

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Kongish as a linguistic variety

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**Kongish as a Linguistic Variety**

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We hereby recommend that the Dissertation by Mr. TAI Ka Kit entitled "Kongish as a Linguistic Variety" be accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Language Studies.



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## **Kongish as a Linguistic Variety**

### *Abstract*

Whether Hong Kong English (HKE) should be a linguistic variety has been one of the most-debated topics in HKE studies since the landmark study of Luke and Richards (1982). Scholars dispute over whether the set of features in the English spoken or written by Hong Kong people should be regarded as a variety. Given how this decision should not solely depend on the scholars, and how the users' viewpoints should also be considered, it is necessary to survey the opinions and attitudes of Hong Kong people on these features. The variety status is highly dependable on how people's attitudes towards its recognition and agreement in society. However, little attention was given to the people's attitudes towards online HKE and whether these attitudes help to constitute a linguistic variety of online HKE.

In this project, I apply the linguistic norms framework (Poon, forthcoming) to test whether Hong Kong people see these features constitute a variety. This study investigated the attitudes of Hong Kong people towards online HKE, and in the process, explored whether the recognition of online HKE might allow us to recognise Hong Kong English as a variety in both online and offline contexts.

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## **1. Introduction**

Languages have been ever evolving, but changes are usually rather slow. In the history of humanity, a language may take over decades or centuries to evolve and change. However, because of the proliferation of the internet, people from different places can communicate more easily, and this leads to not only drastic, but also quick, changes in language form. The languages used on the internet by Hong Kong people are one very good example. Both English and Cantonese have taken different forms when they are used online. It gradually triggered the new mixed-form of English and Cantonese in online context.

As a Crown colony, the English language has taken root in Hong Kong and become the primary working language in this city since 1842. The British government employed English as an official language in colonial Hong Kong when Cantonese remained vernacular, “substrate” language for local use. Since then, these two languages have been interacting and affecting each other in various ways. The contact between English and Cantonese has also attracted many scholars who look into the ways in which English and Cantonese have evolved in the Hong Kong context.

On the other hand, the term “Hong Kong English” (HKE thereafter) has gained scholastic attention since 1980s (Luke & Richard, 1982; Harris, 1989). Scholars discussed whether the independent variety of “Hong Kong English” existed in the city. This issue has also become a research subject since then. The recognition of the variety status of “Hong Kong English” has not reached a consensus in the scholastic field until now. Meanwhile, the views from language users in Hong Kong were not thoroughly taken into the previous linguistic research of “Hong Kong English”.

Since the advancement of information and communication technology in 1990s, Hong Kong people have been communicating online more often. Even though Cantonese was their first language, people did not however use it to chat with each other, which was especially true in the early days of cyber communication. This is because inputting Chinese at that time was rather complicated, and it took more time to type Chinese characters. As a result, Hong Kong people developed specific ways to type Cantonese using the English alphabet, including Romanising Cantonese expressions. It leads to the peculiar usage of

English on the asynchronous and synchronous online platforms in Hong Kong. This form of English is given different names. Poon (2010), for example, regards it as CHKE (Computer-mediated Hong Kong English), which is different from the conventional written form of Hong Kong English. Wong, Tsang & Lok (2017) coins it with the term basilectal Hong Kong English (Kongish).

In this project, I study people's attitudes towards the online HKE features and whether these features can help us determine whether these features constitute a variety of English. It also investigates how these online features become a driving force behind the growing positive attitudes towards HKE amongst its language users. I employ the linguistic norms framework (Poon, forthcoming) to examine the variety status of online HKE. A group of English users in Hong Kong were invited to a structured interview in this attitudinal study. Their attitudes allow me to identify the social function(s) of these features. These functions in turn serve as a reliable evidence to support the recognition of a linguistic variety, not only by the users, but also by linguists.

By studying the people's attitudes towards the online HKE features, I aim to answer the following research questions:

- i. The attitudes of Hong Kong people towards online HKE features
- ii. Whether these attitudes help people to recognise not only HKE online, but also HKE offline as a variety.



## 2. Literature reviews

### 2.1 Hong Kong English as a variety

Hong Kong English, as a topic in post-colonial Englishes, has attracted various attentions in the last two decades. A plethora of multi-faceted studies of HKE have been conducted, such as phonology (Hung, 2000; Wee, 2016; Lam, 2017), lexis (Benson, 2002; Cummings, 2007; Evan 2015a, 2015b), grammar and syntax (Yao, 2016; Wong, 2017), literacy studies (Fung & Carter, 2007a, 2007b; Lee, 2007) and corpus studies upon the Hong Kong component of International Corpus of English (Bolton, 2002; Hansen, 2017). The existence and recognition of whether Hong Kong English can be regarded as an independent variety has also been the subject of ongoing debates among scholars in Hong Kong. The argument started with the landmark study of Luke and Richard (1982) in which they stated that “there is no such thing as Hong Kong English” (p.55), and that Hong Kong English lacked “societal basis” to be regarded as “Hong Kong English”. Harris (1989), at his inaugural lecture, even noted that “Hong Kong English is the worst English in the world”. This stance exhibits people’s predominant attitudes towards the term “Hong Kong English” when it first came out and discussed by scholars. The attitude did not seem to have changed two decades later. Li (2000) echoed Luke and Richard’s observation (1982) by also arguing that there was “short of a sociological basis at the societal level, it seems inappropriate to characterize ‘Hong Kong English’ as a new variety of English” (p.57). The attitude towards HKE seemed to have progressed a little since then. In 2002, Bolton argued for the existence of HKE even if it was not completely autonomous, according to Butler’s (1997) model. Similar to Bolton was Groves (2009), who claimed that HKE was at an early stage of developing into a fully independent variety.

Pang (2003) said that Hong Kong English was already localized in the city, but it was still in the progress of indigenization. Pang anticipated that Hong Kong people would not easily acknowledge and accept the existence of Hong Kong English due to linguistics purism<sup>1</sup> as well as high status of English. He, however, also stated the appropriation of ICQ language

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<sup>1</sup>The term “linguistics purism” (or linguistics cleanliness) is negatively used to describe a thought that a language should be preserved from changes in any ways. In the Hong Kong context, “purist” of English users and gatekeepers of linguistics propriety in Hong Kong eschew the use of quintessential term ‘goodest’ in spoken realm. However, by my observation, ‘goodest’ is gaining its popularity in colloquial form amongst younger generation in Hong Kong

may gradually give rise to more positive attitude towards Hong Kong English. He also believed that the advancement of technological applications would eventually benefit the indigenization of Hong Kong English in the not-too-distant future. Joseph (2004) discussed the existence of Hong Kong English, noting that certain consistent “errors” made by English users in Hong Kong may also be distinct features of up-and-coming variety of post-colonial English.

Poon (2005) argued that the existence of two varieties of written Hong Kong Englishes. Apart from the traditional form of written Hong Kong English, the Hong Kong English in computer-mediated communication should be considered as another variety under the umbrella of Hong Kong English which marks the Hong Kong identity. In his doctoral dissertation, Poon (2011) indicated that there were three kinds of linguistic norms (i.e. formal norms, contextual norms and identity norms) of Hong Kong English on the internet, helping to justify the definition of linguistic variety emically. Poon’s studies serve as a prelude and systematic study to Hong Kong English on the internet and justifying linguistics variety. Evans (2011) conducted an empirical research and showed that HKE was still at its moot point as nativised variety. He also noted that a unique Hong Kong-style hybrid of English and Cantonese, rather than standard form of English, was being used in computer- and telephone-mediated communication among younger people in Hong Kong.

In August 2015, a novel term, Kongish, was emerged on the Facebook. Since then the term Kongish was used to denote certain ways of using HKE that specific online. According to the founders of *Kongish Daily*, Kongish comprises abundant language play (Cantonese and English) that intertwined with local culture (Wong et al., 2017). Sewell and Chan (2016) investigated the features of Kongish and applied the evaluative model of Mollin (2006) to re-assess whether HKE should be a variety. They claimed that the variety status of Kongish should be at least equal to ‘Hong Kong English’ with compelling evidence on its formal cohesion, functional adaptation and attitudinal appreciation in Mollin’s framework. It is worth noting that the intrinsic structure of Kongish may also be further studied in light of contact linguistics and translanguaging (Li & García, 2014). Li & Luk (2017) currently asserted that, “English is not commonly used for intra-ethnic-communication among Cantonese Hongkonger—unlike Chinese Singaporeans in this regard — it may not be as appropriate to characterize HKE as a new variety” (p.37).

Despite the slow progress of recognition of HKE as a variety, language users recognise it much earlier. In Bacon-Shone and Bolton's (2008) language survey, the respondents were asked if they believed that a 'Hong Kong style of English' existed. Unexpectedly, 73% of the respondents agreed that the Hong Kong-style English existed. Bacon-Shone, Bolton and Luke (2015) conducted a similar survey to study language use, proficiency and attitudes in Hong Kong. They asked the same question of the existence of Hong Kong-style English in the survey in 2014 and released the result in August 2015. Surprisingly, the figure has climbed up to 82.8%. It is definitely a sign that, in general, Hong Kong people acknowledge the existence of "Hong Kong English". Hence, the recognition of the variety by speakers and their audience also needs contemplation (Lim, 2015).

One should however note that those who recognise HKE as a variety, or believe HKE is on the way to become an independent variety, focus their discussion on HKE features online. They all believe that HKE in general can become a fully autonomous variety because of the specific features online. As discussed above, Bolton, Poon, Evans and Sewell & Chan, for example all agree that HKE features in CMC are the key that derives HKE in general to be recognised as a variety. Online features may help Hong Kong people perceive HKE as a local variety. Also unexplored is whether HKE online is strong enough a driving force for the "autonomisation" of HKE in other offline contexts. For this reason, this project further explores the attitudes of Hong Kong people towards online HKE features.

## 2.2 Hong Kong English in computer-mediated communication and its features

The studies of Hong Kong English in computer-mediated communication started in 1990s and bloomed after the millennium. The invention of the internet and advancement of communication technology has a great impact on speeding variation of language usage in diasporic digital communities. In the Hong Kong context, Bodomo (2007) envisaged that Hong Kong English might emerge and evolve through mobile messaging. People playfully mixing written English and Chinese could contribute to the emergence of online Hong Kong English features. He was proven right.

The Chinese word-processing was limited and complicated in early computer settings. Computer users were not familiar with using keyboards to type Chinese character. People, as a result, utilized English inputting method on the internet which indirectly "bubble up" a

new written form of Hong Kong English in computer-mediated communication (Bolton, 2003). This is similar to the case of Greeklisch, whereby users use the roman keyboard to type Greek characters. Greeklisch came into being because typing Greek characters was a troublesome and unproductive typing method (Spilioti, 2009). Similar adaptation also existed in Cantonese-English bilingual web user in Hong Kong (Lee, 2007). Bolton (2003) noted the rapid development of unique usage of Hong Kong English on an instant messenger: ICQ. A mixture of English and romanised Cantonese has emerged on the internet which serves integrationist function (Pang, 2003). The occurrence of Cantonese particles in Hong Kong student's English email has also been noticed and this phenomenon has been named as "cyber-creole" (James, 2001). This sort of mixed-code has become popular among younger generation in multilingual communities. As Schneider (2011) says, they are deliberately chosen "as appropriate expressions of the speaker's multicultural and multilingual backgrounds and personalities, their culturally hybrid identities" (p. 223). He also observed that the phenomena of unmarked informal conversation could be found in the Hong Kong media. The emergence of this written form of Hong Kong English has attracted scholars to investigate the underlying elements of its usage.

Poon (2005) was the first scholar to notice that there were distinctive features of the Hong Kong English in the CMC (hereafter CHKE) which should be classified as a new variety of Hong Kong English. In his study, 16 Hong Kong youngsters were invited for interview to elicit their attitudes towards both CHKE and other written forms of Hong Kong English. The CHKE marked local Hong Kong identity by younger people in the city. Poon's research further supported by the observation from Warschauer, Black and Chou (2010) who said that the new form of Englishes was expressing user's identity and evolving online.

Lee (2007) compiled a corpus of emails and ICQ messages written by undergraduate in Hong Kong in order to present a panoramic view of the linguistic features of CMC in Hong Kong. She concluded that there were five methods of constructing Cantonese in CMC: (1) Cantonese romanizations; (2) literal translations; (3) homophony; (4) Cantonese characters; and (5) combinations of "o" or "0" and Chinese characters. Later, Lee (2016) also commented on the emergence of HKE on the internet, which was regarded as Kongish, in her book *Multilingualism Online*. This sort of usage serves as up-to-date research pool and strikes a chord of the study of HKE in CMC. In the monograph she wrote: "Kongish (a

blend of Hong Kong and English) is a stylized variety of Hong Kong English which has been popularized on the internet and in various pop culture media in Hong Kong. It draws on translingual resources from English, Cantonese, Hong Kong Cantonese Internet slang terms, transliteration, code-mixing, and being deliberately ungrammatical (e.g. goodest for best )” (Lee, 2016, p. 64). In the meantime, the establishment of *Kongish Daily* may also prompt the detailed studies of its anthropological and corpus data in the future.

However, one limitation of the above studies was the spectrum of respondents. Since the informants were mainly college students, it may reduce the representativeness of its finding. Such an issue of representativeness has been underlined by Groves (2012).

As Crystal has stated that, “Changes in language typically take decades, or even lifetimes, before they established. But history is no guide, when it comes to electronic technology...it seems likely that the Internet will speed up the process of language change” (2011, p.57), there is a need to review the linguistic features and attitudes towards Hong Kong English in CMC. Lim (2015) contended that CMC is one of the significant platforms for mutating Hong Kong English, and three factors acted as catalysts (i.e. computer-mediated, popular culture and the media, and education and human capital) in the evolution of Hong Kong English. This platform has provided new dynamics to the already vibrant and ever-changing Hong Kong English. She also pointed out the use of HKE in CMC will move to the spoken discourse in the future. Some lexical terms of Hong Kong English in CMC have already started to transfer to the spoken discourse such as “add oil” due to the returnees and mixed-heritage Hongkongers (Lim & Ansaldo, 2016).

Facebook put the synchronous and asynchronous forms of CMC into one platform (Barton and Lee, 2013). The establishment of a Facebook page *Kongish Daily* offered a greater scope for studying Hong Kong English in CMC. The page was followed by over 43,000 people around the world and the majority were local Hong Kong people. People from different social stratifications were commenting the non-typical usage of English in the content of posts on *Kongish Daily*. This phenomenon and its usage have attained a new level of maturity of Hong Kong English in CMC. Some studies also suggest that the younger people in Hong Kong have created a local-feature laden of written English for

interacting with others by mobile phone and computer (Lee, 2007; Fung & Carter, 2007a, 2007b; Evans, 2011).

The erstwhile features of Hong Kong English in CMC are romanised Cantonese, sentence final particles in romanised form and literal translation from Cantonese to English. One new element is added into its features: using “9” and “7” as infix in HKE online. Accordingly, there are four features of Hong Kong English in computer-mediated communication:

- 1) Romanised Cantonese. Cantonese phrases would be translated into romanised form by adapting the phonological conversion. For instance, *moshige* (Cantonese – mo4 si6 geh3), ‘It would be fine’.
- 2) Sentence final particles in romanised form: For instance, “I bring you to eat good west lah!”, ‘I am going to have a big meal with you’.
- 3) Literal translation from Cantonese to English: Morpheme in Cantonese expression would be translated into English. For instance, *laugh die me* (Cantonese –siu3 sei2 ngo5, ‘It is hilarious’)
- 4) Affixation – Infix: Using numerical number to sheer response. For instance, “sor9ly, exact7ly and hun9ry”

The numerical “9” and “7” project the local Cantonese culture and linguistic creativity amongst younger generation in Hong Kong. The “9” and “7” are used to form the culture-dependent lexis (Kachru, 1995) and load with cultural semiosis (Koutsogiannis, 2004). Kwok (2017) did a detailed speculation on the implication of using “9” and “7” in Kongish. It also portrays the bilingual language play which should be taken into account of discussing spoken and written realms of language in Hong Kong. The digital code play is a leading trend of studying online language in light of computer-mediated discourse analysis, especially the online code play in European countries. Jaworska (2014) investigated the play of code used by English speaking German who lived in the UK. This study lends light

on the people's code play in the post on Kongish Daily.

### 2.3 Attitudes towards Hong Kong English

The language status or variety status is highly dependable on how people's attitudes towards its recognition and agreement in society. It is important to refer to the awareness and attitudes of language users towards HKE as a variety. Nevertheless, attitudinal studies are one of the less copious research areas in Hong Kong English as a variety. This is partly due to the fact that the purism of Standard English had been embedded in L2 English speaker of Hong Kong people (Li, 2002). They tend to view non-standard English negatively. It will be interesting to look at how the Hong Kong people currently perceive attitudes towards the English usage in the dynamic linguistic ecology of Hong Kong (in particular with Hong Kong English in CMC).

Groves (2011) investigated the perception of local undergraduate students towards their own variety of English and discussed the notion of linguistics schizophrenia in Hong Kong. Students were asked about the existence and acceptance of Hong Kong English, where 73% of subjects come up with agreement on the existence of HKE while 10.7% denied. Interestingly, around 42.1% of respondents accepted that Hong Kong English is unique and acceptable while 43% of respondents believed Hong Kong English was an inferior variety of English. Grove (ibid) concluded that the localized form of English in Hong Kong was unlikely to occur in the near future in Hong Kong.

Zhang (2013) employed the verbal-guise technique to examine informants' attitudes towards eight varieties of English and then divided HKE into two accents: broad accent (HKbr) and educated accent (HKed) of Hong Kong English. Results showed that HKed was ranked much higher than HKbr (5th vs. 8th out of 8). Surprisingly, it was also shown that HKbr was ranked even lower than Philippine English, as caused by the 'linguistic self-hatred' (Labov's term) in the bottom heart of Hong Kong people. Both status and solidarity of HKbr came last in the ranking amongst Inner Circle English varieties (e.g. American English) in the findings. She said that the relatively positive attitude towards Mandarin-accented English is closely interrelated to speakers' socio-economic and intellectual

background <sup>2</sup>.

Hansen Edwards (2015) investigated the attitudes towards the legitimacy of Hong Kong English of 300 university students in Hong Kong. The respondents generally showed a positive attitude towards Hong Kong English in relation to the cultural identity of Hong Kongers. Some English speakers in Hong Kong would use HKE during intra-ethnic group communication with their peers because of its convenience and effective communication. Meanwhile, the result suggested that English speakers in Hong Kong differed from the degree of acceptance of HKE, even in the university setting. Hansen Edwards (2016) re-issued the same questionnaire she wrote in previous study (Hansen Edwards, 2015) in order to compare the change of attitudes towards Hong Kong English after the political turbulence: *The Umbrella Movement*. Hansen Edwards considered the Movement as a chance to strengthen a Hong Kong identity, in particular among the younger generation. The findings showed an increase of recognition of local Hong Kong identity that led to the wider acceptance of HKE.

As we can see, the previous attitude studies on HKE mainly focused on the attitudes towards the spoken data of HKE. The informants are at large restricted to university students who are usually of certain age group (Groves, 2011; Hansen Edwards, 2015). Yet little attention is given to the people's attitudes towards HKE online and whether online HKE features constitute the variety status of Hong Kong English in people's eyes from different age group. Thus, a further strand of research on this issue needs to be done so that we can obtain the better insight for regarding HKE as a variety.

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<sup>2</sup> Some immigrants from Mainland China specialized in particular field and qualified as a permanent citizenship in Hong Kong by joining the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS).



### **3. Methodology**

In order to test whether the online HKE features constitute the variety status of HKE, a set of online HKE expressions, together with a questionnaire, were sent to the informants. Eighteen replies were collected. This project adopted the norms framework proposed by Poon (forthcoming).

#### 3.1 The norms framework and justification

To determine whether the online HKE features are sufficient to constitute a linguistic variety of HKE, I used the three linguistic norms to test the people's attitudes towards online HKE features and contribution to linguistic variety of HKE. They are formal norms, contextual norms and identity norms. These three kinds of norms have been employed as rulers to justify whether the online HKE features contribute its variety status from the emic point of view.

First, formal norm helps us differentiate language forms and allow language users to determine whether the utterances can be accepted as a language or a linguistic variety. In the course of choosing the expressions as stimulants for the interview, all the CMC features of the expressions have been eliminated so as to elicit informants' judgement solely on the online HKE features (instead of generic CMC features). Therefore, once the informants recognize the expressions is in a part of certain language and consider as an acceptable form, it would be fitting the formal norm.

Second, contextual norms are related to the appropriateness of utterances in the particular contexts. Readers can justify whether the utterance is appropriate behavior in a specific context in accordance with their "contextual norms". In this score, Question 4 asks informants to tell where people generally write the expressions and normality of writing it in the mentioned medium. Question 5 further tests the figuration of identity of the author by informants. If the informants can point out the expressions were normally written for CMC only, this would show that the informants recognize that the expressions meet the contextual norm of CMC.

Third, identity norm allows reader to interpret the identities of author's background upon reading the expressions. Informant asked to generalize author's background in Question 3 and the rationale of their generalization. If they can judge that the writer(s) of these expressions is/are a Hong Kong person/people, it can be said that they recognize the identity norms of Hong Kong English online.

### 3.2 The expressions

The establishment of *Kongish Daily* has provided a large pool of up-to-date usage of online HKE. Most followers are local Hong Kong people. The reach rate of the page and its spreading on the internet reveal that Kongish usage is the common or accepted form of online HKE amongst Hong Kong people. The representativeness of its data would be the most suitable for this project. In order to extract the current data of online HKE features, I referred to the posts and contents on *Kongish Daily*. Thirteen edited expressions have been selected for the structured interview in this project. Several points need to be addressed in the course of selecting data and minimal editing has been adopted. It is important that all the Hong Kong-related elements and CMC features should be avoided in the dataset.

First, emoticons and hashtag have been avoided from the expressions. The presence of emoticons and hashtag would be indicative of CMC itself. The general CMC features would typically trigger the association with internet usage. As a result, it may lead informants indicate the online HKE features without consideration. The exclusion of CMC features is to test the informants' recognition of internet language.

Second, terms that indicate Hong Kong geographical location should be excluded which would be indicative of places in Hong Kong. Informants may figure out the expressions are used in Hong Kong context. For example, Up-water (Sheung Shui) and MK (Mong Kok), these geographical terms would lead informant's orientation towards Hong Kong context.

Third, certain representative and typical lexical terms of online Hong Kong English should be included in the expressions such as "add oil" and "goodest". "Add oil" has gained its international exposure of Hong Kong English since the "add oil machine" was placed on the Charter Road during the Umbrella Movement in 2014. As Lim (2015) stated that "the

term has long been limited to the Chinese "gayao!" (加油), after originating as a cheer at the Macau Grand Prix in the 60s, but Hong Kong is increasingly using the English transliteration”.

“Goodest” is also a new lexicon of Hong Kong English and created by the younger generation in the recent years. It has widely been used in the both online and offline context. Therefore, Expression 3 is put into the dataset.

The selected thirteen expressions have been shown as below:

1.	A moment of passion hai really tempting and resist ng dou.
2.	Poor guy experience make him become a cool guy.
3.	Add oil ah! YOU hai goodest ga!!!
4.	Take off have-colour ge glasses, and give support to need-love ge ppl!
5.	Almighty God, you see through world matter la...
6.	Ngo dou see gwor yau people ge surname hai "Diu".
7.	Give heart machine aah, ngo dei always support you!
8.	You gum hun9ry ga, meh dou eat.
9.	Dim gai geh! Dim gai wui gum geh! Ho ging aaaahhh!!
10.	No need to say sor9ly wor. You quick d back to fire-star lah.
11.	No matter what 7 you say. I wui always agree with ngo boss.
12.	This man is velly In7eresting.
13.	You treat me as water fish? Ng tung I stay here bei nei fish-meat?

Table 1. Table of selected online HKE expressions

Fourth, and most importantly, the four features of online HKE should also be listed in the dataset. I have tabulated the four features of HKE and its examples below.

Features of HKE in CMC	Examples
1. Romanised Cantonese	Dim gai (Expression 9)
2. Sentence final particles in romanised form	you see through world matter la...(Expression 5)
3. Literal translation from Cantonese to English	fire-star (Expression 10)
4. Affixation – Infix (using 7 and 9)	Sor9ly (Expression 10) and In7eresting (Expression 12)

Table 2. Features of online HKE and its examples

### 3.3 The questions

Informants were asked to read the thirteen expressions first and then answer all the questions. Below are the questions for the interviews:

1.	What is your age? Where are you from? What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary) What is your gender?
2.	Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?
3.	How old do you think the author is? Is the author a man or woman? Where does the author come from? How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary) Why do you think the author has such an identity?
4.	Where do people generally write this kind of expression?  How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified?  Why?  Would you use this kind of expression in other media?
5.	What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?  How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

6.	Which language do these expressions belong to and why?
7.	Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

Table 3. Interview questions

Informants have to complete all seven questions above. The purpose of Question 1 was to collect the informants' demographic background for the further analysis of their responses. For the age of informants, I divided the age range into four categories so as to avoid informants' reluctance to provide their actual age. The matter surrounding age is discussed below (in section 3.5).

Question 2 was set to test informant's understanding of the expressions. Given that these expressions comprise bilingual plays, it is important that the informants were capable of understanding the most of expressions that might make online HKE be more specific. It ensured that the informants can almost fully understand the expressions before they show attitudes towards the stimulants. However, the informants from outside Hong Kong would not be taken into account in the intelligibility of expressions.

Question 3 asked informants to guess the identities of the author and its justification. Gender and age range of the author would be the important data for portraying the preference of writing this kind of expression. Some data showed that the majority of online HKE user's age and gender was mostly youngsters (Poon, 2005) and mainly female (statistics from *Kongish Daily*). The second part of Question 3, asking author's background, was used to test the informant whether can indicate these expressions were being used in Hong Kong and their views on positivity towards online HKE. The main purpose of designing questions 3 was to check whether the identities that proposed by informants can fulfill the identity norm.

Question 4 asked the informants to utter the context and normality of writing online HKE. This aimed to collect informant's attributes about whether writing these expressions can be regarded as the appropriate behavior in the online context. This question designed to elicit the recognition of contextual norm by the informants.

Question 5 asked the informants to differentiate one language from another language and its acceptability. This question suggested that the expressions were written by native English speaker or native Mandarin speaker. It allowed me to look at the informant's response as to whether they still can figure out the identity of the author if knowing the expressions were written by non-Hong Kong people. This question has been used to whether the informants could figure out the identity of the author and consolidated the identity norms asked in Question 3.

Question 6 asked the informants to justify the language form of the expressions (formal norms). Someone may argue that the expressions were the code-mixing of Cantonese and English. Proximity in Cantonese and English of online HKE would also be an intriguing issue to investigate. This question allowed informants to explicate which language of these expressions belongs to and their justifications. If the informants are able to name what language does this usage belong to, then it would be meeting the formal norms. This question aimed to testify whether the informants could point out the language in the expressions were formally distinguishable from other languages. Question 7 allowed informants to provide further views on the online HKE or supplement the replies of previous questions.

### 3.4 The interviews

The structured interviews were conducted via email. The email was chosen since the coding of data would be more. A set of online HKE expressions with a questionnaire in two independent word-files were sent to the informants. The informants have been told that the expressions were written by the same author. The reason why chose to conducting the interview via email system in lieu of using other instant messengers was that the informants could read the expressions and questions thoroughly on the same screen and at the same time. Scrolling up and down the screen may hamper impatient informants from reading all the expressions and providing comprehensive answer to the questions. This approach has been used to mitigate informant's unwillingness to answer all the questions. There is no limitation of time for conducting the interview. The informants can take their time to answer the questions in the word-file and submit the questionnaire at their earliest

convenience. This allowed informants to provide more thoughtful answers. It would also be easier for informants to quote expressions during replying the questions. Meanwhile, I also provided the Chinese version of the questionnaire to some informants who may not feel comfortable to answering in English, especially the youngsters.

### 3.5 The informants

This project sought to collect Hong Kong people's views on online HKE features by both Hong Kong locals and people from outside Hong Kong.

18 informants were invited to do this interview. 13 informants are local Hong Kong people from four age groups. Three informants are native Mandarin speakers and have been living in Hong Kong for few years. Two informants, who are native English speakers, have been working in the primary school at Hong Kong for ten years.

I divided the informants into four age groups in order to observe the patterns in different generation's attitudes towards the online HKE and widen the spectrum of informant's representativeness. The age distribution of informants broadly reflects the attitudinal responses in different generations. The purpose of inviting native Mandarin speakers and native English speakers is to look at whether they can realize these expressions were written by local Hong Kong people after few years' immersion or observation of the Hong Kong context and do these expressions were violated linguistic norms in their minds.

I assumed, nowadays, that the informants have no difficulties in accessing the internet or using instant messenger as a communication tool. The use of CMC has reached full compatibility. It can be said that they were familiar with current ways of CMC in both diachronic and synchronic chat-groups such as WhatsApp and email. All the informants are author's friends and colleagues. Hence, "good" reliability could be assured in this sense.

The background information of the informants has been listed in the following table:

Informant	Gender	Age group	Education level	Place of Origin
A	M	28-37	Tertiary	Hong Kong
B	F	18-27	Tertiary	Hong Kong
C	F	38 or above	Tertiary	Hong Kong
D	M	18-27	Tertiary	Hong Kong
E	F	38 or above	Tertiary	Hong Kong
F	F	18-27	Tertiary	Tianjin, China
G	M	18-27	Tertiary	Hong Kong
H	M	28-37	Tertiary	Hong Kong
I	F	18-27	Tertiary	Hong Kong
J	F	18-27	Tertiary	Zhuhai, China
K	F	38 or above	Tertiary	UK
L	M	13-17	Secondary	Hong Kong
M	M	18-27	Tertiary	Hong Kong
N	M	18-27	Tertiary	Sichuan, China
O	M	28-37	Tertiary	USA
P	F	38 or above	Tertiary	Hong Kong
Q	F	38 or above	Tertiary	Hong Kong
R	F	13-17	Secondary	Hong Kong

Table 4. Details of the 18 informants



## 4. Results and discussions

### 4.1 The projection of norms in informant's replies

18 informants participated in this survey, including native English speaker and Mandarin speakers. Question 1 in the survey asked for basic information such as their age, citizenship, educational background (in Table 4).

This section presented the projection of norms in informant's replies.

#### 4.1.1 Question 2: Understanding of expressions

Eight informants (from Hong Kong) said that they understood the expressions. Five informants needed some more time to decode the expressions or did not understand few expressions. Only one informant from Hong Kong said that she did not understand most of the expressions. All three native Mandarin speakers understood the expressions while all the native English speakers interviewed said they did not understand the expressions. The two native English speakers have been working in Hong Kong for more than ten years. However, they could not thoroughly understand all expressions except some words or phrases. However, partially understanding was still valuable for this project, since it might attributable to some online HKE features that linked up with certain context.

#### 4.1.2 Question 3: The construction of authors' identities

This question asks informants to guess the author's background after viewing the expressions. The justification of identity construction of the author was also underpinned in the latter part of this question.

Age range	Number of informant(s)
A: 13 – 17	4
B: 18- 27	8
C: 28- 37	3

D: 38 or above	1
Can be from B to C (i.e. Aged between 18 and 37)	1
Can be from A to B (i.e. Aged between 13 and 27)	1

Table 5. Age range of the author

The results showed that the age range of the author could span through various generations. The majority of the informants (8 informants) thought that the expressions should be written by young adult (age from 18 to 27). Meanwhile, A few informants thought the expressions could also be written by a teenager (age from 13 to 17) or a young adult (age from 28 to 37).

Gender	Number of informant(s)
Male	10
Female	5
Can not tell	3

Table 6. Gender of the author

For the gender of the author, ten informants thought that the expressions were written by male while five informants recognized it as written by female. This result did not match the demographic data at Kongish Daily since its followers were mainly female. It was surprised that ten informants thought the expressions should be written by male in accordance with results in this project. That might be needed for further investigation on the notion of language and gender. Three informants said that they could not tell the gender of the author. An informant thought that the expressions were written by a female because of its “tone”:

Because the tone is like a girl’s

(Informant L)

Educational background	Number of informant(s)
Secondary	9
Tertiary	9

Table 7. Gender of the author

On the other hand, same proportion of informants' responses regarded the educational background as secondary or tertiary. For the informants who thought the educational background of the author was secondary level, they said:

The language she used is Hong Kong English (Informant Q)

Konglish is used (Informant L)

The author is lack of vocabularies to express himself (Informant M)

Affected by both Cantonese (first language) and elementary English (Informant F)

Code mixing too much (Informant N)

Almost all the informants (17 out of 18 informants) considered that the author should come from Hong Kong and was a younger people:

It is because Hong Kong teens will usually say something like this (Informant R)

The choice of words (e.g. fire-star) shows he is quite young (Informant I)

The author uses Cantonese in the English dialogue. Most of the Cantonese used are spoken Cantonese that Hongkongers usually use every day (Informant D)

The author used some words with Hong Kong element, for example, add oil is only used in dialogue between local Hong Kong people. (Informant A)

Surprisingly, Informant O, a native English speaker from United States, noticed the Expression 3 could be used in Hong Kong as the presence of “add oil” and “Diu”, which echoed Lim’s (2016) observation.

Add oil is used in HK. (Informant O)

Two informants said that the expressions reflected the local Hong Kong identity:

It also shows the local HK identity. (Informant A)

Using this kind of expression also can define and identify the real Hongkongers. (Informant G)

Generally, the informants showed their ability to interpret the author’s background from the expressions. All the informants agreed that the author was a relatively young person from Hong Kong. It is worth noting that there were few informants recognized the expressions could also be used by the younger adult (i.e. age group C: 28-37-years-old). It revealed that Kongish was used within age group A and C. This observation shows that there was increasing number of Kongish users in the society when comparing with Poon’s (2005) data. Half of the informants thought the author should be a man which quite different from the earlier claim that these online HKE features were mostly used by women. It has been named as “Kong Girl Passage” which was a relatively derogative term and negative evaluation. Hence, it could be said that people possessed a positive attitudes towards online HKE features now than before. The number of user has been increasing with the passage of time since the early 1990s. The local Hong Kong identity was also addressed in the informant’s replies which may be the one of the reasons why the Kongish had gained such its popularity or appreciation amongst Hong Kong people after the Umbrella Movement.

To sum up, the informants used different justifications of author’s identity to explain why they identify the writer as such. The identities of the author should be relatively young, well-educated and come from Hong Kong which could come up with a set of identity

norms from the expressions in relation to Hong Kong.

#### 4.1.3 Question 4: Context and online HKE features

This question intended to elicit whether the informant see norms of using such features on the internet.

Informants	Context(s)
A	On the internet or instant message like Whatsapp. It is very common in my daily communication.
B	It is very common because we can express the ideas in a short time.
C	Facebook, 100 毛. It may be normal to write as such in a highly specified community to create a sense of closeness among community members.
D	They mostly use this kind of expression when they are texting with their friends or making comments on different SNS platforms.
E	Social media such as WhatsApp and WeChat. I think it is quite normal, since it requires less time to write.
F	Not very normal in oral.
G	Social Network. That's very common to write this kind of expression in any social media platform and people found this expression is the way to communicate comfortably with Hong Kong people.
H	On the internet, Facebook, message, whatsapps and 100 mo's magazine. Quite often when communicating with a Chinese. Because I think those could express myself more and easier.
I	Social media like Facebook and Whatsapp. It is quite common because these platforms are set as an informal place for people to share their ideas and feelings, just like their common room in real life.
J	When people chat with friends who are so familiar with each other by MSN, WHATSAPP, WECHAT etc. I think it is not so normal because not every people can understand it, especially those who are not so familiar to Cantonese.
K	Magazine. Somewhat normal if it is an advice column in a magazine and they can often use informal language too

L	Message (whatsapp, snapchat, ig etc.). Slightly normal. Sometimes I can see these expressions on FB, IG, whatsapp
M	The chatting apps on the mobile phone. It is very common in Hong Kong. It is because it is quite easy for the Hong Kong teenagers.
N	Facebook/whatsapp. Acceptable but I will not do this because it shows a poor mastery of English
O	Personal diary. It is normal because it's private
P	In electronic communication media such as Whatsapp and Facebook. Very normal.
Q	Internet. Normal on internet and it's the communication with their friends.
R	I think it is normal because they may not know how to express themselves, so they use this kind of expressions.

Table 8. Informants' answers to question 4.

The majority of the informants believed that the expressions should be extracted from the internet or instant messaging tool and functioned as informal communication. Asynchronous and synchronous chat-groups have been mentioned in the informants' response. It implied the online HKE features have widely been used in daily communication in CMC context. Informants agreed that the internet was the major medium of using online HKE. They felt comfortable to use this kind of usage in the internet context.

The chatting apps on the mobile phone (Informant M)

They mostly use this kind of expression when they are texting with their friends or making comments on different SNS platforms. (Informant D)

The Internet, Facebook, message and WhatsApp and 100 mo's magazine (Informant H)

There were informants said that it was (very) common or convenient to use online HKE features in their mentioned medium. They noted with various reasons:

It is very common in Hong Kong. It is because it is quite easy for the Hong Kong teenagers  
(Informant M)

It can save a lot of time (Informant A)

It is very common because we can express the ideas in a short time (Informant B)

That's very common to write this kind of expression in any social media platform and people found this expression is the way to communicate comfortably with Hong Kong people (Informant G)

Because I think those could express myself more and easier (Informant H)

Some informants said that this kind of expression was acceptable in certain group of people:

It is very popular in younger people when they are texting with frds. (Informant A)

Many informants said that the HKE features were commonly used in various chat groups in CMC as informal communication among Hong Kong people. It could be deduced that the use of online HKE features were an appropriate behavior in the CMC context and as an informal communicative function from the elicitation of informant's replies. All the informants from Hong Kong could elicit these feature should belong to internet language even with all the CMC features have been excluded in the process of data selection. The replies in this query revealed the meeting of contextual norms of online HKE features. At the same time, some informants also mentioned that these online HKE features were also appeared on the offline context such the printed copy of local magazine 100 毛 (100 Most). For the informants from China still could tell that the expressions should be taken from the internet or CMC context in evidence of some Cantonese lexicons.

Facebook/whatsapp. (Informant N)

#### 4.1.4 Question 5: Re-assurance of identity of the author

With regard to the identity of the author, this question asked whether the informants could guess if the author was a person from outside Hong Kong in order to further tell the identity of the writer. The informants have been told that the expressions were written by a person from outside Hong Kong. The replies show that almost all the informants thought that they could not believe the expressions were written by non-Hong Kong people. They felt surprised or shocked when they have been told that the author was a non-Hong Kong people:

Can't believe it (Informant L)

I don't think so. (Informant F)

Although some informants did not feel surprised under certain circumstances as they suggested, their explanations were also related to the Hong Kong context. Even though the informants were being told the author was not a Hong Kong person, informants tended to reconnect their replies with “Hong Kong” with different considerable views. What the replies further show were the features in the expressions should be associated with the dominant language Cantonese or Hong Kong Cantonese precisely and cultural element in Hong Kong. They probably would not have disagreement or objection if these were some connections specific to Hong Kong. The justifications of geographical identity from the expressions were further highlighted in this question. Replies in this question revisited the relation between the expressions and Hong Kong context. The use of online HKE features could still be acceptable if the author's backdrop was related to Hong Kong. High proportion of informants distinguished that the language use in the expressions was not genuinely written by American English speaker or Mandarin speaker and possibly taken from the Hong Kong context. Informants considered that the background of the author violated the identity norms in their eyes. They suggested these features should be used by a Hong Kong-related person who has a good command of Cantonese language and well-understanding of Hong Kong culture:



Won't be surprised. Since the author may have lived in Hong Kong for some time.

(Informant E)

He/She might be an expert in Hong Kong culture.

(Informant G)

I think he/she may born in HK or their families are Hongkongers. He/she must stay in HK for several years and they have learned Cantonese before.

(Informant J)

It may be possible given the person is also a (near to) native Hong Kong Cantonese.

(Informant C)

#### 4.1.5 Question 6: Language of the expressions

The vast majority of the informants said that the expressions in the stimulant were written in Cantonese. Code-mixing in the expressions was the major supporting reason of their justification. There was only one informant who used the term “Konglish” (Informant G) to denote the usage in the expressions, notwithstanding this term has been widely used in the online media. It could be concluded that Kongish was not the prevalent term to describe the online HKE features in accordance with the results in this project. It might still need a period of time to reach its maturity of referring the online HKE features in the society.

Spoken Cantonese, most of the content was translated from Cantonese directly.

(Informant H)

Cantonese. It's because generally it is not English and it contains some Cantonese expressions.

(Informant L)

Cantonese, coz this expression definitely evolved from Cantonese language.

(Informant G)

I think this language of expressions belong to Cantonese, it is Cantonese pinyin.

(Informant R)

A mixture of Chinese and English.

(Informant B)

Chinglish

(Informant Q)

Many informants generally distinguished the language in the dataset was a part of Cantonese (i.e. recognizing the formal norms). Informant H even recognized the language as the particular register of Cantonese which was the spoken form of Cantonese. One of the informants (Informant R) coined these features as a legitimized variety and gave a name to it (Chinglish). She recognized this variety distinctive from Cantonese and English. With reference to the informants' replies, the online HKE features were formally distinguishable. It could be regarded as meeting the formal norms in this score.

A few informants demonstrated alternative and interesting views on the issue of language of the expressions. Two informants considered these features as the formal norms of English owing to its orthographical representation of English alphabet:

These expressions are mainly written in standard English, interspersed with expressions in romanised Cantonese

(Informant E)

Mainly English with some Cantonese or HK elements. It is because the expressions were written in English letters.

(Informant A)

One informant commented the linguistic structure of the expressions which shed light on the proximity of Cantonese and English in sentence pattern of online HKE. This would also be one of the implications in this project.

Grammatically, it is Chinese expressions. Orthographically, it is written in English.

(Informant B)

#### 4.1.6 Further comments on online HKE

A few informants said that the appropriateness of using these features should be bear in mind:

The expression may be convenient to those who are excellent in Cantonese, but it could not be used on public media, because not all the people can understand it.

(Informant J)

I think this usage is quite interesting. However, there are not much people around me can communicate by using it as they need to have a certain standard or level of language using.

(Informant H)

Few informants thought that using this kind of expression would harm people's language proficiency or weaken the motivation of learning English:

I think this kind of usage makes Hong Kong teenager lazy and couldn't understand the real English

(Informant M)

I think it is harmful to our English levels.

(Informant L)

It will deteriorate pupils' reading level and cause countless problems in language learning

(Informant P)

Another informant commented that it would be acceptable and fine to use this kind of expressions for the purpose of communication, and it was a natural phenomenon of language usage in the online context:

I would say it is a phenomenon happening all around the world because of the IT boom in 21 century so it is not surprised that people in Hong Kong have such language usage for communication. This kind of usage should be considered and investigated as its influences is getting bigger and effecting people how to communicate in their real life but not on the

internet only.

(Informant I)

An informant, who is a native British English speaker, briefly commented and regarded the online HKE as a dialect (i.e. pointing out the formal norms):

Very interesting to see other kinds of dialects develop over time and through generations  
(Informant K)

#### 4.2 Linguistic norms, Kongish and Hong Kong English

In this project, three linguistic norms (formal norm, contextual norms and identity norms) have been adapted to test whether people's attitudes towards a bundle of online HKE features constitute the notion of variety from the emic view. On the other hand, people's attitudes towards the use of HKE in the online context has also been studied in order to observe the changes of attitudinal reactions towards the online HKE in the past two decades with such a dynamic multilingual and cultural background of Hong Kong.

##### 4.2.1 The linguistic norms and Kongish

First, formal norms allowed the reader to make a judgement of whether such utterance or features could be treated as a part of particular language or variety. Informants from Hong Kong or outside Hong Kong recognized the language of the expressions should be based on the structure of Cantonese in the presence of certain features such "*Diu*" (Informant O), "*Add oil ah!*" (Informant H) and "*fire-star*" (Informant I). Informants from Hong Kong thought that the author of the expressions could not be the one who come from outside Hong Kong unless showing some connections with Hong Kong Cantonese or culture. They considered the online HKE features as a part of Cantonese, though the usage in the expressions was mixed the code of English and Cantonese. They formally distinguished this set of feature was belonged to Hong Kong Cantonese. One informant even gave a specific name to describe this usage which was a unique and recognized English variety in China (i.e. Chinglish). Meanwhile, informants from outside Hong Kong distinguished the

language use in the expressions and said that is different from the formal norms of their mother tongue. That was the way show that emically online HKE is formally different from Cantonese or English. It could be said that the online HKE features met the formal norms on the basis of results.

Second, contextual norms if the people viewed these features as appropriate in certain contexts. The informants recognized that the expressions were taken from the internet and used for informal purposes. Different types of diachronic and synchronic chat-groups have been mentioned in their replies such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Many informants found that this kind of usage was normal and common in the CMC context. Hence, the online HKE features were appropriate to appear on the internet/CMC context and used in informal context such as magazine. It was therefore fulfill the contextual norms in this line.

Third, identity norms allowed the reader to interpret the identity of author via utterance from the expressions. Informants realized that the online HKE features could be linked to various identities. All informants thought the identities of the author was well-educated, relatively young, more importantly grew up in Hong Kong or Hong Kong-related. They pointed out that this set of online HKE features should be written by Hong Kong-related person, most probably local Hong Konger. The identity of the author could be uttered via the online HKE features. Also, the local Hong Kong identity was mentioned in the replies.

#### 4.2.2 The general attitudes towards Kongish

Generally, the informants showed more positive attitudes towards online HKE than before. Positive and supportive comments of using Kongish on the internet context have been made by a number of informants from age group B (Age 18-27) and C (Age 28-37). Perhaps, most of them in these two groups had experienced or witnessed the transition period from ICQ language to the Kongish usage. They would treat usage of Kongish as a kind of language play and as a humorous way to express their thoughts. They accepted the phenomenon of multilingual play of code in the CMC.

Informants from age group A (Age 13-17) were relatively conservative regarding Kongish usage. Informants in age group A were secondary students who said there were too many grammatical mistakes in the expressions. This may be one of the reasons why they thought

the author of the expressions should have a poor command of English language and English proficiency would be negatively influenced in the case of using Kongish. Since the Kongish mixed the codes of English, Cantonese and sometimes Mandarin. Code-mixing in the classroom is the evidence of poor mastery of English competence and students were told to be a “purist” (Li’s term) in their English writing and speaking. Therefore, it may affect the evaluation of Kongish usage under this score and negative attitudes have been observed. On the other hand, some informants from age group D (38-years-old or above) condemned the use of Kongish with listing several sheer negative views. They treated the Kongish usage as the product of uncultivated language usage. They would never use this kind of language in any context. Perhaps, this group of informants was not the frequent user of CMC and grew up with the mindset of linguistic purity in their early schooling which might affect their consideration of evaluating online HKE. The interconnection between age and degree of acceptability of online HKE in different generations brings forth the issue of attitudinal studies towards the particular usage of English in Hong Kong.

It is worth noting that informants from Mainland China held relatively negative views to online HKE. They denoted that was an incomplete acquisition of English language. On the contrary, informants from English countries showed more positive attitudes towards the expressions. This observation could further be investigated in light of language ideology and its linguistics capacity in people’s heart. All informants felt surprised that the expressions were written by non-Hong Kong people. However, they still accepted the language use in the expressions in certain context.

#### 4.2.3 The variety status of Hong Kong English and Kongish

In this project, the results provided one more perspective to show there was a basic societal basis of regarding Hong Kong English as an independent variety. The spectrum of informants was wider than the previous studies (Evan, 2002) and was not only limited to the college students. It also concluded people from outside Hong Kong. Different layers of social stratification have been invited for doing the interview. It might enhance the representativeness of the recognition of Hong Kong English in this project. Some online HKE features (*sor9ly*, *exat7ly* and *add oil*) have been mentioned in informants’ replies

whilst no negative views on these features. One point could not be denied that there was a Hong Kong style of English or “Hong Kong English” existed in informants’ sense in accordance with this set of expressions. They called it *Konglish*, *Chinglish*, *a language between English and Cantonese* or *a dialect*. A unique form of English has been used in the Hong Kong context, they might not be able to name it as a variety though. On the analysis of results, people’s attitudes towards the online HKE features had contributed to constitute the variety status of Hong Kong by employing the linguistic norms (Poon, forthcoming). One may argue that four online HKE features were not enough to meet the criterion of variety status of HKE. In this project, people’s perception towards the recognition of HKE has already established in the language community. Online linguistics features could be one of the indicators for testing the variety status of specific Englishes. However, the attitudinal reactions of language users should also be taken into account and even more persuasive to the up-coming English varieties around the world.

#### 4.2.4 The future of Kongish

In the past two decades, the online HKE features were only used in written form on the internet. However, there was a growing trend of using online HKE features as spoken form in the online world after Umbrella Movement. Indeed, the local political movement provided an extra impetus for spreading of localized form of English in Hong Kong. The local magazine *100 Most* was famous in adapting language play in their productions. All the online HKE features have been used in their Facebook page or magazine 100毛. For example, one of the actors in 100 Most, 東方昇, deliberately used a lot of Kongish features of literal translation from Cantonese to English and romanised Cantonese in his speech in the videotape that promoting sanitary napkin<sup>3</sup>. For example, *for the world bring comed revolution 360 degree loop defend loud protect* and *today, I want dive big family introduce*. More than 841k views have been recorded for this promotional videotape. It implied that these features attracted such a multitude of audience in Hong Kong or from outside Hong Kong.

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.facebook.com/100most/videos/877020042425644/>



(Caption 1 in the videotape)



(Caption 2 in the videotape)

Meanwhile, the production team at 100 Most also adapted these online HKE features into the printed magazine 100 毛.





(Volume 125, 100 Most)

The online HKE features were not limited to the written form in the internet only. It has already transferred to the offline context. People in Hong Kong started to adapt the usage into various offline contexts. Several printed local magazine or books were intentionally to use these features in their volume such as 貓奴大發明<sup>4</sup> by Tony Electronics (東尼電機). This phenomenon was not only happened in the books or magazines, but also appeared on the advertisement banner<sup>5</sup> in the Hong Kong community. The equivalent translation of Cantonese words to English was the common way to use online HKE features in the offline context.



(A banner for leasing the flat in Central)

From the above observation and informant's replies, it could be said that the online HKE features gained enough force to recognize the HKE as an independent local variety of English. The social perception towards its usage has been gaining more positive evaluation in support with different adaptations of Kongish features onto various media in Hong Kong.

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.cp1897.com.hk/product\\_info.php?BookId=9789887816164](http://www.cp1897.com.hk/product_info.php?BookId=9789887816164)

<sup>5</sup><https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/realtime/article/20161006/55738172>

Informant's attitudes towards the linguistics features of online HKE constituted the variety status of Hong Kong English from an emic point of view from deploying the linguistic norms framework (formal norms, contextual norms and identity norms) in this project.

#### 4.2.5 Limitations of the study

First, the number of the informants was one of the major limitations in this study. Only 18 informants participated in this project which might not be persuasive enough to represent the Hong Kong community. Second, the neglect of occupational background of the informants may also be limitation. People from different workplaces may influence their attitudes towards the online HKE. For instance, informants who came from educational sector might possess more conservative or negative views on the use of online HKE in a number of contexts since the preserve of purity in English usage was the golden rule in the process of language acquisition. Therefore, the online HKE features might not be easily accepted by this group of people. Third, the unequal distribution of gender in age group A to D could be another limitation in the study. The gender of number of informants in particular age group should remain to be same which could enhance the representativeness of the finding.

## 5. Conclusion and implication

The variety status of Hong Kong English has long been the research topic in the field of world Englishes. For the last two decades, scholars have conducted a number of studies on HKE, trying to determine whether it is or is not a linguistic variety. The early studies in 1990s said that there was no such thing as HKE, and that it would not enjoyed the same variety status as other Englishes at least for the next 20 years. During the millennium, scholars noticed that some unique linguistic patterns consistently appeared in the English spoken and written by Hong Kong people, even by competent English users. These researchers started to then consider these patterns as linguistic features rather than random errors. However, the previous HKE data were mainly extracted from the acrolectal approach which might not fully represent the whole picture of HKE. The muted presence of basilectal or vernacular form of the data has been ignored in HKE studies.

In this project, the non-acrolectal data were used to test whether a bundle of online HKE features could help constitute a variety in the eyes of Hong Kong people. The linguistic norms framework was adapted to test if these online HKE features constitute a linguistic variety that serves certain social functions. The results revealed that the informants from Hong Kong were not only able to distinguish these features from other varieties (including Standard English and HKE offline). They also linked this set of features with a specific social function, which is to mark Hong Kong identity. Given how these features are formally and functionally distinctive, one can conclude that HKE online is a linguistic variety distinguishable, not only from Standard English, but also other written forms of HKE.

In recent time, the local tutorial centre Beacon College<sup>6</sup> has conducted a street interview on the understandings of certain online HKE expressions. They randomly asked a number of passerbys on the Sai Yeung Choi Street at Mong Kok to translate some Romanised Cantonese expressions (often seen online) into spoken form of Cantonese. In the interviews, both the interviewees and interviewer called these online HKE features “Chinglish”. This observation shows how the people in the interview recognized the formal norms of online HKE features. Informants in this street interview thought that this kind of usage should be

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.facebook.com/beaconcollege.fans/videos/1936334539717313/>

used by “Kong girl”, “Students from local prestigious colleges”, “Oversea student” and “Fake ABC<sup>7</sup>”. It revealed that the use of Kongish should be limited to certain group of people with similar background or linguistic practices.

The issues discussed within this project are worthy of further exploration and discussion in a larger scale as the potential role of the internet in influencing language attitudes is an interesting topic to pursue.

At the same time, an implication is noted after analyzing results. Generally, the majority of informants showed positive attitudes towards the use of Kongish, and they accepted it as an identity carrier. Hong Kong people frequently use Kongish expressions in their daily language practice in CMC. This observation has fulfilled the part of identity construction and sociolinguistics of contact at Stage 4 (endonormative stabilization) in Schneider’s (2007) model. Some informants in this project could represent that the role of HKE has been partially moving to the Stage 4 of Schneider’s model.

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<sup>7</sup> “Fake ABC” is a short form of “Fake America-born Chinese” which is used to describe a person that imitating American style in his/her speech practices. This is also a new lexicon of HKE.

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## Appendix

### Informant A

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)  
C  
Where are you from?  
Hong Kong  
What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)  
Tertiary  
What is your gender?  
Male
2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?  
Yes, fully understand. But some words need more time to decode. E.g. world matter
3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)  
B and C will also use.  
Is the author a man or woman?  
Woman  
Where does the author come from?  
Hong Kong  
How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)  
Tertiary  
Why do you think the author has such an identity?  
The author used some words with Hong Kong element, for example, add oil is only used in dialogue between local Hong Kong people.
4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?  
On the internet or instant message like Wtsapp  
How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?  
It is very common in my daily communication. It can save a lot of time and create some humor effect.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No.

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

Maybe. Since the sentences are using English words. But it may need some more time for them to learn the words with Cantonese element.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

I will feel surprised. They wont write something like that. They wont tolerate these sentences.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Mainly English with some Cantonese or HK elements. It is because the expressions were written in English letters.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

I think these usages are very HK. It is very popular in younger people when they are texting with frds. It also shows the local HK identity.

Informant B

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

A

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Secondary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

Because the author wrote these expressions in Hong Kong English.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Messaging

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

It is very common because we can express the ideas in a short time.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

It is impossible. He is not using American English.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Maybe. He is good at Putonghua but not English.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

A mixture of Chinese and English. Grammatically, it is Chinese expressions.

Orthographically, it is written in English.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

No

Informant C

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

D

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes.

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

The author may want to show that he or she is proficient in the 'latest' online

Cantonese expressions

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Facebook, 100 毛

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

It may be normal to write as such in a highly specified community to create a sense of closeness among community members

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No.

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

It may be possible given the person is also a (near to) native Hong Kong Cantonese.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

It may be possible given the person is also a (near to) native Hong Kong Cantonese

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Cantonese, as it contains something transliterated such as 'ngo'

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

It is fine to be used among people who can understand.

Informant D

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Male

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

I can understand

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

C

Is the author a man or woman?

Can't tell

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

At least secondary, probably tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

The author uses Cantonese in the English dialogue. Most of the Cantonese used are spoken Cantonese that Hongkongers usually use everyday.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

People using Cantonese as their mother tongue. They mostly use this kind of expression when they are texting with their friends or making comments on different SNS platforms.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

Hongkongers won't use it a lot as some Hong Kong people can't read it very easily.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No.

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

Don't tell lie.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

They can't write something like this. They can't even understand most of them.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

A language between English and Cantonese.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

It saves time as it is the fastest way to express emotions when you are required to type it out.



Informant E

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

D

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

C

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

The passage is written in a mixture of English and Cantonese.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Social media such as Whatsapp and Wechat

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

I think it is quite normal, since it requires less time to write.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No.

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

Won't be surprised, since the author may have lived in Hong Kong for some time  
How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Won't be surprised, since the author may have lived in Hong Kong for some time.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

These expressions are mainly written in standard English, interspersed with expressions in romanised Cantonese.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

Acceptable in casual usage only.

Informant F

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Where are you from?

Tianjin, China

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Master's degree

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

A or B

Is the author a man or woman?

Female

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Secondary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

Affected by both Cantonese (first language) and elementary English.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

HK

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

Not very normal in oral.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No.

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

I don't think so.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Can't be

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

HK native and English mixture.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

It is common phenomenon in HK native speakers.

Informant G

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Male

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

I understand most of the passage but some Konglish words are too trendy to know.

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Woman

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

Because that's the alternative way to communicate with higher education students by using informal English. And thus they start using some easy and comfortable English words to communicate with each other. Also, some very Hong Kong words are used in the sentences such as sor9ly and exat7ly.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Social Network, 100 most.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

That's very common to write this kind of expression in any social media platform

and people found this expression is the way to communicate comfortably with Hong Kong people. Using this kind of expression also can define and identify the real hongkongers.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

Often, I would use it when I am not able to describe or communicate something in English properly, probably the “lazy way” to communicate.

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

He/She must be a Hong Kong people or he/she might expert in Hong Kong culture...

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Definitely not, Mandarin speaker use Putonghua!

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Cantonese, coz this expression definitely evolved from Cantonese language.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

Ngo ho buy this language usage! That's the way Hong Kong people to communicate with this expression in “Hong Kong” way.

Informant H

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

C

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Master of Arts

What is your gender?

Male

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

There are slangs which are transferred to English directly such as "Add oil ah!"

Besides, there are some Cantonese pinyin like "Ngo" which means I, "hai" means is.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

On the internet, Facebook, message, whatsapps and 100 mo's magazine.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

Quite often when communicating with a Chinese. Because I think those could express myself more and easier

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

I would reject to do so as I don't think that they would understand the content.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Funny, he might like Canton culture quite much.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Spoken Cantonese, most of the content was translated from Cantonese directly.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

I think this usage is quite interesting. However, there are not much people around me can communicate by using it as they need to have a certain standard or level of language using



Informant I

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

It is because the foul language he used like 'Diu' comes from Cantonese and the choice of words(e.g. fire-star) shows he is quite young. Moreover, tertiary-educated people use English to communicate more often than a secondary school student.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Social media like Facebook and WhatsApp.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

It is quite common because these platforms are set as an informal place for people to share their ideas and feelings, just like their common room in real

life. Therefore, the language they use on the internet will be similar to the language they use in daily life.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

I would be really surprised!! It is hard to image these sentences are written by them because they are supposed to have their own language usage to communicate in their society.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

I would be really surprised too!!

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Hong Kong I would say. It is because the language structure including the grammar and choice of words have the features of Hong Kong Cantonese.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

I would say it is a phenomenon happening all around the world because of the IT boom in 21 century so it is not surprised that people in Hong Kong have such language usage for communication. This kind of usage should be considered and investigated as its influences is getting bigger and effecting people how to communicate in their real life but not on the internet only.

Informant J

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Where are you from?

Zhuhai, China

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

M.A.

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

A

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Secondary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

Because the way of expression seems rude, and the words are commonly used by HK young guys nowadays. Some spelling of words origin from the pronunciation of Cantonese.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

When people chat with friends who are so familiar with each other by MSN, WHATSAPP, WECHAT etc.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

I think it is not so normal cause not every people can understand it, especially those who are not so familiar to Cantonese.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

I think he/she may born in HK or their families are hongkongers.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

He/she must stay in HK for several years and they have learned Cantonese before.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Cantonese, the pronunciation is the same.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

The expression may be convenient to those who are excellent in Cantonese, but it could not be used on public media, because not all the people can understand it.

Informant K

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

D

Where are you from?

UK

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

I don't understand most of it.

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

May be Singapore or Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

Some sentences seem to be an informal structure

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Magazine

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

Somewhat normal if it is an advice column in a magazine and they can often use informal language too

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

Not really

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

Very shocked

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Can't believe it

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Not sure, Maybe Singapore. Maybe a kind of local dialect.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

Very interesting to see other kinds of dialects develop over time and through generations...

Informant L

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)  
A  
Where are you from?  
HK  
What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)  
Secondary  
What is your gender?  
Male
2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?  
Yes
3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)  
A  
Is the author a man or woman?  
Woman  
Where does the author come from?  
Hong Kong  
How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)  
Secondary  
Why do you think the author has such an identity?  
Because the tone is like a girl's and Konglish is used.
4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?  
Message (whatsapp, snapchat, ig etc.)  
How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?  
Slightly normal. Sometimes I can see these expressions on FB, IG, whatsapp  
Would you use this kind of expression in other media?  
No
5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

Can't believe it.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Can't believe it

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Cantonese. It's because generally it is not English and it contains some Cantonese expressions.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

I think it is harmful to our English levels. There are too many grammatical mistakes.



Informant M

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Male

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes, I understand.

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Secondary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

It is because those word are “Chinglish” which normally used by Hong Kong teenager. The author lack of vocabularies to express himself, he simply uses the phonic of Chinese words.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

The chatting apps on the mobile phone.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

It is very common in Hong Kong, It is because it is quite easy for the Hong Kong teenagers. They can use “Chinglish” instead of English to express themselves and no need to care about the spelling and grammar.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No, I wouldn't

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

It is not possible because Native American English speakers were educated using English. They won't use that kind of words. Also they may not understand Chinese and can't use "Chinglish".

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

I don't think so. Since there are some Cantonese wording in the expressions, native Mandarin speaker from Beijing will not use Cantonese.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Cantonese. It looks like Cantonese elements.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

I think this kind of usage makes Hong Kong teenager lazy and couldn't understand the real English. "Chinglish" is totally wrong, using it makes teenager lack of English knowledge.

Informant N

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)  
B  
Where are you from?  
Sichuan, China  
What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)  
Tertiary  
What is your gender?  
Male
2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?  
I fully understand every sentence.
3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)  
D  
Is the author a man or woman?  
I cannot tell  
Where does the author come from?  
Local of Hong Kong  
How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)  
Secondary  
Why do you think the author has such an identity?  
Code-mixing too much.
4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?  
Facebook/whatsapp  
How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?  
Acceptable but I will not do this because it shows a poor mastery of English  
Would you use this kind of expression in other media?  
Absolutely not.
5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

You are kidding me.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

You are kidding me too. The writer's Cantonese sounds native.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Cantonese and English

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

I think it may be more illustrative if Chinese character transcription can be included.

Informant O

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

C

Where are you from?

USA

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Male

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Some of the words.

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

C

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong/China

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

Not sure maybe he is angry. Add oil is used in hk.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Personal diary

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

It is normal because it's private

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

Perhaps

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

I would assume he grew up in HK

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Interesting

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Cantonese because of diu

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

It's ok la. It should be a local dialect.

Informant P

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

D

Where are you from?

HK

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

Yes

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Man

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

It mixed Cantonese and English. It is wrong grammar.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

In electronic communication media such as Whatsapp and Facebook.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

Very normal.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

Can't believe.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Can't believe too.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Not sure.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

It will deteriorate pupils' reading level and cause countless problems in language learning.



Informant Q

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

D

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Tertiary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

I don't understand.

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

A

Is the author a man or woman?

I don't know.

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Secondary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

Too many grammar mistakes. The language she used is Hong Kong English

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

Internet

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

I don't know.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

No

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

I feel shocked because too many grammatical mistakes!

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

Maybe

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

Chinglish

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

I never use these expressions.

Informant R

1. What is your age? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

A

Where are you from?

Hong Kong

What is your educational background? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Secondary

What is your gender?

Female

2. Do you understand the passage? If not, which part do you not understand?

I understand the passage.

3. How old do you think the author is? (A: 13–17 B:18 – 27 C: 28 – 37 D: 38 or above)

B

Is the author a man or woman?

Woman

Where does the author come from?

Hong Kong

How educated you think the author is? (e.g. secondary / tertiary)

Secondary

Why do you think the author has such an identity?

It is because Hong Kong teens will usually say something like this.

4. Where do people generally write this kind of expression?

I think they write this kind of expression at school, home or street when they angry or annoyed.

How normal is it to write this kind of expression in the medium that you identified? Why?

I think it is normal because they may not know how to express themselves, so they use this kind of expressions.

Would you use this kind of expression in other media?

I won't use this kind of expressions because I have educated. They use incorrect

grammar.

5. What if I told you these expressions were written by a native American English speaker from Washington?

I think this American English speaker know Cantonese very well.

How about me telling you these expressions were written by a native Mandarin speaker from Beijing?

I think this Beijing Mandarin speaker know Cantonese very well.

6. Which language do these expressions belong to and why?

I think this language of expressions belong to Cantonese, it is Cantonese pinyin.

7. Do you have any final comments or thoughts on this kind of usage?

No comment.