

# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self- directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

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British Council's Master's Dissertation Awards 2020  
Special Commendation



**Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities**

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Dissertation submitted to the University of Oxford in partial fulfilment of the degree of MSc

Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition

Trinity Term, 2019

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## **Abstract**

With English being the preeminent medium of international interaction, millions are learning and using English as an additional language: L2-users are outnumbering L1-users at an ever-growing rate. The relevance of native-speaker norms is thus called into question. In terms of pronunciation, L2-users are given more space to assert and communicate their identities by means of L1-influenced accents. While L2-users are the key participants of ELF interactions, ownership of English is no longer conceptualized as belonging exclusively to natives as English has become an integral part of many non-native speakers' identity. However, Hong Kong L2-users' adherence to native pronunciation appears to persist. The current study sought to understand the self-directed accent preference and their self-perceived L2 identity among Hong Kong students studying in UK universities. 116 UK-based Hong Kong students completed a questionnaire and 5 in-depth interviews were conducted. It was revealed that Hong Kong L2-users in the study largely prefer native accent despite regular ELF encounters. While questionnaire results show that participants display traits of ownership claim over English, this sense of ownership does not lead to a stronger appreciation for the L1-influence accent. Although many express that English constitutes a salient part of their identity, they choose not to reflect their claim of English ownership through accent choice. The strong preference for native accent appeared to be driven mainly by pragmatic reasons rather than identity-related reasons. Native accents are believed to ensure effective communication due to their high intelligibility, whereas Hong Kong accent was viewed as having marginal significance in signalling participants' cultural identity but project an undesirable identity as incompetent L2-users.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Jessica Briggs Baffoe-Djan for her continuous support throughout my study, for her patient guidance, immense knowledge and insightful critique. I could not have imagined having a better supervisor for my study.

This study could not have been possible without the kind help of my participants. Though their participation was voluntary, they amazed me with encouraging enthusiasm on the topic. I thank those who contacted me upon finishing the survey and discussed their thoughts with me. In particular, my thanks are due to the interview participants, many of which I have become friends with subsequent to the interviews, for sharing insightful stories of their study abroad experience.

Finally, I cannot thank my family and friends enough for their support and calming words in times of frustration and self-doubt. I thank my parents especially for their understanding, endless faith in me, and for supporting me in whatever choices I make in life.



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### List of Abbreviations

ELF	English As a Lingua Franca
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English As a Second Language
EFL	English As a Foreign Language
GA	General American
HK	Hong Kong
HKA	Hong Kong Accent
HKE	Hong Kong English
HKGOV	Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
IC	Inner Circle
ICAs	Inner-Circle Accents
IELTS®	International English Language Testing System
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LF	Lingua Franca
LOS	Length of Stay
NA	Native Accents
NNSs	Non-Native Speakers
NSs	Native Speakers
MOI	Medium of Instruction
RP	Received Pronunciation
SA	Study Abroad
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLL	Second Language Learning
VGT	Verbal Guise Test

## 1. Introduction

Discussions of English as a lingua franca (ELF) communication raise questions regarding traditional English language teaching's (ELT) adherence to native Anglophone norms, particularly casting doubt on their relevance on pronunciation teaching. It has been argued that native-speaker (NS) norms are no longer the exclusive yardstick for measuring second-language(L2)-users' phonological accuracy, lexico-grammatical correctness and discourse-pragmatic appropriacy (Li, 2009). The gradual departure from native-speakerism also problematizes Anglophone countries' exclusive ownership of the language, giving more voice to L2-user and recognizing the legitimacy of other varieties. When English is spoken as an international language by all L1, L2 and foreign language users, the language is "denationalized and acculturated" to local needs (Sharifian, 2009, p.82). Norton (1997) argues that English no longer only belongs to "native speakers of standard English, [but] to all the people who speaks it, irrespective of linguistic and sociocultural history" (p.409), hence broadening the notion of ownership over English.

Ownership claim over the language links intimately to speakers' self-perceived identity. As Norton (1997, 2010) noted, a language learner's identity should be understood in relation to its social meaning. For study-abroad sojourners in the UK, their L2 identities are far from monolithic: as ELF communication is necessitated by both NS-NNS and NNS-NNS communications, they constantly (re)evaluate their relationships with their interlocutors from various backgrounds. While the ELF perspective on English pronunciation increasingly empowers L2-users to diverge from native norms, Hong Kong (HK) students appear to demonstrate resistance to the liberating ideologies and insistence on their preference for native accents (Li, 2009; Luk & Lin, 2006; Sung, 2016a). Earlier studies found that HK students generally prefer native pronunciation as their accent goal. The contexts in which the studies took place, however, render English largely as the language of academic or professional discourse, instead of a lingua franca. This, in turn, limits the studies' implications for teaching and learning, particularly when the goal of ELT is to prepare students for real-world communication where ELF interaction is not only limited to academic or professional conversations (Ranta, 2010). Therefore, the current study aims to address this gap in the literature by inquiring into ELF communication in the UK among HK students and understand the extent to which they claim identity as legitimate speakers of English through their self-directed accent preference.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter aims to explain relevant concepts investigated in the current study and provide an account of the theoretical framework on which the study draw. The chapter is organized in three sections, explaining concepts in ELF, second language identity and accent respectively. The chapter is summarized with an overview and rationale for the study.

### 2.1 English as lingua franca communication

Globalization is bringing people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to frequent contact at an unprecedented level. Given the linguistic diversity in intercultural encounters, English has taken on the role of shared language as a result of its worldwide spread. English as a lingua franca (ELF) refers to situations where English is used as the “vehicular language between speakers who do not share a first language” (Mauranen, 2012, p.8), and interlocutors can include both first-language users (L1-users) and second-language users (L2-users)<sup>1</sup> (Mauranen, 2017). While the contemporary world order is increasingly globally constituted, variability lies in the heart of ELF interactions (Kimura & Canagarajah, 2017): rather than being a monolithic language, English has become “heterogeneous” (Canagarajah, 2006, p.234) and draws on multiple norms, with each norm demonstrating relevance in different contexts of intercultural interaction (Canagarajah, 2006). The increasingly frequent occurrence of ELF communication has thus raised issues as regards normative models in second language pedagogy, reconsiderations of the nature of communicative competence (Dewey, 2007) and, in particular, gives voice to L2-users by broadening the conceptualization of English ownership.

#### 2.1.1 Challenging native-centric norms

With English being the preeminent medium of international interaction, millions are learning and using English as an additional language nowadays: L2-users are outnumbering L1-users at an ever-growing rate (Kirkpatrick, 2009). Therefore, it is often the case that ELF

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<sup>1</sup> As the present study investigates the extent to which non-first language English speakers assert ownership over the English language, calling English users a *non-native speaker* disenfranchises the relevance of the varieties spoken by these speakers as illegitimate (Mufwene, 2008). This study will, therefore, refer to speakers of English with a non-English L1 background as L2-users, instead of NNSs.

communication takes place without the presence of any L1-users. The relevance of native-speaker norms is thus called into question. For example, Hülmbauer (2007) found that lexicogrammatical non-standardness (as measured against native standards) does not hinder communicative effectiveness in ELF, as participants in her study were able to adopt negotiation and accommodation strategies to reach understanding. Besides lexico-grammar, phonology is another area that receives animated attention regarding the shift away from native-speaker norms. Long before ELF research became a salient topic in second language acquisition (SLA) studies, Abercrombie argued that “language learners need no more than a comfortably intelligible pronunciation” (Abercrombie, 1949, p.120). In their seminal study on accent, and intelligibility, Derwing and Munro (1995) found that non-native pronunciations have little effect on intelligibility, the extent to which a listener understands speech (Derwing & Munro, 1995). By asking their participants to transcribe a number of non-native stimuli, 64% of the transcriptions received an accuracy score of over 91% with more than one-third of errors being trivial (such as omissions of function words or regularizations). Their findings demonstrate empirically that non-native phonological features do not necessitate reduced intelligibility, casting doubt on the relevance of a native phonological model. Later studies also found evidence to support the claim that foreign accents do not necessarily confound intelligibility (e.g. Kirkpatrick, Deterding, & Wong, 2008; Zhang, 2015). The reality of ELF communication is precisely captured in the words of a participant in Hülmbauer’s study (2007): “I understand you [(another NNS interlocutor)] and you understand me ... and you understand me better than a proper Englishman” (p. 4). By setting native-standards aside, pluricentricity should be the norm in ELF, following localized linguistic patterns of innovation and creativity (Li, 2009). While L2-users have often been positioned within a “deficit framework” in the past (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 596), studies that found instances of successful ELF communication despite non-observance of native-norms came to challenge monolingual and ethnocentric models that see multilingual competence as obstruction to successful communication in English.

## 2.2 Second language identity (SLI)

Norton (2000) defines identity as the way “people understand their relationship to the world” (p.5). From this perspective, identity is a rhetorical process of turning semiotic

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resources in the situationally and socially constituted environment into a presentation of the self to others (Bauman, 2000). Studies in SLA have gradually moved from predominantly psycholinguistic approaches to a broadened focus on sociological and anthropological dimensions of language learning, as understanding the relationship between the learner and the larger social world is key to comprehending the beliefs and behaviours of learners (Norton, 1995). Language learners' identity position has been found to contribute to their learning trajectories, as every time they use the target language, they "organiz[e] and reorganiz[e] a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (Norton, 1997, p. 408). For example, Miller (2000) studied three ESL students' language use in an Australian high school in relation to their social identity and socialization into the mainstream community. ESL students in her study did not feel acknowledged by their peer or teacher as legitimate L2 users of English, and were acutely aware of their identity as "other". While Riggins (1997) noted that "discourses of otherness are articulated by both dominant majorities and subordinate minorities" (p. 6), their otherness appears to be self-imposed, where they chose not to mix with Anglo-Australian students and not use English. However, it is worth noting that the ESL students reported in her study are all of Chinese origins (HK, Taiwan and Mainland China). While a number of studies have found evidence for culture's influence on SLA, the Chinese participants self-segregation from Anglo-Australian students might likely be influenced by their cultural beliefs. Supporting what Oxford (1996) argues that language learning strategy use is influenced by cultural beliefs, perceptions, and values, Rao found that (2006) his Chinese ESL participants favour social strategies the least, thus shying away from collaborative language-learning tasks. Indeed, Miller admitted in her own words, that "this article would have been very different if I had chosen to write about the Bosnian students" (p.97). As the study reports on the case studies on a specific group of ESL learners, the generalizability of the study is limited. Nonetheless, Miller's study that report on the lived experiences and struggles of ESL learners undoubtedly provide insights into the complex interplay of social membership and language use being at play in the process of L2-user' language acquisition process, foregrounding the premise that identity negotiation is an inseparable part of SLA.

As globalization take places, multilingual competence gradually took on the status as norm, giving voice to L2-users to be rid of the "other" identity position. While there is an emerging line of interest in ELF communication research, there is clearly a lack of research in

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addressing the ways in which L2-users negotiate their *identities* in line with the discourse of ELF (Canagarajah, 2006; Gu, Pakin & Kirkpatrick, 2014). One reason can be that ELF has been seen as mainly “serving very practical purposes of information transfer rather than featuring strongly in identity construction” (Virkkula and Nikula, 2010, p.256). However, ELF interaction is far from being identity-neutral (Baker, 2015). Speakers of English, first, second and foreign language users alike, develop complex relationships with the language, such that it has “touched their identities” (Sharifian, 2008, p.5). The study of Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) provides a convincing account of English playing a key role in constituting many L2-users’ identity. The fight to speak from a legitimate L2-user identity is best captured in one of her participants’ words: “English may be my second language, but I’m not ‘ESL’ ” (p. 389). One of her participants concludes her resistance over an imposed identity as a NNS/ESL-speaker in the following words:

I’m not an English language learner. I am a non-native speaker. I speak English as a second language [...] it is possible to achieve more in a second language than many people can in their first. [...] being a proficient non-native can actually be a point of pride because it is a significant achievement.

(Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008, p.390)

As L2-users become the key participants in ELF communication, identity negotiation and its complex interplay with language use is thus an unneglectable aspect of understanding the language acquisition process of the learners along with the global spread of English.

### 2.2.1 Post-structuralist perspective on identity

The notion of identity used to be conceptualized as holistic and deterministic (Nathan, 2015; Norton, 1997, 2010) that see people in static categories. However, in a world that is characterized by changes and movements, identities can no longer be viewed as fixed and essential. Post-structuralism emerged as a school of thought, as explained by Pavlenko (2002), “to investigate and to theorize the role of language in construction and reproduction of social relations, and the role of social dynamics in the processes of additional language learning and use” (p.278). Poststructuralism thus depicts individuals as diverse and changing over historical time and social space (Weedon, 1997). Under this framework, identity is, therefore, dynamic, situated, multiple and oftentimes contradictory (Norton, p.2013). In particular to second



language identity, where learners progress from a range of stages in their learning process, their identity as L2-users is far from static. Moreover, when L2 learners acquire the target language in multilingual contexts, their identity is further complexified due to the various relationships they have with the target language community and other cultural or social communities. The global spread of English has therefore created greater space for L2 users to develop and construct new identities outside the boundaries of statically-defined identities, such as national or cultural identities (Higgins, 2010).

## 2.2.2 Construction of Second language identity

### 2.2.2.1 Positioning and agency

Identity is not only ascribed or given by social structures, but also actively negotiated by the individual who exercises their agency to position themselves: identity is constructed and understood through both other- and self-positionings. Positioning refers to the discursive process of situating oneself or others with particular rights and obligations in a community (Kayi-Aydar, 2015) by taking part in conversations as “coherent participants” (Davies & Harre, 1999, p. 37). In particular, the term ‘self-positioning’ (or “reflexive positioning”) is used to capture the dynamic aspects of selfhood. As Davies (2000) explains, “[positioning] is constantly in progress; it is revised and (re)presented through language” (p.137), and is therefore dynamic. Based on a similar premise, Norton (1997, 2013) argues that human agency allows language learners to “reframe their relationship with others and claim alternative, more powerful identities from which to speak, read or write, thereby enhancing language acquisition” (Norton, 2013, p.3). As speakers actively and agentively position themselves in a speech community through talks, they continuously (re)construct and (re)shape their sense of self (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004).

Drawing on the positioning theory, Lin (1999) found in her study with a group of underachieving ESL secondary students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in HK that discursive agency and self-positioning play a key role in challenging ascribed positions. Being in remedial classes of a low-banding secondary school in HK, these students were ascribed as facing “closed doors,” “dead ends,” and “limited prospects” (p.408) due to their limited English ability. However, in Lin’s analysis of classroom discourse, it was found that these students actively engaged in classroom conversations mediated by frequent teacher

initiations, responses and feedbacks in *L1* – the use of L1 helps draw learners closer to English, a language that is otherwise perceived as a largely irrelevant language in their daily lives (Lin, 1999). The overall positive atmosphere of the English classroom suggested that these underachieving students refused to position themselves as being excluded from chances of social success despite the difficulties they encounter in their language learning, but instead strived to be positive and confident in learning English. Although Lin's study provides an optimistic account of agentive positioning among disadvantaged ESL learners, the small scale of her study – reporting observations of agentive positioning from only one classroom – limits the generalizability of her finding. Indeed, as noted by Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001, p.250), “in many contexts, certain identities may not be negotiable because people may be positioned in powerful ways which they are unable to resist”. Moreover, it appears that the key to challenging ascribed identity lies more critically in the choice of medium of instruction in the English classroom, than discursive practices where learners are encouraged to negotiate their relationship with the target language. Her study would benefit from reporting more observations of classroom discourses where disadvantaged students display resistance against ascribed identities, as well as extending the discussion on how the choice of teaching language encourages agentive positioning and identity negotiation. Nonetheless, Lin's study still proffers stories of *resistance* through *agentive self-positioning* of L2-learners who reject unfavourable identities: instead of accepting the identities and constraints ascribed by the larger social structure, they agentively choose to learn and speak from a more powerful position where they see possibilities for themselves.

#### 2.2.2.2 Ownership

Considering the global spread of English, the ownership of English has expanded beyond native English speakers – it does not exclusively belong to its L1-users but to “everyone who speaks English, [...] first, second and foreign language speakers alike” (Crystal, 1999, p.230). Widdowson (1994) argues for the possibility that L2-users may appropriate English by creating their own grammatical patterns to suit their communicative needs. From this perspective, speakers of English can claim ownership over the language by altering it to suit their own local purposes, hence divorcing their variety from that of L1-users. As a number of studies have reported L2-users' creative use of English (e.g. Cogo, 2009; Hülmbauer 2007;

Nikula, 2007), the NS-NNS division seems no longer accurate in a world where English is a global language.

As Piller (2002) argues, it seems almost inappropriate to treat L2 users as perennial learners. Early in 1990s where English began to take on an increasingly international role, Rampton proposed a language expertise/language allegiance framework (1990) where he points out the inadequacies of the NS-NNS dichotomy and offers an alternative way to define language ownership in the contemporary settings where English was gaining currency as the international lingua franca. Based on Rampton's framework, Park (2011) proposed to expand the dimension of "language expertise" to "legitimate knowledge", in order to capture both aspects of *proficiency* and *feelings as legitimate speakers*. He posits that English ownership is realized through affective belonging, and legitimate knowledge (Seilhamer, 2015) – a feeling of legitimate speaker-hood and the "awareness of the right to speak [English]" (Norton, 1995, p. 18). In addition, he stresses that even when a speaker does not have any inheritance relationship with the language (i.e. L2-speakers), the affective belonging and sentimental attachment (i.e. language allegiance) they have for the language can potentially be stronger than those deriving from inheritance (i.e. L1-speakers) (Park, 2011). It is worth noting that, in the case of English as a global LF, ownership is not always realized through "overt ownership" (Seilhamer, 2015, p.8), such as creative usage or appropriation of grammar, but more so through a sense of legitimate membership in the global community of English users, and the *agency* to liberate themselves from ascribed identities as "non-natives".

Studies in recent years continuously show that NNSs are able to claim ownership over the English language. In Higgins' study (2003), she found that although outer-circle speakers<sup>2</sup> from India, Malaysia and Singapore are deemed to speak Englishes that are "not considered native varieties" (p. 615), these speakers displayed no less indicators of ownership over English than inner-circle speakers. The L2-users in her study, as much as the L1-users, make reference to their own usage as a display of ownership when they are asked to judge the acceptability of given sentences. However, L2-users still display less certainty, or in her words, "lesser degrees

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<sup>2</sup> Based on Kachru's concentric model of English (1992), inner circle refers to regions where English is the primary language. Outer circle refers to regions where English is not the native tongue in outer circle regions but serves as the lingua franca between ethnic and language groups. Typical examples of outer circle regions are India and Singapore. Expanding circle refers to regions where English is traditionally learned as a foreign language and play little or no administrative or institutional role.

of ownership” (p.640), than L1-users. Higgins carefully paired participants with similar backgrounds in the acceptability judgement test to avoid power-imbalance between inner-circle speakers and outer-circle speakers. However, it is questionable whether putting participants in pairs elicit the most reliable results. Considering that the study examines ownership, which is largely manifested through confidence in language expertise, the presence of another person might possibly influence the participants’ confidence in offering judgement on the given texts. Power differentials exist not only between L1 and L2 speakers but also between speakers of the same background considering that power distance is subjectively perceived. Therefore, more reliable data could be elicited through individual tasks so that power relation does not constitute a confounding factor in the examination of English ownership. Nonetheless, Higgins’ study was one of the first to explore the notion of ownership of English among non-L1 populations and offered an insightful understanding of the topic. Similarly, Nikula (2007) find that not only Outer-circle speakers are increasingly claiming ownership over English, but also Expanding-circle speakers. Finnish EFL learners in her study are able to use English creatively, and often playfully, as a resource for the construction of both classroom activities and off-lesson interactions among each other. Studies like these continue to offer optimistic assessments of L2-users’ capacity to claim ownership over a language that was once thought to belong to its L1-speakers. From a practical point of view, by understanding how ESL/EFL learners position themselves in perceiving their L2 identity throughout their acquisition process, TESOL practitioners are better able to recognize students’ language needs and to enable *learners* of English to develop an “emancipated ‘non-native’ speaker identity” (Kohn, 2018, p.1) to become *speakers* of English in their own right.

#### 2.2.2.2.1 English ownership among HK L2-users

HK has a long history of using English due to its colonial history and its international status in modern days. Bolton and Lim (2000) examined the English used by Hongkongers in the post-colonial era, which they refer to as a Cantonese/British-English hybrid. They argue that “HK English” (HKE), instead of being marginal or non-standard, the grammatical and lexical expressiveness in the variety is “uniquely HK” (Bolton & Lim, 2000, p.438). In terms of its phonology, studies have found *systematic* phonological patterns of HKE characterized by [n] / [l]; [θ] / [ð] / [f] confluents, deletion of final non-bilabial plosives, L-vocalization,

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vowel reduction, different rhythm and sentence stress (Deterding, Wong & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Schneider, 2007). These studies foreground the natural process of sociolinguistic ecology and the increasing cultural space in HK that allows for increased ownership of the language, as well as the creative use of the English language among its L2-users.

The English language also plays a significant role in indexing Hongkongers' lingua cultural identity. Instances of Hongkongers' creative use of English have been noted in the literature and are found to function pragmatically as identity-signalling devices. For example, Luk (2013) found a high degree of linguistic creativity among Hongkongers' English use, such as the use of bilingual punning as insider talks. In 2014, after the "Umbrella Movement"<sup>3</sup> in HK took on a new significance to local Hongkongers, Yau (2016) described Kongish as "a humorous mix of Cantonese and literal English translations from the local tongue" and "a language of protest" (p.1), which has gained currency among bilingual young Hongkongers as a badge of identity. Kongish, a Cantonese-English hybrid was creatively produced by mixing English words with transliteration of Cantonese sayings, for example, "Tonight eat mud?" (What shall we eat tonight?). While Kongish is easily intelligible to bilingual Hongkongers, it is almost obscure to non-Hongkongers, making it a language for identity and membership signalling. Rather than being driven by a lack of proficiency, Kongish is "deliberate in its intention to violate the rules" (Keegan, 2019, p.1). The spread of Kongish exemplifies the high degree of creativity and autonomy among HK English users to create new meanings in line with local sociocultural contexts by drawing on their multilingual repertoire.

To quote Seidlhofer, "speakers [of English] now assert and communicate their own identities [...] using the language creatively and 'subversively' rather than mimicking native speakers of English" (2009, p.239). English has, indeed, become an integral part of many Hongkongers' cultural identity, making HK L2-users a highly relevant and worthwhile subject to investigate in the discussion of global expansion of English speaker-hood and ownership.

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<sup>3</sup> A political movement calling for universal suffrage that took place in Hong Kong in 2014, alongside the growing negative sentiment towards Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong and the tightening relationship with China in the recent decade (Chan, J., 2014).

#### 2.2.2.2.2 English Ownership HK L2-users in ELF contexts

To date, very little research has directly investigated the issue of English ownership among HK L2-users vis-a-vis ELF communications. Sung (2015) conducted a qualitative study with twenty-eight university students in HK using in-depth interviews and found that his participants expressed identities as legitimate and empowered speakers of English despite English not being their L1. Situated in the ELF framework, the study asks questions closely related to L2 identity construction, encourage participants to reflect on their ELF experience and feelings. Some participants appeared to “normalize” (p.317) their “non-native” status and saw their “non-nativeness” as constituting a shared identity among most speakers of English in ELF settings. Participants in his study embraced their identities as legitimate and empowered speakers of English and validated their identities as multilingual and multicompetent speakers of English. As the author concluded, the participants appeared to be able to liberate themselves from the pressure to follow NS-norms, and the ascribed identity as deficient speakers and perennial learners of English, through a sense of ownership as speakers of ELF. While Sung’s study (2015) offers an optimistic outlook for HK L2-speakers in claiming ownership and legitimacy, his findings might be confounded by selection bias. As the twenty-eight participants were selected based on their “reported extensive ELF experiences” (p.314), frequent participation in ELF communication may attribute to their awareness of the “shared non-nativeness” (Hülmbauer, 2009, p.328) that encourages them to normalize their non-nativeness. Moreover, the findings reported in Sung’s study appears to be oriented towards participants’ experiences in NNS-NNS interactions, where NS-NNS interactions were not discussed in the findings. As Mauranen (2017) reminded us, in ELF communications, interlocutors can include both L1 and L2-users of English. While NS-NNS power relation is a prominent issue in the discussion of identity construction in the ELF context, the optimistic picture painted by Sung’s study where HK L2-users are able to claim voice as legitimate speakers may be rendered rather single-sided. Indeed, more study is needed, conducted with a larger sample and in different contexts, to further corroborate Sung’s findings.

### 2.3 Accents

Accents, as defined by Lippi-Green (1997), are “loose bundles of prosodic and segmental features distributed over geographic and/or social space” (p. 42). Accents have the most immediate effect in signalling one’s identity position (Walker, 2010) – they are not only

the vehicle where speakers index their individual identity, but also their social identities and group membership (Lippi-Green, 1997). For L2-users, accent mostly refers to the transfer of L1 phonology into the target language (Lippi-Green, 1998). This makes accent a particularly important feature in ELF interactions where most interactants speak English not as an L1. As Jenkins (2007) points out, “accents are highly salient to ELF speaker-hearers” (p. 78) as accent and pronunciation forms a significant part of the speaker’s self-image. For instance, a L2-user may choose to keep their L1-influenced accent deliberately, in order to “retain their self-respect or to gain the approval of their peers” (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994, p.7) or they may choose to pursue an accent that is associated with a particular group of speakers to converge to the target community. While English takes on the role as a global LF, L2-users are given more space to affirm their L1 identity through their L1-influenced accent, rather than conforming to traditional ELT ideologies that hold native pronunciation as the unchallenged and exclusive yardstick.

### 2.3.1 Accent attitudes and ELF

Accents are the most “immediately tangible characteristics” (Sung, 2016a, p. 57) of spoken varieties in a language. It is thus unsurprising that accents trigger cognitive and affective reactions through evaluation of the speaker based on a set of beliefs associated with the particular accent (Hosoda, Stone-Romero & Walter, 2007). Attitudes towards different accents have been studied extensively by means of the verbal-guise test (VGT) and matched-guise test, both of which investigate listeners’ evaluation of speakers based on their accents. Studies have repeatedly found that English learners evaluate native accents more positively than “non-native” accents (e.g. Ahmed, Abdullah, & Heng, 2014; Kaur, 2014; Yook & Lindemann, 2013), and such attitude appears to persist despite the spread of ELF. For example, Kaur (2014) studied a group of Malaysian university students on an international campus and found that her respondents perceive native accents as being “better” and “more correct” (p.3) than non-native accents despite frequent experience of ELF interaction. Similarly, Zhang (2013) used a VGT to elicit HK students’ attitude toward different accents. The study that HK participants evaluated “prestige varieties” (p.14), including RP and general American accent more positively than HKE and Mandarin-accent English although HK students experience ELF on campus on a regular basis.

Jenkins (2007) argues that the preference for native-speaker accents lies in “deeply entrenched attitudes and, at times, an emotional and even irrational attachment to British and American English” (p.190). In the current linguistic landscape, there is a need to legitimize the “variable use” (p.77) of English by L2 speakers in ELF communication (Seidlhofer, 2011), instead of adhering to “a tenacious deficit view of ELF in which variation is perceived as deviation from ENL [English as a Native Language] norms and described in terms of errors or fossilization” (Seidlhofer, 2004, p.213). It is necessary to investigate accent attitudes in tandem with speakers’ L2 identity, particularly, the extent to which they take ownership as legitimate speakers of English and in turn, attach meaning and significance their L1-influenced accents.

### 2.3.2 Self-directed accent preference

While a multitude of studies has examined attitudes attached to various accents, a small amount of studies focuses on the accent that the L2 learners want to take up. As accent is one of the most salient features that speakers use to index their identity, self-directed accent preference (SAP) is closely relevant to the discussion of identity projection (Walker, 2010). As found in the study of McCrocklin and Link (2016), accent choice is clearly used to signal group membership and affiliation. The study worked with seventy-eight students studying abroad in an American university using questionnaires and interviews. It was found that the majority of the participants expressed desire to acquire native accents. Overall, ELS speakers in the study view native accents as “a skill, valuable amenity that would give them pride and feeling of excitement” (p.139). This study raised an important point about native accent aspiration not only being present among English language learners but users of English who have largely completed their language learning (i.e. highly proficient L2-users). Similar traits are also present among HK SA students. It is common, although all students who study abroad at overseas tertiary institutions are proficiency L2-users (having passed university English requirements), many students from HK continue to show a clear interest in improving their L2, including their pronunciation and accent. For this reason, it is worth investigating the SAP of HK students studying in the UK and understanding how students balance lingua-cultural identity and other oftentimes conflicting identities through accent choice in line with the needs that arise with ELF communications.



### 2.3.3 SAP among HK English users

It has been repeatedly reported that ELT practices in HK tend to give high regard to the British-Australasia-North-American pronunciation model (Holliday, 1994, p.12). As Luk and Lin (2006) noted, native-speaker-centricity for pronunciation continues to be privileged through “institutional apparatuses such as media and education in post-colonial HK” (p. 1). This exonormative attitude is evidenced by a deferential attitude towards native-English teachers among local schools and ELT materials, as well as city-wide assessment systems that demand English pronunciation “with no noticeable first language (L1) characteristics” for ELT practitioners (HKGOV, 2000, p.110). Acknowledging the strong exonormative attitude among Hongkongers, Josephs (2004) also comments that Hongkongers appear to equate the emergence of HKE (including its syntactic and phonological features) with the decline of English standards in HK. In the words of Jenkins (2007 p. 194), “speakers of HK English, a variety whose very existence many of its speakers themselves deny, regard differences between their English and standard British English as errors, no matter how widespread and easily intelligible among themselves these Cantonese-influenced features are”. This dispiriting phenomenon surely needs to be addressed with more recent studies, especially in line with the recent development of ELF.

Sung is among the few researchers who look at SAP in relation to ELF communication among HK ESL users in the 2010s. His (2016a) study interviewed eighteen HK English majors on their ELF communication experiences. The results of the study, unsurprisingly, conform to earlier studies (e.g. Li, 2009; Luk & Lin 2006), indicating that learners prefer to speak in native accents more so than an L1-accent, though some participants commented that the HK accent helps indexing their cultural identity. The study revealed that the issue of accent pursuit versus identity appears to have created a dilemma among these HK English users – a tension was present between the twin goal of speaking English with an L1-influenced English accent to enact their lingua-cultural identity and aspiring to a native-like accent to signal “identities as competent speakers of English” (p.62).

Another study conducted by Sung (2016b) reports on the written narratives by the same group of students regarding their on-campus ELF experiences. While most students generally had positive experiences in ELF communication where they showed willingness to employ communication strategies to ensure understanding, the research findings are accentuated by

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participants' reported perception of unequal power relation between NS and NNS during ELF communications. Some participants felt inferior when speaking to L1-users of English. Some participants expressed that their identity as a competent English speaker is challenged in an NS-NNS ELF interaction and became "linguistically inferior and socially passive" (p.312). -The narratives attest to the claim that identity formation is often contradictory and is underlined by a great deal of ambivalence: while the desire to project a competent English speaker identity is strong, they want do not to take up a "fake" or "inauthentic" identity (p.314) associated with Anglophone cultures and prefer to convey their lingua-cultural identity through their L1-influenced accent. The findings highlight the relevance of NS-NNS power differential in the discussion of SAP, as the power relation perceived by HK L2-users often presses them to speak from a disadvantaged position where they fail to claim ownership as legitimate speakers of L2, but as "linguistically inferior and socially passive" (p.312) learners of English.

It is worth pointing out, nonetheless, the studies conducted by Sung fall short in several areas. First, the settings of the studies are in HK where ELF communication takes place to a limited extent, which weakens the generalizability of the findings. Although English is one of the official languages of HK together with Chinese (Civil Service Bureau, HKSAR Gov, 2019), the language is still strongly attached with social prestige and economic power in HK (Chan, J. Y. H. , 2013). A census commissioned by the University of HK Social Sciences Research Centre (Bacon-Shone, Bolton & Luke, 2015) reveals that 98.2% local students report using Cantonese with friends on campus, while only 21.9% use English as a medium of daily interaction, raising questions regarding the generalizability of ELF studies set in local on-campus ELF contexts. Existing literature that examines HK students' attitudes towards ELF has been predominantly done in the local context where ELF only takes place to a limited extent. It is, therefore, necessary to conduct ELF research in settings where English is not exclusively an MOI, but in a truly international context. The current study investigates HK students' ELF experience in a study abroad context in the UK where English is not only the MOI, but also the language of daily communication and the lingua franca between speakers of different L1s.

Moreover, participants in Sung's studies seem to lack representativeness of the HK L2-user population as most participants in his studies are English majors: students who choose to commit their tertiary studies to the English language specifically. These participants may

perceive their identity as an English speaker vastly differently from other students who mainly use English only as an instrumental lingua franca and accord less personal affiliation to the language. The English major participants may be likely to have specific goals in their language development, for example, targeting to achieve a native-like accent, which would inevitably give rise to the high respect held against native standards and NSs. Therefore, in order to ensure reliability and reduce bias, it is necessary that future studies that examine SAP and identity should sample from a more diverse pool of participants.

## 2.4 Summary and Rationale

ELF has opened up new space for the discussion of identity construction among English L2 speakers, and particularly broadened the conventional conceptualization of English ownership. Studies examining ownership claimed by the “non-native” population shed light on the needs of L2 learners in the “real world”, inviting practitioners to revisit the outdated ELT ideologies that adhere to NS models. As English in HK has taken up a new sentiment that speaks to many people’s identity, HK ESL speakers became an interesting and worthwhile population to study. However, reviewing existing literature, most studies have been conducted in on-campus ELF settings and fail to take into account that English is still attached with social prestige in the present HK (e.g. Sung, 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b). In addition, few studies have explored ownership among HKE speakers through the lens of self-directed accent preference, which is a highly relevant notion in the discussion of L2 identity and language ownership. While SAP is an important aspect of identity negotiation in ELF, it remains an underexplored issue as most studies focus on the evaluation of different accents regarding nuanced qualities associated to the speakers of accent such as social status, competence and social attractiveness.

Despite the global spread of English, there still appears to be an attachment to NS models among HK L2-users. To understand the influence of ELF over Hongkongers’ “monolithic perspective of language ideology” (Jenks & Lee, 2016, p.384) towards NS models, it is necessary to study a population that experience ELF communication on a regular basis. In a study abroad context, students’ “authentic” ELF interactions call for constant re-evaluation of relationships between the self and others, thus encouraging speakers to continuously make decisions regarding identity projection through accent choice. The current study targets HK students who study abroad in the UK where English is not only the local language, but also an

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essential LF that facilitates intercultural communication. Given that all SA students are highly proficient speakers of English, studies on such population would also give insight into how ESL speakers transition from learners to owners of the global LF, approached from the perspective of individual agency and ownership.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research questions

The current study examines UK-based HK students' self-directed accent preference (SAP) and the extent to which they assert ownership over the English language. While English functions in a study abroad context not only as the medium of instruction but also as the lingua franca for daily intercultural communication, the study wishes to understand the relationship between L2 identity, especially in terms of ownership over English, and accent pursuit among HK students who regularly engage in ELF interactions. The study thus asks the following questions:

- (i) What are UK-based HK students' self-directed accent preference (SAP) as regards L2 English accent? Inner-circle accent<sup>4</sup> preference (IC-SAP), L1-influenced accent preference (L1-SAP), or no preference?
- (ii) How do UK-based HK students identify as English L2-users in the ELF context? Do they claim an English owner identity or an English learner identity?
- (iii) Is there a relationship between students' self-directed accent preference and their self-perceived identity as English L2-users in the UK ELF context?
- (iv) To what other factors do they attribute their self-directed accent preference?

*Self-directed accent preference (SAP)* is defined in the study as the accent and pronunciation model that the speaker aims to achieve when speaking English. Terms such as *accent aspiration* (Jenkins, 2007) and *accent aim* (Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006; Rindal, 2010) have been used in the literature to refer to the same construct. The current study is interested in investigating the accent that the participants prefer for *themselves*, rather than looking into the evaluation of different accents vis-a-vis nuanced qualities associated with the *speakers* of accent such as social status, competence and social attractiveness. SAP is realized in terms of (1) inner-circle accent preference (IC-SAP); (2) L1-influenced accent preference (L1-SAP) and

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<sup>4</sup> This dissertation also prefers the term "inner-circle" accent over "native" accent as the term "native" is subject to varying and subjective definitions. Although Kachru's (1992) concentric model of world Englishes receives criticism for its overemphasis on geographic location and colonial history, the dissertation conceptualizes inner-circle accent preference as the adherence to anglophone pronunciation norms (i.e. native-speakerism), which is manifested through an acknowledgement of the geographic and political boundaries' linguistic relevance.

(3) no preference. *Inner-circle accent preference* refers to preference for an Anglophone or BANA (British, Australasian, North American) (Halliday, 1994) pronunciation model. *L1-influenced accent preference* refers to an inclination for a HK accent, or a Cantonese-influenced accent as all participants speak Cantonese to an advanced or native level.

Research questions 2 and 3 pertain to *L2 identity* in English, which is operationalized as the extent to which the speaker asserts ownership over the English language. As Norton (2013) pointed out, identities are not merely given by social structures or ascribed by others, but are also negotiated by the agents who wish to position themselves. Therefore, English L2 identity is realized in terms of *an English owner identity* (owner-SLI) and an *English learner identity* (learner-SLI). As Piller (2002) argues, it seems almost inappropriate to treat L2 users as perpetual learners, *English owner identity* thus refers to the identity position that a person takes as legitimate speaker of English despite it not being their first language; *English learner identity*, on the other hand, refers to the identity position when a person sees themselves as a learner, seeking and engaging in life experiences with a learning attitude (Dweck, 2013) who, more often than not, in a position of reduced power (Norton, 2013).

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between self-directed accent preference and English L2 identity and further ascertain the effect of L2 identity on SAP. **Figure 1** illustrates the hypothesized relationships among variables in the model of SLI associated with SAP.

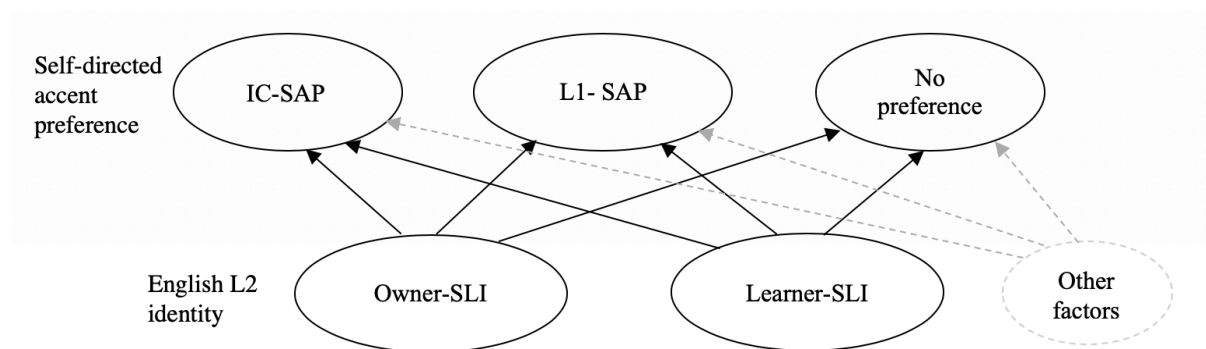


Fig. 1 Conceptual model of the study

### 3.2 Study design

The current study adopts a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017) where the collection and analysis of the quantitative data are followed by qualitative data collection and analysis, building on the results from the initial quantitative inquiry. The first stage of the study aims to answer research questions 1-3. An online questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data regarding participants' SAP and English L2 identity.

Qualitative inquiry was used in the second phase to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. A subsample of participants respectively indicating (a) inner-circle SAP, (b) L1-influence SAP and (c) no preference in the survey were invited to the interviews. The qualitative enquiry stage was semi-structured, allowing more space for exploratory enquiry, thus addressing the last research question regarding other factors that influence participants' SAP. The qualitative stage of the study aims at probing, explaining, and triangulating the quantitative results. Corroborated findings across the two methods will afford greater confidence in drawing conclusions from the findings, whereas if conflict arises between the two methods, the complexity of the phenomenon may still be appreciated (Wu, 2012). **Figure 2** illustrates the temporal order of the study phases.

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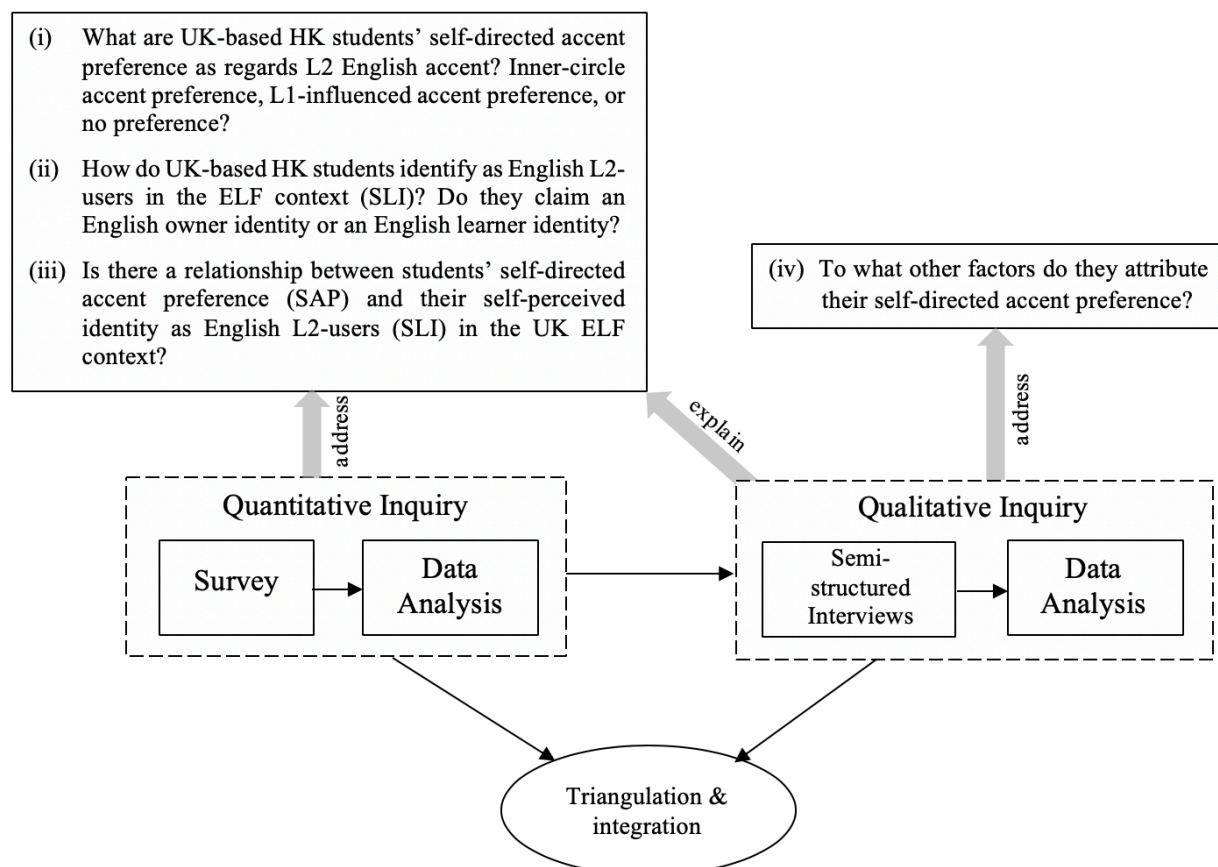


Figure 2. Chronology of the study

### 3.3 Population and sample

The population investigated in the current study is students from HK who study abroad in UK universities. According to statistics from the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA, 2018), HK was within the top three non-EU sending countries for higher education student enrolments in the 2016/17 academic year, behind only China and the United States: a total of 16,680 HK students were recorded to have enrolled in UK universities in 2016/17. Based on the Thematic Household Survey Report on HK Students Studying Outside HK completed by the HK Census and Statistic Department (2011), among all persons undertaking higher education outside HK in 2011, the largest group of students, accounting for 25.9% of the total study abroad population, study in the UK. The UK was also ranked the top (25%) study abroad destination for persons who intended to study outside HK. The number of HK students seeking overseas options for higher education is estimated by the bureau only to



grow. Therefore, the currently study primarily investigates HK students studying in the most popular overseas destination among HK citizens, namely, the UK.

The current study sampled 161 adult (age $\geq$ 18) “non-English-native” HK students who study in a UK university. The study defines HK students as persons who identify as culturally affiliated with the city of HK. All participants were advanced users of English who had passed the university entrance requirement for English language ability (IELTS overall score of 6.5 or above) (e.g. University of Oxford, 2019; University of York, 2019). Students who speak English as L1 were excluded from the study as the study primarily investigates ESL speakers’ SLI and SAP.

### 3.3.1 Survey sample

The sample consisted of both undergraduate and postgraduate students at UK universities. Questionnaire participants were recruited through HK student associations in 37 UK universities through poster advertisements (Appendix F) on their respective social media platforms (see Appendix G for the list of universities sampled). The universities were chosen on convenience sampling basis; that is, the universities were chosen based on convenient accessibility to the researcher, though it was made sure that universities across the UK were selected. Snowball sampling was also used for further disseminating the questionnaire. Participants were encouraged to send the questionnaire to their acquaintances who are also HK students studying abroad in UK universities.

Inclusion criteria were (1) identifying as being from HK; (2) not speaking English as a first language; (3) being enrolled full-time study in a UK university at the time of the study. A total of 179 respondents completed the survey. 33 responses did not meet these criteria. These responses, together with responses that had more than 50% of the questionnaire unfilled (N=26), were removed from the data. It was originally planned that only first-year students would be included to control for length of stay (LOS) in the UK. As previous studies have shown that LOS is a critical variable contributing to motivation for accent pursuit and self-perception of accent strength in learners’ speech (e.g. Flege & Fletcher, 1992; Gluszek, Newheiser & Dovidio, 2011; Moyer, 2007), LOS would potentially constitute a confounding variable in the current study, which focuses primarily on SAP as an outcome variable of SLI and essentially English ownership. However, the response rate among first-year students was rather low in the

pilot studies, hence it was decided that all UK-based HK students were eligible for the survey. Among all participants, the mean length of stay in the UK was 2.89 years (SD=2.14), indicating good comparability between participants. Two participants indicated 12 and 13 years' LOS ( $\geq 10$  years) in the UK respectively were removed from the sample as a prolonged LOS might have direct effect on SAP. The final dataset included 116 responses.

While snowball sampling might raise questions concerning the unrepresentative homogeneity of the sample, the sample appears to be heterogeneous. Participants came from 31 different universities and faculty affiliations included law, arts, social science, natural science, humanities, computer science, medical studies, engineering and business administration. 57 (49.1%) of the respondents were male and 59 (50.9%) were female. Mean age of the respondents was 21.44 (SD=2.69). 92.4% of the sample indicated speaking Cantonese most frequently in HK, 5.1% indicated English, and 1.6% indicated Mandarin (see Appendix H for a detailed report of participant demographic information).

### 3.3.2 Interview sample

Questionnaire participants were invited to submit contact details if they were interested in taking part in the second stage of the study. The Likert-scale values for SAP-section items were recoded to range from -3 to 3 (originally coded 1-7 on the questionnaire). Participants with significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) different mean scores for IC-SAP and L1-SAP, and positive mean scores for IC-SAP that fell after the 67th percentile (1.65 or more) were considered as displaying a strong IC-SAP preference. Similarly, participants with significantly different mean scores for IC-SAP and L1-SAP, and positive mean scores for L1-SAP that fell after the 67th percentile (equal to or larger than 0, as the 67th percentile cut-off point is less than zero, i.e. -.40) were considered displaying a strong L1-SAP preference. In order to identify participants with no-preference SAP, the mean score for both IC-SAP and L1-SAP were calculated. Overall SAP means that fell between in the 33th and 67th percentile were taken as representing a no-preference SAP (between 0.60 and 1.00). A total of thirty-three participants were identified as displaying an IC-SAP; two for L1-SAP; and fourteen for no-preference.

Only one participant indicating an L1-SAP agreed to take part in the interview. Using simple random sampling, two participants indicating IC-SAP and no preference respectively

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were invited to the interviews among participants who indicated an interest in joining the qualitative stage of the study. The IC-SAP subsample consisted of two male participants (A, B); L1-influenced SAP subsample consisted of one male participant (C) and the no-preference subsample consisted of one male (D) and one female (E) participant. The mean age of the interview sample was 22.5 (SD = 2.95). The 5 interviewees came from 4 universities; departmental affiliations included social sciences, medical sciences, business administration and arts. Their mean LOS was 1.60 years (SD = .894).

### 3.4 Research instruments

Two research instruments were used in the study, namely, questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

#### 3.4.1 Questionnaire

Data on participants' (1) SAP, (2) self-perceived English L2 identity (SLI) and (3) demographic information were collected through the questionnaire (Appendix D5). A survey approach was employed due to its scalability in reaching a large population set out by the study. It is worth noting that while measuring, or at least, uncovering awareness, attitudes, perceptions and belief systems, it is difficult to ensure that all respondents will all use the same frame of reference in answering an attitude question (Oppenheim, 1992). To address this problem, the questionnaire adopts multi-item scales to capture each target domain. 4-5 items were constructed to constitute each key construct, in addition to two other open-ended questions addressing SLI (see 3.4.1.1) and SAP (see 3.4.1.2) respectively.

The questionnaire was hosted on Qualtrics.com. The bilingual questionnaire was available in both traditional Chinese, the participants' L1, and English, to ensure reliability by avoiding possible language-related misunderstanding of questionnaire items. The Chinese questionnaire was translated by the researcher who is native in Chinese and was back-translated and reviewed by an external reviewer skilled in Chinese and the research topic to ensure that the Chinese-translated questionnaire asked the same questions as intended. Each section of the questionnaire is described and justified in turn below.

### 3.4.1.1 SAP

The SAP section comprised nineteen items in total. Participants were first asked to name their most preferred self-directed accent. No specific instruction as to what constitutes an accent, nor any example was given. It was therefore expected that respondents might respond with a range of accent types, for example, from a broad categorization of “native accent” to a narrower categorization of “British accent”, or a specifically defined categorization of “London accent”. In asking directly what accent participants prefer, it is hoped to gain an understanding of how participants conceptualize the notion of “accent” and what boundaries they draw in categorizing accents. Placing this open-ended question at the beginning of the survey also helps to avoid any priming effect of other questions related to accent in the survey.

#### 3.4.1.1.1 Accent-rating section

Following the first question, an accent-rating section was included in the questionnaire to elicit participants’ evaluation of different accents in line with how much they desire to speak the accent demonstrated. The section was inspired by verbal guise testing (VGT) but the current study is interested in investigating the accent that the participants prefer for *themselves*, rather than looking into their evaluation of different accents regarding nuanced qualities associated with the *speakers* of the accent as typically measured by VGTs. Participants were asked to rate from 1-100 how much they would like to speak English in the accent demonstrated in each recording. A 1-100 scale was preferred over a 1-10 scale for its larger range, allowing participants to compare and rank different stimuli.

The accent-rating section used eight different speakers of different accents, carefully selected for comparable voice-qualities. Among the speakers, four speakers (A-D) were chosen to represent what Halliday (1994, 2008) refers to as inner-circle countries, being from the United States, the UK (Southern Britain), Ireland and New Zealand respectively. Another four speakers were chosen to represent speakers from both the outer and expanding circles. Both norm-developing and norm-dependent varieties were included, represented by speakers from India, Singapore and HK respectively. Two HK speakers were chosen to represent two different types of HK accent spoken by Hongkongers. As explained by Bolton and Kwok (1990), English-Chinese bilingualism ranges from marginal (i.e. minimal proficiency in L2),

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functional (i.e. ability to maintain meaningful conversations in both languages), and ambilingualism (i.e. native-like control over both languages) (see **Figure 3**). The two HK speakers in the accent-rating section represent functional bilingual and (near-)ambilingual respectively.

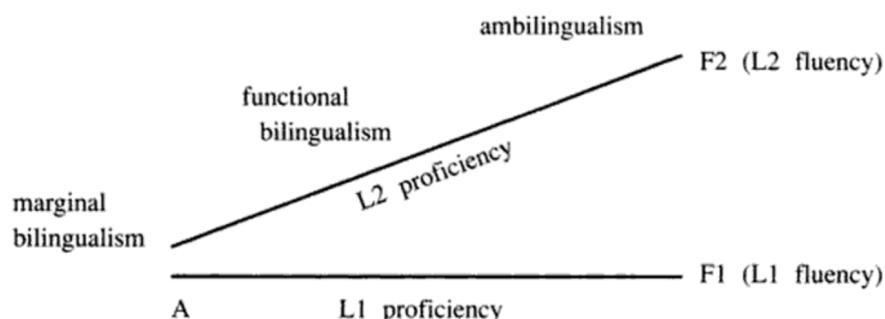


Figure 3. *Bilingualism in HK* (Bolton & Kwok, 1990, p. 148)

To minimise any undesired influence from factors other than accent (e.g., gender, age and educational background), all speakers are female university graduates in their 20s. The speakers were given a pre-selected, factually neutral text to read out and were instructed not to alter their natural accent during recording. All recordings were listened to by 2 judges, including one professional linguist and an applied linguistics research student. Both agreed that all speakers were authentic representations of the varieties of English under investigation. The order of the stimuli was randomised to minimise ordering effect.

The text selected for the stimuli is as follows:

*“I have a question from last Thursday's class. I can't quite grasp the idea of escape velocity. Could you please explain it to me again?”*

The sentence was chosen due to its conversational nature. The text was scripted carefully based on some common segmental features observed in some new Englishes in East and Southeast Asia (Deterding & Mohamad, 2016) (see Appendix I for phonological analysis of the chosen text). All recordings were edited with audio-editing software Audacity® (ver. 2.3.0) for post-recording adjustment. Background noise was removed and pauses between each independent clause were matched among all stimuli. Tempo of independent clauses also was adjusted so that all recordings are of 7s in duration. This is to minimize confounding factors,

such as speed and length of pause, which may affect respondents' evaluation of the speaker's proficiency and accent. However, distances between and durations of individual syllables (or words) were not matched, considering that certain accents may be influenced by a syllable-timed L1, despite English being a stress-timed language: Deterding, Wong and Kirkpatrick (2008) concluded that one of the main features of HK English (HKE) accent is syllable-based rhythm. That is, as HKE speakers tend to have fewer reduced vowels, neighbouring vowels tend to be more even in their duration. Pitch was not adjusted as it was evaluated as a possible suprasegmental feature that constitutes part of the speakers' accent: HKE demonstrates a distinct tonal quality, as a result of transference from the tonal nature of Cantonese to English, despite English being an intonation-rich language Cheung (2009).

Although the speakers are recruited to represent regional accents, personal experiences of each speaker may have effects on their individual accent. Therefore, information regarding each speakers' (1) SA experience, (2) language(s) spoken other than English, (3) usage of English in ELF/overseas context, and (4) frequency of English usage/ proficiency (for non-English-L1 speakers) was collected in order to ensure representativeness of each speaker's accent. See Appendix E for a detailed report of the speakers' backgrounds.

#### 3.4.1.1.2 Multi-item scale questions

A set of multi-item scale questions were asked following the accent-rating section. A 7-point Likert scale was chosen following Leung's (2011) recommendation for psychometric tests in behavioral and social sciences, as a long scale increases sensitivity and is "closer to interval level of scaling and normality" (p. 412). In order to capture no-preference SAP, a neutral-midpoint was included in the scale. The Likert scale items comprised eight statements corresponding to (1) IC-SAP; and (2) L1-influenced SAP respectively while the neutral point on the scale allow for the indication of (3) no SAP preference. All items were randomized.

IC SAP was represented by items 1-5:

- (1) *When speaking in English, I would like to sound as native as possible;*
- (2) *I hope that studying abroad will help me sound more like a native speaker of English.*
- (3) *I tried to change my accent so that I can sound more native*

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- (4) *I think having a native-like accent would give me more advantages*
- (5) *I think the best English pronunciation training is one that helps students achieve native-like accent*

Items (1), (2) and (3) express an attitude that holds NS-accent as model, where respondents actively seek opportunities to practice and acquire native-like accents. In item (5), achieving native-like accents was treated as equal to “the best English pronunciation training”. Item (4) describes respondents’ belief that a native accent would bring positive benefits to the speaker, reflecting an external motivation for IC-SAP.

L1-influence SAP was represented by items 6-10:

- (6) *When speaking in English with someone not from HK, I like it when they can tell from my accent that I am from HK*
- (7) *I don't mind speaking with a HK accent (HKA)*
- (8) *I feel comfortable speaking English with my HK accent in general*
- (9) *I have tried to get rid of my HK accent*
- (10) *I feel proud of the HK accent*

A preference for a Cantonese-accented-English foregrounds possibility for Hongkongers’ ownership over English. Items (6) and (10) express pride for HKA, which motivates an L1-SAP. Particularly, item (6) encompasses a feeling where participants view the HKA as a badge of identity. Items (7), (8), (9) reflect an attitude that is opposite to what Jenks and Lee (2016) called “linguistic ridicule or reprehension” (p. 395) that some Hongkongers might express towards the HKA – an attitude that accepts the HK accent as normal and not a target for ridicule. Negatively worded item (9) were included in the multi-item scale to prevent response bias.

#### 3.4.1.2 English L2 identity

In this section, one sentence-completion item was placed at the beginning of the section. Respondents are asked to complete the sentence, “When speaking English in the UK, I feel...”, by describing their feelings of speaking English in the UK. This aims to provide insights into how they comprehend their relationship with the larger social and linguistic structure, thus addressing the question as to how they position themselves as English users in the UK – as learners or owners. This item was informed by the study of Humphrey and Spratt (2008) on foreign language learning motivation, in which they invited respondents to complete

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sentences describing their feelings towards learning different languages. In their study, it was found that respondents' feelings towards the target language reflect largely the type of motivation for learning the language; likewise, respondents' feeling of using English in the UK would provide useful insight into what motivates them to position themselves as learners/owner in the UK.

### 3.4.1.2.1 Multi-item scale questions

Following the sentence completion question, a set of 6-point Likert scale items were included in the survey to gather data regarding participants' self-perceived identity as ESL users in the UK. A 6-point scale was chosen following Chomeya's (2010) recommendation for its tendency to follow normal distributions. It was decided not to include a neutral point to avoid social desirability bias (Garland, 1991) as the questions asked in the survey concern accents, a speech feature that is inherently associated with social stigma (Walker, 2010). The Likert scale items consist of 8 self-developed statements corresponding to (1) English owner identity or (2) English learner identity. All items were randomized.

An English owner identity is represented by items 1-5:

- (1) *Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am;*
- (2) *I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language);*
- (3) *I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual;*
- (4) *I am confident in using English;*
- (5) *I find it unpleasant when people comment negatively about HK English;*

Items 1-5 were informed by the legitimate knowledge/language allegiance framework (Rampton, 1990; Park, 2011) to represent the English ownership taken up by L2 speakers. *Legitimate knowledge* encompasses both language expertise and awareness of the right to speak as legitimate speakers. Therefore, items (2) and (4) expresses speakers' confidence and language expertise in English as reflected in seeing English on par with Chinese, their first and most proficient language. Item (3) represents the feeling of being a legitimate speaker by claiming to be a Chinese-English bilingual. Although the definition of bilingualism has yet to



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reach a definite agreement, it is important to note that the statements intend to gauge information regarding a *self-perceived identity* determined by individual-based perception and self-knowledge of how one relates to speech communities, as opposed to an *imposed/ ascribed* identity that *determines* whether or not the participant is bilingual (Kramsch, 2013). Therefore, agreeing to be a Chinese-English bilingual not only indicates confidence but also a feeling as a legitimate speaker of English despite it not being the L1.

*Language allegiance/affective belonging* represents the sentimental value that speakers attached to the language. Items (1) and (5) represent feelings that English is an integral part of respondents' self-perceived identity, instead of being a foreign language that remains a utility tool and has little contribution to their identity. Item (5) was designed to capture the extent to which speakers attach sentimental value to English through affiliation and a sense of involvement and belonging with the social group that speaks HKE.

An English learner identity was represented by items 6-10:

- (6) *I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK;*
- (7) *I sometimes worry that I cannot communicate well with local because my English is not good enough;*
- (8) *I would feel delighted if people tell me that I speak good English;*
- (9) *I am sometimes nervous when speaking to native speakers of English*
- (10) *I sometimes worry that people would judge my English*

The identity position as English learners entails active engagement in life experiences with a learning attitude (Dweck, 2013) as represented by items (6) and (8) whereby respondents show interest in further improving their L2 despite being proficient speakers of English and view compliments as positive reinforcements for further improvement. Another aspect that marks learner identity is subject to relations of power. As Norton (2013) argues, learners are, more often than not, in a position of reduced power. Items (7), (9), and (10) reflect the recognition of power differentials between the respondents and other English speakers, accentuated by a sense of skepticism in their ability to communicate fluently in English and the pursuit of exonormative goals set out by standards other than their own.

### 3.4.1.3 Piloting

The questionnaire was first piloted on 25 participants matching exactly the profile of the population. However, the Cronbach's alpha values for the SAP and SLI multi-item scales indicated a low internal consistency. Therefore, the Likert-scale items were revised to draw more strongly on existing theories to ensure the quality of the items (see Appendix D4 for findings of pilot 1, changes made to the questionnaire items and justifications). The revised questionnaire was piloted again on 21 UK-based HK students to ensure reliability. Nonetheless, the reliability statistics return was unsatisfactory and it was decided that items originally proposed to measure "no-preference" SAP to be taken off the section, together with items that contributed to a lowered Cronbach's alpha value (Appendix D4). In lieu of no-preference items, a neutral point was added to the scale to capture "no-preference SAP". A third pilot was conducted with 19 UK-based HK students. Results from pilot 3 indicate that the questionnaire has good reliability (Cronbach's alpha value for each sub-construct evaluates above .7 (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2007).

### 3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Five semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of participants' perception of English ownership and their SAP. Two participants indicating IC-SAP and no preference respectively were interviewed; while only one L1-SAP participant was interviewed. As the interviews aim to complement and triangulate findings from the quantitative stage of the study, it was decided that a small sub-sample of 5 participants would be sufficient.

#### 3.4.2.1 Interview protocol

The interviews consist of a semi-structured conversation guided by an interview protocol (Appendix M) aiming to answer the fourth research question, in which the influencing factors underpinning students SAP are probed. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese, the participants' first language. This is to ensure the reliability of the interview and that interviewees were able to express their opinions regarding accents and identity in a language

that they are most comfortable with. The interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes; responses were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated for analysis. While it is beyond the scope of the current study to conduct a detailed discourse analysis, I concur with Cameron's (2001, p.154) comment that "important contextualising information may be carried by small details that are easily overlooked because they have little or no referential content", particularly in the discussion of identity, which often involves feeling of ambivalence (Cummins, 1994; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). Therefore, elements from prosodic transcription (Eggins & Slade, 2005; Jenkins, 2007) were incorporated to reflect information on significant suprasegmental features, such as stress and intonation, laughing, pause, silence, false starts, word repetition and hesitation (Dörnyei, 2007) (Appendix N for transcription legend).

The interviews began with warm-up questions, followed by two main sections: participants' SAP (accent preference) and SLI (L2 identity) respectively. The first section asks about participants' SAP and their evaluation of their current accent in order to build an understanding of their motivation for setting their corresponding accent goal, which includes a question that asks participants to describe any positive or negative experiences that they had in the UK which they attribute to their accent. The SLI section asks questions related to participants' self-perceived identity as English speakers while studying abroad in the UK.

#### 3.4.2.2 Researcher positionality

My positionality as a researcher is culturally ascribed since I share the same cultural background as my interviewees. I explicitly explained my cultural background at the beginning of the interviews to signal an insider position. As defined by Loxley and Seery (2008), insider research is undertaken by members of the same group, who share characteristics (cultural, biological, occupational, etc.) of the culture studied. The nature of qualitative enquiry sets the researcher as the data collection instrument (Bourke, 2014): an insider position gave me "lived familiarity" with and a priori knowledge of the group being researched (Mercer, 2007, p.3) and allowed me to "project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under study" (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001, p. 411). Moreover, an insider position allowed the power differential between me and the interviewees to be kept to a minimum (Greene, 2014). While the study focuses on participants' English SAP, any

differentiation in accent between the interviewees and me would immediately become a source of power differential. Therefore, in order to signal an insider membership as the interviewees, all interviews were conducted in Cantonese, the L1 of both the interviewees and researcher. It was hoped that my position as an insider researcher would allow me to establish a relationship of trust with my interviewees and allow for a meaningful and genuine conversation on accent, identity and essentially their lived experiences.

While some may argue against insider positionality due to possible compromise to objectivity, SAP is a choice personal to individual participants that is largely affected by the participants' personal history of English learning and other related life events. Moreover, it was found in earlier studies that accent-related beliefs and attitudes seem rather rigid and not prone to change as language learner beliefs are often conditioned by individual learning history (Jenkins, 2007). Nonetheless, I strived to stay as objective as possible throughout the interviews and did not add any comment to the participants' responses.

#### 3.4.2.3 Piloting

The interview was piloted with 2 UK-based HK students. Overall, the interviews were found to elicit information relevant to the research questions.

### 3.5 Analysis Strategies

#### 3.5.1 **RQ1:** What are UK-based HK students' SAP as regards L2 English accent? Inner-circle accent preference, L1-influenced accent preference, or no preference?

Research question 1 was addressed through the first section on SAP in the questionnaire and further corroborated through in-depth interviews. In the accent-rating section, mean scores for all stimuli were calculated and items were ranked according to their mean scores to determine the overall SAP tendency among all respondents. Among the Likert-scale items, negatively worded item 9 (SAP\_L1\_4) was reverse-coded. The analysis followed a "summative model" (p. 27) where the mean scores of each SAP scale's constituent items were calculated to determine the respondents' SAP tendency (mean\_SAP\_IC and mean\_SAP\_L1). Cronbach's alpha values were calculated a priori for each multi-item scale to ensure internal consistency.

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A 2-tailed paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to discern if there is a significant difference between the sample's responses to the IC-SAP and L1-SAP items. Three possible outcomes could be expected:

- (1) a significant difference with higher IC-SAP mean referring to an overall tendency towards IC-SAP;
- (2) a significant difference with higher L1-SAP mean referring to an overall tendency towards L1-SAP;
- (3) a non-significant difference referring to an overall no-preference SAP.

### 3.5.2 **RQ2:** How do UK-based HK students identify as English L2-users in the ELF context (SLI)? Do they claim an English owner identity or an English learner identity?

Research question 2 was addressed through the second questionnaire section on self-perceived SLI as English users in the UK. Similar to the analysis of SAP, a two-tailed paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare means of the two sub-constructs (mean\_SLI\_owner and mean\_SLI\_learner) as well as to determine the overall tendency toward which participants identify themselves as L2 English users in the UK. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated a priori for each multi-item scale to ensure internal reliability (Appendix D4).

### 3.5.3 **RQ3:** Is there a relationship between students' self-directed accent preference (SAP) and their self-perceived identity as English L2-users (SLI) in the UK ELF context?

#### *Bivariate correlation and multiple regression analysis*

All variables in question (mean\_SAP\_IC; mean\_SAP\_L1; mean\_SLI\_owner; mean\_SLI\_learner) were checked for normality of distribution through examination of histograms, probability plots, skewness and kurtosis scores (Appendix J). Inspection of normal probability plots also confirmed linear relationships between the dependent and independent variables. Standard residuals of both models are between -3.3 and 3.3 (Pallant, 2013). The absence of multicollinearity between predictor variables allows for more valid results about individual predictors (Pallant, 2013).

A bivariate correlation analysis was first conducted to establish the relationship between each SAP orientation (ratio scales obtained from Likert-scale items) and each SLI. To

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further discern the directionality of the relationship, linear regression analyses were carried out. As set out by the research questions, participants' self-perceived identity as English speakers in the UK (SLI: mean\_SLI\_owner and mean\_SLI\_learner) was entered as the predictor variable into the regression model. In addition, demographic information including length of stay, length of other overseas experience, age and number of years of English education, were entered into the multiple regression model to discern their predictive power over each SAP.

### 3.5.4 RQ4: To what other factors do they attribute their self-directed preference?

The final research question was addressed through qualitative inquiry, which consisted of 5 semi-structured interviews. Latent level content analysis was conducted on the interview data as the analysis involves the “researcher’s second-level and interpretative analysis of the underlying meaning of the data” (Dörnyei, 2007, p.246). All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and translated for analysis. I listened to the interview recordings a number of times and developed profiles of the 5 interviewees. I then identified trends in the data and queried relevant a priori keywords. After initial and secondary interpretative coding, some salient content categories emerged:

- (a) Concerns for communicative effectiveness;
- (b) ELT materials and teacher beliefs;
- (c) HK accent’s role in signaling lingua-cultural identity;
- (d) Significance of English to the individual.

## 3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was obtained through the Departmental Research Ethics Committee at the Department of Education, the University of Oxford, in line with the CUREC 1A procedure for research with adult human participants (Appendix B). All questionnaire data were anonymized. Interview participants were informed that all personal information, including email addresses and names, would be destroyed after the interview and all participants will be identified by and referred to with codes. Participants were informed that all personal data would be destroyed on project completion.

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An ethical concern of the study is that the discussion in the interview covers personal issues relating to the participant's personal language learning experience which may invoke feelings of embarrassment or insecurity. To protect the participants and lower participant burden, it was clarified at the beginning of the session that their accent would not be evaluated and their comments would not be published in association with their identity.

#### 4. Results

In this chapter, findings of the study are presented in two parts. The first part reports on the results of the survey, aiming to answer research questions 1-3 that ask about UK-based HK students' self-directed accent preference (SAP) and L2 identity (SLI) as well as the relationship between the two. The second part covers relevant findings from the semi-structured interviews, which aimed to address factors other than SLI that contribute to students' SAP.

#### 4.1 Self-directed accent preference

##### 4.1.1 Sentence completion question

The first question in the survey asked directly the SAP of the respondents in text-entry format. The overall distribution of SAP responses is shown in Table 1. Among 116 respondents, 96 (82.8%) indicated an inner-circle-SAP (IC-SAP) while 2 (1.72%) indicated an L1-SAP. The 96 IC-accent responses include of accents from 4 IC countries, namely, America, Australia, Ireland and the UK, fitting what Holliday describes as the British-Australasia-North-American model (1994, p.12). 81.3% (N=78) of respondents indicating an IC-SAP prefer accents from the UK. 55 respondents preferred a “general” British/English accent with no specification, while some preferred specific accents based on geographic division, including Southern, Northern and Midlands accents, or narrower categorizations such as London, Manchester and Yorkshire accents. 17 respondents (14.7%) indicated no preference. A number of no-preference responses were accompanied by an explanation that intelligibility is more important than accent. Overall, the sample indicated a stronger orientation towards IC-accents in the first survey question.

*Table 1. Sentence completion responses for SAP according to countries of origin*

American (13)			
Australian (2)			
Both British and American (2)			
HK (2)			
“International” (1)			
Irish (1)			
UK (78)	British/ English (76)	British/ English (no specification) (55)	
		“Southern British” (11)	London (3)
		“Northern British” (3)	Manchester (1) Yorkshire (1)
		“Midlands accent” (1)	
		Received Pronunciation (6)	
	Scottish (1)		
No preference (17)			



#### 4.1.2 Accent-rating

Similar to results from the first question, the accent-rating section finds SAP orientation towards inner-circle accents. The mean score for each stimulus respectively representing various regional accents was computed from all responses. Missing values were treated as zero mark assigned to the stimuli as the questionnaire hosting platform treats zero point (the slider at the same position as default) as non-responses. All eight stimuli were ranked according to their mean scores (**Table 2**). The results show that all inner-circle accents ranked higher than outer-circle and expanding-circle accent stimuli (non-ICAs)..

*Table 2. Ranking of accent-rating stimuli based on mean scores*

Rank	Speaker (accent represented)	Mean (SD)	
1	Speaker A (General American)	70.3 (22.8)	Inner-circle accents
2	Speaker B (Southern British)	66.2 (26.4)	
3	Speaker D (New Zealand)	54.4 (24.3)	
4	Speaker C (Irish)	35.7 (24.8)	
5	Speaker I (HK – near-ambilingual)	31.5 (23.6)	Outer or expanding circle accent
6	Speaker II (Indian)	21.1 (21.2)	
7	Speaker III (Singaporean)	17.0 (19.9)	
8	Speaker IV (HK – functional bilingual)	10.7 (15.7)	

Mean scores were computed for both inner-circle stimuli and non-inner-circle stimuli. Both variables were checked for normality of distribution through examination of histograms, probability plots, skewness and kurtosis scores. A systematic negative skewness was found for inner-circle stimuli (skewness =  $-.690$ ) while a positive skewness was found for non-inner-circle stimuli (skewness =  $.720$ ). A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant difference between inner-circle stimuli ( $Md = 57.5$ ) and non-inner-circle stimuli ( $Md = 17.7$ ),  $z = -9.29$ ,  $p < .001$ , with a large effect size ( $r = .862$ ).

Table 3. Wilcoxon signed-rank test results comparing mean scores of inner-circle stimuli and non-inner-circle stimuli in accent rating section

	<b>n</b>	<b>Md</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
IC-stimuli	116	57.5	0.00	89.0
Non-IC-stimuli	116	17.7	0.00	60.5

<b>IC-stimuli –</b>					
<b>Non-IC-stimuli</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>	<b>z</b>	<b>p</b>
Negative Ranks <sup>a</sup>	113	59.0	6662	-9.29	.000
Positive Ranks <sup>b</sup>	2	4.00	8.00		
Ties <sup>c</sup>	1				

a = IC-stimuli > Non-IC-stimuli

b = IC-stimuli < Non-IC-stimuli

c = IC-stimuli = Non-IC-stimuli

#### 4.1.3 Likert-scale items

Among the Likert-scale items, negatively worded item 9 (SAP\_L1\_4) was reverse-coded. The Likert-scale values were recoded to range from -3 to 3 (originally coded 1-7 on the questionnaire). Means of each SAP scale's constituent items were calculated to determine the respondents' SAP tendency (mean\_SAP\_IC and mean\_SAP\_L1). Variables, mean\_SAP\_IC; mean\_SAP\_L1, were checked for normality of distribution through examination of histograms, probability plots, skewness and kurtosis scores (Appendix J). A 2-tailed paired-samples t-test was conducted and a significant difference ( $t(114) = -12.6, p < .001$ ) with a large effect size of -1.18 was found between the two SAP orientations (**Table 4**). A higher IC-SAP mean score points to an overall tendency to orient towards IC-SAP.

Table 4. t-test results comparing mean scores of IC-SAP and L1-SAP Likert scale items

IC-SAP		L1-SAP		95% CI of the Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d
Mean	SD	Mean	SD					
1.28	.915	-.878	1.10	-2.49 ; -1.81	-12.6	114	.000	-1.18

## 4.2 English L2 Identity

### 4.2.1 Feelings of speaking English in the UK

Information regarding respondents' feelings about speaking English in the UK was collected through a sentence-completion item. When asked to complete the sentence, "when speaking English in the UK, I feel...", a range of adjectives, including positive, negative and neutral adjectives, were provided in the responses. Overall, slightly more respondents expressed a negative (N=47) feeling speaking English in the UK than a positive feeling (N=39) and 16 respondents expressed neutral feelings.

Positive feelings include (number of times mentioned in parentheses) *accepted* (2), *confident*(7), *comfortable* (17), *good* (2), *happy* (3), *excited* (1), *fine* (3), *pleased* (1), *proud* (1) and *relaxed* (2) (Total = 39). Among these positive descriptions, a number of respondents provided explanations to their feelings. Feelings of *happiness*, *excitement* and *pleasure* were explained to stem from the opportunity to practice and improve English:

- i. "*happy as i can improve my english speaking*"
- ii. "*excited because I believe talking to native speaker could improve my English*"
- iii. "*pleased to be fully immersed in an English-speaking environment*"

(survey responses)

Such learning attitude where the speakers actively seek improvement and practice opportunities clearly points to an identity position as learner. Other 17 responses include the adjective *comfortable* (without negation, such as "not comfortable", "less comfortable" etc.), while some explained that the feeling of comfort stems from an awareness that NSs do not expect NNSs to speak "perfect English" and that they are less likely to judge NNSs' English compared to other Hongkongers :

- i. "*Comfortable because they won't be judgmental about others' accents compared to HK people*"
- ii. "*Feel comfortable comparing to when i am in HK*"
- iii. "*free as people here won't judge your accent or your grammar*"

Such positive feeling of comfort, stemming from an awareness that interlocutors in the UK are less likely to judge their language proficiency, may be conducive to stronger sense of ownership over the language as the perceived NS-NNS power differentials were weakened.

However, such interpretation needs further corroboration through other measurements in the study.

A range of negative descriptions were provided in the survey, including *anxious* (3), *awkward* (1), *bashful* (1), *confused* (1), *disgusted* (2), *embarrassed*(1), *inadequate* (1), *insecure* (4), *intimidated* (1), *unconfident/less confident/ lack of confidence/ not confident* (6), *nervous* (10), *scared* (3), *shy* (3), *strange* (2), *stressed* (2), *uncomfortable* (1), *weird* (2) and *worried* (3) (Total = 47). A number of respondents expressed a feeling of nervousness or insecurity due to their “flawed” or “not-good enough” English, which they think would in turn affect communication:

- i. “*nervous, because my English is not good*”
- ii. “*insecure, because my spoken English, with regard to grammar and pronunciation, is flawed*”
- iii. “*a little bit stressful (stressed) because I afraid native speakers can't understand what I am talking about*”

One respondent explicitly stated that he/she “*somewhat lack of confidence because the native may giggle if we talk some HK-style English*”. Contrary to positive feelings of comfort and confidence, respondents who express a negative feeling using English in the UK display traits of recognizing NS-NNS power relation, through worries of inefficient English use. It can be seen that these respondents take up a learner identity position where they see themselves accountable for any communication breakdown (i.e. they view themselves as not equal to native speakers), rather than assuming equal responsibility for ensuring communicative effective in all parties of interaction.

Besides positive or negative feelings, a number of respondents express a sense of neutrality while speaking English in the UK. *Neutral* (1), *no feeling* (3), *normal* (6), *natural* (6) (Total=16) were among the adjectives provided that expressed neither positive nor negative feelings. While one respondent explicitly expressed dislike for the language attitude in HK that holds NA in high regard, these neutral feelings are accentuated by a priority for CE over native-ness or a deliberate use of L1-accent:

- i. “*No feeling, it's ok as long as people understand what I am saying*”
- ii. “*Neutral. it is important to clearly convey my message fluently, regardless of my accent. There are people in HK who patronise you for having an NA and I hate that.*”

#### 4.2.2 Likert-scale items

To quantitatively inquire into respondents' SLI, owner and learner identities were represented by 5 statements respectively as multi-item scales. Among all owner-SLI items, item (5) received a mean score below 4, while all other statements scored above 4. Item (5) was designed specifically to capture the extent to which speakers attach sentimental value over English through affiliation and a sense of involvement and belonging with the social group that speaks HKE – the low mean score may indicate that participants in the currently juggle between the stigma attached with HKE and linguistic affiliation with their own English variety. Overall, respondents displayed a high level of language expertise and language allegiance (mean\_SLI\_owner = 4.44; SD =.622) based on Park's (2011) language ownership framework.

*Table 5. Likert-scale item statistics for owner-SLI*

Item	Mean (SD)
(1) <i>Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am</i>	4.75(1.05)
(2) <i>I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language)</i>	4.21(1.27)
(3) <i>I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual</i>	4.81(.936)
(4) <i>I am confident in using English</i>	4.58(.946)
(5) <i>I find it unpleasant when people comment negatively about HK English</i>	3.83(1.14)

Similar to findings from the first question in the SLI section, respondents display an awareness that interlocutors in the UK are less likely to judge their language proficiency – item (9) and (10) which represent a recognized power differentials between the respondents and the NSs, both scored below 4. This “awareness of the right to speak” (Norton, 1995, p. 18) reflects a lessened SLI as learners and an increased sense of ownership over the language through feeling of legitimate speaker-hood.

*Table 6. Likert-scale item statistics for learner-SLI*

Item	Mean (SD)
(6) <i>I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK</i>	4.70 (0.848)
(7) <i>I sometimes worry that I cannot communicate well with local because my English is not good enough</i>	4.10(1.36)
(8) <i>I would feel delighted if people tell me that I speak good English</i>	4.90(1.02)
(9) <i>I am sometimes nervous when speaking to native speakers of English</i>	3.85(1.48)
(10) <i>I sometimes worry that people would judge my English</i>	3.90(1.38)

To answer the research question as regard the identity position HK students take as English speakers in an ELF context, a 2-tailed paired-sample t-test were conducted. No significant difference was found between mean\_SLI\_owner and mean\_SLI\_learner ( $t(115) = -1.54, p = .127$ ) and owner identity received an overall higher mean than learner identity (**Table 7**). The non-significant difference suggested that owner and learner identities are not opposite ends of a continuum that corresponds to mastery of the language, but a more complex issues entwined with the lived experiences of the speakers. It was hoped that the qualitative stage of the study would capture the ambivalences and complexity in the participants' identities in relation to using English in an ELF context (Jenkins, 2007).

*Table 7. t-test results comparing mean scores of owner and learner identity Likert-scale items*

SLI_owner		SLI_learner		95% CI of the Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Mean	SD	Mean	SD					
4.44	.622	4.29	.815	-0.338; 0.042	-1.54	114	.127	0.203

### 4.3 Relationship between self-directed accent preference and English L2 identity

#### 4.3.1 Bivariate correlation

Bivariate correlation analysis found a significant moderate-to-low positive correlation between IC-SAP and both SLI positions ( $r = .346$  correlated with owner-SLI;  $r = .398$  with learner-SLI), indicating that regardless of the identity position the speaker take, they tend to prefer IC-accents. The slightly higher correlation coefficient between IC-SAP and learner-SLI than that between IC-SAP and owner-SLI reflects speakers who identify more as learners have a slightly stronger preference for IC-SAP than speakers who identify more as an owner of the language. On the other hand, correlation analysis also demonstrates similar pattern as findings from earlier sections where L1-accent received a significantly weaker preference compared to IC-accents. L1-SAP is negatively and significantly correlated to both identity positions ( $r = -.367$  correlated with owner-SLI;  $r = -.238$  with learner-SLI). The correlation coefficients are mapped onto the conceptual model of the study in **Figure 4**. Despite taking up an owner-SLI, speakers tend not to wish to speak with an L1 accent. A significant negative moderate-to-strong correlation was also found between the two SAPs. IC-SAP and L1-SAP correlate at  $-.649$ , meaning that the more a person prefers to speak in IC-accents, the less is L1-accent preferred.

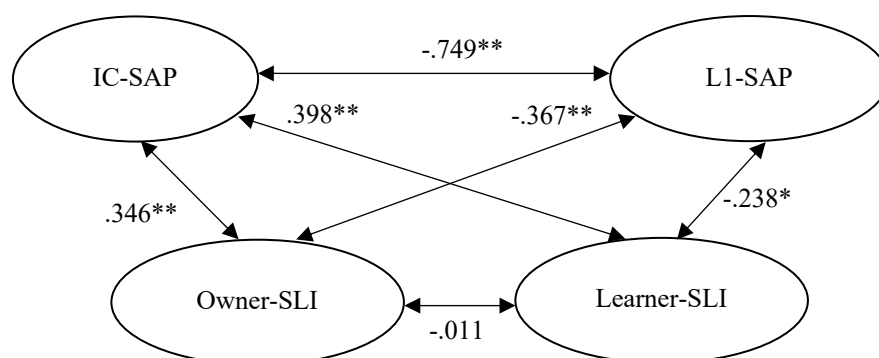


Figure 4. Bivariate correlation results mapped on study conceptual model

Table 8. Bivariate correlation results

	Mean SAP L1	mean SAP IC	mean SLI learner	mean SLI owner
Mean_SAP_L1	1	-.749**	-.238*	-.367**
mean_SAP_IC	-.749**	1	.398**	.346**
mean_SLI_learner	-.238*	.398**	1	-.011
mean_SLI_owner	-.367**	.346**	-.011	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.3.2 Multiple linear regressions

To further determine SLI's effect on SAP, linear regression analyses were performed. In addition, demographic information including length of stay (bg\_LOS\_UK), length of other overseas experience (bg\_overseas\_exp\_total), age (bg\_age) and number of years of English education (bg\_year\_of\_Eng), were entered into the multiple regression model to discern their predictive power over each SAP (see Appendix L. for assumption testing statistics).

All independent variables explained 35.4% of the variance for IC-SAP and 25.7% for L1-SAP. Both models are statistically significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level (Table 9). Owner- identity and Learner-identity both significantly contributed to the model predicting IC-SAP ( $p < .001$ ), whereas all other variables related to language learning background did not make a significant contribution to predicting IC-SAP. Learner-identity made a slightly stronger unique contribution to the model ( $\beta = 0.403$ ) than Owner-identity ( $\beta = .370$ ), corroborating earlier

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findings (section 4.3.1) that a speaker claiming a stronger learner identity tends to prefer IC-accents more than speakers claiming an owner identity.

As for L1-SAP, only owner-identity was found to be a significant predictor ( $p=.000$ ), while all other independent variables had no predictive power. The negative beta weight (-.378) indicates that stronger owner-identity leads to weaker L1-SAP, which contradicts existing theories that suggest ownership increases the awareness of right to speak and thus a more endonormative perspective on accent. It was hoped that the qualitative data would further explain the relationship between ownership by providing a closer understanding as to what other factors is attributed to SAP, and specifically, reasons behind the disfavor towards L1-accents.

Table 9. Regression model summaries

DV	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
IC-SAP	.595	.354	.319	.75214	.354	9.967	6	109	.000
L1-SAP	.507	.257	.216	.97152	.257	6.278	6	109	.000

Table 10. Regression coefficients for each IV

DV		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
IC-SAP	(constant)	-2.080	.982			-2.119	.036
	<b>mean_SLI_owner</b>	.544	.115	<b>.370</b>		4.729	<b>.000</b>
	<b>mean_SLI_learner</b>	.453	.087	<b>.403</b>		5.216	<b>.000</b>
	bg_overseas_exp_total	-.036	.042	-.067		-.852	.396
	bg_year_of_Eng	.072	.118	.054		.610	.543
	bg_LOS_UK	-.114	.033	-.267		-3.404	.001
	bg_age	-.025	.031	-.072		-.802	.424
L1-SAP	(constant)	2.221	1.268			1.751	.083
	<b>mean_SLI_owner</b>	-.669	.149	<b>-.378</b>		-4.498	<b>.000</b>
	mean_SLI_learner	-.321	.112	-.237		-2.862	.005
	bg_overseas_exp_total	.132	.054	.206		2.445	.016
	bg_year_of_Eng	-.094	.153	-.058		-.614	.540
	bg_LOS_UK	.079	.043	.153		1.823	.071
	bg_age	-.009	.040	-.021		-.224	.823



#### 4.4 Factors influencing self-directed preference

Five interviews were conducted with participants indicating strong IC-SAP (N=2), L1-SAP (N=1) and no preference (N=2) to find out what other factors contribute to different SAP orientations. Some salient content categories emerged throughout across interviews and were interpreted in line with each SAP category accordingly. See Appendix N for transcription legend.

##### 4.4.1 Inner-circle self-direct accent preference

###### Communicative effectiveness

###### (a) *Native accents facilitate communication*

Almost all interview participants expressed that native accents are instrumental in facilitating communicative effectiveness. Although the study only interviewed 2 participants who indicated a strong IC-SAP, other interviewees who displayed an L1-SAP or no-preference in the survey, agreed that they would choose native accents for practical reasons. Participant C (L1-SAP) explained that, despite the pride he took in his HK accent, he would choose the local accent (British accent) for its intelligibility as it facilitates communication and understanding.

I: But you said you were proud of HKA earlier?

C: I mean I actually feel proud of HKA.. but I feel like if I speak in HK accent, it's a bit *hard for natives to understand* me. [...] so sometimes I try to use a **local accent**, it's *easier to communicate with others without misunderstanding*.

Native accents, particularly the British accent, were perceived to enable effective communication because they are “clearer” (A) and more “widely accepted” (D) and therefore more easily understood by people from different L1 backgrounds. When asked why they viewed native accents as more comprehensible, many made reference to dictionary pronunciations, stating that British and American pronunciations are more reliable and accurate. However, their conception of NAs seems to be defined in line with the BANA-model proposed by Holliday (1994). Interview participant D, while agreeing that Singaporeans are L1-users, rejected Singaporean pronunciations as standards:

I: How are Singaporean accent and British accent different?

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D: Because if you look up words in a dictionary, there wouldn't be Singaporean accent! British accent is more widely accepted and easier to understand. I think British and American [accents] are understood by the whole world.

C raised a point regarding the convenience of British accent with reference particularly to the ELF context. It appears that, in order to achieve communicative efficiency when people of various L1 backgrounds take part in ELF conversations, it is more effective to set one single accent as standard which all conversation participants can adhere to:

C: I think for someone to go to another country, it'd be more convenient for the foreigners to learn the local way of speaking, instead of the other way around. Because there are so many versions of foreign accent, but only one local version.

Similarly, A also commented that accents other than the local accent easily creates misunderstanding and is inevitably entwined with issues of comprehensibility:

I: [...] so you don't actually prefer a particular accent, you would prefer any accent as long as it's the local accent and it's clear enough for communication.

A: YES, EXACTLY! [...] it's just an example, like Indian accents involves a lot of "r". It's more difficult for people to understand.

(b) *HKA compromises communicative effectiveness*

Among the participants who indicated an inner-circle-SAP, another recurrent comment emerged – HKA was viewed as a source that compromises communicative effectiveness due to its low intelligibility in international contexts. The syllable-based rhythm of HKA was explained by A as “uttering each syllable by syllable” which endangers intelligibility:

A: HK people utter each syllable by syllable, with no stress and (2.4) for example when they say “questionnaire”, they say /,kwes-tʃə'ne-a / (pronounced syllable by syllable and changed the last schwa to a clearly articulated /a/) @ you know those really stereotypical ... HK accent. [...] because I think the HK accent [...] to some extent, it's going to *affect the communication between people*.

Descriptions of HKA as being “wrong” and “unclear” was mentioned by A, indicating a belief that regards HKA as inherently deficient and substandard to inner-circle accents.

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A: Because that accent (HKA), first, means that you're not fluent when you talk. and... sometimes, those pronunciations may be wrong. Because when I hear many people from HK speak English ... what example can I think of (2) for example, when they say "republic", they'd say [ri'pʌbrek] @@ like very unclear and wrong.

B also explained that HKA does not distinguish certain contrastive sounds in English and provided an example where his accent indeed caused miscommunication:

B: Actually just a few days back, someone did not understand me when I mixed up "chip" and "cheap".

### ELT materials and educational values

When asked why they view IC-accent in a more positive light than HKA, many responded that ELT practices in HK were a major push factor. The recurrent theme of native-centric ELT practices was brought up by all interviewees. In D's words, the "education beliefs in HK makes [students] think that there is something better than HK English": ELT practices tend to view NS-pronunciation as the authentic model and thus the exclusive yardstick, while at the same time discrediting the value of L1-accent. B explained further how such educational beliefs are played out in practice, pointing out that typical HK pronunciations would be corrected in line with more "authentic" accents:

I: What do you think of the term "HK English"?

B: I cannot deny that I think of the term quite negatively. Maybe because of the stigma.

I: What stigma?

B: During my education in HK, our teachers told us to get rid of elements of our HK accents. Like my teachers would correct my pronunciation if it's too "typical" of HK pronunciation. I mean overall, in English lessons, they would want us to learn a more "authentic" accents.

I: What does it mean by authentic accent?

B: @@(UM).. like many of the recordings in our textbooks are British speakers... so that's the goal that have been presented to all of us HK students.. so more or less we'd see this accent as the "best" while HK accent as something undesirable. Yes, I think education has a lot to do with how students perceive their own accent... @

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3 out of 5 interviewees pointed out more specifically that listening materials used in local classrooms, including textbooks and exam materials, are almost exclusively recorded by NSs. C explained further how native-accented teaching materials affected perception of his own accent and inflicted uncertainty over his English ability by alluding to attitudes that equate native-like accents with high-proficiency (or HKA with low-proficiency):

C: Because all these NSs on the recordings indeed made me question my own English. It made me think that “if I speak in HK accent, does it mean my English is not good?”. I think this attitude, I mean the attitude that a more natively-like accent means better English proficiency or a HK accent means lower English proficiency, is quite deep-rooted in the attitude of HK students.

#### *HKA's role in signaling lingua-cultural identity*

HKA appears to take on a rather marginal role in signalling these HK students' cultural identity in an ELF context. When asked if they would trade their HKA for a native accent, all respondents, despite their SAP indicated in the survey, responded positively. They explained that a pursuit for native accent is not in conflict with their cultural identification as Hongkongers.

A: I still call myself a Hongkonger even if I don't necessarily want to speak the HK accent. I think it's not that if you enjoy being mistaken as a native due to your accent, you are abandoning another part of yourself.

Rather than an expression of lingua-cultural identity, accent is taken more as an indicator of language mastery. C explained that a native-like-accent is a marker of English proficiency:

I: How would you feel if you were mistaken for a native English speaker because of your accent?

C: I feel like he is acknowledging my English proficiency. Like he thinks that I speak good English.

While HKA has minimal role in contributing to UK-based HK students' lingua-cultural identity, it was found that a native accent is treated by some respondents as a token of in-group membership with the native-speaking community. B commented that a native accent helps him

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blend in with the native community, whereas HKA is an obvious obstruct to his language learning goal of concealing his learner identity:

B: I have been trying to blend in. That's why I would really enjoy it if this happens (mistaken as a native due to his accent) and that's why I don't like it so much when people say I have a HKA.. it makes me question my proficiency.

#### 4.4.2 L1 self-directed accent preference

##### HKE as an emerging variety of English

Among all interview participants, C views HKA in a more appreciative attitude. He vocalized his pride for HKE (including HK-accent and other grammatical and lexical features) as a valuable product of interaction between English and Cantonese, or in his words, a “different face” of English:

C: Different kinds of English have their own features... like creating different- (ER) different faces for the language. so now, I think HKE to me is something positive. I feel like when English arrived in HK, it absorbed a bit of HK culture and something from HK. It's still English, but it's more special, and it has a “TASTE” of HK in it. I don't think it's a bad thing to have a “taste” of HK, it's not anything negative. I think it's just a fact, it is there. But I think now (ER) I feel like sometimes I feel quite proud of HKE. I feel that when a language reaches a certain place, it can grow and evolve in the space of that new place and take in the nutrient of the new place.. to absorb the local culture and turn into something new and different- let's not say it's an evolution, it's more like (ER).. becoming more special, I think it's a good thing.

His recognition of the descriptive nature of language appears to motivate an L1-SAP.

#### 4.4.3 No preference

##### Significance of English to the individual

Despite English being HK's official language, English appears to have varying significance in constituting HK L2-users' identity. For the two participants who indicated no-preference, both participants explained that English is an instrumental *tool*. The description of English as a tool entails a lack of personal or sentimental connection to the language, which is

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key to claiming ownership of the language (Park, 2011). Such alienated feeling towards English appears to contribute to their indifferent attitude towards SAP. E explained such disaffection by comparing English to swimming ability – it is an essential skill but does not represent who she is:

E: languages to me are only.. capabilities or a *tool*. It's like if you fall into the water and you know how to swim. It's just a skill. [...] I mean English helps me meet more people. So if you ask me, I wouldn't label it as a part of my identity, but it would affect my social ability.. like things more practical.

Another participant compared English to Chinese and attempted to evaluate the significance of the two languages to her self-identity. She explained her indifference towards English-accent because English is only a *tool*, which has a marginal role in constituting her identity:

I: Would you feel like not being able to speak in HK accent would mean losing a part of who you are?

D: WELL.. I haven't really thought much about English.. but if you ask me a similar question about Mandarin, if you asked me if I would want a Beijing Mandarin accent and at the same time can get rid of my HK Mandarin accent, I'd die for it@@@

I: So it looks like English has a small significance in constituting your identity.

D: Yes.. [...] I care more about Chinese than English. So it's more like a *tool* to me. I mean I can always get help from others for English when I need it.

At the end of her comment, she clearly indicated an identity position as a learner where she is willing to ask for and receive help with English. This lack of ownership over the language appears to lead to her indifferent SAP.

### Communicative effectiveness – again?

While a number of participants support their IC-SAP in the name of “communicative effectiveness”, indifference towards SAP was also supported by the very same rationale. E restated her stance multiple times that communicative effectiveness should be the “ultimate goal” of ELF interactions, while discarding the importance of accent:

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E: I think what's more important about learning or using a language is not really on accent, it's more about whether or not you can communicate properly and effectively.

Contrasting with explanations provided by IC-SAP participants, it seems that, “communicative effectiveness” is deemed to be achieved in differing manners by these two groups of participants:

- (a) variations compromise communicative effectiveness as successful ELF interaction is achieved through a set of native pronunciation which all learners should adhere to due to its high intelligibility;
- (b) successful ELF communication is achieved as long as the meaning of a message and understood. ELF should allow for variation, provided that the variation does not hinder understanding.

While the former takes on a more static stance on communicative effectiveness, the latter seems to view communicative effectiveness as a concept that is situated and relative to different circumstances.

*Ambivalence* also appears to underlie SAP. While stating effective communication as goal, he admitted a “double standard” that he imposed on himself and others – accent is unimportant to other L2-users as long as understanding is achieved, but such standard does not apply to his own accent pursuit.

B: I am stricter to myself .. I aim for a native accent, but I mean (1.4) overall.. it's good enough to be able to communicate. It is a bit of a double standard because I have this perfectionist in me that pushes me to practise for a British accent .. but for others (ER) I mean overall.. GOOD English means... to me.. (ER) means you can communicate, like get your messages across.

### 4.5 Summary of Findings

Both the survey and semi-structured interviews point to a clear direction that UK-based HK students had a significantly stronger inner-circle-SAP while tending to hold a negative attitude towards L1-accent. However, the preference for inner-circle accents does not seem to stem from a lack of ownership among these HK L2-users. Survey findings indicated that the sample shows traits of ownership claim as legitimate speaker of English in the UK ELF context,

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although these highly proficient L2-users from HK identify as English learners to a similar extent. A clear connection was found between SAP and SLI, and particularly, a learner identity encourages a closer observance of NS-pronunciation models and hence a stronger IC-SAP.



## 5. Discussion

In this chapter, findings of the study are interpreted in detail to explicitly and comprehensively answer the research questions of the study.

### 5.1 RQ1: What are UK-based HK students' self-directed accent preference (SAP) as regards L2 English accent? Inner-circle accent preference (IC-SAP), L1-influenced accent preference (L1-SAP), or no preference?

Inner-circle accents were found to be most favored among the sample, though a small number of participants indicated an L1-SAP or no preference. Such findings echo with earlier studies where HK students were found to demonstrate insistence in their preference for native accents despite recent movement in ELF (e.g. Li, 2009; Luk & Lin, 2006; Sung, 2016a). The strong attachment to inner-circle accents among HK ESL speakers was also found in tandem with strong stigmas against Cantonese-accented English, affirming an exonormative attitude among HK L2-users found in existing literature (e.g. Luk and Lin, 2006; Joseph, 2004; Jenkins, 2007).

#### Accent and comprehensibility

Many prefer native accents for reasons of “communicative effectiveness”. It appears that the perception of accent is entwined with concerns of comprehensibility. This conception of “communicative effectiveness” appeared to be conceptualized based on a subjective perception of comprehensibility over an objective measure of intelligibility: it was widely perceived that native accents facilitate intercultural communication while HKA impedes successful communication. The perception is necessitated by the long-standing native-centric model in ELT practices where the value of local varieties is often downplayed or even forbidden in local English classrooms. In fact, many non-native varieties, including HKE, receive empirical support that they are more intelligible, to both the varieties' own speakers and speakers of native-varieties, than is often perceived (e.g. Kirkpatrick et. al., 2008; Zhang, 2015). When invited to describe any negative encounters attributable to the participants' L1-influenced accent, many failed to provide *personal* examples that demonstrate the intelligibility concerns that they have for HKA; yet they tend to provide *stereotypical* accounts of HKA and instances of how HKA causes miscommunication based on their perceptions of HKA, the

majority of which stems predominately from beliefs advocated in ELT classrooms. This finding matches closely with what Levis (2005) describes as the “contradictory principles” (p.370): L2-students often subscribe to the “nativeness principle” where native-like-accent is perceived to be the ultimate pronunciation goal for their “supposed international intelligibility” (Kirkpartick et. al. 2008); but at the same time, abide by the “intelligibility principle” which stresses the importance of being understood. As both principles wave the flag of intelligibility, the two principles that guide L2-learners’ accent pursuit appear to be conflicting in nature. Similarly, participants in the current study also seem to encounter ambivalence in making their choice of SAP. While a number of studies have found evidence that some IC-accent is not as internationally intelligible as commonly perceived (e.g. Deterding, 2005), some participants also acknowledged this ambivalence and questioned the nativeness principle. For example, although Geordie accent is local to New Castle, it does not necessarily promise intelligibility, yet tend more to impede understanding in ELF interactions (see Appendix O2 for transcript).

While the nativeness principle seems to dominate ELT practices, L2-users who are frequent participants in ELF interaction appear to be able to evaluate these two principles in line with the linguistic reality – the reality that most ELF interlocutors are non-native – and place more significance on the intelligibility principle, slowly shifting away from a rigid attachment to native pronunciations. Such recognition and ideological departure from the nativeness principle is precisely summed up in an interviewee’s words:

C: English is a very international language nowadays, and you use English to communicate with foreigners. I used to think that accent is quite important.. but after this year.. I talk to Singaporeans and some Indian too.. their accents are quite heavy but the conversation are.. fine, they have no problem expressing their thoughts. [...]  
@ I think they can understand me too even if I speak in this accent.. If that’s the case, there’s no need to set native speakers as the target.

It appears that ELF experiences are conducive to L2-users’ critical evaluation of their language needs where they gain understanding that an obsessive pursuit for native-accent is unrealistic and irrelevant in authentic English conversations. However, for learners who acquire the language in a largely monolingual context where most of their English-speaking contexts are simulated through textbook activities, the tasks of helping learners coming to such realization

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lies with ELT curriculum and local English classrooms. ELT practices in HK, where English remains largely a foreign language, seems to be falling behind in helping learners understand the reality of international communication in English, but instead, fixated on a rather outdated and irrelevant ideology that sees NA as the unquestionable model.

5.2 RQ2: How do UK-based HK students identify as English L2-users in the ELF context? Do they claim an English owner identity or an English learner identity?

Overall, UK-based HK students in the study claimed both identities as owner and learner. Contrasting with existing theories that conceptualize owner and learner identity on the opposite end of a continuum (Seilhamer, 2015), the participants display a high level of language expertise and language allegiance, i.e. ownership over English, while at the same time seek and engage in language experiences with a learning attitude (Dweck, 2013). Countering what Jenkins (2007, p.109) termed “an irrational attachment to British and American English”, HK L2-users appear to be able to claim ownership and speak as legitimate speakers of English. Some participants displayed overt traits of ownership – rather than a quality of deficiency, they view HKE as a legitimate variety – by claiming a right to speak, or in Bourdieu’s term, claiming “the power to impose reception” (1977, p.75) as a multilingual student studying abroad in the UK. The use of HKE was perceived as an act of drawing on their multilingual repertoire from which they take pride, as opposed to adulteration or a lowered English standard viewed by many of HKE’s own speakers (Joseph, 2004). Instead of “abandoning” their cultural identity, an interview participant (B) explained his choice of accent as an act of “putting on different identities in different contexts” and compared himself to a “chameleon”. This comment interestingly contrasts with findings in Jenkins’ (2007) study where her participants described their SAP as “linguistic schizophrenia” (p.206). “Linguistic schizophrenia” refers to the struggle between pleasure one takes in being taken as a competent-English-speaker and the feeling that their cultural identity is being undermined. In this sense, B appears to see identity as a fluid concept prone to change according to context. It seems that some UK-based HK students are aware of the multiple identities and view their identities as a proficient English more salient than his cultural identity without perceiving any conflict between the two.

However, the sentence-completion item in the questionnaire revealed that over half of the respondents claim an overt learner identity, by expressing feelings of insecurity and lack of confidence. This finding is similar to what Sung (2016b) found in his study where his participants felt “linguistically inferior and socially passive” (p.312) when engaged in ELF interactions with NS. It appears then, although HK L2-users attempt to claim voice as competent and legitimate speakers of English, they are still subject to NS-NNS power relationship where they tend to position themselves as the “inferior” through their feeling of incompetence calibrated against native competence.

5.3 RQ3: Is there a relationship between students’ self-directed accent preference and their self-perceived identity as English L2-users in the UK ELF context?

Quantitative analysis found that L2 identity has an effect on UK-based HK students’ self-directed accent preference. Interestingly, an inner-circle-SAP was found motivated by both identity positions – while an English-learner identity seems sensible in motivating an exonormative observance of native norms, an owner identity also tends to contribute to a preference for inner-circle accents. Furthermore, regression analysis found that stronger owner-identity leads to weaker L1-SAP, which appear to contradict existing literature that suggests a more endonormative language attitude as a result of establishing ownership in English (e.g. Rubdy, McKay, Alsagoff, & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008).

Qualitative enquiry revealed that, while participants in the study generally demonstrate traits of ownership claim, hurdles to full ownership were mainly found to be along the language allegiance dimension. In HK, most people speak English as a foreign language. English, therefore, remains largely the language of the classroom. HK L2-users tend to attach more utilitarian value to the language than sentimental value. Description of English as “tool” is not uncommon among interview participants, which accentuates the lack of personal and affective belonging to the language. The role of English in many local L2-learners’ daily lives is captured in the words of an interview participant: “many people learn English just to deal with exams. It’s like, to them, English is the language for exam, instead of a language for communication”(C). Certainly, ELT practice is, once again, the point of intervention in helping HK L2-users’ recognize the value of English to their personal lives and increase a sense of

ownership. Although English does not invoke personal sentiment to all participants, most L2-users in the study appear to display ownership along the dimension of legitimate knowledge – they usually acknowledge their proficiency and confidence in English and tend to see themselves as competent users of English in ELF contexts. While HKA is generally less favored compared to inner-circle accents, participants appear to find ways other than accents to express their ownership over the language. Several participants mentioned their use of Kongish in texting or online writing as a badge of identity. While Kongish is used by participants as a way to communicate their cultural identity, it is also a form in which these HK L2-users display overt their ownership over the language – the use of Kongish demonstrates a high degree of creativity and autonomy among HKE users where they create new meanings in line with their own communicative needs through playful manipulation of English, a language that is not their L1. The understanding of the extent to which HK L2-speakers claim ownership over English in an ELF context can benefit from further studies on areas other than accents, expanding to aspects of creative language use in terms of vocabulary, syntax or at a wider discourse level.

#### 5.4 RQ4: To what other factors do they attribute their self-directed accent preference?

Two major motivations for SAP was found to be the concern for intelligibility (and hence “communicative effectiveness”) and influence from local ELT beliefs. A common (mis)conception among the participants was that inner-circle accents necessitate intelligibility in ELF situations while HKA pose possible threats to successful intercultural communication due to its low intelligibility (see 5.1 for more detailed discussion). Despite counterexamples provided during in-depth interviews (e.g. Geordie accent does not promise intelligibility and speakers of HKA can be understood by international interlocutor with ease), such conception appears to be widespread amongst most HK L2-users and is resistant to change. Some participants pointed out that such (mis)conception can be attributed to HK ELT practices.

#### *ELT practices encourage IC-SAP*

As Levis points out, “most current pronunciation materials are consistent with the nativeness principle” (2005, p. 371). This situation appears to be particularly prevalent in HK. A number of interview participants pointed out that examination papers, textbooks and

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assessment practices are still largely guided by NS norms conceptually in their design. Though some effort has been made to incorporate a diversified exposure of English accents to simulate a more authentic ELF communication context (Chan, Jim, 2014), most teaching materials and marking schemes still problematize HKE phonological features as erroneous. As expressed by a participant, listening materials recorded by L1-speakers contribute to the lack of confidence in his own pronunciation ability and prompt him to get rid of phonological features that diverge from model demonstrated in the textbooks. Teaching materials clearly constitute a major factor that encourages an inner-circle-SAP and disfavor towards L1-accent. Moreover, *teacher beliefs* also contribute significantly to the negative evolution of L1-accent. A number of participants recounted experiences where HKA featured speech was ridiculed in the local classroom, many instances involve teachers correcting their L1-accented pronunciation to ones that are demonstrated in the dictionary. This is similar to what Jenkins (2007) found: NNS English teachers tend to be resilient against “concept of ELF in general and ELF accents” (p.141), showing a reluctance to “disassociate notions of correctness from 'nativeness' and to assess intelligibility and acceptability from anything but an NS standpoint” (p.141). English teachers in HK demonstrate similar attitudes as the participants in Jenkins’ study, tending to impart the native-speaker-centric ideologies to students that encourage negative evaluation of L1-accented speech.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Key findings

This mixed-methods study used a questionnaire and in-depth interviews to reveal the self-directed accent preference (SAP) and L2-identity (SLI) of UK-based HK students vis-a-vis their experiences of using English as L2-users in ELF contexts. The survey found an overall strong inner-circle-SAP among the sample, while only a minority of participants indicated L1-SAP or no preference. This finding corroborates with the attachment for native-norms found in earlier studies (e.g. Josephs, 2004; Li, 2009; Sung, 2016a) where HK L2-users tend to view native-pronunciation in a more positive light than L1-accented speech. In terms of self-perceived identity, the survey found insignificant difference between the extent to which participants identify as learners and owners of English in the UK with slightly higher inclination toward an owner identity. This finding suggests that HK L2-users in the UK are able to claim ownership as legitimate speakers of English despite English not being their first language. However, this sense of ownership does not seem to lead to a stronger appreciation for the L1-influence accent. Further analysis also found that HK L2-users with a stronger sense of ownership tend to prefer a HK accent less. This finding is interesting as it appears that HK L2-users express their ownership over the language through channels other than accent in their own speech.

Semi-structured interviews found that inner-circle-SAP stems mostly from a concern for intelligibility, as inner-circle accents were perceived to be more intelligible, hence conducive to successful international communication. Contrarily, L1-accent was largely viewed as sign of deficiency and potential sources of misunderstanding. A native-like accent was believed to be an indicator of English mastery while a HK accent gives an impression of low English proficiency to the interlocutor. Although many participants claim to take pride in their cultural identity as Hongkongers, they expressed that they do not wish to reflect their cultural identity through accents. It seems that a HK accent has a marginal role in signaling HK L2-users' cultural identity but acts more as an indicator of English competence.

## 6.2 Pedagogical implications

Local ELT practices and beliefs are crucial in increasing L2-learners' awareness of the linguistic reality where monolingual competence is the marked case (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) and empower students to view their multilingual competence as asset instead of hurdle to language mastery. It is worth-noting that the local curriculum authority highlights the importance of learners' ability to "understand speakers with a range of accents and language varieties in speech" (CDC, 2007, p.49), yet only limited effort committing to changes in ideology in local ELF practices was observed (Chan, 2014).

As McDonough et. al. (2013) reminds us, ELT materials take up a central role to developing students language attitude, as they are "often seen as being the core of a particular programme" (p. 51). To question the dominance of NS-norms and ethnocentric values, textbooks should be developed in ways that are sensitive to learners' sociocultural context and attend to learners' communicative needs., teaching materials should adopt a more pluricentric view of English in listening and speaking by (1) downplaying the importance to NS standards for pronunciation; (2) avoiding stigmatization of typical HKE phonological features; (3) emphasizing the importance of communicative competence over native-like competence. As suggested by interviewee C, the local curriculum can start by adopting listening materials recorded by speakers of different accents. Learners can not only be introduced to accents other than inner-circle ones, but also help L2-users recognize the legitimacy of their own accent. As most HK students often view textbooks as authoritative sources (Norton & Gao, 2008), exposing learners to different English varieties through textbooks would be a critical point of intervention in breaking away from a deep-rooted adherence to native-speakerism.

Moreover, English teachers take on a role more important than ever in encouraging students to resist essentialized identity as a perennial learner or as non-native speakers of English. It is pivotal that teachers do not encourage the stigmatization of HKA in the classroom and in assessment practices. As noted by Galloway and Rose (2015), what ELT classrooms need is a "move away from native English speaker expertise to a focus on multi-lingual and multi-cultural, or translingual and trans-cultural" (p. 206), teachers should help L2 users recognize their multicultural and multilingual assets and help them connect with the diverse and international world that is far from monolithic through English.



### 6.3 Limitations and suggestions for future studies

The current study is subject to several limitations due to its short timeframe and limited resources. One limitation of the study is the variability in the sample profile. While it was first planned that only first-year UK-based HK students would be recruited to control for the effect of length of stay on accent choice, recruitment with such criterion was difficult. The recruitment criteria were thus expanded to students who have studied in the UK for fewer than 10 years. Although standard deviation shows that variable among participants in terms of length of stay is within an acceptable range, further studies would benefit from a stricter controlling in terms of length of stay where all participants can be compared on a more equal basis. While it was beyond the scope of the current study to investigate the effect of length of abroad experience, it would be fruitful to obtain a greater understanding of length of stay pertaining to SAP. As found in the current study, some participants expressed a lesser degree of self-awareness in terms of accent after spending time abroad since they experienced situations where non-native accented speech does not compromise intelligibility or successful ELF communication. ELF experience and length of time spent abroad appear to play a role in shaping L2-users' attitude for SAP. In this sense, it would also be fruitful to conduct longitudinal studies that examine changes HK L2-users undergo vis-a-vis SAP and L2-identity throughout their study abroad journey.

To further understand the extent to which HK L2-users assert ownership over English, it would be useful to measure such construct by means other than ones used in the current study (i.e. questionnaire and in-depth interviews). In the existing literature, instruments such as acceptability judgment tasks in conjunction with stimulated recall interviews have been employed in the study of ownership (e.g. Bokhorst-Heng et. al, 2007; Higgins, 2003). In the already sparse literature that investigated ownership among HK L2-users, most study adopts qualitative enquiries such as written narratives and interviews (e.g. Sung, 2016b). It would thus be fruitful to extend our current comprehension of HK L2-users' ownership of English through more quantified manners, such as questionnaires and acceptability judgement tasks.

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# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

## Appendix A. Participant information sheet

### UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY  
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027  
[general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk) [www.education.ox.ac.uk](http://www.education.ox.ac.uk)

Director Professor Jo-Anne Baird



### Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

(CUREC approval ref. ED-CIA-19-111)

#### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

##### 1. *Invitation*

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project. Before you decide to take part, it is important to understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part in this study.

##### 2. *What is the purpose of this research?*

This study investigates the relationship between self-directed English accent preference (SAP) among UK-based Hong Kong students and the extent to which they claim ownership of the English language. Previous researches examining Hong Kong students' accent preference have been largely done in the Hong Kong context where English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communications take place at a limited extent. Therefore, I would like to understand how the global spread of ELF creates space of "non-native" English users to take up ownership over the language as legitimate speakers through the lenses of SAP.

The results of the study will hopefully add to the current understanding of how ELF broadens the notion of English ownership, specifically to population whose first language is not English. In addition, the study hopes to challenge ELT practices that hold native-speaker norms as model, and accentuate the significance of agency among English as a second language users in claiming ownership of their own learning, whereby liberating themselves from the ascribed identity as "non-native" and "perpetual learners".

##### 3. *Why have I been invited to take part?*

You have been invited because you are a Hong Kong student aged between 18-30 undertaking your undergraduate or postgraduate study in a UK university. You are also higher proficient users of English who regularly engage in ELF communications. I am interested in your experience in using English in the UK and how your experiences shape your preference for English accent in your own speech.

##### 4. *Do I have to take part?*

It is your decision whether or not to take part in this study. You can ask questions about the research before deciding whether to participate. If you agree to participate, you may withdraw yourself from the study at any time, without giving a reason, by advising the researchers of this decision.

##### 5. *What will happen to me if I take part in the research?*

I would like to invite you to take part in a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Should you be interested in getting further involved in the study as a participant, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview where you can share about your experience as an English user in the UK during your study abroad period. The interview would not take more than 1 hour. Your consent will be elicited for the audio recording during the interview. If you are still happy to take part, you will then be asked to sign a consent form.

# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

## 6. *Are there any potential risks in taking part?*

The is no risk in taking part in the study.

## 7. *Are there any benefits in taking part?*

There will be no direct benefit to you from taking part in this research. However, if you take part you will be helping to increase knowledge about how study abroad affect Hong Kong students' identification as English users and accent preference.

## 8. *Expenses and payments*

Reasonable travel costs will be covered.

## 9. *What happens to the data provided?*<sup>1</sup>

The information you provide as part of the study is the **research data**. Any research data from which you can be identified (e.g. your name, date of birth, audio recording), is known as **personal data**. It does not include data where the identity has been removed (anonymous data).

We will minimise our use of personal data in the study as much as possible. The **research data** will be stored confidentially in an encrypted location. All **personal data** will be stored confidentially in an encrypted location and the researcher would be the only person who has access to the original files. Your questionnaire response will be anonymised unless you choose to take part in the interview. You will be identified in this research only by a code number. We would like your permission to use direct quotes. You are assured that your identity will be kept strictly confidential and your comments would be used strictly for academic discussion.

My supervisor will have access to the personal and research data collected. Responsible members of the University of Oxford may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the research.

All data, including questionnaire responses and interview recordings will be destroyed at the end of the research project.

## 10. *Will the research be published?*

The research will be written up as a dissertation. On successful submission of the dissertation, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will be openly accessible to members of the department.

## 11. *Who is organising and funding the research?*

The research is funded as an independent master's research project at the University of Oxford, Department of Education.

## 12. *Who has reviewed this study?*

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to [CUREC's Best Practice Guidance on Data Collection and Management](#) (BPG 09)



# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

## **13. Who do I contact if I have a concern about the study or I wish to complain?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please speak to me at 07935599456 or email to [yvonne.yim@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:yvonne.yim@education.ox.ac.uk), or my supervisor Dr Jessica Briggs Baffoe-Djan at 01865611022 or email to [jessica.briggsbaffoe-djan@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jessica.briggsbaffoe-djan@education.ox.ac.uk), who will do their best to answer your query. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the relevant chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter in a reasonably expeditious manner:

Chair, **Social Sciences & Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee**; Email: [ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk);  
Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

## **14. Data Protection**

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study.

The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest.

Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/individualrights/>.

## **15. Further Information and Contact Details**

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Yvonne Iwai Yim  
Department of Education  
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY  
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024  
Email: [general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk)

### **Thank you**

Thank you for reading about my research. I hope this study interests you and that you would be interested in taking part.

# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

## Appendix B. CUREC Approval email

Friday, June 21, 2019 at 12:06:27 PM British Summer Time

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**Subject:** Re: Yvonne Yim (ALSLA) CUREC application  
**Date:** Friday, 22 February 2019 at 9:22:01 PM Greenwich Mean Time  
**From:** Sandra Mathers  
**To:** Yvonne Yim  
**CC:** Jessica Briggs Baffoe-Djan, Jackie Bridges  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg, image002.png, Sandra signature.png

Dear Yvonne and Jess

**“You speak good English”: Hong Kong students’ self-directed English accent preference as affected by L2 identity negotiation in a UK university ELF context**

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

If your research involves participants whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question (this includes those under 18 and vulnerable adults), then it is advisable to read the following NSPCC professional reporting requirements for cases of suspected abuse

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/factsheet-child-abuse-reporting-requirements-professionals.pdf>

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application you should submit details to [research.office@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:research.office@education.ox.ac.uk) for consideration.

Good luck with your research study.

With kind regards,

Sandra Mathers  
Department of Education  
University of Oxford

On 22/02/2019 20:52, Yvonne Yim wrote:

Dear Sandra,

Thank you for your reply regarding my CUREC application. I am sorry for omitting the details on how the recording will be done. I will be recording the interviews with a digital voice recorder (model: COOAU 1536Kbps Mini Dictaphone) and the recorder will be placed on a desk in front of the participants after obtaining their consent for recording.

Please let me know if more details should be provided regarding other areas of my study. Thank you very much for viewing my application.

Best regards,  
Yvonne



# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

## Appendix D. Questionnaire

### Appendix D.1 Questionnaire: Pilot 1



## Accent and Identity

Before starting filling in the questionnaire, please confirm the following information

	Please confirm whether the statements are true	
	True	False
I identify as being from Hong Kong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am <b>not</b> an English native speaker.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am currently studying in a <b>UK</b> university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am <b>18</b> or above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I <b>have read</b> the information above and <b>agree to participate</b> with the understanding that the data (including any <b>personal data</b> ) I submit will be processed accordingly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----page break-----

In the questionnaire, you'll be asked to **listen to several short recordings**, please complete the questionnaire in an environment that allows you to **play the recording clearly and loudly** or please have your **headphones** ready, or you are advised to return to the questionnaire at a more convenient time.

-----page break-----

Please answer the following questions. This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers – we are interested in your personal opinion – please give your answers sincerely. Thank you very much for your help.

1. What English accent do you **most** desire to speak in?

\_\_\_\_\_



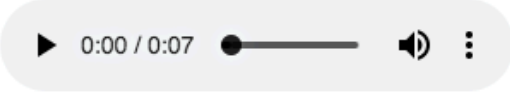


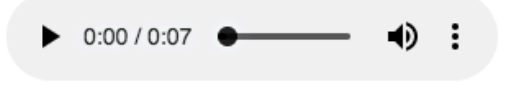
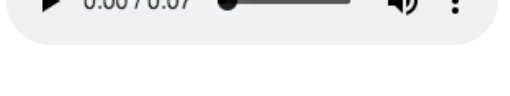
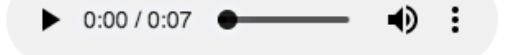
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## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

2. Listen to the following recordings and rate from 1-100 in terms of **how much you would like to speak English in the accent demonstrated in each recording.**

Please only rate the recording based on the **accent** demonstrated, not other voice qualities.

The sentence demonstrated: "I have a question from last Thursday's class. I can't quite grasp the idea of escape velocity, could you please explain it to me again?"

	Do not wish to speak in this accent	Extremely desire to speak in this accent
	0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100	
	<input type="range" value="0"/>	
	<input type="range" value="0"/>	
	<input type="range" value="0"/>	
	<input type="range" value="0"/>	
	<input type="range" value="0"/>	
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	<input type="range" value="0"/>	

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## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

3. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have tried to get rid of my Hong Kong accent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When speaking in English, I would like to sound as native as possible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hope that studying abroad will help me sound more like a native speaker of English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the best English pronunciation training is one that helps students achieve native-like accent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When speaking in English with someone not from Hong Kong, I like it when they can tell from my accent that I am from Hong Kong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable speaking English with my Hong Kong accent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It does not matter much if I speak with a native or HK accent as long as my speech is intelligible to others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am often self-aware about my accent when speaking English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think a person should not deliberately try to change their accent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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4. Please complete the sentence by describing your **feeling(s)** of speaking English in the UK.

**When speaking English in the UK, I feel... (because...)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please feel free to elaborate your answer)

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Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

5. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry that I cannot communicate well with locals because my English is not good enough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Studying in the UK makes me feel less competent in my English ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am always happy with people correcting my mistakes when I speak English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it unpleasant when someone asks if English is my second language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----page break-----

## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Finally, in order to help us to better interpret and classify your answers, please tell us more about your personal and language learning background.

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

2. What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which division do you belong to?

- Arts
- Humanities
- Social Science
- Natural Science
- Computer Science
- Medicine/ Medical Science
- Engineering
- Business
- Law
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many years have you learnt/ been able to speak English?

- less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 5-20 years
- more than 20 years

5. In what year did you start your study in the UK?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. In what language did you receive the **majority** of your primary and second education?

- Chinese
- English
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

7. What language do you **speak** the most in Hong Kong prior to arriving at the UK?

- Chinese
- English
- Mandarin



## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

8. Before coming to the UK for your study, have you stayed in an English-speaking country for over 1 month?

- Yes
- No

9. For how long did you stay abroad in this/these countri(es) and what was the purpose?

	Location	Length of stay (in month/year)	Purpose of stag (e.g. study, immigration etc.)
1			
2			
3			

10. What is the name of the university you are you currently enrolled in?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you intend to stay in the UK after you complete your study?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

12. Are you willing to participate in an interview with the researcher at a mutually convenient time and place? You will be compensated for your time.

- Yes
- No

Please leave your information below:

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

-----page break-----

We have tried to make this questionnaire as comprehensive as possible but you may feel that there are things we have missed out. Please write what you think below.

\_\_\_\_\_

-----End of survey-----

## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

### Appendix D2. Questionnaire: Pilot 2 - Likert scale items

#### A. SAP

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements 請選出你對以下的陳述同意程度

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When speaking in English with someone not from Hong Kong, I like it when they can tell from my accent that I am from Hong Kong 當我與非香港人用英語交談時，如果他們可以從我的口音知道我來自香港，我會很高興	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't see any problem with speaking in a Hong Kong accent 我認為用港式口音並沒有任何問題	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't mind speaking with a Hong Kong accent 我不介意自己有香港口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable speaking English with my Hong Kong accent 我喜歡用港式口音說英語	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have tried to get rid of my Hong Kong accent 我曾經嘗試擺脫我的港式口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel proud of the Hong Kong accent 我為港式口音感到自豪	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When speaking in English, I would like to sound as native as possible 當說英語時，我想盡可能地用純正地道口音 (native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hope that studying abroad will help me acquire a native English accent 我希望出國留學能幫助我獲得純正的英語口音(native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tried to change my accent so that I can sound more native 我有試過改變我的口音，以令我的英文聽起來更純正	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To me, improving pronunciation means mostly training to speak in a native accent 我認為要改善發音大致上意味著要追求純正地道口音(native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think having a native-like accent would give me more advantages 我認為純正英語口音會給我帶來更多的好處	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the best English pronunciation training is one that helps students achieve native-like accent 我認為最好的英語發音訓練是要幫助學生達致地道口音 (native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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It does not matter much if I speak with a native or HK accent as long as others understand me 只要別人聽懂我的話，我不介意自己用地道口音或香港口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think a person should not deliberately try to change their accent 我認為人們不應故意改變自己的口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have thought about seeking pronunciation training to improve my accent 我有想過尋求發音訓練，以改善我的英語口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am often self-aware about my accent when speaking English 在說英語的時候，我經常會介意自己的口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a particular accent goal 我以某一種特定口音作為目標	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

### B. English L2 Identity

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements

請選出你對以下的陳述同意程度

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK 即使我在英國留學，我也總是努力提高自己的英語水平	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes worry that I cannot communicate well with local because my English is not good enough 我有時擔心我的英語不夠好以致我不能與當地人溝通	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Studying in the UK makes me feel less competent in my English ability 在英國留學讓我覺得自己的英語能力其實沒有自己想像的好	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am always happy with people correcting my mistakes when I speak English 當我說英語時，我不會介意被人矯正我的錯誤	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel delighted if people tell me that I speak good English 如果有人告訴我說我的英語說得很好，我會感到很高興	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am sometimes nervous when speaking to native speakers of English 當我與當地人用英語溝通的時候，我有時會感到緊張	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes worry that people would judge my English 我有時會擔心其他人會批評我的英語	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it unpleasant when someone asks if English is my second language 我不喜歡別人問我英語是否是我的第二語言	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am 能夠說英語是我身分認同的不可分割的一部分	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language) 我覺得英語與說中文 (或我的其他第一語言) 一樣讓我能夠充分表達自己	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual 我認為自己是一個中英雙語的人	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident in using English 我對自己的英語能力有信心	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it unpleasant when people comment negatively about Hong Kong English 當人們對香港英語有負面評論時，我會感到很不愉快	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Appendix D3. Questionnaire: Pilot 3 - Likert scale items

A. SAP

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements  
請選出你對以下的陳述同意程度

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When speaking in English with someone not from Hong Kong, I like it when they can tell from my accent that I am from Hong Kong 當我與非香港人用英語交談時，如果他們可以從我的口音知道我來自香港，我會很高興	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't mind speaking with a Hong Kong accent 我不介意自己有香港口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable speaking English with my Hong Kong accent in general 我喜歡用港式口音說英語	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have tried to get rid of my Hong Kong accent 我曾經嘗試擺脫我的港式口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel proud of the Hong Kong accent 我為港式口音感到自豪	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When speaking in English, I would like to sound as native as possible 當說英語時，我想盡可能地用純正地道口音 (native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hope that studying abroad will help me acquire a native English accent 我希望出國留學能幫助我獲得純正的英語口音(native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tried to change my accent so that I can sound more native 我有試過改變我的口音，以令我的英文聽起來更純正	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think having a native-like accent would give me more advantages 我認為純正英語口音會給我帶來更多的好處	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the best English pronunciation training is one that helps students achieve native-like accent 我認為最好的英語發音訓練是要幫助學生達致地道口音 (native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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### B. English L2 Identity

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements

請選出你對以下的陳述同意程度

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK 即使我在英國留學，我也總是努力提高自己的英語水平	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes worry that I cannot communicate well with local because my English is not good enough 我有時擔心我的英語不夠好以致我不能與當地人溝通	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel delighted if people tell me that I speak good English 如果有人告訴我說我的英語說得很好，我會感到很高興	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am sometimes nervous when speaking to native speakers of English 當我與當地人用英語溝通的時候，我有時會感到緊張	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes worry that people would judge my English 我有時會擔心其他人會批評我的英語	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it unpleasant when someone asks if English is my second language 我不喜歡別人問我英語是否是我的第二語言	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am 能夠說英語是我身分認同的不可分割的一部分	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language) 我覺得英語與說中文 (或我的其他第一語言) 一樣讓我能夠充分表達自己	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual 我認為自己是一個中英雙語的人	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it unpleasant when people comment negatively about Hong Kong English 當人們對香港英語有負面評論時，我會感到很不愉快	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix D4. Detailed explanation of internal consistency measure of Likert scale items in pilot studies

**Pilot 1**

Number of cases: 25

The first pilot was carried out with 25 Hong Kong who studies in the UK, which matches the exact profile of the population. The Cronbach's alpha value for SAP (including L1, IC SAP and no preference) in the first pilot evaluates to a very low value of 0.081 (n=9). Cronbach's alpha values were also calculated for each SAP outcome and the internal consistency scores evaluate to 0.722, 0.824 and 0.577 respectively for L1, IC SAP and no preference. As for the second language identity construct, the Cronbach alpha's for SLI is 0.416 while the individual score for each SLI outcome is .348 (learner identity) and 0.374 (owner identity). Due to the low internal reliability values for the two constructs (SAP and SLA), it was decided that a second pilot was to be carried out with added items to the Likert-scales item sections.

*English learner identity* items are marked by interests in continuing to improve in the L2 and a sense of scepticism in their ability to communicate fluently in English. It was decided that items to be added in the second pilot accentuated participants' recognition of the power differentials between themselves and other English speakers. Similarly, the *English owner identity* items aimed to express a sense that the language, instead of being foreign to the participants, is an integral part of their self-perceived identity (item 1 and 2), being at par with their first language. It was decided that added items in the second pilot would be informed by and formulated in lines with the legitimate knowledge/ language allegiance framework (Rampton, 1990; Park, 2011). Therefore, items focusing on participant's confidence in their L2 ability and their feeling of being legitimate speakers of English (i.e. legitimate knowledge), as well as the positive sentiment they attach to English (language allegiance).

**SLI**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.416	8

**SLI – English owner**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.374	4

**SLI – English learner**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.348	4

**SAP**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.081	9

**SAP – Inner-circle SAP**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.824	3

**SAP – L1-influenced SAP**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.722	3

**SAP – No preference**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.577	3

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**Item-Total Statistics (SLI\_owner)**

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SLI_owner_1	I find it unpleasant when someone asks if English is my second language	.589
SLI_owner_2	Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am	-.142
SLI_owner_3	I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language)	-.010
SLI_owner_4	I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual	.458

**Item-Total Statistics (SLI\_learner)**

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SLI_learner_1	I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK	.433
SLI_learner_2	I worry that I cannot communicate well with locals because my English is not good enough	.377
SLI_learner_3	Studying in the UK makes me feel less competent in my English ability	.019
SLI_learner_4	I am always happy with people correcting my mistakes when I speak English	.227

**Item-Total Statistics (SAP\_IC)**

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAP_IC_1	When speaking in English, I would like to sound as native as possible	.735
SAP_IC_2	I hope that studying abroad will help me sound more like a native speaker of English	.788
SAP_IC_3	I think the best English pronunciation training is one that helps students achieve native-like accent	.739

**Item-Total Statistics (SAP\_L1)**

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAP_L1_1_recode	I have tried to get rid of my Hong Kong accent	.696
SAP_L1_2	When speaking in English with someone not from Hong Kong, I like it when they can tell from my accent that I am from Hong Kong	.736
SAP_L1_3	I feel comfortable speaking English with my Hong Kong accent	.421

**Item-Total Statistics (SAP\_no\_pre)**

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAP_nopre_1	It does not matter much if I speak with a native or HK accent as long as my speech is intelligible to others	.649
SAP_nopre_2_recode	I am often self-aware about my accent when speaking English	.418
SAP_nopre_3	I think a person should not deliberately try to change their accent	.346



## Pilot 2

Number of cases: 21

A second pilot was conducted with 22 UK-based HK students matching exactly the profile of the population. New items informed by theories were added to pilot 2. Based on the reliability statistics of the second pilot data, items that contributes to lower Cronbach's alpha value for respective constructs were removed: SLI\_owner\_1 ; SLI\_learner\_3; SLI\_learner\_4; SAP\_IC\_2, SAP\_L1\_3. However, in view of the low Cronbach's alpha value, it was decided that each English-owner SLI; English-learner SLI; IC-SAP; L1-SAP to be considered independently as sub-constructs where internal consistency values would be calculated for separately. At the same time, no-preference SAP items would be removed and represented by a neutral point on all SAP items. The proposed changes were applied to a third pilot.

### SLI

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.519	13

#### SLI – English owner

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.447	6

#### SLI – English learner

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.526	7

### SAP

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.594	17

#### SAP – Inner-circle SAP

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.859	6

#### SAP – L1-influenced SAP

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.809	6

#### SAP – No preference

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.668	5

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Item-Total Statistics (SLI\_owner)

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SLI_owner_1	<del>I find it unpleasant when someone asks if English is my second language</del> 我不喜歡別人問我英語是否是我的第二語言	.663
SLI_owner_2	Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am 能夠說英語是我身分認同的不可分割的一部分	.550
SLI_owner_3	I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language) 我覺得英語與說中文 (或我的其他第一語言) 一樣讓我能夠充分表達自己	.532
SLI_owner_4	I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual 我認為自己是一個中英雙語的人	.540
SLI_owner_5	I am confident in using English 我對自己的英語能力有信心	.566
SLI_owner_6	I find it unpleasant when people comment negatively about Hong Kong English 當人們對香港英語有負面評論時，我會感到很不愉快	.560

Item-Total Statistics (SLI\_learner)

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SLI_learner_1	I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK 即使我在英國留學，我也總是努力提高自己的英語水平	.499
SLI_learner_2	I sometimes worry that I cannot communicate well with local because my English is not good enough 我有時擔心我的英語不夠好以致我不能與當地人溝通	.518
SLI_learner_3	<del>Studying in the UK makes me feel less competent in my English ability</del> 在英國留學讓我覺得自己的英語能力其實沒有自己想像的好	.577
SLI_learner_4	<del>I am always happy with people correcting my mistakes when I speak English</del> 當我說英語時，我不會介意被人矯正我的錯誤	.610
SLI_learner_5	I would feel delighted if a native speaker tells me that I speak good English 如果有人告訴我說我的英語說得很好，我會感到很高興	.520
SLI_learner_6	I am sometimes nervous when speaking to native speakers of English 當我與當地人用英語溝通的時候，我有時會感到緊張	.516
SLI_learner_7	I sometimes worry that people would judge my English 我有時會擔心其他人會批評我的英語	.496

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Item-Total Statistics (SAP\_IC)

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAP_IC_1	When speaking in English, I would like to sound as native as possible 當說英語時，我想盡可能地用純正地道口音 (native accent)	.524
SAP_IC_2	I hope that studying abroad will help me acquire a native English accent 我希望出國留學能幫助我獲得純正的英語口音(native accent)	.586
SAP_IC_3	To me, improving pronunciation means mostly training to speak in a native accent 我認為要改善發音大致上意味著要追求純正地道口音(native accent)	.500
SAP_IC_4	I tried to change my accent so that I can sound more native 我有試過改變我的口音，以令我的英文聽起來更純正	.531
SAP_IC_5	I think having a native-like accent would give me more advantages 我認為純正英語口音會給我帶來更多的好處	.540
SAP_IC_6	I think the best English pronunciation training is one that helps students achieve native-like accent 我認為最好的英語發音訓練是要幫助學生達致地道口音 (native accent)	.461

Item-Total Statistics (SAP\_L1)

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAP_L1_1	When speaking in English with someone not from Hong Kong, I like it when they can tell from my accent that I am from Hong Kong 當我與非香港人用英語交談時，如果他們可以從我的口音知道我來自香港，我會很高興	.512
SAP_L1_2	I feel comfortable speaking English with my Hong Kong accent 我喜歡用港式口音說英語	.546
SAP_L1_3	<del>I don't see any problem with speaking in a Hong Kong accent</del> 我認為用港式口音並沒有任何問題	<del>.665</del>
SAP_L1_4	I don't mind speaking with a Hong Kong accent 我不介意自己有香港口音	.454
SAP_L1_5_recode	I have tried to get rid of my Hong Kong accent 我曾經嘗試擺脫我的港式口音	.492
SAP_L1_6	I feel proud of the Hong Kong accent 我為港式口音感到自豪	.591

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Item-Total Statistics (SAP\_no\_pre)

		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAP_nopre_1	It does not matter much if I speak with a native or HK accent as long as others understand me 只要別人聽懂我的話，我不介意自己用地道口音或香港口音	.557
SAP_nopre_2	I think a person should not deliberately try to change their accent 我認為人們不應故意改變自己的口音	.486
SAP_nopre_3 _recode	I have thought about seeking pronunciation training to improve my accent 我有想過尋求發音訓練，以改善我的英語口音	.567
SAP_nopre_4 _recode	I am often self-aware about my accent when speaking English 在說英語的時候，我經常會介意自己的口音	.543
SAP_nopre_5 _recode	I have a particular accent goal 我以某一種特定口音作為目標	.597

### Pilot 3

Number of cases: 19

A third pilot was conducted with 19 UK-based HK students. Results from pilot 3 indicates that the questionnaire has good reliability (Cronbach's alpha value for each sub-constructs evaluates above .7). A preliminary analysis was performed on the pilot data and found insignificant correlation between SAP and SLI with overall IC-SAP scoring significantly higher than L1-SAP ( $t(19) = -12.626, p < 0.05$ ). An insignificant correlation foregrounds a profound attachment to native among HK students despite awareness of right to speak and desire to claim ownership over English.

#### SLI – English owner

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.702	5

#### SLI – English learner

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.749	5

#### SAP – Inner-circle SAP

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.832	5

#### SAP – L1-influenced SAP

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.788	5

#### Correlations

		mean SAP IC	mean SAP L1	mean SLI owner	mean SLI learner
mean_SAP_IC	Pearson Correlation	1	-.396	.378	.301
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.093	.110	.211
	N	19	19	19	19
mean_SAP_L1	Pearson Correlation	-.396	1	.200	.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.093		.411	.707
	N	19	19	19	19
mean_SLI_owner	Pearson Correlation	.378	.200	1	.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.110	.411		.504
	N	19	19	19	19
mean_SLI_learner	Pearson Correlation	.301	.092	.164	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.211	.707	.504	
	N	19	19	19	19

Appendix D5. Final questionnaire



Accent and Identity

**Invitation**

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project. Before you decide to take part, it is important to understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part in this study.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This study investigates the relationship between self-directed English accent preference (SAP) among UK-based Hong Kong students and the extent to which they claim ownership of the English language. Previous researches examining Hong Kong students' accent preference have been largely done in the Hong Kong context where English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communications take place at a limited extent. Therefore, I would like to understand how the global spread of ELF creates space of “non-native” English users to take up ownership over the language as legitimate speakers through the lenses of SAP.

The results of the study will hopefully add to the current understanding of how ELF broadens the notion of English ownership, specifically to population whose first language is not English. In addition, the study hopes to challenge ELT practices that hold native-speaker norms as model, and accentuate the significance of agency among English as a second language users in claiming ownership of their own learning, whereby liberating themselves from the ascribed identity as “non-native” and “perpetual learners”.

**Why have I been invited to take part?**

You have been invited because you are a Hong Kong student undertaking your undergraduate or postgraduate study in a UK university and are aged between 18-30. You are also advanced users of English. I am interested in your experience in using English in the UK and how your experiences shape your preference for English accent in your own speech.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is your decision whether or not to take part in this study. You can ask questions about the research before deciding whether or not to participate. If you do agree to participate, you may withdraw yourself from the study at any time, without giving a reason, by exiting the questionnaire.

**Data Protection**

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest.

**Who do I contact if I have a concern about the study or I wish to complain?**

If you have concerns as regards any aspect of this study, please speak to me at 07935599456 or email to [yvonne.yim@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:yvonne.yim@education.ox.ac.uk), or my supervisor Dr Jessica Briggs Baffoe-Djan at 01865611022 or email to [jessica.briggsbaffoe-djan@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jessica.briggsbaffoe-djan@education.ox.ac.uk). The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the relevant chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter in a reasonably expeditious manner: Chair, Social Sciences & Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee; Email: [ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk); Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

For more information of the study, please go to <https://docdro.id/MWC5AVs>

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# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or academic penalty.
3. I understand that research data collected during the study may be looked at by designated individuals from the University of Oxford where it is relevant to my taking part in this study. I give permission for these individuals to access my data.
4. I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.
5. I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.
6. I understand how this research will be written up and published.
7. I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.
8. I consent to being audio recorded
9. I understand how audio recordings will be used in research outputs
10. I agree to take part in the study

By clicking “Next”, you agree to participate in this study. If you do not wish to participate, please do not continue.

- Next
- I do not wish to continue

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## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Before starting filling in the questionnaire, please confirm the following information

在開始回答問卷之前，請確認以下資料。

	Please confirm whether the statements are true 請確認陳述是否正確	
	True 正確	False 不正確
I identify as being from Hong Kong 我來自香港	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am <b>not</b> an English native speaker. 英文 <b>不是</b> 我的母語。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am currently studying in a <b>UK</b> university 我目前在 <b>英國</b> 留學(大學)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am <b>18</b> or above 我是 <b>18</b> 歲或以上	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I <b>have read</b> the information above and <b>agree to participate</b> with the understanding that the data (including any <b>personal data</b> ) I submit will be processed accordingly 我已閱讀上述信息並同意參與，並了解我提交的資料(包括任何 <b>個人資料</b> )將被相應處理	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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In the questionnaire, you'll be asked to **listen to several short recordings**, please complete the questionnaire in an environment that allows you to **play the recording clearly and loudly** or please have your **headphones** ready, or you are advised to return to the questionnaire at a more convenient time.

在問卷的其中一部份，你將需要**聆聽一些錄音(短句)**。請你在一個**可以播放錄音的環境**中完成問卷，或請你準備你的**耳機**。如果有需要的話，你可以在能夠聆聽錄音的時候才填寫問卷。

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Please answer the following questions. This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers – we are interested in your personal opinion – please give your answers sincerely. Thank you very much for your help.  
請回答以下問題。這不是測試，所並沒有“正確”或“錯誤”的答案 - 我們對你的個人意見感興趣 - 請真誠地回答。非常感謝你的幫助。

6. What English accent do you **most** desire to speak in?  
你最想用什麼口音(accent)說英語？

\_\_\_\_\_



# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

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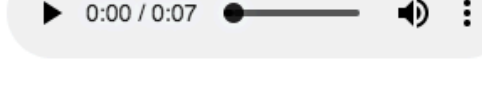

7. Listen to the following recordings and rate from 1-100 in terms of **how much you would like to speak English in the accent demonstrated in each recording.**

請聆聽以下錄音，並用 1-100 分來表明你有多想用錄音中演示的口音來說英語。

Please only rate the recording based on the **accent** demonstrated, not other voice qualities.

請僅根據每段錄音的口音評分，而不是其他聲音質量。

The sentence demonstrated 錄音語句: "I have a question from last Thursday's class. I can't quite grasp the idea of escape velocity, could you please explain it to me again?"

	Do not wish to speak in this accent		Extremely desire to speak in this accent								
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										
	<input type="range" value="10"/>										

Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

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8. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements  
請選出你對以下的陳述同意程度

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When speaking in English, I would like to sound as native as possible 當說英語時，我想盡可能地用純正地道口音 (native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hope that studying abroad will help me acquire a native English accent 我希望出國留學能幫助我獲得純正的英語口音(native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tried to change my accent so that I can sound more native 我有試過改變我的口音，以令我的英文聽起來更純正	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think having a native-like accent would give me more advantages 我認為純正英語口音會給我帶來更多的好處	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the best English pronunciation training is one that helps students achieve native-like accent 我認為最好的英語發音訓練是要幫助學生達致地道口音 (native accent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When speaking in English with someone not from Hong Kong, I like it when they can tell from my accent that I am from Hong Kong 當我與非香港人用英語交談時，如果他們可以從我的口音知道我來自香港，我會很高興	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't mind speaking with a Hong Kong accent 我不介意自己有香港口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable speaking English with my Hong Kong accent in general 我喜歡用港式口音說英語	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have tried to get rid of my Hong Kong accent 我曾經嘗試擺脫我的港式口音	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel proud of the Hong Kong accent 我為港式口音感到自豪	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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9. Please complete the sentence by describing your **feeling(s)** of speaking English in the UK.  
請完成以下句子以描述你在英國說英語的**感受**。

**When speaking English in the UK, I feel... (because...)**  
在英國說英語時，我感到.....(因為.....)

(Please feel free to elaborate your answer. 你可以選擇闡述你的想法)  
(You can choose to answer in either Chinese or English 可以用中文或英文回答)

Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

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10. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements  
請選出你對以下的陳述同意程度

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Being able to speak English is an inseparable part of who I am 能夠說英語是我身分認同的不可分割的一部分	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that English can help me express myself as much as Cantonese (or my other first language) 我覺得英語與說中文 (或我的其他第一語言) 一樣讓我能夠充分表達自己	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see myself as a Chinese-English bilingual 我認為自己是一個中英雙語的人	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident in using English 我對自己的英語能力有信心	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it unpleasant when people comment negatively about Hong Kong English 當人們對香港英語有負面評論時，我會感到很不愉快	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always try to improve my English even when I study abroad in the UK 即使我在英國留學，我也總是努力提高自己的英語水平	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes worry that I cannot communicate well with local because my English is not good enough 我有時擔心我的英語不夠好以致我不能與當地人溝通	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel delighted if people tell me that I speak good English 如果有人告訴我我的英語說得很好，我會感到很高興	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am sometimes nervous when speaking to native speakers of English 當我與當地人用英語溝通的時候，我有時會感到緊張	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes worry that people would judge my English 我有時會擔心其他人會批評我的英語	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Finally, in order to help us to better interpret and classify your answers, please tell us more about your personal and language learning background.

最後，為讓我們可以更充份地分析你的答案，請告訴我們一些有關你的個人和語言學習背景的資料。

1. What is your gender? 你的性別是什麼？
  - Male 男
  - Female 女
  - Non-binary 非二元性別
  - Prefer not to say 不想透露
  
2. What is your age? 你的年齡是什麼？  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Which division do you belong to? 你就讀的學科屬於哪個學院？
  - Arts 文學/藝術
  - Humanities 人文
  - Social Science 社會科學
  - Natural Science 自然科學
  - Computer Science 計算機科學
  - Medicine/ Medical Science 醫學
  - Engineering 工程學
  - Business 商學
  - Law 法律
  - Other (please specify) 其他(請指明): \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How many years have you learnt/ been able to speak English? 你學了/能說英語多少年？
  - less than 5 years 少於 5 年
  - 5-10 years 5-10 年
  - 10-15 years 10-15 年
  - 5-20 years 15-20 年
  - more than 20 years 多於 20 年
  
5. In what year did you start your study in the UK? 你在哪一年開始在英國留學？  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. In what language did you receive the **majority** of your primary and second education?  
你的小學和中學教育**大部分**是用什麼語言進行？
  - Chinese 中文
  - English 英文

## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Other (please specify) 其他(請指明): \_\_\_\_\_

7. What language do you **speak** the most in Hong Kong prior to arriving at the UK? 在來英國讀書前，你在香港使用什麼語言最多(口語)?

- Chinese 中文
- English 英文
- Mandarin 普通話
- Other (please specify) 其他(請指明): \_\_\_\_\_

8. Before coming to the UK for your study, have you stayed in an English-speaking country for over 1 month? 在來英國流學之前，你有否在其他國家逗留超過 1 個月?

- Yes 有
- No 沒有

9. For how long did you stay abroad in this/these country(es) and what was the purpose? 在這個/這些國家逗留多久了? 目的是什麼?

	Location 地點	Length of stay (in month/ year) 逗留時間 (月/年) e.g. 1 month; 2 years	Purpose of stay (e.g. study, immigration etc.) 逗留目的 (例如學習, 移民等)
1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

10. What is the name of the university you are you currently enrolled in? 你在英國就讀的大學名稱是什麼?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you intend to stay in the UK after you complete your study? 完成學業後，你打算留在英國嗎?

- Yes 會
- No 不會
- Not sure 未知

## Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

12. Are you willing to participate in an interview with the researcher at a mutually convenient time and place? You will be compensated for your time.

你願意接受訪問嗎 (在你方便的時間和地點進行)? 你的時間會被補償。

- Yes 願意
- No 不願意

Please leave your information below 請留下你的資料

First Name 名字 \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name 姓氏 \_\_\_\_\_

Email 電郵 \_\_\_\_\_

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We have tried to make this questionnaire as comprehensive as possible but you may feel that there are things we have missed out. Please write what you think below.

我們盡力想令這份問卷變得更全面。如果你覺得有任何有關英語口音及英國留學的題材我們沒有提及, 請留下你的想法。

\_\_\_\_\_

-----End of survey-----

Appendix E. Background information of speakers in the accent rating section

**Speaker A (General American)** was born in Portland, Oregon, United States in 1994. She has no previous living abroad experience (more than 1 month), though she studied in Los Angeles for 4 years. She does not speak any foreign language besides English. She is living in Portland, Oregon at the time of the recording.

**Speaker B (Southern British)** was born in Totton, Southampton, UK, in 1993. She has lived in Brussels, Belgium for 2 years up to the time of the recording. She reported experience of learning Belgian at beginner level while at Brussel but used English for daily communication with non-English-L1 speakers. She also studied abroad in Vancouver, Canada for 3 months. She does not speak any foreign language besides English.

**Speaker C (Irish)** was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1994. She has one-year SA experience in England for her postgraduate study and is continuing her study in Dublin at the time of the recording. She reported mostly using English with other English-natives while studying abroad in England as her programme consisted of mostly English-natives.

**Speaker D (New Zealand)** was born in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1993. She studied for one year in a UK university and is working in New Zealand at the time of the recording. She reported mostly using English with other English natives while studying abroad in England and using English with other non-English-L1 speakers mainly in academic contexts (lectures and academic-related discussion) and sometimes for casual conversations.

**Speaker I (HK)** was born in HK in 1996 and had no living abroad experience. She received her primary education in Cantonese and completed her secondary and higher education using English as MOI. She was a final year student in the English teacher training programme (EMI) in a university in HK. She had no SA experience and reported using Cantonese with her friends in HK.

**Speaker II (Indian)** was born in Mumbai, India in 1995. At the time of the recording, she works and lives in Bonn, Germany (had stayed for 10 months). She received all her education

Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

in English and reported using English as her first language besides her other native language, Marathi. She mostly used English with her friends in Germany and her other co-nationals.

**Speaker III (Singaporean)** was born in Singapore in 1992. She has one-year SA experience in a UK university for her postgraduate study and is living in Singapore at the time of the recording. She reported using English most frequently in Singapore with other multilingual co-nationals. She also spoke Mandarin, Japanese and Korean in other contexts.

**Speaker IV (HK)** was born in HK in 1996. She studied nursing in a HK university (English materials but mostly with Cantonese instructions) and was working in HK at the time of the recording. She reported using Chinese for the majority of her primary and secondary education. She spoke Cantonese with her friends and seldom used English for daily communication. She speaks Cantonese fluently and speaks intermediate Mandarin.



# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

## Appendix F. Poster advertisement

### **UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY  
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027  
[general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk) [www.education.ox.ac.uk](http://www.education.ox.ac.uk)

**Director Professor Jo-Anne Baird**



### **Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities**

#### **SURVEY INVITATION**

This study investigates the relationship between self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students studying abroad in UK universities and their second language identity.

We are looking for participants, aged 18-30, who are Hong Kong 1-year (both undergraduate and postgraduate) students studying in a UK university. We are looking for participants identify as non-native English speakers and being from Hong Kong. You would be invited to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire should take around 10 minutes to complete.

If you are interested and would like more information please contact Yvonne Iwai Yim at the Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens Oxford on +44(0)07935599456 or [yvonne.yim@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:yvonne.yim@education.ox.ac.uk). There is no obligation to take part.

You will be compensated for your time.

Thank you!

Appendix G. List of Hong Kong societies where questionnaire was advertised

1. Cambridge University Hong Kong Postgraduate Scholars Association
2. Cardiff University Hong Kong Society
3. Coventry University Hong Kong Society
4. Dundee University Hong Kong Society
5. Edinburgh University Hong Kong International Society
6. Glasgow University Hong Kong Society
7. Imperial College Hong Kong Public Awareness and Social Service Society
8. King's College London Chinese Society
9. Lancaster University Hong Kong Society
10. London School of Economics and Political Science Chinese Society
11. London School of Economics and Political Science Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society
12. Newcastle University Hong Kong Society
13. Oxford University Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Services Society
14. Oxford University Hong Kong Scholars Association
15. Strathclyde University Hong Kong Society
16. University of Bath Hong Kong Society
17. University of Birmingham Hong Kong Cultural Society
18. University of Brighton Hong Kong Society
19. University of Bristol Hong Kong Society
20. University of East Anglia Hong Kong Society
21. University of Exeter Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society
22. University Of Exeter Hong Kong Society
23. University of Kent Hong Kong Society
24. University of Leeds Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society
25. University of Liverpool Hong Kong Society
26. University of Manchester Chinese Student Society
27. University of Manchester Hong Kong Public Affairs & Social Services Society
28. University of Nottingham Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Services
29. University of Portsmouth Hong Kong Society
30. University of Reading Hong Kong Society
31. University of Sheffield Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Services Society
32. University of Southampton Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society
33. University of Surrey Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Services Society
34. University of Sussex Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Services Society
35. University of the Arts London - Hong Kong
36. University of York Hong Kong Society
37. Warwick University Hong Kong Society

Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Appendix H. Participant demographic information

**A. Gender**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	57	49.1
Female	59	50.9
Total	116	100.0

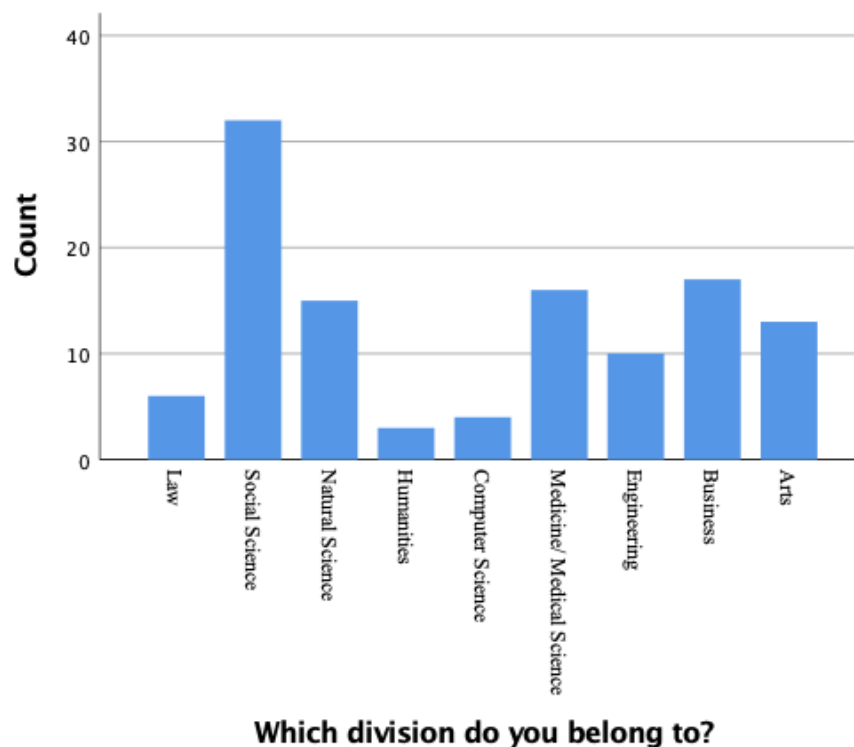
**B. Length of Stay in UK**

Length of Stay in UK	
Mean	2.89
Median	2.00
Variance	4.59
Std. Deviation	2.14
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	9.00

**C. Age**

Age	
Mean	21.4
Median	20.0
Variance	7.14
Std. Deviation	2.67
Minimum	18.0
Maximum	36.0

**D. Division affiliation**



### E. MOI for Education in HK

#### In what language did you receive the majority of your primary and second education?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Chinese	29	25.2
	English	74	63.8
	Other (please specify)	12	10.3
	Total	115	99.1
Missing	System	1	.9
Total		116	100.0

- Other includes:
1. Using Chinese in primary education and English in secondary education
  2. Using Chinese for verbal instructions and English for textbooks and written materials
  3. Using English in primary education and Chinese in secondary education

### F. Years of English learning/ speaking experience

#### How many years have you learnt/ been able to speak English?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	5-10 years	2	1.7
	10-15 years	25	21.6
	15-20 years	67	57.8
	more than 20 years	21	18.1
	Total	115	99.1
Missing	System	1	.9
Total		116	100

### G. Language most frequently spoken prior to coming to the UK

What language do you speak the most in Hong Kong prior to arriving at the UK?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Cantonese	107	92.2
	English	6	5.2
	Mandarin	1	.9
	Other (please specify)	1	.9
	Total	115	99.1
Missing	System	1	.9
Total		116	100

#### **H. List of university participants were enrolled in**

1. City University of London
2. Durham University
3. Imperial College London
4. Keele University
5. Lancaster University
6. Leeds College of Music
7. London School of Economics and Political Science
8. Newcastle University
9. Queen Mary, University of London
10. Swansea University
11. The University of Manchester
12. University College London
13. University of Bath
14. University of Brighton
15. University of Bristol
16. University of Cambridge
17. University of Dundee
18. University of Edinburgh
19. University of Exeter
20. University of Glasgow
21. University of Kent
22. University of Leeds
23. University of Liverpool
24. University of Nottingham
25. University of Oxford
26. University of Sheffield
27. University of Southampton
28. University of Strathclyde
29. University of Surrey
30. University of The Arts London
31. University of York

Appendix I. Detailed description of chosen text for accenting rating section

The selected text:

*“I have a question from last Thursday's class. I can't quite grasp the idea of escape velocity. Could you please explain it to me again?”*

- (i) /θ/ substitution with /f/ in HK accent e.g. *Thursday* ['fɜ:zdeɪ]; with /t/ or /d/ in Singaporean accent e.g. *Thursday* ['tɜ:zdeɪ]; with /t/ in Indian accent e.g. *Thursday* ['tɜ:zdeɪ];
- (ii) Conflation of /l/ and /r/ in consonant cluster in HK accent, e.g. *grasp* [grɑ:sp];
- (iii) addition of a final vowel in Chinese accent, e.g. *last* [lɑ:stə]
- (iv) substantial nasalisation of a vowel before a final /n/, often accompanied by omission of the /n/, in Chinese accent, e.g. *explain* [ɪks'pleɪ̃]
- (v) Intervocalic /t/ substitution with /d/ in Indian and Singaporean accent, e.g. *velocity* [vɪ'lɒsɪdɪ]
- (vi) Increasing realisation of /r/ in non-prevocalic positions in Indian accent, e.g. *Thursday* ['tɜrzdeɪ]

The selected text also present words that induce different phonetic realization among “native” varieties of English, including:

- (i) Intervocalic /t/ realized as flap “t” /ɾ/ in general American accent, e.g. *velocity* [və'ləsəɾɪ]
- (ii) Fronted realization of /ɑ:/ in general American accent with /æ/, e.g. *last* [læst], *class* [klæs] and *grasp* [græsp];
- (iii) Fortition of dental fricatives to alveolar stops in Irish accent, e.g. *Thursday* ['tɜrz,deɪ]
- (iv) centralised onset of /ai/ in Irish accent, e.g. *quite* [kwqɪt] (Hickey, 2004)
- (v) /ɛ/ raising in New Zealand accent, e.g. *again* [ə'gɛɪn] and *question* 'kwɛstʃən (Evans & Watson, 2004)

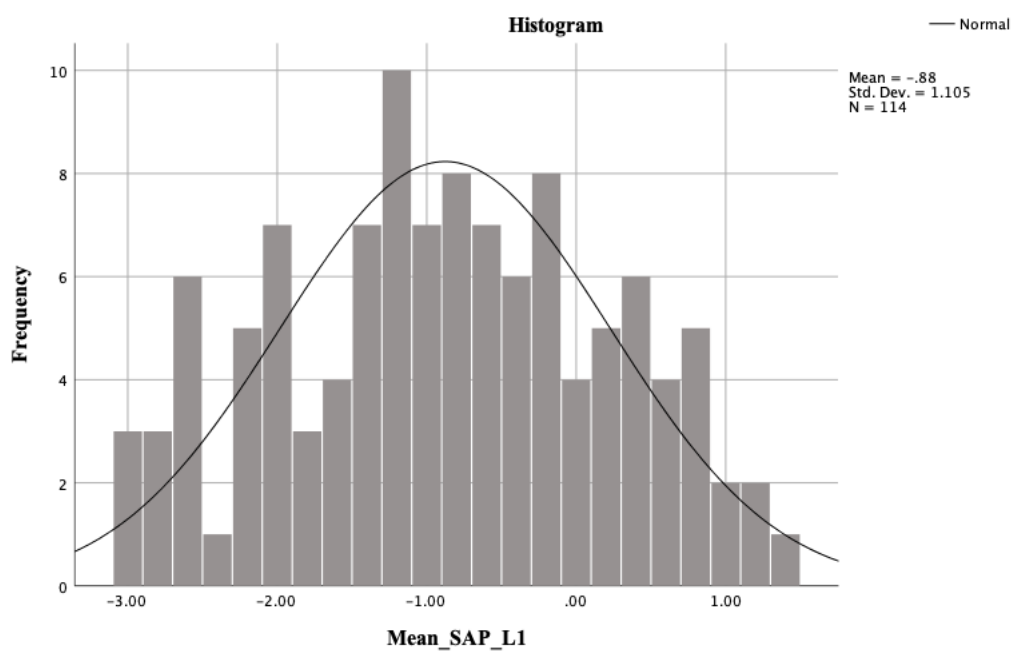
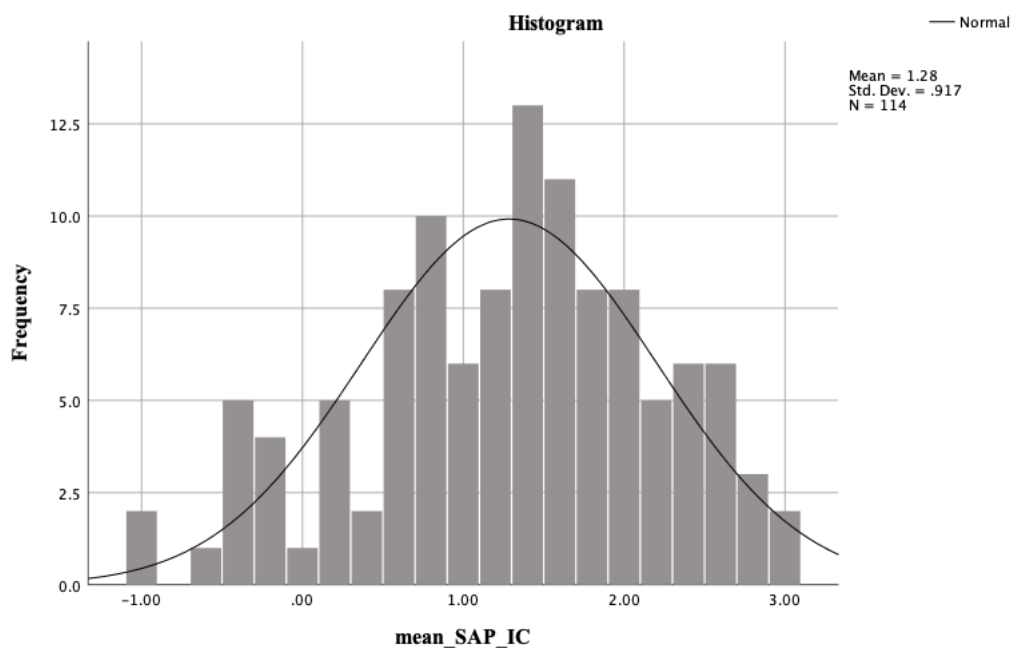
Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Appendix J. Distribution normality of survey variables

		Statistic	Std. Error	
mean_SAP_IC	Mean	1.2842	.08589	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	1.1140	
		Upper Bound	1.4544	
	Variance	.841		
	Std. Deviation	.91705		
	Interquartile Range	1.25		
	Skewness	-.355	.226	
	Kurtosis	-.355	.449	
Mean_SAP_L1	Mean	-.8772	.10349	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	-1.0822	
		Upper Bound	-.6722	
	Variance	1.221		
	Std. Deviation	1.10494		
	Interquartile Range	1.65		
	Skewness	-.045	.226	
	Kurtosis	-.795	.449	
mean_SLI_owner	Mean	4.4351	.05851	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.3192	
		Upper Bound	4.5510	
	Variance	.390		
	Std. Deviation	.62471		
	Interquartile Range	1.05		
	Skewness	-.189	.226	
	Kurtosis	-.731	.449	
mean_SLI_learner	Mean	4.3053	.07485	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.1570	
		Upper Bound	4.4536	
	Variance	.639		
	Std. Deviation	.79921		
	Interquartile Range	1.00		
	Skewness	-.120	.226	
	Kurtosis	-.129	.449	

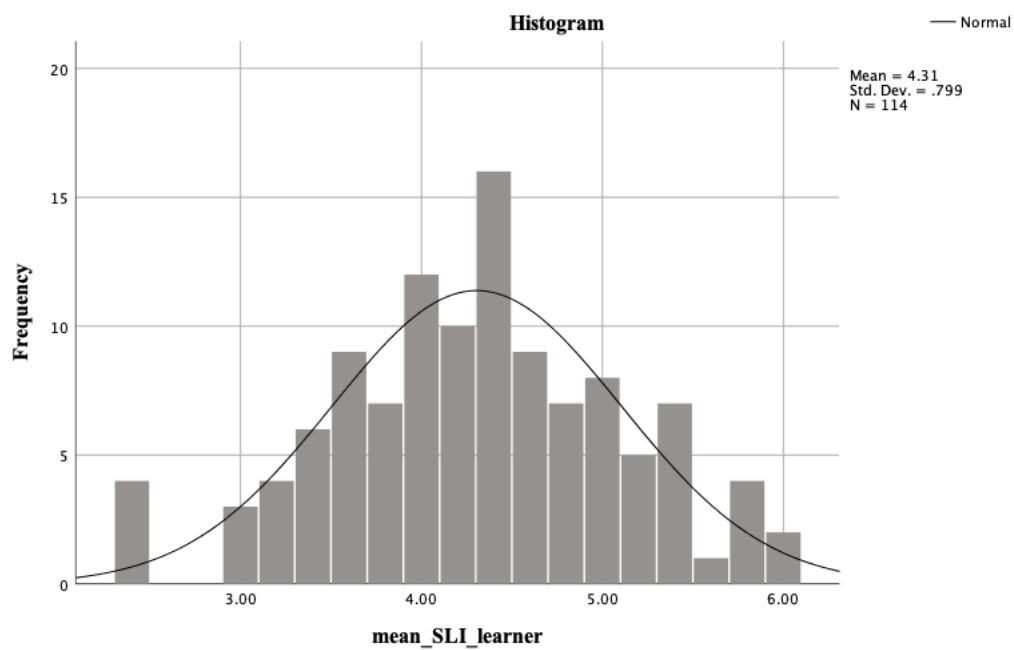
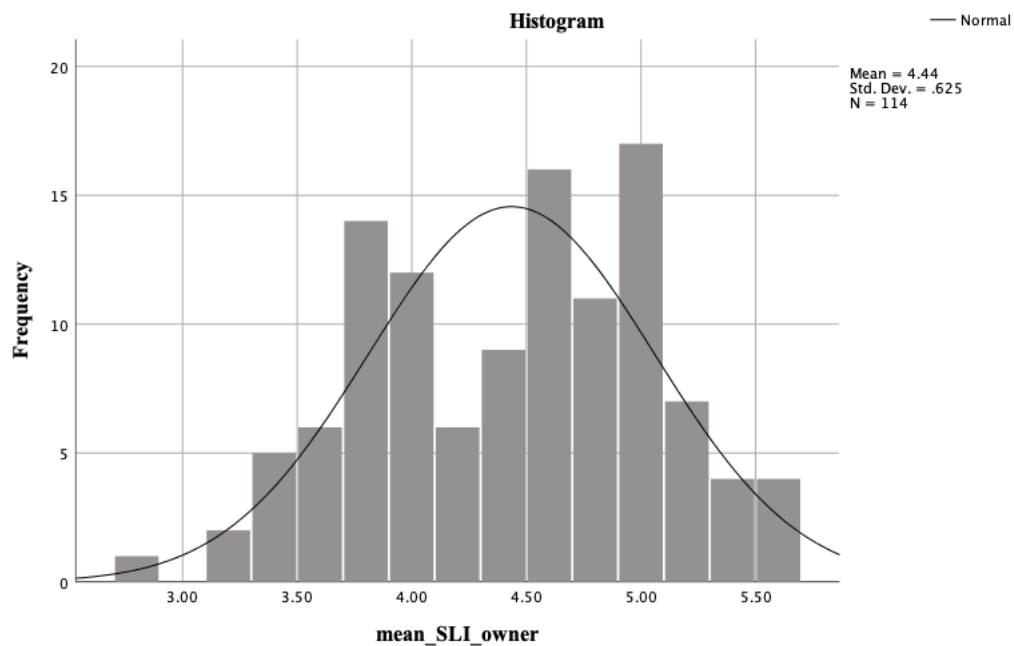
Tests of Normality			
	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
mean_SAP_IC	.977	114	.045
Mean_SAP_L1	.978	114	.061
mean_SLI_owner	.969	114	.010
mean_SLI_learner	.984	114	.190

Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

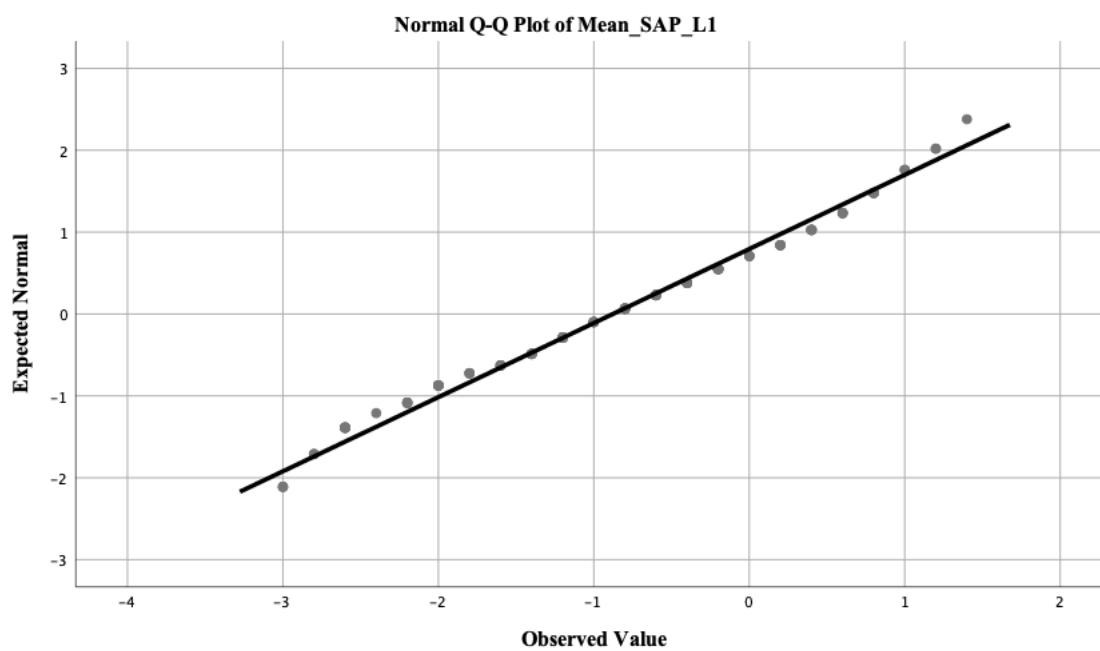
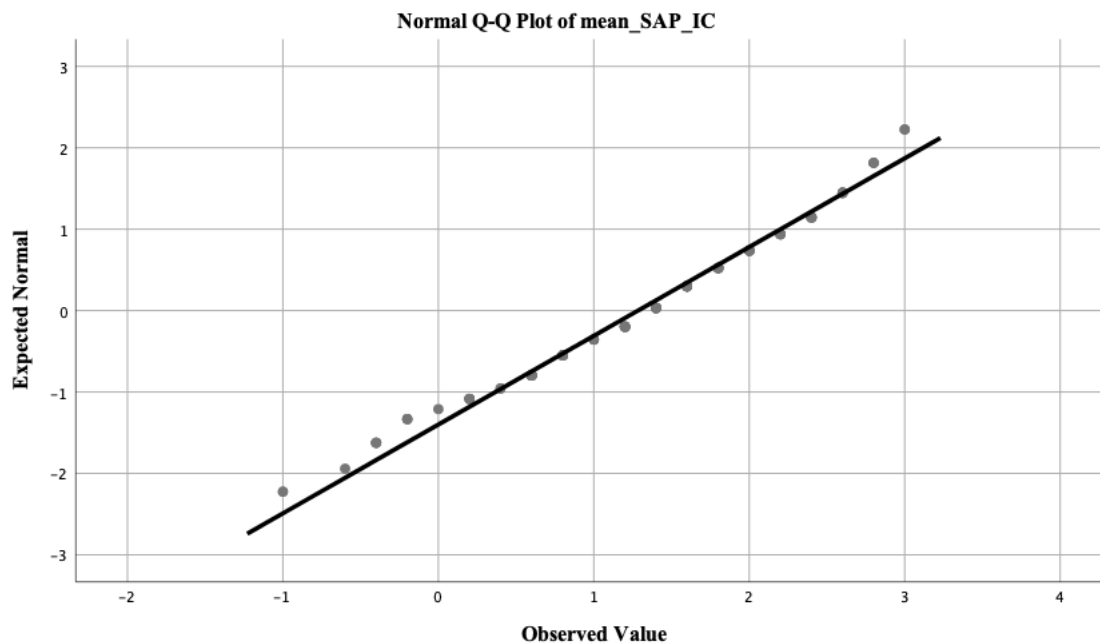




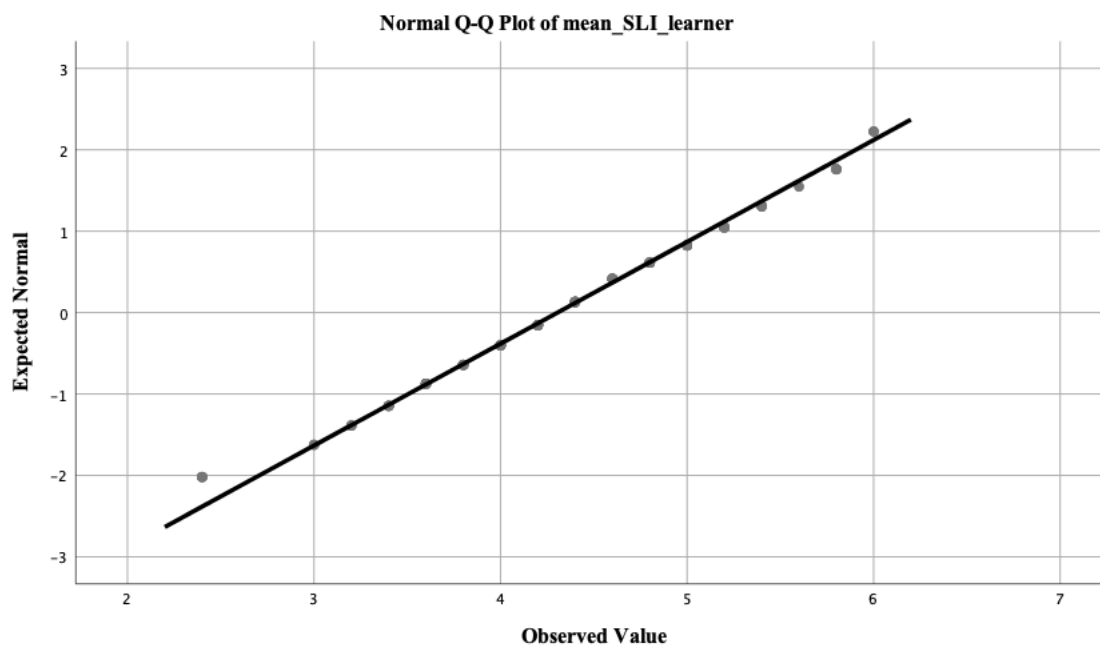
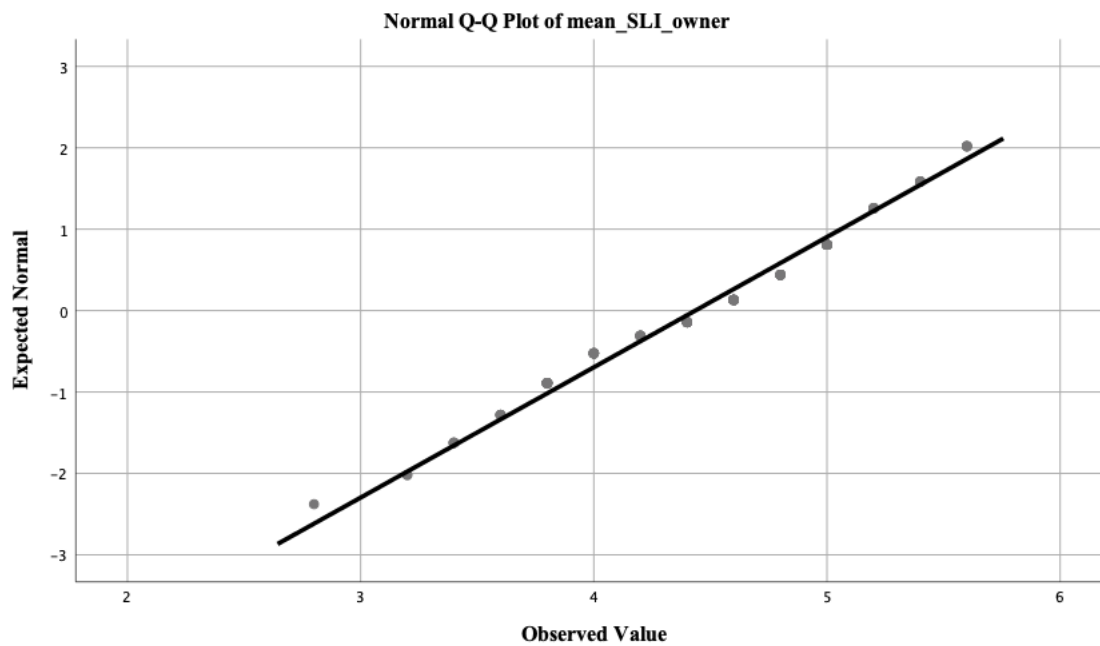
# Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities



Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities



Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities



Appendix K. Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients of constructs

measured by multi-item scales

	IC-SAP	L1-SAP	Owner-SLI	Learner-SLI
Cronbach's Alpha( $\alpha$ )	.741	.811	.672*	.604*
Number of items	5	5	5	5

\*Recent work in SLA research (e.g. Brown, 2014; Plonsky & Derrick, 2016) suggested interpretation of reliability estimates beyond generic benchmarks for acceptability. It was reported that consistency estimates vary based on factors including L2 proficiency of the sample, the skill or domain being tested, or features of the instrument employed. As such, it is recommended that internal consistency values are interpreted with reference to the broader field of research that has measured similar constructs in a similar way and among comparable populations. Studies investigating ideal L2 self among English L2 learners which encompasses certain aspects of learner/owner identity in the current study have observed Cronbach's alpha at the .5 level (e.g. Kim & Kim, 2014; Gu & Cheung, 2016). Therefore, the alpha value for Owner-SLI and Learner-SLI (.672 and .604 respectively) were interpreted as indicating good internal consistency. However, it is worth noting that the construct of *English owner* remains a rather unexplored area in SLA research and more quantitative enquiry into similar construct is necessary to determine an acceptable reliability estimates for such concept.

Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Appendix L. Assumption testing for linear multiple regression analysis

**1. Regression model for *mean\_SAP\_IC* as dependent variable**

**Descriptive Statistics**

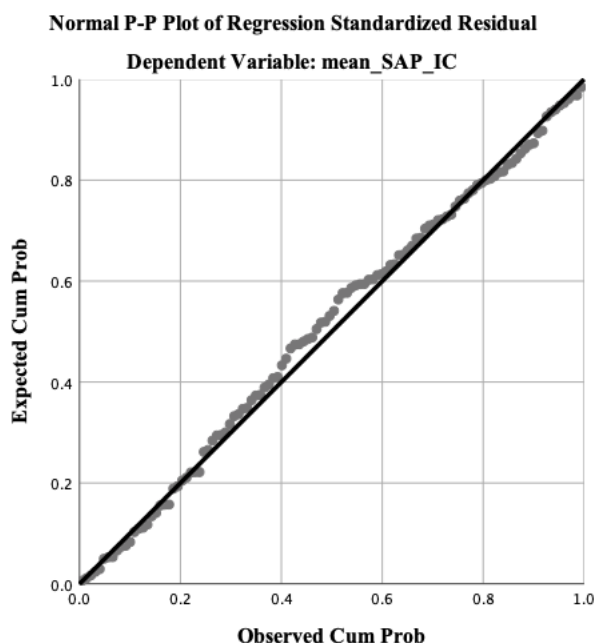
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
mean_SAP_IC	1.2783	.91126	116
mean_SLI_learner	4.2887	.81174	116
mean_SLI_owner	4.4365	.61944	116
bg_overseas_exp_total	12.0000	1.71439	116
bg_year_of_Eng	3.93	.682	116
bg_LOS_UK	2.8879	2.14181	116
bg_age	21.4000	2.65985	116

**Correlations**

	mean S AP IC	mean SLI learner	mean SLI owner	bg overseas exp total	bg year of Eng	bg LOS UK	Bg age	
Pearson	mean_SAP_IC	1.000	.388	.345	-.095	.057	-.204	-.089
Correla tion	mean_SLI_learner	.388	1.000	-.011	-.049	.043	.053	.034
	mean_SLI_owner	.345	-.011	1.000	-.052	.022	.119	-.090
	bg_overseas_exp_total	-.095	-.049	-.052	1.000	.104	-.066	.168
	bg_year_of_Eng	.057	.043	.022	.104	1.000	-.070	.476
	bg_LOS_UK	-.204	.053	.119	-.066	-.070	1.000	.045
	bg_age	-.089	.034	-.090	.168	.476	.045	1.000
	Sig. (1- tailed)	mean_SAP_IC	.	.000	.000	.156	.272	.014
mean_SLI_learner		.000	.	.452	.302	.325	.286	.357
mean_SLI_owner		.000	.452	.	.288	.405	.101	.168
bg_overseas_exp_total		.156	.302	.288	.	.133	.240	.036
bg_year_of_Eng		.272	.325	.405	.133	.	.227	.000
bg_LOS_UK		.014	.286	.101	.240	.227	.	.316
bg_age		.172	.357	.168	.036	.000	.316	.

**Residuals Statistics**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	-.2479	2.6026	1.2783	.54240	116
Residual	-1.86575	1.61314	.00000	.73226	116
Std. Predicted Value	-2.814	2.442	.000	1.000	116
Std. Residual	-2.481	2.145	.000	.974	116



## 2. Regression model for *mean\_SAP\_L1* as dependent variable

### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
mean_SAP_IC	-.8724	1.09716	116
mean_SLI_learner	4.2887	.81174	116
mean_SLI_owner	4.4365	.61944	116
bg_overseas_exp_total	12.0000	1.71439	116
bg_year_of_Eng	3.93	.682	116
bg_LOS_UK	2.8879	2.14181	116
bg_age	21.4000	2.65985	116

### Correlations

		mean_S AP IC	mean_SLI learner	mean_SLI owner	bg_overseas exp total	bg_year of Eng	bg_LOS UK	Bg age
Pearson Correlati on	mean_SAP_IC	1.000	-.238	-.367	.217	-.076	.085	.018
	mean_SLI_learner	-.238	1.000	-.011	-.049	.043	.053	.034
	mean_SLI_owner	-.367	-.011	1.000	-.052	.022	.119	-.090
	bg_overseas_exp_total	.217	-.049	-.052	1.000	.104	-.066	.168
	bg_year_of_Eng	-.076	.043	.022	.104	1.000	-.070	.476
	bg_LOS_UK	.085	.053	.119	-.066	-.070	1.000	.045
	bg_age	.018	.034	-.090	.168	.476	.045	1.000
	mean_SAP_IC	.	.005	.000	.010	.208	.181	.423

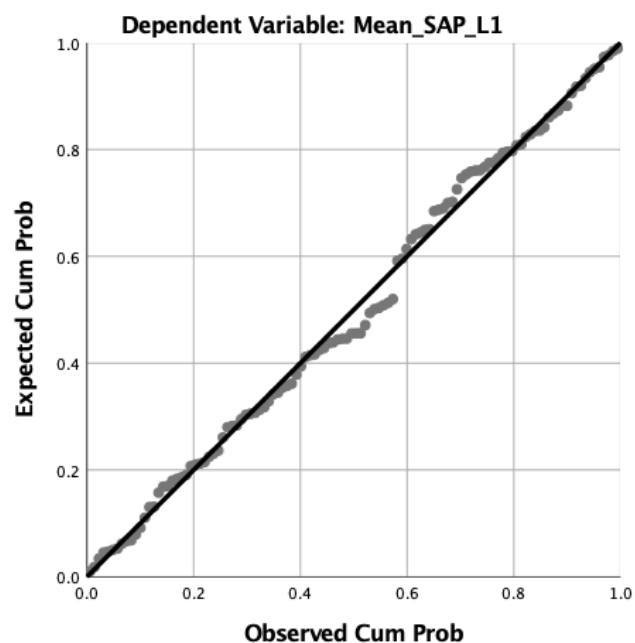
Reassessing ownership of English in ELF through self-perceived L2 identity and self-directed English accent preference among Hong Kong students in UK universities

Sig. (1-tailed)	mean SLI learner	.005	.	.452	.302	.325	.286	.357
	mean SLI owner	.000	.452	.	.288	.405	.101	.168
	bg_overseas_exp_total	.010	.302	.288	.	.133	.240	.036
	bg_year_of_Eng	.208	.325	.405	.133	.	.227	.000
	bg_LOS_UK	.181	.286	.101	.240	.227	.	.316
	bg_age	.423	.357	.168	.036	.000	.316	.

**Residuals Statistics**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	-2.2089	1.5761	-.8724	.55601	116
Residual	-2.26504	2.23332	.00000	.94583	116
Std. Predicted Value	-2.404	4.404	.000	1.000	116
Std. Residual	-2.331	2.299	.000	.974	116

**Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual**



Appendix M. Interview protocol

Warm up questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are you studying?</li> <li>- How long have you been in the UK?</li> <li>- How do you like it in the UK so far?</li> </ul>
Part A : self-directed accent preference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you are able to choose, in what accent would you like to speak? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Do you think this is an attainable goal?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- How would you feel if you were mistaken for a native English speaker because of your accent?</li> <li>- How would you feel when someone said they can tell from your English accent that you are from Hong Kong? Why?</li> <li>- What does “native speaker” mean to you? And what is a NS accent to you?</li> <li>- How would you describe your current accent in English? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o How do you feel about your current accent? (happy, frustrated?)</li> <li>o Do you like your own accent? Why or Why not?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Could you describe any positive or negative experiences that you have had encountered while speaking English in the UK (which you may attribute to your accent)?</li> <li>- Based on your pronunciation ability, do you feel comfortable speaking English with British/ native speakers/ other non-native speakers?</li> <li>- How do you think British people would react toward you if you had a native sounding accent? And if you have a noticeable foreign accent?</li> <li>- If starting today you could have a native accent but you won’t be able to speak in HK accent again, would you take it?</li> </ul>
Part B: Second language identity and ownership of English in the UK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you think that being able to speak English is an important part of your who you are? Why?</li> <li>- How would you feel if a native English speaker comment that you speak “good English”? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o What does “good English” mean to you?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Recently, many people comment that the English level of Hong Kong people has lowered and advocates that Hong Kong people should “學好英文” (learn English well). How do you feel about this comment? What does it mean to you to “學好” (learn it well)?</li> <li>- What do you think of the term “Hong Kong English”? How do you define Hong Kong English?</li> <li>- How do you feel about Hong Kong English and how does it relate to you? What is its significance to you?</li> </ul>
Conclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there anything you would like to add?</li> <li>- Is there anything that you expected me to ask but I did not?</li> <li>- Do you have any question regarding the study?</li> </ul>



Appendix N. Transcription legend

<u>MEANING</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
<b><i>Pause</i></b>		
pause, timed	(1.2)	pause duration in seconds
hold/micropause	..	brief silence, break in phonation
pause, untimed	...	pause of 0.2 seconds or more
lag/prosodic lengthening	:	slowing of local tempo, segment lengthening (repeated to show greater length)
<b><i>Sequence</i></b>		
overlap	over [lapping [talk	overlapping talk
<b><i>Vocalisms</i></b>		
breath (in)	(H)	audible inhalation
exhale	(Hx)	audible exhalation
laugh	@	one per pulse or particle of laughter
laughing word	@you're @kidding	laugh symbol marks laughter during word
<b><i>Metatranscription</i></b>		
unintelligible	###	one symbol per syllable
uncertain	#you're #kidding	transcribed words are uncertain
pseudograph	~Jill	name change to preserve anonymity (tilde)
vocalism	(COUGH)	various notations: (SNIFF), (AHEM), etc.
stress	CAPS	emphatic or contrastive stress ('I' is underlined)
comments	(words)	analyst comment on any topic
cut-of	sen-	abrupt cut-off (hyphen attached to item preceding cut-off)
other modes of speaking	<SOFT> text </SOFT>	
change of tone	↗	rising tone beginning on stressed syllable (only if particularly noticeable)
change of tone	↘	falling tone beginning on stressed syllable (only if particularly noticeable)

Appendix O. Interview transcripts

Appendix O1. Interview transcript: A – IC-SAP

A: Interviewee            I: Interviewer

- I: Let's start with some warmup questions. Are you now studying in New Castle University?
- A: Yes, I've been here for 2 years, going into third year next year.
- I: How do you like it here in the UK?
- A: I feel ok about it. I quite liked the UK before I came here.
- I: That's nice. I saw from the survey that you indicated you most desire to speak any Southern British Accent (“Any accent from Southern England 任何英格蘭南部的口音”, quote from survey response), why is that? But considering that you are in the northern part of UK, does it mean you don't like the accent there?
- A: Let me put it this way, I feel like there are many different accents in Northern UK and I feel that it's hard for me to call them “English”. Especially English is not my first language. For example, I am at New Castle now, and the locals speak the Geordie accent.. it's really difficult to understand. Yes.. from my perspective, I completely cannot understand this accent @ [I
- I:     [ @@
- A: I am being serious. Yes... (UM) .. if- from my perspective, the accents from the south are.. I think, clearer. Yes, clearer than northern accents. Yes, that's why I prefer – and it's easier for me to learn. If you're talking about the northern ones, like Geordie accent... I feel like I am not good enough to learn it..
- I: @ but besides the fact that southern accents are clearer and easier to understand, you mentioned that it's easier for you to learn. But I wonder why you would want to LEARN this accent? an accent other than your own. Do you feel that your current accent is not good enough?
- A: I don't really (ERM)... try to compare my own accent to the British accent. Because.. to honest- I studies primary and secondary school in HK...I studies in a not very bad secondary school and then I went to university, so (ERM) because I met people from different places so my accent has changed. I don't think I can precisely say that I have acquired a certain kind of British accent or that I speak a HK accent. So when I answered (UM) that question in the survey a few days back ... let me put it this way... I had a stereotype for Hong Kong accent, like Hong Kong people utter each syllable by syllable, with no stress and (2.4) for example when they say “questionnaire”, they say / ,kwes-trə'ne-a / (imitating HK accent by separating each syllable at syllable time and changing the last schwa to a clearly pronounced /a/) @ you know those of really stereotypical ... HK accent. Yea, I treat these as HK accent.. I mean, there isn't a really clear definition as to what is HK accent.

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- I: I see, but you don't want to have this kind of stereotypical HK accent?
- A: If you're talking about the stereotypical one, then no, I don't want to speak that accent. Not because (ERM) I think foreigners (in Cantonese, foreigner are sometimes used to refer to English speaking Caucasians) are better, or that I have xenomania, just that I think if I'm to learn English, then I have to learn the England English, or American accent if you're in America (1.2) I think it's more authentic. It's just like Cantonese ... you won't go learn Cantonese with Japanese accent.
- I: @What about Cantonese from Guangzhou?
- A: [Yes
- I: [Those are ok too?
- A: Yes I think that are fine too.
- I: So if I understand you correctly, you prefer English accent because you're in England, and particularly the southern accents for their intelligibility and clarity; but if you're in the Australia, you would prefer the Australian accent and American accent if you're [in the US.
- A: [yes, yes
- I: so you don't actually prefer a particular accent, you would prefer any accent as long as it's the local accent and it's clear enough for communication.
- A: YES, EXACTLY! It's most important to be able to communicate with the locals.
- I: I see, so the most important aspect for choosing an accent is for communication effectiveness.
- A: YES! And when you meet new people- (UM) if a person from HK goes to the UK and speaks Australian accent- (2.2) let me put it this way, if you don't speak an accent that is very different from the local accent... it's just an example, like Indian accents involves a lot of "r", it's more difficult for people to understand. And if I'm trI: trying to learn their accent (the local accent), it's my respect for the local people.
- I: I see. What if someone not from HK mistake you for a native speaker from your accent, how would you feel?
- A: (ERM) this is a very hypothetical question as it never happened to me before@ But if this happens, I would think that this person thinks my English is not that bad ## ... but if someone thought that I am a native speaker, I wouldn't be particularly happy. Like I won't get happy if I "get away" with my identity as a Hongkonger if my accent is native-like. It's not like I'd get happier if people thought I grew up here in the UK. I think this is a wrong mindset.
- I: I [see
- A: [because I still call myself a hongkonger even if I don't necessarily want to speak the HK accent

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- I: What about the other way around? What if people say they can tell from your accent that you're from HK? @How @would @you @feel?
- A: @@ look, there is unavoidably a PRESUMPTION that HK accents those stereotypes I mentioned earlier- like uttering each sound one by one @ like that. If that person uses this definition of HK accent to tell that I am from HK, that means that he thinks I also speak those stereotypical features of HK accent, then I would feel unpleasant. Because I don't expect myself to speak that type of English. But it doesn't mean that I am shame- ashamed of being of a hongkonger. I think there is no need to project a non-hongkonger identity through accent but I still don't want to be told that I speak the "stereotypical HK accent"
- I: So does that mean that as long as that person don't think that you speak the "stereotypical HK accent", then you'd be fine being identified as a HK person?
- A: Yes- BUT .. I-I-I don't want to be identified as a HK person because of my accent. I hope .. I would learn the local accent, or their culture and slangs, as much as possible. This is out of my respect for them. I think particularly when we are not British, or we are not Europeans (2), I think- to show respect for the culture is a basic quality that you have to show as a visit to someone else's country. And then people will respect you too, like mutual respect.
- I: It's like foreigner trying to learn Cantonese in Hong Kong @
- A: @Yes.
- I: You mentioned that your biggest motivation for accent learning is to learn the LOCAL accent, then what about if you go to countries that do not speak English as a local language, like in continental Europe, then would you be interested in learning their English accents too? How do you decide which is accent is "LOCAL"/ "NATIVE" (in Cantonese, "native" and "local" can be used interchangeably in some contexts)?
- A: I think to me, then I would want to learn the accent from places where English is the NATIVE language (inner-circle countries). For example, if I go to Spain, I would try to learn Spanish, not English. I would try my best to learn Spanish, even if I can't speak it FLAWLESSLY. But I wouldn't think so much about learning the Spanish English accent because English is not the local native language.. like people may think that I am being pretentious or even mocking their accents. (1.5) How I would express my respect to the Spanish people is that I would try to learn THEIR language, which is Spanish, not English, not their English accent. I would definitely not want to offend them by imitating their accent, because some people would think that I am making fun of them for having an accent. That's why I think learning the local language is a way to show respect for the local culture and its people.
- I: Interesting. How would describing your English accent now? Do you feel positively or negative about your own accent or just neutral?
- A: (EH)...I would say I..I would say I CAN improve on it... but would I consider it as being really bad? ... well my definition of a bad accent is.. I'd have to say it even if it sounds very mean.. the "stereotypical accent" that I mentioned earlier @@ then I think I am nowhere

close to that accent. Yes, but I definitely think that my accent can be better. (UM) in fact, in the two years of being in the UK, I have met different lecturers, many of them from different places, like Ireland, Wales, people from many different places. And I think to some extent, my accent has been affected by them... it's like your accent gets a bit of everything from other people's accent... then.. then (2) what kind of accent do I ACTUALLY speak? Like.. like.. back in secondary school, we learnt that there is an accent called "UK ACCENT", like British accent, but in fact I now doubt if there is such thing as British accent. I think.. I think after two years here, it's really hard to define what is British accent.

I: OK, it's interesting that you mentioned you met people from all over the globe. If you want to pursue a "LOCAL accent" out of respect and to facilitate understanding as you said earlier, wouldn't it be a bit CONFLICTING when the people you talk to all speak different accents? I mean, a "local accent" would not necessarily facilitate understanding in this case then.

A: Right @@ it is actually really messed up and conflicting... The fact that I am in New Castle now, if I REALLY am to learn the local accent, I would have to learn the Geordie accent @ yes... then.. but.. if I ask my friends from other countries whether they understand the Geordie accent and they say they understand it, then I think it's my problem that I don't understand it. @@ but if they also @say @that @they @don't @understand @@ then I think we should be more realistic and set communicative effectiveness as the ultimate goal. (ERM) but I think the HK accent, again, I'm talking about the "stereotypical HK accent", [then, to some extent, it's going to affect the

I: [OK

A: communication between people. (ERM) ... because that accent, first, means that you're not fluent when you talk. and... sometimes, those pronunciations may be wrong. Because when I hear many people from HK speak English ... what example can I think of (2) for example, when they say "republic", they'd say [ri'pʌbrɛk] @@ like very unclear and wrong. (ER) then.. then.. mistakes like this would affect communication. BUT... I'm not sure if I should treat it as a feature of an accent, or just a mispronunciation. There's actually a very blurred line and large grey area. I think language is actually very descriptive ("約定俗成"), then you can say it's just an accent. But if you check the dictionary, such pronunciation is considered wrong. So... what I want the most is that I can communicate my meaning well and ... yea

I: Could you describe any positive or negative experiences that you have had encountered while speaking English in the UK which you may attribute to your accent?

A: (2.6) I think... not really. I think that's because New Castle is a very international city, there are many non-New-Castle-local here... AH! Since you asked I actually remember something. When I just got here in 2017 around November, I had to ship something and needed some stamps. So I asked for some water. So I said ... I forgot what I said, but I read the word "water" as ['wɔ:tæ]... I'm not sure if he really didn't understand me or he doesn't like the way I said the word and he said "sorry I don't really know what you mean".. something like that. So I said, "I want some water ['wɔ:tæ]" and after a few more rounds of STRUGGLES, he tried to

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CORRECT me saying, “do you mean water [ˈwɔːrər]” @ so now I still don’t really know how I should pronounce this word, [ˈwɔːtæ] @[ˈwɔːdær] @[ˈwɔːrər]”..@

- I: This is interesting.
- A: I think it’s an issue related to accent, but... then I can’t know from my interlocutor’s face or any feature based on their appearance to know where they are from and which [accent of the word] @“water” I should choose to use with them @@@
- I: @@ that’s true. If that’s the case, why would you still want to pursue a certain kind of accent when there’s no one accent that can ensure absolute effective communication?
- A: I agree... it’s quite conflicting but I think the local accent is more accepted... yea...
- I: I see. Let’s move on to another question. When you talk to native English people and other non-native English speakers, do you feel differently?
- A: I’d be lying if I tell you that I don’t feel a bit nervous when talking to English natives. Like... there are only a dozen people in my programme, and once in a while we’d go to a pub to hang out and chat over some beers .. I don’t usually talk a lot, not like I’m a log of wood sitting there just that I don’t talk much... mainly... (ER) not saying that I am scared, but I’m always trying to avoid embarrassment. I think it’d feel embarrassed because I worry that sometimes if I speak too slowly or can’t find the right word, I’d have make all people at the table.. like 8 pairs of eyes looking at you, waiting for you to SQUEEZE that word out from your mouth.. I think that’s really embarrassing. I think if..if..if I don’t talk at that moment, possibly two people can talk instead, like, like.. the time that I would take up to formulate that sentence would be enough for 2 native speakers to talk. Then I’d think (Hx) my thought is not that important after all and I’d give up joining the conversation.
- I: So it sounds like you are not confident in your English usage overall, but not just about your accent?
- A: @@ yes you’re right.. like if I talk to (1.6) other people whose first language is not English, I wouldn’t feel this way. And I feel that I’d be more fluent when I talk to these people (non-natives). [Yes.
- I: [Why?
- A: I’d feel less conscious about my own accent. The reason why is that they themselves didn’t grow up or study in the UK, yes...
- I: but do you feel that natives would judge you?
- A: Actually, I think they won’t... but I just afraid that.. I don’t know, they definitely won’t judge, but they might als- I don’t know. I think it’s just I’m not confident in front of them. It’s just my feeling. I mean, would they think in their head that “ X (name of interviewee) pronounced the word wrong”? They actually would not, I think. I think it’s just my thought.
- I: Interesting, would it be that not being able to speak the same “English” as the native would affect how you blend in with the group which composes mostly of English natives?

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- A: Let me put it this way, I was not born in the UK, and I did not receive my education in the UK, my parents are not UK taxpayers. And if you look at my face, you can tell immediately that I am not FROM the UK, but I'd try my best to blend in to the community here. I have met some really nice British people, and we can get along well. What did you ask again? I feel like I'm being really off-topic.
- I: So you think that you are trying to blend in with the British people in your social circle through an accent that is closer to theirs?
- A: I feel that my accent would actually affect how much I can blend in to the local social circle. Yes, I think it does affect it. Well, let me think... I think unless my L1 accent is really really heavy, to a point that they would not understand my meaning, it's not really about my accent... or unless they are particularly resistant to foreign people, like they have some stereotypes towards foreigners and make them dislike a certain group of foreigners, and they might dislike you when they hear your accent. If that's the case I think these people are not worth being friends with @@ so I think actually overall I think accent wouldn't really affect much whether I can integrate into the local group. Also, I never try to only hang out with local British, I also have other friends from like India, Middle East, America, of course I have friends from HK too. But I hope to meet more people ACTUALLY from the UK because I am studying in the UK after all. I saw some of my classmates from HK, they only hang out with people from HK and not try to meet local- I'm not really trying to JUDGE them, but from my perspective, I think it's important to meet some HK people, but yes.. if you're in the UK, meet UK people, so that you can learn more about the local culture. This is also my respect for the people here.
- I: If starting today you could have a native accent, southern English accent in your case as you indicated as your most preferred accent, but you won't be able to speak in HK accent again, would you take it?
- A: Yes, yes I would accept this. (ER) Because being able to speak a local accent doesn't mean that I am no longer a HK person. I think my HK identity is not defined by whether or not I speak a HK accent. It's not like being able to speak Cantonese means you love democracy. @I don't want to touch on political topics but- I think being a HK person is defined by many things. I think if I can have a native accent, as long as it's not an accent that's too difficult to understand, I would gladly take it.
- I: Interesting. In the survey, you indicated that you feel insecure when speaking English in the UK. Why do you feel this way?
- A: Did I write that? I almost forgot.
- I: Yes, you wrote, "insecure, because my spoken English with regard to grammar and pronunciation is flawed". Why do you use the word "flawed"?
- A: I wanted to write "is not flawless", but on a second thought, no one really speak a language perfectly. Even a native speaker would not say that their English is flawless. @@ The fact that I used the word "flawed" already shows that my English is not good! @ That's why in terms of grammar or word choice.. I'm still @lacking @proficiency. ## I think grammar is important

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for spoken English but I think it's not so important that people would stop you saying "hey you're using the wrong tense" just because you misused a tense. They would still understand you. Also...

I: What about "insecure"? why did you put "insecure" as your feeling? Based on what you said, you think that people wouldn't really correct your grammar, why would you still feel insecure?

A: I-I- think sometimes you can be contented (about your language skills) just because others don't correct you. For one, you don't want to just stop at the most basic level when you're a learning a language. (ER) so- so you can say that this is my respect for others, you can also say that this is my own personal pursuit to speak better English. Just as what I said earlier, the word "flaw" wasn't used most appropriately and I believe there are many more other words that can capture my feelings better. After all, my vocabulary bank is not- not- not- that big.

I: @ you're very critical [of yourself.

A: [like- like- like I definitely do not know all the words there are in the English language. Then if I know more words, would I be able to use a more accurate adjective to describe my feelings when filling out the questionnaire? Then- then- I don't know, right? So I think that's why I'm feeling insecure about my language proficiency. Like I don't ever feel insecure about my Cantonese, because I grew up speaking Cantonese, I even know many words not even on the dictionary. That's why I wouldn't feel insecure about my Cantonese.

I: Does it mean that your insecurity stems from a feeling that you're not good enough?

A: Yes.

I: Do you also feel that your language skill would affect how you integrate into the local community as you mentioned earlier?

A: Yes, sort of. There is an American in our course, there's me from HK, a guy from India but he grew up in the UK, so he doesn't have an accent- I mean an Indian accent. So when they talk to each other, they use a lot of slangs, which I don't know. But I can't just say that "hey, I don't understand slangs, stop using slangs", @right?

I: @

A: But sometimes, there are some slangs, I'm not sure if they are too new or what, I can't really find it online, like on Google, and I'd have to look deeper elsewhere. So when I finally find the meaning of that slang, they are already talking about something else. That's why I can't join that part of the conversation. Then... yes.

I: We have been talking about HK accent, but what about HK English? What's your general impression of the term HK English?

A: Well... Hong Kong English... from my perspective.. the secondary school that I used to study in in HK, they really emphasize the final "t" and "d" sounds and they told us we must pronounce them. I don't know how to put it... but there are many things like this that is not really applicable in the UK. Like, I'm not sure if you have taken the HKDSE, but from my past experience of taking the DSE, like when I worked on listening paper, all the speakers on the



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recordings are really clear and slow. But in reality, two British people never talk like that when they talk to each other. So- if you ask if how do I think about HK English, actually I really can't answer you.. if I based it on my personal experience, most of my secondary schoolmates don't have the "stereotypical HK accent", yes, many of them speak better English than me. Yes... but they definitely do not speak British accent, especially in terms of fluency, fluency, yes, and also pronunciation of certain words, and the flow.

I: I see, but when people mention the word HK English, what's your impression? Would you think of HKE positively or negatively? Or just think that it's a neutral description?

A: I think it's kind of neutral but still a bit off to the side of negative. The reason being that HK people, they... oh wait, why am I saying they, WE Hong Kong people @yes yes we Hong Kong people have very different English levels. There are some people that I met who can't even form a grammatical English sentence, but I also know some people who speak really good English, like they study in international schools all along, and their social circle comprise mostly of people from the UK or the US. But those people who spend their life around UK and US people, their English, does it still count as HK English? I mean many HK people do not grow up speaking English. Mostly Chinese Hongkongers do not speak English as a native language, so... if you're talking about Hong Kong English... if someone tell me that I speak English an HK accent, it's be rather negative.

I: How would you see yourself on this spectrum? From very bad to speaking English really well.

A: I think- I- I- if I have to rate myself, I would give myself 7.5 out of 10 for my overall English ability. Would I be too egotistic? @

I: @ have you heard of the recent commercial featuring the HK celebrity William Chen? People have been ridiculing his accent. What do you think of his accent?

A: @@@ I watched that. @ I did laugh after I watched that commercial. But it's not like laughed out loud like "hahaha"@ but later, I saw people commenting on facebook that there is no need to laugh at him for his accent, because there are actually a lot of people in HK speaking in this accent too. But for me, I think we still can't take pride in this accent, especially because this accent might be watched by other foreigners, so if they could choose, they shouldn't... well, like that commercial, is demonstrating exactly what I said as the most stereotypical Hong Kong accent where people utter each syllable one by one@.

I: What if the commercial features another type of HK accent? maybe one that is not as "stereotypical" as William Chen's accent? would that be ok you think?

A: I think yes.. it's really hard to avoid the assumption that the "stereotypical HK accent" is a BAD accent... I can say that I really don't wish that the "stereotypical HK accent" would be the "face of HK", an accent that the world recognize to represent HK people. I don't really want the world to think that HK people don't speak good English... I don't know, I think I'm making mistake of judging people's English level based on their accent.. but I don't know, I don't want foreigners to think that, "if you speak this accent, you're from HK". I don't hope for that.

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I: Why not?

A: I think the most important reason is that I think of myself as a HK person and I dislike that accent. I don't want a person to judge where I am from based on my accent. I want to be a Hongkong person but it does not necessarily mean that I want a HK accent. I think from my standpoint, the fact that I do not like this accent is not something wrong to do. But I should not impose my preference on others, so I wouldn't tell other people to stop using this HK accent. I mean I do know some friends who speak with this HK accent but of course I would not tell them to not use this accent, and tell them to try to use a more native-like accent @.

I: Recently, people have been commenting that HK people's English standard has decreased, and people have been saying that HK people should improve their English. What do you think about this?

A: I definitely think that some people in HK really OVERLY patronize the RP accent. I think anyone who has been in the UK would realized that people here don't speak RP. I'm not sure if I'm right, but I think a pursuit for RP is not really that practical, because it's really really slow. Like if you go to a pub and talk to your friends in RP, after a pint of beer, that person should probably be bored to sleep @@.

I: @@

A: I think this accent is really impractical. I, in fact, accept the accent spoken by HK people but I am not pride of it, and I would not tell the world that speaking HK accent as a HK person is the only right thing to do, as oppose to trying to learn another native accent. As I said, I do not hate the HK accent, but I do not love it, at least for myself. I do not wish to speak the HK accent. But yea... I am quite disgusted by people who speak from a perspective that they view RP as the standard and tell HK people to get rid of their HK accent.

I: But what do you think is "good English"? what does it mean to you to learn English well?

A: I think for myself, it's important to get rid of a thought process in Cantonese. I think what I lack is that I cannot formulate English sentences in English.. I mean I tend to think in Cantonese, than translate the sentence into English, which makes me disfluent.

I: That's an interesting thought. That's all the questions I have for today. Is there anything you wish to add or anything you expected me to ask but I didn't?

A: No.

I: Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix O2. Interview transcript: B – IC-SAP

B: Interviewee            I: Interviewer

- I: How do you like the UK so far?
- B: It's quite relaxing here, I quite like it.
- I: Really? Don't you find studying in Oxford stressful?
- B: @@ not for my program. I do feel a bit of stress but at least we have more space here, not like in HK, so crowded.
- I: @ OK, let's get to the interview. If you are able to choose, in what accent would you like to speak? Why?
- B: To me, my goal when I learn a language is that I want to blend in and want others to not be aware of the fact that I am second language speaker. So my English accent goal would be that I would try to speak a native speaker's accent.
- I: What is a native accent?
- B: I mean.. the accent of someone who grows up speaking the language. I think it's not up to me to define what a native person is @@
- I: I mean to different people they have different ideas of native English speakers. What about Singaporean? Do they think they are native speakers too?
- B: I think Singaporeans are ok, they are native.
- I: So if you want a native accent, you'd be find sounding like a Singaporean too?
- B: If I suddenly have their accent, I'd accept it.
- I: What about the accent of a Hong Kong person who grew up speaking English?
- B: It's really rare that people who speak English has their first language would have a HK accent. Do you know anyone like that? So that's why I think by definition, it's quite rare for a native speaker of English to have Hong Kong accents.
- I: I see. What about Indian accents?
- B: (2) If I suddenly have an Indian accent, it'd be... what's the word... (1.5) weird.
- I: Why weird?
- B: You would find it very unusual, for someone of my face to speak in an Indian accent.. maybe they would think that I am making fun of them.
- I: Does that mean that you think as a person with an East Asian appearance, it can be disrespectful to speak in an accent that do not seem to belong to you?
- B: yes, especially (0.5) like- I think your question is quite thought-provoking. For example, some accents do have speakers with East Asian faces, like British and American, so that's why I think there is no problem trying to sound like them.
- I: I see. But to some native speakers, they might also find it disrespectful for someone to imitate their accents.

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- B: I think it depends on how well you can imitate the accent @ then- then- in a ideal world, if I really like Australian culture, I think I would be able to imitate their accent 99%. So.. it really depends on ability of that person.
- I: OK, going back to the original question, you mentioned that you want to achieve a native accent, do you think this goal is attainable?
- B: yes, VERY attainable, it's a matter of time. And also a bit of talent @. Of course, effort too. I know some people who can spend a long time in a native English country and their accent didn't change at all.
- I: Do you think you are getting close to this goal?
- B: I... now.. I think I'm doing ok. I think I am satisfied with my accent.
- I: Have you been having this accent goal consistently throughout your learning of English?
- B: Aha! That's a good question. I think not. At least when I was younger- as in when I was in secondary school, I wasn't as conscious about my accent as I am now. Like I pay attention to good pronunciation but I didn't think much about accents.
- I: What made you more aware of your accent?
- B: I think it's because after I started university, I suddenly developed this interest for learning foreign languages. Then.. then I reflected on my English, I thought I had already reached a certain level, if I want to further improve my English, I need to further improve my pronunciation by choose an accent as a goal, like.. yes. Otherwise I would be stopping myself from improving.
- I: What if a native speaker mistakes you for another native speaker, how would you feel?
- B: I would feel excited about this! @@
- I: Excited, why?
- B: I think it's because I have become a chameleon.. I feel I have become a bit addicted... like I have been trying to blend in. That's why I would really enjoy it if this happens) and that's why I don't like it so much when people say I have a HKA.. it makes me question my proficiency.. it makes me question my proficiency. I think it wouldn't harm my identity as a hongkonger.. it's just an issue of #aesthetics, so I think it's not that if you enjoy being mistaken as a native, you are abandoning another part of yourself.
- I: Interesting, do you think that a native-like accent would help you feel more as part of the community?
- B: (UM).. if you ask me this... I used to think that accent is a tool for me to blend in .. I think it was a phase, like two years ago when I went on exchange, I feel like it's part of my identity as well.. ↗
- I: What do you mean? Are you saying that going on exchange made you feel that English is being a more important part of your identity?
- B: Yes, like now, when I talk to a group of international people, I would use my British accent. For one, it's because I have internalized this accent, like I have actually practice my English accent for a couple of years now. For two, (1.2) UM I quite enjoy being distinct from certain of my friends ↗
- I: You mean other Hongkongers or friends from other places?

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B: Both.

I: But you want to blend in and be distinctive at the same time?

B: That's why I said it's a phase. When I learn English at a younger age, I wanted to blend in to the local community. But now, it's my second time to live in Europe, I do not care so much about whether or not I can blend in with the locals, because some of my friends are Canadians, East Asians, Central Asians and so on, people from many different places, but I still use the accent that I have been practicing. Not because I want to blend in with these people, but I have already developed an attachment to this accent ↗

I: I see. What about when someone commented that they can tell from your accent that you're from HK?

B: @this happened to me once@@

I: How did you feel that time?

B: I was DISAPPOINTED at myself.

I: Disappointed, why?

B: Kind of ... I associate the ability to learn/ imitate (same word in Cantonese) an accent is part of my language skill. ## Like I remember when I was on exchange in Scandinavia, I went to London with some friends that I met online, then.. then.. because one of my friends was an English teacher so I ask him how he thought of my English. And he said I sound a little like British but at the same time can still tell that I have some Hong Kong accents. I mean obviously most people would not pay such small details on someone's accent but I feel like I still got something to work on.

I: To what point do you think that you're "good enough" then?

B: I think a general benchmark is communicative efficiency.. but I am stricter to myself, I want more than just being able to get my meaning across.

I: Do you have any positive or negative experience in the UK that you attribute to your accent?

B: UM.. (1.4) I think there must be some... but I can't think of any now..

I: Maybe I can share one experience of mine and see if you have encountered something similar. Just a couple of days ago I was talking to a person from Wales and I told him I went to Brick Lane market in London but he burst out laughing and said "hahaha did the lane BREAK?" or something like that trying to point out that I did not pronounce "brick" accurately in a joking way. I am sure he meant no offence, but I was quite taken aback, and I felt really embarrassed.

B: @@ I had exactly the same experience! It's the same problem with long /i:/ and short /I/ sounds!

I: Or maybe you had some positive experience?

B: well.. I think it's mostly me who judges myself, rather than being judged by others. Actually just a few days back, someone did not understand me when I mixed up "chip" and "cheap".. I immediately corrected myself but I mean here in Oxford, there aren't many people who directly judge you, because Oxford is very international after all. People pay more attention to the quality of the speech, like content, then pronunciation.. but yes, it's usually me who is more conscious about my own pronunciation. Well, for positive experience, I can't think of any now, but maybe it pops up and I'll tell you later.

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- I: Sure. Next question, do you think that your British friends would treat you differently if you speak in a native British accent?
- B: No.
- I: Why?
- B: You are talking about the British friends that I already know?
- I: I mean British people in general.
- B: ok, then I think maybe slightly different, only slightly. Because I would not hide the fact that I am from Hong Kong. Whenever people ask, I'd tell them I'm from Hong Kong. So (2).. I think their impression on me wouldn't change much..
- I: You have raised an interesting point. You mentioned that you would not hide the fact that you're from HK, but would you proudly tell people up front that you're from HK?
- B: My stance is- is- I am neutral. Like, if you ask, it'd tell you but I wouldn't use my accent or language to index my HK identity. Yes, I won't do something like that. BUT it's really hard to avoid being asked where I am from nowadays as the world so internationalized now.
- I: If starting today you could have a native accent but you won't be able to speak in HK accent again, would you take it?
- B: @Dude @I can't even do a Hong Kong accent now.
- I: How do you feel that you are unable to do a HK accent now? Would you still trade your current Hong Kong accent for a native accent?
- B: Are you asking if it feels like I have lost a part of my identity?
- I: You can say that.
- B: I don't feel that way. Because I feel that English is a face that I put on when I address the "world" but at the same time, I would put on different identities in different contexts. For example, when I text my friends from Hong Kong, I use Kongish. It's a very distinct language from the ones that I use with foreign- I mean westerners. So I think accent is only a small part and it wouldn't affect my identification as a Hongkonger. I mean.. if I can no long speak Kongish, it's significance would be stronger.
- I: Would you feel a slight sense of pleasure when your English proficiency has exceeded that of your mother tongue, Chinese? I mean it's not a good thing to lose your L1, but did you ever feel a slight sense of pleasure from that?
- B: yes yes yes! I definitely had this feeling before. Definitely! I always can't find the right word when I speak Cantonese @ and I just shook it off and never really tried to "rescues" my Chinese. BUT it does not mean I don't love this language ↗
- I: I see.
- B: Like, I won't flaunt the fact that I can speak Chinese, but when people ask about Chinese or Cantonese, I would explain it passionately. So... yes there is still a sense of pride I take in the fact that I speak Chinese.
- I: Interesting. Do you feel that English is an important part of your identity?
- B: Yes. I- I think that's because I am quite global, like I like to communicate with people from different places, so English is quite important to me. Like my friends from the college, they are usually not local British, so I uses English to talk to them.

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- I: Do you feel differently when you talk to people who are native English speakers and to those who are not?
- B: WA.. this is well asked. Feelings.. I- I don't want to admit it but to be honest, I feel a bit pressured when I talked to natives. Yes. But I think it's not because of my language ability, it's just because they have spoken this language longer than I have.. so I think their thought process would be deeper (思維層次), like they could think more with the language while sometimes I would have to think about formulating the sentences at the same amount of time.
- I: 思維層次? That's an interesting word.
- B: @@ I mean maybe it does not have anything to do with language, but @@yes.. I do feel the pressure with native. I think some people would worry about making mistakes in front of natives.
- I: Do you worry about that?
- B: I would feel really shy and embarrassed AFTER I make the mistake. But normally I do not actively have this worry.
- I: How would you feel if a native English speaker comment that you speak "good English"? Why?
- B: For one, I don't think I have heard this sentence before @@ but with reference to my experience of speaking other foreign language that I learnt, when I hear this, I would ... maybe... I feel happy and unhappy at the same time. When I learn a language, my goal is to blend in the community that speaks that language. so when someone comment that I speak well, I would feel unsatisfied with my learning. But if we're just talking about English.. I don't know I have never experienced that before.
- I: What if hypothetically, if a native speaker commented that you speak English-
- B: OK. Then I think because English is spoken by so many people nowadays as a bridging language, that's why it's so rare for someone to comment on other's proficiency. Like everyone is used to the fact that most of the people they talk to in English are not native speakers, like maybe they would only have 80% of the level of natives.
- I: That's true, but what if a native speaker is not so sensitive of the fact that most English speakers nowadays do not necessarily speak English as a first language, and comment that you speak good English, how would you feel?
- B: I would be upset. Because ... if he says that.. he is acknowledging the fact that I am not EQUAL to them, like he only took me as a learner. I mean in fact, I am ACTUALLY a learner, but I don't like... I mean I prefer to think that I am someone who have already mastered English. So when he say that, it feels like he is looking down on me although his intention might be good.
- I: What does good English mean to you?
- B: For one, they have the impression that I am not native. Must be. I mean this person would be very conscious of the fact that I am not a native speaker, or else he would not make this comment. UM.. (3) I think what they usually comment on when they think someone speak good English, is about fluency and accent, not so much word choice.
- I: What does it mean to be fluent to you?

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- B: I mean the flow of words coming from the speaker's mouth and pronunciation. I personally really pay a lot of attention on pronunciation.
- I: Recently, many people comment that the English level of Hong Kong people has lowered and advocates that Hong Kong people should “學好英文” (learn English well). How do you feel about this comment?
- B: Well- I agree. I mean.. some people may think that telling someone to go “learn English better” could be humiliating... but in fact, it is truly beneficial to learn English well.
- I: But what does it mean, to you, to learn it well?
- B: I knew you were going to ask this! @@
- I: @ you guessed it.
- B: I mean.. most of the HK people that I know are people from the Chinese university of Hong Kong. Although they are university students, I think they still struggle with using English to communicate. Yes.. I mean I won't expect- well sounds like I'm being too arrogant, but- but I don't expect everyone to speak English like me. But I feel that if you put them in an English speaking environment, they'd really need some time to get used to this language environment and finally be able to communicate properly in English and to survive.
- I: So you're saying being able to communicate effectively is the end goal, the GOOD English?
- B: Yes.
- I: I'm not trying to challenge you.. but don't you think it's a bit contradictory with what you said that you learning a native accent is your ultimate goal?
- B: Yes.. I mean I am stricter to myself... I aim for a native accent, but I mean (1.4) overall.. it's good enough to be able to communicate. It is a bit of a double standard because I have this perfectionist in me that pushes me to practise for a British accent .. but for others (ER) I mean overall.. GOOD English means... to me.. (ER) means you can communicate, like get your messages across.
- I: OK.. What do you think of the term “Hong Kong English?” How do you define Hong Kong English?
- B: I cannot deny that I think of the term quit negatively. Maybe because of the stigma.
- I: What stigma?
- B: During my education in HK, our education tells us to get rid of elements of our HK accents. Like my teachers would correct my pronunciation if it's too “typical” of HK pronunciation. I mean overall, in English lessons, they would want us to learn a more “authentic”- I need to put double quote over this word [@@
- I: [ @I will put that on the transcript for you
- B: @ I mean schools would want us to learn “authentic” accents.
- I: What does it mean by authentic accent then?
- B: @@UM.. like many of the recordings in our textbooks are British speakers... so that's the goal that have been presented to all of us HK students.. so more or less we'd see this accent as the “best” while HK accent as something undesirable. Yes, I think education has a lot to do with how students perceive their own accent... @



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- I: That's true. That's some really interesting points that you raise. That's all the question I have for you, is there anything you want to add or anything you expected me to ask but I did not?
- B: No.
- I: Thank you so much for taking the interview with me.

Appendix O3. Interview transcript: C – L1-SAP

C: Interviewee            I: Interviewer

- I: Hello, thanks for taking the interview. You have been in the UK for 3 years now, how do you like the UK so far?
- C: It's ok.. I mean I do not particularly like the UK but I mean I live here.. so, yea I think I like it.
- I: @I see. Let's start with the interview questions. If you are able to choose, in what accent would you like to speak? Why?
- C: I mean I actually feel proud of the Hong Kong accent.. but I feel like if I speak in HK accent, it's a bit hard for natives to understand me. Second, I think for someone to go to another country, it'd be more convenient for the foreigner to learn the local way of speaking, instead of the other way around. Because there are so many versions of foreign accent, but only one local version. It's also a sense of respect. I mean, I feel proud of the fact that Hong Kong people are a starting to use English as part of who we are, but I feel like out of respect, I would still choose the local accent.
- I: What does it mean by local then?
- C: I mean British accent. I have not been to America.. or Singapore.. I don't really know what the accents are like for people from these places, but I think when I'm in a certain country, I'd try to learn/ imitate (same word in Cantonese) the local accent.
- I: Interesting. Both America and Singapore uses English as the local language, but what about when you go to a place where English is not the local language, say, Japan, would you still try to learn/ imitate the local English accent?
- C: I would still want to understand their accent, but whether or not I want to use that accent (4) (UM).. if I think using that accent would help me communicate with others, I would use that accent. But I mean it would be really hard to learn others' accent.. I cannot say for sure I would insist on using THEIR accent 100% of the time.
- I: I see. How would you feel if you were mistaken for a native English speaker because of your accent?
- C: I feel that... if someone says that, I think it's a compliment. I feel like he is acknowledging my English proficiency. Like he thinks that I speak good English.
- I: How would you feel when someone said they can tell from your English accent that you are from Hong Kong?
- C: I would also- wait, let me think for a second.. (3) I mean, I think it nice if someone can tell from the way I speak where my home is.. that proves that my home has a strong influencing power in the global world, like people from other places in the words are aware of the distinctive features of how people from my hometown speak English. If that's the case, I'd feel

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really happy. It proves that.. (ER) Hong Kong people are not only able to infiltrate features of Cantonese onto English but also EXPORT these feature to the world and let the world know how we speak, they'd go like "oh, that's how HK people speak English, they have such special characteristics on their accents". I think.. it- it's going to make me proud.

I: I see. How would you describe your current accent in English?

C: ER... I... ER... because I am like a "Whatever will be, will be"-kind of person. I don't try to force things too much. Like I do not deliberately improve my accent. Sometimes I would listen to how other people speak and I might try just for fun.. but I would not change my accent deliberately, not like I know some people would go online and watch accent videos and be really active and "into" learning an accent. I mean, I would just let my accent be, like naturally changing as I study here. #communicate, like maybe I would learn from others, but.. (ER).. I do not have a special obsession over learning a certain accent. (ER) yes, I won't do that.

I: I see. Based on your pronunciation ability, do you feel differently speaking English with British/ native speakers/ other non-native speakers?

C: (2) different feelings.. (EM) (3) if I talk to native speakers, because they are native, their must speak better English than me, I mean if we are talking about proficiency (ER) I also know a Japanese friends, when he speaks in English, he has- he has some- slight Japanese accent but (ER) his English (ER).. is not that good. So when I talk to him, I would try my best to slow down or (ER) (ER) use easier words. Yes. Because I- I- I- believe that native speakers would do the same when talking to me. Like they would talk more slowly and they would use easier words.

I: How do you feel about that, I mean when native speakers speak slower and use simpler words?

C: At first, I had some negative feelings about this, like I feel like they are doing it because they think my English is not good enough, like- like- I'd start to blame myself thinking why isn't my English good enough. But then, I think, they are actually just being polite, because, in reality, if they don't do this, it's going to affect communication. So now, I think there isn't a problem. I think they are- they are accommodating me.

I: I see. If starting today you could have a native accent but you won't be able to speak in HK accent again, would you take it?

C: (UM).. (ER) (3). I think I would choose British accent if that's the case.

I: Why?

C: Because.. because I purely think that British accent sounds nicer.

I: Would you feel that you would lose a part of your identity as a Hongkonger then?

C: (UM) (5) I think (ER).. I think it's fine. Of course I think.. (ER) being able to speak in the HK accent is something to be proud of, something that can represent my identity. But I think being able to speak British accent is not going to harm my identity as a Hongkonger.

I: Do you think that being able to speak English is an important part of your who you are?

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- C: Yes, I think it's- it's a part of my identity, but (2) it's not like it's SUPER important. Like, to me, my identity is a person from Hong Kong. Based on this idea of identity, the most important thing that constitute my identity is, I mean in terms of language, is of course Cantonese, then Mandarin or English. That's why English is important, but not SUPER important. I mean I won't say that someone would not share the same identity as Hongkonger as me if they don't speak English.
- I: I see. How would you feel if a native English speaker comment that you speak "good English"? Why?
- C: (ER) .. Of course I would feel happy, because it feels like he is (ER), as a native speaker, he is recognizing my English ability, so yes, I would feel quite happy. Like my English is actually good enough for EVEN native speakers to comment positively about it. But- (2) I mean considering that I am in the UK now, maybe I would think more about this comment. British people are generally quite polite, sometimes when they say that you speak good English, they may only mean that you're fair, you are able to communicate without problems.
- I: To you, what is good English?
- C: (2) I think, it's more about (ER).. (UM).. let me think (4) I think it's about- at first I was thinking maybe it's more about grammar, but I mean- when I talk in English, my grammar is usually don't care much about my grammar. But I feel like- I feel like based on my experience in the past 3 years, the locals don't actually CARE much if you are using exactly the correct grammar. So I think if a native speaker ever compliment on my English saying I speak good English, I feel like they are talking more about my fluency and flow.
- I: What about pronunciation? Do you think that is an important aspect of what constitute good English?
- C: Yes I think so. I think yes, it does affect other people's judgement on your English proficiency. But I feel that native people don't think accent as something super important when they evaluate their English level, like not the first thing they pay attention to. Like they would take your accent into account but they won't "super" consider it. Because.. (ER).. I know someone who (ER) studies here and he is from Austria. When he speaks English, he has a really strong German accent. But (ER) it feels like when he talks with the natives here, even if he still have that strong foreign accent, but I don't think the natives would not- (ER) like they wouldn't expect him to speak with a British accent. Like I think natives wouldn't require us (ESL speakers) to speak in their accent. like they are fine as long as they can understand us.
- I: I see. You mentioned in the survey that you feel a bit unconfident when speaking English in the UK because you find yourself in situations where you need to repeat yourself multiple times for others to understand you. Can you explain a bit more why do you feel this way?
- C: (UM).. let me think if there's any example (4) I think- I remember one time, I was chatting with a friend about Tibet... I mean the English for Tibet.. if I need to pronounce it... it's TEE-bet, then my friend- my friend- he- (AH) he said "sorry?", like he asked me to say it again, so I repeated several times, and then he said "ah, you mean ti-BET". I mean.. yea, my

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pronunciation sometimes makes people not get what I say. So.. I think.. sometimes I try to use a local accent, it's easier to communicate with other without misunderstanding, like I would be able to talk to them more smoothly. But would it make me- I mean to be honest, I am unconfident because I feel that my unclear pronunciation or accent would make it hard for people to understand me and to maintain a conversation with others.

I: This is an interesting example. But do you think your lack of confidence is because of accent or mispronunciation?

C: (UM)... I mean- I mean that example... feels like it's not so much about accent... I think (UM)... I think there is a certain link between accent and the correctness of pronunciation. Because, IN FACT, there is no universal pronunciation for each word. I mean even for the UK, there are many way to read the same word, and like American English sounds very different. So... (UM) (4) (UM↗) sorry I forgot the question.

I: Do you think your lack of confidence is because of your HK accent or you think you pronunciation is not correct? I mean you have already answer my question but please fill free to add more if you want.

C: I mean.. I think both contributes to my lack of confidence. (ER) (4.2) I am not sure, but in my daily life, when I talk to natives, (ER) there are times, I mean it's not super common, but there are time when they need me to repeat myself.. but I'm not sure if they ask me to repeat because of my accent or because I didn't read the word correctly. But I think.. (UM) I guess, it's mostly about my accent. Because I think the HK accent is quite different from the local accent and they are not familiar with the accent.

I: When people ask you to repeat, how do you feel right away?

C: Usually my first feeling is that, well ok, I'll repeat, no big deal. No problem, maybe it's just I didn't speak clearly. I mean I would not immediately reflect on my pronunciation. But I mean if they ask me to repeat for the second time, it would make me think that "oh no, is my problem, is it because of my accent?" Many times, when they say "oh.. ok", they act as if they understand, but I feel like they don't @ @I think they just don't want feel embarrassed and make me think that I mis pronounced some words. Do you know what I mean?

I: Yes @

C: I feel like they don't understand...but they are just being nice. Then I would start to reflect on my pronunciation, and think, "did I make a mistake? Or is my English not good enough?" I would start to feel a bit disappointed.. like I would think that there is something wrong with my accent.

I: Recently, many people comment that the English level of Hong Kong people has lowered and advocates that Hong Kong people should “學好英文” (learn English well). How do you feel about this comment?

- C: (2) How do I feel about this? I think (3).. it's reasonable. If someone said it's time for HK people to learn English well. I think it's nor- normal. I mean, Hongkongers' English has a serious problem their attitude for learning English. Many people learn English just to deal with exams. It's like, to them, English is the language for exam, instead of a language for communication. (ER) (4) so I think, yes.. HK's education has a bit of a problem related to education beliefs and attitude. So I think if someone said Hongkongers to learn English well, it's reasonable. That's how I feel. We are not doing so well in this regard.
- I: But to you, what does it mean to learn English well?
- C: I think to learn English well.. it means you can.. you can fluently use this language to communicate. But of course, to USE, encompasses many abilities, including, writing, reading, express your idea. So I think as long as you're effective in getting your meaning across, it's good enough.
- I: But do you think HK people's English is actually not good "enough"?
- C: The English level of HK people. I cannot tell for sure, I can't speak for the overall English level of all HK people because my social circle is limited. And I have not read any educational report or anything of that sort to know what the current level of English among HK people is. But from my experience, I feel that the people that I know, I mean HK people, when I went to secondary school, I feel that their English is OK. Of course not to a level where they can speak English like natives, like no mistakes or no stuttering, or without grammatical mistakes or use really elaborate words, but I think HK people are absolutely fine with using English for daily living. So if we are judging based on this, it's (the English level of Hongkongers) OK.
- I: Interesting. So based on this threshold, I mean the fact that one can use English for daily living and get meaning across effective, HK people has already reached the level of "having learnt English well", then why should people still improve? What more should we pursue?
- C: I think... (UM).. (UM).. I think, yes, we have reached a level that is quite ok in my standard. I think there is some problem with people's attitude. I think we can try to improve our mindset for learning English. (ER)... let me think if there's any example how people can improve... (5)...
- I: It's ok if you cant think of any, maybe we can come back to this a bit later. Maybe you will have more ideas as we discuss more.
- C: OK
- I: What do you think of the term "Hong Kong English?" How do you define Hong Kong English?
- C: the first thing I would think of is the problem of HK accent- I mean it's not a problem. I mean the distinct quality of our accent. the second is that... we always formulate English sentences in a Cantonese way. Like "add oil".. those kind of words that are directly translate and native people would not really understand. But I mean some of the phrases have already been entered into the dictionary... The first thought is that, it the kind of Kongish that I used to us in

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secondary school. You know it's sort of romanization of Cantonese words but typed in English, if it make any sense @

- I: @yes I do that a lot with my friends from HK too. We are quite "fluent" in using Kongish while text @@
- C: @ it took me a while to get the hang of Kongish. But I think it's something special for HK people. It's fun.
- I: Yes. but overall, what is your feeling towards HK English?
- C: (EM).. I used to think quite negatively about HKE, like before I came to the UK. I used to think that it's a bad thing to have HK accent. like when I used to study in HK, during English lesson and I was asked to read out loud a passage- I mean for exams, I would try to sound more like native speakers. I would try to get rid of my HK accent, yes, to sound more like a native. But now that I am in the UK, I feel that English is a LANGUAGE, not just for exams. Different kinds of English have their own features... like creating different- (ER) different faces for the language. so now, I think HKE to me is something positive. I feel like when English arrived in HK, it absorbed a bit of HK culture and something from HK. It's still English, but it's more special, and it has a "TASTE" of HK in it. I don't think it's a bad thing to have a "taste" of HK, it's not anything negative. I think it's just a fact, it is there. But I think now (ER) I feel like sometimes I feel quite proud of HKE. I feel that when a language reaches a certain place, it can grow and evolve in the space of that new place and take in the nutrient of the new place.. to absorb the local culture and turn into something new and different- let's not say it's an evolution, it's more like (ER).. becoming more special, I think it's a good thing.
- I: it's a very interesting perspective. It was very intriguing listening to your thoughts. That's all the questions I have for you today. Is there anything you would like to add? or anything that you expected me to ask but I did not?
- C: (UM)... I feel that... now.. for anyone to score above 5 in HKDSE English, they should have no problem communicating in English but I feel that that still do necessarily know much about local things.. like the word "Cheer", I mean I know that I means "乾杯" like when you drink, but here in the UK, I learnt that it can mean many things, you can use it to say thank you or for greeting. But in HK when we learnt how to greet in English, it must be Hi or Hello and you when someone asks you how you are, you would go like "I am fine thank you" robotically. What I mean is that our education in HK do not touch on the language that English people use in their daily lives. I feel like the English we learn is just for exam or professional uses, we can write emails or essays and we can make presentations but our education does not seem to touch on these nuanced part of the English language that relate to the daily lives of English speaking people.
- I: But you mentioned that the English education does enable our students to communicate properly for English in the workplace or professional settings, why is it so necessary for people to learn these "local" expression? Like not everyone would go to the UK. Do you think what the HK education provide is enough to qualify as enabling our students to learn English "well"?

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- C: (4) (UM). If it's enough... I think it's- enough. Yes, I think most people who completed DSE would be able to handle English materials at work, but I think there are more to it. Our education can improve by taking a step forward, by turning it into something that is more than just a language for exam and utility...(AH) one more thing. You know Singlish is very famous, I always wonder why Singaporean can be so proud of their English and accent, and whole world seem to be quite aware of the unique ways Singaporeans speak English. I mean will there be any chance for HKE to take on a role like this too? Maybe HK can use Singapore as a reference and how they deal with a "localized" English. How their English education enable their students to take pride in their own version of English. I am not saying that Singapore's education is necessarily good but I think it's worth thinking how we can learn from their way of thinking .. (ER) I mean in terms of English Education. Yes.
- I: What do you think HK people can do take on this pride for our own accent?
- C: I mean.. for me, I didn't take the HKDSE, but when I was in S4 and S5, when I did listening tests, all the recordings are spoken by westerners.. I mean maybe HK education can try to use materials that are spoken by people who are not native? Maybe some HKE speaker? Because all these native speakers on the recording indeed made me question my own English. It made me think that "if I speak in HK accent, does it mean my English is not good?". I think this attitude, I mean the attitude that a more nativelike accent means better English proficiency, or a HK accent means lower English proficiency, is quite deep-rooted in the attitude of HK people. I mean for MTR or bus broadcasts, they can try to use some HK accented recordings@
- I: Oh that's an interesting idea! I think they already started doing it at MTR! Thank you so much for your ideas. It's been a pleasure talking to you today.
- C: It was a good chat.
- I: Thank you.



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Appendix O4. Interview transcript: D – no-preference

D: Interviewee            I: Interviewer

- I: Hello, thanks for taking the interview. You said it's your first year in the UK, how do you like it here so far?
- D: I think it's ok. Most people are quite friendly.
- I: Let's get started with the interview questions. If you are able to choose, in what accent would you like to speak? Why?
- D: British accent.
- I: @but you responded in the survey that you have no preference @
- D: I mean sometimes I feel like it's not important, sometimes I'd refer British accent. The education in HK views British accent as something as.. the best. But after spending a while in the UK, I feel like it really doesn't matter what accent you have. Ah wait.. I think I feel like certain accents are associated with higher social status.. I mean if there's a word I don't know and I go look up the pronunciation on dictionary, I'd press the British accent, like I wouldn't learn that word in another accent.. yes. If that's the case, I think overall I prefer British accent more.
- I: I see. How would you feel if you were mistaken for a native English speaker because of your accent?
- D: UM... I would thank him... I mean I wouldn't feel anything special, not like I would feel very excited about it. I think me myself... I didn't set particular standard for my English.. I mean someone would take this comment as something negative.. maybe they would be unhappy, because they may take it as an offence. Like they have really internalize English as a big part of their identity, like they think in English and feel really close to English so... yes, to me, English doesn't really have this role. It's more like a skill or tool, so when someone compliment that I learnt the language well or think that I am a native, I would thank them.
- I: You thank them because you think they acknowledge your learning result?
- D: (UM).. I mean to a certain extent, they mean it as a compliment. I mean if they say that you sound like a native speaker, it means that you have reached the highest level of mastery. Like you're at their level.
- I: I see. How would you feel when someone said they can tell from your English accent that you are from Hong Kong? Why?
- D: I think that would be interesting. While I was travelling in France, I talked to a French person. I told him that I am from HK and he said he worked in HK for 5 years and went back to France. So he learnt that I'm from HK, we were both really excited, feeling like we found someone whom we can identify with.

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- I: What about more specifically regarding accent? if someone says “Ah I knew you’re from HK from your accent! So typical of HK people.” Then how would you feel?
- D: I think... in my opinion.. HK English suggest something negative. So I think I’d feel a bit... not a very good feeling, if they say it’s my accent specifically that gives away my HK identity. I think, at that particular moment, I would not feel positive about that comment, but... I feel like it’s actually quite normal, because after all I am a Hongkonger, then it’s very reasonable that I have an HK accent. I think.. I mean we Hongkongers are second language users of English.
- I: I [see
- D: [there a person in my class. He’s from HK. I think that he speaks really good English but from his accent, you can tell- I mean he has a weird accent. like sometimes he uses British pronunciation, sometimes American, sometimes- I think his accent is such a mixture. So to native speakers, it’d be really weird to their hears. But for me, I really can’t tell what’s wrong with his accent. All I think about his accent is that he speaks good English. But people told me that his accent gives away that he is a learner of English, like he is not native. But to me, he is totally a high achiever.
- I: Interesting. Going back to your accent preference, I wonder why is it British? Not American, or Irish or some other accents?
- D: I think in HK, the teaching materials are usually British English. Like for Taiwanese, they uses American more- Korean too! They think American accents are better. When I went on exchange in Korea. Someone from Korean told me that my English sounds different from the kind of English they learn. So I explained to her that in HK, we generally think that British accent is better than American accent. Then.. we discussed... she was saying how she had always though American accent is the best because America is the most powerful country in the world. Yes, I think, yes, it has to do with education.
- I: You raised an interesting point. Seems like Hongkonger, Taiwanese and Korean and many people from other non-English-speaking country prefer “native” accents. What does native means to you?
- D:
- I: Would you like to have a Singaporean accent then? They also count as natives in your definition.
- D: I think it’s not so much about pronunciation. In terms of fluency, use of words and other aspects like writing skills, Singaporeans are definitely native speakers.. but if we are talking about accent, I would not prefer their accent, I would prefer British accent.
- I: How are Singaporean accent and British accent different?
- D: Because if you look up words in dictionary, there wouldn’t be Singaporean accent! British accent is more widely accepted and easier to understand. I think British and American [accents] are understood by the whole world.

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- I: I see. How would you describe your current accent in English?
- D: I think.. already... I mean if I can further improve, it'd be the best. But it's not my first priority to improve my accent. Yes, I think my accent is fine, it's ok, I can communicate with no problem in this accent.
- I: Based on your pronunciation ability, do you feel comfortable speaking English with British/native speakers/ other non-native speakers?
- D: I feel that, for some reason, it's more fun to talk to non-native speakers. Because we know for a fact that neither of us are native speakers, so we would tolerate mistakes more. But with native speakers, they might think that "how do you not know how to pronounce this word?". Yes, that's my feeling. So far, based on my 1-year experience in the UK, I think it's more comfortable for me to talk to non-native speakers.
- I: If starting today you could have a native accent but you won't be able to speak in HK accent again, would you take it?
- D: UM... I think.. <UNSURE>yes</UNSURE>.. (UM) after all, native accent is more widely accepted ↗ I think, since young, I've been told that it's important to get rid of my HK accent and it's best to learn British accent. So I always think that British accent is always better than HK accent.
- I: But you would give up HK accent in exchange for a British accent? Would you feel like not being able to speak in HK accent would mean losing a part of who you are?
- D: WELL.. I haven't really thought much about English.. but if you ask me a similar question about Mandarin, if you asked me if I would want a Beijing Mandarin accent and at the same time can get rid of my HK Mandarin accent, I'd die for it@@
- I: So it looks like English has a small significance in constituting your identity.
- D: Yes.. because my undergraduate degree is on Chinese literature...so I care more about Chinese than English. So it's more like a tool to me. I mean I can always get help from others for English when I need it.
- I: Interesting.
- D: Yes, to be honest, my career does not depend on English. I mean although I studied in an EMI school in HK, many of my schoolmates are really good at English, but it's just a foreign language to me.
- I: In what occasion do you use English?
- D: Actually, maybe only when I talk to foreigners- ah but I do sometimes text my friends in English.
- I: For foreigners, do you mean non-native English speaker?
- D: I mean both native and non-natives. I mean for people from other countries, the only common language is English if they don't know Chinese. I have some Italian friends.

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I: How would you feel if a native English speaker comment that you speak “good English”? Why?

D: (UM).. I think it’s a compliment. From the perspectives of a native speaker, I am a second language learner. If a native speaker says that I have learnt English well, I would feel happy and satisfied.

I: But to you, what does good English mean?

D: I think it’s mostly about... they think they are able to communicate with you with no problem. Like if you think of it this way... when I compliment that someone speak good Chinese, I think it’s mostly because... maybe he uses some local expressions, and there is not much obstacle in communicating with him in Chinese. Of course, that’s because he is a second language learner. I would also accommodate him, like talk slower. Yes. like I completely understand what he says and he does not stutter much, I would tell him that he learnt Chinese well.

I: What about English? I mean English has taken on a really international role. Like everyone who come to study in the UK should be able to communicate in English, so based on your definition for good English, does that mean that everyone who studies in the UK speak good English?

D: well.. that’s true.. I think on top of that.. if you are able to speak more “locally”, like maybe use some slang. But I think to be honest, I think as long as you can express what you think in English, it’s quit good already. Like if you look at a writing composition, you’d evaluate the piece of writing in terms of organization, content.. so as long as these areas are fine, I’d call it good language usage.

I: I see. Recently, many people comment that the English level of Hong Kong people has lowered and advocates that Hong Kong people should learn English well. How do you feel about this comment?

D: To be honest, I don’t really feel like HK people’s English has gotten worse than before. I mean consider the generation before us.. like I’ve been watching a lot of news conference about the protest lately. Carrie Lam (then Chief Executive of Hong Kong) and the Commissioner of Police.. they are from the same generation, but they have very different English levels. I think... I mean it’s really only because of mother tongue education, so there is a really big different between CMI and EMI school students.. also family education and personal interests, it would cause much difference. But based on the people that I know, I think most HK people’s English is quite good.

I: So if you think HK people’s English is already quite good, do you think it’s still necessary for us to learn it even better?

D: English is a very international language nowadays, and you use English to communicate with foreigners. I used to think that accent is quite important.. but after this year.. I talk to Singaporeans and some Indian too.. their accents are quite heavy but the conversation are.. fine, like they have no problem expressing their thoughts. When you- to Singaporeans, the Singaporean accent is just something normal, not a problem at all. And I think @ I think they

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can understand me too even if I speak in this accent.. If that's the case, there's no need to set native speakers as the target. I mean Singaporeans are also native speakers, so.. yes.

I: What do you think of the term "Hong Kong English?"

D: @It's a bit negative. It's not a positive term, yes, if you mention HK English.

I: Why? What makes you think that it's not positive?

D: I think that's because from a young age, HK education stresses a pursuit of perfection.. like if you learn anything, you need to set the best as goal. Since English is not the native language of HK people... when we are labelled to speak HK English, I would have some hard feelings.

I: What about Singlish then?

D: I think it's quite neutral ↘

I: What makes HK English different from Singlish?

D: I think it's the education belief in HK... makes us think that there is something better than HK English.

I: Do you think your year in the UK have changed the way you view HK English?

D: Yes. I have been to many places and need to talk to local people. Like I went to Holland, when I talked to people, everyone has their own accent, and there was no problem at all in communication. It was fun. This made me think that accent is really not that important.

I: You mentioned in the survey that "I feel less comfortable than using English as a medium of communication in European countries because British somehow doesn't understand that English is not everyone's native language and would judge you by your mistakes or accent". Can you elaborate your answer more?

D: One time I was talking to my roommate, who is British, I told her that I went to ee-KEE-uh (IKEA) and she said "oh you mean eye-KEE-ah". So I was like, yes... like I think they might be a bit insensitive. I sometimes feel like they are trying to correct you. And I think it can be a bit impolite too.. but I mean English people.. they are not like us. We grew up learning a foreign language (English), but they only use English as a first language, and even if they take foreign language classes, they don't follow through and just take it for exams.

I: Yes.. that's true. That's all for the interview questions. It is a very intriguing conversation with you. Is there anything you would like to add? or anything that you expected me to ask but I did not?

D: No.

I: Do you have any question regarding the study?

D: No.

I: Thank you for taking part in the interview.

Appendix O5. Interview transcript: E – no-preference

E: Interviewee            I: Interviewer

- I: Hello, thanks for taking the interview. This is your first year in the UK, how do you like it here so far?
- E: OK la. I don't really like the weather, and it depends on which city, I like some places but some places, I don't quite like.
- I: What about Oxford?
- E: I like my study here. But for my programme, there aren't many local British. I feel like I didn't learn much about English culture.
- I: I see. Let's get started with the interview questions. If you are able to choose, in what accent would you like to speak? Why?
- E: (2).. to be honest, I used to... I would want to have a certain accent.. but now I discovered that, as I am getting older, accent is really not that important. It's because the world is getting internationalized (ER) your accent actually became blended in to the world. That's why I don't have a particular preference for accent for myself. FOR MYSELF, I mean I don't have any desire to change my accent but to be honest there are certain accents that I do not prefer to listen @@
- I: I see, so for yourself, you don't have a specific accent preference.
- E: Yes, no preference. I think as long as I can communicate my thoughts, it's fine.
- I: How would you feel if you were mistaken for a native English speaker because of your accent?
- E: ... (UM) nothing really.. my feeling would be like "yes.. I can speak English". Because languages to me are only.. capabilities or a tool. It's like if you fall into the water and you know how to swim. It's a skill. So if someone compliment on my English, I won't go like "(WA) I know how to swim!", I mean you wont feel that way. Yes, I won't feel particularly proud, because English is.. how do I put it.. it's a very common and international language. But if I speak another language that is not English, I mean an additional language that I learn, then I would feel proud.
- I: Why do you feel that English is different from other languages that you learn?
- E: I wouldn't say that they are particularly different. I should put it this way, because English is one of the bilingual languages in HK, so many people can speak English and Chinese. So I don't think it's something particularly special about English. Because as a bilingual person, you are suppose to be able to communicate in the two languages with no problem.
- I: When in HK, do you mostly speak Chinese or English?
- E: If you are asking about majority, yes, Chinese. I mean speaking.

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- I: Do you think your English has an equal status as Chinese to you?
- E: (UM)... I can communicate well in English. I would rate myself 85 over 100 for my English skills. And for Chinese, I guess 95?
- I: Interesting, how about your English accent? How do you like your English accent?
- E: If I have to rate it... I mean it really depends on what accent you are asking me to compare my own accent to.
- I: I mean, since you don't have a preference, there is no need to rate your accent against certain standard. Let me rephrase my question, how satisfied are you with your accent?
- E: Accent... I think we should put it this way, it depends on what accent you're trying to imitate. Like you have to compare your accent to something in order to rate your accent ↗
- I: Why? But you said you don't have any desire to imitate- or change your accent.
- E: Yes I really don't care.. so if I have to answer.... I guess 50? Because it's the mid-point. I think what's more important about learning or using a language is not really on accent, it's more about whether or not you can communicate properly and effectively. That's why, for accent.. from my perspective, I don't really try to imitate any specific accent.. so I cant really rate my accent. I feel that sometimes I speak in difference accents when I talk to British people or American people. Like they are used to to-MAY-to (tomato) or to-MA-to.. so I mean my accent is always different..
- I: Has there been any experience where your accent, or pronunciation has caused miscommunication?
- E: (UM).. I cant think of any now.. but if they don't understand, I would change my way of pronouncing that word.
- I: @what if there are both British and American in the group which you're talking to, how do you choose which pronunciation to change into?
- E: (EH).. I don't care.. either.. as long as they understand.
- I: How would you feel when someone said they can tell from your English accent that you are from Hong Kong? Why?
- E: I would feel really happy.
- I: Very happy, Why?
- E: YES! Because for some reason many people thought that my accent is a bit Malaysian, so not many people can tell that I am from HK. And also I think HK accent is quite rare here, I mean after all, HK is just a small city, just a district.. so when people try to guess where I am from base on my English accent, they usually wouldn't say HK. So if that person can tell I'm from HK, I'd feel happy about that.
- I: You feel disappointed when someone guesses that you're from Malaysia?

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E: Yes..

I: Is it because it's an inaccurate guess or do you not like Malaysian accent?

E: let me think about it... I just think that it's really difficult to guess correctly that I am from HK, given that HK is such a small place, so... there is a really low chance where people guess correctly that it's HK. So if they say Malaysia- (AH) there was one time someone really quickly told me they can tell from my accent that I was from HK, I felt really excited, yes. Just yesterday.. someone told me they thought I'm Malaysian because of my accent, then I said "yes, it's not my first time being mistaken as a Malaysian, but I'm from HK". I don't know why, I don't even know how Malaysian accent sound like @ so I was like "OK la".

I: What do you mean by "OK la"? @ Do you have any desire to project your HK identity through your accent if you're mistaken as a Malaysian so often?

E: (UM).. I don't think I deliberately try to speak a HK style English. I think the English that I speak in one that can enable me to communicate.. I mean sometimes, accent changes. For example, in the past couple of days, I spent time with more south east Asian.. (EH).. like Singaporean, they speak English in a very special way.. so to some extent, from the past few days where I spent time with them, my accent changed. @if I go back to my normal routine, my original accent would come back. So I think accent changes in a short time.

I: Do you mean you try to cater to, or accommodate the way your conversation partners speak?

E: (UM).. I wouldn't say I deliberately try to do that. I think it's just natural, you'd want to use an accent that similar to the person you're talking to.

I: But in the UK, it's quite likely that your conversation is joined by people from various places who speak many different types of accent, how do you "blend in"? Would you [try

E: [No, I won't... I mean, first, let's say that I do not try to deliberately change my accent. I think we should say that I am @not @even @aware that my accent changes. For example, when I talk to Australian, I won't be able to naturally speak their accent because their accent is very unique. That's why in the beginning of the interview, I don't have a particular accent preference, but I do not deny that my accent would be affected by others. Like I don't do it (change my accent) actively.

I: I see. How would you describe your current accent in English?

E: A mix ↗

I: How do you feel about your accent?

E: I don't feel anything.

I: Nothing at all?

E: yes, really, no feeling.



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- I: OK. Could you describe any positive or negative experiences that you have had encountered while speaking English in the UK (which you may attribute to your accent)?
- E: I think sometimes, there are some words I don't understand.. I think it's because of accent. There are some words I can't pronounce, then I need to further explain what I mean. But I don't think it's anything positive or negative. It's just about clarification.
- I: What do you mean by "can't pronounce"?
- E: For example, there a word, T-A-X. I can't pronounce this word @, yes, I can't pronounce it. TAX. Like I'm probably saying it wrong now. Like when I talk to an American, they may not be able to understand this word.
- I: Why?
- E: I think my accent is.. lacking. I can't grasp how to pronounce this word.
- I: @ I think there is a difference between not knowing this word and pronouncing this word in your own accent.
- E: I think yes, I can read this word out loud, but I think I sound differently than most other people when they say this word.
- I: And you think this difference leads to misunderstanding?
- E: (UM).. like they wouldn't understand this word right away, so I need to further explain.
- I: Do you feel differently when speaking English with British/ native speakers/ other non-native speakers?
- E: (UM) yes, I think in a group setting, it's easier to talk to non-native speakers. (ER).. because maybe.. we.. let me think why- I think it's because there are less frequent use of colloquial terms. Like it's quite often that when you talk to native, they would use a lot of slangs, then you need to clarify, and they may speak really fast. But when all of us have not mastered English to a native level, then it'd be easier to talk to each other. I mean in a group, you know when the conversation moves really quickly, it's easier to follow the conversation when speaking with non-natives. Yes, simpler words, similar language complexity, and slower speed.
- I: How do you think British people would react toward you if you had a native sounding accent?
- E: No I don't think so. Because I did not grow up in the UK.. like I don't suppose any native speaker would be able to speak my accent. like if I put them in my shoes.
- I: If starting today you could have a native accent but you won't be able to speak in HK accent again, would you take it?
- E: (UM).. let me think about this question... well.. I think if that's the case, I don't mind it.
- I: Why not?
- E: (ER)... I need to think about this. I mean I don't mind having HK accent, but I think if I can have a better that enables me to communicate better, then it's good! If we are talking about-

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just talking about accent and I don't need to give up my Chinese although, just the accent, then why not. As I said, there are some words I can't pronounce, so if I could have a native accent, I would be able to pronounce these words, at least to a point that people would understand

I: But as you mentioned, it's easier to talk to non-native speakers and harder to follow the conversation with native speakers, then why do you think a native accent will facilitate, or improve communication?

E: That's why I needed time to think about this question just now.. I really don't mind my accent. If I have to make a choice... I think... let just put it this way, "indifferent choice".

I: You mean you are fine with both options?

E: Yes, I would not be like "of course it's better to use native accent", because I think accent is a special feature of your speech. Yes, that's what I think. I mean HK is an international city, so you sort of feel proud to be coming from this city. That's why I'm fine to have a HK accent.

I: Do you try to use your HK accent to signal this pride that you take from you HK identity?

E: My HK accent... I don't think I deliberately use any HK accent. Because.. people don't guess I am from HK. So.. I think if they could guess it right, I'd feel happy.

I: I feel like your feeling of happiness only comes from the fact that it's a difficult guess and it's surprising that someone get it right.. not so much about pride.

E: YES YES YES! that's the feeling. A tiny tiny sense of pride.

I: How do you identify yourself culturally?

E: A HK person.

I: Do you use other channel to express your HK identity, besides accent.

E: Maybe my appearance? I think it's not that important...I mean where I'm from. I don't deliberately tell people that I am from HK, but when people ask, I'd be happy to share. But I won't go like "I am from HK, I am proud of being a HK person", no I won't do that. I really have no special feeling about having a HK accent, it's nothing positive or negative.

I: Do you think that being able to speak English is an important part of your who you are? Why?

E: Yes.

I: but you mentioned that English is more or less just a tool.

E: As I said, English is like the ability to swim. It's an essential skill.

I: So it's an important part of who you are that you can swim?

E: I mean.. I don't think the two are comparable... I don't quite get your question. Can you clarify.

I: I mean is being able to speak English an important part of your identity?

E: (AH) I think I misunderstood your question, I thought you were asking if it's important to know how to speak English. So... if you ask if English is important to my identity.. (ER)...Identity

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in certain way.. (ER) I should put it this way, if I can speak English, my social circle would be bigger. I mean English helps me meet more people. So if you ask me, I wouldn't label it as a part of my identity, but it would affect my social ability.. like things more practical. I would see it this way. That why I misheard your question thinking if English is essential.

I: How would you feel if a native English speaker comment that you speak "good English"?

E: No feeling. Same as my answer before.

I: @@the previous question is more about accent and this one is about overall English proficiency.

E: I would think.. (AH) ok, quite nice. That's all.

I: That's is?

E: YES.

I: What if someone said you speak bad English@@?

E: Then I would go home and watch more TV show.

I: @ I mean would you have any feeling?

E: Feeling.. I would think that I should go home and work harder to make my communication clearer.

I: You won't feel negative about it?

E: Yes, that's why I need to improve.

I: But it seems like you put all the "responsibility" on your part. Like why is it only your fault, why shouldn't that person try harder to understand you too?

E: (UM) I think it's because of my personality. I would reflect myself first, then think about others. I think communication is two-sided... but if someone doesn't understand me, I would reflect on myself first. So if he doesn't understand, I'd just use another word. Yes.

I: Recently, many people comment that the English level of Hong Kong people has lowered and advocates that Hong Kong people should learn English well. How do you feel about this comment?

E: (UM).. it's so hard for me to answer this question.. because I have not read any report about HK people's English level or anything I really know nothing about it.

I: @@ what's your overall feeling for people you know? I mean about their English proficiency.

E: I don't think HK people's English worsened.

I: Then do you think there's a need for people to learn English well? Or better?

E: I mean then.. go home and reflect on ourselves. It's a really similar question to when you ask how I'd feel when someone says I don't speak good English. Yes. I'd go home and reflect.

I: but you said HK people's English is not bad, where is there a need to reflect?

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- E: As I said, there are always other words you can use.
- I: Why is there a need to change?
- E: I think the ultimate goal is to make the other understand. You should accommodate, that's why you change. Not like you should argue with the other person that "it's your problem that you don't understand, go home and reflect" not like that. The most important thing is to make each other understand.
- I: OK. What do you think of the term "Hong Kong English"?
- E: I think there's a really large spectrum. Like there are some people who speak really really HK style English, versus someone who speaks English really well. So when you ask me about HK English, I don't know which HKE you are talking about.
- I: @ I did not refer to any specific point on the spectrum you mentioned. I mean what's your overall feeling for HK English?
- E: OK, then that's how I feel. I feel that there is a spectrum. Some people speak English really well, very westernized, versus someone who speak really really HK accent. I mean there are a lot of people how passed IELTS and manage to come to the UK and study. That means their English is good enough, but they still have HK accent (UM)... I think if you're talking about HKE is really all about the accent. Yes.
- I: OK. Interesting. That's all for the interview questions. Is there anything you would like to add?
- E: No.
- I: Is there anything that you expected me to ask but I did no?
- E: No.
- I: Do you have any question regarding the study?
- E: What is this study about?
- I: I'm trying to see what contributes to HK people's self-directed accent preference, and how they identify themselves as English speakers in the UK. I want to see if there is a relationship between the two.
- E: I see.
- I: Yes. Thank you very much for your time.