

MASTER'S THESIS

Code-mixing users in Hong Kong

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CODE-MIXING USERS

IN HONG KONG

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Abstract

Code-mixing of Cantonese and English is a very common speech behaviour among the bilinguals in Hong Kong. Though some linguists, educationalists and policy makers have repeatedly made severe criticism and blamed code-mixing users for the decline in students' language achievement, mixed-code is still used on regular basis. Using qualitative methods, this paper studies the code-mixing behaviour from the users' perspectives to see why they code-mix. Two groups of people, 80 secondary teachers and 80 secondary students are chosen as subjects. Their awareness of the frequency and purposes of using mixed-code in three domains of their daily life, namely, home, school and leisure activities is investigated and analyzed. It has been found that both teachers and students use mixed-code frequently and abundantly, especially in the school and leisure domains, as the interlocutors have similar educational backgrounds and using mixed-code can save time for translating some English expressions into Chinese. It is an effective means for communication. So whether language purity in the classroom is necessary is subject to debate.

摘要

中英夾雜是香港雙語者的一個普遍語言行爲。雖然有些語言學家、教育家和教育政策製定者多次嚴厲批評這是導致學生語文成績下降的主要原因之一，但我們仍然經常聽到這種混合語。本文從混合語使用者的角度研究這種語言混合行爲，以了解他們爲何要把語言混合使用。受試者包括兩組人：80位中學教師和80位中學學生。此項研究調查及分析了他們在家庭、學校及休閒活動中使用中英混合語的頻密程度和目的。研究結果顯示這兩類人在學校及休閒活動中經常大量使用中英混合語，其主要原因是交談雙方的受教育背景接近，使用混合語可省卻把英語表達傳譯爲中文的麻煩，可見中英混合語是一種有效的交流手段。鑒於此，是否有必要在課堂裏實行純語教學便值得商榷。

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