisal of teacher talk have only been carried out in a small number of areas. Moreover, how attitudinal resources in teacher talk affect students has not been studied.

As English-medium classes are also increasingly more common in the universities in China, the researcher analyzed in this study how teacher talk influences students from the point of Appraisal System in the context of English-medium teachers with different cultural backgrounds. Specifically, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1) How are the attitudinal resources employed differently for instruction by Asian and western instructors in English–medium classes?
2) How do Chinese students perceive the attitudinal resources in Asian and western instructors' teacher talk?

This research was carried out in the Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College (UIC), whose medium of instruction was English for all courses except for Chinese and physical education classes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Appraisal Theory and Attitude System

Martin and White (2005) classified Appraisal into three major realms for interaction— 'Attitude', 'Engagement' and 'Graduation'. Painter (2003) pointed out that 'Attitude' might play a crucial role within Appraisal Theory. Moreover, White (2002) also mentioned that 'Attitude' indicates values from speakers' evaluation on participants and process. To be more specific, Attitude particularly means humans' feelings or emotions, which could be further categorized into three domains— 'Affect', 'Judgement' and 'Appreciation' (Martin & White, 2005). Figure 2.1 demonstrates an overview of the Attitude system:

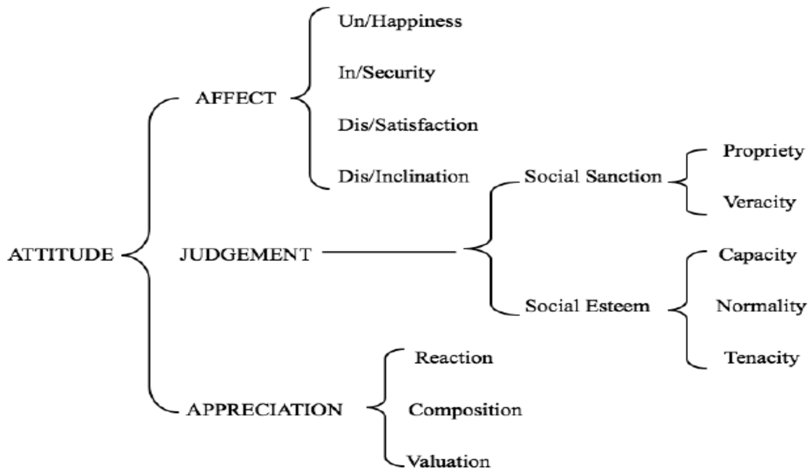

Fig 2.1. Overview of Attitude System (Martin & White, 2005, p.38)

Affect. According to Martin (2005, p. 42), Affect is concerned with evaluating human's feelings, which could be classified as positive or negative emotions. In other words, it refers to how speakers or writers would spontaneously react when they encounter specific things or people—whether we feel happy or unhappy, bored or interested. Halliday (1994) recognized that 'modification of participants and process', 'Affective mental and behavioral process' and 'modal adjuncts' might lead to Affect. Accordingly, Affect could be recognized as 'quality', 'process' and 'comment'.

Judgement. Within the Appraisal Theory, Judgement registers people's behaviors or even their personalities from the perspective of ethics through synthesizing certain set of social norms, which could be positive or negative, or presented in an explicit or implicit way. Judgement is also categorized into 'Social Esteem' and 'Social Sanction' respectively. The Judgement of social esteem deals with the evaluation on improving or decreasing someone's reputation in a community without ethical significance, whereas social sanction refers to some legal routine regarding morality. On the other hand, social esteem occurs more in oral contexts, while social sanction is more likely to be employed in contexts of writing.

Martin & White (2005) divided realization of social esteem into Normality—to measure how unusual someone is; Capacity—to evaluate how capable they are; Tenacity—to judge how resolute they are. Social sanction could also be classified as Veracity, which indexes how truthful someone is; and Propriety, which is used to measure someone's ethical degree.

Appreciation. Martin & White (2005) categorized Appreciation into three domains—how things affect people; what do things consist of and their essentials behind the two aspects above. Appreciation refers to aesthetics as well as the evaluation towards the nature of issues or process. Similar to the Affect and Judgement, Appreciation could also be registered as positive or negative. Different from Judgement, Appreciation concentrates more on appraising the nature of people instead of their performance.

Martin & White (2005, p.56) also group Appreciation into three variables: Reaction—how the attention being captured during the process of appraising objects; Composition—the perception of proportionality about the appraised objects; Valuation—social significance of the appraised people.

2.2 Attitudinal Resources in Teacher Talk

Volosinov (1973, p.67) illustrated that every composition of utterances could own its value, indicating that each element in a real utterance might contain meaning as well as value. People always express their emotion towards various incidents and others in their talk, whilst establish interpersonal and social relation through appraising other's discourse and utterance. Teachers are also one of the social identities, how they reveal the value system of their personalities, establish and maintain the interlocutors' relationships and organize the discourse can be reflected, when they are expressing their thoughts, opinions and attitudes (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Moskowitz (1971) generalizes a certain functions of teacher talk in EFL classroom, which involving teachers' attitudinal resources for some extent:

Direct Influence

i. Gives Information: Giving information, facts, own opinion or ideas, lecturing, or asking rhetorical questions;
ii. Gives Directions: Giving directions, requests, or commands that students are expected to follow. Directing various drills; facilitating whole-class and small-group activity; …

Indirect Influence

i. Deals with feelings: In a non-threatening way, accepting, discussing, referring to or communicating understanding of past, present, or future feelings of students;
ii. Praises or Encouragements: Praising, complimenting, and telling students why they are valued, according to what they have done or said; encouraging students to communicate and trying to form their confidence. Confirming answers are correct;
iii. Asks Questions: Asking questions to which the answer is anticipated. Rhetorical questions are not included in this category; ...

(Moskowitz, 1971, pp.9-12)

Indeed, the Moskowitz's analysis on teacher talk could reflect the Martin's Attitude System (2005)—for instance, 'Praises or Encouragements' might involve the Affect and Judgement, which would implicate teachers' positive attitude or interpersonal meanings about students' in-class behaviors.

In English-medium content classes, instructors of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds might employ different attitudinal resources express in various ways in their teacher talk. Farr (2015, p.93) pointed out that different orientations towards teaching and learning prevail in different learning cultures. Though all the instructors use English as the medium of instruction, different attitudinal resources in their talk could be identified due to the differences in their cultural backgrounds. In this case, with Appraisal Theory employed, the preferred attitudinal resources in the intercultural teacher talk can be identified.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study consisted of classroom observation, interview and discourse analysis. In order to answer the first research question, classroom observations and audio-tape recordings were employed to collect the teachers' in-class performance, which encompassed the classroom contexts and teachers' oral discourse. Afterwards, discourse analysis was adopted to examine the teacher talk in terms of the attitudinal resources.

Additionally, to probe the second research question, student interviews were adopted to research students' perception, feelings and thoughts about their teachers.

3.2 Participants

Two assistant professors in UIC, who have taught at university level for at least three years, were invited to participate in the study. Both of them were from the field of applied linguistics. In order to keep them anonymous, they were referred to Instructor A and Instructor B. Instructor A originates from Asia and has American educational background. He can speak relatively fluent English as second language. Instructor B comes from North America and she can speak proficient English language as first language.

In terms of course content and assessment methods, both courses involved information about 'media' and 'culture', and students had to submit a multimedia project and a term paper toward the end of the semester instead of having a final exam. Thus, both instructors might handle their course similarly in terms of introducing the course concepts and equipping the students with skills for completing the assessment tasks.

As for the other participants—eight Chinese students from UIC, who were interviewed and recorded individually. Four of them were from the Instructor A's class (Group A), whilst the other four belonged to Instructor B's class (Group B). In addition, students in Group A came from the Division of Business and Management (DBM), whereas the Group B student belonged to Division of Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS).

4. Results

4.1Attitudinal Resources Used in Teacher Talk

Two classes conducted by Instructor A and B were named as Class A and Class B respectively. The transcribed teacher talk of each class lasts for around 9 minutes. In the data analysis, the attitudinal resources were classified into the three attitudinal subsystems by Martin's Appraisal Theory. The frequency of each subsystem resource was later calculated, whilst the distribution patterns of attitudinal resources were delved.

Table 1. The Distribution of the Three Subsystems of Attitude Theory

Classes	Duration of Explanation of new Concepts	Total Freq. of Attitudinal Resources	Affect Freq. / Percent	Judgement Freq. / Percent	Appreciation Freq. / Percent
Class A	9 min	69 / 100%	6 / 8.70%	17 / 24.64%	46 / 66.67%
Class B	9 min	86 / 100%	7 / 8.14%	29 / 33.72%	50 / 58.14%

Note. Each lesson lasted for 50 minutes and only the teacher talk for instructions were recorded. The teacher talk of questioning and providing feedback was excluded.

Table 1 presents distribution patterns of attitudinal resources between Class A and B. What stands out in the table is, Appreciation accounts for the highest frequency (58.14 to 66.67%), Judgement maintains in the middle (around 25 to 34%), whereas Affect the lowest (around 8%). Although Instructor A and Instructor B used similar amount of Affect and Appreciation Resources, Instructor B tended to use more Judgement Resources.

According to the classroom observation, when the two instructors came up with defining some abstract or specific concepts, such as 'auto ethnography' or 'commercial advertisement', they focused more on using Judgement and Appreciation Resources, rather than using Affect Resources. In another word, this type of teacher talk mostly reveals how the instructors appreciate essences of the course concepts and how they evaluate them as well.

Furthermore, both instructors were in favor of using Judgement Resources on their personal behaviors, when they were employing their own experiences as examples to further expand the course concepts sometimes.

Basing on the classroom participation of the students in Class A and B respectively, Class A students were busy on making notes during the Instructor A's explanation and hardly responded to the instructor, unless they were called. Nevertheless, during Instructor B's instruction, the Class B students always made eye contacts with Instructor B and sometimes responded to the Instructor B with brief feedback or simple body language, such as 'Yes', 'No' or nodding, shaking head. Overall, the Class B students behaved more actively than Class A students, when they classified the Judgement Resources, during the Instructor B's elaboration of course concepts with some particular examples drawn from her own experience.

Appreciation. As shown in Table 1, Appreciation occurred more frequently than both Affect and Judgement in the two classes. The Appreciation resources account for 64 percent of total attitudinal resources in Instructor A's teacher talk, which was a little bit more than Instructor B's.

Table 2. The Distribution of Three Subsystems of Appreciation

Classes	Total Freq. of Appreciation Res.	Reaction Freq. / Percent	Composition Freq. / Percent	Valuation Freq. / Percent
Class A	46	8 / 17.39%	19 / 41.30%	19 / 41.30%
Class B	50	19 / 38.00%	13 / 26.00%	18 / 36.00%

It is apparent from Table 2 that although the frequency of Appreciation Resources in both classes were similar, the two instructors had different preferences in using different kinds of Appreciation Resources when they were explaining the course concepts. Instructor A used Composition (41.30%) 1.5 times more frequently than Instructor B did (26%), while Instructor B employed more Reaction Resources of course concepts (38%) twice more than Instructor A did (17.39%).

Instructor A preferred using negative Composition, when elaborating some basic theories or knowledge points. However, these Composition Resources were too abstract or board, which hardly drew the students a clear big picture of new concepts. In Excerpt A2, 'in advertisement, we *can* do some *specific tasks*, for example, in a newspaper or radio or television, they are *general* media technology, which *is called* media, but advertisement in *some sort of* media contents.' Although terms like '*specific*', 'general' and '*some sort of*' were perceived as too vague to comprehend the course theories by students, Instructor A intended to employ some technical terms to present the new concepts in relatively academic way as well as his authoritative teacher figure.

Instructor B was more likely to use positive Reaction Resources, when explaining course concepts. In the Excerpt B35, 'Although ethnography is different, built on this notion of ethnography is very qualitative' Instructor

B's explanation contained her evaluation about the essence of ethnography. Moreover, with this kind of Reaction, Instructor B provided her students a more thorough view on course concepts, which including emphasis of concepts' significance and value.

To sum up, the two instructors used different attitudinal resources under Appreciation System. Instructor A tried to use more negative Composition to demonstrate the new concepts objectively, whilst show off his authoritative figure in class. Instructor B was more into express her feelings or attitudes towards the implications behind the new concepts.

Judgement. As revealed by Table 3, Instructor B employed more Judgement Resources in her explanation, whilst the two instructors mainly adopted the social esteem in their Judgement Resources. To be more specific, the distribution patterns of the Judgement Resources from both instructors were very similar within Normality, which account for one third (31% to 35%). However, Instructor A employed Capacity Resources less frequently, whereas the Capacity accounts for the majority in his own Judgement Resources (64.71%). There was minority of Tenacity and Veracity occurred in the Instructor B's illustrations (around 10% in total).

Table 3. The Distribution of Four Subsystems of Judgement

Classes	Total number of Judgement Res.	Normality Freq./ Percent	Capacity Freq./ Percent	Tenacity Freq./ Percent	Veracity Freq./ Percent
Class A	17	6 / 35.29%	11 / 64.71%	N	N
Class B	29	9 / 31.03%	16 / 55.17%	1 / 3.45%	2 / 6.90%

In terms of Appendix A, Instructor A was more inclined to use Negative Judgement Resources. To be more specific, Instructor A used Capacity in a more prestigious or authoritative way, as shown below:

A15. Your item is like… Yeah, so, she said, we *have to* talk about features of the item. We *have to* make the item *attractive to* the public. (Judgement-Social esteem-Capacity) '—';

A24. Definition that how we *can* define an advertisement. (Judgement-Social esteem-Capacity) '—';

A29. Advertisement is a process of delivering a message, to the *general public.* (Judgement-Social esteem-Normality) '—';

Moreover, the single most striking observation to emerge from the non-verbal explanations was that Instructor A was more inclined to write some key words on the blackboard when he was elaborating a particular concept. For instance, He wrote some key terms such as 'commercial advertisement' on the blackboard when he was trying to shed lights on the principles or details behind this knowledge point. Additionally, Instructor A produced more negative Judgement Resources when he was giving verbal and non-verbal explanation at the same time.

It could be easily recognized that the main differences between the use of Judgement by the two instructors, concentrate on Normality and Capacity. Instructor B often used Capacity to demonstrate some principles by assuming students' ability or capacity. This pattern can be viewed in the following Excerpts:

B10. So an example that you *might* see that has *predominant* pattern. ①(Judgement-Social Esteem-Capacity) '+';

B19. If you *really* want to understand the media representation well, watch something about twenty years ago. ② (Judgement-Social Esteem-Normality) '+'

In the excerpts above, Instructor B commonly used positive Capacity and Normality Resources: 'we *might*…', 'we *really need to*…' in order to establish certain detailed contexts for her students, which may have effectively guided the students to explore the nature of the course concepts.

In a word, Instructor A was more likely to use 'we *can*…', 'we *have to*…', which contained more power than the hedging words used by Instructor B like 'might' and '*need to*' as well. Though Instructor B also used '*can*' and '*have to*' in a certain context, the frequency was lower and Instructor B was trying to build a more relaxing classroom atmosphere with the use of the hedging Capacity Resources.

4.2 Summary

Taken together, these results indicate that there were apparent differences among the attitudinal resources employed by different instructors when they were giving instructions about the new course concepts. These differences concentrate on the Appreciation and Judgement— Composition Resources account for more ratio within Instructor

A’s Judgement Resources, while Instructor B used Capacity and Reaction Resources more frequently. The next chapter, therefore, moves on to discuss the insights and effects of using the above resources differently by the two instructors, when they were illustrating the new course concepts.

5. Discussion

5.1 Attitudinal Resources Employed and Constructed in Instructor A’s and Instructor B’s Teacher Talk

The distribution pattern of the three attitudinal subsystems in the two English-medium instructors were different between western and Asian college instructors. The instructors’ attitudinal resources of the three subsystems were appraised, regarding their social identity backgrounds.

Concerning with their social identities, negative Judgement Resources were more widely used in the breakdown of Instructor A’s attitudinal resources, whereas there were more positive Appreciation and Judgement Resources in Instructor B’s instructions. In terms of the classroom observation, Instructor A mainly used the teacher-center teaching strategies in his classroom. In terms of Instructor A’s teacher talk, it could be easily recognized that he may have adopted some Confucian heritages of learning, which means the instructor played the role of an authoritative parent and students were obligated to respect and accept the instructor’s ideas (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006, p.13). Table 4.1.2 implicates that the Capacity accounts the majority among Instructor A’s Judgement Resources. According to Gee (2011), language can signal a relatively formal and differential relationship with the addressee. In this case, Instructor A was trying to use ‘you have to’, ‘you can’ to establish a formal and deferential student-teacher relationship with his students. With this prestigious instruction, his students were more likely to admit the authenticity of his definition or elaboration of the new course concepts. It also indicates a fact that Instructor A may have used the negative Capacity to restrain the students’ innovation or control how they develop their own ideas towards some course theories strictly. Moreover, some negative Normality Resources like ‘general’, which mentioned in the result section above, were used to demonstrate the instructor’s objective and academic attitude in front of his students.

By contrast, Instructor B used numerous non-directive language embedded with positive Appreciation Resources. For instance, the utterance ‘a good way to define…’ was employed with positive Reaction Resources as mentioned above in the Result section. It could be easily construed that the given definition by Instructor B was just a suggested definition instead of an ideal one. With this effort, Instructor B was trying to decrease her authoritative presence in her class so as to encourage her students to think out of the box.

Though both instructors used similar amount of Appreciation Resources, Instructor A’s discourses contained more Composition Resources (41.30% out of the total Appreciation Resources), which were nearly twice more than Instructor B’s and most them were negative. Nevertheless, there were more Reaction in Instructor B’s Appreciation (around 38%), which were almost twice more than Instructor A’s. Depending on the classroom observation, Instructor A always tried to use Composition to define the course concepts with some specific descriptive terms so as to make the nature of the concepts more objective and academic. However, it turned out that the employed Composition were way too abstract or even ambiguous, such as ‘general’, ‘specific’ and ‘some sort of’. Accordingly, every time when Instructor A asked some concept checking questions, he hardly received any content feedbacks from his students. By contrast, Instructor B was more inclined to use Reaction to emphasize the significance and importance behind the course concepts rather than highlighting the principles or functions of the concepts. For instance, ‘learning is rational’, ‘it’s very important to understand this’. They implicated that how the concepts might grab the instructor and how instructors like them. It helped her students to identify the key points of instructor B’s explanation and engage them to think about the content of course concepts actively.

Additionally, the classified distribution patterns of attitudinal resources in teacher talk may have taken speaking contexts into consideration, which were quite different from Martin’s Appraisal Theory. To be more specific, the given examples in the norm of Martin’s Theory were apparent adjectives, whereas the discussed attitudinal resources in teacher talk could not be defined without classroom contexts. For instance, some modal verbs could be further classified as the attitudinal resources like ‘might’, ‘can’. It is because this research tried to look into the Appraisal Theory in the aspect of oral texts, which might need more contexts to reveal the attitudinal resources.

5.2 Student Perceptions

The student participants in current study are Chinese EFL learners, who are studying the subject content in English. However, they have been learning their subjects with traditional authoritarian approaches since they were in primary school. Although they are taught by English-medium instructors now, the teaching style in UIC has not been completely shifted to western one. To be more specific, their instructors are from western and Asian as well, who employ different teaching approaches, depending on instructors' own learning cultures. The different effects of instructors' teaching practices towards the Chinese EFL classroom can be revealed from the students' perceptions of attitudinal resources of the teacher talk.

5.2.1 Perceptions of Instructor A

According to the research interview, the negative Capacity Resources in Instructor A's teacher talk may have decreased the students' critical thinking on the course concepts. For example, from utterance appraised in the interview below:

'We have to think about different types of advertisement'

Instructor A emphasized the standard definition of 'advertisement' the negative Capacity 'have to', which also contained strong validity. Though the students may have acquired the generally accepted answers immediately, they would hardly think further beyond the instructor's illustrations.

Nevertheless, his Capacity Resources in the brief conclusion of each new concept's illustration, were perceived as reliable and authentic by the Chinese EFL students. The taught concepts were considered as meaningful and valuable, which further engaged the students to absorb the knowledge more actively.

Furthermore, the negative Composition Resources within Instructor A's instructions were specific technical terms, which can draw more details for the students to understand the concepts. However, these Composition Resources were too abstract for students to access sometimes. For instance, the evaluated utterances in the interview: 'public relations', 'conceptual matter' and 'general public'. They might even draw students an impression that the course concepts were meaningless or confusing.

5.2.2 Perceptions of Instructor B

When it comes to Instructor B's teacher talk, the students perceived the positive Reaction Resources as good hints to help them learn about the essence of the course concepts. It can be revealed from utterances in the interview: 'Very similar to'. In this case, with logical connection to their prior knowledge, they could absorb the knowledge in more systematic and logical way.

Additionally, some hedging words or non-directive instructions, belonging to positive Capacity Resources might also encourage Chinese EFL students to delve more innovatively and critically into the course concepts. For example, the utterance appraised in the interview: 'might', 'sort of' would make students think the interpretation of the new concepts were open answer. Students could understand the knowledge in a more relaxing way and be more willing to think more critically.

Nevertheless, some Chinese EFL students like the Student X1, who perceived the negative Judgement Resources as effective. In China, EFL students from international education institutions like UIC, might be used to regarding their teachers as a figure of maximum authority. Khuvasanond (2013) points out that the students who are used to teacher-centered instruction in Asian classroom are assumed to be passive and reserved. In this case, Chinese EFL students who are learning subject content in English would find the teacher talk unfamiliar and even confusing.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Attitudinal Resources Employed and Constructed in Instructor A's and Instructor B's Teacher Talk

Instructor A employed more Composition resources of Appreciation and larger ratio of Capacity in Judgement, whereas Instructor B used more Capacity Resources and Reaction Resources in teacher talk.

Instructor A explained the course concepts through traditional authoritarian approaches with more negative Composition resources embedded. He demonstrated the knowledge points with abstract and technical Composition, which may have improved the teacher's authenticity and power, though it may also have reduced the students' motivation on developing their own idea.

Instructor B illustrated concepts with more positive Capacity and Reaction which formed a western non-directive teaching practices. With this type of Capacity, Instructor B could engage the students to explore more perspectives to comprehend the concepts. The positive Reaction of Instructor B could also draw a clearer view towards the essences of the course concepts.

6.2 Student Perceptions

It was found that the perceptions of Chinese EFL students to their English-medium instructors depended on the attitudinal resources in their teacher talk. The two instructors in this study have different social identities and own different teaching cultures. It came out that these elements can be revealed from their employed attitudinal resources, which might further affect Chinese EFL students' in-class learning experience.

The negative Capacity resources from Instructor A might make these students consider the concepts as authentic, whilst helping the instructor establish a confident and authoritative figure in students' mind. When coming across Judgement resources, these students were willing to believe their instructors and learn the course concepts more actively. Moreover, though Instructor A's negative Composition resources will provide students with more detailed information about the concepts, whereas most of them were technical terms, which were too abstract and vague for students to access.

The positive Reaction resources from Instructor B's teacher talk might also work as a crucial role to facilitate students to understand entities of new course concepts and recognize the importance or uniqueness of the concepts. In addition, the students might also identify the connections between the new course concepts and their prior knowledge, which will draw them a more systematic big picture of their course. Furthermore, some non-directive Capacity resources were classified in Instructor B's teacher talk. This kind of attitudinal resources can engage students to develop their personal views or ideas on the course concepts.

To sum up, with Reaction and Capacity resources from Instructor A and B respectively, Chinese EFL students perceived the new course concepts as persuasive, whilst concepts' essence could be comprehended in a more logical way and further critically developed.

6.3 Limitation

To begin with, the number of research participants was very limited—only two instructors and eight student interviewees were included. The reliability of the data should be improved through inviting more research subjects.

Although this study tended to control the variables in addition to the two instructors and student subjects, the course content was very hard to be equalized. To be more specific, Class A was a free selective course, whereas Class B was a major required course. Though there were common knowledge points between these courses, the course content of Class B was more complicated and abstract than Class A. In this case, student interviewees may have been affected by different degrees of the content complexity when they were asked to appraise the instructors' attitudinal resources.

6.4 Pedagogical Implication

Effective attitudinal resources were found in both instructors' teacher talk, yet they might be perceived differently by the Chinese EFL students. Thus, an integrated use of attitudinal resources in English-medium classes are suggested.

With Reaction resources, instructors can draw Chinese students some logical connections with other knowledge points, whilst instructors can also use two types of Capacity resources in an appropriate sequence: with the positive Appreciation or Judgement go first to allow the students brainstorm the concepts, instructors can later refine the concepts basing on students' critical thinking towards the concepts with negative Judgement so as to guarantee the students to comprehend the nature of knowledge points accurately. In other words, with such sequence of using the attitudinal resources, the students can be encouraged to delve into the knowledge rather than being spoon-fed by their instructor, whereas their instructor's guidance can prevent them from thinking in a wrong way.

In a word, English-medium instructors can improve their intercultural teaching efficiency by employing attitudinal resources from both western and Asian teaching cultures in their class so as to help the students to learn new course concepts more efficiently and critically.

Acknowledgments

This paper is a revised version of the final year project for my BA TESL programme. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Edith Yan, for her inspiring instructions and valuable suggestions.

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The Emotional Impact of Swear Words in Chinese and English on Chinese-English Bilingual Speakers

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Abstract. Chinese-English bilingual speakers often have different language attitudes toward their first language (Chinese) and second language (English). This study investigated the emotional impact of English and Chinese swear words on 93 Chinese-English bilingual speakers. The findings were based on data drawn from a self-collected database through a web-questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions. The methodology of this study combined a matched–guise test and a web-questionnaire. Year One and Year Four English-related major Undergraduates who were currently studying at Beijing Normal University-HongKong Baptist University United International College (UIC) listened to the same English and Chinese speech audio tapes which contained different swear words and recorded the offensive intensity that they felt on five-point Likert scale in the web-questionnaire. The researcher found that the participants' emotional perceptions varied based on different conversation contexts when comparing English and Chinese swear words. The descriptive statistic scores revealed that the perceived emotional impact of swear words in the Abusive category was higher in Chinese, while the perceived emotional impact of swear words in the Casual category was higher in English. Besides, according to the Spearman correlation analyses, a positive correlation was found between offensiveness perceptions and participants' proficiency levels in English Abusive speeches. The results of t-test suggested that Year Four participants had stronger emotional reactions towards English swear words than Year One participants. These findings suggested that there are implications on English language teaching practices and self English learning approach for improving Chinese English learners' English competence. In order to make Chinese English learners using English correctly and effectively in different contexts, both teachers and English learners should spend time and effort in the English study process.

Keywords: emotional impact, swear words, Chinese-English bilingual speakers, language attitude, contextual swearing

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

After spending three years of college life at Beijing Normal University-HongKong Baptist University United International College (UIC), the researcher found that Chinese-English bilingual speakers have different language attitudes toward their first language and second language. To be more precise, it is easier for Chinese native speakers to accept emotionally charged expressions in English than in their mother tongue (Chinese) even though they have similar semantic content. For instance, when an individual hears "fxxk you" in English, it may elicit less emotional resonance than when he or she hears the equivalent expression in Chinese. Hence, numerous students switch their verbal swearing from Chinese to English and regard this action as more polite. However, with the progress of one's English proficiency, individuals' perception towards English will change. They will become more sensitive to some English expressions that may have been neglected before because they are now more familiar with the cultures of English speaking countries and have a deeper understanding of the language. Under these circumstances, Chinese students at UIC seem to accept English swear words more easily compared with Chinese swear words, whereas the emotional impact of the swear words for them may vary from freshman to seniors.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary reason for this research is related to an interesting phenomenon called "the swearing paradox." This concept states that although it is commonly acknowledged that swear words involve intense negative emotions for both speakers and listeners, people still would like to use such highly offensive behavior in their daily life (Kapoor, 2016; Beers Fägersten, 2007). Similarly, swear words are often the first category of language that second language learners would like to learn. Even though they cannot acquire this knowledge within the classroom, they usually have a great amount of enthusiasm to learn these expressions from other resources. Year One students at UIC probably have limited knowledge of English swear words and speak these words rarely in their daily life because they spend most of their time in the classroom during high school. However, Year Four students at UIC with English-related majors may have gained an opulent knowledge of swear words and expressions in English because they can learn English from various sources. Knowing how to use English swear words is a skill that Chinese students can use to express emotions differently. However, English swear words can be easily misused in some contexts, and the listeners may think of the speaker as a rude person.

The present research aimed to investigate the relationship between native Chinese speakers' English proficiency level and their emotional sensitivity to swear words, and to what extent Chinese-English bilinguals view English swear words as less offensive than Chinese swear words with equivalent semantic meanings.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Swear words are an essential part of a language which contains intense emotions. The current research focused on Chinese college students' different language attitudes towards their native and second language. Moreover, it partly reflected the individuals' English attitude changes with the improvement of their English language proficiency which can indicate whether learning English in an English as Foreign Language (EFL) environment can enhance learners' understanding of culture related expressions. This research also filled the gap that no researcher has studied the emotional impact on swear words of Chinese-English bilingual speakers. Moreover, this study used matched-guise test as a supplementary method to solve the drawbacks of solely using the questionnaire as the single method of research. The participants could give more authentic responses to contextualized audio stimuli than visual stimuli.

1.4 Research Questions & Hypothesis

There are two research questions in this research. They are:

1. To what extent are the different emotional impacts that Mandarin native speakers would have towards receiving swear words in Mandarin (L1) and English (L2) with equivalent semantic content?
2. To what extent does the Mandarin native speakers' English proficiency level influence the emotional impact?

The research hypotheses are:

1. Mandarin native speakers would more likely accept swear words in English (L2) instead of Mandarin (L1) with equivalent semantic content.
2. Bilingual speakers with higher English proficiency level would have stronger emotional impacts from English swear words.
3. Year Four English related major students would have stronger emotional impacts on English swear words than Year One English related major students

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Terms

2.1.1 Defining Swear Words

Swear words are considered as taboo words in many languages. Swear words are one significant part of a language which have versatile and pragmatic uses and they can express various emotional attitudes of the speakers (Wilson and Dewaele, 2010). The purpose of individuals using swearwords is to make listeners feeling known to them, which being generally viewed as an offensive or rude behavior. The usage of swear words can be categorized into Casual swearing and Abusive swearing. Abusive swearing means the intention of the speaker's swearing is causing harm; Casual swearing means the intention of the speaker's swearing is not for causing harm, but for expressing emotions (Kapoor, 2016).

2.1.2 Defining Matched-guise Test

Matched-guise test is a methodological instrument to investigate listeners attitudes toward different languages in diverse contexts (Butler, 2007). The measurement is based on the supposition that speech style can elicit individuals' preferences to certain group-related traits. A balanced bilingual person who is fully competent in both languages is needed to tape-record speeches in both languages, and the recordings were used as "stimulus" materials for assessment. During the evaluation of the participants, the researcher must argue that every listener views the recordings of both languages were recorded by different native speakers. In this way, the voice and other features such as reading styles can be controlled among disparate recordings, and therefore the judgments on the "speaker" only rely on the language cues (Giles and Billings, 2004).

2.2 The Relevance of the Present Research to Other Studies

Many scholars have conducted studies on language attitudes which are related to swear words. Some researchers believed that the language attitude of bilingual or multilingual speakers towards swear words in the first and second language are different (Harris, 2004; Harris et al. 2003; Dewaele, 2004b). Harris (2004) argued that the native language involves more emotional resonance than the second language for bilingual speakers, especially on taboo words. The findings of the laboratory study also proved that the first language could elicit stronger emotional impacts for Turkish-English bilingual speakers through skin conductance (Harris et al. 2003). In contrast, Dewaele (2004b) found that the emotional impact of swear words in the first language weakens for individuals whose first language is no longer the dominant language of the speaker. In other words, the first language may not contain the most emotional resonance for individuals and they preferred to use the dominant language to swear which may not be their first language.

Swear words can be used for various purposes which may be positive, negative, or inconsequential in terms of the impact of swear words on listeners. Based on different contexts, swear words can be used for harming people, positive social outcomes like humor, or just a casual conversational habit of speakers. Interestingly, although the casual use of swear words is not intentionally offensive, this kind of behavior sometimes be viewed as offensive or impolite by others (Jay, 2009). Besides, many variables can influence the gap of emotional responses between the first and second languages towards swear words. Taking the age of second language acquisition as an example, swear words learned in early childhood would elicit stronger emotional reactivity as opposed to late second language (L2) learners regardless of whether they were genuinely aware of the meaning of those swear words (Harris et al. 2003). Moreover, Dewaele (2004b) believed that individuals had stronger emotional reactions to swear words based on the language that they were more proficient in.

Language attitudes towards swear words have been studied through different methods. Harris (2004) investigated Spanish-English bilinguals' emotional reactivity towards different kinds of taboo words through skin conductance, which could lead to sensitive and accurate results from the research. Paper formed questionnaires have been applied to related studies, which showed swear words to participants through visual manifestation (Kapoor, 2016; Beers Fägersten, 2007). Besides, a follow-up interview being conducted in Beers Fägersten's study in order to acquire further details (Beers Fägersten, 2007). Dewaele (2004a) collected a wide range of database through a web-questionnaire, which allowed him to conclude more general claims.

Overall, related studies mostly suggested that swear words in the first language have a stronger emotional impact than the second language for individuals, but sociobiographical factors can also influence the degree of emotional reactions. The main methodologies were skin conductance and questionnaires. Although related topic studies have investigated participants of several nationalities, no prior study focused on Chinese bilinguals. This research compares the emotions of Chinese-English bilingual speakers towards English and Chinese swear words for the first time. The present research aimed to investigate whether Chinese-English bilingual speakers also have the same language attitudes shown by previous studies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The researcher conducted a small scale study. A total of 93 Chinese-English bilingual speakers who studied at UIC contributed to the database with 24 male students and 69 female students. The researcher intended to balance the ratio of two genders during the data collection. However, it was not possible to collect the same number of data between male and female in English related majors at UIC because the ratio of the total English major students between males and females was 3:7. Moreover, the present study did not focus on gender difference, so the ratio of the participants' gender should not influence the results of the study. The population of the sample made up of Year One and Year Four students. The ratio of the Year One and Year Four participants were nearly balanced (48 Year One participants and 45 Year Four participants). These two groups of participants have the same Chinese proficiency level but different English proficiency level. The English proficiency level of the participants ranged from B1 to C1 based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standard (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2018. The participants were Year One and Year Four English related major students in order to elicit a large gap in English Proficiency levels.

For Year Four English related major students, they have been exposed to an English learning environment for more than three years and most of them have taken IELTS or TOEFL exams prior to this research. Therefore their English proficiency level can be measured by comparing the scores of their exam results and CEFR standard. Both official websites of TOEFL and IELTS have released the tables and explanations that allow test takers to compare their scores with CEFR ability standard (Compare TOEFL Scores, 2015; Common European Framework, 2018) (See Appendix for tables). For those who have not taken any of the above two exams, the researcher classified them as B2 level, because the last English textbook they studied in UIC was “Pathways” (level 3) which is for B2 level students.

For Year One English related major students, they recently passed the college entrance examination in China and they learned the textbook called “Pathways (level 2)” which is for B1 to B2 level students in their first semester English Class. Therefore, for the participants who chose the option “I have not taken any of these standard tests” in question number 5 and then chose the option “Pathways (level 2)” in question number 8 in the web-questionnaire, the researcher classified them as B1 level.

3.2 Research Design

The present research adopted a mixed-methods design. The methodology of this research combines a web-questionnaire which contains open-ended and close-ended questions and a matched-guise test. The researcher needed to use qualitative and numerical data to describe the phenomenon and discuss the possible reasons for this phenomenon through the answers of respondents.

In this research, a web-questionnaire with 33 questions that reflected the emotions and language attitudes of participants towards English and Chinese swear words were collected. The web-questionnaire could be easily accessed via smartphones and computers. The usage of web-questionnaire had advantages for the researcher collecting large and diverse data from possible participants, which may increase the validity of the result database. The traits of web-questionnaire such as anonymity could also make responses clearer and more complete than the answers in paper formed questionnaires (Wilson and Dewaele, 2010). Based on the design of the web-questionnaire, the following sociobiographical information could be controlled, which are age (young adults), educational level (undergraduate), the first and second language (Mandarin and English), occupation (student), Major (English related majors), and the speaker-listener relationship (neither a friend nor an acquaintance). The researcher had excluded three participants who did not correspond to any information mentioned above. The two open-ended questions could help the researcher explain the reasons of emotional reactions that were reflected in the close-ended question section.

The English speeches under close-ended questions were adopted and revised from two previous studies (Kapoor, 2016; Beers Fägersten, 2007). The researcher extracted and revised 10 English speeches which Chinese college students would be familiar with from the questionnaires of these two studies and translated these speeches into Chinese. A native Chinese-speaking teaching assistant in the Teaching English as a Second Language Program at UIC identified the meaning of the Chinese speeches that were equivalent to the meaning of the English speeches. The researcher categorized the 10 English speeches and 10 Chinese speeches into two categories-Abusive speeches and Casual speeches based on the context of their use. (See Table 1 and Table 2 for the question numbers in each category). All swear words were given within full sentences in different contexts because Harris (2004) believed that single words may elicit less emotional reactions than emotional expressions due to a lack of context.

The researcher combined the matched-guise test and the close-ended questions. A male balanced Chinese-English bilingual speaker who moved to Singapore for education when he was 14 years old recorded all English and Chinese dialogues into sound files, and the researcher inserted the files into the web-questionnaire. There was a native-speaker accent in both languages. All the speeches were recorded with an emotional tone appropriate to the context of that speech. According to Harris (2004), flat or neutral intonation would make emotional expressions abnormal and could not elicit the prior experiences of listeners. The audio recordings were presented using a function of the web-questionnaire, developed by the web-questionnaire company called Wenjuanxing.

Table 1. The Question Number of Three Different English Speech Categories

Categories	**Question number in the questionnaire**
English Casual speeches	13, 15, 17, 19
English Abusive speeches	14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22

Table 2. The Question Number of Three Different Chinese Speech Categories

Categories	**Question number in the questionnaire**
Chinese Casual speeches	23, 25, 27, 29
Chinese Abusive speeches	24, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32

After conducting a pilot study in October 2018, the researcher identified some flaws and improved the content of the questionnaire. The sound of audio clips was revised from a flat tone with nearly no emotion involved in the sounds which represented authentic emotions in the contexts of the dialogues. The design of the questionnaire was also improved. The following improvements were made: The structure of the questionnaire was more user-friendly and simple; the two open-ended questions were added into the web-questionnaire; the sequence of the abusive category speeches and casual category speeches was randomly listed in order to make the participants not aware of the speeches that they listened to have two contexts of their usage (abusive and casual).

3.3 Data Collection

The entire data collection section was based on a web-questionnaire. All the participants did the web-questionnaire in a quiet place using earphones. In the web-questionnaire, participants needed to provide basic language background information and answer the two open-ended questions about "where do you think you learned the most swear words from" and "in which scenario do you most likely use swear words". After that, the participants were instructed to do the following close-ended questions by rating each speech for offensiveness on a five-point Likert scale (1 referring to not offensive and 5 referring to very offensive) by touching the screens on their smartphones. Then, they needed to listen to twenty audio clips one by one. In the audio clips, a list of speeches recorded in English and Chinese with equivalent semantic meanings would be played. First, the participants needed to listen to ten English speeches and finished the ranking of their feelings immediately after listening to the audio clips on the scales, and then they needed to apply the same procedure for the Chinese speeches. In this way, the researcher was able to compare the emotional change of participants for each speech between the two languages through the questionnaire results which could help the researcher collect valid data to answer the research questions.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data were collected based on the scores provided by participants from question number 13 to 32 in the web-questionnaire. The quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software on the computer.

To check the difference of emotional impacts between Mandarin and English, an analysis of mean, and standard deviation score was conducted on the six categories: English Speeches mean (E1), Chinese speeches mean (C1), English Casual speeches mean (E2), Chinese Casual speeches mean (C2), English Abusive speeches mean (E3), and Chinese Abusive speeches mean (C3). Take English Casual speeches mean (E2) as an example, the result of E2 was the average of the Total mean scores of Question number 13, 15, 17, and 19 (See Table 3). The way of calculating the mean score of English Casual speeches would help readers to understand how the researcher calculated the mean scores of other categories.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Category of English Casual Speeches and Each Question Number in English Casual Speeches Category

	Q No 13	**Q No 15**	**Q No 17**	**Q No 19**	**E2**
N	93	93	93	93	93
Mean	2.02	3.16	2.85	2.60	2.66
Std. Deviation	1.23	1.28	1.15	1.36	0.77

Note: Q No refers to the question number of the web-questionnaire.

Spearman correlation analyses were conducted to find the relationship between offensiveness perceptions and proficiency levels. Independent-Sample t-test was used to check differences in offensiveness perceptions of three English speech categories (E1, E2, E3) between Year One students and Year Four students.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Within this research, all the participants voluntarily filled the questionnaire. The participants participated on the basis of informed consent because the researcher noted at the beginning of the questionnaire that the participants had the right to stop at any point or withdraw from the study if they disapproved of or were uncomfortable with the subject matter. Due to the topic of the current study, the participants had to listen to some offensive expressions. However, there was no gender or race bias involved in the audio clips because the audios did not indicate any aforementioned information about the persons involved in the speeches. Moreover, the privacy and anonymity of the respondents were well protected and all the data were used with the permission of the participants.

4. Results

4.1 The Difference of Emotional Impacts between Mandarin and English

The descriptive statistic scores (mean and standard deviation) in six speech categories (E1, C1, E2, C2, E3, C3) showed that Chinese native speakers' emotional impact towards different speech categories had different levels of variation (see Table 4 for descriptive statistic sores). The mean scores of six categories varied from the lowest point of 2.36 (C2) to the highest point 3.40 (C3). Comparing with E1 and C1, the mean scores revealed that there was no significant difference between the emotional impacts of Mandarin native speakers towards English swear words (3.01) and Chinese swear words (2.98). The Mean scores of E3 (3.24) and C3 (3.4) revealed that Mandarin native speakers would more likely accept the swear words in English rather than Mandarin with equivalent semantic content when the speaker uses abusive languages. However, the contrary result was shown when comparing English Casual speeches (2.66) with Chinese Casual speeches (2.36), which means Chinese Mandarin native speakers would more likely accept the swear words in Casual categories in Mandarin instead of English (see Figure 1 for mean scores).

Table 4. Six Descriptive Statistic Sores on Participants' Ranking of Six Speech Categories in English and Chinese.

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
E1	93	3.01	0.56
C1	93	2.98	0.62
E2	93	2.66	0.77
C2	93	2.36	0.75
E3	93	3.24	0.69
C3	93	3.40	0.79

Note: The procedure of calculating E1, C1, C2, E3, C3 was the same as the example of E2 shown in Table 3.

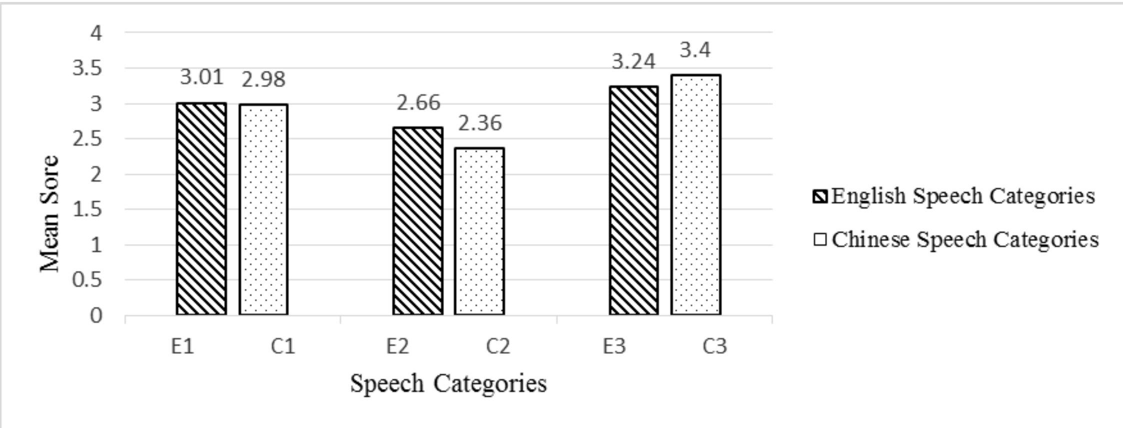

Figure 1. Mean Scores on Participants' Ranking of six Speech Categories in English and Chinese

4.2 The English Proficiency Level of Participants

The distribution of the proficiency level of the total population is shown in Figure 2. There were 45 participants in B1 level, 31 participants in B2 level, 16 participants in C1 level, and only 1 participant in C2 level.

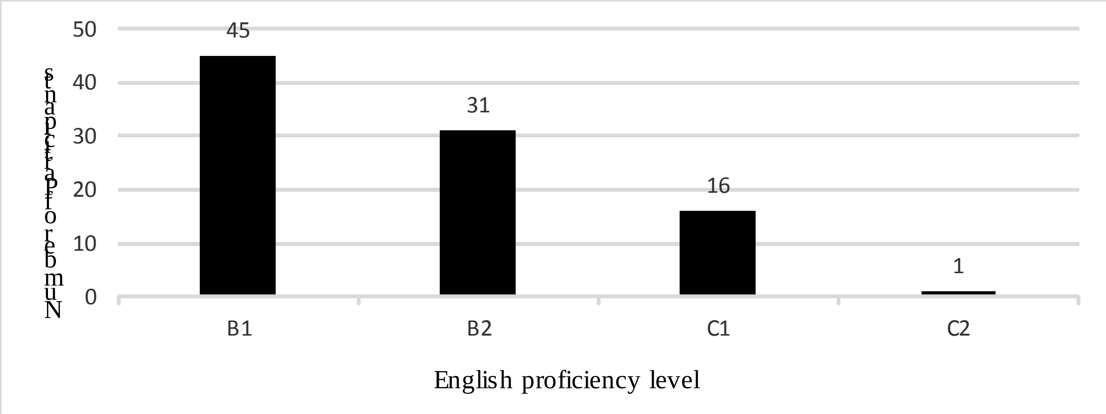

Figure 2. The Summary of Participants and Their English Levels

4.3 The Relationship between Offensiveness Perceptions and Proficiency Levels

The second research question focused on the comparison of the emotional impact among participants with different English proficiency levels. The analysis used Spearman correlation study to find the relationship between proficiency and perceptions, and T-test to see the difference of emotional impact between Year One participants and Year Four participants.

The Spearman correlation study was used to examine the relationship between offensiveness perceptions and English proficiency level. A positive correlation was shown between E3 and English proficiency level. Having a higher English proficiency level meant a higher score on rating offensiveness of English Abusive speeches: ($r = 0.344$, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, E1 was positively correlated with English proficiency level but slightly weaker ($r = 0.273$, $p < 0.01$). However, there was no significant correlation presented between E2 and English proficiency level ($r = 0.005$, p =ns) (See Table 5 for the results of the nonparametric correlation analysis).

Table 5. Spearman Correlations among English Proficiency Levels

Spearman Correlations				
		E1	E2	E3
English proficiency level	r	0.273**	0.005	0.344**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	0.962	0.001
	N	93	93	93
*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01				

4.4 The Relationship between Offensiveness Perceptions and Year of Study

The final analysis focused on the link between the perception of emotions of three English speech categories and the year of study of participants. The independent samples t-test revealed that Year Four English related major students had a stronger emotional reaction towards English speeches which contained swear words (E1) than Year One English related major students: ($t (91) = -2.64$, $p< 0.05$). The same pattern was repeated when comparing perceived offensiveness in the English Abusive speeches (E3) by Year One participants with perceived offensiveness in the English Abusive speeches (E3) by Year Four participants: ($t (91) = -3.093$, $p<0.01$). By contrast, the perceived offensiveness in the English Casual speeches (E2) by Year One participants was not significantly different from that by Year Four participants: ($t (91) = -0.70$, p = ns) (see Table 6). The Mean scores on perceived offensiveness of English speeches in three English categories by Year One participants and Year Four participants are presented in Figure 3.

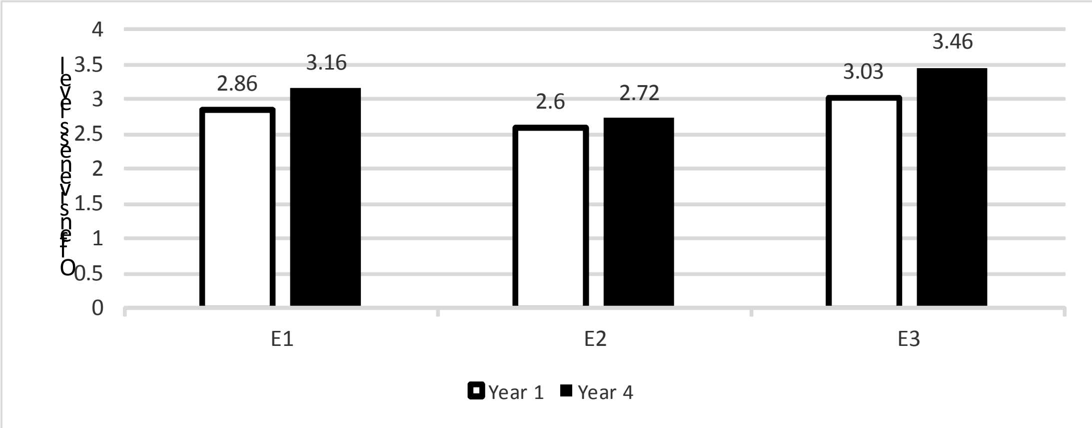

Figure 3. Mean scores on perceived Offensiveness of English Speeches in Three English Categories by Two Groups of Students

Table 6. The Perceived Offensiveness in Three English Speech Categories by Two Groups of Students.

Category	t-test for equality of means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
E1	-2.64	91	0.01
E2	-0.70	91	0.484
E3	-3.093	91	0.003

5. Discussion

Overall, swear words in both Chinese and English elicited strong emotional impacts. The results of this study partially showed that Mandarin native speakers would more likely accept swear words in English than Mandarin with equivalent semantic content, and there was a positive correlation between the English proficiency and the emotional reaction to English swear words.

To be more specific, the findings of the present study partially support hypothesis 1 (Mandarin native speakers would more likely accept the swear words in English instead of Mandarin with equivalent semantic content). The data showed that Mandarin native speakers felt more offensive towards Chinese Abusive speeches than English Abusive speeches. However, more offense was felt towards English Casual speeches than Chinese Casual speeches. For both languages, there existed an offensiveness gap between Abusive speeches and Casual speeches, but the gap of Chinese (L1) speeches was larger than English (L2) speeches. Therefore, the different communicative intentions of swear words can be perceived more effectively in L1 than L2 by UIC students. A possible explanation for this was that a large sample size of the participants was between B1 to B2 level, whereas their Mandarin proficiency level is that of a native speaker. Therefore, there was a large gap between their Mandarin proficiency level and English proficiency level which may result in their ability to easily distinguish the illocutionary meanings of Chinese speeches (whether it insults someone or just a conversational habit) in different contexts, but they were unable to differentiate the distinction among English speeches. Besides, according to Rintell (1984), Chinese English learners could not be able to correctly identify and rate the illocutionary intentions (the emotions behind the expressions) in taped conversations conveyed by English native speakers because Chinese culture is very different from the culture of English speaking countries. The reactions to swear words inform the identities of individuals and the culture that people belong to (Jay and Janschewitz, 2008). Therefore, Chinese native speakers' cultural and linguistic background could also affect their ability to understand the implicit emotions involved in the content of English Casual speeches.

Comparing the mean scores of E2 and C2, E3 and C3 in Table 4, the results revealed that UIC students could more easily accept English swear words when the purpose of swearing was insulting someone. This result matched the findings of previous studies about individual's emotions on L1 and L2 swear words. However, when it comes to using swear words as a conversational habit, the data showed that UIC students viewed English swearing as being more impolite. From this phenomenon, the present study seemed to confirm that bilingual speakers were more focused on the semantic meaning of swear words in L2 conversations, but paid more attention to the pragmatic meaning of swear words in L1 conversations.

Additionally, the findings of the study also partially support hypothesis 2 (The bilingual speakers with higher English proficiency level would have a stronger emotional impact on English swear words). The data identified that significant positive correlations existed between different English proficiency levels and the view of offensiveness on English swear words in abusive contexts, but the different English proficiency levels seemed to have nothing to do with emotional impact in casual contexts. It is not surprising that a bilingual speaker who is more proficient in his or her L2 possessed relatively stronger emotional reactions towards L2 swear words. Nonetheless, the correlation study of English proficiency level and E2 suggested that all participants had problems in identifying the emotions conveyed in the English conversations where swear words appeared as conversational habits.

In general, Year Four students possessed a perception of higher emotional force of English swear words than Year One students even though the English proficiency level of Year Four students may not be much higher than Year One students according to the database. This finding may be related to the singular English teaching environment at UIC. In this learning environment, Year Four students were more familiar with the culture of English speaking countries and more experienced using English such as delivering presentations and writing essays. Hence, their English abilities were higher than Year One students even though there was no big difference between these two groups of students on Standard English Proficiency Test scores.

5.1 Pedagogical Implication

The findings of the present study have an important pedagogical implication on English language teaching practice and English learning methods. English learning should not only rely on the teachers of English learners to provide written and visual materials in the classroom, but also need the efforts of English learners themselves because swear words in English are usually not part of an English class.

Firstly, English teachers should teach abundant knowledge about up-to-date culture background of English speaking countries. Based on the participants' response to the open-ended questions, 60 out of 93 participants stated that they learned the most swear words from American TV series. Normally, researchers and educators regard American TV series as an authentic material for English learning and therefore the participants who used authentic material to learn swear words should be able to identify the illocutionary meanings of English Casual speeches, but the quantitative results did not prove this assumption. This is because they do not have time or fail to contextualize swearing when they watch the TV series, if so, they would misunderstand the speaker's purpose of using swear words from humorous or a conversational habit to insulting. Due to the big difference between oriental cultural and western culture, the way of speakers convey thoughts are different. Hence, it is very important for English teachers teaching various knowledge related to language and culture to help their students understand the conversational purpose of different expressions by native speakers. Secondly, Chinese English learners should engage in a rich source of authentic materials to obtain information about how those cultures taught in class are applied in different contexts. A proficient English learner should know not only the semantic meaning of the English words, but also know how to understand and use the words in different communication contexts.

5.2 Limitations

A major limitation of the study is related to the web-questionnaire. The Chinese speeches' translations were a little bit formal for Chinese college students. Although the researcher tried to translate the English speeches into authentic Chinese speeches, some of the participants told the researcher that some of the Chinese speech audios such as Question Number 30 in the web-questionnaire made them feel that they were listening to a Chinese TV drama. This kind of feeling may reduce the offensive grading of Chinese speeches by participants.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, this study investigated the issue of how UIC students' emotional reactions varied between English and Chinese swear words. The current study seemed to partially confirm the hypotheses in a small-scale study. Through the web-questionnaire and matched-guise study, the results have shown that Mandarin native speakers felt less offensively towards English swear words when they heard the speaker used swear words as insulting, while they felt less offensively towards Chinese swear words when they heard the speaker used swear words as a conversational habit. There was a positive correlation between English proficiency level and the offensive feelings about English Abusive speeches. Nevertheless, no significant correlation was found between participants' English proficiency level and attitude changes on English Casual speeches. This finding was further strengthened by the results that

Chinese English learners with higher English language competence (i.e. Year Four students in UIC) had a higher score on English Abusive speeches than Year One students in UIC.

Although many previous studies appeared to conclude that swear words in the first language would elicit a stronger emotional impact than the second language for bilingual speakers, the present study did not find the same result in terms of two contexts of swear words usage (abusive and casual). The findings of this study suggested Chinese English learners should intentionally get in touch with the cultures of English speaking countries because learning English in an EFL environment cannot actually improve learners' understanding of culture related expressions.

Acknowledgments

This paper is a revised version of the Final-Year Project for my BA in TESL degree. I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Jackie Yeoh for supervising this project and her valuable suggestions to this paper.

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Appendix

TOEFL Scores, IELTS Scores and CEFR Levels Comparison Table

CEFR LEVELS	IELTS	TOFEL	TEXTBOOK NAME
B1	4-5	42-71	Pathways (level 2)
B2	5.5-6.5	72-94	Pathways (level 3)
C1	7-8	95-114	
C2	8.5-9	115-120	

A Comparison of Persuasive Strategies of Hong Kong and US Community Colleges Based on Move Structure and Metadiscourse in Leader Messages

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Abstract. US has provided sub-degree programmes since 1862 and is leading the global education trend, while Hong Kong started sub-degree programmes' offering much later and represents a local education trend that is affected by the global education trend and US. The websites of community colleges often include a leader message for building up colleges' image and communicating with stakeholders to perform the function of corporate public relations (CPR). This paper attempts to investigate the impact of globalization on the persuasive strategies employed by Hong Kong community colleges in these web-based leader messages through a linguistic feature comparison of the Hong Kong and US leader messages. We sampled a total of 18 authentic leader messages from Hong Kong and US. Our analysis adopts a multi-dimensional framework using linguistic features in two levels: the macro-level of message structure and the meso-level of metadiscoursal features. Our findings showed that the two types of leader messages are different in macro-level but are similar in meso-level. This implies the global education trend led by US hasn't completely globalize Hong Kong community colleges with respect to the persuasive strategies adopted. We hope that this study is not only useful for teachers of English for Specific Purpose (ESP), but can also be extended to be beneficial in raising the awareness of corporate leaders in writing effective persuasive messages in Hong Kong and US.

Keywords: persuasive strategy, move structure, metadiscourse, community college leader messages

1. Introduction

Is higher education an important knowledge industry? Is it a means to maintain competitiveness in a global market? It is not surprising that many would say yes to these questions. Due to the increasing demand of higher education qualification in the global market, higher education has already become a profit generation industry (Altbach et al., 2009). Having played a leading role in the education industry, US has already provided sub-degree programmes since 1862 to capture the piece of this pie (Chan & Lo, 2008). Nowadays, there are nearly 1,100 community colleges in US, enrolling more than 12 million students annually (American Association of Community Colleges, 2019). Some East Asian countries such as China are also trying to establish international education institutions by doing transformation on their local institutions (Lane, 2012). In Hong Kong, which is one of the largest cities in China, the former chief executive Tung Chee-hwa has introduced the offering of sub-degree programmes since 2000 (Information Services Department, 2000). With regard to the historic development and prestige academic status of US, US is a representative of global education trend; on the contrary, Hong Kong is a representative of local education trend and is affected by the global education trend and US.

To build up a positive image of the community college to its stakeholders, including prospective students, current students, alumni, staff and the public, it is common for the community colleges to include leader messages in their websites. The leader messages in corporate websites are usually used to perform the function of corporate public relations (CPR) (Olasky, 2013). The Internet has facilitated the use of narrative discourse as a means of securing stakeholders' support (Segars & Kohut, 2001) and has been widely used as a cross-border communication medium from the corporate leader to stakeholder in the globalized world without geographical constraint (Murphy & Scharl, 2007; Okazaki, 2004; Okazaki & Alonso Rivas, 2002). Web-based leader messages not only inform shareholders about the performance of the company, but also reflect the leaders' beliefs and values and are thus intended to be persuasive and directive (Kong 2001; Bhatia, 2008; Ngai & Singh, 2017). An effective communication would affect the company image (Maynard & Tian, 2004).

Different leaders employ different persuasive strategies in their messages to affect the perceptions of the stakeholders (Amernic & Craig, 2006). People from a certain culture communicate in a certain way, so the similarity and difference in persuasive strategies of leader messages provide further knowledge about how to construct effective messages to the stakeholders (Ngai & Singh, 2017). Ngai and Singh (2017) adopted a multidimensional framework using both discourse and quantitative analysis to compare the linguistic features of web-based leader messages from the Global 500 corporations in China and US, and showed pertinent differences in communication style. This result also extended the existing research on corporate genre analysis.

1.1 Our Result

This paper follows the line of research by Ngai and Singh (2017) and attempts to identify whether Hong Kong and US community colleges employ the same persuasive strategies in their web-based leader messages. Our analysis of these web-based leader messages adopts a multi-dimensional framework using linguistic features in two levels: the macro-level of message structure (Ngai, Singh, & Koon, 2018; Weller, 2013) and the meso-level of metadiscoursal features (Hyland, 2005). If the two types of leader messages share the same persuasive strategies, this implies that the global education trend led by the US has completely affected Hong Kong community colleges in terms of the persuasive strategies adopted.

We sampled 9 authentic leader messages from community college websites in Hong Kong and US, respectively, which accounts for a total of 18 leader messages. Our analysis showed that the leader messages of Hong Kong and US community colleges are different in the macro-level, but they are similar in the five categories of metadiscoursal features in the meso-level except the feature in engagement markers (significant difference was found by an independent-samples t-test). This shows that Hong Kong community colleges shared some similar persuasive strategies with the US community colleges, but the global education trend led by US hasn't completely globalize Hong Kong community colleges with respect to the persuasive strategies adopted. These web-based leader messages are not usually written by the leaders themselves, but rather first drafted by senior corporate communication (CC) and public relations (PR) professionals (Ngai & Singh, 2018), as well as staff teaching linguistics and languages for those in community colleges, and then approved and endorsed by their leaders. We hope that this study is not only useful for teachers of English for Specific Purpose (ESP), but can also be extended to be beneficial in raising the awareness of corporate leaders and relevant staff in writing effective and more positive persuasive messages in Hong Kong and US.

1.1.1 Macro-level: Seven-move Structure

The structure of a leader message can tell what functional units the leaders prefer in a macro-level view (Ngai, Singh, & Koon, 2018). In this study, we focus on the move structure, which is first proposed by Bhatia (1993) and later modified by Ngai and Singh (2017) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Modified seven-move structure proposed by Ngai and Singh (2017)

Move	Description	Examples of lexico-grammatical features
1	Overview / looking back	Our company established… Long history… We have developed… Last year… For the past decades of development
2	Major themes	Challenging environment Our mission Our Values Our responsibility …has dedicated to… …committed ourselves to serve We strived to become
3	Achievements (major achievements related to the themes / evidence / action details)	We have achieved / enhanced / improved / stepped up / strengthened …has ranked …has grown… Successfully completed
4	Expectations & promises (promises / detailed account of the future actions / measures / plans)	Great opportunities and challenges …to push forward …will work to become

5	Looking forward (positive outlook / continued challenges / prospects)	In the journey towards… …step forward…tomorrow Moving forward…will continue to grow Looking ahead…
6	Expressions of gratitude (appreciation to all / specific stakeholders)	Thank you for your support Sincere thanks to our partners and friends…
7	Positive and confident closing (revisiting Move 1 / summarizing the message)	Work together for a bright future We are confident… I'm proud of what we accomplished

According to Bhatia (1993), certain lexico-grammatical features are often used in the genre of CPR discourse. Bhatia (2008) identified a standardized structure of seven moves based on a corporate chairman's letter. It is worth noting that a specific move structure can only be employed in a particular genre, and one move structure is not applicable to all CPR discourse (e.g., leader messages) (Bhatia, 1993; Ngai & Singh, 2017). Therefore, Ngai and Singh (2017) proposed the modified seven-move structure for corporate leader messages (see Table 1), which are similar to the leader messages of community colleges considered in this study. Our analysis focuses on the order and types of moves in the modified move structure employed in the web-based leader messages of community colleges.

1.1.2 Meso-level: Interactional Features of Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse study is currently new in discourse analysis (Tang, 2010) which can help perform the function of persuasion significantly. It can tell how writers persuade readers in terms of metadiscoursal features used in the messages. This is what we need to investigate in the meso-level. We adopted the metadiscourse model proposed by Hyland (2005). In Hyland's model (2005), both interactive and interactional features are included. The interactive features can tell how writers organize text and guide ideas presented in the text, while the interactional features can tell how writers affect readers' perception of a message and create an appropriate relationship to his or her readers (Hyland, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Tang, 2010). Therefore, the purpose of a leader message is more closely related to the interactional features. According to the explanation provided by Hyland (2005), so our analysis selected the interactional features in Table 2.

Table 2. Interactional features proposed by Hyland (2004, 2005), and Hyland and Tse (2004).

Category	Function	Examples
Hedges	Withhold writer's full commitment to proposition	might / perhaps / possible / about
Boosters	Emphasize force or writer's certainty in proposition	in fact / definitely / it is clear that
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	unfortunately / I agree / surprisingly
Engagement markers / relational markers	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	consider / note that / you can see that
Self-mentions / person markers	Explicit reference to author(s)	I / we / my / our

1.1.3 Organization of the Paper

Section 2 presents the four research questions of this study, and give the details of our methodology including data sampling method and tools used in our analysis. Section 3 presents and discusses the analysis findings. Section 4 concludes the paper with limitations and future work.

2. Methodology

This section raises the four research questions in this study, and presents the details of our analysis including data sampling method and the analysis tools.

2.1 Research Questions

To find out the purposes of the leader messages and how they are constructed, we investigate the following two research questions:

RQ1: How leader messages in Hong Kong and the US community colleges are different and/or similar with each other with regard to the *move order*?

RQ2: What similarities and/or differences are observed in the *move structure* in leader messages from Hong Kong and U.S. community colleges?

To determine whether Hong Kong and US community colleges' leaders share the same persuasive strategies in building up the institute image in the meso-level, we also investigate the following two research questions:

RQ3: What differences and/or similarities are observed in the interactional metadiscoursal features in leader messages in Hong Kong and US community colleges *as a whole*?

RQ4: How leader messages in Hong Kong and US community colleges are different from and/or similar to each other with regard to *each respective* interactional metadiscoursal features?

2.1 Data Sampling

Nine authentic leader messages were collected from websites of community colleges in Hong Kong and US, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. List of selected community colleges in Hong Kong and US.

Hong Kong	US
1. Hong Kong Community College (HKCC)	1. University of South Carolina Lancaster
2. The School of Continuing Education (SCE) of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)	2. Fox Valley Technical College
3. UOW College Hong Kong/Community College of City University	3. Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology
4. School of Continuing and Professional Studies (CUSCS)	4. Eastern Maine Community College
5. HKU SPACE Community College	5. Manchester Community College
6. LiPLACE	6. Hostos Community College
7. Lingnan Institute of Further Education	7. Southwest Tech
8. Hong Kong Institute of Technology (HKIT)	8. TCAT-Elizabethton
9. Caritas Bianchi College of Careers	9. Howard Community College

The community colleges chosen in Hong Kong are major sub-degree providers, while the community colleges selected in U.S. are the first 40 most popular colleges shown in Niche.com which is a website commonly used for information of schools in US. The selected leader messages were found under the web page "About our College", "Director's message" or "President's office" in the websites of the community colleges.

2.3 Data Analysis

For RQ1 and RQ2, the modified seven-move structure proposed by Ngai and Singh (2017) was adopted. We code the 18 leader messages using an approach of sentence-by-sentence and paragraph basis for their move structure suggested by Bhatia (2008) so as to examine the similarities and/or differences between the leader messages.

For RQ3 and RQ4, an established model of metadiscourse from Hyland (2005) was adopted to annotate both Hong Kong and US leader messages. Interactional metadiscoursal features were selected for comparison, and the coding was done by the online tool Text Inspector (https://textinspector.com), which is a common tool used by major publishers such as Cambridge University Press and over 120,000 users. It is worth noting that different category names are used in Text Inspector: *emphatics* refer to boosters; *relational markers* refer to engagement markers; *person markers* refer to self-mentions. We then conduct an independent-samples t-test to identify the similarities and differences of the metadiscoursal features in Hong Kong and US leader messages.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Macro-level: Seven-move Structure

Different move order and pattern. For RQ1, it is found that no message in Hong Kong and US community colleges aligned with the sequence of moves proposed, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Order and types of moves of the selected leader messages.

Leader messages	Hong Kong		US	
	Move order	No. of types	Move order	No. of types
1	2-3-4-3-4-4	3	2-6-7	3
2	2-3-3-3-3-3-4	3	1-3-3-3-6	3
3	2-3-4-4-4	3	1-3-3-1	2
4	3-2-3-3-3-3	2	2-2-3	2
5	3-3-3-2-4	3	2-3-3-6	3
6	2-3-3-4-3-4	3	1-5-1-3-3-3-4-4-2	5
7	2-3-2-3-2	2	2-3-3-6	3
8	2-3-3-3-3-3-3	2	6-1-3-2-4-7-7	7
9	3-2-3-3	2	2-3-3-6	3

This finding is not surprising as the order of moves may differ according to the function of the moves (Ngai & Singh, 2017). From Table 4, most community colleges (all Hong Kong community colleges (100%) and 7 US community colleges (77.8%)) had three to five moves missing in their messages. Such difference implies that the community college leaders in Hong Kong and US employ different message structures to engage the stakeholders.

Concerning RQ2, some big differences related to the move structure were found in the leader messages in Hong Kong and US as illustrated in Fig. 1.

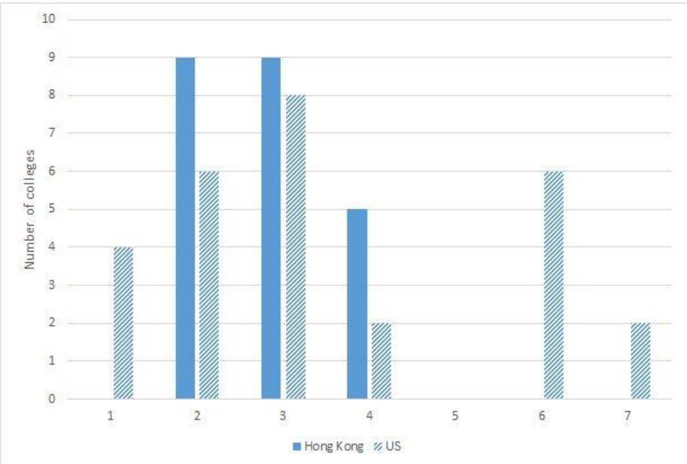

Figure 1. Presence of the seven moves (Moves 1 to 7) in Hong Kong and US leader messages.

Figure 1 shows that Move 1, Move 5, Move 6 and Move 7 were missing in the Hong Kong leader messages; these moves refer to looking back, looking forward, expressing the challenges ahead and positive closing, respectively. On the contrary, it is interesting that only Move 5 (which refers to expressing challenges) was missing in the US leader messages. This implies that Hong Kong college leaders tend to persuade stakeholders by giving information which are achievement (100%) and theme (100%) instead of building relationship with stakeholders by including the past and present messages (0%), expressing gratitude (0%) and summarizing the message (0%). As suggested by the findings, the move structure for leader messages in Hong Kong community colleges is different and the updated structure is shown below.

- *Move 1:* Major themes
- *Move 2:* Achievements
- *Move 3:* Expectations and promises (promises / detailed account of the future actions / measures / plans)

US community college leaders commonly adopt a holistic approach. They tend to mention less achievement (66.75%) and theme (88.9%) when comparing with the Hong Kong leaders (100% in both), but they use more other strategies (i.e., Move 1, Move 6 and Move 7) to create a friendly image and to be friends with the stakeholders. The community college leaders include the past (88.9%) and present (22.2%) messages, which can make the messages dialogic (Kong, 2001). Various voices of people in messages can be found. To please the stakeholders, US community college leaders also show appreciation (77.8%) to their stakeholders. The findings suggested the following updated move structure for leader messages in US community colleges:

- *Move 1:* Overview/looking back
- *Move 2:* Major themes
- *Move 3:* Achievements
- *Move 4:* Expectations and promises (promises / detailed account of the future actions / measures / plans)
- *Move 5:* Expressions of gratitude (appreciation to all / specific stakeholders)
- *Move 6:* Positive and confident closing (revisiting Move 1 / summarizing the message)

Common present and absent moves. It is worth nothing that the community college leaders in both Hong Kong and US gave promise to stakeholders (Hong Kong: 55.6%; US: 22.2%), but they did not mention challenges ahead in their messages. This could be ascribed to the fact they don’t want to worry stakeholders and project a negative image of the colleges (Ngai & Singh, 2017).

3.2 Meso-level: Interactional Features of Metadiscourse

Double interactional metadiscourse resources. Concerning RQ3, Table 5 shows that the leaders’ messages in U.S. contained almost double the amount of interactional metadiscoursal features in Hong Kong leaders’ messages. It seems that U.S. and Hong Kong community college leaders share totally different strategies to create their image and persuade students joining their colleges.

Table 5. Interactional metadiscoursal features in leader messages (per 100 words).

Category	Hong Kong	US
Hedges	0.19	0.23
Boosters	0.32	0.44
Attitude markers	0.03	0.22
Engagement markers	1.28	3.8
Self-mentions	2.81	4.18
Interactional	**4.63**	**8.87**

Variation in the use of engagement markers. For RQ4, to further investigate whether the differences and/or similarities between Hong Kong and U.S. leaders’ messages in each interactional metadiscoursal feature are observed, an independent-samples t-test was conducted, and the result is as shown in Table 6. It is worth noting that there is only one significant difference in the engagement markers between leaders’ messages in Hong Kong and U.S. (t_{16}=-2.639, $p<.05$). In particular, the average of engagement markers in the US leader messages was 2.57 higher than that of the Hong Kong leader messages. This may be ascribed to the fact that the engagement markers could help building relationship with different stakeholders. US community college leaders prefer to engage stakeholders by building relationship.

Table 6. Results of independent-samples t-test on each interactional metadiscoursal feature.

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Hedges	Equal variances assumed	.769	.393	-.368	16	.718	-.03667	.09965	-.24791	.17457
	Equal variances not assumed			-.368	15.787	.718	-.03667	.09965	-.24814	.17481
Boosters	Equal variances assumed	.820	.379	-.428	16	.674	-.11333	.26482	-.67472	.44805
	Equal variances not assumed			-.428	15.914	.674	-.11333	.26482	-.67497	.44830
Attitude markers	Equal variances assumed	17.106	.001	-1.927	16	.072	-.18889	.09802	-.39669	.01891
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.927	9.271	.085	-.18889	.09802	-.40965	.03187
Engagement markers	Equal variances assumed	2.850	.111	-2.639	16	.018	-2.52667	.95746	-4.55638	-.49695
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.639	14.421	.019	-2.52667	.95746	-4.57459	-.47874
Self-mentions	Equal variances assumed	1.094	.311	-1.469	16	.161	-1.37222	.93382	-3.35184	.60740
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.469	14.670	.163	-1.37222	.93382	-3.36653	.62209

Similarities in the use of hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions. Concerning the rest of the interactional metadiscoursal features (i.e., hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions), it is interesting that our result showed no significant difference between Hong Kong and US leader messages. In other words, the use of hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions should be similar in Hong Kong and US leader messages.

According to Table 7 below, less than 1 hedge, booster and attitude markers were found every 100 words in leader messages in both Hong Kong and US. It may be due to the fact that propositions are not necessary in the leader messages of community colleges. On the other hand, about 3 and 4 self-mentions were found every 100 words in leader messages in Hong Kong and US community colleges, respectively. It seems that the leaders would like to gain credit for their achievement (Hyland, 2005), which show that they play an important role in the colleges to stakeholders.

Table 7. Mean of Hong Kong and US leader messages in interactional metadiscoursal features.

Group Statistics

	type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hedges	HK	9	.1889	.19871	.06624
	USA	9	.2256	.22333	.07444
Boosters	HK	9	.3222	.54069	.18023
	USA	9	.4356	.58207	.19402
Attitude markers	HK	9	.0267	.08000	.02667
	USA	9	.2156	.28298	.09433
Engagement markers	HK	9	1.2756	1.66144	.55381
	USA	9	3.8022	2.34310	.78103
Self-mentions	HK	9	2.8111	1.65602	.55201
	USA	9	4.1833	2.25961	.75320

4. Conclusion

In this paper, move structure and model of interactional metadiscourse are used to investigate whether Hong Kong and US community college leaders share the same persuasive strategies in building up images and communicating with stakeholders. Our analysis on these leader messages adopted a multidimensional framework using linguistic features in the macro- and meso-levels. It is found that there are more differences than similarities on the persuasive strategies used by Hong Kong and US community college leaders in terms of the macro-level structure. On the other hand, in terms of the meso-level metadiscoursal features, more similarities are found when the five categories of interactional metadiscoursal features are considered individually.

First, the marco-level structures of the two types of leader messages are clearly different. Their move orders and patterns are not the same. In particular, Hong Kong community college leaders mainly persuade stakeholders by telling achievements, while US leaders adopt a holistic approach with a preference on creating a friendly image by pleasing stakeholders and including different voices. There is only one common point; both of them do not mention challenges and would like to give promises in the messages to avoid giving a negative image to stakeholders.

When the five categories of interactional metadiscoursal features were considered individually, it is interesting to find that the uses of hedges, attitude markers, self-mentions and boosters are similar amongst US and Hong Kong community college leaders. In particular, both of them seldom use hedges, boosters and attitude markers, but frequently use self-mentions in the leader messages. This could be ascribed to the fact that both of them tend to show how important they are in the leader messages, and propositions are not necessary in the messages. Although the US leader messages contained more interactional metadiscoursal features, there was only one significant difference in engagement markers from an analysis by independent-samples t-test.

From our findings, it is worth noting that community college leaders in Hong Kong and US share some similar persuasive strategies in the web-based leader messages. However, it can also be observed that different persuasive strategies are also used by some college leaders. Thus, the global education trend led by US hasn't completely globalize Hong Kong community colleges with respect to the persuasive strategies adopted. We hope that this study is not only useful for teachers of English for Specific Purpose (ESP), but can also be extended to be beneficial in raising the awareness of corporate leaders and relevant staff in writing effective and more positive persuasive messages in Hong Kong and US.

Limitation and Future work. The findings in this study may not be reliable enough due to the small sample size. Different selection criteria for the samples may also influence the reliability of the data. Yet we hope that this study would provide some useful insights on how to write an effective persuasive message. Further improvement can be made by expanding the sample size and collecting data with the same selection criteria, that is, to select the leader messages of the high ranking universities in Hong Kong and US. Another direction is to adopt a different move structure especially designed for academic leader messages.

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Examining the Effects of Eiagnostic Test on the Development of Self-directed Language Learning

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Abstract. Students learn better when they are in charge of their own learning, and thus it is important to develop and foster self-directed language learning. In order to help students understand their own needs of learning and strengths/weaknesses, language assessment is one of the important tools. The purpose of this study is to investigate the learners' English competence and development through a diagnostic test and self-directed learning reports. The test is an English language proficiency measurement system designed specifically for the Hong Kong academic context by Hong Kong universities. Students were required to participate in a diagnostic English language assessment, develop their own learning activities and then fill in a report which showed the learners' short-term learning goal, self-directed learning experiences and improvement plans. The findings showed that less than half of the participants reached the satisfactory level of the diagnostic tests regarding listening, vocabulary, reading and grammar, and vocabulary learning was the top priority of their improvement needs. And they were made aware of their strengths and weaknesses through the tests and pursued their improvement plans accordingly, though some were reluctant to seek for improvement for the weaknesses they had identified. These revealed that they might not know how to work out their effective learning plan so as to eliminate their weaknesses and enhance their strengths, even though they were motivated to learn. To help students learn better, teachers play a significant role to help facilitate their self-directed learning by giving them strategy training and self-evaluation skills.

Keywords: language assessment, self-directed language learning, diagnostic tests

1. Introduction

As it is generally believed that students learn better when they are in charge of their own learning, it is important to develop and foster self-directed language learning. The best learner should be a reflective learner who always looks back at her own learning progress, evaluate his/her own weaknesses and strengths, and then work out his/her own improvement plans (Yeh, 2010). To help a learner become a reflective learner, it is essential to help him/her understand the self-directed language learning "techniques used in order to direct one's own learning" (Pemberton, 1996, p.3) because language learning indeed is "a life-long endeavor" (Thomson, 1996, p.78). Self-directed learning also refers to 'learning in which the learners themselves take responsibility for their own learning' (Thomson, 1996, p.78) and 'taking charge of one's own learning' (Holec, 1981, p.3).

To help learners take charge of their learning, they firstly have to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. This is where diagnostic tests come into play. Diagnosis tests have long been used in connection with the major purposes (or types) of testing in the field of language testing (Henning, 1987). According to Lee (2015), "proficiency testing is concerned primarily with assessing acquisition/learning from the past and predicting performance for the future" (p.302) and diagnostic language assessment is defined "to be the processes of identifying test-takers' (or learners') weaknesses, as well as their strengths, in a targeted domain of linguistic and communicative competence and providing specific diagnostic feedback and (guidance for) remedial learning" (p.303). As a result, once they realize their own strengths and weaknesses through the diagnostic tests, they can devise their self-directed learning experience and improvement plans.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the learners' English competence and development through a diagnostic test and self-directed learning reports which show the learners' short-term learning goal, self-directed learning activities and improvement plans. It also examines how language assessment/diagnostic tests can lead the reflective learners to direct their own learning effectively. And it is a particularly relevant reference for language learners who would like to improve their language competence continuously and teachers who would like to help students conduct self-directed language learning. The results of the diagnostic test and the self-directed learning reports are analyzed so as to identify students' common learning weaknesses, strengths and examine the impact of the diagnostic test on the self-directed learning experience. These can show a lot about the mentality of self-directed learners and ultimately help more students learn to become successful reflective language learners. The findings can also shed light on the teachers' teaching approach and the implementation/promotion of the self-directed language learning. Suggestions for the self-directed language learning strategies and self-evaluation skills are made in this paper as well.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-directed Language Learning

According to Holec (1981), autonomy, which is often used interchangeably with independence and self-direction, refers to 'taking charge of one's own learning' (p.3). This is elaborated in the way that "to take charge of one's own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.: 1) determining the objectives; 2) defining the contents and progressions; 3) selecting methods and techniques to be used; 4) monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.); 5) evaluating what has been acquired" (p.3). However, the ability of taking charge of one's own learning is not inborn but must be acquired either by 'natural' means or by formal learning. This learning may be done with or without the help of a teacher, with or without the use of teaching aids. And taking charge of learning in this way by the learner is self-directed, which implies an 'autonomous learner' (p.4).

Since self-directed language learning is not an absolute concept, different contents and processes are described in different phases of learning. According to Scharle & Szabo (2000), there are generally three phases that one must go through, though they are not strictly in linear format. They can be implemented together as they are interrelated. Raising awareness is the starting point; changing attitudes follows and eventually it involves transferring roles. Since some Hong Kong students are dependent and have little incentive to undertake learning outside their studies (Yeh 2010), it is important to arouse their awareness of the importance and need of the development of self-directed learning. After they are made aware of the significance of self-directed language learning, positive attitudes can be fostered and finally they can take up new roles in learning. According to Nunan (1997), there are also five-level model including Awareness, Involvement, Intervention, Creation and Transcendence. In a nutshell, the first phase (Raising awareness) consists of Awareness; the second phase (Changing Attitudes) contains Involvement, Intervention and Creation, and the last phase (Transferring Roles) is Transcendence (See Table 1).

As shown, students are made aware of the importance of the learning goals and strategies in the first phase. In the second phase, learners are given chances to develop proper learning attitudes through learning how to choose, modify, adapt or/and create their own learning goals and tasks. In the last phase, learners can successfully take up the role of self-learning and manage their learning effectively and efficiently. Similarly, the contents, language functions and methodology are predefined by teachers during which learners should be able to identify the learning strategies involved for their own learning at the first level. Starting from the second level, learners should be encouraged to develop proper attitudes towards self-directed language learning. Therefore, teachers should design contents that allow learners to make choices for their preferred learning and convey the message that they should learn to learn by selecting appropriate contents and methods from available options. At the third level, teachers should allow learners to make changes on their learning goals and path. They have freedom to modify and adapt the contents and methods concerned to suit their own needs. At the fourth level, learners should be given the responsibility for creating their own goals and deciding the methods to achieve the goals, with or without the help/advice of teachers. At the last level, learners become teachers in the sense that they become full autonomous in their learning process once they have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge. Although there are five levels within three phases, they do not prohibit learners from moving back and forth between levels. Some learners are able to modify materials even at relatively early phase. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the considerable overlapping of learners' learning phases and produce relevant help/support to drive learners to the ultimate level (Nunan, 1997).

Table 1. A Model to the Development of Autonomy

Phase	Level	Learner action	Content	Process
Raising Awareness	One	Awareness	Learners are made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials they are using.	Learners identify strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred learning styles/strategies.
Changing Attitudes	Two	Involvement	Learners are involved in selecting their own goals from a range of alternatives on offer.	Learners make choices among a range of options.
	Three	Intervention	Learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning programme.	Learners modify/adapt tasks.
	Four	Creation	Learners create their own goals and objectives.	Learners create their own tasks.
Transferring Roles	Five	Transcendence	Learners go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond.	Learners become teachers and researchers.

In this study, the students should have entered phase 2 and level 2 as they had been made aware of the importance and value of self-directed language learning through formal lessons and workshops and were involved in selecting their own goals from a range of alternatives on offer (which were introduced in the diagnostic tests and self-directed reports) and making choices among a range of options (which were provided in formal lessons and workshops) during the self-directed learning process. They were also given a report template and required to fill in the details while and after they pursued their self-directed language learning.

2.2 Language Assessment

It is believed that diagnostic tests can provide useful indicators for researchers and educators to improve students' learning. Lee (2015) stated that:

> When we refer to the language learners' weaknesses (or deficiencies) in addition to their strengths in diagnostic tests, we implicitly assume that there is some sort of a normally, healthily, or fully functioning state for the learner's targeted competence. The learners' targeted competence can also be further divided into its sub-competencies or constituent components, and such norms can possibly be specified at various levels of granularity, for instance, at the level of an overall language proficiency, a particular language skill (e.g., reading, writing), domain (e.g., lexis, grammar), or task (e.g., general understanding, writing an email). These normally functioning states can serve as reference points (or target goals) against which the learners' current states of knowledge, skills, and abilities are measured to identify the learning gap. (p.303)

A wide range of questions has been used to collect information of the linguistic knowledge and sub skills in the language diagnostic test. Once the students have completed the test, they can get feedback on their own performance including both strengths and weaknesses through a detailed report. They may review the test items/tasks incorrectly, incompletely, or unsatisfactorily answered, with a focus on their misconceptions, faulty understanding, and cognitive/performance errors (Lee, 2015). After that, they can review the relevant sections of resource materials available (e.g., an online dictionary, a grammar book, a textbook, etc.) that address their weaknesses, misconceptions, and cognitive/performance errors in relation to the items/tasks (Lee, 2015). Finally, they can prepare their action plan to improve their competence and performance based on the test results. From that we can see, diagnostic tests place a significant role in the self-directed language learning.

3. Methodology

The Diagnostic English Language Tracking Assessment (DELTA), was used as the diagnostic test in this study, is an English language proficiency measurement system designed specifically for the Hong Kong academic context and administered by the English Language Centre and other universities in Hong Kong (HKPU, 2017). “Through the DELTA, students can diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in reading, listening, grammar and vocabulary, track their English language gains and plan their English language learning” (HKPU, 2017).

The sample of the study comprised 68 Year-1 learners studying a 13-week English course in a community college. Self-directed language learning was a compulsory component of the course they took. During the third week of the academic year, students were required to participate in a diagnostic English language assessment, develop their own learning activities and then fill in a report which included their improvement needs, short-term learning goals, self-directed learning activities/experience and improvement plans. After they attended the test, they could diagnose their strengths and weaknesses of their English competence including listening, vocabulary, reading and grammar, track their English language gains and then plan their self-directed English learning. They submitted their test results and reports, which were agreed to be used as the data for this study, to the school at the end of the course (i.e. Week 13).

4. Findings & Discussion

4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Students

As stated, there were four main parts including listening, vocabulary, reading and grammar in the diagnostic test. The component skills profile shows the contribution that the scores that each participant attained on each component has made to the DELTA Measure. Components below the measurement line indicate the area of relative weakness while those above the line can be regarded as reaching the satisfactory/acceptance level. The results showed that 40% of the participants reached the satisfactory level of listening component, 37% reached the satisfactory level of vocabulary component, 47% reached the satisfactory level of reading component and 44% reached the satisfactory level of grammar component (Please see Table 2). In other words, 60% of the participants had rather weak competence of listening component, 63% had weak competence of vocabulary component, 53% got weak competence of reading component and 56% got weak competence of grammar component. From that we can see, more than half of the participants failed to reach the basic satisfactory level of the components and it is really an alarm to learners and teachers that learners really need to work much harder to master the competences mentioned and the basic skills/strategies required.

Table 2. ummary of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Diagnostic Test Reports

	Listening	Vocabulary	Reading	Grammar
Satisfactory level	40%	37%	47%	44%
Relative weakness	60%	63%	53%	56%

Vocabulary, comparatively speaking, was the weakest component among all participants. Perhaps it is necessary, firstly, for educators and teachers to think of some effective vocabulary teaching and learning strategies and incorporate them into formal curriculum and self-directed language learning. As vocabulary is the core part of each component, it may eventually affect their competence and performance in most (if not all) components.

4.2 Self-directed Language Learning

4.2.1 Self-evaluation of Improvement Needs

According to the overall self-directed learning reports, 49% of the participants wanted to improve listening component, 68% preferred to improve vocabulary component, 56% chose to improve reading component and 40% opted for grammar component (Please refer to Table 3). It was really surprising to see that participants did not prioritize their learning based on the test results. For instance, 60% of the participants failed to reach the satisfactory level of listening component but only 49% of them wanted to seek for improvement in this aspect. In other words, even though 11% of them knew that they were weak in listening but chose to neglect it. This was similar to the case of grammar component as well.

Table 3. Summary of the Overall Improvement Needs of Participants

	Listening	Vocabulary	Reading	Grammar
Overall Improvement Needs	49%	68%	56%	40%

In fact, the participants were already advised to improve their weak components based on their diagnostic test reports in the very first beginning of the self-directed learning program. However, their preference reflected that they had been made aware of their strengths and weaknesses but they might not agree to or comply with the results and thus some of them made their improvement plans regardless of the test results. They simply followed their own personal feelings and thought to prepare for their self-directed learning activities. Perhaps they encountered some difficulties and problems which they thought were unable to be solved. This reflects that they lack the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of their own performance which is particularly important when they need to conduct effective self-directed learning (Dickinson, 1987).

Based on the overall results, it could be further divided into four groups: Group 1 refers to those who failed in and wanted to improve the respective component; Group 2 refers to those who failed in but refused to improve the respective component; Group 3 refers to those who reached the satisfactory level and still wanted to improve the respective component; Group 4 refers to those reached the satisfactory level and did not need improvement (Please See Table 4). The first group showed that 35%, 56%, 43% and 35% of the participants indicated improvement needs for listening, vocabulary, reading and grammar respectively; the second group stated that 38%, 26%, 24% and 17% of the participants failed in the components respectively but did not pursue improvement; the third group described that 10%, 10%, 13% and 6% of the participants reached the satisfactory level of the components respectively and still wanted to pursue improvement (i.e. willing to further strengthen their strengths); the last group mentioned that 17%, 8%, 20% and 42% of the participants reached the satisfactory level of various components respectively and did not seek for pursue improvement.

Table 4: Summary of the Four Groups of Improvement Needs of the Participants

		Listening	Vocabulary	Reading	Grammar
1	Improvement needs of those who failed in and wanted to improve the respective component	35%	56%	43%	35%
2	Improvement needs of those who failed in and refused to improve the respective component	38%	26%	24%	17%
3	Improvement needs of those who reached the satisfactory level but wanted to improve the respective component	10%	10%	13%	6%
4	Improvement needs of those who reached the satisfactory level and did not need improvement	17%	8%	20%	42%

According to Table 4, vocabulary was still the top priority of the improvement needs among all of the participants. Obviously the participants found that they had a need to improve their vocabulary, no matter whether they reached the satisfactory level or not. It might be due to the fact that the whole test contained a lot of vocabulary they were not familiar with and thus gave them an impression that their main concern/difficulty should be vocabulary, which ultimately affected their overall feeling and performance in the test. And to analyze it from another perspective, vocabulary may be an easier item to master when compared to listening, reading and grammar. On the other hand, it was strange to see that although participants knew that vocabulary was a very important component when they pursue English learning, they (accounted for 26%) were still reluctant to learn it. In this regard, a detailed study on their underlying reasons and perception towards vocabulary learning is needed.

It was also surprising to see that 60% of the participants failed to reach the satisfactory level of listening component, but only 49% wanted to seek for improvement in their self-directed learning, regardless their actual performance. And 38% of the participants who failed to reach the satisfactory level still did not want to improve their listening competence whereas 10% who reached the satisfactory level but still wanted to pursue improvement in this aspect. Perhaps they thought that it was difficult to master listening skills and competence as it involves a wide range of accents of speakers and pronunciation of vocabulary, and thus some of them chose to escape from learning while few understood that it was important to further strengthen their listening competence and thus sought for further improvement, no matter what the test result was. Perhaps the impact of diagnostic tests was over-estimated and there were other factors that seriously affect one's choice of self-directed learning. And it seems that learners may not know how to choose appropriate learning materials for their own learning. As explained earlier, learners may move back and forth between levels of self-directed learning (i.e. from Phase/Level 2 back to Phase/Level 1) because their inability to involve in the activities effectively. In this case, teachers should be aware of the considerable overlapping of learners' learning phases and produce relevant help/support to drive learners to the desired goal and ultimate level/phase. Indeed, changing learners' attitudes (i.e. Phase 2) is always a challenge to teachers and educators, and to put things right, self-evaluation techniques and learning strategies play an important role here.

Similar to the participants' feedback of listening component, 56% of the participants failed to reach the satisfactory level of grammar component, but only 40% wanted to improve their grammar. And 35% of the participants who failed in this component wanted to seek for improvement whereas 17% of the participants who also failed to reach the satisfactory level did not think it was necessary to further improve their grammar. And interestingly, 42% of the participants (i.e. the highest percentage among four groups) showed no interest in improvement as they reached the satisfactory level and only 6% of them (i.e. the lowest percentage among four groups) sought for improvement even though they reached the level. Unlike other components, grammar seems to have a very different pattern among the four main groups. This may be owing to the fact that grammar involves static rules and forms, and it may be easier for students to master and therefore those who reached the satisfactory level chose to spend more time and effort on other components. Paradoxically, those failed to reach the level might find it difficult to master grammar and thus were unwilling to pursue improvement. To help understand this case and solve the problem, there is a need to study their perception on grammar.

As for reading component, it seemed that most participants regarded reading as the second option which needed improvement. As described, 56% of the participants showed their willingness for improvement while 53% of them failed to reach the satisfactory level. Besides, 13% of the participants who reached the satisfactory level indicated that they needed further improvement in their self-directed learning plan. These have showed that participants identified their weakness/strengths during the test. Together with the diagnostic tests, self-evaluation definitely is a crucial component which motivates them to carry out their improvement plans seriously. However, this requires teachers' attention and assistance so as to help them eliminate their weakness or strengthen their strengths by showing them relevant and useful learning strategies.

4.2.2 Specific Needs of Sub-skills Involved

A list of required specific sub skills was included in the diagnostic test and identified by the participants in their self-directed language learning report. As shown in Table 5, they would like to learn the following sub skills after taking the test and carry out their self-directed learning plan accordingly.

As seen from the table, "identifying specific information" and "understanding main ideas and supporting ideas" were the two main listening sub skills that most participants wanted to improve. "Interpreting a word or phrase as use by the speaker" was the third subskill they wanted to improve and it helped explain that participants wanted to improve vocabulary component most because it was also a core item in other components like listening. Regarding the sub skills of reading, most of them would like to "understand main ideas and supporting ideas", "interpreting a word or phrase as used by the writer", "identify specific information", and "understand information and make in inference". As far as grammar is concerned, most of them showed preference for learning "verb formation, tense, voice, modal, subject and verb agreement" and 'preposition" came next. However, the former was grouped into one category and thus it is difficult to find out which particular item they have difficulty in. In short, these results could serve as the useful and important reference for teachers when they prepare for suggested learning activities and materials and for other language learners who would like to pursue further language competence improvement because they are usually the core items one needs to learn. With more subskills-oriented teaching and learning approach, students should be able to master the relevant skills and competence in the long run.

Table 5. Summary of Sub Skills Needed by the Participants

Sub skills of Listening:		No. of participants required (%)
	Identifying specific information	76%
	Understanding main ideas and supporting ideas	75%
	Interpreting a word or phrase as used by the speaker	57%
	Understanding information and making an inference	51%
	Interpreting an attitude or intention of the speaker	44%
	Inferring a speaker's reasoning	38%
Sub skills of Reading:		
	Understanding main ideas and supporting ideas	74%
	Interpreting a word or phrase as used by the writer	63%
	Identifying specific information	63%
	Understanding information and making in inference	59%
	Interpreting an attitude or intention of the speaker	50%
	Inferring a speaker's reasoning	26%
	Identifying text type	3%
	Understanding grammatical relationships of words/phrases across the text	1%
Sub skills of Grammar:		
	Verb formation / tense / voice / modal / subject and verb agreement	84%
	Preposition	68%
	Determiner	50%
	Word form	40%
	Relative pronoun	37%
	Connectives	31%
	Word order	24%
	Others:	
	• Gerund	3%
	• Modal	3%
	• Possessive	3%
	• Adverb	1%
	• Conditional	1%
	• Discourse marker	1%
	• Infinitive	1%
	• Participle	1%
	• Phrasal verb	1%
	• Present perfect tense	1%
	• Relative clause	1%
	• Simple past tense	1%
	• simple present tense	1%

One important point to note is that the sub skills for vocabulary were not included in the table because the participants were simply asked to give five sample words from the test that they would like to learn and it was found that the words varied among participants. Therefore, it is not useful and helpful to interpret their learning difficulties for further improvement. To help examine, the report should include other concrete learning points that the learners can use as the reference for future learning or improvement. For instance, it can include questions or items such as listing out the type of words/phrases (e.g. prefix, suffix, conjunction, preposition) they have difficulty in, the categories of the word (e.g. parts of speech) they do not know, and five words of each test component they did not know but affected their comprehension seriously, etc. This part can also require the participants to indicate whether they have difficulties or learning problems in verb formation, tense, voice, modal, subject and verb agreement, etc. With these answers, teachers and other learners may further understand their main learning problems of vocabulary. This also implies that careful setting/description of the self-directed learning report is very crucial for further improvement or research.

4.2.3. Self-directed Learning Experiences

Regarding their short-term learning goals, they could be concluded as "communication skills", "learning English vocabulary", "improve listening" and "improve speaking skills". These partially supported their improvement needs mentioned in the previous sections and some of the needs were related to their weaknesses shown in the diagnostic test reports. Vocabulary and listening were two main components most participants wanted to improve while reading and grammar were not their concern at all. In addition, they wanted to improve their speaking skills, especially presentation skills as they thought that these were important to study. It is surprising to see that speaking competence was not covered in the diagnostic test at all but they wanted to improve it. This shows that they carry out their self-directed learning based on their own preference and feeling rather than based on the diagnostic test results. To figure out the real situation, there is a need to examine what they said and what they had done during the process so as to dispel the doubts and see the real picture.

As for what they did, their self-directed learning experience generally included "watching English materials to learn vocabulary, pronunciation and speaking pattern", "listening to English music and songs", "listening to BBC through the apps (3 - 5 short news everyday)", "talking to myself in front of the mirror", "reading novels to learn vocabulary and writing patterns", "reading SCMP (South China Morning Post) to learn vocabulary and learning the recent society environment", "improving pronunciation of English words by reading aloud each word", "watching U.S. drama to learn standard pronunciation, imitate the tone of the characters, strengthen the fluency of the speech, learn slang to understand the culture, values and living habits and allusions of the country" and "joining more English activities like joining a drama group", etc. While they learnt, they also mentioned that they preferred activities such as "interesting materials such as movies and books (through the character's dialogue)", "complex and difficult vocabulary (e.g. dazzling, charming, stunning, inspiring, glamorous, gorgeous, etc.)", "pronunciation from BBC news apps and vocabulary learning", "movies from Netflix", "learning vocabulary through movies", "dictionary", and "classifying words into different topics such as daily products, animals and business terms) and parts of speech (adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, etc.)". They were also interested in Harry Potter, LaLa Land, and wanted to learn vocabulary, pronunciation and speaking skills. When they watched movies, they preferred them with Chinese and English subtitles and liked the appropriate tone from characters. Besides, they liked songs that "made them feel joyful and sensitive to unknown words". They also wanted to learn daily English words like "no one knows" and "I promise", and improve listening skills such as American and British accents. Lastly, they liked talking to themselves in front of the mirror because they were not embarrassed when they practiced alone, and they could improve their eye contact, body language, fluency and confidence. Their experience showed that they liked to learn vocabulary and enhance speaking & listening through movies, songs and applications probably because these could let them enjoy while they were learning English. These have also showed that they performed their self-directed language learning largely based on their short-term goals but it was not necessarily related to their weaknesses.

Furthermore, they did not mention anything particularly relevant to the sub skills they described in the previous sections of the reports while they actually conducted their self-directed learning. This means that they simply carry out their learning activities without a systematic plan and do something related to learning but are reluctant to think of the effectiveness of their learning related to their weaknesses. Although their general learning goals are met, their needs of the sub skills are not achieved. To reinforce the effectiveness of their self-evaluation and self-directed language learning, they need more suggestions on learning materials/strategies and guidelines to help them conduct self-directed learning effectively. As a self-directed learner, reflection is a crucial self-evaluation stage as it helps them to modify and revise their learning path. And teachers should play a very crucial role in the facilitation during the promotion and development of students' self-directed language learning.

In addition to their past learning experiences, they were also asked to describe their future learning goals and activities for the next academic year in the last part of the report. Their future learning goals included "improve writing skills using different sentence patterns with correct grammar", "improve grammar so as to improve writing and speaking", "improve reading", "learn vocabulary to improve communication skills", and "improve pronunciation of vocabulary", etc. Their suggested related activities consisted of "doing more exercises such as tenses", "reading English story books which contain correct grammar and a lot of phrases", "reading English books for around 10 - 20 pages everyday", "learning vocabulary by reading more fictions such as "Harry Potter", and "watching English TV news like BBC". Obviously, they would like to put more time and effort on other components including grammar, reading and communication skills after they have put time and effort on vocabulary and listening. From that we may conclude, they should be satisfied with their self-directed learning experiences and progress and thus they started thinking of other learning components for their future learning. However, how much and what they have improved are still unknown.

In a nutshell, the diagnostic test reports have indispensable impacts on learners' willingness and motivation to learn, though some of them were reluctant to carry out their self-directed language learning based on the results of the reports. Generally speaking, the participants have made some short-term goals and fulfilled them but the sub skills they wanted to learn were not embedded in their own self-directed learning experience and the learning result was still an unknown. These clearly imply that they need more guidelines and assistance when they conduct their self-directed learning. To help foster it, there is a need of training on both learning strategies and self-evaluation/reflection.

5. Suggestions

During the learning process, learners need to be made aware of learning strategies because 'strategies are the tools for active, self-directed involvement needed for developing L2 communicative ability' (Oxford, 1994, p.1). Foreign or second language (L2) learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques students use consciously to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2 (Oxford, 1990). Research has repeatedly shown that the conscious, tailored use of such strategies is related to language achievement and proficiency (Oxford, 1994). Therefore, we should show learners the variety of available strategies, help them find out what works for them, and help them to discover how and when to use them. According to Oxford (1994), there are some suggested principles for strategy training:

- Training should be integrated into regular L2 activities over a long period of time.
- Strategy training should include explanations, handouts, activities, brainstorming, and materials for reference and home study.
- Strategy training should be explicit, overt and relevant and should provide plenty of practice with varied L2 tasks involving authentic materials.
- Strategy training should provide strategies that are transferable to future language tasks beyond a given class.
- Strategy training should be individualized as different students prefer or need certain strategies for particular tasks.
- Strategy training should provide students with a mechanism to evaluate their own progress and to evaluate the success of the training and the value of the strategies in multiple tasks.

As pointed out by Wenden (1991), 'successful' or 'expert' or 'intelligent' learners have learned how to learn. They have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous (p.15). In short, successful learners must be well equipped with good learning strategies for their self-directed learning.

Similar to the significance of learning strategies, 'the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own performance in a foreign language is an important skill in learning, and particularly important when the learning becomes autonomous' (Dickinson, 1987, p.136). To help facilitate learners' self-evaluation, teachers should aim to provide students with challenging experiences that provoke deeper reflection, which is regarded as one type of self-evaluation, and with opportunities to discuss the processes of learning that arise from them (Benson & Voller, 2001).

6. Conclusion

The impact of the diagnostic test on self-directed language learning is positive and crucial. The diagnostic test can, firstly, help identify learners' strengths and weaknesses which are the most important indicators for learners to conduct self-directed language learning. Based on the individual strengths and weaknesses, they have devised their short-term goals and are motivated to carry out their self-directed language learning, though some of them may not fully work on the weaknesses they have identified.

To strengthen the effectiveness of the self-directed language learning, relevant learning strategies and self-evaluation skills should be explicitly incorporated in the very first beginning of the course/program. Besides, the self-directed language learning is designed, developed, and implemented in close connection with a course of instruction, and thus teachers should play a major role in developing and implementing a long- or short-term self-directed language learning program for students, which can go in parallel with self-directed learning phases and levels and be embedded in ongoing school curriculum. Teachers can also provide a continuous self-directed learning path which needs to work in close collaboration with diagnostic test developers for learners.

Lastly, to learn more about the mentality of participants towards the self-directed language learning, further research on the underlying causes of their preferences for especially vocabulary and grammar learning should be conducted. Some focus-group interviews, for example, should be carried out to explore their reasons behind their actions so as to help dispel the doubts and aid other language learners, teachers and educators to pursue and foster self-directed language learning effectively.

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Taking a Reflective Leadership Role: What Can Curriculum Leaders Learn from a Book about Medical Practice?

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Abstract. It has been observed that language teachers working in higher education frequently feel undervalued by the mainstream academic seniors. Not only at the university level, in education systems that feature high centralization, managerial control and accountability measures, frontline English teachers working at primary or secondary level also find that their expertise goes unrecognized. At issue is the imbalanced relationship between frontline teachers and curriculum leaders who are more often than not considered as experts or more academically senior. Despite the availability of articles discussing such inequality, there is a lack of framework that is used to investigate into the kinds of relationship that curriculum leaders have with frontline teachers. Borrowing ideas from *Being Mortal*, a New York Times bestseller written by an American surgeon who critically reflects his and others' practice in the medical profession, this article presents a reflective framework that helps researchers alike analyse the roles taken by curriculum leaders in higher education or government setting. Finally, my argument over the role that should be taken by curriculum leaders is offered.

Keywords: curriculum leader's roles, curriculum leadership, curriculum dissemination, Hong Kong curriculum, reflective practice, frontline teachers' quality assurance, student engagement, student satisfaction

1. Reflective Approach to Practice

New York bestseller *Being Mortal* (Gawande, 2014), which addresses the issues relating to ageing and dying, is a book more likely to be found in the self-help section of a bookstore than in the Education category of a university library. However, the essence of reflective practice demonstrated by the author-cum-physician Atul Gawande should be applicable to not only the medical field but also many other professions, in particular curriculum development and teaching.

Being Mortal can be said a lived illustration of Schön's *Reflective Practitioners* (1983). In the latter, the writer calls for a shift from the scientific or technical approach to the reflective approach in professional practices such as urban planning.

Here, the word 'practice' is defined as a 'process of problem solving through the selection, from available means, of the one best suited to established ends' (Schön, 1983, p.39). However, Schön warns that over-emphasis on using the technical means to solve problems may result in over-learning, in which professional habitually follow the established methods without regarding the actual situations and the human needs; thus leading to the loss of values they are supposed to promote:

Among younger professionals and students, there are many who find the professions without real interest in the values they are supposed to promote: lawyers have no real interest in justice or compassion; physicians, in the equitable distribution of quality health care; scientists and engineers, in the beneficence and safety of their technologies. (Schön, 1983, p.12)

The over-emphasis of the use of technical methods in problem solving is exactly the issue that Gawande wants to address in his book as he, as a medical professional, has witnessed scenarios where surgeons and physicians are more obsessed with the treatment methods than the patients' psychological needs. In one scenario, for example, he recalled a consultation session between his critically ill father who was also a physician and a neurosurgeon:

The neurosurgeon at my hospital didn't much like my father's questions. He was fine answering the first couple. But after that he grew exasperated. He had the air of the renowned professor he was – authoritative, self-certain, and busy with things to do. (Gawande, 2014, p.197)

The above scenario shows how a medical practitioner can be so obsessed with the treatment methods that he or she may overlook a patient's concerns. In the field of education, the obsession of methods usually turns into products of 'over-learning' and one-size-fits-all formula. Established methods such as standard testing, elearning, STEM education and flipped classrooms are advocated by curriculum leaders in many countries and are hailed as panacea to many classroom problems such as students' lack of motivation and diverse needs among students. These curriculum leaders, similar to the neurosurgeon above, are authoritative and self-certain, and promote only research-based methods that they believe are effective and can maximize learning outcomes. What they forget is the 'real interest in the values they are supposed to promote'. Thus, gone are the days when [face-to-face] communication should be encouraged in English language classroom, as students are now busy inputting their answers in their mobile devices rather than talking to each other in groups or explaining and negotiating their stance in front of the whole class. Also missing is the belief that meaning should be socially constructed in a text-based writing lesson, as pupils can now learn writing by watching flipped videos at home. No longer is English learning fun and in context, as learning activities are now reduced into constant drilling for better standard test results.

I am not arguing that elearning, flipped-learning or standard testing are of no use. In fact, when used in appropriate contexts, they can greatly benefit learning. Flipped learning videos, for instance, can be best used for explaining some maths concepts and historical facts such as the writer's background but definitely not for literary appreciation in which students should be encouraged to have their own interpretation rather than watching the teacher's interpretation. However, under the closely monitoring management, these methods are more often than not introduced indiscriminately to the schools. Frontline teachers also tend to accept the expert-designed central curriculum planning and authoritative advice without much say. In the U.S. for example, the government has been 'moving towards authoritarianism, letting the government dictate what and how students should learn and what schools should teach' (Zhao, 2009, p.40). In the U.K., Murray (2016, p.440) also describes how English language teachers in university language centres are undervalued by their 'mainstream' academic seniors and how their expertise is overlooked when it comes to curriculum decision making. Inevitably, teachers also 'over-learn' by either blindly following the expert-designed methods or being compelled to follow them under the pressure of accountability. Consequently, they too are forced to become teachers 'without the real interest in the values they are supposed to promote'. To safeguard the core values of English teaching that are fast disappearing, I argue that there is a need to review the relationship between curriculum leaders and frontline language teachers. I will come back to this argument at the end of this article, but for the time being, a framework is needed to describe the relationship concerned.

Borrowing the ideas from Gawande's book, the section below aims to outline the three possible types of relationship that curriculum leaders have with the frontline language teachers. While I draw on examples in the field of teaching English as a second language (ESL), practitioners may apply this framework to other professional contexts. It should be noted that the framework I mention below only provides an alternative approach to examining the relationship between curriculum leaders and frontline teachers. It should not be hailed as the single approach as such relationships could be viewed from the sociological perspectives (e.g. Foucault as in Ball, 2012) or from the leadership theories (e.g. distributed leadership as in Tian and Risku, 2018; Harris, 2008).

2. Three Different Roles in Curriculum Leadership

In his book, Gawande cited a short paper by Emanuel and Emmanuel (1992), which he read during his studies in the medical college, and discussed the relationship that clinicians might have with their patients. The most traditional kind of relationship is a paternalistic relationship. It means that the medical professional has become an authoritative figure and only tells the patients what he or she thinks is the most effective way of treatment. The patients, in turn, simply follow what they are told.

2.1 Paternalistic Relationship

Curriculum leaders at the policy level who steer reforms and curriculum implementation more often than not take such a paternalistic role. From the management point of view, there are certain benefits for being paternalistic. First, it would be easier for paternalistic curriculum leaders to disseminate the intended curriculum, as it is usually written by experts with consensus of different stakeholders. Since only the most 'effective' methods are selected, it provides a convincing and objective ground for implementation. Besides that, when it comes to evaluation, curriculum leaders can easily formulate some performance indicators to check if frontline teachers have successfully implemented the intended curriculum or not.

Despite the above-mentioned benefits, one should be aware of the hidden agenda that the intended curriculum promotes. One reason is that some governments may over-emphasize certain learning styles and incorporate them into their educational innovations in order that students achieve certain skills or attitudes such as "learning to learn" (Hall, 2005, p.49). This kind of reductionist design implies that any deviant methods used by teachers are 'wrong' and thus hurts teachers' feelings. One example is the early stage of educational reforms in Hong Kong in the early 2000s, where the target-oriented curriculum (TOC) was introduced and described by Morris, Chan and Lo (2003, pp. 81-82) as follows:

In the TOC policy documents, prevailing practice is described as fragmented and overcrowded; lacking coherence; emphasizing rote memorization and the 'linear mastery of decontextualized skills'; lacking awareness of the rote of learning; ...Many teachers were hurt by the criticisms of their competencies which suggested that they lacked appropriate professional skills, that what they were doing was problematic, and that they should radically change their behaviour.

While in the medical world, there could be one single treatment for a certain disease. Teaching is different. Kumaravadivelu (2012), for example, warns that the design of many methods in teaching ESL is based on the assumption that the learning environments are stagnant, and that they should not be hailed as a panacea to all classroom problems. Likewise, Long (2001, p.181) also alerts us against the promotion of a single method – a practice which he calls the 'method traps'. He cites studies that have set out to compare different teaching methods, and concludes that there is 'little or no advantage for one [method] over another' (Long, 2001, p.181). Thus, any attempt by the paternalistic curriculum leaders to advocate a certain teaching method or curriculum approach could be dangerous as it may lead teachers into the method traps. Having said that, I do not mean that paternalistic relationship should be totally avoided. In fact, a paternalistic curriculum could be written for good intentions with an aim to maximize learning outcomes or help students acquire certain skills demanded by the community. For inexperienced teachers who have yet to be capable of developing a curriculum for learners, the guidelines given by paternalistic curriculum leaders would be of great help to them. However, the success of Finnish education indicates that school improvement does not necessarily come from top-down paternalistic guidance but policies that '[emphasize] teacher professionalism, school-based curriculum, trust-based educational leadership, and school collaboration through networking" (Sahlberg, 2011, p.66).

2.2 Informative Relationship

The second type of relationship that is described by Gawande (2014) is 'informative' (Gawande, 2014, p.100), which is the opposite of the paternalistic relationship. In the former, the doctor tells the patients all the facts and figures and the rest is up to them. However, a doctor-knows-it-all could be confusing as Gawande (2014, p.100) described what his father encountered in a pre-surgery consultation with a doctor-knows-it-all:

The doctor recommended seeing the oncologist to plan chemotherapy… The oncologist was now center stage… She proceeded in information mode. She laid out eight or nine chemotherapy options in about ten minutes. Average number of syllables per drug: 4.1. It was dizzying. He could take bevacizumab, carboplatin, temozolomide, thalidomide, vincristine, vinblastine, or some other options I missed in my notes.

While one advantage of curriculum leaders taking an informative role is to allow decisions to be made democratically, too much information may lead to confusion and even overdoing. That is exactly the problem about Hong Kong's educational reform towards the 2010s. Following the introduction of the TOC, the Education Bureau in Hong Kong has moved from the authoritative role into a more informative role by introducing numerous strategies that aim to develop students' generic skills. These strategies include but not limit to questioning techniques, high-order thinking training, catering to learners' diversity, school-based curriculum development, theme-based learning, e-learning, co-operative learning, reading to learn, STEM education and so on. In a sense, as the reform proceeded, teachers were bombarded with various innovations and recommended methods. Schools that lack the professional judgment to choose and pick the appropriate strategies for their students tend to touch on every strategy advocated by the Education Bureau; thus overloading teachers and students. Cheng (2017, p.97), thus, uses the term 'bottleneck effect' to describe the overdose of strategies in Hong Kong's educational reform.

Another reason for the 'overdose' is that some teachers are just afraid to make decisions as patients do. Citing an example, Gawande (2014, p.197) describes how his father faces all the choices given by his surgeon:

In theory, a person should make decisions about life and death matters analytically, on the basis of the facts. But the facts were shot through with holes and uncertainties. The tumor was rare. No clear predictions could be made. Making choices required somehow filling the gaps, and what my father filled them with was fear.

The curriculum decisions made by teachers are by no means as life-threatening as the one made by Gawande's father. However, under the accountability culture, teachers may not risk making a new move because of all the uncertainties. In my previous serving school, we had been adopted an integrated approach in our school-based curriculum, which means that each topic should cover reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Having so many things and exercises to cover, an experienced teacher therefore proposed focusing on only one to two skills each year. The issue was brought up every year, but again nobody was willing to venture into the proposal, fearing that students' results could be affected. Likewise, there are also schools that adopt all the innovations addressed in the curriculum, fearing that they might miss something and thus end up being criticized by the official inspectorate. Therefore, while an informative relationship sounds democratic, curriculum leaders who take up this relationship with the frontline teachers should minimize their fear and confusion. In this regard, I argue that curriculum leaders should switch to an interpretive role, which is explained as follows.

2.3 Interpretive Relationship

Displayed In the hospital setting, doctors who take up an interpretative role help patients determine what they want. They attempt to understand the patients' (physical and psychological) needs and worries and provide solutions and makeshifts to them. These solutions may not necessarily sound conventional, but may help the patients or the elderly live a better life. There is one scenario in Chapter 5 of *Being Mortal*, which best explains what an interpretive relationship is like.

A medical graduate Bill Thomas got a new job in a nursing home. As a medical practitioner, he was supposed to take care of the physical needs of the aged and ensure that the elderly live in a safe environment without falling down. However, what he concerned most was not how to enforce tight safety measures in the nursing home so as to avoid accidents among the elderly. What caught his attention was however the depressing environment in the nursing home. He then put himself in the shoes of the elderly and found that all they needed more was freedom instead of safety and most importantly a purpose in life. He therefore thought out of the box by introducing plants, animals, and even children into the lives of the residence, turning the nursing home into a lively and hopeful place.

Similar to Bill Thomas, there are certainly some interpretive curriculum leaders who see the psychological needs of teachers and students more important than theories about outcome and efficiency. However, as far as I observed, curriculum leaders at the policy level in Hong Kong seem to be more concerned about whether schools meet the performance indicators than the psychological needs of teachers and students. This can be reflected in the controversy over a standardized test called Basic Competency Assessment (BCA) in Hong Kong, where thousands of parents in Hong Kong called on the government to abolish BCA at Primary 3 level (grade 3) in a Facebook petition, worrying that their children may lose motivation in their studies because of the never-ending drilling for the standardized test. However, a local newspaper reported that the former Secretary for Education Eddie Ng 'struck an uncompromising stance' on BCA, as he cited examples from Canada in support of his stance:

[There were] two Canadian provinces, one of which saw its students perform below the national average after dropping a common exam. The other recorded improvements with the test in place… The examples showed the "bad consequence" of removing a standardized exam for schools. (Ng, 2017, March 30)

Overlearning of technical methods such as the use of standardized test results to assess learning, as Schön (1983) warns, may definitely prevent professional practitioners from using more discursive methods in their practice. Not only this, it will blind one's eyes from seeing the real picture. While I do not argue the effectiveness of BCA, what the former education chief did not realize was the psychological needs for students, parents and teachers. True, dropping the test may possibly affect students' academic performance. Nonetheless, what is more important to the children is a happier childhood without being obsessed with drilling for the standardized text. Parents, on the other hand, do not want to see their children lose interests in their studies. For teachers, they may feel 'disappointed by the misplaced focus on the [standardized tests], which often overshadow and distract from the actual day-to-day learning' (Tucker, 2016, p.2). Had the former education chief and other curriculum leaders alike taken an interpretative role in their leadership and considered the concerns of different stakeholders, many arguments could have been avoided and resolved.

Accounting for the success of Finland's education, local scholar Pasi Sahlberg (2010) highlights the importance of trust and shared decision-making, as he cites the former Finnish education head:

In leading the way toward educational reform in Finland in the early 1990s, Dr. Wilho Hirvi, then Director General of the National Board of Education, said that "an educated nation cannot be created by force." He acknowledged that teachers and students must be heard, and that the way forward called for active collaboration. In Finland, teachers and students were insisting on more flexibility and freedom in deciding how to design instruction, what to study, and when. … Basic to this new culture has been the cultivation of trust between education authorities and schools. Such trust, as we have witnessed, makes reform that is not only sustainable but also owned by teachers who implement it. (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 2)

Here, the key words are "teachers and students must be heard" and as such, Finland can boldly do away with the standardized high-stakes tests as it knows that teachers and students want to 'focus on teaching and learning without the disturbance of frequent tests to be passed' (ibid, p.67). In contrast with paternalistic curriculum leaders who take an authoritative position and super-imposes an expert-designed curriculum on teachers, interpretative leaders listen to the voices of teachers and students, provide flexibility to teachers and allow them to make decisions that are pertinent to their own needs. Another example is the school-based curriculum development (SBCD) practice in Singapore, in which SBCD in elementary schools is usually led by veteran teachers but they do not take a paternalistic role and told other fellow teachers to strictly follow suits. Instead, these curriculum leaders would guide other fellow teachers to interpret and reflect on their own strengths so that the latter could design a curriculum according to their subject knowledge and expertise (Teo & Osborne, 2010). The SBCD practice in Singapore thus dismisses the concern that inexperienced teachers may fumble in the dark if not following the curriculum designed by paternalistic curriculum leaders. On the other hand, these relatively inexperienced teachers may too become a curriculum expert in their own areas.

3. Conclusion

Given the unequal relationship between curriculum leaders and frontline teachers in Hong Kong as well as in other highly centralized education systems, teachers will inevitably comply with the educational innovations imposed on them. This problem would not be resolved unless the curriculum leaders at the policy level adopt a more interpretative role with an attempt to understand the constraints of curriculum implementation in various contexts as well as the fears of teachers which are usually triggered by daunting accountability measures and the government's lack of respect for teachers' professional judgments. As John Dewey emphasized in his masterpiece *My Pedagogic Creed*, education should start with students' psychological needs as the basic (Dewey, 2004). This fundamental view should be restored as more emphasis is now placed on the technical side rather than the psychological or sociological side. Hopefully, this article will bring about changes in the roles taken by curriculum leaders in different settings, especially those working at the policy level who may realize that education is for humanity but not vice versa.

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The Linguistic Commodification of Mainland Salespeople in Hong Kong

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Abstract. Languages have increasingly been used for market purposes in various jobs, bringing about recognition and material remuneration for those who possess them (Heller, 2010). In recent years, researchers have extensively discussed and studied the commodification of English in some explicitly language-centered fields such as language teaching and call centers (Block & Cameron, 2002; Rahman, 2009). While languages other than English, such as minority languages, have been shown to be commodified in tourism industries (Leeman & Mordan, 2009; Heller, 2014), the possibility of the commodity value of non-English languages as labor skills has been less investigated. Therefore, this paper focuses on Cantonese and commodification discourses among mainland sales workers in Hong Kong. I draw my data from ethnographic observations and interviews with a community of practice. They are all working class women from mainland, who are engaged in sales jobs and have low levels of education. I examine how they discuss the role of Cantonese in their actual sales work and their language ideologies. The findings show that Cantonese appears an important prerequisite by which they are allowed to participate in the local labor market and to settle down in Hong Kong. Cantonese capabilities together with non-linguistic behaviors are often commodified as a "package" and help these mainland workers create images of sincere and reliable saleswomen and selling their products in return. This present study will offer new empirical evidence of linguistic commodification and extend our understanding of the commodity value of language skills in the Hong Kong job market and the dilemma of mainland sales workers.

Keywords: Cantonese, language commodification, salespeople, language ideologies

1. Introduction

Commodification refers to the transformation of relationships, formerly untainted by commerce, into commercial relationships, relationships of exchange, of buying and selling (Marx & Engels, 1848). The act of commodification is significant in modern society as there is a growing trend that ideas, skills and the like can be turned into commodities, no longer confined to food, clothing and other traditional goods in previous days. The notion of referring to languages as commodities with economic exchange value can be traced back to the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1911). His concept of linguistic marketplace implies an economic relation within which certain linguistic competence has a higher market value than others. Hence, this study, using his perspective, is to explore the commodification of language in the context of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has a linguistically diverse environment due to its geographical location and political history. After returning to China in 1997, Hong Kong began to officially adopt Chinese and English as its written language and Cantonese, English and Mandarin as the spoken language, i.e. the policy of bi-literacy and tri-lingualism. Yet despite the status planning to raise the status of Mandarin, Cantonese remains the dominant language in Hong Kong in term of frequency, importance and attitudes (Lee, 2010). Accordingly, learning Cantonese appears necessary for new immigrants who want to enter local labor market, specifically working class people with low education. Recent years have seen a sharp increase in the number of mainlanders working in Hong Kong, reaching 121,775 in 2016 (Census and Statistics Department). In terms of job category, 38.1% of new immigrants are engaged in service industries such as sales, which constitute a majority of this group. Thus, this study will discuss and investigate whether and how languages are commodified by mainland salespeople to make economic profits and how they view the role of languages in their actual work.

2. Relevant Studies

Although language can always be analyzed as a commodity, its salience as a resource with exchange value has increased with the growing importance of language in the globalized new economy (Heller, 2010:101). Heller (2010) clarifies the process of commodifying languages on two levels. One level focuses on certain linguistic forms indexical of taste, intellectual competence and etc. which are exchangeable for money and the other points to the distinct change that circulation of goods which used to depend on other kinds of resources are now contingent on the deployment of linguistic resources. This offers us an illuminating perspective to analyze in what ways languages could play a role in sales work.

In general, the commodity values of languages are discussed in two ways: as a skill in the job market (Cameron, 2001, 2005), which this paper is more in line with, and as a sign of authenticity (Coupland, 2003). Lorente (2018) for instance, focusing on Philippine women workers in Singapore, examines how English is crucial for transforming migrant women into transnational domestic workers. Myrna, one of Lorente's interviewees, recalls that 'they (i.e. the employers) want to know whether you (i.e. foreign domestic workers) know English' (2018: 1). Another scholar Sharma's research investigates why tourism workers in Nepal want to learn English in terms of commodification (2018), in which he proves the unique commodity value of English skills in relation to local cultures in Nepali tourism market. Similar to these works, a considerable body of research has focused on the commodity value of languages in the job market, the dominant language English in particular, notably in fields of tourism, language teaching and call centers (Block & Cameron, 2002; Rahman, 2009). While languages other than English, such as minority languages, have been shown to be commodified in tourism industries (Leeman & Mordan, 2009), the possibility of the commodity value of non-English languages as labor skills has been less investigated. Therefore, this paper specifically focuses on Cantonese and commodification discourses among mainland sales workers in Hong Kong.

3. Service Industries and Attitudes in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has long been a tourist hot-spot in the world, renowned as shopping paradise and complimented for its distinctive fusion of eastern and western cultures. In spite of this, service attitudes have always been a heated issue resolving around Hong Kong service industries, especially tourism. According to Annual Smile Report (Better Business World Wide) from 2010 to 2018, Hong Kong has, all the time, ranked within the last five places among 50 countries or regions, meaning having the fewest smiling faces. In the meantime, media frequently discloses customers' dissatisfaction in Hong Kong service industries and raise concerns, which are evident from the reports from South China Morning Post (one of the most authoritative and influential newspapers in Hong Kong) and China Daily (the largest English portal in China). Their reports include titles such as, In Hong Kong, the customer is no longer king (Wu, 2013); Hong Kong's low-quality services are threatening economic development (So, 2016); Bad service in Hong Kong: language barrier, poor attitude or just plain racism? and so forth (Vishwana, 2018). Authorities suggest Hong Kong's poor customer service featuring few smiles results from long working hours, frequent customer complaints, lengthy commutes and etc., This background information on views of customer service in Hong Kong will help us better understand the participants' opinions, their motivations and reasons behind their linguistic and non-linguistic behaviors.

4. Methods

All of my participants are working class women from mainland China. As shown in Table 1, the participants' ages range from 32 to 47, with their average age being 42 years. Most of them came to Hong Kong shortly after the reunification of Hong Kong. Till now, they have worked in Hong Kong for an average of 14 years.

Table 1. Background of the participants

Pseudonym	Age	Provinces	Mother Tongue	Education	Years in Hong Kong	Sales Job in
Juan	47	Sichuan	Sichuanese	Primary School	7	Birdnests
Dan	44	Chongqing	Sichuanese	Junior School	19	Facial
Yun	46	Chongqing	Sichuanese	Junior School	20	Clothes
Jiali	44	Sichuan	Sichuanese	Junior School	17	Snacks
Lian	40	Anhui	Anhui Dialect	Junior School	18	Tea
Shu	40	Guangdong	Teochew	High School	14	Health Food
Chunxiu	32	Sichuan	Sichuanese	Junior School	6	Bakery
Honglan	45	Sichuan	Sichuanese	Primary School	17	Jewelry

Prior to interviewing these women, I had been well acquainted with a few of them. Juan was a popular and warm-hearted person in this mainland community, where the members kept frequent contacts with each other by hiking, shopping and chatting together. I had known her for many years previous to the study due to our family connection and owing to her help I successfully approached these mainland sales workers within a short period of time. Moreover, since I was introduced as a relative of Juan, I was positioned as an insider within their community. More precisely, they were all seniors to me in terms of age and social experience whereas I was treated as a peer to their children, which invisibly shortened the psychological distance between us. Therefore, all the participants were willing to share their work experiences and life stories with me.

My field sites include the participants' workplaces, homes and the restaurants they frequented. In March and April, I paid frequent visits to Plaza Hollywood (a large shopping mall in Kowloon East), Argyle Centre (in Mong Kok), Sunshine City (in Ma On Shan), Chung On Commercial Complex (in Ma On Shan), Heartbreak Sour and Spicy Noodles (an authentic Sichuan restaurant in Sham Shui Po) etc. To better understand the motivations and attitudes behind their linguistic behaviors and how they relate to each other within this community, I also did my participant observation in job shadowing, their informal gatherings, having meals and so on.

Semi-structured interviews were mainly conducted with the eight mainland sales workers. Due to their different work schedules, all the informants were interviewed and recorded individually. Recordings typically lasted for 30-60 minutes. I started my interviews first asking them why they came to Hong Kong and chose sales work here. Then I asked them to recall what they usually talk about at work, how they talk with customers and how they view the role of Cantonese in Hong Kong. They brought stories of their achievements through hard work, relationships with their customers, communication problems and discrimination experienced in the workplace. As an Sichuanese myself, I used Sichuan dialect to communicate with most participants and would always exchange opinions about the changes in Sichuan in recent years, making them feel close and intimate as expected.

5. Data Analysis

In the next three excerpts I will demonstrate what kind of role Cantonese plays in sales work in the Hong Kong context, how it becomes commodified by mainland sales workers as well as what are being commodified together with it.

Excerpt 1: Cantonese is a prerequisite[1]

Juan:… tingdedong↑ tamen, baifenzhi bajiushi dou tingdedong↑. Yinwei ni shouxian yuyan butong, zhefen gongzuo ni <u>kending</u> zuobuxialai. Yinwei zai Xianggang gongzuo ni suo fuwu de duixiang doushi bendiren sa. Nikan, wo xianzai gongzuo zheli shi zhuzhaiqu sa, jihu meiyou youke. Zai zhuzhaiqu gongzuo ni <u>yi:ding yaoneng</u> shuo dangdihua.

Juan: ... I do understand↑, understand↑ eighty to ninety percent of what they say. In the first place, if you don't know the language, you <u>definitely</u> cannot handle the job. Doing sales work in Hong Kong, we mainly serve the local people. You see, the shop I work in is in the residential area, with almost no tourists here. You <u>ha:ve to</u> <u>be able to</u> speak local dialect.

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[1] The transcription conventions are summarized in the appendix.

When I asked Juan whether she had worried about her communication with customers, she repeatedly used the word "understand" in an eager manner to show her capability of managing conversations at work. Based on her own experience, she indicates that Cantonese is the first challenge to overcome if a mainlander intends to enter sales work in Hong Kong, underlining the importance of needing to speak Cantonese by extra emphasis on words like "definitely" and "have to". On the other hand, in saying so, Juan again proves her qualification for sales work by her abling to speak Cantonese. First of all, her job interview was in Cantonese, which invisibly examines the applicant's Cantonese proficiency. Then her response reminded me of the nature and routine of her daily work. In general, Juan has basic salary guaranteed by fixed working days and commission depending on how many products she has additionally sold. The more and more expensive items she promotes, the more profit she could gain. Such scheme incentivizes employees to work harder to sell more valuable products for the mutual benefits of themselves and the company. Hence, Juan cannot just stand in the shop doing nothing or passively wait for customers to consult. In order to obtain more profits, she needs to be able to attract potential customers who happen to pass by and, more importantly, inspire their desire to purchase. She needs Cantonese to explain functions, benefits and target groups of different birdnests, introduce the most suitable one to clients and answer various questions from them. Nevertheless, these are possible only when she can deploy Cantonese abilities. Otherwise, all will be in vain no matter how familiar she is with these products and selling techniques. In Juan's words during another part of the interview, "knowing equals nothing. You just have to talk." That is, they are expected to turn these knowledge about bird's nest and skills into verbal practice. This is perhaps what she meant by "cannot handle the job" without speaking Cantonese.

Juan's words implicitly reveal another important point in viewing the role of Cantonese, to whom the salespeople greet. She works in a residential area and her target customers are mainly locals. In this way, Cantonese is the default language in their communication. It should be noted that, in Hong Kong, the majority of shops are still scattered over residential areas as residential areas occupy the largest proportion in used land, which indicates Cantonese remains the only effective means for these mainland salespeople to communicate with customers in most cases.

Since Cantonese is necessary, I also asked her whether the employers specified language requirements in the recruitment advertisements. According to Juan, it was not very common to capture them in the advertisements, which might be unexpected. However, from another perspective, what is unshown here becomes even more important than what has been explicitly mentioned in the advertisement. What are expected for a qualified applicant would normally include "positive and proactive; good service attitudes; excellent interpersonal and sales skills (積極主動; 良好服务态度; 具良好溝通 / 銷售技巧)(taken from a typical local advertisement that Juan responded to) ", all of which are undoubtedly based on one's language capabilities as previously discussed. At this point, the absence of language requirements does not imply they are of no importance but conversely proves they are underlying rules every mainland applicant understands and obeys. If one cannot speak Cantonese, he or she will never be considered for a sales position in Hong Kong. Cantonese abilities are not only what qualify these mainlanders for this particular job but also what allow for their transregional mobility in a broader sense.While I kept asking my participants whether they suffered disadvantages caused by their limited Cantonese capabilities, they would always shift my focus to what they could achieve with their available abilities, i.e. they could make up or perform even better than their local counterparts with better service attitudes. Since all the interviews were conducted respectively, this response tends to be worth exploring in that it was repeatedly brought up by themselves and approved by almost all. It was thanks to them that I realized the sales work could be far more than the linguistic commodification I had initially set out to study and what really makes a difference to them.

Jiali works in a famous snack brand's chain store in Hong Kong. Her daily job is to sort and group snacks onto the shelves and, most importantly, try to sell as much as she can to every prospective customer. In Excerpt 2, she highlights the importance of good service attitudes in sales work, which can be better understood when associated with the status quo of Hong Kong service industries.

Excerpt 2: They speak better Cantonese but I have higher sales performance

Jiali: Shuozhende, taidu yidingyao youshan. Xiang Xianggang bendiren, zheshi yige hennan ( ) gangnü jiu gen women (butong) tamen xiaoshou haoxiang nijüede zhiyexiaorong. Wo benren zuoxiaoshou jingchang nadiyi, (jiushishuo) ni buyao, renjia yimai ni jiu gaoxing, renjia bumai ni jiu bailian. Niyao fazineixinde jüede ni kemai kebumai, suibian ta fahui, na youxie keren hui yuanyuan chaochu ni xiangxiang.

X: Na ni jüede Xianggang bendiren gongzuo qilai hui gengyou youshi ma?

Jiali: Haihao (2.8). Henduo fangmian women faner haiyao genghao. Women neidiren de xingge jiushi bijiao youshan a kailang. Tamen jiushi hak1 min6 a. Xianggang nüren henxihuan heilian a, women chufei shi henshengqi henshengqi le, heile liangfenzhong women ziji jiu haole. Xianggangren nazhong shi guanxing de heilian. Wo hui jüede women bi tamen rongyi xiangchu. Ni yiding buneng rang guke youyali. Ni yao guancha ta, kan ta youxuyao mashang qu bangmang, yao ganjüe ta youxingqu le, ni zai manman jieshi, ni jiuhui xiaode henhao.

Jiali: To be honest, you really need a friendly attitude. For the locals, it is quite a difficult ( ). Kong girls are (different) from us. When they work, they smile as if they were forced to. I myself always win first place in sales. (The point) is, you cannot, wear a cheerful look immediately the customers buy something while pull a long face immediately they buy nothing. If you, from the heart, feel it doesn't matter whether they buy or not, leave themselves to take the initiative, then some customers will eventually go far beyond your expectations.

X: Do you find locals work with more advantages than you?
Jiali: Not really (2.8). Rather, we did better in many aspects. We mainlanders are very friendly and open-minded. But they invariably hak1 min6 ((wear a scowl on their faces)). Hong Kong women are used to scowls indeed. We rarely do unless we get very annoyed, very annoyed. If we do, we back to normal in two minutes. But theirs are habitual. I think we areeasier to get along with… You cannot pressure your customers. You just observe them and see if they need any help. When you feel they are interested, you then start to introduce the products and will make it finally.

In Excerpt 2, Jiali told me that she always won first place in her workplace and insisted that a sincere and friendly attitude should be her secret to excellent sales performance. Besides, Jiali displays her negative stance towards native women in Hong Kong, using the word "Kong girl". Originally a neutral word, "Kong girl" is now commonly used in local forums and presses to refer to Hong Kong women characterized by being self-centered, materialistic, snobbish and demanding (Chu, 2014; Kang & Chen, 2014). By the same token, she positions herself as somebody not belonging to this group, but instead being someone with friendliness and sincerity. Jiali again expresses the negative stereotype towards Hong Kong women by the derogatory description of their facial expression, i.e. hak1 min6 (wear a scowl on one's face), reinforced by the emphasis on guanxing (habitual). In her view, Hong Kong workers' smiles, if not few, are somewhat fake, coerced and not from their heart. On the surface they are saying "welcome" with their mouths, but all other their facial expressions and body languages give an unwelcome and uninviting signal to customers. By comparison, she recommends her usual reaction, a "laissez-faire" strategy whose core is offering timely assistance through careful observation, never to pressure customers. It proves effective by her mentioning "customers will go far beyond your expectations (buy a lot of things)" based on her experience.

She also shares one of her work experience with me. Once an old man asked her about a snack's producing area, yet she was not able to produce the correct Cantonese pronunciation of the corresponding expression. Then she instinctively said the word in her mother tongue Mandarin so as to make herself well understood, which worked. According to Jiali, most Hong Kongers she knew could basically understand spoken Mandarin despite their poor Mandarin pronunciation. What is more, she emphasizes she wore a sunny smile to the old man all the time and that the whole communication went very smoothly. On the one hand, Jiali's code-switching is to some extent a result of her different Cantonese and Mandarin language proficiency levels, i.e. limited Cantonese abilities vis-à-vis native Mandarin. There still exists a gap between what she wants to produce with Cantonese and what she could actually achieve with her current Cantonese capabilities. On the other hand, her experience reveals there seems something more important than the mere linguistic behaviors in the actual work, or, at least, language abilities are not the only central factor leading to success in sales work. Cantonese is required and needed only at a mutually-comprehensible level, which Jiali has already reached. In her view, limited Cantonese speaking skills constrain her in expressing information to some extent, yet her heartfelt customer service compensates for the deficiency in Cantonese. Jiali believes that how she smiles and speaks are subject to reinterpretation by customers, so she always puts herself in their shoes to give appropriate responses. The ability to answer spontaneously and resolve emerging difficulties, to show consistent patience and a genuine customer-friendly attitude along with her Cantonese abilities come together to contribute to her fruitful work performance. This is how she acknowledges that Cantonese is locals' mother tongue but that she has better sales performance.

Excerpt 3: We talk about news and children
Dan: nixiaode weishazi haoduo keren genzhewo zuo, wo you keren gen le wo shiduonian, haiyou haoduo keren you jieshao gen tamen pengyou. Yinwei wo hui kanren, buhui yizhi butingde jiang, youxie keren buxihuan zheyang. Wo yiban hui gen tamen chejiachang, liaoha xinwen a, waer a, qingsong de huati, gen pengyou yiyang ma. Deng zuode chabuduo le, wo keneng zai gentamen shuo, "women youge xinchanpin chulai le…"

Dan: You know why I have many guests following me for long, one of whom for over ten years, and some will also introduce me to their friends, because I could figure out their needs. For me, I normally talk with them about recent news, our children and other relaxing topics, like with friends. When the facial is almost finished, I then tell them "by the way, we have a new product…"

While I asked Dan what she usually talks about with her clients, she first mentioned her stable customer base before coming to the point and attributed her customer base to exactly what she talks about at work and the way she talks. I am interested in this mainly due to the nature of Dan's work. Dan mainly provides facial treatment for those women hoping to look younger and more beautiful. The whole treatment normally lasts one to two hours, so she always has much more time to communicate with her target clients than ordinary sales workers. To be more precise, she can take advantage of the sufficient time guaranteed by the treatment itself to sell skincare products to her clients. She changes her workplace at times because she makes a living by her own skills and techniques, and is not highly heavily reliant on her employer. She makes constant contact with her regular customers so that most of them follow her to do facials in whichever beauty parlor she is currently working. One client she mentions follows her from her time as a student to motherhood. This kind of loyal "following" can be seen as recognition and appreciation of Dan's work from her clients as well. It suffices to show that how strong social relationships could be in this field.

Dan's rich work experience enables her to gain insights into various customers' psychology, largely facilitating her sales tasks. During the interview, she positions herself as a friend of her clients. She notes that quite a few clients show emotional aversion to the saleswoman's endless talking. Yet she explains that it is understandable since most clients come to do facial after a day's exhausted work and they are here to beautify and enjoy themselves, not to listen to the lengthy sales information. In this way, they are reluctant to buy whatever products they are recommended. Hence, Dan would usually turn to everyday topics such as recent news and raising children in which they could identify with each other. On such occasions, her clients are completely relaxed and comfortable and gradually develop a sense of trust in her. There will be a higher possibility of making a deal from the clients if they are in need of recommended products.

Dan's experience indicates that sales work as communicative labor, is neither as simple as speaking maximally nor minimally, but being able to speak the right amount as well as the right content in the right manner. In the meantime, we see a 'behavioral script' (Blommaert, 2017: 47) emerge here, in which being able to interest, engage and relax clients in conversations is of vital importance for making profits in facial. Dan realizes that being able to speak Cantonese is not sufficient for her work and thus pays much more attention to the content and manner of her conversation with clients, i.e. news and children. Her discursive performance exposes her as an amiable and reliable "friend" to talk with. In addition, the less salient or intangible characteristics by means of languages, unlike language proficiency, are what we likely ignore when judging mainland saleswomen's work performance while equally important and valued by them. This is very much in line with Agha's idea of 'figures of personhood' (2011: 173), in which behaviors 'index the persona (or social image) of the one performing them, make social personae inferable and thereby function as singular indexical icons, or concrete emblems'. In fact, all linguistic and non-linguistic elements are packaged together not only to market their products but also themselves, i.e. casting themselves as sincere, reliable and professional saleswomen. Dan's case also demonstrates the commodity value of language abilities works better in combination with accompanying non-linguistic behaviors sales workers carry out. As a consequence, the clients themselves are willing to share their lives, buy recommended products and back again to service providers.

6. Conclusion

This study has broadened our understanding of the role of Cantonese and commodification discourses of mainland sales workers in Hong Kong. First, it suggests that Cantonese is an essential prerequisite allowing mainland workers' participation in local labor market and their transregional mobility in a broader sense. Second, Cantonese capabilities are found to be commodified usually in combination with other non-linguistic behaviors to help these mainland workers create images of sincere and reliable saleswomen and better sell their products in return. The present findings, though preliminary, provides evidence of how linguistic commodification actually takes place among mainland sales workers in Hong Kong. Further research could be done under this topic and explore the commodification of other languages such as Mandarin.

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Appendix

Transcription Conventions

↑ an upper arrow indicates a marked rise in pitch
emphasis is indicated by underlining
: colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound
( ) empty parentheses indicate the transcriber's inability to hear what was said
(word) parenthesized words are especially dubious hearings or speaker identifications
(( )) double parentheses contain transcriber's descriptions rather than, or in addition to, transcriptions
(0.0) numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence by tenth of seconds
hak1 min6 italics mark off code-switching