

Language Attitudes after the Handover: Communication and Identity in 2013 Hong Kong

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Abstract: This study is intended to find out the language attitudes of students in Hong Kong towards these three languages, and it is similar to the study which was carried out by Kwok in 2004. However, this study expands from Kwok's study, which includes students' language attitudes on Cantonese. Moreover, the respondents for this study are from two different universities, which are The City University of Hong Kong and The Open University of Hong Kong, as for Kwok's study, the respondents do not have a restriction. Therefore, this study can find out students' opinions on language attitudes of Cantonese, English and Putonghua.

Keywords: Language identity, Language attitude, Cantonese, English, Putonghua.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong is a trilingual society, which the Basic Law has claimed Hong Kong to be a "Biliteracy and Trilingual" society. Therefore, Cantonese, Putonghua and English are the most important languages in Hong Kong. In 2013, when Hong Kong had already been a part of China for 15 years, the situation of these three languages fluctuates. This is due to the fact that China has become more influential in Hong Kong. As a result, Putonghua, which is the national and official language in China, is becoming more important in Hong Kong society. However, English remains as one of the most important languages in Hong Kong, which Lai (2005) mentioned is the highest instrumental value and social status in Hong Kong. As for Cantonese, it is the dominant language in Hong Kong (Bruche-Schulz, 1997), because most of the people in Hong Kong speak Cantonese (HKSAR Government, 2007), which can represent Hong Kong people and contain their identity (Bolton & Bacon-Shone, 2008).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Pennington (1998), language attitudes in Hong Kong have been changing since the 90s. This is due to the fact that Hong Kong has a complex political background. During the 1980s, Hong Kong was under the rule of the British government, until 1997, the Hong Kong's sovereignty is being handed to the government of China. Therefore, as Pennington (1998) mentioned, because of the complex background of Hong Kong, the two languages, which are Cantonese and English, can either support each other, such as in code-mixing, or they may compete for their available resources, which will divide into "High and Low" languages.

Scholars supported that Cantonese is used to signal in-group identity, which is a symbol of Hong Kong identity, whereas English and Putonghua are being used in formal situations. According to Bruche-Schulz (1997), Cantonese can be considered as a language for everyday use, and there are findings which show that people are in favor of using Putonghua for the educational function. As Evans and Green (2001) further explain, there is no doubt that English is still a dominant

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 2, Issue 3, pp: (6-27), Month: May – June 2015, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

language in workplace or formal settings, whereas Cantonese appears to be the “unmarked language of intra-ethnic communication” (p.265). In recent research, findings of Sullivan, Schatz and Lam (2012) indicate that Cantonese represents Hong Kong society and identity, whereas Putonghua represents Chinese society and identity. Moreover, as these authors mentioned, English is a “Hong Kongers’ distinctiveness” (p.47) from Mainland China.

Some scholars believe that Cantonese enjoys a higher status than other language varieties in Hong Kong. According to Adamson and Auyeung (1997), on the one hand, Cantonese is highly used in the public domain and will continue to be a central subject in Chinese language teaching in Hong Kong. English, on the other hand, is considered to have a high value in cultural exchange, despite the connotation with colonialism. Bolton (2002) further explained that Cantonese enjoys a higher status than other varieties, because it is the dominant language in Hong Kong popular culture, such as pop songs and newspapers.

However, according to Groves (2010), Cantonese is no more than a dialect. The study carried out by Groves focuses on the status of Cantonese in Hong Kong. Groves (2010) claims that there is not enough evidence to say Cantonese is a language, but it is more than enough to say Cantonese is a dialect. This is due to the fact that Cantonese did not go through the standardization process, and this differentiates Cantonese from a standard language (Groves, 2010).

There are also some scholars predicting the future language attitudes in Hong Kong. Adamson and Auyeung (1997) came up with a prediction for Putonghua, which was that Putonghua would be emphasized more in different sectors of society after the handover, so that the importance of Putonghua will increase. As Evans and Green (2001) claim, the findings in their report indicate that there may be a shift in the future. The shift which they describe is that the use of Chinese will increase at the expense of English and the use of Putonghua will increase at the expense of Cantonese, and to some extent English, in written and spoken workplace communication. Moreover, Lai (2010) supports that because new political, social, and economic impacts can affect language attitudes, attitude change in the future is entirely possible. This is due to the development of Hong Kong and its relationship with China after the handover.

In recent years, some scholars conducted studies on language attitudes in Hong Kong which relate to the ways that Putonghua, Cantonese and English are being used on different occasions. According to Lai (2011), in the Hong Kong situation, Cantonese and English are being used for different purpose. Hong Kong people tend to use Cantonese among their friends, whereas English is used in formal settings. However, as Lai (2011) further explained, if the Hong Kong economy continues to increase connection with China, then Putonghua will have more acceptance in Hong Kong society. Therefore, Lai’s research implies that Hong Kong may turn into a triglossic society in the future. Although there is little evidence to show that Hong Kong is changing from a diglossic society to a triglossic society, the implementation of Putonghua in the Hong Kong school curriculum has increased after the handover (Lai, 2010b). The number of schools which use or teach in Putonghua has increased, and children learn it as a third language in school (Lai, 2010b). According to Lai (2010b), Hong Kong will become a triglossic society, because of the increase importance of Putonghua in Hong Kong.

Mathews, Ma, and Lui (2008) state that the attitudes towards Putonghua among Hong Kong people are complex. Mathews et al. (2008) conducted a study related to different ways Hong Kong people labeled themselves. They mentioned that Hong Kong people love their country, but their loyalty can be labeled as “Sunshine patriotism” (Mathews, Ma & Lui, 2008). When referring to the bright side of China, such as winning medals in the Olympics, Hong Kong people claim themselves as “Chinese”, who feel glory about the performance of their country (Mathews, Ma & Lui, 2008). However, when referring to the “negative” side of China, such as corruption in government departments, Hong Kong people will claim that people from China are “Mainlanders” and label themselves as “Hong Kongers” (Mathews, Ma & Lui, 2008). Hence the love and hate sentiments coexist among Hong Kong people, and this is a reason that explains why, after the handover, Putonghua cannot replace the position of Cantonese nor English in Hong Kong.

Kwok (2004) has done a research which relates to the language attitudes of English and Putonghua. According to Kwok (2004), English is still the “unbeatable” language, which is commonly used in business and academic settings. As for Putonghua, it is not a favorable choice among Hong Kong people. Kwok (2004) further explains that Hong Kong peoples’ attitudes towards Putonghua are more instrumentally-driven than integratively-driven, which means people learn Putonghua for business purposes rather than for achieving the integration of Chinese language. However, as Kwok (2004) concludes, although Hong Kong peoples’ attitudes towards Putonghua are only related to business setting, the attitudes of

Hong Kong people may change in the future. This is due to the increases connection between Hong Kong and Mainland China.

There are also some studies which claim that Hong Kong will become a trilingual society. Trilingual refers to Putonghua, Cantonese and English. Li (2009) claimed that there will be a large demand for high proficiency in Putonghua and English, so that Hong Kong can maintain its socioeconomic competitiveness. This also explains the reason that the Hong Kong government emphasizes the importance of “Biliteracy & Trilingualism” in its language-in-education policy (Li, 2009). However, as Li (2009) points out, there are some difficulties in achieving “Biliteracy & Trilingualism”. The first problem is the lack of environment for people to practice and use English and Putonghua in the society. This is due to the fact that people use these two languages only on special occasions, such as international conference (Li, 2009). The second problem is the high linguistic dissimilarity between Chinese and English. Because of the different language families that Chinese and English come from, there are difficulties for people to fully master the use of English (Li, 2009). Therefore, Li (2009) concluded that there will be a lot of obstacles ahead of Hong Kong people to achieve “Biliteracy & Trilingualism”.

There are some studies which mention that Hong Kong peoples’ identity is reflected through the languages they prefer. According to Lai (2010a), Hong Kong people are proud of Hong Kong’s socioeconomic achievements, for example, its status as an international financial center. Hence, people express a strong sense of Hong Kong identity and Cantonese is the language is associated with that identity (Lai, 2010a). At the same time, as Lai (2010a) mentioned Hong Kong people also accept the mixture of English and Cantonese as representing Hong Kong identity. This is due to the fact that many Hong Kong people, especially teenagers, like to use code-mixing in their conversation and this situation has been expanded to formal contexts, such as school presentation (Lai, 2010a). As for Putonghua, according to Lai (2010a), there is not any evidence to support the increasing importance of Putonghua. In Lai’s research, among the middle-class of Hong Kong, people tend to reject Putonghua as the language of power in Hong Kong (Lai, 2010a). Lai (2010a) concluded that Putonghua cannot replace any of the roles of Cantonese nor English without the assistance from Hong Kong government.

3. OBJECTIVE

This study is related to Kwok’s (2004) prediction, which is Hong Kong peoples’ attitudes towards Putonghua may change. Cantonese, English and Putonghua have different roles or status in Hong Kong. As the influence of China increases, people attitudes towards Putonghua may also change. Therefore, the first objective is to find out do students have positive attitudes on Putonghua because of the rising influence of China.

The second objective is intended to compare the status of English between 2004 and 2013. English is the most important language in Hong Kong. Kwok’s study (2004) shows that English is still the most important language in Hong Kong. The main reason is due to the long colonial period from the British government (Kwok, 2004). However, after the handover, evidence shows that the influence from the Chinese government is increasing in Hong Kong, for example, the implementation of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) (Trade Development Council, 2006). Hence, the status of English may change in 2013.

The last objective is related to Cantonese. In Kwok’s study (2004), there is not any information or opinion which is related to the language attitudes of Cantonese. However, Cantonese is the dominant language in Hong Kong (Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008). This is due to the fact that, recently, the term of “Hong Kongers” is introduced to distinct between Hong Kong people and Mainlanders (Matthew, Ma & Lui, 2008). This shows that Hong Kong people are aware of their own identity, and they try to draw a line to separate between Hong Kong people and Mainland people. Therefore, the last objective of this study is intended to find out the attitudes that Hong Kong people have on Cantonese.

By using the three objectives of this study, the following three questions are the main focus of this research paper.

What attitudes do students have regarding English, Cantonese and Putonghua?

Does the rising influence of China (PRC) affect students’ attitude towards English?

Does English still remain as a “value-added” language in Hong Kong?

4. METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative study. Adopting the past experience from similar research on language attitudes, the data collection methods are questionnaire and follow up with individual interviews. This research extends on the previous pilot study, which was carried out in 2012. The number of subjects has been expanded from 20 participants to 40 participants. The people who were invited to participate in this research are mainly 20 English major students from Open University of Hong Kong (Group 2), and 20 students who are studying in the field of humanities from City University of Hong Kong (Group 1). This research intends to compare and contrast the opinion between English major students and other students who are not English majors. Their age is approximately between 17 and 25 years old, and they are all undergraduate students. All of the interviewees were born in Hong Kong, and their native language is Cantonese.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. Part A of the questionnaire is intended to find out the students' attitudes towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua. All the students were required to choose between those three languages and express their opinion about which language is important for Hong Kong at present and in the future. Part B of the questionnaire is intended to find out students' opinion on Cantonese, English and Putonghua. In this section, there are 21 items which are related to these three languages being used in different context of Hong Kong. The scale of the grading system is from "(a) Strongly agree" to "(e) Strongly disagree". Those items are mainly adopted from the studies of Kwok (2004), and some of the items have been modified and expanded to fit in the research topic and current society context. Moreover, those questionnaire's items have already received Kwok's permission before using them.

As for the follow-up interview, it was used to elicit further information on students' language attitudes. Follow-up interviews were carried out to ask students for further explanation to their answer selections on the questionnaire. The interview questions are adopted from previous questionnaire questions, for example, "Is Putonghua a prestigious language? Why/why not?" The language that was used throughout the interview was Cantonese. This is due to the fact that all the interviewees are Hong Kong residents and their native language are Cantonese. The number of interviewees is 3 students from The Open University English stream and 3 students from the mixed groups, and they are a convenience sample.

Chi-square was used for calculation, and it was done in Excel. After the chi-square calculation, other statistical calculation, such as means is used to further investigate on the different patterns from the questionnaires' result, and all those calculation processes were done in Excel. The scale of mean is set from "1" to "5", which is used for indicating the degree of agreement from the respondents (See Appendix C).

5. RESULTS

Language attitudes in Hong Kong:

The data shows that there are significant numbers indicating Hong Kong students' language attitudes. In the first group, who all come from City University of Hong Kong, 70% of the respondents mention that English is an important language in business and academic sectors, and 60% of them further claim that they would like to improve English in the future. As for the second group, who are students from Open University of Hong Kong, they also express similar attitudes towards the use of languages. Over 50% of the respondents said that English is an important in business and academic sectors, and over 60% of the respondents would like to improve their English in the future.

The survey results show that English is still playing a dominant role in the formal setting. In both groups, most of the students express it is a more important language than Cantonese and Putonghua. However, Putonghua also has a significant number of respondents to indicate its importance. In group 1, 30% of the respondents mention that they would like to improve their Putonghua in the future, whereas 35% of the respondents in group 2 also mention that they would like to improve their Putonghua in the future.

Attitudes towards English:

As mentioned above, the status of English is confirmed in this study. In the first group, 95% of the respondents agree that speaking better English can enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people. 55% of the respondents claim that English is a prestigious language. 65% of the respondents agree that English is the most important language in academic setting. Over 60% of the respondents believe that Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in

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the society. 70% of the respondents agree that English is a language of power, and 60% of them agree that people who can speak fluent English must be well-educated. Moreover, 45% of the respondents agree that most middle-class people in Hong Kong speak fluent English. However, there is an interesting point in the question of “I would only speak English to foreigners. It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua a speaker.” 50% of the respondents disagree with this issue.

In the second group, the results are similar to the results from the first group. 90% of the respondents agree that speaking better English can enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people. 70% of the respondents claim that English is a prestigious language. 95% of the respondents agree that English is the most important language in academic setting, which is higher than the results from group 1. Over 60% of the respondents believe that Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in the society. 60% of the respondents agree that English is a language of power, and 50% of them agree that people who can speak fluent English must be well-educated. However, there are only 35% of the respondents agree that most middle-class people in Hong Kong speak fluent English, which is lower than group 1's respondents. Furthermore, in the question of “I would only speak English to foreigners. It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua a speaker.” Only 20% of the respondents disagree with this issue.

Using the chi-square test, the result in group 1 for questions “Speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people”, “English is a prestigious language”, “Most middle-class people in Hong Kong speak fluent English”, “English is a language of power” and “Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in the society” have exceeded the critical values for significance at the .01 level, so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis. However, the results for the questions “A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent English must be well educated” “I would only speak English to foreigner” and “It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua speaker” have not reached the critical values, and so there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies.

The result in group 2 for questions “Speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people”, “English is a prestigious language”, “Most middle-class people in Hong Kong speak fluent English” and “Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in the society” have exceeded the critical values, so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis. However, the result for “A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent English must be well educated”, “English is a language of power” have not reached the critical values, and there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies.

The chi-square results show a similar pattern between group 1 and 2. The results are significant for both groups when questions are related to English is the prestigious language and language of power, whereas question that is related to English and education level, the results for both groups have no significant.

Attitudes towards Putonghua:

Respondents from group 1 generally do not express any strong attitudes towards Putonghua. 35% of the respondents do not agree that Putonghua is a language of power, and about 45% of the respondents disagree with Putonghua gives them a familiar and friendly feeling. 55% of the respondents disagree that it is fashionable to be able to speak Putonghua. 60% of the respondents disagree that speaking Putonghua makes them feel patriotic, and 35% of them disagree that “A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated”. Less than 20% of the respondents mention that they would like to learn Putonghua in the future. However, 60% of the respondents disagree that people who could speak fluent Putonghua must be born in China or come from the Mainland, and only 20% of them do not agree that Putonghua is a prestigious language in Hong Kong. Moreover, 70% of the respondents agree that Putonghua is rising in importance in the international arena.

Respondents from group 2 also do not express strong attitudes towards Putonghua. 30% of the respondents do not agree that Putonghua is a language of power, and about 55% of the respondents disagree that Putonghua gives them a familiar and friendly feeling, 70% of the respondents disagree that it is fashionable to be able to speak Putonghua. 60% of the respondents disagree that speaking Putonghua makes them feel patriotic, and 50% of them disagree that “A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated”. Only 30% of the respondents mention that they would like to learn Putonghua in the future. However, 60% of the respondents disagree that people who could speak fluent

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Putonghua must be born in China or come from the Mainland, and only 20% of them do not agree that Putonghua is a prestigious language in Hong Kong. Moreover, 85% of the respondents agree that Putonghua is rising in importance in the international arena.

Using the chi-square test, the result in group 1 for questions “Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people”, “Putonghua is rising in importance in the international arena”, “Putonghua is a prestigious language”, “Putonghua gives me a friendly and familiar feelings”, “Hong Kong people who could speak fluent Putonghua have higher status in society” and “Putonghua is a language of power” have exceeded the critical values, so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis. However, the results for “A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be born in China or come from the Mainland”, “It is fashionable to be able to speak in Putonghua”, “Speaking Putonghua makes me feel patriotic (love of one’s country)” have not reached the critical values., and there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies.

The result in group 2 for questions “Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people”, “Putonghua is a prestigious language”, “Putonghua is a language of power” and “Hong Kong people who could speak fluent Putonghua have higher status in society” have exceeded the critical values, so it is possible to reject the critical values. However, the results for “Putonghua gives me a friendly and familiar feelings”, “It is fashionable to be able to speak in Putonghua”, “Speaking Putonghua makes me feel patriotic (love of one’s country)” have not reached the critical values, and there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies.

The chi-square results show a similar pattern between group 1 and 2. The results are significant for both groups when questions are related to Putonghua can help people to be competitive in the society and prestigious language, whereas questions that are asking respondents about friendly feeling and patriotic issue, the results have no significant.

Attitudes towards Cantonese:

Respondents from group 1 have positive attitudes towards Cantonese for signaling in-group identity, which is “Hong Kongers”. However, they hold permissive attitudes towards Cantonese when it is related to the international arena. 85% of the respondents agree that Cantonese gives them a familiar and friendly feeling, and about 65% of them do not have strong attitude towards Cantonese is a prestigious language in Hong Kong. 60% of the respondents agree that speaking Cantonese can show their identity. However, 50% of the respondents disagree that Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena. Moreover, only 5% of the respondents mention Cantonese is useful in business and academic areas. Less than 10% of the respondents express that they would like to further improve or learn their Cantonese in the future.

Respondents from group 2 have similar attitudes towards Cantonese compared with group 1. 85% of the respondents agree that Cantonese gives them a familiar and friendly feeling. 75% of the respondents agree that speaking Cantonese can show their identity. However, 80% of the respondents disagree that Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena, and about 50% of them disagree that Cantonese is a prestigious language in Hong Kong. Moreover, only 15% of the respondents mention Cantonese is useful in business and academic areas. Less than 10% of the respondents express that they would like to further improve or learn their Cantonese in the future.

Using the chi-square test, the results in group 1 for questions “Cantonese gives me a friendly and familiar feeling”, “Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena” and “Cantonese is a prestigious language” have exceeded the critical values, so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis. However, the result of “Speaking Cantonese can show my identity (Hong Kong Chinese)” has not reached the critical values, and there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies.

The result in group 2 for questions “Cantonese gives me a friendly and familiar feeling” and “Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena” have exceeded the critical values, so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis. However, the result of “Speaking Cantonese can show my identity (Hong Kong Chinese)” and “Cantonese is a prestigious language” have not reached the critical values, and there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies.

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The chi-square results show a similar pattern between group 1 and 2. The results are significant for both groups when questions are related to friendly feeling, whereas questions that are asking respondents about Cantonese is a prestigious language, the results have no significant.

Individual values vs. community values:

In this study, there is also a comparison of individual values and community values. Respondents from both groups have a similar pattern in expressing their opinion. When the question are related to the general community attitudes, such as “Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people” or “Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society”, respondents are more willing to express their own opinion. However, when questions come to make individual judgment, such as “Putonghua is a prestigious language” or “A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated”, respondents are tended not to express strong opinion. Below is the means of each question, they can show respondents answer preference to questions that are related to either individual values or community values.

Questions	Group 1 (Mean)	Group 2 (Mean)
A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated. (Individual)	3.3	3.4
Putonghua is a prestigious language. (Individual)	2.9	2.9
Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people. (Community)	2.2	1.9
Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society. (Community)	2.5	2.2

Trilingual society:

Hong Kong is a trilingual society, which contain Cantonese, English and Putonghua. The language policy in 1995 claimed that Hong Kong is a “Biliterate and Trilingual” society, and it has been stated in the basic law. This study also asks the two groups of respondents to express their view on Hong Kong is a trilingual society. However, the result of this question is not similar.

Group 1, who are mainly humanities students in City University, general agrees that Hong Kong is a trilingual society. 95% of the respondents from group 1 agree that Hong Kong is a trilingual city. However, for the second group, only 55% of the respondents agree that Hong Kong is a trilingual city, and 20% of them disagree with this issue, which is more than the group 1 respondents.

Using the chi-square test, the result in group 1 for the question “Hong Kong is a trilingual society” has exceeded the critical values, so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis. However, the result in group 2 for the question “Hong Kong is a trilingual society” has not reached the critical values, and there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies.

Interview result:

6 follow-up interviews have been conducted to get further information from the participants. Both group 1 and 2 have similar result for question 1. Most of the participants mention that English and Cantonese are the prestigious languages in Hong Kong. This is due to the fact that participants often use these two languages in both formal and informal settings. One of the participants said that the English version documents hold more grounds, whereas Cantonese is the common language of Hong Kong people. Therefore, both English and Cantonese are the prestigious language in Hong Kong. As for Putonghua, all of the participants mention that it is not a prestigious language in Hong Kong. This is due to the fact that only Mainlanders use Putonghua.

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In the second question, both groups mention that English will benefit them in their study. As for the work setting, group 1 indicates that both English and Putonghua will be useful. However, in group 2, only English can help them at work. This is due to the fact that most of the participants in group 2 are English major, so they will prefer using English than Putonghua.

In the coming ten years, both groups mention that Putonghua will become more important. This is due to the fact that more and more Mainlanders will come and live in Hong Kong, so Putonghua will be important. However, most of the interviewees express negative attitudes on Putonghua. There is one participant from group 2 said that Putonghua will make him think of Mainlanders who are uncivilized and come from a different world. Despite most of the participants express their negative attitudes towards Putonghua, one of the interviewees in group 1 holds a different perspective. That participant mentions that “I think Putonghua is a useful language. I was hired from my employer because I could speak fluent Putonghua”.

The word association from both groups is similar. Below is the comparison of both groups’ word association.

	Group 1	Group 2
Putonghua	Conservative, money, China	China, Mainland, uncivilized
English	Foreign, important, hard	Home, prestige, lingua franca
Cantonese	Friends, native, Hong Kong	Hong Kong, Chinese, easy

The word associations show that Cantonese is a Hong Kong language, and interviewees have friendly feelings on this language. English is an international and important language. However, interestingly, one of the interviewees mentions that English is related to “Home”. He further explains that he feels more comfortable when using English, and he will also use English with his friends. As for Putonghua, it is related to uncivilized. Interviewees tend to relate Putonghua with money or Mainlanders. This is due to the fact that Mainlanders use Putonghua and they have spent a lot of in Hong Kong.

Both groups of participants mention that they prefer their colleagues and friends to use Cantonese, due to the fact that using Cantonese is much more intimacy than using English and Putonghua. One of the participants in group 1 said that using Cantonese to communicate, he can express his ideas more clearly. At informal setting, most of the participants in both groups do not like to use English for communication. One of the participants replies that people may not like to talk with you if you use English in daily conversation. This is due to the fact that people may think that you are unwilling to build a closer relationship with others and they may think that you are arrogant. However, one of the interviewees from group 2 mentions that using English is more comfortable for him. Although he does not have any preference on which languages his colleagues and friends use, he likes to use English for communication purpose.

6. DISCUSSION

Attitudes on English:

Both groups have similar attitudes towards English. The majority of the respondents mention that English is highly influential in Hong Kong. The figures below have shown that both groups have positive attitude towards English.

Questions	Rank	Mean (Group 1)	Rank	Mean (Group 2)
Speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.	1	1.7	1	1.8
English is a prestigious language.	2	2.4	2	2.0
English is a language of power.	2	2.4	3	2.2
Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society.	3	2.5	3	2.2

The numbers above show that both groups agree that English has a high status in Hong Kong. The results of English are being the language of power and receive a higher status in the society are consistent with the study that was carried out by

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Kwok (2004). More than half of the respondents in both groups agree that speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people and Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society. This is due to the fact that English is a lingua franca, which is an international language (Goodman et al., 2007). English can help people to improve their individual position and gain more economy opportunity (Goodman et al., 2007). In Hong Kong, if a person knows better English, that person can have a better job or more successful in the academic field. These kinds of benefits can help that person to climb up the social ladder. Therefore, knowing English can help people to have a better career path, and remain competitive in the society.

Both groups also agree that English is a prestigious language, and it is a language of power. This is due to the fact that English can be seen as an “outer” value for Hong Kong people, which refers to academic achievements and success (Pennington, 1998). For both groups of respondents, English is their medium of instruction, so English is their language of power, because English helps them to gain high grades. Moreover, in Hong Kong, English is also an important language in business sectors. This is due to the fact that Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city, and there are different nationality of people come to Hong Kong to do business. Speaking better English can help people to gain a lot of benefits in business sectors, so Hong Kong people often think that English is the language of power.

In today’s Hong Kong society, there is no doubt that English still plays an important role. Due to the fact that the Hong Kong government highly emphasis on good command of English in Hong Kong, which according to the Policy Address in 2010, the Hong Kong government has implemented a policy, which is called the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme. This scheme is used to attract people, who are from other countries, with talent in specific areas, such as music, to move into Hong Kong (Policy address, 2010). One of the requirements of this scheme is to have good proficiency of English (Policy address, 2010). Because of this scheme, the importance of English has increased. This is the reason why there are significant numbers of respondents from both groups mention that speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.

Another reason to explain the overwhelming result from the respondents is related to the background of these two groups. Group 1 is mainly from City University of Hong Kong, and they all study in the same field, which is Humanities. City University is a westernized university, which the culture is more towards the West. Hence, students tend to use English more often than the other languages. This explains why there are 70% of the respondents think that “English is a prestigious language”.

Although the second group of students is from Open University of Hong Kong, they are all English major. These students use English more often than the other students in the Open University. For example, English major students in Open University need to write their assignment in English, whereas the other majors’ students, such as Business, can submit their assignment in Chinese. Therefore, over 60% of the respondents mention English is the language of power and a prestige language.

Attitudes in Putonghua:

The results of this study have shown that people contain both positive and negative attitudes on Putonghua. Compared to Kwok’s study in 2004, the respondents generally only have negative attitudes towards Putonghua. Therefore, there are different between this study and Kwok’s study. This is due to the fact that, after 9 years, the connection between Hong Kong and Mainland China has increased, and lots of events happened to change Hong Kong peoples’ attitudes towards Putonghua, such as the Olympics in Beijing. This event has increased the relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland China. The figures below have shown that Putonghua’s status and importance are increasing in Hong Kong.

Questions	Rank	Mean (Group 1)	Rank	Mean (Group 2)
Putonghua is rising in importance in the international arena.	1	2.1	1	1.8
Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.	2	2.2	2	1.9

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The official language policy in Hong Kong's government promoted the idea of a "Biliterate" and "Trilingual" society in 1995 since then the Basic Law follows this idea. In today's society, "Biliterate" and "Trilingual" are the important elements for selecting the elites in Hong Kong. According to the Basic Law (1997), "Trilingual" means Cantonese, English and Putonghua. Therefore, the basic law has already given Putonghua an official status. The above statistics shows that students are aware of the importance of Putonghua, and they understand that Putonghua can help them to enhance their competitiveness in the society. Hence, they agree that if they know Putonghua, it will benefit them, such as a better career development.

Besides the personal aspect, students also aware of the role that China plays in the international arena. There is no doubt that China is one of the most influential countries in the society, so Putonghua has increased its importance in the world. There are over 30 million non-Chinese people now learning Putonghua, due to people recognize that the influential power of China is expanding (BBC News, 2007). Those learners mention that the reason of learning Putonghua is due to economic reason, because China has more career opportunity than other countries (BBC News, 2007). In order to open China's market, there are more people willing to learn Putonghua. This is the reason why students agree that Putonghua is rising in the international arena, and it will continue to be influential around the world.

However, negative attitudes towards Putonghua from the respondents can also be found in this study, and this part of the study is similar to Kwok's (2004) study. Most respondents disagree that speaking Putonghua makes them feel patriotic and fashionable.

Questions	Group 1 (Mean)	Group 2 (Mean)
Putonghua gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.	3.5	3.6
It is fashionable to be able to speak in Putonghua.	3.6	3.9

The mean of these two questions shows that respondents hold a quite strong negative attitude towards Putonghua. Although Putonghua has increased its importance in the international arena, Hong Kong people want to separate themselves from Mainland China.

The bad connotation of Putonghua from Hong Kong students can be seen in the question of "A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated". Due to the fact that some of the Mainlanders uncivilized behavior, respondents think that they are not well educated if they speak Putonghua. The mean shows that respondents disagree that a Hong Kong person who speaks fluent Putonghua is well-educated.

Questions	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated.	3.3	3.4

Also, respondents who have this kind of perception are due to the main language use in Hong Kong, which is not Putonghua. There is hardly any well-educated person used Putonghua to give a speech in front of the public in Hong Kong. Therefore, respondents may only connect Putonghua with those Mainlanders who are misbehaved in the society.

Moreover, Hong Kong people do not like the interference from the Mainland China. Over 60% of the respondents disagree that speaking Putonghua makes them feel patriotic. This is due to the fact that, in Hong Kong, people are more willing to accept the policy of "one country and two systems" (Basic Law, 1997), because this idea helps to maintain Hong Kong's uniqueness. However, in recent years, Chinese government has done different things, and tries to eliminate this concept, for example, implementing the Moral, Civil and National Education subject (Education Bureau, 2008). These kinds of action have provoked a strong reaction from the general public, such as protest from all universities in Hong Kong. Therefore, Hong Kong people do not like Putonghua in Hong Kong, because it may refer to Chinese government interfering in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, Hong Kong people do not want Putonghua to replace Cantonese. The figures below show that both groups disagree that speaking Putonghua has a friendly feeling and representing the language of power.

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Questions	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
Putonghua is a language of power.	3.1	3.3
Putonghua gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.	3.5	3.6

This is due to the fact that Hong Kong people contain more positive attitudes on their own dialect, which is Cantonese, so they do not want Putonghua to be in power. In 2010, there was a protecting Cantonese campaign in Guangzhou (Hui, 2010), due to the fact that people want to maintain their own regional dialect. To prevent Putonghua replacing Cantonese, Hong Kong people do not have friendly nor familiar feelings with Putonghua. Moreover, people are afraid that Putonghua will be a killer language to kill Cantonese. This is due to the population of people speaking Putonghua are more than Cantonese speakers. Hence, people do not want Putonghua to take over the place of their vernacular variety, which is Cantonese.

Language attitudes in Cantonese:

Cantonese has attracted Hong Kong peoples' attention, because of the increase connection with Mainland China. People afraid that Putonghua will take over the place of Cantonese in the future, so, recently, there are campaigns to protect Cantonese. Moreover, recently, the concept of Hong Kong identity also recognizes by youngsters, who they refer to themselves as "Hong Kongers" or "Hong Kong Chinese". The attitudes of Cantonese did not conduct in Kwok's study (2004). This may due to the fact that the concept of Hong Kong identity was not strongly expressed during that period. However, after 9 years, Hong Kong people try to separate themselves from Mainland China, and therefore, it is relevant to find out the general attitudes that Hong Kong people have on Cantonese.

The general attitudes towards Cantonese are positive in this study. The majority of the respondents mention that Cantonese is the language that signals Hong Kong identity. According to Pennington (1998), Cantonese is related to the "inner" value, which refers to home and solidarity. Both groups claim that speaking Cantonese can show their Hong Kong identity, and also it gives a familiar and friendly feeling to the people in Hong Kong. There is not any difference between the two groups of respondents. The figures show that students in Hong Kong are more aware of their self-identity. This is due to that fact that Hong Kong people are proud of their own identity. They often claim themselves as "Hong Kong Chinese" or "Hong Kongers". This identity based on the glory achievement of Hong Kong in the past, and Hong Kong people use this identity to distinguish between Hong Kong Chinese and Mainland Chinese (Mathews et al., 2008).

Cantonese is the language which signals Hong Kong peoples' identity. According to the Census report (2007), 99% of people in Hong Kong speak Cantonese. Therefore, Cantonese is the dominant language in Hong Kong society. Hong Kong people use Cantonese most of the time, such as chatting, even in formal speech the government officer also used Cantonese to announce important matters. In the follow-up interview, most of the respondents mention that they prefer people to use Cantonese as the medium of the conversation. The reason is that they would have a better understanding in Cantonese, and they can interact more during the conversation. Hence, this shows that Cantonese is the "insider" language for Hong Kong people.

However, if the questions expand to international level, Cantonese is still not influential enough to compete with Putonghua and English. In the statistical results below, the mean show that respondents do not agree with Cantonese is the language of power, and it is raising its importance in the international arena. This is due to the fact that there are not many people around the world who can understand Cantonese. Cantonese is only widely used in Hong Kong, because it is a dialect in China. One of the interviewees said that Cantonese cannot be spread worldwide, due to the fact that Hong Kong is only a part of China. Compared the result from both groups, group 2, who are mainly English major students from Open University of Hong Kong, expresses a stronger view on "Cantonese is rising its importance in the international arena".

Question	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
Cantonese is rising its importance in the international arena	3.5	4.1

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This is due to that fact that group 2 students are all English major, and they know that English is the dominant language in the world. Those respondents in group 2 have been to London for an immersion programme. During that time, they needed to use English throughout the trip, and they needed to live in a local resident home. Group 2 respondents have stronger disagreement of Cantonese is rising its importance in the international arena, because they have experienced that it is impossible to use Cantonese outside Hong Kong.

There is a different opinion from the two groups in “Cantonese is a prestigious language”. The mean for the question “Cantonese is a prestigious language” is different between group 1 and group 2.

Question	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
Cantonese is a prestigious language	2.7	3.4

The figure shows that group 1 respondents tend to agree more on the statement than group 2 students. This shows the different language attitudes which students have in Cantonese. The reason that group 1 respondents tend to agree with Cantonese is a prestigious language is due to group 1 students have more opportunity to use Cantonese in their academic field than group 2. There are some respondents are from journalism, which requires them to speak standard Cantonese in their studies. They need to speak standard Cantonese, in order to gain a better future career development. Hence, they may think Cantonese is a prestigious language for them, because they rely more on this language. As for group 2, they are all English major students, and better Cantonese will not bring them any benefits in the future. Therefore, they use a broader sense to judge whether Cantonese is a prestige language in the society, and their opinion towards Cantonese is only for “inside” communication.

Hong Kong identity:

Some of the interviewees in the follow-up interviews mention that Cantonese is a prestige language, due to the fact that Cantonese signals Hong Kong identity. One of the interviewees in group 1 further defines the term of Hong Kong identity, which means loyal to Hong Kong and proud to be born in Hong Kong.

This concept of “Hong Kongers” is mentioned in Matthews, Ma, and Lui’s study. Matthews, Ma, and Lui (2008) mention that people in Hong Kong use “Hong Kongers” and “Chinese” to refer different people. For “Hong Kongers”, it refers to people in Hong Kong who speak Cantonese and proud to be born in Hong Kong rather than Mainland, whereas “Chinese” refers to the Mainlanders, who are uneducated (Matthews, Ma, and Lui, 2008).

Referring back to the interview, respondents mention that they are all born in Hong Kong, but not in China. They all have personal sentiment in Hong Kong, because they feel friendly and safe. However, they feel distant and strange about China. This is due to the fact that they have less chance to know about Mainland’s culture. Therefore, all respondents accept they are Hong Kong people, and they treat Hong Kong as their homeland rather than China.

Hong Kong identity is implemented in students’ mind due to two reasons. First, the long colonial period has widened the relationship between Mainland and Hong Kong (Kwok, 2004). Hong Kong had being ruled by the British government for 150 years.

During the colonial period, Hong Kong people have made Hong Kong become an international financial center, which attracted different countries of investors to invest in Hong Kong. During the 80s, it was the golden period of Hong Kong (Bolton & Bacon-Shone, 2008), and Hong Kong identity developed during that time. Although Hong Kong handed back to China in 1997, people in Hong Kong still miss the golden period of Hong Kong, and they think they are better quality than Mainland people. Hong Kong people think that they are “fashionable” and “smart”, whereas Mainlanders are “conservative” and “out of style” (Lam et al., 1999). Therefore, Hong Kong people often claim themselves as “Hong Kongers”.

Other possible languages in Hong Kong:

There are some new languages that respondents would like to learn in the future, and this is related to the popular culture in 2013. Referring to Kwok’s study in 2004, the respondents mention that Putonghua is the language which they would

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like to learn in the future. Kwok (2004) concludes that because of the economic benefits, students would choose to learn Putonghua. However, in 2013, the language attitudes change among the respondents. The majority of respondents from both groups indicate that they would like to learn other languages beside Cantonese, English and Putonghua. Among the choices, which are provided by the respondents, both groups of respondents have chosen the same two languages, which are Korean and Japanese.

The reason that Putonghua is not the popular language for students is due to the fact that the respondents from both groups think Putonghua is not fashionable. The figure below shows that both groups tend to disagree that it is fashionable to speak Putonghua.

Question	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
It is fashionable to be able to speak in Putonghua.	3.6	3.9

Mainlanders are being judged as “out of style” (Lam et al., 1999), so Hong Kong people think it is not fashionable to speak Putonghua. Another reason that the teenagers think Putonghua is outdated because it is related to standard Chinese. Using standard Chinese as the medium for a daily conversation, it would be very odd and the relationship between people will be distant. This is similar to the situation in London, which people tend to think the Received Pronunciation (RP) is posh and old-fashioned (Graddol et al., 2007). Moreover, Hong Kong people think that Putonghua is only used for specific purposes, such as business meeting with a Mainland entrepreneur.

As for Korean and Japanese, they are popular among the two groups because of these two countries’ cultures, such as pop songs, films, are recently being introduced to students in Hong Kong. According to Bennett (2000), popular music is heard by young people, and they will try to intimate the culture which the music will act like a cultural resource. In Hong Kong, many teenagers like pop songs from Korea and Japan, for example, the “Gangnam Style” has over 100 million people watched on YouTube. Therefore, the teenagers in Hong Kong are highly influence by the spread of Korean and Japanese culture through the advancement of internet, and this influence also affect the respondents’ language attitudes towards Korean and Japanese.

Furthermore, students’ different language attitudes in 2013 are related to the development of technology. The advancement of technology has helped the spread of different languages. YouTube and other online resources have played an important role of influencing students’ language attitudes. There are lots of different materials online, such as films, which teenagers can easily access. This allows teenagers to learn other countries culture, or develop their interest in it. Hence, the convenience of internet makes teenagers have different language attitudes and interests, and this is why the results differ from Kwok’s study in 2004.

Trilingual society:

Hong Kong is a trilingual city, which is agreed by most of the people in Hong Kong. However, there are different points of views from the two groups’ respondents. The figure below shows that group 1 agrees more on the issue of Hong Kong is a trilingual city than group 2.

Question	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
Hong Kong is a trilingual (Cantonese, English, Putonghua) city.	1.7	2.5

One of the interviewees in group 2 expresses that Hong Kong is a bilingual city rather than a trilingual society. This is due to the fact that he uses Cantonese and English more often, but he does not use Putonghua. The interviewee further explains that the use of Putonghua is not common in Hong Kong, and the only time when you need to use Putonghua is communicating with Mainlanders.

Although there is a slight difference between group 1 and group 2, the overall trend of both groups is agreed that Hong Kong is a trilingual city. The importance of Putonghua cannot be denied in today’s society. Professor David Crystal gives his opinion about Putonghua, and he said that learning Putonghua is related to money talk, which is related to the business context (BBC, 2007). In Hong Kong, the situation is similar to what Professor Crystal describes, people use Putonghua in business sectors.

The Hong Kong government has already implemented some policies which make people have more opportunities to use and learn Putonghua. In the education sector, some primary schools are asked to use Putonghua as the medium of instruction. Moreover, in university, there are courses which are used to prepare students' to take the Putonghua Proficiency Test. Those courses, which are related to Putonghua Proficiency Test, are sponsored by the Hong Kong government (HKSAR, 2005). Therefore, the Hong Kong government tries to increase the opportunity for people to use Putonghua. In the future, Hong Kong may become a truly trilingual society.

Code-mixing and Code-switching:

Language attitudes towards Cantonese are positive in daily conversation. However, the Cantonese that used in the conversation is not "pure" Cantonese. According to Pennington (1998), the mixing of English and Cantonese, or other Chinese varieties, can be found easily. Code-mixing is the norm of today's society, so people code-mixed consciously and unconsciously. Code-mixing is one of the unique symbols of modern Cantonese, and it represents the modernity and creativity of Hong Kong people (Pennington, 1998). Unlike other places, Hong Kong peoples' attitudes towards code-mixing are positive, and they think it is one of the features of "insider" language (Pennington, 1998).

The interviews for this study were carried out in Cantonese with code-mixing, and this phenomenon happened in all 6 interviews. This is due to the fact that code-mixing is one of the features in Cantonese. Pennington (1998) introduces two reasons for code-mixing in Hong Kong, which are cognitive economy and cognitive enrichment. Cognitive economy relates to the time span of the conversation. Using code-mixing, the conversation will be more concise, and it can help to maintain the fluency of the speech. As for cognitive enrichment, code-mixing can help to expand the vocabularies in Cantonese, and it is used to fill in the gaps where sometimes the words cannot be express in Cantonese. Beside these two reasons, in today's society, teenagers use code-mixing because it can represent Hong Kong culture, and it is a symbol of Hong Kong people. Code-mixing in Hong Kong can be treated as an "insider" language, and it can enhance solidarity.

Moreover, code-mixing is not only limited to daily conversation. The spokesperson often uses code-mixing in formal context, such as press conference, so that the message can be transmitted effectively and naturally. This is an example that code-mixing has been expanded to formal contexts. Moreover, this proves that the society accepts code-mixing.

Avoid language death:

The language attitudes towards Putonghua are generally negative in individual feelings, whereas Cantonese are generally positive. This is due to the fact that Hong Kong people are aware of their vernacular language, and they try to avoid Putonghua takes over Cantonese in Hong Kong. The respondents have different feelings for Putonghua and Cantonese.

Questions	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
Putonghua gives me a familiar and friendly feeling	3.5	3.6
Cantonese gives me a familiar and friendly feeling	1.8	1.8

The figures can be interpreted as Hong Kong people are resisting Putonghua. This is due to the fact that the long colonial period from the British government, Hong Kong people are not familiar with Putonghua, although, in these past 10 years, the China government tries to promote Putonghua in Hong Kong. On the one hand, the results show that the respondents do not contain any familiar and friendly feeling in Putonghua. On the other hand, Cantonese gain more popularity than Putonghua. For example, the protecting Cantonese campaign in Guangzhou is used to avoid Putonghua replace Cantonese (Hui, 2010). Therefore, the results of individual language attitudes on Cantonese are general more positive than Putonghua.

Professor David Crystal mentions that Putonghua is now highly influential around the world, but it cannot be recognized as an international language (BBC, 2007). This is due to the fact that people use and learn Putonghua for a specific purpose, which is related to business (BBC, 2007). However, this cannot be a definite answer. Using English as an example, it was not an important language during the Roman Empire period, whereas Latin was the official language. Time past and more people learn and use English around the world, and English has replaced the status of Latin. Therefore, Putonghua may also become a lingua franca in the future because of the increasing numbers of learners.

Communications medium:

Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city which contains different nationality of people. However, there are different opinions from the two groups of respondents in “I would only speak English to foreigners. It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua speaker”. The figure below shows that group 1 disagrees with this statement, but group 2 agrees with this statement.

Question	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
I would only speak English to foreigners. It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua speaker	3.2	2.8

The unusual thing is related to the respondents’ background. Respondents in group 2 are all English major, who are tended to be good at English, but they agree that it is uneasy for them to speak English to a Cantonese or Putonghua speaker. The reason why they have this perception is because of the background of the university. Group 2 respondents come from the Open University of Hong Kong, whereas Group 1 students come from the City University of Hong Kong. The unique thing of Open University of Hong Kong is they are less westernized. There is not much foreigners in English major, and almost all of the students are Chinese. Even after class, if students have difficulties, they will approach to a Chinese lecturer to ask question in Chinese. Despite they are all English major students, they feel that English may not help them to transmit their message accurately.

However, for group 1, all of the respondents come from the City University of Hong Kong. This university is more “westernized” than Open University of Hong Kong, so students will have more chance of using English among themselves. Hence, they may not feel uneasy to use English to communicate with a Cantonese or Putonghua speaker.

7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

English attitudes:

Compared with the study carried out by Lai (2010b), the results of the current study’s survey of students’ English attitudes show no change. In Lai’s study (2010b), the student respondents view English as having a superior status in Hong Kong. The respondents mention that English is important for them in their own career development and academics (Lai, 2010b). In the current study, the respondents in the interviews mention that English is the language that can benefit them at work and study. They further explain that most of the subjects in university are taught in English. Moreover, one of the respondents in group 2 mentions that there is a language requirement for each assignment, so the language quality in each assignment can be ensured.

There is a perceived relationship between education level and English ability. Lai’s study (2010a) and Kwok’s study (2004), show that people with higher education tend to speak fluent English.

Question	Lai (2010a) Mean Middle-class	Kwok (2004) percentage	Group 1 Mean (2013)	Group 2 Mean (2013)
A Hong Kong person who speaks fluent English is usually educated	2.25	56% agree	2.4	2.6

The reason that people with higher education tend to speak fluent English is due to English is a second language in Hong Kong. Unlike western society, Hong Kong people are not native English speakers. Therefore, Hong Kong people have to learn English through education. If a Hong Kong person speaks fluent English, then he or she must be well-educated.

The relationship between English competency and the social status, which is introduced by Kwok (2004), has been further affirmed in this study. About 65% of the respondents from both groups agree that Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society. Compared to Kwok’s (2004) analysis, the percentages of respondents who agree and disagree for this question were similar. This finding is perhaps related to the fact that the Basic Law introduces the “Biliteracy and Trilingualism” policy (Basic Law, 1997). In order to have a better future career or academic performance in Hong Kong, people need to speak good English. Therefore, speaking better English can help people to have higher status or to help them to climb up the social ladder in Hong Kong.

Putonghua attitudes:

In earlier studies, such as Pierson (1998) and Boyle (1998), it was stated that Hong Kong people were eager to learn Putonghua not for business purpose, but for a sense of cultural closeness. However, Kwok (2004) and this study show that it is because of the economic expansion from Mainland China that students want to learn Putonghua. Although Hong Kong people were eager to learn Putonghua before, Hong Kong students often label themselves as “Hong Kongers” or “Hong Kong Chinese” to separate Mainlanders and Hong Kong people. The idea of the “Trilingual” society is being stated in the Basic Law, but students in Hong Kong do not really want to learn or use Putonghua. One of the interviewees mentions that the reason that he does not want to use Putonghua is because it is a symbol of being uncivilized. The interviewee explains that people who use Putonghua are mainly from the Mainland, and their behaviors are uncivilized, for example, littering and spitting in public areas. Therefore, Hong Kong students already have a bad connotation on Putonghua because of their attitudes to the people.

Cantonese attitudes:

Compared with Groves’s (2010) study, there are some differences in my respondents’ attitudes towards Cantonese. According to Groves (2010), Hong Kong people treat Cantonese as a language in Hong Kong, but it is considered a dialect in China. The respondents in this study generally disagree that Cantonese is rising in the international arena.

	Mean (Group 1)	Mean (Group 2)
Cantonese is a prestigious language.	2.7	3.4
Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena	3.5	4.1

The above figures show that Hong Kong students do not have a consistent attitude as to whether Cantonese is a prestige language or not. Looking at Groves (2010), the respondents in 2010 give a strong opinion that Cantonese is not rising in importance. This may be a sign that they view Cantonese more as a dialect rather than a language. The uncertain attitude on Cantonese from the combined groups in the current study may be due to the fact that Cantonese is being promoted strongly in Hong Kong, for example, the protecting Cantonese campaign. As for group 2 respondents, they hold a stronger point of view towards the question “Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena”. This is due to the fact that they are all English major and they have participated in the one month immersion programme to England in Open University of Hong Kong. Hence, they understand that Cantonese is not rising in importance in the international arena.

8. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, English is a language of power is further affirmed in this study, and there is not much difference between Kwok’s study and this study. Therefore, in the future, it seems from my results that English will continue to be the most important language in Hong Kong. However, the status of Putonghua is rising, and it is becoming more important in international arena. Although respondents generally hold negative attitudes towards Putonghua, there is no doubt about its importance in Hong Kong society. As for Cantonese, it plays an important role in signaling the in-group identity of Hong Kong people, but its influence area only limited within Hong Kong.

The result points out that the rising influence of China does not affect the status of English. Professor David Crystal mentions that Putonghua is related to “money talk”(BBC, 2007). People learn Putonghua due to the big business opportunity in China, so people are not intrinsically want to learn Putonghua (BBC, 2007). Therefore, as Professor David Crystal concludes, Putonghua will not affect the status of English. However, the example of English replaced Latin in the past may happen again because of the high popularity of Putonghua around the world.

Moreover, the respondents from both groups mention that, on the one hand, English will remain its status in Hong Kong, and it can signal ones status and educational level. On the other hand, the rising influence of China does not bring positive attitudes to Hong Kong people. Respondents express that Putonghua is an uncivilized and outdated language. Furthermore, people want to protect their own vernacular culture, so Putonghua does not indicate any friendly feelings for Hong Kong people.

Despite there is no doubt that English is an important language in Hong Kong, there are other languages that teenagers would like to learn in the future. Due to the fact that the spread of Korean and Japanese culture, teenagers express that

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they want to learn these two languages in the future. Therefore, in the coming years, the numbers of people learning Korean and Japanese will be increased, and further research can be done in this field, which aims to find out the language attitudes that teenagers have on these two languages.

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APPENDIX - A

Questionnaire on Language Attitudes after the Handover: Communication and Identity in 2013 Hong Kong:

Part A

(Please highlight the answer)

What language do you use most frequently?

- a) Cantonese b) English c) Putonghua

2) What language do you prefer to use most?

- a) Cantonese b) English c) Putonghua

3) Please state your level of competence in the languages as mentioned below.

	Native	fluent	good	fair	poor
Cantonese					
English					
Putonghua					

4) What language do you think has superior status in HK at present?

- a) Cantonese b) English c) Putonghua

d) Other (Please specify) _____

5) What language would you like to learn in the near future?

- a) Cantonese b) English c) Putonghua

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d) Other (Please specify) _____

6) What language would you like to improve in the near future?

a) Cantonese b) English c) Putonghua

d) Other (Please specify) _____

7) What language do you think is the most important business language in currently in Hong Kong situation?

a) Cantonese b) English c) Putonghua

d) Other (Please specify) _____

8) What language do you think is the most important academic language currently in Hong Kong?

a) Cantonese b) English c) Putonghua

d) Other (Please specify) _____

Part B

(Please highlight the answer)

9) I would only speak English to foreigners. It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua speaker.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

10) People who could speak fluent Putonghua must be born in China or come from the Mainland.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

11) A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent English must be well educated.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

12) A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

13) Speaking Putonghua makes me feel patriotic (love of one's country).

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

14) Speaking Cantonese can show my identity (Hong Kong Chinese).

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

15) Most middle-class people in Hong Kong speak fluent English.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

16) Speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

17) Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

18) English is a prestigious language.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

19) Putonghua is a prestigious language.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

20) Cantonese is a prestigious language.

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a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

21) Putonghua is rising in importance in the international arena.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

22) Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

23) Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

24) Hong Kong people who could speak fluent Putonghua have higher status in society.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

25) English is a language of power.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

26) Putonghua is a language of power.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

27) Putonghua gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

28) Cantonese gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

29) It is fashionable to be able to speak in Putonghua.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

30) Hong Kong is a trilingual (Cantonese, English, Putonghua) city.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

This is the end of the questionnaire

Thank you

APPENDIX - B
Interview questions:

Is English a prestigious language in Hong Kong? Why/why not?

1b) Is Putonghua a prestigious language in Hong Kong? Why/why not?

1c) Is Cantonese a prestigious language in Hong Kong? Why/why not?

What languages do you think will benefit you in work or study?

Which language, in your opinion, do you think is the most influential language in Hong Kong in the coming 10 years? Why?

What impression do you have when people use Putonghua?

Could you provide the first word that comes to your mind when hearing this word: Putonghua? English? Cantonese? (Word association)

Do you prefer your classmates or your colleagues to speak Cantonese with you?

Do you use English in informal settings? Why/why not?

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APPENDIX - C

(“1” is towards agreeing the statement and “5” is towards disagreeing the statement)

Questions	Rank	Mean (Group 1)	Chi-square
Hong Kong is a trilingual (Cantonese, English, Putonghua) city.	1	1.7	25.5
Speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.	1	1.7	28.5
Cantonese gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.	3	1.8	18.5
Putonghua is rising in importance in the international arena.	4	2.1	14.5
Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.	5	2.2	29.5
A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent English must be well educated.	6	2.4	4
Speaking Cantonese can show my identity (Hong Kong Chinese).	6	2.4	12.5
English is a prestigious language.	6	2.4	17.5
English is a language of power.	6	2.4	22
Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society.	10	2.5	29.5
Cantonese is a prestigious language.	11	2.7	22
Most middle-class people in Hong Kong speak fluent English.	11	2.7	13.5
Putonghua is a prestigious language	13	2.9	13
Putonghua is a language of power.	14	3.1	14.5
Hong Kong people who could speak fluent Putonghua have higher status in society.	15	3.2	15.5
I would only speak English to foreigners. It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua speaker.	15	3.2	10
A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent Putonghua must be well educated.	17	3.3	8.5
Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena	18	3.5	25.5
Putonghua gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.	18	3.5	21.5
People who could speak fluent Putonghua must be born in China or come from the Mainland.	20	3.6	8
It is fashionable to be able to speak in Putonghua.	20	3.6	11.5
Speaking Putonghua makes me feel patriotic (love of one's country).	22	3.9	8.5

Questions	Rank	Mean (Group 2)	Chi-square
Putonghua is rising in importance in the international arena.	1	1.8	19.5
Speaking better English could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.	1	1.8	26
Cantonese gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.	1	1.8	18.5
Speaking better Putonghua could enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong people.	4	1.9	18

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English is a prestigious language.	5	2	13.5
Speaking Cantonese can show my identity (Hong Kong Chinese).	6	2.1	11.5
English is a language of power.	7	2.2	8.5
Hong Kong people who could speak fluent English have higher status in society.	7	2.2	13.5
Hong Kong is a trilingual (Cantonese, English, Putonghua) city.	9	2.5	8.5
A Hong Kong person who could speak fluent English must be well educated.	10	2.6	10
I would only speak English to foreigners. It makes me feel uneasy to speak English to a Cantonese/Putonghua speaker.	11	2.8	4
Most middle-class people in Hong Kong speak fluent English.	12	2.9	14.5
Putonghua is a prestigious language	12	2.9	18
Putonghua is a language of power.	14	3.3	17
Hong Kong people who could speak fluent Putonghua have higher status in society.	15	3.4	21.5
Cantonese is a prestigious language.	16	3.4	7.5
Putonghua gives me a familiar and friendly feeling.	17	3.6	11.5
People who could speak fluent Putonghua must be born in China or come from the Mainland.	17	3.6	4.5
Speaking Putonghua makes me feel patriotic (love of one's country).	19	3.8	7.5
It is fashionable to be able to speak in Putonghua.	20	3.9	13
Cantonese is rising in importance in the international arena	21	4.1	16.5