

## MASTER'S THESIS

# Code-mixing in the spoken and written discourse of mass media in Hong Kong

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**CODE-MIXING  
IN THE SPOKEN AND WRITTEN DISCOURSE  
OF MASS MEDIA IN HONG KONG**

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## **Abstract**

Code-mixing is a very common language phenomenon in Hong Kong due to the extensive contact between Cantonese/Chinese and English. Many code-mixed and borrowed lexical items with an English origin are found in the speech and writing of English-Cantonese bilinguals or even Cantonese monolinguals. These lexical items exhibit varying degree of linguistic integration and community speakers' acceptance. In this study, I make use of the concept of linguistic and sociolinguistic criteria—semantic integration, morphological integration, syntactic integration, frequency of use and speaker's acceptability—of the code-mixed items to measure the degree of integration. Using the measurement of integration, I conduct a cross-mode (spoken vs written) investigation of how the code-mixed items in the spoken and written discourse differ in terms of linguistic and sociolinguistic integration. Data drawn from local radio programmes and popular infotainment magazines are used. The finding is that the code-mixed items in the spoken discourse tend to be less integrated than those in the written discourse. The distribution may be explained as the results of the differences between the spoken and written delivery mode. Factors like interactivity, target audience, temporariness, and the diffusion process in speech all favour less integrated code-mixed items to occur in the spoken discourse.

## 摘要(翻譯)<sup>1</sup>

語言夾雜是香港常見的語言現象。由於英語和中文接觸繁頻，廣東話及中文句子裏經常混合英語詞彙，包括「混合代碼」<sup>2</sup>及「借用詞」<sup>3</sup>。這種情況經常出現在操雙語(即英語及粵語)甚至只操粵語人士的書面語或口語中。事實上，混合詞彙展示之語言整合程度和社區語言使用者<sup>4</sup>之接受情度各有差別。此項研究將根據語言學及社會語言學的準則，包括語義整合<sup>5</sup>、形態整合、句法整合、詞頻以及語言使用者之接受程度，量度混合詞彙之整合性。本研究展開跨語式研究，探討「混合代碼」在口語編章及書面編章所程示之語言及社會語言的整合現象。研究資料採自本港電台節目及流行雜誌。結果發現，「混合代碼」在口語編章之整合性較在書面編章之整合性為低。一解釋是「混合代碼」的程現模式可能受制於口語及書面語之語言模式之差別。口語的各項特徵，包括對話時的互動性、受訊群大小差別、訊息之持久性，以及詞彙擴散模式，皆促使整合性較低的「混合代碼」在口語編章出現。

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<sup>1</sup> Linguistic terms are translated based on "An English-Chinese Lexicon of Linguistics (1998) Beijing: Commercial Press."

<sup>2</sup> code-mixing

<sup>3</sup> borrowed item

<sup>4</sup> community speakers

<sup>5</sup> integration

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