Title: Cognitive and social factors in explaining language acquisition: A study of the spoken English of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London

Name: Lawrence Lau

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Cognitive and Social Factors in Explaining Language Acquisition:
A Study of the Spoken English of the Hong Kong Cantonese
Adolescents in London

Lawrence Lau

A thesis submitted to the University of Luton in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Thesis Abstract

Through combining the traditional Chomskyan approach as well as the sociolinguistic approach to language learning, the present research explores the production of 12 English linguistic features by 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants living in London. An analysis of their social practices is also undertaken and linked to their production of these linguistic features.

The research relies on participant observation and data elicited from interviews with the 12 informants. These informants were born in Hong Kong and arrived in London at age 5, 8, and 10. The findings suggest that cognitive and social factors play an important part in language learning. These factors include the critical period, social network, and other social practices like reading, taking part in school-organised extracurricular activities.

The research underscores the importance of social factors in the explanation of language behaviour in migrant communities.
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Chapter One  Introduction.

The thesis investigates linguistic and cultural adaptation in the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. An important aspect of the thesis is to investigate the English of 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants. By investigating their production of 12 English linguistic features in their speech data elicited from interviews and reading tasks and by investigating their social practices through interviews and participant observation, the thesis identifies biological and societal factors that mediate the 12 adolescent informants' attainment of full native speaker proficiency in English and societal factors that mediate their social and linguistic practices.

1.01 Identifying the Problem.

Many linguists believe that language learning can only be understood as a mental or cognitive process. Throughout the present work, this explanation of language learning will be referred to as the principles and parameters (PP) model. Proponents of the PP model postulate that there is a part of the human brain, the language acquisition device (LAD), that is responsible for language learning. The LAD is postulated to contain a set of grammatical principles and parameters. The part played by the environment in language learning, according to this model, is limited to providing input for the LAD to set parameters.

An important element underlying language learning as a mental process is the notion of critical period. Very simply put, the critical period hypothesis states that language learning is necessarily incomplete if learners start after a certain age, and this inability to attain a native-speaker proficiency level is believed to be brought about by the lateralisation of the human brain (Long 1990; Pinker 1995; Scovel 1988).

In second language acquisition (SLA) research, the critical period is used to account for adult migrants' inability to attain native speaker proficiency in their second language (L2). Conversely,

\[^{1}\text{The definition of full native speaker proficiency is given in a later section of this chapter.}\]
proponents of the PP model believe that arriving in an L2 environment within the critical period is a **necessary and sufficient** condition for migrants to achieve native-speaker proficiency (e.g., Bley-Vroman, 1990; Long 1990; Pinker, 1995; Towell and Hawkins, 1994). For example, Towell and Hawkins (1994) posit that one can take “any child at birth, born in any part of the world, transport that child into any speech community, and he or she will learn the language of the community rapidly, effortlessly, uniformly, and successfully” (p. 60).

However, there is evidence to suggest that young L2 learners who have settled in a new country may not achieve native speaker proficiency by adulthood. For example, the Home Affairs Committee (HAC) was told by an expert witness, Dr. Mortimore, the Director of the Education, Research and Statistics Branch that “research suggest that [Chinese] pupils who have attended English schools for all or most of their school careers may need continuing English support” (HAC, 1985 Volume 2, p. 158). As another example, loup (1989) finds that despite growing up in an English-speaking environment, Jeanne, who settled in the USA with her family at the age of nine, did not acquire either native or native-like proficiency in English grammar and syntax.

This evidence indicates that not all young L2 learners will be able to learn “the language of the community rapidly, effortlessly, uniformly, and successfully” as posited by Towell and Hawkins (1994 p. 60). This evidence also indicates that language learning is not strictly or only a mental process, there have to be non-cognitive factors involved in L2 learning. The problem for SLA research is identifying non-cognitive factors influencing L2 learning.

**1.02 Primary Aim of the Present Work.**

The primary aim of the present work is to contribute to the existing knowledge of L2 learning relating to the causes of L2 learning outcomes. The present work adds to the existing knowledge of L2 learning by investigating non-cognitive factors related to language learning, by investigating the linguistic practices and social practices of the Hong Kong adult Cantonese community in London, by analysing the social practices and the English speech of 12 Hong
Kong Cantonese adolescents who were born in Hong Kong and arrived in London at age 5, 8, or 10.

A main focus of this work is identifying non-cognitive factors related to L2 learning. The idea for investigation of non-cognitive factors related to L2 learning came mainly from historical and sociolinguistic research. The present work draws on the findings of the historical and sociolinguistic research conducted by Ashby (1981), Cutler (1999), Eckert (2000), Labov (1972a; 1972b), and Traugott (1972), among others, to show that there is variation within a language. Sociolinguistic research by Cutler (1999), Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a, 1972b) shows that there is a societal component in L1 learning.

The key societal component in language learning that the present work has identified through the review of the sociolinguistic research mentioned above is social group membership. Mike, the subject in Cutler’s (1999) study, was a white American adolescent who tried but failed to cross over to a predominantly African American hip hop community. Cutler’s (1999) research show that Mike’s speech contains only a few linguistic features that are salient to the African American hip hop community. Eckert (2000) looks at the social practices and the linguistic practice of two groups of adolescent students in a school in Detroit. These two groups of students, whom she calls Jocks and Burnouts, are divided by their different orientation towards their future career. Eckert (2000) identifies the difference in aspects of their linguistic practice and social practices and attributes the difference to their belonging to two different groups or communities. Labov (1972a) investigated the linguistic practice of two groups of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) adolescent speakers and attributed the non-use of salient AAVE features like copula deletion by a group of young AAVE speakers whom he called the lames to their not being a part of the AAVE vernacular culture. Labov (1972b) showed how the production of two salient linguistic features had changed for some of the residents on Martha’s Vineyard because they identified with the fishermen there.

Studies such as those of Cutler (1999), Eckert (2000), and Labov (1972a; 1972b) suggest that SLA researchers can learn from young L2 learners who have acquired native speaker proficiency in their L2 as well as those who have not, but who might still be in the process of attaining native speaker proficiency. Applying the findings of the sociolinguistic research reviewed, the present work proposes that a realistic L2 learning model should include social group membership as one
of the factors that influences the use of L2. The aim and purpose of the present work is to identify the effects of the critical period and the effects of societal factors in language learning. This is accomplished by investigating six *sociolinguistic indicators*, non standard English linguistic features that are salient to the adolescent community in London and Southeast England, and six *proficiency indicators*, linguistic features that are only salient to Hong Kong Cantonese speakers. These are analysed in English speech data, elicited at age 18, of the twelve Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants based on their use or non-use of the proficiency and sociolinguistic indicators, and by investigating the extent to which these twelve informants had assimilated to the adolescent community in London, as judged through their speech data and their social practices.

The primary aim of the present work can be broken down into the following facets of the research process:

- Identifying the weaknesses of the PP model that lead to the unrealistic premise that language learning is strictly a mental process.

- Identifying social group membership as a societal factor that is essential to a realistic language learning model.

- Identifying a set of linguistic features that are salient to the London adolescent community and another set salient only to the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community.

- Investigating the production of these two sets of linguistic features by the twelve Hong Kong Cantonese informants.

- Determining the extent to which the critical period and social group membership influence the informants' production and non-use of the six proficiency indicators and six sociolinguistic indicators.

- Identifying and discussing the limitations of the present work and recommendations for future research.
Research Question.

Based on previous work in SLA, the present work does not consider the null hypothesis that all subjects, having arrived in London pre-critical period, will have achieved *full native language competence* - defined here as showing nil evidence of the L1 proficiency indicators and high attainment of the sociolinguistic indicators - by age 18. Rather, the work assumes variable competence in this group and asks the question: How do social factors mediate cognitive factors in learning a second language before adulthood?

1.03 Secondary Aim of the Present Work.

The secondary aim of the present work is to contribute to the existing knowledge of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London relating to their social and linguistic practices. By investigating the history of the Chinese / Cantonese community in London, and the social practices and the use of English of the Hong Kong adult Cantonese community in contemporary London, the present work adds to the existing knowledge of the social practices of Hong Kong Cantonese adult and adolescent migrants in London. It provides information on the extent to which their Hong Kong Cantonese social practices become more British in character over time, on barriers to their social practices becoming more British in character, on the extent to which the social practices of the twelve Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants retain their Hong Kong Cantonese characteristics, and on the extent to which, and the ways in which they use English.

A focus of this work is identifying social practices of the adult and adolescent migrants of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. The idea for investigation of the social practices of the Hong Kong Cantonese migrants in London came mainly from (i) research on language learning and (ii) sociolinguistic research. The present work will draw on the findings of the research conducted Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998) among others, to show that learning cannot be understood without taking the situations in which learning takes place into
consideration. The researcher sees learning as *legitimate peripheral participation*. For the Hong Kong Cantonese community, the legitimacy of participating in more British social practices lies in their British subject status and location as living in London. The peripherality aspect lies in the similarities of some Hong Kong Cantonese social practices to British ones and in the informants’ exposure to actual British social practices on their arrival in London.

The key social practices of the adult and adolescent Hong Kong Cantonese migrants in London that the present work has identified through interviewing and observing 8 Hong Kong Cantonese adult (age 40 and older) migrants and young (ages 18 - 20) Hong Kong Cantonese informants are education, social network, food preference, and mass media (i.e. films, music, reading and television). The present work shows that the 8 Hong Kong Cantonese adult migrants do not consider extracurricular activities as important for their children’s education. In addition, they have only Hong Kong Cantonese friends and eat mainly Chinese food. They do not read English newspapers but watch Cantonese films, and read Chinese newspapers. Other than sports programmes and news, they watch few television programmes in English. The 4 young Hong Kong Cantonese informants hardly take part in school organised extracurricular activities. They have friends from other ethnic minority groups in London but the friends they go out with are other Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents. They prefer Chinese food as well but they also have Western food sometimes. They read English newspapers for academic purposes and watch Cantonese films and television programmes as well as films and television programmes in English. The identification of the social practices of these two groups of Hong Kong Cantonese living in London made it possible to investigate them systematically in a select group of first-generation adolescents.

In its social component, the research involves:

- Identifying social practices among Hong Kong Cantonese adult migrants in London that are similar to Hong Kong Cantonese social practices.

- Identifying social practices among Hong Kong Cantonese adult migrants in London that have become more British like or social practices that are not taken up by Cantonese in Hong Kong.
• Identifying how English is used by Hong Kong Cantonese adult migrants in London.

• Determining the barriers that would keep Hong Kong Cantonese adult migrants in London from a fuller participation in a British way of life.

• Confirming the reliability and validity of the use of the sociolinguistic and proficiency indicators from the speech data of 4 younger informants.

1.04 Significance of the Present Work.

One dimension of originality in this research in this thesis is that it is built on an analysis of 12 linguistic features. These linguistic features are divided into 2 sets of 6 features each. One set of linguistic features are proficiency indicators. These proficiency indicators are salient in Hong Kong Cantonese English but they are not found in the speech of native speakers of English. The source of these features, if they exist in the speech data of the informants, can be attributed to Cantonese, the informants' first language. The other set of linguistic features are sociolinguistic indicators. These sociolinguistic indicators are salient and non-standard English linguistic features used among adolescent English native speakers in London and Southeast England. The inclusion of these two types of variables is a key aspect of the research design that makes this work novel. It allows both a view of the informants based on their proficiency and a view of them based on their sociolinguistic competence. It also allows an evaluation of the influence of their community as contrasted with the influence of the larger language environment in which they live.

The six proficiency indicators are as follows:

• /l/ for /n/ in word initial position for English words: Bauer (1983) and Matthews and Yip (1994) point out that /l/ for /n/ in word initial position is a robust phonological feature in Hong Kong Cantonese. As such, it is possible that this linguistic feature may influence the twelve Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants in their pronunciation of English words.
• **Stress placement:** In Cantonese, pitch change is used to distinguish words. In English, pitch change is used as a component of stress. Archibald (1997) believes that Cantonese English L2 speakers may treat stress in English words like pitch in their L1. It is possible that this difference between English and Cantonese influences the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants in their placement of primary stress on English words.

• **Past tense marking:** Cantonese does not have a tense system. It uses an aspect system in which, as Matthews and Yip (1994) point out, "the notions past, present, and future are not encoded grammatically by forms of the verb" (p. 197). Furthermore, unlike English marking, aspect markers in Cantonese are "in most cases grammatically optional" (Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 197). It is possible that these differences between English and Cantonese influence the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants in their marking of English verbs in past time contexts.

• **Use of the:** Cantonese does not have an article system. It has two demonstratives *ni* [this] and *go* [that] for "deictic functions such as pointing or referring back to noun phrases" (Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 89). Genericity is marked by generic classifiers like *jung* [kind] and *leuih* [species] (see Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 100-1). In English, *the* is used to mark definiteness and genericity. It is possible that these differences between English and Cantonese influence the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants in their production of *the*.

• **Null object:** Cantonese is a topic-prominent language (Li and Thompson, 1976; Matthews and Yip, 1994). Matthews and Yip (1994) point out that the object of a Cantonese sentence can be omitted if it has been established as the topic of the discourse or if the reference is clear from the context. In English, an overt object is required for transitive verbs. It is possible that these differences between English and Cantonese influences the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants in their omission of objects with English transitive verbs.

• **Lexis:** Difficulty in differentiating the meanings and usage between Cantonese lexis and English lexis may make the twelve Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants in using English words with Cantonese meanings and usage.
The six sociolinguistic indicators are

- **Glottalisation of the inter-vocalic word medial /t/:** Research by Tollfree (1999), Wells (1984), and Williams and Kerswill (1999) show that the glottal variant of inter-vocalic word medial /t/ is a robust linguistic feature, especially among young native speakers in contemporary Britain.

- **Information-staging features:** Information-staging features are present in conversation because conversation is spontaneous. Speakers need to plan and produce their utterances and information-staging features are used to facilitate better understanding on the parts of hearers with less effort on the part of speakers because these features help speakers reduce the length of what they have to say. The present work looks at the production of two of these features by the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants.

  The first feature is the high rise terminal (HRT) in declarative sentences. Research by Cruttenden (1997) shows that HRT is a new and robust linguistic feature in London. Research by Britain (1998) and Burridge and Mulder (1998) indicates that HRT has communicative goals like checking whether the hearer has understood and signalling to the hearer that the speaker wants to continue talking.

  The second feature is *you know.* Research by Andersson and Trudgill (1990) and Schiffrin (1987) shows that the production of *you know* is robust among native speakers of English and that one of the communicative goals is to mark knowledge as shared information.

- **Tense alternation in narrative:** Tense alternation in narrative is common among native speakers of English (*COBUILD English Grammar*, 1990; Labov, 1972a; Schiffrin, 1981; Wolfson, 1978; 1979).

- **Quotative verb *be like***: Romaine and Lange (1998) and Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) report the use of *be like* as a new linguistic feature in the UK.

- **Discourse Marker *init***: The production of *init* is robust especially among young native speakers in contemporary Britain (Kerswill and Williams, 2002).
• **Pop terms**: Andersson and Trudgill (1990) point out that the use pop terms is stigmatised and group related.

The twelve adolescent informants can be categorised as first-generation migrants. First-generation migrants are often defined as those born outside the country in which they settled and second-generation migrants are those born within. Based on a study of Black migrant groups in the UK, Sutcliffe (1992) points out that there exists within these immigrant groups a group that should not be classified as either first-generation migrants or second generation migrants. These people are those who arrive in the host country at a very young age. In societal terms, they are brought up in the host-country environment but by accident of birth, they are still first-generation migrants because they are born outside the host country. Sutcliffe (1992) calls them the *link generation*.

The present work categorises the twelve adolescent informants as the link generation in Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. The link generation, as represented by the twelve informants, offers fascinating research opportunities. A description of their use of English and their social practices can shed light on the nature-nurture question with respect to L2 acquisition.

1.05 **General Research Design.**

The research design of the present work was driven by the consideration of obtaining first hand information on the social practices of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London and English speech data of 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link generation migrants fitting the age of arrival profile. The recruitment of these informants raised a number of issues that are addressed in this section.
Using an Ethnographic Approach for Data Collection.

First, recruiting Hong Kong Cantonese link generation adolescent informant candidates with the right age profile and the right age of arrival profile was more lengthy than difficult. However, it was difficult to keep in touch with those candidates and keep them interested in the research project. In addition, obtaining information on the social practices from the adult Hong Kong Cantonese informants and the 12 link generation adolescent informants required the researcher to take up the role of a participant observer. The advantage of such a role was that it provided the present researcher an insider's perspective and *emic* view. Furthermore, the length of the observation (two years for adult informants and 6-9 months for the 12 adolescent informants) can be considered to have minimised the *observer paradox* and the *halo* effects.

The disadvantage of participant observation was that it made it more difficult for the researcher to distance himself from both groups of informants so that he could report without the likelihood of cultural bias. However, as a Hong Kong Cantonese adult migrant living in London, the researcher, before the recruiting process began, has been a part of the community whose social practices and language use he observed, interpreted, and wrote on. In that sense, accident of birth made it difficult for him to avoid being biased.

The researcher is both *near* and *distant from* the adult informants and the 12 link generation adolescent informants. He is *near* the adult informants because he, like them, was born in Hong Kong and arrived in London in adulthood. The adult informants speak Cantonese as their L1 and are about the same age as the researcher. On the other hand, he was a researcher while the adult informants were in catering. The researcher is *near* the twelve link generation adolescent informants by sharing the same birth place and the same L1. He is also *near* them because they have a set of common pastimes. Like most of these 12 informants, he plays video games and shoots pool in arcades. He listens to English pop music, he is well informed on the Hong Kong Cantopop scene, and he watches the same films and television programmes in English and Cantonese as these twelve informants do. However, the researcher is thirty years older than the twelve link generation informants. Duranti (1997) points out that a successful ethnography is as follows:

*It is not a method of writing in which the observer assumes one [original italic] perspective - whether “distant” or “near” -, but a style in which the researcher establishes a dialogue*
between different viewpoints and voices, including those of the people studied, of the ethnographer, and of his disciplinary and theoretical preferences. This is indeed the style of best ethnographies we have. They are a composite of a number of viewpoints, including the observer's and the observed.

It is hoped that the researcher was able to present both his viewpoints and those of the adult informants and the link generation informants in the present work.

The Issue of Convergence vs. Divergence.

As the researcher was both near and distinct from the twelve link generation informants, it was difficult to determine the extent to which the twelve informants converged to or diverged from the English used by the researcher when they were interviewed. Like the built-in cultural bias discussed in the preceding section, the inability of the present work to identify instances of convergence and divergence is a limitation of the present work.

1.06 Methodologies.

How the Informants were Recruited.

There are three sets of informants in the research. The first set of informants are eight Hong Kong Cantonese adult informants with catering background. All of them owned or part-owned a catering outlet in London when they were interviewed. They were all native speakers of Cantonese born in Hong Kong. The researcher befriended some of them (Ken and Helen, Tam, and Anon I) when he bought meals at their outlets. Through these informants, the researcher came to know the others. The profiles of the Hong Kong Cantonese adult informants are listed in the following table.
### Table 1.01 Profiles of the 8 Hong Kong Cantonese Adult Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married. Owner of a takeaway in South-east London. He arrived in UK at age 15 under the sponsorship system and worked in his adopted father's (his uncle) takeaway and then in a restaurant in South-east England. He also worked for several years as a delivery person for a Chinese food supplier. He started his own business at around age 30. The interview took place at their home in 1999. Educational level: 3 years of secondary school in Hong Kong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married. Wife of Ken. She arrived in London at age 18 on a tourist visa and worked as a waitress in her sister's restaurant. She gained permanent residency status after she married Ken. The interview took place at their home in Lee in 1999. Educational level: 2 years of secondary school in Hong Kong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tam</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Separated. Owner of a Chinese restaurant in West London. He arrived at age 18 on a student visa and worked in his uncle's takeaway. He gained permanent residency status after he married a permanent resident from Hong Kong. He worked in various restaurants until he met his present partner (Anon 1) and they opened the restaurant together. The interview took place in a London casino in 1998. Educational level: GCE O Level (GCSE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon 1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Divorced. She arrived in the UK on a student visa at age 20 and worked in the restaurant of her sister. She gained permanent residency status through application to the Home Office. The interview took place in their restaurant in 1998. Educational level: OND in Business Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divorced. Owner of a Chinese restaurant in West London. He arrived in London at age 15 under the sponsorship system. He was reading computer science at Imperial College when his father died and he had to drop out from university to take over the business. The interviews took place in his restaurant and in his home in 1999. Educational level: First year at university level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married. Owner of a Chinese takeaway in South-east London. She arrived in London with her children at age 40 under the Immigration Act (Hong Kong) 1991. A housewife in Hong Kong before immigration, she worked in Chinese takeaways in South-east London for several years to gain experience before opening her own takeaway in late 1990s. The interview took place in her home in 1999. Educational level: Primary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Chahn</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divorced. Currently an employee at a Chinese takeaway in South-east London. He arrived in London under the sponsorship system at age 14. He worked in takeaways and restaurants and he opened a restaurant in central London and then a Chinese takeaway in Kent at the time of the interview. Both failed. The interview took place in the researcher's home. Educational level: Secondary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married. Part-owner of a takeaway in North London. He arrived in the UK on a work permit at age 20 and worked in a takeaway owned by sister and his brother-in-law. He bought half-share in the takeaway in 1995. The interview took place in his home in 1999. Educational level: Primary school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second set of informants are four non-link generation adolescents with catering background. These informants were either born in London or did not have migrant status.

2 All of the names of the adult informants are pseudonyms. Two of the adult informants agreed to be interviewed on the condition they would remain "totally anonymous". The researcher assigned the tags 'Anon 1' and 'Anon 2' to these informants as deference to the condition they had set. The other informants were told that they would be given a pseudonym should the research be published.
The mother of two informants (JO and JU) was an acquaintance of the researcher in Hong Kong. She asked him when they met up in London to teach her children ten-pin bowling and pool. For at least once a fortnight over a period of two years, JO, JU, and the researcher ‘shot some pool’ in Chinatown or bowled in Bayswater. These ‘lessons’ offered him an invaluable opportunity to talk to them and get to know about them. The other two informants, ML and AF, were the daughter and nephew of Ken, one of the adult informants. They were both working in Ken’s takeaway at the time and the researcher was able to talk with them when he visited the takeaway or their home. The profiles of these informants are listed in the following table.

Table 1.02 Profiles of the 4 Non-link Generation Hong Kong Cantonese Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>20 years old at the time of the interview. He came to London at age 9 and returned to Hong Kong at 11. He came to London again at 13. He went to 2 public schools in London. He was doing an HND in building construction. The interview took place in the researcher’s home. Family background: catering. He did not have migrant status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>17 years old at the time of the interview. JO was born in London but returned to Hong Kong with her mother and her brother when her parents divorced. JO was 7 years old at the time. She returned to London at age 15 and lives with her father. JO was studying for her A-Levels at a public school. The interview took place in her home. Family background: catering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JU</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>14 years old at the time of the interview. He is JO’s brother. He was born in London and returned to Hong Kong when he was about 3 years old. When he returned to London, he was about 11 years old. He was studying in a public school in London. The interview took place in his home. Family background: catering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>18 years old at the time of the interview. ML was born in London but she was sent back to Hong Kong to be brought up by her grandparents at age 2.6. She returned to London when she was 7. ML was studying A-Levels in a state school. The interview took place in her home. Family background: catering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third set of informants, the main focus of the research, are 12 link generation informants. They were not selected randomly but systematically to obtain a certain profile of the subjects of the study. The recruitment process took place between 1998 and 2000. Potential candidates were located through friends, through introducing the researcher himself to them at arcades, pubs, and clubs in Soho.\(^3\) The age of arrival (AOA) profiles of these informants are listed in the following table.

\(^3\) There were about 20 willing candidates that would fit the AOA profile. However, some were not available for interview in 2000 for various reasons. Several changed their mobile phone numbers without giving the researcher the new phone number and contact was lost. Two candidates were stranded in Europe in 2000 and did not return to London before September 2000. The researcher was not able to arrange any interview with them because they had to leave for university soon after returning to London. One candidate was taken away by the Metropolitan Police. He was a waiter in a Chinese restaurant in Soho. He would have been an interesting informant because he was the only candidate who had given up his education by age 15.
Table 1.03 The AOA Profile of the 12 Link Generation Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Age of Arrival in England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>September, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>April, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>August, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>June, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>June, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>July, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>January, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>April, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>August, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>October, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>February, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>July, 1982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How the researcher came to meet the twelve link generation informants is summarised as follows:

- CC He was introduced to her through JO and JU, the 2 non-link generation informants.
- CT He met CT when he worked in his mother’s Chinese restaurant.
- EL He met EL through JH.
- FN He was introduced to FN by GW. He had not met FN before the interview.

According to the owner of the restaurant in which he was working at the time, the teenager was involved in a credit card scam. No further information was forthcoming. Other than changes in life situations, another factor that caused some candidates to withdraw was that they fell out among each other. Sue and Jane both lived in North London and went to the same school. The researcher first met Sue in an arcade in Soho in 1999 and came to know Jane and KN, one of the 6 male link generation informants, through her. The researcher interviewed the two girls at his home on the same day in July, 2000. After that, they fell out over KN and both girls refused to be interviewed for a second time. As a result, the researcher had to give them up as informants. By September, there were only eleven link generation candidates available and one female informant (FN) had to be recruited hastily through GW, another link generation informant. Perhaps it is peculiar to the culture of Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents that in situations like this, there can be no neutral bystanders. One simply has to take sides and taking sides means having no contact with the other party. The researcher contacted Sue and Jane by phone in September 2000 to arrange the second interview. Neither of the girls could give him a firm date. Both said that they were busy. At first, he did not catch on and tried, by phone, to find a time that both of them were free to be interviewed together. He phoned Jane and she told him that she would be free on certain dates. Then he phoned Sue and she told him that she did not want to do the second interview when she was that Jane was free to come to his home on those dates. He phoned Jane again and told her what had happened. When she knew that he was trying to fix an interview date for both of them, she withdrew as well. The situation that the researcher was in with these two girls was not a unique one. JH, one of the six male link generation informants, was going out with two female link generation informants (GW and EL) behind their back. All three of them fell out when the two girls found out what was going on. Luckily for the researcher, they found out after he had interviewed them for the second time because both of them blamed him for not telling them about what was going on.
• GW He met GW when they had to share a table in a Chinese restaurant in Soho. GW was lunching with JH at the time. The waitress mixed up their orders and provided an opportunity for the researcher to strike up a conversation with them.

• HG He met HG through GW.

• HN He met HN in a video-game arcade in Soho.

• JH He met JH and GW in a Chinese restaurant in Soho.

• JT He met JT through EL.

• JW He met JW through HN.

• KN He met KN through Sue.

• YH He met YH through her Hong Kong Cantonese boy friend, whom the researcher met in an arcade in Soho.

Data Collection.

The interviews with the adult informants were conducted in Cantonese and tape-recorded. They were asked about their life in Hong Kong and why they chose to migrate to Britain. They were also invited to talk about their life in London. Participant observation of their social practices was possible because the researcher was accepted by the adult informants. He was invited very often to their homes for meals and gatherings. He could drop in at their catering outlets and observed their working life and talked with them when they were not busy. He went on day-trips in South-east England and to Continental Europe with some of the informants. Some took him to their favourite casinos and others took him to Chinese-owned supermarkets for specific Chinese ingredients that were not easily available in London. He got to know them very well and he was able to observe their life both at home or at work closely without being obtrusive. 4

The interviews with the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants (AF, JO, JU, and ML), which took place between 1998 and 1999, were conducted in English and tape-recorded. The informants were interviewed about their life in Hong Kong and their life in London. More

4 To this day, he still meets with them regularly, especially the informants who live in South-east London. He still drops in at their catering outlets and socialises with them on a monthly basis. They are the first people he asks for advice or help when the heating of his home breaks down or when he has other DIY problems. He is invited for sumptuous Chinese meals on almost every Chinese festival day by them. They have become his friends and he is grateful for their friendship and generosity.
specifically, they were invited to talk about their education, their friends, and their preferences in music, films and television, and their hobbies. Participant observation of their social practices was possible because the researcher met JO and JU at least once a month at Bayswater or the West End for ten pin bowling and pool. He observed AF and ML in the takeaway where they worked.

The interviews with the 12 link generation informants, which took place in 2000, were conducted in English and tape-recorded. They were interviewed twice. The interviews were recorded on a Sony walkman, Model WM-GX614. A Sony wired microphone, Model ECM-T6, was attached to the clothes the informants were wearing during the recording. The tapes used were TDK D-90 or BASF Sound 90. These informants were interviewed in the researcher’s home in Southeast London or at their homes. They were informed that he was researching the social practices of Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London. They knew that the interviews would be tape-recorded and that the interviews would be conducted in English. They were also informed that their real names would only be known to the researcher. They were not informed that the researcher was specifically interested in their language. The topics raised in the interviews were as follows:

- The date of birth of the informants, when they arrived in London and where they lived.
- Their family including what their parents did in Hong Kong and what they did in London, how their family celebrated major Chinese festivals (e.g. Chinese New Year; Mid Autumn Festival) and Christian festivals (e.g. Christmas).
- What they remembered about Hong Kong before they left including their education there.
- Their school life in London including their school friends, problems with their use of English when they first arrived, how these problems were solved, their extra curricular activities, their favourite subjects in school, their choice of university and the first degree, and their GCSE and A Level results, and their Chinese education.
- Who their best friends were, the friends they went out with, where they went, and what they did. Their ideal boyfriend / girl friend.
- The music they listened to, the television programmes and films they watched, the books, magazines and newspaper they read, and the food they ate.
- Trips outside the UK including trips to Hong Kong.
Observation of their social practices was made when the researcher went out with some of the informants and their friends or when some of the informants visited the researcher at his home. This included all six male informants and four of the female informants: CC, EL, GW, and YH. The researcher's age and gender made it difficult for him to know some of the female informants as well as he got to know the male informants. The details of the observation with the ten informants and where the 12 informants were and what they were doing in 2001 - 2002 are summarised below:

- **CC** The researcher went out with CC and her cousins (JO and JU) very often. They met at least once every month over a two year period. They went bowling together and the researcher taught her how to shoot pool. They also went to the cinema and had meals together. The researcher became a frequent visitor to her home until she left London. They have met twice since she went to an Oxford college. The researcher was invited to her birthday dinner party in Soho and he attended the funeral of her family pet. Both interviews took place at her home.

- **CT** CT and the researcher met frequently between 1997 and 2000. They played video games in their homes and for two weeks in 1999, CT stayed at the researcher's place after his home was vandalised by the dissatisfied staff of his mother's restaurant. They often talked about their favourite writers and what he wanted to read at university. They went out very often to the West End together. Contact diminished when he went to Cambridge. He spent a night in the researcher's home to catch an early flight to Ibiza, a holiday he did not want his mother to know about. One interview took place in his home and the other at the researcher's.

- **EL** EL and the researcher went shopping twice. She took him to the shopping complex in Bluewater along with JH. The researcher took her to a cosmetic shop in King's Road, Chelsea. Both trips lasted the whole day. They went to a pub in Erith a few times and the researcher visited her at her home a few times and they went to the cinema once. The last time the researcher met EL was in a pub in Erith. The researcher was chided for not letting her know that JH was going out with GW. The researcher talked to EL on the phone once towards the end of 2001. She told him she was in a college doing A-Level subjects. Both interviews took place at her home.
• FN  The researcher met only FN twice when she was interviewed at his home. According to GW, a friend of FN’s, she was in the University of Middlesex reading a business management degree in 2001. Both interviews took place at the researcher’s home.

• GW  GW came to the researcher’s home very often between 1998 and 2000. They watched Hong Kong Cantonese films on VCD format together. They went out with JH to a karaoke bar in Trafalgar Square once. When she had fallen out with GW and JH, the researcher met her only once when she came to his home to return all the VCD compact disks she had borrowed. They talked briefly on the phone twice in 2001. GW was still studying for her A-Level because she had not done well enough to get a university place in 2000. Both interviews took place at the researcher’s home.

• HG  Apart from the interviews, the researcher only met HG once when she was with GW. According to GW, HG was working in a fashion shop in Central London in 2001. Both interviews took place at the researcher’s home.

• HN and JW  These two informants and the researcher had dinner together twice (once with their friends) and they often went to arcades in Soho and Romford and a karaoke bar near Trafalgar Square. Each meeting lasted between two and four hours. Between 1999 and 2000, the researcher met with HN more often than he did with JW. However, it was JW that the researcher still met up with occasionally between 2001 and 2002. They met up in Romford twice and had dinner in a Chinese restaurant together when the researcher was in the area. JW had dropped out of college and worked full-time in his parents’ takeaway. He told the researcher he wanted to save enough money to buy the takeaway one day. HN dropped out of college and left home in the early months of 2001. JW was not willing to tell the researcher anything about it. The researcher came across HN once in an arcade in Soho in 2002. He agreed to go to a pub with the researcher and have a talk but they came across his father on the way to the pub. His father told him off about the way he dressed and the length of his hair. HN became very angry and walked away quickly without giving the researcher his mobile phone number as he had promised. Both interviews with HN took place at his home. One interview with JW took place at HN’s home and the other at JW’s home.

5 Apart from losing face in front of the researcher and the need to get out of a bad situation very quickly, HN probably departed because he did not want to talk with the researcher.
• JH  JH and the researcher meet regularly since the researcher first met him in 1999. They go to an arcade in Soho and the karaoke bar in Trafalgar Square often and they have meals together. He comes around to the researcher’s home regularly (once every two months) since he passed his driving test and bought a car in 2001. He is now in Greenwich University. One interview took place at the researcher’s home and the other at EL’s home.

• JT  JT went out with the researcher and JH twice to the karaoke bar in Trafalgar Square and an arcade in Soho. He returned to Hong Kong with his family after he failed his A-Level examinations in 2000. According to JH, he is now a fireman in Hong Kong. Both interviews took place at his home.

• KN  KN, Sue, and the researcher went out together a few times. They had meals together at the Chinese restaurant owned by Sue’s parents. They went to a few museums in Central London. KN and the researcher have not contacted each other since KN left for University of Nottingham. Both interviews took place at his home.

• YH  The researcher met with YH only when she was with her boyfriend. They went to arcades and the restaurant owned by the boyfriend’s father. YH and her boyfriend had been to the researcher’s home twice, excluding the two times she came to his place for her interviews. YH took exception to some of the slang the researcher had selected for her and other informants. The researcher have not contacted her since the last interview. According to her boyfriend, she was studying in University College, London.

English was used between the researcher and the four non-link generation adolescent informants and the twelve link generation adolescent informants during the interviews. At other times, Cantonese was used. Interviews with the adult informants were conducted entirely in Cantonese. The use of the two languages with different informants in different situations makes the interpretation of the data more complex but also more interesting and in a way, more normal or natural for the researcher and the informants to use Cantonese whenever they met.
Role Playing Task, Pop Term Identification Task and Reading Aloud Tasks.

A lesson learnt from the interviews with the four non-link generation informants is that, for some of the proficiency indicators and sociolinguistic indicators, it might be difficult to obtain enough data to analyse the link generation informants’ production of these indicators in certain linguistic environments. The speech data of the four non-link generation informants indicate that there might be few tokens of the with place names, few token of English words with word initial /n/ other than tokens like no and know, few token of English words with intervocalic word medial /t/, few pop terms, and few tokens of English words with four or more syllables. A series of tasks were designed to elicit more such tokens from the link generation informants, and to gather a more formal or ‘monitored’ type of data as well. They were asked to perform these tasks at the end of their second interview.

The first task they had to perform was a role playing task to elicit data on their use of the with place names in London. The informants had to imagine they were inside the Burger King in Leicester Square. A tourist would come up to them and ask them for directions to a number of places in London. The places were divided into three groups. Places in Group 1 do not have the in front of their names: Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Tower Bridge. Places in Group 2 require the in front of their names: the Houses of Parliament, the Tower of London, and the River Thames. Places in Group 3 do not have the in front of their names or require the in front of their names: the Albert Hall, Madame Tussauds, the Millennium Dome, and Westminster Abbey. These names (without the) were printed on white cards and presented to the informants. The informants had to choose two places from each group. After giving directions to the places of their choice to the hypothetical tourist, the informants were asked to nominate a place in London for them to give directions to the tourist.

The second task the link generation informants had to perform was a pop term identification task. A number of pop terms and words specific to British culture were selected. These words were bad, banger, blotto, chill, chip, cool, crisp, fat, grass, jar, jerk, knacked, lad, lager, lout, nerd, pint, piss, saveloy, shit, stout, ta, tacky, weed, wicked, and yob. These words were printed on white cards and placed in a bag. Each card was randomly drawn out from the bag and the informants were asked what the words meant and how they were used. They were also asked whether they or their friends used the words and what kinds of people would use them.
The third and fourth tasks were the first two reading aloud task the link generation informants were asked to perform. The tasks were based on a list of 27 words with word initial /l, n, s/. Words with initial /l, s/ were included as foils to keep the informants from guessing what the aim of the two tasks were. The twenty seven words were selected to offer for analysis more and different linguistic contexts than the data in the interviews would offer. These words with initial /l, n, s/ are varied according to the vowel and final consonant as follows:

Lip, light, lock, lob, led, lag, lame, line, lay, nip, night, knock, knob, ned, nag, name, nine, nay, sip, sight, sock, sob, sad, sag, same, sine, say.

The words were printed on white cards and put in a bag. For the third task, each card was randomly drawn out from the bag and the informants were asked to complete the sentence I see with each word drawn from the bag. For example, if the word was nip, the informants should have said I see nip. The aim was to investigate the informants’ pronunciation of word initial /n/ preceded by a vowel. At the end of the task, the cards were put into the bag again and shuffled.

For the fourth task, each card was randomly drawn out from the bag again and the informants were asked to complete the sentences The word is ___; ___ means .... For example, if the word was nip, the informants should have said The word is nip. Nip means .... The aims are to investigate the informants’ pronunciation of word initial /n/ preceded by a consonant and at the beginning of a clause.

The fifth task was another reading aloud task the link generation informants were asked to perform. The task was based on a list of eighteen words with intervocalic word medial /t/ The words were selected to offer for analysis more and different linguistic contexts than the data in the interviews would offer. These words are varied according to the vowel and final consonant as follows:

Better, bitter, bottle, butter, button, bottom, kettle, later, latter, letter, litre, litter, metre, mutton, scrotum, setting, waiter, writing.

The words were printed on white cards and put in a bag. Each card was randomly drawn out from the bag and the informants were asked to read out the word on the card.
The sixth task was the last task the link generation informants were asked to perform. The task was based on a list of six sets of three word tokens. The aims are to investigate where the informants' placed primary stress on words with the same root and if the informants would place primary stress on syllables according to position or according to the syllables themselves. These words were:

Nationalisation, nationality, nationalise, photograph, photography, photographically, critic, critical, critically, origin, originate, originality, audition, auditing, auditorium, edit, editing, editorial.

Each set of words was printed on white cards and put in a bag. Each card was randomly drawn out from the bag and the informants were asked to read out the words on the card.

Transcription of the Interviews.

The interviews were transcribed and the length of the interviews with the twelve link generation adolescent informants was recorded in terms of the number of word tokens and time. The length of the interviews is listed in Table 1.04. The dates of the interviews and where they took place are listed in Table 1.05.

Table 1.04 lists the number of word tokens elicited from each informant based on two different methods of counting. Method One was the straightforward way of counting every word token in the data. Each token of init was counted as one word token. 'Y' know was counted as two word tokens. Abbreviations like VCD and DVD were counted as one word token. Slang like cock sucker, piss head, and arse hole were counted as two word tokens. Method One includes all possible pause-filler tokens transcribed as hmm, mmm, erm, and er. These are all possible fillers because they can also be backchannel cues and variants of yes or yeah. Method Two excludes these possible pause-filler tokens and is otherwise the same as Method One.

Word token counting was done in the following order:
• The word count function of *Microsoft Word* was used to count the total number of word tokens elicited from each informant. The number of word tokens elicited from each informant was then recorded.

• All possible pause fillers were deleted from the data. The total number of word tokens elicited from each informant without the possible word fillers was counted again, using the word count function of *Microsoft Word*.

For example, in the following extract, Method One yields 53 word tokens. After three possible pause filler tokens (in bold) are removed, the total number of word tokens falls to 50.

*JH*  *Erm, no, if, er, yes, some of them, yes, some of them, while we was in London, studying in London, er, like ninety percent were blacks and some of them are racists but I did get along with them though. Cause some of them are quite safe. Some of them are buddies, init?*

**Table 1.04  Number of Words Elicited from Each Informant and Duration of the Interviews.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Method One</th>
<th>Method Two</th>
<th>number of possible pause fillers</th>
<th>Duration of the interviews (minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>13,549</td>
<td>13,466</td>
<td>082 (0.612561%)</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>13,067</td>
<td>12,803</td>
<td>264 (2.020357%)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>17,332</td>
<td>16,892</td>
<td>440 (2.538657%)</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>12,774</td>
<td>12,636</td>
<td>138 (1.080319%)</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>23,510</td>
<td>23,199</td>
<td>311 (1.322641%)</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>19,296</td>
<td>19,078</td>
<td>218 (0.927265%)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>11,210</td>
<td>10,487</td>
<td>723 (6.449560%)</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>13,523</td>
<td>13,391</td>
<td>132 (0.976115%)</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>18,185</td>
<td>17,886</td>
<td>299 (1.644212%)</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>13,905</td>
<td>13,070</td>
<td>835 (6.005034%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>16,573</td>
<td>427 (2.511765%)</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>16,389</td>
<td>16,122</td>
<td>267 (1.629141%)</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.07 Overview of the Work.

This chapter, Chapter 1, is the introduction to the thesis. The problematic nature of using the PP model in SLA research has been introduced, and the groundwork for a more realistic model of L2 learning has been laid. The operational definition of full native speaker proficiency has been given. The aim, purpose, and significance of the thesis have also been discussed and the research questions and the research design including the methodologies, the informants, and how they were recruited have been presented. The 12 linguistic features have also been identified in this chapter (Step 3).

Chapter 2 will begin with the identification of the major components of the PP model. This framework is chosen for discussion because most L2 research is based on it. The aim of Chapter 2 is to explore the weaknesses of this cognitive language learning framework (Step 1). The discussion of its weaknesses shows where this language learning framework needs to be modified. One of the weaknesses discussed in this chapter is that the framework posits language as static and homogeneous. Chapter 2 also reviews the SLA research by Johnson and Newport (1989) to show that AOA is not the only factor that L2 researchers have to take into consideration. Among the factors that L2 researchers have to heed is the likelihood that migrants might have started learning an indigenous variety of the target language before they migrated.
Chapter 3 begins by introducing evidence of *language change* through a review of historical linguistic research to refute the claim that language is static and homogenous. The aim of Chapter 3 is to establish the argument that a more realistic language learning framework than the one discussed in Chapter 2 must contain a social and historical component (Step 2). This aim is achieved, first of all, by reviewing the theoretical arguments put forward by Halliday (1985), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998). Empirical evidence that a realistic language framework should contain a social component will be presented through reviewing the research of Cutler (1999), Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a; 1972b). The research by Labov (1972a; 1972b) is reviewed first. Then the problem of the traditional Labovian language learning framework will be explored. The problem is that it is difficult to identify a community that has shared speech norms. By reviewing the research of Cutler (1999) and Eckert (2000), the work shows how this problem can be overcome. Both researchers identify a community by its social practices. This is based on the community of practice (CoP) framework put forward by Lave and Wenger (1991) that a community of practitioners share similar linguistic and non-linguistic practices. The research by Cutler (1999) and Eckert (2000) is also central to the present work in other ways. The Eckert (2000) study shows that although two distinct communities might use the same *linguistic variants* because they share common group characteristics (e.g. adolescent students in the same school), the two communities do not share the same social practices and they do not favour the same linguistic variants. Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London and the larger youth community in London might share the same characteristics (e.g. age; place of residence) and they might use the same linguistic variants. The present work needs to find out what these linguistic variants are and whether they favour the same linguistic variants. In addition the work needs to find out what the social practices of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London are.

Chapter 4 reports the study on the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London that provides a framework and baseline against which to interpret the behaviour of the twelve link generation adolescent informants. There were 8 adult informants and 4 non-link generation adolescent informants. The aim of the study is twofold. First, by identifying the social practices and linguistic practices of Hong Kong Cantonese adults in London through interviewing and participant observation (Steps 7-10), the present work will be able to evaluate the extent Hong Kong Cantonese link generation adolescent informants were different from adults in terms of
social practices and linguistic practices. Second, through interviewing and observing the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants, the relevance of the social practices and linguistic practices (i.e. the proficiency indicators and sociolinguistic indicators) that might be salient to the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London can be assessed (Step 11).

Chapter 5, which can be considered as the core of the research, consists of 13 sections. Section 5.01 examines the social practices of the 12 link generation informants. The findings and the discussion the use of the 6 proficiency indicators and 6 sociolinguistic indicators in the speech data of the 12 link generation informants from Section 5.02 to Section 5.13. The findings of their linguistic practices, based on their speech data and the tasks they had undertaken, show that none of the 12 informants had achieved full native speaker competency by age 18.

The final conclusions, the limitations of the thesis, and recommendations will be presented in the last chapter, Chapter 6 (Steps 5-6). The social practices of the 12 link generation informants and their age of arrival in London are discussed as possible factors related to their language practice. The limitations of the thesis and recommendations for future SLA research are also discussed in detail in this chapter. Chapter 6 concludes with a discussion on the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London - from its origin in around 1900 to the present day.
Chapter Two  Problems with the Principles and Parameter Model.

Much of the research in second language acquisition is based on a widely known cognitive framework of how one language is acquired. It is a framework that is consistently under modification, in progressive attempts to improve its ability to account for known linguistic phenomena. For example, a recent revision of the framework was proposed by Noam Chomsky in *The minimalist program* (Chomsky, 1995). The discussion will adhere to an earlier version for three reasons. First, there are many similarities between this earlier framework and the minimalist approach. Second, much L1 and L2 acquisition research is based on the earlier framework. Third, the minimalist program is not yet fully developed and has hardly been applied in L2 research.

Similar to the minimalist framework, the earlier version has the following major components:

1. Humans are biologically endowed with a language acquisition faculty known as *Universal Grammar* (UG).

2. This faculty contains a set of grammatical *principles* that are universal to all human languages.

3. It also contains a set of *parameters* the settings of which are language-specific. Parameters act as constraints on the range of variation in the structure of human languages.

4. Via linguistic input, language acquisition is achieved when the appropriate setting for each parameter is arrived at.

5. There is an age constraint on the ability to learn language.

This language learning model is referred to as the Principles and Parameters (PP) model and the proponents of this model as *innatists* since they hold the belief that the innateness of language learning is of paramount importance. The five components of the PP model are reviewed below.
2.01 Components of the Principles and Parameters Model.

Component 1: Species-Specific Language Acquisition Mechanism.

Component 1 is the thesis that language acquisition is a *species-specific* behaviour particular to humans. Animals cannot learn human languages because grammar is an abstract combinatorial system that is *structurally dependent* (e.g., see Aitchison, 1989; Pinker, 1995). On this basis it is maintained that the human brain contains a structure specific to human beings to facilitate language acquisition and language use. On this orientation, language learning, therefore, can only be understood from a strictly cognitive perspective.

The conjecture of the existence of a language acquisition mechanism specific to humans is strengthened by conclusions about L1 acquisition in different cultures. For example, the innatists argue that the language input infants receive cannot account for the output they are able to produce later on. As reviewed by Hornstein and Lightfoot (1981):

(a) The speech the child hears does not consist uniformly of complete grammatical sentences, but also of utterances with pauses, slips of the tongue, incomplete thoughts, etc.

(b) The available data are finite but the child comes to be able to deal with an infinite range of novel sentences, going far beyond the utterances heard during childhood.

(c) People attain knowledge of the structure of their language for which no evidence is available in the data to which they are exposed as children. Crucial evidence for such knowledge consists of judgements concerning complex and rare sentences, paraphrase and ambiguity relations, and ungrammatical 'sentences', all of which are available to the linguist but lie outside the primary data available to the child. Children are not systematically informed that some hypothetical sentences are in fact ungrammatical, that a given sentence is ambiguous, or that certain sets of sentences are paraphrases of each other, and many legitimate and acceptable sentence-types may never occur in a child's linguistic experience. The distinction between what is available to the linguist and the more limited data available to the child is of vital importance for our view of things. (pp. 9-10)

Despite this input-output mismatch, "(the) fact that all normal children acquire essentially comparable grammars of great complexity with remarkable rapidity suggests that human beings

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6 Pinker (1995) explains the link between language learning and the structural dependency of language. "When people learn a language, they are learning how to put words in order, but not by recording which word follows which other words. They do it by recording which word *category* [italics in the original] -nouns, verbs, and so on -follows which categories" (pp. 93-4).
are specially designed to do this..." (Chomsky, 1959, p. 57), even in the context of deficient input.

Component 2: Principles of Universal Grammar.

Because of the input-output mismatch, the innatists contend that the language acquisition mechanism must contain a set of principles of Universal Grammar (UG). These principles, according to Radford (1997),

determine the nature of grammatical structure and the range of grammatical operations found in natural language grammars. Since UG principles which are innately endowed do not have to be learned by the child, the theory of UG minimizes the learning load placed on the child, and thereby maximizes the learnability of natural language grammar. (p. 16)

Component 3: Parameters.

As noted earlier, UG principles are only one aspect of language acquisition. If the child’s language acquisition mechanism contains only UG principles, all natural languages would contain the same grammatical structures. Since this is not the case, the innatists posit parameters to explain structural differences among natural languages. Radford (1997) defines parameters as “language-particular aspects of grammatical structure which children have to learn [italics in original] as part of the task of acquiring their native language” (p. 17).

An example of a parameter is the pro-drop / null subject parameter. Researchers (e.g. Haegeman, 1994; Radford, 1997) point out that English is a non-null subject language because English does not allow finite verbs to have null / covert subjects. These researchers also point out that Italian is a null subject language because Italian finite verbs can have either overt or covert subjects. This contrast can be seen in the following examples:

Example:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho telefonato</td>
<td>Gianni dice che ha telefonato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) have telephoned</td>
<td>Gianni says that (he) has telephoned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Examples and glosses from Haegeman, 1994, p. 453)
Radford (1997) argues that all natural languages are either null subject languages or non-null subject languages. Thus children learning Italian, English, or any other natural language, have to set the pro-drop / null subject parameter, and the information that children need to set parameters correctly is present in the linguistic input they receive. Radford (1997) offers other examples of parameters. For example, he discusses a wh-parameter that allows or prohibits wh-expressions to move “to the front of the sentence” (p. 18), as shown in the following English and Chinese examples:

Example:  
What do you think he will say?

Example:  
Ni xiangxin ta hui shuo shenme  
You think he will say what?

(Examples and glosses from Radford, 1997, p. 18)

The innatists view language acquisition as a process of parameter setting. For the innatists, each parameter offers a binary choice, as seen in the discussion on the pro-drop parameter and the wh-parameter in the previous paragraph.

Component 4: Input.

The existence of UG guarantees that humans are capable of acquiring a language. Innatists now believe that language acquisition comes about because language learners receive linguistic input (e.g., as in Jackendoff, 1993; Pinker, 1995). This view is a retreat from the more extreme view that linguistic input does not play a part in language acquisition (see Haegeman, 1994; Hornstein and Lightfoot, 1981).

How linguistic input play a part in language acquisition is suggested by Towell and Hawkins (1994). These researchers believe that “[once] children have learned a sufficient number of words of the language to which they are exposed, and having correctly categorised them as N, V, and so on, it should be an automatic process to build phrase structure, because they already know the principle determining what form phrases take” (p. 65).
Component 5: The Critical Period.

One of the essential arguments that language learning is a mental process is the claim that empirical research has shown that there is a critical period for language learning. Many researchers believe that “language learning ability is switched on before age twelve and then switches off” (Jackendoff, 1993, p. 188). The belief that there is a critical period for language learning is based on evidence from several sources.

One source of this evidence originates from studies on animal learning behaviour (see, for example, Lorenz, 1952; on his study of the critical period for imprinting among animals like goslings). However, the validity of relating animal behaviours with language learning is open to question because it is the proponents of the PP model who argue that language use and language learning is human-specific. Another source that points towards the existence of a critical period comes from the inability of those who were deprived of linguistic input until they reached puberty.7

One of these was Genie (Curtiss, 1977; 1982; 1988), a girl who was strapped down to a chair and deprived of linguistic input by her parents until she was 13 years old. From 1970, when her plight was discovered by a civil servant in a government office in a Los Angeles suburb, to 1975, a period in which she was studied at the UCLA Medical Center, she was not able to acquire aspects of the English language, including SVO order, wh-movement, tense and plural inflections, functional morphemes, and most pronouns, as illustrated in the following examples:

Example: Man motorcycle have. (Gloss: The man has a motorcycle)
Example: Applesauce buy store. (Gloss: Buy applesauce at the store.)
Example: Father hit Genie cry long time ago. (Gloss: When my father hit me, I cried, a long time ago.)
(Examples and glosses from Curtiss, 1988, p. 98)

7 Cases have been reported, for the past few centuries, of children brought up in the wilderness supposedly by animals and those who were deprived of social contact, and ipso facto, language input. These individuals, when they were brought back into human society, seemed to have lost the ability to master language. However, most of these cases are not suitable for a detailed investigation of the critical period hypothesis. For one thing, it is impossible to determine how old some of the children were when they were ‘found’. Furthermore, it cannot be determined as to whether they had suffered psychological or neurological damage. The only suitable candidates for investigation for the CPH were those whose biological age could be determined.
Aspects of English grammar that Genie acquired during the five-year period after she was found included \emph{theta assignment} (or \emph{semantic role}) as demonstrated in the following examples (also from Curtiss, 1988, p. 98) showing that Genie understood distinctions like animate / non-animate:

\textbf{Example:} I like cat.
\textbf{Example:} Boat have steering wheel.

Curtiss (1982) argues that Genie was not cognitively impaired and supports her argument with a list of various IQ test scores (p. 291) to show that for Genie, there was cognitive growth (but \textit{cf. Rymer 1993 on the possibility that Genie was cognitively impaired}).

The case of Chelsea, as reported by Pinker (1995), was similar to that of Genie in the sense that Chelsea also lived in a language-deprived environment from birth, in her case, until she was thirty-two, when her deafness was discovered. Chelsea was not able to attain full grammatical competence in English, hearing-aid and intensive therapy notwithstanding, though her performance differed from that of Genie in interesting ways.

Curtiss (1988) contrasted Genie’s language performance with that of Chelsea’s. Genie was able to form “semantically clear but generally agrammatical sentences…” (p. 99). Chelsea’s utterances in contrast “are filled with grammatical formatives; but their unprincipled use leads to consistently ungrammatical strings, which at times are also ‘unsemantic’” (p. 99) as in the following examples:

\textbf{Example:} Daddy are be were to the work.
\textbf{Example:} The woman is bus the going.
\textbf{Example:} They are is car in the Tim.
\textbf{Example:} The small a the hat. \hfill (Examples and glosses from Curtiss, 1988, p. 99)

The third source is neurological evidence based on an accumulation of studies on language recovery among aphasic patients. In the nineteenth century, research by Broca and Wernicke

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\footnote{A term in government and binding theory for the relationship between nouns and verbs, nouns and prepositions, and nouns and other nouns.}
indicated that there might be specific areas of the brain that are related to language. Damage to these areas is often related to loss of language ability like production and comprehension. Lenneberg (1967) observed that the probability of full recovery of language among his aphasic patients decreased with age. Innatists claim that the research by Broca, Lenneberg, and Wernicke provide the physical evidence to support the notion of the critical period. These studies on language recovery among aphasic patients, and Lenneberg's (1967) discussion of them, led some innatists to the conclusion that language development is related to cerebral maturation. At puberty, lateralization is complete and adult aphasic patients cannot use the other hemisphere for language recovery because neural plasticity has ended.

The fourth source is observation and empirical research. Jackendoff (1993), for example, believes that “the children of immigrants usually manage to acquire the language of their new country faultlessly” (p. 117) while their parents, “[even] if they are literate, well educated, attend language classes, and so forth, they still end up speaking with an accent and generally distorting the new language to some degree or another” (p. 117). Jackendoff (1993) believes that the difference in the performance of non-L1 languages between adult migrants and their children is explained by the critical period (see also Bley-Vroman, 1990; Pinker, 1995).

There is a lot of second language acquisition (SLA) research comparing the language performance of adult migrants and that of children migrants. One of the most cited pieces of research is conducted by Johnson and Newport (1989). Based on the results of an English test taken by four groups of migrants who arrived in the USA at different ages (one adult group and age groups 3-7, 8-10, and 11-15), Johnson and Newport (1989) conclude that there is a strong linear relationship between age-of-arrival and “ultimate performance in that language” (p. 78).

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9 Studdert-Kennedy (1983) points out that although “separable subsystems within language (may) exist...they are not readily isolated in practice” (p 224). He and his colleagues studied aphasic patients with damage in parts of the brain that are not traditionally associated with language and non-aphasic patients who suffered language loss. They also used neuro-imaging techniques on temporary blockage that they stimulated in various parts of their subjects' brains before assessing the subsequent language loss. They came to the conclusion that while they did not disprove the causal relationship between 'permanent' language loss and lateralization, Lenneberg's (1967) study on lesion in Broca's and Wernicke's areas ignored other areas which are just as important.

10 For example, it was cited by Labov (2000) and Pinker (1995).
2.02 The Subset Hypothesis: How Parameters are Set.

Researchers suggest a way by which normal input, which serves as positive evidence for the child of L1 parameter settings, interacts with parameters for language acquisition purposes. The Subset Hypothesis offers an explanation of how parameters are tested and set without negative evidence playing any role at all in the language acquisition process. At the initial stage of the language acquisition process, all parameters are set at their most restricted settings. Positive evidence enables a decision to be made as to whether the current settings are optimal, in the sense that they fit the input to which the child is exposed. If the current settings are found to be too narrow, they are adjusted so that the positive evidence can be accommodated by the new settings.

White (1989) points out that native speakers of English produce sentences like the following:

Example: Mary ate her dinner quickly.  
Example: Mary quickly ate her dinner.  
Example: Mary has quickly eaten her dinner.  
Example: Quickly Mary ate her dinner.  

(White, 1989, p. 138)

White (1989) also points out that native speakers of English do not produce sentence like:

Example: *Mary ate quickly her dinner.  

(p. 138).

For English, this type of sentence is ungrammatical, though it is possible in some other languages. White (1989) points out that the adjacency parameter imposes constraints on whether the adverb (e.g., quickly) can be placed between the verb (e.g., ate) and the direct object (e.g., her dinner). For English native speakers, the setting of this particular parameter is at the most restrictive possible value, i.e., it is ungrammatical in English for an adverb to be placed between the verb and the direct object. Therefore, positive input does not provide evidence for native speakers of English to set this parameter at a less restricted setting that would allow the

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11 Positive evidence is defined as "a set of observed sentences illustrating a particular phenomenon: for example, if children’s experience (i.e. the speech input they receive) is made up of structures in which heads
placement of the adverb between the verb and the direct object. According to the Subset Hypothesis, native speakers of French, like their English counterparts, have the adjacency parameter set at the most restricted setting (i.e. strict adjacency) at the initial stage of their L1 acquisition process. However, these learners are able to reach the conclusion that in French, adjacency is less restricted than the original setting when they come across examples like the following one:

Example:  
Marie a mange rapidement le diner.  
Mary ate quickly the dinner.  
(White, 1989, p. 137).

2.03 A Critique of the PP Model.

The strength of the PP model lies with the simple explanation it offers to account for language learning. Children are born with a language acquisition device (LAD) / UG and they learn their first language (L1) by setting parameters using the linguistic input that is present in the environment where they live. Yet underneath the explanatory power of the PP model lie its weaknesses.

There is no Direct Evidence that UG Exists. A main criticism against Component 1 is that there is no direct evidence (e.g., in the brain structure) for the existence of UG.12 Moreover, there is the question that if principles and parameters are innate, would they be subject to various laws of variation (a term used by Darwin) such as genetic mutation and genetic drift? If they are subject to these laws, then principles and parameters cannot be universal. In fact, there will be changes between the UG of one generation and that of the next. Furthermore, the view that UG is innate will admit the possible effects of the environment into the model. If genetic drift or genetic

mutation do not affect the transmission of principles and parameters from one generation to another, the question arises as to why they are not affected.  

**How Parameters are Set are not Detailed Enough.** Parameter setting as depicted in the PP model over-simplifies the complexity of language learning. Many researchers of the innatist school believe that parameter setting is more complicated than as depicted, e.g., by Radford (1997). For example, Foster-Cohen (1999) points out that setting the wh-parameter correctly is only the first step in producing a wh-interrogative sentence in English. The next steps for English language learners would be discerning

restrictions on where a wh-word can move from, what kinds of sentence parts it can move across, and whether it can be left in place when a sentence involves two wh-words at the same time (‘Who saw what?’ versus *‘What who saw?’*).

(Foster-Cohen, 1999, pp. 150-1)

In other words, to produce an English wh-interrogative sentence entails more than setting one parameter correctly. In fact, it entails the setting of several parameters.

Furthermore, as the review of historical linguistic research in Chapter 3 will show (e.g. Ashby, 1981), language changes and these changes do not occur abruptly. A change in the use of a linguistic feature begins in some linguistic environments. The change may then spread to other linguistic environments. Parameter setting in the PP model does not take the spread of change from one linguistic environment to another into consideration.

**Linguistic Evidence from Aphasic Patients, Genie and Others Might not be Valid as Proof to the Existence of a Critical Period for Language Learning.** The argument that there is a critical period for language learning should not depend on the language performance of aphasic patients and unfortunates like Genie and Chelsea. In her work on second language acquisition, Harley (1986) warns of the danger of extrapolating from the language performance of aphasic patients who fail to recover full use of language. She points out that “the ability of the damaged brain to regain lost or disrupted language is not necessarily related to the ability of the healthy brain to acquire a new L2” (p. 5).

\[13\] There are numerous books on genetic variation and the effects of the environment on it. A recent addition
The argument that there is a critical period for language learning should not depend on the linguistic performance of Genie and Chelsea, either. To use their linguistic performance as evidence of the importance of linguistic input within a critical period, the primary assumption that the two women did not suffer from any sort of permanent cognitive impairment from their experiences must be made. This is in fact the stand taken by Curtiss (1988). However, Sampson (1997) points out that it is difficult to believe that Genie did not suffer from any cognitive impairment.14

Furthermore, the sad case of Genie was more a case of arrested language development than a case of total deprivation of linguistic input as she was not completely deprived of linguistic input from the day she was born to the day she was rescued.15 The fact that she had some linguistic input is a confounding factor for language researchers who use the plight of Genie as an argument for the existence of the critical period that they have not explored fully. These researchers cannot explain how months of presumably normal amount of linguistic input might or might not have any effect on Genie’s subsequent language development.16

There is very Little Detail about the Critical Period. It is generally assumed that the critical period ends at puberty (e.g. Jackendoff, 1993; Pinker, 1995). However, the onset of puberty varies and depends on environmental factors like climate and diet. Therefore, the age of arrival of subjects in SLA research may not indicate whether they arrive before or after the onset of puberty. In addition, it is difficult for SLA researchers to determine when their subjects reach puberty for two reasons. First, social and religious taboos make it difficult for SLA researchers to ask their subjects when they reach puberty. Second, the subjects themselves might not know or remember how old they were when puberty arrived.

Assuming that puberty is the time when the critical period ends and that the age of informants when puberty arrives can be determined, SLA research based on the PP model still needs to show that there is a diminishing ability to language learning around the time when the critical period begins; the ability to learn a language, according to the PP model, is innate and autonomous of

to this collection is Almost like a whale: The origin of species updated (Jones, 2000).

14 Rymer (1993) interviews David Riger, a member of the team studying Genie. Riger claims that Genie was cognitively impaired.
15 Curtiss, Fromkin, Krashen, Riger, and Riger (1974) stated that Genie’s isolation and deprivation of linguistic input began when she was twenty months old.
environment. Like other innate human abilities (e.g. the ability to see), this ability should diminish with age.

The L2 Performance of Adult Migrants and Child Migrants Using the PP Model Might Not be Valid. The validity of using L2 research to argue for the existence of a critical period for language learning is based on several assumptions.

The first assumption is that the target language is homogeneous and static. The assumption implies that there is no difference in the language use of the native speakers of the target language. The assumption also implies that, for target languages that are widely used in different parts of the world, the fact that migrants might have been exposed to indigenous varieties is often discounted.

The second assumption is that environmental factors do not play any part in language learning. This assumption means that there is no logical explanation other than the existence of a critical period for language learning to account for the difference in language attainment and language use among migrants who settle in the target language environment at different ages.

The third assumption is that migrants have not begun learning the target language before migration. This assumption is unrealistic if target languages (e.g. English, French, and Spanish) are languages used all over the world.

Chapter 3 is devoted to showing why the first two assumptions are flawed. It reviews linguistic research showing that languages are not homogeneous or static. Furthermore, the linguistic research reviewed in Chapter 3 will show that, linguistic heterogeneity is a resource speakers exploit in the expression of their identity and affiliations. The third assumption will be examined in the following section.

Research by Vihman (1996) and others shows that children as young as sixteen months old are able to use some adult words.
2.04 The PP model and SLA Research.

The PP model does not take into consideration L1 classroom learning. The innatists believe that the kind of linguistic input that is essential to language learning is positive input. They also hold the view that negative input, or correction, does not play a role at all in language learning. Their reasons are as follows:

- Infants are seldom, if ever, corrected for the types of mistakes they make.
- There is a natural order of acquisition, or as Schachter (1993) phrases it, a natural "ordering of the testing of the parameter setting" (p 183).17

Negative evidence and the natural order of acquisition cannot both play a crucial role in the language acquisition process. If a natural acquisition order does exist, then negative evidence is presumably superfluous to the language acquisition process. Moreover, negative evidence if it occurs, is unpredictable and variable. If negative evidence is essential to language acquisition then a natural acquisition order does not exist. The existence of a universal acquisition order suggests that negative input does not play a role in language learning. It also suggests that language cannot be taught other than in the sense of merely providing input.

SLA research often follows this tradition of the PP Model and ignore the fact that, for some migrants, the L2 learning process has started before migration. Ignoring the effects of migrant informants having learnt an indigenous variety of L2 may mislead SLA researchers into drawing the wrong conclusions. This point can be demonstrated with an example.

The pseudo-passive is a variant to English passive voice construction in Hong Kong English. It is often used among Cantonese ESL speakers in Hong Kong.

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17 Researchers believe that children acquire various aspects of language in a certain order. Brown (1973; 1988; Brown and Hanlon, 1970) makes the observation that children across cultures and languages produce the same patterns up to the stage where their mean length of utterance (MLU) is 1.5. Brown (1988) focused only on American children when he extended his research to children with MLU higher than 1.5. He points out in his 1988 study that at the stage where MLU is 2, the American child-subjects began to produce functional morphemes. Using the operational definition of acquisition defined as 90% correct use in
Hong Kong Cantonese migrants to English-speaking countries might have been exposed to both variants - the English passive and the Hong Kong English pseudo-passive in the ESL classroom. On arrival to their new country, for example the UK, it is likely that they would be exposed to three variants (the English passive, the pseudo-passive, and the get passive) if they operate within the Hong Kong Cantonese community in the UK. Thus they would not know that pseudo-passive is not a linguistic variant of British English. Contact with native-speakers of English who are not ethnic Hong Kong Cantonese does not necessarily lead to their not using the pseudo-passive. The Subset Hypothesis will predict that it is difficult for the Hong Kong Cantonese migrants to conclude that the pseudo-passive is an illegitimate variant (assuming that a linguistic feature with three variants is less restrictive than with two).

The present work has reiterated several times in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 that the PP Model, as a single-language learning model, is based on assumptions that are flawed. As an SLA model, the flaws are compounded when SLA researchers using this model ignore that L2 learning may have started before their migrant informants settling in their new country. This point will be further illustrated with an SLA study by Johnson and Newport (1989). The review of their study in the following section will show that their adult migrant informants had started learning English for a long time (2 to 12 years) in their countries of origin before arriving in the USA.

Johnson and Newport (1989).

The study chosen for this section is the SLA research carried out by Johnson and Newport (1989). There are three reasons:

• The study is often cited (e.g., Pinker, 1995; Labov, 2000) to support the CPH.
• The researchers have factored in the length of stay of their subjects in the USA. “All subjects had lived in the United States for an unbroken stay of at least three years prior to the time of obligatory contexts in six consecutive hours, he found that although the rate of acquisition varied among subjects (and some took several years), the order of acquisition was invariant.
The researchers have also considered the influence of the length of stay in the analysis of results.

- The researchers claim that they have taken into consideration the amount of formal instruction and motivation into the analysis of results.

The English L2 subjects were divided into two groups according to their AOA in the United States. The late-arrival group consisted of those who arrived between age 17 and age 39. The members of the early-arrival group arrived between age 3 and age 15. Baseline data were provided by 23 native speakers of English. The test consisted of two hundred and seventy-six spoken sentences out of which one hundred and forty were ungrammatical. Out of the 12 rule-types tested, 4 dealt with morphology and the rest with syntax. For analysis of results, the researchers break down the age 3-15 ESL group into three sub-groups: 3-7, 8-10, and 11-15.

The findings on the AOA factor are as follows:

- There was an AOA effect in the subjects' performance of English. Only the 3-7 year old sub-group did not perform significantly different from the native speakers of English group. The 8-10 and 11-15 sub-groups and not unexpectedly, the 17-39 group performed “significantly below the natives” (p. 78).

- The test scores show that performance declines as the AOA increased. The 8-10 sub-group performed significantly better than the 11-15 sub-group which performed significantly better than the 17-39 group.

The findings seem to indicate three things. First, there is a critical period for language learning. Second, the critical period ends at age eight or older. Third, the ability to acquire a native-speaker level of proficiency declines as AOA increases.

However, a closer examination of the research shows that there are problems and inconsistencies. The inconsistencies are related to what Johnson and Newport (1989) meant by exposure to native-speaker environments. The thesis has already pointed out the importance of these effects for the PP model and it feels that the inconsistencies should not be ignored.
Problematic Description of Informants.

In their discussion, Johnson and Newport (1989) adopted the term *age of exposure* to mean "age of arrival in the United States, or age of beginning English instruction in school within the native country" (p. 81). For the subjects in the 17-39 group, the term was defined as "classes or immersion (whichever came first)” (p. 81). The readers have to assume that, for Johnson and Newport (1989), *immersion* means arrival in the USA because the researchers have used *exposure* to include classroom instruction within the native country.

The researchers elsewhere described the 17-39 group as the one in which the subjects were "first exposed [my emphasis] to English between the ages of 17 and 39” (p. 79). At this stage, the readers of Johnson and Newport (1989) would not know how the subjects of the 17-39 age group began learning English - it could be by immersion when they arrived in the USA or by classroom instruction in their native country.

However, the researchers have also stated that they used "only [my emphasis] the subjects (n =23) who had classroom instructions” (p. 81). These could only be the subjects in the 17-39 group (n = 23). So none of the subjects in the 17-39 group underwent immersion at all. They all began learning English in the classroom in their home country.

It is difficult to imagine why Johnson and Newport (1989) did not state clearly that those subjects began learning English in their native country between age 17 and 39. However, there is another problem with Johnson and Newport's (1989) profiling of the 17-39 age group.

They pointed out that all the members of that group that had a minimum of two years and a maximum of twelve years of “mandatory formal English instruction [my emphasis]” (p. 69) before arrival in the USA. It is difficult to think of a country which has an educational policy that forces its citizens to start learning English at age 17 or another country that forces its citizens to study English at age 39 for 2 to 12 years.

Since the subjects in the 17-39 age group in the study by Johnson and Newport (1989) had had studied English prior to their arrival in the USA, the researchers were not evaluating the English performance of those who were first exposed to the target language at the age of 17 or after in the USA. Rather, the researchers were evaluating the English of those who began learning English at age 17 or after for a number of years (2 to 12) in non-English L1 countries. The English language teachers could have been American, Australian, Canadian, English, or other nationalities and ethnic groups, including English language teachers from their own ethnic groups.

Johnson and Newport (1989) used only native speakers of Standard American English (SAE) to provide baseline data. They excluded 2 native-speaker subjects from the analysis. The reasons given by the researchers were that one “acquired English outside of the United States, and the other one because she spoke a non-standard dialect of English” (p. 70). Unless the researchers could prove that the subjects in the 17-39 age group were only taught SAE prior to their arriving in the USA, the purpose of using baseline data to evaluate the importance of the age constraint on L2 learning was defeated. Instead, by comparing the test scores of native speakers of SAE with those who learnt English in their native-country classroom for as little as two years, the difference in the test scores of the two groups was guaranteed, thus weakening Johnson and Newport’s (1989) claim of an age constraint on language learning.

Locating the Critical Period in Migrants’ Use of L2.

The preceding discussion has shown that it is socially unrealistic for SLA research not to take into consideration firstly, that migrants (both adult and young migrants) might have begun learning the target language prior to migration and secondly, that it is difficult to ascertain the varieties of the target language they have learnt in their countries of origin. The preceding discussion has also pointed out the possibility that migrants might still use the varieties of the target language they have learnt prior to migration in the countries they have settled.
2.05 Conclusion.

The discussion in Chapter 2 has identified the major components of the PP model and its weaknesses. The problems of the PP model make it inadequate as a model of language learning. The discussion in Chapter 2 has also presented the arguments against using an unmodified PP model in SLA research.

The discussion in Chapter 3 will highlight some of these problems in more detail. The review of research on how language changes will show that language is more than a set of grammatical principles and parameters, and that without taking language users into consideration, any model of language learning, including the PP model, is doomed to inadequacy.
Chapter Three  Sociolinguistic Approach to Language Learning.

3.01 Language Change.

In their study of *grammaticalisation*, Hopper and Traugott (1993) note that linguistic features “do not shift abruptly from one category to another, but go through a series of gradual transitions” (p.6). During transitions, new and old linguistic forms with similar or identical functions co-exist in a language. Hopper and Traugott (1993) use the term *layering* or *variability* to describe this co-existence of old and new features (see Hopper and Traugott, 1993, pp. 123-6).

Section 3.02 aims to use historical linguistic research to show that language change is gradual and not abrupt. It will argue that, in the light of the research reviewed, the PP Model is unrealistic in assuming that language is homogeneous and static. Furthermore, it will show that societal factors influence the ways language is used.

3.02 Historical Linguistics Research.

French Negative Marking.

Ashby (1981) points out that in Modern French as spoken in France, native speakers can use *ne + pas* as a negative marker. Alternatively, they can use *pas* without *ne* as another variant. He and other researchers point out that historical linguistic research suggests that *pas*, a noun, was added on to *ne* in the twelfth century because the latter was phonologically weak and had to be reinforced (Ashby, 1981; McMahon, 1994).

According to McMahon (1994), there were three other variants as the second negative particle of *ne*. They were *point, mie*, and *gout(t)e*. She points out that because *pas* was the “preferred

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18 Hopper and Traugott (1993) define grammaticalisation as “the process whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalised, continue to develop new grammatical functions” (p. xv).
particle in the centre and west of France and in Paris, and as literary French became equated with the Parisian variety, *pas* became correspondingly popular" (p. 163). She also points out that *mie* is no longer used as a negative particle and that *point* and *gout(t)e* are still used occasionally.

Ashby (1981) notes that there is a trend among speakers of modern colloquial French to use *pas* as the sole negative marker. He comes to this conclusion from the data he has elicited from 37 informants living in Tours. He discovers that the amount of the deletion of *ne* depends on non-linguistic factors like age and gender of the informants. Some of his informants do not use *ne* at all. He also finds that, for other informants, the amount of *ne* deletion depends on linguistic environments. For example, it was less likely that those informants deleted *ne* in subordinate clauses.

**Case Marking in English.**

In Modern English, affirmative utterances are usually in SVO order. Historical linguists have been able to attribute the predominance of the SVO order to the loss of case marking (Hopper and Traugott, 1993; Leith, 1983; McWhorter, 2000; Thomason and Kaufman, 1991; Traugott, 1972).

In *Old English*, nouns were marked differently depending on whether they were used in the nominative, accusative, genitive, or dative cases. Traugott (1972) examined Old English written text, concluding that the word order of Old English was less constrained than that of Modern English but was nevertheless not ‘free’. Under conditions both grammatical (e.g., *predication* in the affirmative) and pragmatic (e.g. to make promises), the word order had to be S (Aux) V (O). Under other conditions, all possible combinations of Subject + Verb + Object appeared in the text she examined (Traugott, 1972, footnote p. 86). Leith (1983) points out that the more elaborated system of case-marking allowed Old English users a higher degree of freedom with the word order. With the disappearance of marking for the three other cases, their grammatical functions were taken over by *prepositions* and by a rigid word order (von Humboldt, 1836/1988; Leith, 1983).

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19 The quantification by ‘usually’ is needed because Modern English allows OSV (or thematised object) order.
Tense Inflection in English.

Leith (1983) also uses past tense inflection as an example of language change. During the transition from Old English to Modern English “the conversion of strong verbs to the weak pattern, and the simplification of the strong verb itself” (p. 102) took place. 21

For example, according to Leith (1983), the West Saxon verb *fleogan* (to fly) had six other forms: one form each for past tense (*fleag*) and past participle (*flogen*). It also had three different forms for the three singular personal pronouns in the subject position, and one form for plural personal pronouns. In standard Modern English, there are only four (*fly, flew, flown, flies*).

Language Change as Evidence that the PP Model is Problematic.

It is difficult to explain language change within the PP model. Language change shows that speakers of an earlier generation would have a set of internalised grammar that is different from the set of internalised grammar of speakers belonging to a later generation. According to the PP model, linguistic output from the speakers of the earlier generation would be the linguistic input the later generation needs for language learning. Furthermore, the model would predict the internalised grammar of speakers in the later generation would be the same as the internalised grammar of the earlier generation. However, language change shows that the prediction is wrong.

In addition, historical linguistic research shows that language change does not come abruptly. A case in point is grammaticalisation of *pas* as the second negative marker in French. As Ashby (1981) and McMahon (1994) have shown, *pas* was used before the twelfth century as a noun meaning *step*. During the twelfth century, *pas* began to be used as a negative particle. Ashby (1981) notes this change is still ongoing because his research shows some French L1 speakers do not use *ne* as the other negative marker.

Historical linguistic research also shows the link between how language changes and language users. For example, some of the informants in Ashby’s (1981) study do not delete *ne*.

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20 In Modern English, other than for pronouns, only genitive case-marking occurs.
21 See Leith (1984 pp. 102-4) for the argument that the cause of this specific change was simplification and not analogy.
categorically (i.e. in all linguistic environments). In addition, he shows that the deletion of *ne* among his subjects was related to social factors like age and gender. Parameter setting, as binary choices, cannot provide any explanation.

The innatists attempt to account for language features that are in the process of changing. They argue that the change is *catastrophic* (or sudden) as opposed to gradual. For example, Lightfoot (1979; 1981) put forward the *Transparency Principle* as a mechanism for change. The Transparency Principle is a regulator-mechanism that allows only a certain distance between *deep* and *surface* grammatical structures, and a certain amount of exceptionality or irregularity in grammar. When English lost the inflectional distinction for nominative, accusative, and dative cases, free word order caused ambiguity. The Transparency Principle then operated to resolve the problem, causing a shift from free word order to fixed word order.\(^\text{22}\)

The validity of the Transparency Principle hinges on language change being completed rapidly. However, evidence from historical linguistics shows that instances of language change are gradual. As we have seen, *pas* began its career as a negative marker used in conjunction with *ne* in twelfth century. It was not until the fifteenth century before it became popular. The present work has pointed out that, for some native speakers of French, *pas* has ousted *ne* and becomes the sole negative marker. In other words, the grammaticalisation of *pas* began nearly 700 years ago and the change is still in progress.

Other arguments against the Transparency Principle have been made by McMahon (1994).\(^\text{23}\) One of her objections is as follows:

\(^{22}\) Lightfoot (1979, 1981) uses Old English (OE) premodals (also termed ‘semi-modals’ like *have to* and *need to*) and Modern English modals to illustrate this ‘catastrophe theory’. He argues that in OE premodals belonged to the same category as other verbs. Premodals were also preterite-present verbs, meaning that they took the historical past tense as the present tense. There were other non-premodal verbs that were also preterite-present verbs. These verbs shared the same syntactic and morphological rules with other verbs. From the end of the OE period to the beginning of the Middle English period, the non-premodal preterite-present verbs became obsolete or became weak verbs, like some other verbs. Unaffected by changes in morphological rules for other verbs like the disappearance of the inflected infinitive, which was replaced by the infinitive *to*, premodals remained unchanged. Premodals, to function as ‘verbs’, underwent a radical categorical change and became modals with their Modern English characteristics. They lost the infinitive, past tense, *ing* inflection, and perfective aspect. They could not take nominal objects nor could they appear in sequence (*cf.* Brown 1998 on the survival of double modals in some varieties of British English).

\(^{23}\) McMahon (1994) has written extensively on the inadequacy of the Transparency Principle. First, the principle does not quantify the distance between deep and surface structures that it would allow nor did it state how much exceptionality languages would tolerate. Second, quoting other researchers’ works, she points out that the change from premodal to modal was not as sudden as Lightfoot (1979) claimed. Various
It is essential for us to establish that this theory is truly restrictive; otherwise, there might be a temptation to introduce a new principle to solve each new problem, producing an unwieldy grammar full of *ad hoc* principles. (p. 131)

Hopper and Traugott (1993) point out that the use of Transparency Principle to account for language change is only valid if language is a set of abstract grammatical rules independent of language users. The discussion in Section 3.03 will show that any language research should not be undertaken without taking language users into consideration. By doing that, the present work will argue that without looking at the life of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link generation informants in London, any analysis of their English speech data is flawed.

### 3.03 Language Change: How it is Transmitted.

As already discussed, innatists posit that environment does not play any role in language learning. Sociolinguists like Labov (e.g. 1972a, 2001), focusing their research on first language learning, come to the conclusion that language learning outcome is dependent on sociolinguistic factors like the social groups L1 speakers are members of, or identify with.

**Sociolinguistic Research and Language Learning.**

Aitchison (1991) dismisses sociolinguistic factors as superficial in language change. She likens language change to the following analogy:

> When a gale blows down an elm tree, but leaves an oak standing, we do not believe that the gale alone causes the elm to fall. The gale merely advanced an event that would probably have occurred a few months or years in any case. (p. 123)

modals lost their non-finite forms over the span of more than a hundred years, from the late fifteenth century to the early seventeenth century. *Have to* appeared even earlier, in the fourteenth century, which made it impossible to be a result of the change as depicted by Lightfoot (1979). Third, modals, like some other verbs, could be a kind of defective verbs. McMahon (1994) uses *beware* as an example of non-model verbs with defective paradigms. It takes the infinitive *to* and imperative form. But it has ‘arguably no finite form’ (p. 124). Fourth, as Traugott (1972) argues, Modern English is still in the process of losing inflection. For example, in Modern English, genitive case can be realised by *of the* construction as well as an *s* inflection.

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One of the aims of this section is to show that sociolinguistic factors are not superficial. From the historical linguistic research reviewed previously, we know that language variation exists. The view offered by Aitchison (1991) and McWhorter (2000) is that the actuation of language variation is enough to explain language change. Many sociolinguists, on the other hand, argue that the focus of linguistic research should be on the transmission of language change and offers a means of exploring the relationships between the environment and language acquisition.

Labov (1972b; 2001) argued that language research should focus on the issue of transmission and not on actuation. In other words, linguists need to know how and why language learners adopt or acquire and use language innovations. This approach to linguistic research is different from that of the innatists who deny that societal factors play any part in language learning. The innatists' argument, as we have already seen, is that language learning is autonomous and therefore different from other acts of learning. The present work will contest this argument by reviewing work by Halliday (1985), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998). The work by these researchers will show why it is wrong, on a theoretical basis, to assume that there is not any societal component in language learning. The sociolinguistic research reviewed in this section (e.g. Cutler 1999, Eckert 2000; Labov 1972a; 1972b) will show that the presence and absence of certain linguistic features in speech, as well as other social practices, depends on whether speakers are members of social groups in which these social practices are identified as salient. The sociolinguistic research will also provide the reason the approach and methodology the present work will adopt when it investigate the social identity of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link generation informants mentioned in the introduction section. The present work will argue that, based on the conclusions drawn in this section:

- Accounting for the performance in English of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link generation informants using the PP model without modification is misguided.

- Their speech data should not be evaluated without looking at the identity they have constructed as members of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London.
The Basis of a Societal Component in Language Learning.

The sociolinguistic research that will be reviewed in this section shows that understanding language needs to take the context of how it is learnt and used into consideration. Furthermore, the discussion will show that the use of linguistic features, like social practices, is an act of identifying with social groups. The present work will review the work by Halliday (1985), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) to establish a theoretical basis that links language use and social practices as acts of identity. Then the work will review sociolinguistic research by sociolinguists like Cutler (1999), Eckert (2000), and Labov (1972a; 1972b) to offer as proof that speakers use language features to mark social group membership. The social practice of learning what linguistic features to use according to the social groups that speakers belong to is how language change is transmitted. To reiterate the point made by Milroy (1993, p. 221), it is “speakers, not languages, that innovate”.


Halliday (1985) defines semiotics as “the study of sign systems – in other words, as the study of meaning (original emphasis) in its most general sense” (p. 4). For Halliday, language cannot be de-contextualised from the society people live in.

Linguistics, then is a kind of semiotics. It is an aspect of the study of meaning. There are many other ways of meaning, other than through language. Language may be, in some rather vague, undefined sense, the most important, the most comprehensive, the most embracing; it is hard to say exactly how. But there are many other modes of meaning, which are outside the realm of language. These will include both art forms such as painting, sculpture, music, the dance, and so forth, and the other modes of cultural behaviour that are not classified under the heading of forms of art, such as modes of exchange, modes of dress, structures of family, and so forth. These are all bearers of meaning in the culture. Indeed, we can define culture as a set of semiotic systems, a set of meanings, all of which interrelate.

(p. 4)


In their critique of the conventional framework of learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) point out the problems with the conventional framework of learning:
It establishes a sharp dichotomy between inside and outside, suggests that knowledge is largely cerebral, and takes the individual as the nonproblematic unit of analysis. Furthermore, learning as internalization is too easily construed as an unproblematic process of absorbing the given, as a matter of transmission and assimilation. (p. 47)

Furthermore, Lave and Wenger (1991) elaborate on their view of the relationship between learning and participation of social practice by saying that:

[as] an aspect of social practice, learning involves the whole person; it implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities - it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person. In this view, learning only partly - and often incidentally - implies becoming able to be involved in new activities, to perform new tasks and functions, to master new understandings. Activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons. The person is defined by as well as defines these relations. Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identity. (p. 53)

Lave and Wenger (1991) believe that legitimate peripheral participation is the “central defining characteristic” (p. 29) of learning:

[ Learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. “Legitimate peripheral participation” provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. (p. 29)

A community is defined by its membership and by the practices the members engage in and identity is a negotiated experience by the ways people experience their selves through participation and reification. Wenger (1998) points out that:

[We] know who we are [original italics] by what is familiar and by what we can negotiate and make use of, and that we know who we are not [original italics] by what is unfamiliar, unwieldy, and out of our purview. This is an important point. We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in. Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not. (p. 164)
Participation and non-participation can be peripheral or marginal. Peripherality allows non-participation to become an enabling form of participation because the “experience of non-participation is aligned with a trajectory of participation” (Wenger, 1998, p. 165). Peripherality, as non-participation, foregrounds social practices that newcomers to a community of practice are not yet engaged in and offers them an opportunity to learn, targets to achieve, and the direction towards full participation. On the other hand, marginality is “a form of non-participation [that] prevents full participation” (p. 166). For example, ethnicity may push certain ethnic groups into “identities of non-participation”, and “it may seem impossible to achieve a different trajectory within the same community” (p. 167).

How ethnic group boundaries can create marginality will be explored next by reviewing a study carried out by Cutler (1999) on Mike, a white male middle-class adolescent living in New York City.

**Appropriating Hip Hop Social Practices in New York City.**

At around age 13-14, Mike began to identify with the “hip-hop” culture. Cutler (1999) points out that Mike, like many white American adolescents, identified with the hip-hop culture and adopted features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). However, despite his attempts to conceal his middle-class background and his private school education, he was not able to join any AAVE native-speaker peer groups. Thus his exposure to AAVE was limited to chance exposure when he came into contact with AAVE native speakers in the street, pool halls, and clubs as well as exposure from films, music, television programmes, and hip-hop websites.

Not being able to join any AAVE native-speaker peer group, Mike tried to adopt urban hip-hop social practices based on what he could learn from the mass media and the Internet; social practices that were more stereotype than authentic. He had a ‘tag’ name which he used when he scrawled graffiti on walls. Cutler observed that “he wore baggy jeans, a reverse baseball cap, designer sneakers, and developed a taste for rap music” (p. 429). He also “experimented with drugs and joined a gang” (p. 430). He also used AAVE features as part of his linguistic repertoire. In the following, Cutler’s (1997) analysis of Mike’s use of AAVE is reviewed.
Cutler (1997) interviewed Mike when he was 16. She noticed that Mike was more successful in using AAVE phonology and hip-hop slang than he was with AAVE grammar and syntax. The convergence of his speech towards AAVE phonology was attested in his production of “schwa pronunciation of the preceding a vowel, post-vocalic r-lessness, and stop pronunciation of inter-dental fricatives” (p. 431). In Mike’s speech samples that Cutler (1997) collected, the researcher found that Mike used the schwa pronunciation in 70% pre-vocalic instances in one sample. Another phonological difference between AAVE and Standard American English is that AAVE does not favour the linking /r/. In Mike’s speech, Cutler found that Mike deleted /r/ “when followed by a vowel at a word boundary” 61% of the time (p. 431). This percentage was close to the frequency of R-lessness (i.e. absence of /r/) Labov (1972a) found among his AAVE native-speaker informants (from an average of 85 % r-lessness for the Thunderbirds, a AAVE adolescent peer group to an average of 48 % r-lessness for middle class AAVE native speakers; see Labov, 1972a, p. 39). As for inter-dental fricatives,

Mike’s stop pronunciation of voiced dental fricatives in word initial position (in articles and demonstratives such as the, this, those) reached 36 percent (n=22), while approximately 50 percent (n=12) of the word final voiceless dental fricatives in the word with were voiceless stops” (p. 432).

Mike used hip-hop slang like phat, yo, chill, and bomb bitches (Cutler, 1999, pp. 432-3). However, in terms of AAVE’s grammatical and morphological features, there were only a few tokens of copula absence and is with third person subjects as in the following example:

Example: These niggas is got shoes on. (Cutler, 1999, p. 431)

Other grammatical and morphological features of AAVE such as third person singular -s absence and habitual be were not found in the data for Mike.

Mike’s attempts to appropriate to identify with the hip-hop community at age 16. There was pressure from his family because the hip-hop social practices he identified and adopted (e.g. drug abuse; becoming a gang member) led to his expulsion from the private school he was in and to his being beaten up by a gang in Central Park. There was also pressure from his white peers to give up his hip-hop styles. In addition, Cutler (1999) notes that Mike was frustrated and angry for
not being admitted into peer groups of AAVE speakers. Cutler (1999) notes that by age 16, Mike "seemed to see himself in opposition to the black community" (p. 435). Although Mike continued to use "AAVE phonology and lexicon, this was no longer an attempt to construct a black identity. Instead, it laid claim to participation in hip-hop as the dominant consumption-based youth culture" (p. 435).

Cutler (1999) explains how ethnicity acts as marginality that inhibits Mike from breaking down the group boundaries.

At first glance one might conclude that young whites embracing hip-hop represents a cultural rapprochement between blacks and whites and perhaps even the creation of a new multi-ethnic youth culture. But, Mike's relationship to African American was more complex and more subject to competing pulls. From a position of remoteness from the realities of lower class urban life, he wanted very much to define and participate in an essentialized version of urban black male youth culture, but he was uncomprehending about the restrictions, angered about rejection, and worried about being labelled a 'wannabe' by his peers. (p. 439)

Cutler's (1999) case study of Mike is important to the present work for several points of comparison with the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants.

The significance of Cutler's (1999) study to the present work is clear. Like Mike, the 12 link generation informants are members of more than one community. These informants were born in Hong Kong. They were members of the Hong Kong youth community. They are members of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. They are also members of the wider youth community in London. Like Cutler's (1999) investigation of Mike's social practices, the investigation of the social practices of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link generation informants must identify each of these social practices as a social practice of one or more communities these informants are member of.

Although Cutler's (1999) study is a study with only one informant, she shows how Mike as a newcomer to the hip-hop community has tried to acquire knowledge and skills to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of the hip-hop community. Mike tried to gain the knowledge and skill through the mass media and the Internet.

produce a glide or delete the consonant while the latter would produce the linking /r/.
Cutler (1999) traces how Mike has changed his social practices to align with the social practices of black male members of the hip-hop culture. These social practices include the use of the linguistic features mentioned earlier and other social practices that Mike has identified hip-hop with (e.g. wearing baggy jeans and putting on a baseball cap in reverse; listening to rap music; joining a gang; drug abuse).

Cutler (1999) shows how ethnicity has acted as marginality that has stopped Mike from carrying out full participation in hip-hop social practices. He has not been accepted by hip-hop groups because he is white. His family and his peers of his own ethnic group have also put pressure on Mike to impede him from moving further along a fuller participation of hip-hop social practices.

Cutler’s (1999) study illustrates what Lave and Wenger (1991) mean when they point out that “activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning” (p. 53) and that “learning involves the construction of identity” (p. 29). Mike’s carrying out of the hip-hop social practices and his subsequent failure to join a hip-hop peer group should not be studied in isolation. Mike’s experiment with hip-hop social practices should be studied as “negotiations of the relationship between self and others” (Cutler, 1999, p. 439).

Similar to Cutler’s (1999) study, research by other sociolinguists points out that ethnicity may act as a group boundary and how each ethnic group have its own social practices. For example, in observing a group of Asian-American students in a junior high school in California, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) noticed that this group of students, apart from their distinctive speech style, have “styles of movement, dress, and other forms of social engagement that the junior high school kids use in constituting themselves as Asian Americans” (p. 187). They “hang out in a spot that is generally known in the school as ‘Asian Wall’” (p. 185). That this group of Asian American students consists of youths from various places in Asia like China, Indo-China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines has not escaped these researchers’ notice; nevertheless, they argue that this group of students forms a community of practice (CoP) because of their common skin colour, and because their diversity is ignored in “most American constructions of ethnicity” (p. 186). Furthermore, these students form a community in its own right because, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) observe, “the Asian-American students see the value of foregrounding their commonalties to increase their numbers and visibility, and hence to construct status” (p. 186).
Sociolinguistic research investigates the relation between the meanings of sociolinguistic variation and identity. Identity is “[a] person’s place in relation to other people, a person’s perspective on the rest of the world, a person’s understanding of his or her value to others” (Eckert 2000, p. 41). While sociolinguistic researchers and ethnographers do not have access to identity, Eckert (2000) believes that by having access to people’s linguistic practices and salient social practices, researchers can come to understand the meaning they have in the community.

Sociolinguistic research, thus, is not a study of individuals’ identity. It is a study of group identity and how meanings are constructed in groups through community social practices and linguistic practices. In the rest of the review of sociolinguistic research, the discussion will focus on how sociolinguistic researchers identify aggregates of people, their common enterprise and how they develop and share ways of doing things, beliefs, and values. The subjects in some of the sociolinguistic research reviewed below were adolescents. Eckert (1999) discusses the importance of constructing social identity through the social use of the vernacular by adolescents. Adolescence is a life stage that “leads the entire age spectrum in sound change and in the use of vernacular variables, and this lead is attributed to adolescents’ engagement in constructing identities in opposition to - or at least independently of - their elders” (p. 163). Eckert (1999) points out:

As the official transition from childhood to adolescence, adolescence is a time when children are expected to become serious about their adult occupations. It is therefore a time of transition from their parents’ social sphere to one that they construct for themselves. Adolescent social structure and social practice is part of this process of construction.

(p. 163)

The sociolinguistic research reviewed here is important to the present work for the following reasons:

- It acts as empirical grounding for the theoretical basis of the present work (see the above discussion on Halliday, 1985; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

- It acts as the justification of the methodology of the present work in its investigation of the social identity issue of the twelve informants.
• It shows that, for certain linguistic features, there is variation in their use among L1 speakers, which may also apply to L2 speakers. For example, a part of the research by Labov (1972a) was based on previous studies which showed that the copula, as a linguistic feature of AAVE, has three variants. Labov (1972a) showed that there was variation in use of the variants among different groups of young native speakers of AAVE. The study by Cheshire (1982) shows that her informants do not mark plural nouns of measurement (e.g. ten mile) the way native speakers of standard English would (e.g. ten miles). The conclusion that there is also variation in the use of some English linguistic features used by the twelve Hong Kong Cantonese informants, must be taken into consideration.

In the following study, Labov (1972b) showed why his study of the use of two linguistic features among the local population on Martha's Vineyard had not been carried out in isolation. Instead, he also looked at how these linguistic features were employed by those who used them as a means to negotiate meaning between themselves and others.

The Martha's Vineyard Community.

The linguistic variables Labov (1972b) chose for his Martha's Vineyard study were the diphthongs of /aw/ as in house and /ay/ as in night. Labov (1972b) identified centralisation of these diphthongs as variants to the standard ones from the Linguistic Atlas of New England (LANE) which shows that the use of these non-standard variants existed since the nineteenth century. Labov noted that the residents' production of these vowels was more centralised, towards the position of schwa. Labov thus believed that he could obtain a view of the co-existence of older and newer forms of language by studying the speech of the Martha's Vineyard community.

The present work proposes to retain the original transcription systems as used by the authors of the studies reviewed rather than converting the various systems used into one system like the IPA. The motivations behind the decision are practicality – Cantonese speech data, for example, are better represented by a system like Yale – and as a mark of respect for the decisions of the original authors.
Table 3.01 Percentage of Centralisation among Three Groups of Inhabitants on Martha's Vineyard (after Labov, 1972b, p. 39)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (n)</th>
<th>Ay</th>
<th>Aw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fishermen</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.01 shows that there is variation in pronouncing the two linguistic variables across the three groups. For example, 63% of the production of the diphthong [ay] and 62% of the production of [aw] by the informants who were fishermen was centralised. The informants who were farmers produced the centralised variant of [ay] 32% of the time and the centralised variant of [aw] 32% of the time. The rest of Labov's (1972b) informants produced centralised [ay] and [aw] 9% and 8% of the time respectively. Labov (1972b) also looked at the production of these diphthongs among the three ethnic groups living on the island.

Table 3.02 Centralisation Index of [ay] by Ethnic Groups (after Labov, 1972b, p. 26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 60</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 45</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.02 groups the subjects according to ethnic origin and age range. The findings show that there was variation in the performance of [ay] among the three ethnic groups. The English informants in three age categories (31-45, 46-60, and over 60) produced the centralised [ay] more often than the Portuguese and Indian informants of the corresponding age groups.

Labov (1972b) noted that the economy of Martha's Vineyard was under economic pressure from mainland America. The geographical distance between the mainland and the island meant a high cost of production, high cost of living, and low economic returns. The inhabitants turned increasingly to tourism for earning a living. Increasingly more land was sold to people from mainland America. The threat of long-term unemployment and dispossession caused resentment against the tourists and this resentment was most felt among the fishermen. Labov (1972b)

---

26 The index was calculated in the following way. Labov opted for measuring only the first element (i.e. [a]) of the linguistic variable. Each of 80 instances of the production of the first element from each subject was awarded a value from 0 (highest) to 3 (most centralised) based on the degree of height of [a] produced. Then the values were added together. Thus the score range was between 0 and 240 (Labov 1972, pp. 14-8).
concluded that the resentment resulted in a pattern of divergence from the standard usage of these diphthongs that characterised people from the mainland.

Labov (1972b) further showed how the resentment against the summer tourists from Mainland America and the centralisation of the two diphthongs were related. He pointed out that the local population including the fishermen who felt most encroached by the summer tourists had retreated 'up-island', while those who became engaged in the tourism remained 'down-island'. The findings listed in Table 3.03 show that those who resented the summer tourists (the up-island group) centralised the two diphthongs more frequently.

Table 3.03 Centralisation Index of [ay] and [aw] by Location (after Labov, 1972b, p. 25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ay</th>
<th>Aw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>down-island</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up-island</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some original inhabitants saw the fishermen as representative of personal attributes that were highly valued on Martha's Vineyard. They were seen as brave, strong, and independent. Those who wanted to remain on the island identified themselves with the fishermen group. The findings listed in Table 3.04 shows how the difference in the attitude towards a life on the island is related to the use of the two diphthongs.

Table 3.04 Percentage of Centralisation by Attitudes towards Martha's Vineyard (after Labov, 1972b, p. 39)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude (n)</th>
<th>Ay</th>
<th>Aw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positive (40)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral (19)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative (06)</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Martha’s Vineyard study shows that the use of certain linguistic features is dependent on the social grouping that the users identify themselves with. To apply this finding to the social practice model of Lave and Wenger (1991), the present work argues that the original population identified the centralisation of the two diphthongs as a practice that was salient in the fishermen group and as a practice that was salient among those who wanted to remain on the island. Furthermore, the findings listed in Table 3.02 indicate that ethnicity and age are two important components in investigating the social practices of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link generation informants of the present work.
A New York City Community.

Labov (1972a) investigated the language use of *lames*, who were native speakers of AAVE and "isolated children who grow up without being members of any vernacular peer group (and those) individuals (who) spilt away from the vernacular culture in their adolescent years" (p. 84).

The research took place in New York City. The Thunderbirds were one of the African American peer groups Labov (1972a) used as informants. By eliciting their help, Labov managed to find out the names of the lames and enrolled them as informants as well.

Labov (1972a) looked at, among other variables, the English copula. There are three variants of the English copula in AAVE. They are full form, contracted form, and deletion. An example of each variant is given below:

Example:    *Sue is the leader.*
Example:    *She's happy.*
Example:    *He talking.*    (All three examples are from Rickford, 1999, p. 61).

Labov (1972a) looked at the three variants by his informants in six linguistic environments:

- A full noun phrase (NP) followed by one of the three variants of the copula followed by a noun phrase or a sentence (S).
- A full Noun Phrase (NP) followed by one of the three variants of the copula followed by a predicate adjective (PA) or locative (Loc).
- A full Noun Phrase (NP) followed by one of the three variants of the copula followed by a verb with -ing (V+ing) or *gonna* (gn).
- A pronoun (Pro) followed by one of the three variants of the copula followed by a noun phrase or a sentence.
- A pronoun followed by one of the three variants of the copula followed by a predicate adjective or locative.
- A pronoun followed by one of the three variants of the copula followed by a verb with -ing or *gonna*. 
The reason that the present work focuses on the use of the copula among these groups of AAVE speaker is that linguistic research has shown a major difference between many varieties of English used in the USA, including SAE and AAVE is the difference in how the copula is used (Baugh, 1983; Rickford, 1999; Wolfram, 1974).

Table 3.05: Total number of instances of the three variants by the Thunderbirds and the lames (after Labov, 1972a, p. 269)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T-birds</th>
<th></th>
<th>Lames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>full form</td>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>deletion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.06: Probability of Use of Copula Contraction and Copula Deletion 28 among the T-birds and the Lames (after Labov, 1972a, p. 269)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T-birds</th>
<th></th>
<th>Lames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>deletion</td>
<td>Contraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings listed in Table 3.05 and Table 3.06 show that the major difference between the two groups of AAVE users was in the deletion of the copula. The lames used copula deletion in fewer linguistic environments that the Thunderbirds did. The lames did not use copula deletion in

27 Sociolinguists are unanimous in agreeing that AAVE and SAE as well as other non-standard varieties of English used by non-Blacks in the USA are different linguistic varieties although these languages or varieties are similar on the surface. They arrive at this conclusion because there are linguistic features in AAVE that are absent in other varieties of English. These salient features include copula deletion. The research by William Labov, as well as that by other sociolinguistic researchers on AAVE, gave credence to the verdicts in the Ann Arbor trial (see Labov, 1982) which paved the way to the Oakland Unified School Board resolution in 1996. See Labov (1982) and Smitherman (2000) on the Ann Arbor case (aka King’s case) and Rickford (1999) and Smitherman (2000) on the Oakland School Board’s decision (aka the Ebonics controversy).

28 The probability is calculated as follows: probability of contraction equals to the (C+D)/N and for deletion D/ (C+D) where C is the total number of contraction and D the total number of deletion in the data for each group. Labov’s (1972a) justification was that contraction came historically before deletion.
two linguistic environments (NP_ PA, Loc; NP_ V+ing, gn). In those linguistic environments where both groups used copula deletion, the lames used this variant less frequently than the Thunderbirds.

As already pointed out, the use of copula deletion is an important linguistic feature that separates AAVE speakers from speakers of other varieties of English in the USA. As we have seen, its use among the lames was different from that of the Thunderbirds, even though both groups were native speakers of AAVE.

Labov (1972a) believed that the lames, although they had acquired the rule for copula deletion, had suppressed it and the lames had "brought their rule system into alignment with that of the dominant white society" (p. 269).

The reason for the difference in the language performance of the lames and the Thunderbirds was that the lames were "marginal men who [were] detached from their own society" (p. 286) and the lames were isolated from the AAVE vernacular culture.

Some lames are courageous and self-reliant individuals who go their own way with no need of group support, and some are weak or fearful types who are protected from the street culture by their mothers, their teachers, and their television set. Some lames gain safety or success through isolation, but in exchange they give up the satisfaction of a full social life and any first-hand knowledge of the vernacular culture. Other lames have gained nothing through their isolation: they are the victims of a disorganized and demoralized subsection of the community. (p. 286)

Labov (1972a) pointed out that the lames “suffered a loss of some magnitude in their isolation” (p. 287) from the rich verbal culture of the AAVE vernacular. And since the vernacular culture is “the main stream of linguistic and social evolution” (p. 287), lames could only have access to it indirectly and their grammar “may be influenced by other dialects in a number of subtle and indirect ways” (p. 288).

The study of the lames offers valuable insights into first language acquisition. This discussion has stressed the importance of environment on language learning outcome many times. Labov’s (1972a) study of the lames offers further proof that the PP Model is flawed without taking environment into consideration. The PP Model argues that environment is the same for everyone and that the language of a community is homogeneous. The study of the lames shows that it is
wrong to assume that people who live in the same locality would use the same language. Labov’s (1972a) study shows that the lames and the Thunderbirds, who lived in the same neighbourhood, used an important linguistic feature of AAVE differently. The study shows that the lames and the Thunderbirds belonged to different speech communities although they lived in the same neighbourhood. The importance of the study to SLA research is that migrants settling in a geographical area where a language is the language of the majority within the critical period is not a sufficient condition to guarantee these migrants would use the language in the same way as the other people do. Migrants of different ages and native speakers can live and work in the same geographical area, and their use of the target language can be different for social reasons. The present work will look at the notion of speech community in more detail in a later section. It will focus on the main difference between the innatist approach and the sociolinguist approach to language learning at this stage.

Labov (2001) sums up the main difference between the sociolinguists’ and innatists’ approaches to language learning as follows:

Those who stress the innate character of the acquisition process tend to focus on the activity of the child. From this perspective, the parental generation plays a passive role, providing only the minimal stimulus for the active acquisition of the child... The transmission problem also deals with the active role of the learner, but equal attention must be given to the detailed template provided by older members of the speech community, at home, on the street, and in the school. (p. 416)

The lames were isolated from the vernacular culture for many reasons, one of which was their parents’ objection to their joining the peer groups in the neighbourhood. They modelled their speech on that of their parents and family, but not on those who took an active part in the vernacular culture. This isolation of the lames was reflected in their minimal use of zero copula, as contrasted with their copula contraction profile, which is quite similar to that of other adolescents living in the same locale.

The Student Communities of a School in Detroit.

The lames and the Thunderbirds lived very close to each other. In fact, they lived in the same neighbourhood. Yet, as Labov’s (1972a) study has shown, their use of some important aspects of AAVE was different. As this discussion has already pointed out, Labov (1972a) explained that the difference was due to the lames being isolated from the AAVE vernacular culture.
The study of the use of the two diphthongs on Martha's Vineyard and the study of AAVE features in New York City show that speakers of the same L1 can live and work very close to one another and yet, because they belong to different social groups or because they identify with different social groups, their use of certain features of their L1 is different.

In the following, a series of studies by Penelope Eckert on a school in Detroit will be reviewed. Her work in Detroit is central to the present work for several reasons:

- It reinforces the points made in the previous discussion. Native speakers of the same L1 can live and work very close to each other but their use of aspects of their L1 is different. For SLA research, it shows that the critical period is not a sufficient condition for L2 speakers to use the target language in the same way as L1 speakers do.

- Penelope Eckert shows how a speech community can be identified. The notion of speech community based on language use alone has been criticised because it is seen as problematic (see Eckert, 2000; Figueroa, 1994; McMahon, 1994). A speech community cannot be solely determined by the language the people in a speech community use. The present work has pointed out, through its review of the work of Halliday (1985), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998) that language is social semiotic system. The study by Eckert (2000) is a model of how a speech community can be identified by language use as well as other non-linguistic social practices.

Eckert (2000) and Community of Practice.

The Eckert (2000) study is one of the first sociolinguistic studies that use the notion of community of practice developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). Eckert (2000) identifies two distinct communities of practice among the student population in a school in Detroit. She details the different social practices, including the use of variants of certain linguistic features, of these two communities of practice. These social practices, as Eckert (2000) shows, form the social semiotic system of the communities of practice.
Non-linguistic Practices in Belten High.

Eckert (1988) observes that social stratification in modern societies is reflected in the education institutions which

by and large focus on training of the future middle class and marginalize those headed for the blue collar work force. This marginalization is effected not only through the devaluation of vocational education in the schools but also through the schools’ investment in a corporate life-style and stigmatization of alternate styles. (p. 188)

According to Eckert (1988), throughout the USA, students “upon entering junior high, [undergo] an abrupt polarisation into two opposed social categories that grow out of elementary school networks which, in turn, are loosely related to neighborhood networks” (p. 188). This is because, as Eckert (2000) points out, secondary education incorporates “all-encompassing social and civil as well as curricular activities” (Eckert, 2000, p. 5) and as a result, “the adolescent’s relation to school is almost a defining act” (p. 5). Based on her own study of a high school in Detroit that she carried out in the 1980s, Eckert (1988) labels these two social categories of students in a high school in Detroit (which she called Belten High) as Jocks and Burnouts.29

Jocks are “an institutionally oriented community of practice” (Eckert, 2000, p. 50) They are students with middle class backgrounds and they are favourites among their teachers. They are also the public figures of the school because of their achievement in sports and academic subjects. Jocks’ are committed to engaging in a lifestyle that is expected of them by taking part in school activities and studying for college. They give up a part of their personal freedom to take part in the corporate activities organised by the school as part of the college entrance requirement. This lack of mobility means that their life is centred around the immediate geographical areas.

On the other hand, Burnouts are “a more locally and personally oriented” community of practice (Eckert, 2000, p. 50). They do not aspire to college education. They are prepared to take up blue-collar work on leaving school. They do not need the kind of training provided by the school because they are heading for blue-collar jobs for which the schools do not offer training. They believe that their schools do not provide the training they need in their job seeking after

29 The labels vary according to places and time. Jocks are also called Soc’s (for Socialites), Preppies, and Collegiates. The alternative labels for the Burnouts are Greasers, Freaks, and Hoods.
graduation. Their activities are more individually based and less related to school. Because they do not take part in extra-curricular activities after school, Burnouts have more free time in the metropolitan areas where their future jobs are likely to be found. They make friends there through friends and older siblings and they see life in the metropolitan areas as life in the 'real world'. They have increasingly closer ties with their friends in the metropolitan areas as older friends and siblings find jobs there.

Eckert (2000) spent over two years in Belten High observing and interviewing students in terms of their lifestyle and the fashions they wore and where they hung out within the school campus. The purpose was “not simply to show how different and separate jocks and Burnouts are; it is to emphasize that their linguistic styles are part of a much broader and deeply meaningful style (my emphasis)” (Eckert, 2000, p. 67). Some of the differences between Jocks and Burnouts are discussed in more detail below:

**Territories.**

Within the school campus, Jocks and Burnouts have their own territories. The former go to the cafeteria for lunch and they utilise facilities and amenities provided by the school. Eckert (2000) sees this as acts of legitimate participation in school. These acts include Jocks having their lunch in the cafeteria and making use of other facilities like lockers, bathrooms, etc. On the other hand, Burnouts hang out in the courtyard where they smoke, and have their lunch is prepared at home. Occasionally, they may buy some food from the cafeteria which they consume at the courtyard. Eckert (2000) believes that Burnouts do not use the cafeteria for the same reasons that they do not use other facilities. They reject the *in loco parentis* role of the school authority which is symbolised by these facilities. They do not use these facilities because the Jocks use them.

**Smoking.**

Attitudes towards smoking is another demarcation line that separates the two social categories. Burnouts display cigarettes on their person while Jocks wear buttons with anti-smoking messages. Burnouts offer cigarettes to their friends as an act of solidarity, and they have studied
and stylised ways of holding a cigarette and of inhaling and exhaling. Jocks, however, participate in anti-smoking committees.

**Adornment and Fashion.**

Adornment and clothing also separate the two groups. Burnouts prefer dark colours clothing. Burnout girls have dark makeup. They wear, jean jackets, sweatshirts with hood, or rock concert T-shirts. Their jackets carry the logos of local car plants and automobiles. Both boys and girls have long dark hair and the girls’ hair is usually straight. Jocks wear Izod shirts, crew-necked sweaters in light pastel colours. The girls’ make-up is light, too. On days when important sports events take place, jocks wear letter sweaters and cheer-leading uniforms.

Apart from colour preference and adornment, Eckert (2000) believes that the main difference between the two groups of students is in the jeans. The Burnouts have appropriated the bell bottom style that was popular in the 70s. Eckert (2000) believes the fashion statement the want to make is that they are materially-deprived. Burnouts want to be “associated with the ‘freaks’ of the seventies” (p. 65). Jocks, because of their relative affluence, follow the latest trends. Eckert (2000), using a four-point scale index (jeans with wide-bell score four points and those with pegged legs score one), discovered that those who hung out in the courtyard scored an average of 3.5 to 3.7 while those who use the cafeteria scored an average of 2.6.

**Academic Pursuit and Extra-curricular Activities.**

Jocks’ and Burnouts’ orientations towards local vs. institutional communities of practice are also reflected in their commitments in their academic pursuit and in their participation in sports and other extra-curricular activities. Jocks, as their label suggests, take an active part in sports organised by the school. Sporting events that involve competing against other school are the terrain where the honour of the school is defended; Burnouts antagonise Jocks’ sense of loyalty towards the school by not taking part in them. Burnouts, being urban-oriented, spend as little time in school as possible and they venture into the metropolitan areas with all the fun (e.g. partying) danger and illicit pleasure (e.g. drug use) that urban Detroit entails. Moreover, Detroit
offers Burnouts information on and connections for job opportunities and sensitises them to the adult world they will enter when they leave school.

Academic achievement and taking part in extracurricular activities are two aspects Eckert (2000) identifies as social practices that separate Jocks from Burnouts. Eckert (2000) designs two indices to quantify her informants' degree of engagement in these institutional activities. The academic index is based on two components; course selection and academic honours (Eckert, 2000, pp. 161-3). Each selection of a college preparatory course is awarded 2 points. Each formal academic honour (e.g. outstanding student award) scores 4 points. The total score is then converted to a five-level index. Level 1 is for scores of 7 or lower and Level 5 for scores higher than 15. The activity index is based on participation in school activities (1 point for each participation), leadership position (2 points each), and official recognition (2 points each) (p. 155-6). The total score is then converted to a four-level index. Level 1 is for scores of 0 (i.e. no activity) and Level 4 for scores of 9 or above.

The findings show that Jocks score higher than Burnouts on both indices. However, Eckert (2000) notices that there are gender differences.

For the academic index, the findings show that academic involvement is "an important part of social differentiation" (p. 162) but if the focus is on academic honours, there is clear gender difference. Eckert (2000) explains as follows:

The heightened gender differentiation in academic honours is clearly an indication that the girls are far more engaged in at least this aspect of the institutional enterprise than boys are. Girls tend to take more courses, and to take more advanced placement courses, than boys. If we assume that this is not a result of gender differentiation in native ability, we are led to speculate that girls are choosing to work harder at academics. While the "good girl" syndrome is one way of explaining this fact, it is also possible that this is part of a broader pattern of women's and girls' greater attention to the production of a self, and in this case, academic status is part of that production. (p. 162)

For the activity index, the findings show that boys are more engaged in athletic activities and even when girls hold "the majority of offices in the non-athletic sphere, they only hold half of the most prestigious offices - those in student government - and the presidents of both senior classes and the student council are boys (p. 158). The next step is to relate these findings to the
language performance of Burnouts and Jocks of both sexes and discover if there is any statistical correlation between them.

Linguistic Practices in Belten High.

The linguistic features in the language performance student-subjects Eckert (2000) analyses include negative concord\(^{30}\) and the vowels forming the Northern Cities Chain Shift (NCCS)\(^{31}\) involving most of the vowels in the English system.

Negative Concord.

Eckert (2000), in her choice of using negative concord as an linguistic variable, points out that negative concord is a salient sociolinguistic feature because of its long association with non-standard English grammar. Yet she is conscious of an extra constraint that might affect the findings. Labov (1972a) pointed out that historical linguistic research had shown that multiple negation was the norm in English until the 18th Century when grammarians imposed what was now the standard form on English (see also McWhorter, 2000). Thus, negative concord, as a sociolinguistic variable, is not new. Eckert (2000) points out that it is "arguably the most conscious and the stigmatized non-standard variable" (p. 119). The assumption is that her informants might have acquired the use of that variable from their parents. In other words, there are at least three social constraints on the adolescents use of negative concord: gender, family background and the social categories in school, i.e. Jocks vs. Burnouts.

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\(^{30}\) More popularly known as double negative, this linguistic feature is characterised by the negative being "attracted to indeterminates generally" (Labov 1972a p. 145), as in That ain't nothing new (p. 145).

\(^{31}\) Aitchison (1991) likens chain shifts to the game of musical chairs in which "participants [shift] into each other's place. A chain shift can be seen as a drag chain when, for example, the shifting of a phoneme causes a chain reaction of other phonemes shifting to fill the vacuum. Alternatively, a chain shift can be seen as a push chain when the shifting of one phoneme encroaches the territory of another phoneme causing the occupant to shift to avoid a merger. A well-studied chain shift is the Great English Vowel Shift (see Aitchison, 1991; McMahon, 1994; for details). As for the NCCS, according to Labov (1994), Ralph Fasold was the first sociolinguist to write on the formation of NCCS (in an unpublished paper) in the Detroit area. The NCCS is "the most complex chain shift yet recorded within one subsystem, involving six members of the English vowel system in one continuous and connected pattern" (p. 178).
To solve the conundrum, Eckert (2000) measures the parents’ income, occupation, housing, and education and discovers it was from their mothers, as primary caretakers, that her informants were most likely to have acquired the use of negative concord. Her education index assigns parents who attended grade school or less to Grade 1 and those who attended some graduate school to Grade 6.

The findings show that the use of negative concord among Jocks and Burnouts correlates with “any aspect of parents’ socioeconomic status, particularly mother’s education” (p. 113) However, “when boys and girls are examined separately, mother’s education retains its effects for girls, but is demoted to secondary constraint. Among the boys, while mother’s education emerges as the primary constraint, this status is due to differences among educational levels, and the hierarchical relations are interrupted. Thus social categories takes over in both cases” (p. 113-4).

The Northern Cities Chain Shift.

Five vocal variables were used in the investigation because they form part of the Northern Cities Chain Shift (NCCS) (see Labov, 1994). The NCCS was set in motion by the raising of /æh/, followed by the fronting of /o/, and then by the lowering and fronting of /əh/. These three variables form the old variables group of the NCCS. The backing of /ʌ/ and that of /e/ form the ‘new’ variable groups. Two other vocal variables, raising and monophthongisation of /æ/ were also analysed.

Eckert (2000) categorises each token of the NCCS variables she analyses into several levels and collapses these levels into two categories. Advanced variants, as opposed to non-advanced ones, are “variants for each variable that are outside of the usual range for that variable and that show significant social correlation” (p. 88).

Eckert (2000) discovers that there are linguistic constraints on the use of NCCS variables. Table 3.07 lists the linguistic constraints on various variables.
Table 3.07  Some Linguistic Constraints on the Use of the NCCS Variables
(From Eckert, 2000, pp. 89-101).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables with advanced variants in [ ]</th>
<th>Linguistic environment acting as constraints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/æh/ raising [æ], [e]</td>
<td>&gt; raising favoured when followed by /k/ than by /t/ or /p/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; raising most favoured when followed by nasal, then by voiced obstruents, then by voiced obstruents, lastly by /l/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; emphatic stress disfavours extreme variants (e.g. (e))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/o/ fronting [æ]</td>
<td>&gt; fronting favoured when preceded by /k/ than by /t/ or /p/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; preceding /l/ inhibits fronting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; fronting favoured by a following nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; emphatic stress disfavours fronting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/o/ fronting [a]</td>
<td>&gt; fronting favoured when preceded by /k/ than by /t/ or /p/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; fronting favoured when at word-final position, particularly when followed by a pause or by a vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; preceding /l/ does not inhibit fronting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; fronting favoured by a following nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; emphatic stress disfavours fronting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/ backing [u]</td>
<td>&gt; backing favoured by both preceding and following labials, by preceding /l/, and by following /l/ and /l/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/ fronting [e]</td>
<td>&gt; fronting favoured in secondary stress position in polysyllables and preceding palatalised /l/ in /l/ cluster as in ‘truck’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; fronting disfavoured in monosyllables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/ backing [œ]</td>
<td>&gt; backing favoured by following /l/ and bilabials, by preceding /l/, preceding /w/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/ lowering [æ]</td>
<td>&gt; backing is disfavoured by monosyllables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; lowering most favoured by following velar/palatal, then by following apicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; lowering favoured by emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; no lowering after /w/, before bilabials or /l/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.08  Percentage of the Advanced Variants of 5 Vocalic Variables by Group and Gender (after Eckert, 1989, p. 261)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jocks (male)</th>
<th>Burnouts (male)</th>
<th>Jocks (female)</th>
<th>Burnouts (female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aeh</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oh</td>
<td>07.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.08 indicates that variation in language use is reflected by multiple group membership. Jocks and Burnouts share membership as members of the adolescent student group. Both Jocks and Burnouts use non-standard variables. On the other hand, they also form two different social groups. Jocks favour the old variables in their speech production and Burnouts favour the new variables. This is perhaps a reflection that the Jocks are more conservative as a social group that the Burnouts are.
Most noticeable in Table 3.08 is the difference in speech production of the 5 variables between male and female students. Trudgill (1974) believed that female speakers lead in the use of prestige variables than male speakers. And as Eckert's (2000) study has shown, female Jocks and female Burnouts use prestige variables of their social groups more frequently than their male counterparts. Yet Eckert (2000) argues at the same time that such an interpretation "does not tell the whole story" (p. 121). She points out that:

the primary importance of gender lies not in differences between male and female across the board, but in differences within gender groups. In developing patterns of behavior, in assessing their own place in the world, and in evaluating their progress, people orient above all to their own gender group. . . Furthermore, a general constraint against competition across gender lines leads people to compete, hence evaluate themselves, within their gender group. A teenage jock girl does not measure her social success in relation to male jocks; a burnout girl does not measure her coolness in relation to male Burnouts; a male jock does not measure his athletic ability in relation to female jocks. (p. 123)

Table 3.09 summarises Jocks and Burnouts' use of the extreme variants with 4 as the highest frequency and 1 as the lowest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(*') front</th>
<th>(e) lower</th>
<th>(aeh)</th>
<th>(o)</th>
<th>(oh)</th>
<th>(λ) back</th>
<th>(ay) raise</th>
<th>(e) back</th>
<th>neg</th>
<th>(ay) mono</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jock</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burnout</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burnout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jock</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from Tables 3.09 show several things. First, girls lead boys in the use of the old NCCS variables (/aeh/, /o/, and /oh/). As for the new variables, Burnouts (both sexes) lead Jocks (both sexes) on two NCCS variants (/λ/ backing, and /e/ backing) and on (ay) raising and negative concord. Furthermore, there are three NCCS variants for which Burnout girls lead Jock girls and Burnout boys lead Jock boys. They are (oh), (λ) backing, and (e) backing. Conversely, (e)

32 Correlation is established by Varbrul analysis.
lowering and /ʌ/ fronting is the only NCCS variant where Jock girls lead Burnout girls and Jock boys lead Burnout boys. Table 3.10 summarises Eckert’s findings with gender and social categories as non-linguistic constraints.

Table 3.10 Combinations of gender and category constraints in Belten High

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jocks &gt; Burnouts</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Burnouts &gt; Jocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female&gt; male</td>
<td>(e) lowering</td>
<td>(aeh)</td>
<td>(o), (oh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>(') fronting</td>
<td></td>
<td>(e) backing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ay) raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(') backing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male&gt; female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ay) monophthongisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>negation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eckert (2000) argues that (e) lowering is an anti-vernacular variant. She points out that, of the variants, (e) lowering is the only one that is constrained by emphasis. Furthermore, lowering, instead of backing of that variant, indicates “an intentional reversal of the change in progress” (p. 97). She believes that negative concord is the vernacular variable because, apart from the evidence presented in the data, it is stigmatised by standard English grammar. She also believes the fact that Jock boys lead Jock girls and Burnout boys lead Burnout girls in the use of this variable shows girls are more conservative than boys in their use of grammatical variables (p. 121).

Table 3.10 also shows which variables most differentiate girls versus boys in each group. For Jocks, these are (oh) and (ay). For Burnouts, they are (aeh) and (o). It is also noteworthy that in general Jock girls and boys differ less than Burnout girls and boys. Thus not only each gender but also each group selects different variables to symbolise gender differences.

To conclude, Eckert (1988; 1989; 2000) establishes a significant difference between the use of the variables by Jocks and by Burnouts. Burnouts, seeking direct connection and immediate integration into the metropolitan community and orientated towards its public facilities and those functioning in it, embrace changes that are identified with that community. Their identity, based on membership in networks that extend into the urban area, provides them with greater exposure to, and motivation to adopt urban vernacular features. Jocks, seeking to transcend the community and the urban area through participation in networks and institutions that are abstracted from the local context, are removed from some of the motivations to adopt urban changes in progress. The
hostility between these two polarised groups, furthermore, lends motivation for mutual differentiation.

3.05 Conclusion.

Language Variation.

One of the purposes of Chapter 3 is to explore some of the flaws in the PP model pointed out in Chapter 2. The review of the literature on historical linguistics shows that language is not homogeneous or static. The use of linguistic features like *pas* as a negative marker by French speakers, which began about 700 years ago, is still in the process of change. The research by Ashby (1981) also shows that parameter shift or setting is not a matter of binary choices. If parameter setting were a matter of binary choices, Ashby's (1981) informants would use the presence and absence of *pas* as two variants categorically. Instead, his research shows that while some of his informants use delete *pas* categorically, the use of *pas* deletion, for other informants, is sensitive to linguistic environment. Traugott (1972) and other researchers have shown that the change in the English case-marking system which began in Anglo-Saxon time (see Leith, 1983, p. 98) has not been completed. Furthermore their research shows how the loss of case-marking has lead to the SVO word order and the use of prepositions. The points about language being heterogeneous and dynamic, and parameter setting not being binary choices are reiterated in the review of sociolinguistic research by Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a; 1972b). Furthermore, their research show that language use cannot be understood without taking language users into consideration.

Copula deletion is a salient linguistic feature in AAVE. Labov (1972a) showed that the Thunderbirds used copula deletion as a variant in 6 linguistic environments. He also showed that there was variation in the frequency this variant was used. Only in one linguistic environment did the Thunderbirds use copula deletion categorically (preceded by a full noun phrase and followed by a verb with *-ing or gonna*). The lames used copula deletion in 4 linguistic environments and none in 2 (preceded by a full noun phrase and followed by a predicate adjective or locative; preceded by a full noun phrase and followed by a verb with *-ing or gonna*). Labov (1972a)
pointed out that the difference in the use of salient AAVE features of the two groups including copula deletion was the linguistic consequence of the lames being on the periphery of the vernacular culture of adolescent AAVE speakers.

The centralised variants of the two diphthongs [aw] and [ay] were salient linguistic features among the fishermen group on Martha's Vineyard. Labov (1972b) showed how other inhabitants on the island, because of their identifying with the personal attributes of the fishermen and because of their shared resentment of the economic encroachment of mainland USA. However, none of the informants in Labov's (1972b) study used the centralised variants of the two diphthongs categorically. Furthermore, the study showed there was variation in the use of the variants among the three ethnic groups living on Martha's Vineyard.

Eckert (2000) identifies two communities among the school population in Belten High by, among other social practices, their career expectation and their social practices including their participation in school organised extra curricular activities. Jocks expect to go on to colleges and they take part in school organised extra curricular activities like sports. The Burnouts expect to get a job after high school and they take part in few school organised extra curricular activities. Eckert (2000) shows variation in use of the linguistic features collectively known as the Northern Cities Chain Shift and other linguistic features like negative concord among the two communities.

Central to the present work is Eckert's (2000) finding that the variation in the use of the linguistic features is linked to multiple group membership. As members of the adolescent student group, both Jocks and Burnouts use non-standard variables. On the other hand, as members of the two student communities and different gender groups, Jocks and Burnouts favour different non-standard variables (Table 3.10). Jock girls leads the others in the use of (e) lowering. Burnout girls leads the others in the use of (aeh), (oh), (ay) raising, and (\') backing. Jock boys leads the others in the use of (ay) monophthongization. Burnout boys leads the others in the use of negative concord.

The research by Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a; 1972b) also shows that a language learning model like the PP model is flawed if it does not show how language change is transmitted because it ignores the effects of environment on language.
Chapter 3 has reviewed the criticism put forward by linguistic researchers like McMahon (1994) against the Transparency Principle. The main argument against the Transparency Principle is that language change does not come about abruptly. Historical linguistic research on language change indicates that aspects of the internalised grammar of one generation must be different from those of the next.

Chapter 3 has reviewed the argument that language learning cannot be understood without taking societal components into consideration. This chapter has reviewed the argument that language change is not merely a change in a set of grammatical rules (Hopper and Traugott, 1993) because it is not languages but speakers who innovate (Milroy, 1993). The research by Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a; 1972b) explains how different linguistic variables are favoured by different groups. The research by Eckert (2000) shows that different communities can be identified by their linguistic practices, by their non-linguistic social attributes like age, gender, and group membership, and by their social practices.

Chapter 3 has also reviewed marginality that prohibits people from joining another social group or community and the linguistic consequences. Eckert (2000) shows that the Jocks and Burnouts belong to two separate social groups because of their difference in career expectation and she shows how this difference impacts on their social practices and on their language use. As adolescent high school students, Jocks and Burnouts use the NCCS variables and other non-standard linguistic variables. However, the use of these linguistic variables by these 2 social groups and across gender are different. Mike, the informant in the study by Cutler (1999), has tried to move toward full participation in the hip-hop community begins with identifying hip-hop social practices and linguistic practices and then engaging them. Cutler (1999) describes how Mike is rejected by the hip-hop peer groups he tries to join. It is the rejection that leads to Mike’s dis-engaging from hip-hop social practices. Cutler (1999) identifies ethnicity, pressure from home and peers as marginality that stops Mike from any further attempt to participate in the hip-hop community. Cutler (1999) concludes that Mike’s use of features of AAVE phonology and lexicon after his dis-engagement from hip-hop culture was the consequence of his “participation in hip-hop as the dominant consumption-based youth culture” (p. 435).

The sociolinguistic research reviewed in this chapter points towards the existence of sociolinguistic competence among language users. Eckert (2000) points out that the development of sociolinguistic competence is about the development of the recognition and the production of socially meaningful patterns of variation (p. 9). It is a process that begins at an early age. Furthermore, she argues that the development of sociolinguistic competence is not “a simple matter of exposure, but that the actual source of the exposure matters” (p. 9). For example, a major influence on children’s language use is their peers. The review of the sociolinguistic research by Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a; 1972b) in this chapter confirms Eckert’s (2000) point about sociolinguistic competence being able to recognise the actual source of exposure. Eckert (1999) points out that sociolinguistic competence is an ability for life. Therefore, sociolinguistic competence that speakers have developed will affect their language use throughout their life. They will be able to identify language features with social meaning. Eckert (1999) believes:

Progress through the life course involves changes in family status, gender relations, employment status, social networks, place of residence, community participation, institutional participation, engagement in the marketplace - all of which have implications for patterns of variation. It is unlikely that speakers pass through all the identity changes of a lifetime without making any changes in their use of sociolinguistic variables. (p. 152)

The research by Cutler (1999), Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a) is important to the investigation of the linguistic and cultural adaptation of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link generation informants. The informants might use the same sociolinguistic indicators as adolescents in other ethnic groups would to mark themselves as part of the wider adolescent community in London. However, the research by Cutler (1999), Eckert (2000) and Labov (1972a) also indicates the possibility that the 12 informants might also use the same sociolinguistic indicators differently from adolescents of other ethnic groups (e.g. in terms of frequency and in terms of different linguistic environments) to mark themselves as members of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. Unfortunately, a comprehensive investigation of this possibility is beyond the capability of the present work for mainly two reasons.

33 The study by Kerswill and Williams (1994) on the use of linguistic features like /t/ in word-medial position (e.g. /t/ in butter) among children between age 4 and age 12 in Milton Keynes confirms Eckert’s (2000) points that the development of sociolinguistic competence starts at an early age and that peer affects on language use.
First, although the sociolinguistic indicators were carefully selected based on a review of previous sociolinguistic research on contemporary British English, there is little sociolinguistic research on contemporary British English as used by different adolescent ethnic groups. The present work did not have English speech data of other adolescent ethnic groups in London from which it could determine whether difference in use of the same sociolinguistic indicators exists.

Second, the magnitude of linguistic diversity in London and in Britain makes such an investigation impossible. For example, Rosen and Burgess (1980) identified, other than English, 55 languages used as L1 by 750 pupils in 28 schools in London. The Linguistic Minorities Projects (1985) maintains that there are more than 130 languages spoken as L1 by school children in Inner London.

Investigating the social practices of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants, as Eckert (2000) has done with the social practices of the Jocks and Burnouts in Belten High, is a means to exploring whether the 12 informants use sociolinguistic indicators to mark the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London.

In Section 3.04, the present work has pointed out the importance of investigating the salient social practices and linguistic practices of a community and the social meaning of these practices. In Chapter 4, the present work will identify marginality that maintains a migrant community like the Hong Kong Cantonese as one which keeps its social practices from becoming more British. It will further identity salient social practices of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. It will also investigate the extent these practices have changed across two generations by investigating the social practices of Hong Kong Cantonese adults and adolescents in London. The Hong Kong Cantonese informants of whom the investigation of their social practices are chosen are 8 adults and 4 non-link generation informants. Their social profiles have been given in Chapter 1 and will not be repeated here.

Chapter 4 will show the existence of marginality throughout 100 years in the history of the settlement of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. It will identify salient social practices of Hong Kong Cantonese adults in London, the extent these social practices are different from those in Hong Kong, and their use of English as means to accessing the difference
in social practices and the use of English between them and the link generation. It will also look at the social practices and the use of English among the 4 non-link generation Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants as comparing with those of the 12 link generation informants.
Chapter Four  The Hong Kong Cantonese Community in London.

Chapter 4 investigates the linguistic and cultural assimilation patterns of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. More specifically, it investigates factors that affect the language and ethnicity profile of the community. Section 4.01 focuses on the Hong Kong Cantonese community from its first settlement in London in the late Nineteenth Century to the end of W.W.II. The aim is to show how marginality helped keep the migrant community isolated. Section 4.01 also offers an insight into how the Hong Kong Cantonese in this period tried to construct meaning in the hostile world they lived in. The source of information for this section came from newspaper cuttings.\(^{34}\) In Section 4.02, the investigation of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London from the end of W.W.II to the present day in terms of marginality, their use of English, and their social practices is reported. Information in this section came from previous research and from interviews and participant observation of eight adult informants. It will be argued that culture, among other factors, play an important part in the degree of linguistic and cultural assimilation of the Hong Kong Cantonese community. In Section 4.03 and Section 4.04, the investigation of the linguistic and social practices of four Hong Kong non-link generation Cantonese adolescents living in London is reported. The findings of this investigation will be compared with those of the eight adult informants.

The investigation of the social practices of the non-link generation Cantonese adolescents and the 8 adult informants reveals these informants did not go out with non-Cantonese friends. Long working hours and a lower level of proficiency level of English might be attributable to the adult informants’ not having any non-Cantonese friends but these factors did not apply to the non-link generation adolescent informants. The 4 non-link generation adolescent informants went to school where they met students from other ethnic groups every school day. They were more proficient in English than the adult informants. The present work suggests cultural differences between Hong Kong Cantonese and other ethnic groups play an important role in the two informant groups’ not having friends they went out with. This suggestion will be confirmed by the statements made by some of the 12 link generation adolescent informants.

\(^{34}\) The accounts of the Chinese settlement in London and in Britain during this period did not always differentiate different groups of Chinese. For example, it might not always be possible to tell whether the Chinese mentioned in a particular newspaper article during this period were Cantonese from Hong Kong or
4.01 British Chinese Community in London 1900-45.

The first group of Chinese people that arrived in Britain were students who were sent by the Manchu Government as part of the Self-strengthening Movement, a short-lived reform programme instigated in the wake of the two Opium Wars that took place in the Nineteenth Century (see Hsieh, 1970). These students came to Britain to study ship-building and railway building or to join the naval academies. On completion of their education in Britain, they would return to China and join the Civil Services. Since few of them settled in Britain at all, these Chinese students would not be discussed any further in the present work.

The earliest records of Chinese settlement in Britain were those of Chinese sailors who 'jumped ship' and settled around Tower Hamlet in London, Liverpool, and Cardiff in the late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century. They came to Britain because they were employed on a contractual basis by British shipping lines in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Their arrival in a British port determined their contracts. And as we shall see in the following paragraph, they were forced to stay in Britain because they had difficulty in boarding any vessel at all when they arrived in Britain.

There were several causes of the hostility of the British public against the Chinese. First, China and Britain had been at war twice in the last 60 years of the Nineteenth Century and war between the 2 countries broke out again in 1901. Second, Britain at the beginning of the Twentieth Century was a time of economic strife. The Chinese sailors arrived in a Britain of labour unrest. Britain was undergoing an economic depression that affected the working classes more than the rest of the population. Employers in Britain cut labour costs in order to remain competitive in the face of increasing foreign competition in industrial production and shipping. Real wages for the British workers, who lived in a world where "ninepence a week meant the difference between acute and normal discomfort" (Dangerfield 1970, p. 196), fell because of falling wages and also because of inflation. The Chinese who settled in London and elsewhere in the UK in this period were seen as a means to keeping wages down and to weakening the bargaining power of trade unions.

Chinese from other parts of China. However, the present work differentiates the 2 groups wherever possible.
Once the Chinese sailors arrived in Britain, their only way out was through another seafaring contract. However, it was difficult for them to acquire one because they were seen, with some justification, as blacklegs and an alternative source of labour which dragged down wages. The minimum wage of a British sailor was between seven pounds and ten shillings to eight pounds while a Chinese sailor would get between three pounds and ten shillings to five pounds. A journalist of the *East London Observer* (April 10th, 1909) noted, hiring Chinese sailors cut down costs in other ways as well. They did not require as much provision as British sailors did and if accidents occurred, it was less likely for a Chinese sailor to claim for compensations. Resentment against Chinese sailors in East London often turned into violence. For example, in London in 1908, a group of Chinese sailors who were about to board a ship were surrounded by a crowd of about 1000 and “despite the vigilance of the police, a number of blows were struck and several of the Chinamen tested the quality of British muscle” (*East End News*, 12th May, 1908).

In 1909, in response to political pressure, the Board of Trade, headed by Winston Churchill, introduced a language test for all foreign sailors to be hired in Britain. Those who passed the test were given a certificate which included a photograph, fingerprints, and a detail description of the holder. However, Chinese sailors who could prove that they had lived in Hong Kong were exempted from the test. This measure failed to appease the British public.

Hostility towards the Chinese was not restricted to the Chinese who were seeking another seafaring contract. It was also directed towards those who decided to settle in Britain. For example, a resident in East London wrote to the *East End News* and complained about the Chinese population because they smelt, and because they were not properly dressed, and because they associated with white women (June 19th, 1908). Another correspondent complained about some Chinese who dirtied the pavement because they were cracking nuts on their doorsteps (*East End News*, 8th September, 1908). In 1919, when two Chinese moved into Pennyfields in East London with their English wives, their accommodation was ransacked and their furniture was thrown into the streets (*Daily Telegraph*, 17th June, 1919).

Those Chinese who had decided to settle in Britain made their living by starting their own businesses which included boarding houses, laundries, and restaurants to cater for the needs of

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35 China was at war with Britain in 1841 and 1871, and again in 1901.
the Chinese communities in Britain. When war broke out in 1914, resentment against the Chinese did not cease. In June 1916, the Seamen’s and Firemen’s Union presented a report of their own investigation on Chinese sailors to the Admiralty. The report alleged that the Chinese sailors on British vessels were German spies giving away vital shipping information to the enemies. The British press duly reported this news and resulted in an anti-Chinese riot in London (East End News, 27th June, 1916). There was no evidence that any ad hoc action was taken by the Sea Lords.

There was widespread rumour that the Chinese in East London were engaged in illicit activities ranging from operating gambling and opium dens to corrupting the morality of white women. For example, when the Star reported the death of Billie Carleton, a West End actress, killed by an opium overdose, the newspaper believed that there was a Chinese organisation led by a kingpin who “recruited the prettiest girls he could find” and used “sex and opium to entice the wealthy” (The Star, 9th January, 1919). This report was the first of many that pointed towards the existence of a Chinese supra-national criminal organisation run by a Chinese man whose headquarters was in East London. The Evening News and the Daily Express picked up the story and ran a series of articles in October 1920 that alleged to the existence of this organisation (Evening News, October 4th, 5th, 7th, 14th, 1920). Headlines such as “The Lupe of the Yellow Man” (4th October), “White Girls hypnotised by Yellow Men” (7th October), “Corruption of White Girls” (14th October), and “Yellow Peril in London” (Daily Express, 20th October), attested to the hostility towards to the Chinese community by some British press.

There were other grievances against the Chinese in Britain. For example, apart from the complaints that the Chinese communities bred dogs for food (Evening Mail, 5th October 1920), it was alleged that the Chinese took unfair advantage of the social welfare system. The Daily Mail reported that there was one Chinese who

could easily work, but he prefers the dole. He is a great opium smoker and he thinks it wonderful that he should do nothing and that the British government should pay for his opium smoking. (14th March, 1924)

Some British press was more sympathetic towards the Chinese community. For example, a journalist from the Daily Graphic interviewed some English women with Chinese husbands on
the physical intimidation they were threatened with and on the hostility towards their children (16th July, 1920).

The solution suggested by the British press to the "Chinese problem" was that there should be forced repatriation (see for example, Evening News, 7th October 1920). However, it was evident that British magistrates had taken up this option before the end of W.W.I. For example, the sentence given to a Chinese for illegal gambling in 1914 was a five pound fine (East London Advertiser, July 4th 1914) while the sentence for the same offence in 1917 for another Chinese was a twenty pound fine and deportation (East End News, 12th October, 1917). In 1923, the fine was raised to two hundred pounds plus deportation (East End News, 15th May, 1923). In 1930, a Chinese man found guilty of operating an illegal gambling den was fined 150 pounds with deportation while his English wife was given a fifteen pound fine (East End News, February 25th 1930). The success of deportation as a policy to control the Chinese population was attested by the testimony of PC Coombe who told the magistrate at a trial that there were fewer than 100 Chinese in Shoreditch (East End News, 20th February, 1934). It was during the 1930s that the Chinese began to move their businesses to the West End. And those who remained in the East End saw their businesses destroyed by German bombing in W.W.II.

An inevitable conclusion that can be drawn on the Chinese community in London during this period is that it was a community in its own right. There was little assimilation into the British culture because they were not accepted. They faced hostility from the British public and the British press. As the press reports cited in this section have shown, they also faced physical intimidation. In East London at least, we saw how the Chinese community was established, its struggle, and its demise within a span of forty-odd years.

It was the Cantonese from Hong Kong who tried to save the Chinese community in London. Some Cantonese students from Hong Kong helped the Chinese in East London to maintain their Chinese identity. In the 1928, the Chung Hwa School, the first Chinese language school in Britain was set up in Pennyfields, East London, by a group of Hong Kong students studying in Britain. One of the founders was Irene Ho, a student from Hong Kong and the daughter of a famous philanthropist who built several schools and hospitals in Hong Kong. The school, staffed by volunteer students from Hong Kong, aimed at teaching British Chinese children about the Chinese culture. The children were taught to read and write in Chinese. They were also given
lessons on Chinese history and aspects of the Chinese culture. A club was established at the school in the early 1930s. Cultural activities like celebration of Chinese festivals were organised for the children and the aged. The club also acted as a licensed employment agency for the Chinese community in London. The Chung Hwa School and Club was funded from donations through which a building was bought. The original building of the Chung Hwa School and Club was destroyed during the Blitz. After the war, a new building was constructed with donations on the original site and the Chung Hwa School and Club continued to operate until 1964 when the lease ended by compulsory purchase by the London County Council (East London Advertisers, April 6th 1964).

In sum, the Chinese community in London in this period was demonised by the British press and had to endure hostility and acts of violence from the British public. The preceding paragraphs have shown how the community was marginalised and then destroyed by this hostility and war. The preceding paragraphs have also shown how a group of Cantonese students from Hong Kong had helped the community maintain its Chineseness by offering British Chinese children education in Chinese language and Chinese culture.

It would be interesting to speculate on how this period of Chinese settlement in Britain affected the behaviours of the British Chinese in the contemporary period. For example, when we try to account for the dispersal of the Chinese population in Modern Britain, we may have difficulty in deciding whether it is due to a survival instinct developed from the pain of experience during this period transmitted by words of mouth or whether it is due to economic necessity.

4.02 British Chinese Community in London after W.W.II.

The next phrase of Chinese immigration in Britain began in the 1950s. The Chinese immigrants in this period were different from those in the previous period in several ways. First, most of the Chinese migrants in this period were Cantonese with Hong Kong citizenship. Second, they came to Britain voluntarily while many of their predecessors were stranded in Britain. Third, most of them were employed in Chinese catering and as far as employment is concerned, they offered
less of a threat to the British workforce than their predecessors. Fourth, the Hong Kong Cantonese did not concentrate in one area as their predecessors had in, for example, East London. The following discussion will show that it was partly the British legislation on immigration that resulted in creating a Hong Kong Cantonese community who mainly worked in the catering industry.

**Employment Patterns.**

Changes in the circumstances in Britain and Hong Kong at the time and various pieces of legislation to control immigration that came into existence resulted in associating Chinese immigrants with catering. Britain was still committed to the Far East in the 1950s and early 1960s and the ex-servicemen returning to Britain after their tours-of-duty in Pakistan, India, Singapore, Malaya, Hong Kong, Korea, and Vietnam created a basic clientele for Asian culinary services and helped spread their popularity. The end of rationing in the 1950s meant that food became cheaper and more easily available. Immigrants were welcome, in theory at least, to Britain. The few surviving Chinese restaurants in East London had moved to Gerrard Street in Soho. Further expansion in the business meant extra staff and Hong Kong was the logical place for recruitment.

This recruitment process for extra staff was based on family ties. Basically, it meant that the restaurant owners told their families in Hong Kong to spread by word of mouth about the positions vacant and the terms of employment. Chinese restaurant owners had to rely on family connection for recruitment as it was not economically viable for them to advertise the positions vacant in the Hong Kong press and go to Hong Kong to interview the candidates. The process of recruiting Hong Kong Chinese migrants to work in catering in Britain coincided with the industrialisation process that took place in Hong Kong at the time. Agriculture in the New Territories was made superfluous because it could not keep up with the demand of a fast expanding population to any significant degree. Many farmers in the New Territories were displaced by the process and immigration was an alternative way to support the family. Food had to be imported and farming in the New Territories was phrased out gradually. Watson (1977) believed that catering suited the Hong Kong Chinese migrants because it required a minimum of competence in English and little skill, a point that I will return later. The Cantonese migrants
from Hong Kong who went to Britain in this period were male, single, and mainly between 15 and 24 (Watson 1977).

Migration to Britain from Hong Kong became increasingly tightened with Westminster’s re-defining the ‘right of abode in Britain’ in the form of parliamentary acts. The Commonwealth Act 1962 introduced a Work Voucher System which restricted entry to Britain for skilled workers who arrived with a specific job waiting for them. The 1962 Act meant that most of the Chinese migrants from Hong Kong until 1991 were irrevocably linked to the catering business.36 Strictly from the migrant workers’ point of view, the Work Voucher System tied each migrant worker to a particular restaurant for a number of years.37 In other words, British law required the workers who entered Britain through this system to return to their place of origin first and re-apply before they could change their place of work. It was not surprising that Hong Kong Cantonese migrants were reluctant to do this. And if one takes into consideration the vulnerable position the migrant workers put themselves in and the financial cost incurred for the journey, it was equally understandable that a lot of ‘trust’ was required and families and clans were the only social network where this type of staff recruitment could take place.

By 1965, non-skilled workers were not eligible to apply through the Work Voucher System. The enactment of the Commonwealth Act 1968 and Immigration Act 1971 replaced the Work Voucher System with work permits. The 1968 Act also introduced the sponsorship system. Children of the male migrant workers could not enter Britain without their mothers and the applicants in Britain had to satisfy the Home Office that they could provide independent accommodation for the family. This meant that the applicants had to be house-owners or holders of a lease. Opening a take-away with living quarters was the way to kill several birds with one

36 The number of migrant workers allowed into Britain under the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 did not satisfy the demand of the restaurateurs for extra staff. The way around it was to recruit those in the New Territories whose nationality was Chinese. In theory, all who were born in the colony were British but everyone had a choice of nationality at the age of 18 when they were required by law to apply for an adult identity card and not every person would apply for British nationality. Those who did not would travel on a Certificate of Identity as opposed to a Hong Kong British passport and their application to enter Britain did not come under the quota allocated by the various Commonwealth Immigration Acts. Another way to recruit extra staff was to employ students. These students were either bona fide students who needed an alternative source of income or those who, like one of my informants, were born and lived in the New Territories, arrived in Britain on a student visa and worked in a Chinese restaurant in London for ten years before they were qualified to apply for naturalisation. They had to give up a substantial part of their income as tuition fees so that the student visas could be extended.

37 The number of years that one has to work for a particular employer before the migrant worker can apply for the right to abode in Britain changes from time to time. The current limit is four years.
It satisfied the Home Office’s stipulations on accommodation. It meant that the applicants could start their own business at a cost only a bit higher than buying or renting accommodation strictly for residential purposes. In addition, owning the property makes more business sense than renting it because there is less complication when it is time to sell the business. Potential buyers do not have to go through another negotiation if the owners of the business and the property are the same persons.

Since there are only so many Chinese takeaways and restaurants that an area can support, the Cantonese population is dispersed all over Britain and there is hardly an area in Britain that one would not associate Chinese immigrants with.  

Table 4.01 and 4.02 show the distribution of Chinese immigrants in England and London in the 1980s. London was the most popular city among these immigrants because of the number of Chinese restaurants there and because it was the only city that was linked to Hong Kong by direct flight. Table 4.02 shows how evenly distributed the Chinese immigrants were in ten boroughs of London. It was not surprising, bearing in mind the concentration of Chinese restaurants and shops in Soho, that the City of Westminster topped the league.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population (000s)</th>
<th>Chinese (%)</th>
<th>Other Asians (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater London</td>
<td>6679.7</td>
<td>56.6 (0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>2499.4</td>
<td>8.3 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merseyside</td>
<td>1403.6</td>
<td>5.6 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyne and Wear</td>
<td>1095.2</td>
<td>4.8 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of ethnic Chinese in London in percentage of local population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38 There are areas in major British cities including Birmingham, Liverpool, London and Manchester known as 'Chinatown'. But these areas are where the Chinese commercial premises concentrate. Take the Chinatown in Soho for example. It is an area enclosed by Shaftsbury Avenue in the north, Leicester Square in the south, Charing Cross Road in the east, and Wardour Street in the west. It would take no more than ten minutes to circumnavigate the perimeter on foot. Yet, at the last count (circa 1999) there are over 40 Chinese restaurants, two Chinese hair-stylist shops, three Chinese supermarkets, three travel agencies that specialise in flights to Hong Kong and China, four shops that sell newspaper, magazines, CDs, and books from Hong Kong, and five groceries that sell Chinese vegetables grown in Britain.
Chinese Adult Migrants and Their Children.

Chan (1986) argues that a possible area of conflict between the adult Chinese migrants and their children that he identifies is that the next generations may not be willing to take over or work in the catering business. The eight Hong Kong Chinese restaurant and takeaway owners interviewed in London agreed that their children did not want to work in catering but there was little evidence to support Chan’s (1986) claim that the unwillingness of the children to work in catering is a source of conflict between the two generations. On the contrary, the researcher has come across Hong Kong Cantonese families in which the children were encouraged to seek non-catering employment. JO was the daughter of a Chinese restaurant owner and she wanted to study law at university. In her words:

JO [My father] approves because he is a restaurateur and he tells me that being a restaurateur isn't that great, you know. It's hard work all the time. It's all naturally getting down and doing stuff but rather if you're being a solicitor, it's more like using your brain writing, not like hard work labour.

Perhaps the discrepancies between the findings here and Chan’s (1986) can be reduced if another factor is taken into consideration – how successful the catering business is. The parents may not be sure as to whether they are entitled to financial support from the state. Furthermore, there is a matter of face. As Chan (1986) points out, the Chinese consider the family as a basic economic unit. Chinese parents are proud to accept financial help from their children. It means that they have successfully brought up their children ‘correctly’. Conversely, their children ‘abandoning’ them to the mercy of the state means that they have failed. Most of all, an unsuccessful business may mean they might not be able to sell their business at an amount that may see them through their old age. These parents would want their children to stay in the catering business so that the children can be relied to continue their family business and provide for them.

Since it takes at least two people to run a takeaway - one in the kitchen and another at the counter - for a husband-and-wife team that can ill afford to hire extra staff so that one of them is free to look after the children, the children may have to remain in the shop until it is closed. They play and have their evening meals there. They study and do their homework there. And they occasionally help out there, too. This may give the impression that Chinese takeaway owners are
not adverse to using child-labour. Chan (1986) puts forward this view. He believes there are two reasons. First, it is because, for the Chinese,

the family is looked upon as a basic economic unit, a whole unit on its own. Members of the family are required to improve its prosperity collectively. Contribution to the well-being of the family is regarded as a duty for the individual members, especially for the younger members. ... Working for the family business is rather a duty and not a job. (p. 10)

One of Chan’s (1986) informants told him that two of her sons were “helping with [her] sister-in-law’s business every day when they were off school till about 12 p.m. They enjoyed it very much. Their aunt gave them 20 pounds each a week to buy things to eat” (p.10).39

The second reason, according to Chan (1986) is that “this has practical advantages too, such as the saving on the overhead expenses e.g., national insurance etc. if the work is regarded as a voluntary contribution” (p. 10). Valid as these reasons might be, keeping the children in the shop is one way to resolve the conflict between the long working hours40 and the need to feed and look after the children.41

A point that Chan (1986) might have missed is that adolescents in Britain are allowed by law and by their family to do part-time work. Many adolescents of different ethnic origins seek additional income from working part-time at fast-food shops like McDonald’s and Burger King and from doing newspaper round. Some of them take over from their parents for a few hours a day in running their corner shops. There is nothing extraordinary about Cantonese adolescents working at their parents’ takeaways. It is not a social practice that is isolated to the Hong Kong Cantonese community.

39 “To buy things to eat” is a Cantonese euphemism for wages.
40 For one who works in a takeaway, work begins at about 11 in the morning with food preparation. Lunch business begins at 12 noon. When it closes at 2 p.m., work like cleaning in the kitchen and more food preparation has to be carried out. Then there is a break between whatever time remains and 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. when evening business starts. It ends at about midnight and an hour or more is needed for cleaning.
41 Furthermore, getting 20 pounds from their aunt for a five-day week (everyday when they were off school) for six hours a day (6 p.m. to midnight) circa 1985, the boys in Chan’s (1986) study were taking about seventy pence an hour net or about 1 pound an hour gross. A fast-food chain in England was paying the counter staff a basic gross rate of 1.38 pounds an hour just before it was forced by law to pay a minimum wage of 3 pounds an hour in 1998. The aunt in the study was not paying her nephews anything less than she would have to for hired help.
As already pointed out, the younger generations do not like to work in the catering outlets. The typical resentment that the adolescents feel comes not just from the hard work and the long hours but the verbal abuse from the customers that they suffer and resent as well. Cantonese adolescents usually work at the counter because their English is better than that of their parents and because they may not know how to cook Chinese food. ML, a second generation Cantonese, worked at the counter in her parents’ takeaway every Friday night and Saturday night. One Saturday night when the researcher was sitting in the kitchen, she rushed in from the front of the shop and hid in the gap between two refrigerators. Since that incident, the researcher noted that she was not available at the counter whenever a certain male customer walked in. When she was asked about this, she told the researcher that it was because the customer always gave her trouble. Dickson (1991) found that his female subjects in London encountered similar problems. For example:

May: My mum insisted that I stay on the counter until we closed which is after the pub close up to midnight ... and I used to get racial abuse, sexual harassment, I used to get everything ... Saying we were this and that and the other ... I hated it, they just used to make me feel so small.

Mei Han: I don’t like working Friday nights because there’s this man who comes in and he keeps singing ‘Suzy Wong, Suzy Wong’ (p. 96)

Rights as British Citizens.

The Home Affairs Committee (HAC, 1985) attribute “a formidable barrier to full participation in British life” by the Chinese immigrants to their “lack of English, ignorance of rights, cultural differences, scattered settlement and long unsociable hours” (Volume 1, p. xiv). The Home Affairs Committee further conclude that these factors have meant not only that the Chinese tend to be isolated from and not to understand the society in which they live, but that the society is unaware of the nature and needs of the Chinese community. The Home Affairs Committee point out that “[not] all of the five are peculiar to the Chinese, but taken together they distinguish the Chinese and their problems” (Volume 1, p. xiv). The committee realise that part of the blame should be laid on the existing immigration rules. Take the ignorance of rights as an example. The committee point out that

under the immigration rules, a person whose dependants are seeking admittance for settlement must be able and willing to maintain and accommodate them without
recourse to public funds, and an undertaking in writing, enforceable by law, can be required of him. (Volume 1, p. xiv)

In other words, many Hong Kong Cantonese migrants do not know that they or their dependants might be entitled to social security, housing support, and other financial support from the state. This research shows that it is true only for Cantonese migrants at the initial stages of settling in London. An informant, Anon 2, living and operating a takeaway in South East London told the researcher that she did not realise that her four children were entitled to free education in Britain and for the first few years after the family settled in Britain, they suffered from financial hardship because they sent their children to paid schools in London. She only knew about her children’s right to free education when her social circle broadened and she found out that the children of some her Cantonese friends went to state schools.

Knowing their rights as British citizens is a defining social practice for the old-timers of the London Hong Kong Cantonese community. Anon 2 did not know that her children were entitled to free education because no one informed her of her rights when she arrived in London. She inferred that her children were not entitled to free education because they had just arrived as migrants and as such they had not paid enough tax or spent enough time in Britain to earn them that right. Other informants, particularly A Chahn, David, Ken, Helen and Wong, distinguished themselves from the new-comers like the researcher by their knowledge of their legal rights, especially those concerning consumer laws. For example, A Chahn, Ken, and Helen told the researcher on several occasions that he was entitled to a refund for the goods that he had bought from retailers without having to give any reasons.

Social Life and Entertainment: Gambling, Television, Films, Reading and Music.

British cities offer little entertainment to Hong Kong Cantonese adult migrants in the catering business other than gambling because of the working hours. In the West End, casinos attract Chinese clientele by offering free Cantonese buffets and free membership. There is always Cantonese food on the menu. By one o’clock in the morning, the casinos are full of ethnic Chinese and Hong Kong Cantonese. Most all of them gamble and a few of them gamble heavily. Most go to the casinos not just for the thrill of gambling. Casinos are the only places where they can meet socially after work. All the informants, with the exception of Anon 2, frequently went
to the casinos in Central London when they were young. Some stopped when they got family responsibilities.

Hong Kong Cantonese culture does not sanction gambling. For example, playing majohng is seen as therapeutic as long as the stakes are not high. Majohng is also seen as a social activity. Friends and relatives can gather together for a few hours and catch up with the latest news and gossips while playing a few hands. It is considered particularly propitious to win, however little, during the Chinese New Year celebrations. Many teachers and headmasters in Hong Kong, especially the older ones, do not see anything wrong in playing majohng with their colleagues after school or going horse racing on their days off as long as their students do not witness these activities. Although gambling is not sanctioned in Britain, the adult informants knew that it is not an activity that is encouraged in Britain. In the researcher’s initial contacts with the informants, some of them (David, Ken, Tam) jumped the gun when he told them that he did not gamble. They told him that there was nothing wrong with gambling as long as players could afford it and that they saw gambling as a test of their judgement as well as a way to relieve stress.

In terms of home entertainment, many Chinese families watch the two Chinese satellite television channels in Britain. One of them offers a twenty-four hour service but it costs about £50 a month (circa 1999). It is a subsidiary of a Hong Kong television company and it relays Hong Kong television programmes twenty-four hours a day on a real-time basis. The other begins broadcasting at eight in the evening for four hours in Mandarin and from midnight to four in the morning, programmes in Cantonese are broadcast. Programmes include soap operas made in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan. Subtitles are provided to cater for the needs of Chinese with different language backgrounds.

Families in Hong Kong offer by post an alternative source of Cantonese television programmes and Cantonese films. All the adult informants were supplied by their relatives in Hong Kong with Cantonese television programmes, soap operas, and films recorded on video-tapes and disks on VCD format. In addition, television programmes and films can be rented commercially in the West End. Some food suppliers offer free private films and soap operas on videotape as an incentive to custom.
Apart from soap operas and films from Hong Kong, the Chinese television station offers news of Hong Kong and China and editorials on events that happened in these places. In London, there is a Cantonese radio station that broadcasts every evening from six to seven p.m.\textsuperscript{42} Part of the news is devoted to reporting the happenings in Hong Kong and in China. This news programme is very popular among those who work in the kitchen because it keeps them abreast of the happenings in China and in Hong Kong while they work. For example, when the researcher visited Wong’s takeaway one evening at the end of April, 2000, the informant dispensed with the usual greetings and told him about the ‘good news’ that their ‘mother-country’ had successfully bid for some national treasures lost in the Nineteenth Century in an auction that took place in Hong Kong.

Other attractions of the radio station include Hong Kong stock market news, reviews of Cantonese films and television programmes, latest gossip of Cantonese film and Cantopop stars, and of course, Cantopop.

Most Chinese takeaways have a television set in the service area for the customers to while away their time while waiting for the orders. The adult informants who worked in takeaways watched British television programmes when they were not busy. For example, they watched an occasional soap opera like \textit{Eastenders}, game shows like \textit{Who Wants to be a Millionaire}, or American television programmes like \textit{Ally McBeal}, but they did not follow these programmes ardently. Language proficiency may be a constraint as indicated from what some of the adult informants (Ken, Tam, Anon 2) had told the researcher. They also believed that it was easier for them to understand American television programmes than British ones. However, lack of proficiency in English might not be the only cause. Their preference for American television and the provision of English subtitles on most television programmes indicate that there are other reasons for their preference. These may include their taste for American style television programmes and the influence of Hong Kong television culture. Hong Kong television in the Seventies was dominated by American television programmes and the Cantonese language channels broadcast American programmes like \textit{Charlie’s Angels}, and \textit{Starsky and Hutch} dubbed into Cantonese. British productions like \textit{Upstairs Downstairs} or \textit{Dad’s Army} could only be seen on the English language channels.

What the informants recorded from television is another indication of their preference for Hong Kong television programmes. They did not record English television programmes except sports

\textsuperscript{42} The station broadcasts on AM 55.8 MHz.
programmes. For those informants who had satellite television, they recorded Cantonese soap operas.

In the Seventies when video-recorders were not popular in Hong Kong, a cinema in the West End showed a Cantonese film (usually a kungfu film) at about two a.m. every Sunday morning. The adult informants who settled in London then would attend that performance to be followed by a late dinner at 24-hour Chinese restaurants in Soho. Their interest in Cantonese films had not waned. The cupboards in their home were filled with Cantonese films on videotape cassettes and on compact discs in VCD format which is more popular and compact disks in that system more easily available than the alternative format, DVD, in Hong Kong. Their relatives in Hong Kong sent them a constant supply of Cantonese films in videotape and on CD.

The adult informants watched about six hours of Cantonese television programmes, soap operas, and films every week. All the adult informants had a VCD player at home. David, Anon 2, Ken and Helen owned a NTSC videotape player imported from Hong Kong to watch films on NTSC format.

None of the adult informants read English novels for pleasure. Anon 2 was the only informant who read English gardening magazines. Others did not read English magazines at all. As for English newspapers, the informants read tabloids the Sun and the Daily Mirror because these were the newspaper they bought for the customers. Some informants like Ken and David also admitted that it was easier for them to understand the English used in tabloids than in newspaper like the Guardian.

All 8 adult informants read Chinese newspapers and magazines published in Hong Kong which can be bought in Chinatown in Soho. They are expensive (£4.50 for a Hong Kong newspaper and over £8.00 for a magazine circa 2000) and as the adult informants did not go to Chinatown very often, they relied on their friends and relatives to send them magazines from Hong Kong.

Some of the adult informants listened to mainstream Western pop music when they were young and newly arrived in London. The Beatles and Rod Steward were pop idols of Ken, David, and Tam. However, none of them owned any musical tapes or CDs of these artists at the time of the research. The others only listened to Cantopop stars and Cantonese opera.
Social Networks and Home Life.

If we characterise our friends as those we meet and visit socially as well as those we invite to our home, then none of the informants had any non-Cantonese friends. English proficiency is an obvious reason. Cultural difference and their long working hours are important factors if we consider David, the adult informant who studied at Imperial College for one year, to be very proficient at English. Furthermore, they had very few friends who were not related to catering and their spouses or partners were all Cantonese. When the adult informants were asked why they had few non-Chinese friends, they explained that they did not have any opportunity to meet any or that they had different lifestyles.

The adult informants did not have any Chinese (as opposed to Hong Kong Cantonese) or Vietnamese friends although there would be more similarities between the 3 cultures. The research showed that the adult informants saw migrants from China and Vietnam as competition and threat to their livelihood. With the exception of Anon 2 and Tam, the adult informants also demonised these migrants as lacking in proper manners (from spitting to eating without chewing), parasitic to society (see below), and members of criminal organisations (from selling illegally imported cigarettes to belonging to protection rackets).

Long working hours prevented the adult informants from meeting their Hong Kong Cantonese friends socially except during the Christmas break. When Hong Kong Cantonese families gather together, the main topics of conversation usually centre on their business and on the education of the children. Their business talk is rule-governed and can be perplexing for those outside the catering business. For example, the answer to “How’s business?” is a certain sum of money. It is understood that the sum of money mentioned refers to the weekly turnover, and the listeners can immediately work out the net profit or net loss from the answer given the knowledge of the amount of monthly mortgage or rent, tax, and overheads.43 For the adult informants, one-upmanship was fought more on the terrain of their children’s academic achievements than on

43 Chinese advertisements offering the sale or lease of takeaways are written under the same rules. The turnover is disclosed without the time adverbial and it is understood among potential buyers that the amount refers to the weekly turnover.

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their living standards. The former is measured by how prestigious the universities are where the children are studying in or where they have applied.

From these conversations, the adult informants’ worries and, to a certain extent, their ignorance were revealed to the researcher. For example, around 1998, many Hong Kong Cantonese caterers had a lot of misgivings about a proposed bill that put the burden of informing their customers if the food they sold contained genetically modified (GM) ingredients on them. They believed that such legislation would leave them vulnerable to the scruples or lack thereof of their suppliers. Moreover, some of them confused the GM food issue with that of organic foods. One adult informant (Wong) told me at the family barbecue that he did not understand why he had to display a list of all the GM ingredients used in his takeaway on the menu when food preservatives had been used in the food-processing industry for years. Their main worry, as far as their business was concerned, was competition from other ethnic Chinese from China and Vietnam. They saw competition from these people as being unfair. The informants argued that these groups arrived in Britain as asylum seekers and as such they were entitled to government subsidies when they set up their own business, which was usually in catering, and the subsidies came from taxing the informants. Furthermore, the informants pointed out that these new groups of competitors were different from them in business practice. The newcomers, according to the informants, opened a catering outlet so that it could be sold in a couple of years’ time and after it is sold, they would begin the process again in another town or city.

There were aspects of their life at home that separate long-term London Cantonese from their compatriots in Hong Kong and those who have just arrived in London. The aspects that stood out were their knowledge of home maintenance and their interest in gardening. Descaling pipes, installing and fixing central heating, for example, are not practised in Hong Kong and these are just some aspects of home maintenance the informants had learnt to do by themselves in London. Problems with lime scale and air bubbles in central heating were not something that all Hong Kong Cantonese migrants realised existed until the problems occurred. Home gardening is not practised in Hong Kong because only the very wealthy can afford a garden. Of all the adult informants who owned a garden (David; Ken and Helen; Anon 2; Wong), only one (Wong) covered it with concrete slabs. Others learnt about gardening and what gardening tools like mowers and hose pipes to buy through advertisements and gardening magazines. Ken and Helen built a birdhouse and a fish pond with Japanese Koi carp in their garden. Anon 2 believed that a
neat and tidy garden was very important or the neighbours might complain. The only English magazines that she read were gardening magazines. David had installed a greenhouse for growing tomatoes and Chinese vegetables that were not easily available in supermarkets in London.

Food and Drink.

The diet of the adult informants also reflected their Hong Kong Chinese cultural heritage. They had two meals in the evening, one before their outlets opened and another one after they closed. These meals were taken at the outlets. The simpler meal was usually a bowl of instant noodles with some meat and vegetables. For the main meal, they usually had meat, vegetables, eggs, and rice all cooked in the Chinese way. Whole mackerel was steamed with slices of pork, shiitake mushroom, spring onion, and ginger. Chicken was cooked by submerging it in boiling water and served with a ginger and spring onion sauce. Minced pork was steamed with dried scallops or dried shrimps. There was the quintessential Chinese soup with ingredients like ginseng, dried dates, and sea weeds simmered for hours on a slow fire before consumption at least once a week. The informants celebrated Chinese New Year, and Chinese festivals like the Mid-Autumn Festival with special fare including shark fin soup, shellfish, and lobster. The kitchen at their own home, which was not different from English ones in design, was where, for some adult informants, an occasional “Western” meal was cooked, to satisfy the demands of their children. It is usually spaghetti in a tomato sauce or roast chicken. However, Chineseness stood out in the ingredients they used to prepare such meals. They did not use herbs like basil, parsley, or tarragon. Nor did they use dairy products like milk or cheese as ingredients. The pasta was eaten with Chinese vegetables in oyster sauce. Chicken was usually quartered before the pieces were put into the oven. On the rare occasions when chicken was roasted whole, it was expected that the chicken would not be stuffed. Roast leg of lamb at one of the barbecues the researcher attended was prepared with cloves of garlic and ginger but there was no rosemary or thyme. On special occasions, most of the informants liked alcoholic beverages with their meals. With the exception of David, who believed that an Italian dry white like Frascati goes best with Chinese food, others (Ken; Helen; Tam; Anon 1; Wong; the rest were tee-total) limited their choices to lager and cognac, which were the typical drinks served at Chinese restaurants in Hong Kong in

44 Macaroni is the only other pasta dish that is popular among the Cantonese in Hong Kong.
the Seventies and early Eighties. And when the informants ate out, they seldom went to non-Chinese restaurants. David was the only one who would ever go to a non-Chinese restaurant. Some, like Ken and Helen, insisted on having rice with every meal. Others, like Tam, Anon 1, A Chahn, and Anon 2, had little regard for non-Cantonese food.

Sport Preferences.

Eating is not the only social practice that reveals the Hong Kong connections. The adult informants' preferences in spectator sports coincided with those in Hong Kong. These included Formula One car racing, snooker, soccer, and tennis. Ken followed the wanes and fortunes of Liverpool F. C. and of the England National Football Team with fervour. He displayed a Union flag in the takeaway whenever England played. A Chahn had expert factual knowledge on Formula One motor racing that showed he was a true follower of the sport. He knew the brands of tyres each racing team used, the engine capacity of the cars, and the history of the top drivers, now and in the past. Tam considered Alex Higgins to be the best snooker player ever and lamented that the golden age of snooker had disappeared the day Hurricane Higgins retired. However, as a group, the informants were not interested in other sports like cricket or rugby. David proudly showed me the school report of his son, who was born in London. It stated that the adolescent held his cricket bat the way baseball players would and David asked me whether the two sports had different rules. Helen had heard of Jonah Lomu, the rugby player, and seen him in action on television but she used American football terms like touch-down instead of try.

Family Obligations.

One aspect of life that separates London Hong Kong Cantonese from some other ethnic groups in Britain is their sense of obligation towards their families in Hong Kong. For those adult informants who still had parents and siblings in Hong Kong and elsewhere (Anon 1; Ken; Helen; Tam; Wong), honouring their obligations toward the extended family involved a kind of obligation that defined them as Hong Kong Cantonese. Ken and Helen sent about £700 (depending on the exchange rate) to their parents in Hong Kong every month. The amount was equivalent to about 25% of the monthly turnover of their takeaway. They knew they should go back to Hong Kong to mark the 80th birthday of Ken’s father although the trip would mean a loss
in income as it entailed closing their takeaway for the duration. In addition, Ken had to house his two nephews as their father (Ken’s brother) could afford only their tuition fees. Tam supported his two brothers financially when they studied in England. Wong had a nephew staying with him and Wong had to pay the adolescent’s tuition fees as well. At the same time, his son was staying with his sister and her family in the USA. Anon 1 second-mortgaged her house to pay for a flat in Hong Kong so that her mother could have her own abode instead of living with her brother and his family. These are examples of the strength of commitment bridging between family members in London, Hong Kong, and elsewhere.

Migrant Identity.

The Cantonese word for migrants is *kiuh*, which also means *guests*. The meaning carries the connotation of being in a non-permanent state. Most of the informants were uncertain about whether they would stay in Britain after their retirement. The exceptions were David and Anon 2. David was adamant that there was nothing for him in Hong Kong. Anon 2 believed she should stay until her youngest son (age 7 at the time) had graduated from university by which time it would be too late for her to return to Hong Kong. All the adult informants, including David and Anon 2, and their families returned to Hong Kong once between July, 1997, when the sovereignty of the British colony reverted to China and 1999, on the rumours that they would lose their right of abode in Hong Kong. Yet at the same time, they were hesitant about the prospect of retirement in Hong Kong because they knew the move meant a fall in their present standard of living. It is difficult to give up a four-bedroom house with a back garden in London for a high-rise flat of 500 square feet in Hong Kong.

The adult informants identified themselves as non-permanent residents in the UK and resented anything that might bring attention to the Hong Kong Cantonese community. This fear can be marked by what they felt about the Stephen Lawrence murder and its aftermath. With the exception of Anon 2, the adult informants felt what the parents of the murdered victim had done up to the publication of the McPherson Report to bring the murderer(s) to justice as unjustified.

45 There were rumours that those who were born in Hong Kong but holding a British passport would lose their rights to abode in Hong Kong. This contradicted another set of rumours that as long as this category of Hong Kong people returned to Hong Kong at least once within 18 months of the handover, they would still
and gaau sih [literal meaning: create trouble]. They worried that what the Lawrences had done would damage race relations in Britain. Anon 1 and Helen were even worried that the publication of the report would be marked by racial riots.

The Adult Migrants’ Catering Business.

Business was sacrosanct to all the adult informants. Most of them had not had more than two holidays since they settled in Britain. With the exception of Wong, and Ken and Helen, they worked seven days a week. They closed their outlets once a year on Christmas Day and for a few days after that when business was slack. They resented everything that may constitute as a threat to their livelihood, from government interference like the GM food issue mentioned earlier, or linking the outbreak of food-and-mouth disease in 2001 to Chinese catering, to their personal problems such as sickness. A-Chahn was bitter with the press reports on medical research that links cancer with the consumption of bean sprouts and soy sauce, his arguments being that smoking and drinking are more hazardous to health than the consumption of these products. Anon 1 was worried that the NATO conflict with Serbia might escalate and led to an economic downturn in Britain. Anon 2 scolded one of her daughters several times in the presence of the researcher because the girl, instead of minding the counter area, spent too much time in the back yard talking to her friends on her mobile phone. Ken was in and out of hospital during the summer months of 2000. He had to hire temporary help to take over his duties and he told the medical staff in the hospital on his third visit that if the prognosis was not forthcoming, he wished to be treated as an out-patient. And despite his doctor’s warning that he might not get another hospital bed once his status had changed, he was adamant that he should be discharged.

All of the adult informants were proud of their achievements when they were young. They had been told by their elders that education meant financial security. Most of them did not receive any more than nine years of formal education in Hong Kong. In London, they worked very hard, endured a lot of hardship, and forewent social activities that some young people may take for granted to save enough to start their own business.
Ken, for example, attended three different secondary schools in as many years in Hong Kong. On arrival in Britain, he began his catering career working as a kitchen helper. His duties included rinsing vegetables, cutting up meat, and cleaning the takeaway. He acquired his cooking skills by observation and by paying the chefs in the takeaway out of his own pocket. Learning how to prepare curry sauce from a chef cost him £50 in the early Seventies. Thirty-odd years on, he and Helen owned a takeaway and two houses. Both informants knew that it would have been difficult for them to achieve such a standard of living had they stayed in Hong Kong. Wong quit school and worked in his father's shop in Hong Kong after six years of formal education. His migration to Britain was purely a family decision as they believed Britain would offer him a better opportunity than Hong Kong. He entered Britain under the Work Voucher System to work in his sister's takeaway in Islington which did not need extra help and he was contracted out to work as a busboy in a Chinese restaurant in Soho. He had to endure the condescending attitude of the owner and his wife who believed they had an in loco parentis role to play. They complained to Wong's sister, who in turn relayed the complaint to his parents, that he was gambling and smoking. He was unable to work for another employer until he was granted residency in Britain. At that point, he worked initially as a waiter in a Chinese restaurant in Gillingham, where he met his wife and where he began working in the kitchen. At the time of the research, they owned part of a takeaway in Islington and a house in East London. Their son was a scholarship student in a prestigious university in the USA. Informants like Ken and Wong believed that because of their lack of formal education, they would not have attained the standard of living they enjoyed had they not migrated to Britain. At the same time, they believed that it was their capacity to endure adversity and their capabilities to learn and adapt to a new culture that made them successful.

Use of English.

As pointed out, many adult migrants from Hong Kong working in catering are not well-educated. Not surprisingly, because of the working hours, they are either unable or reluctant to go to language schools on arrival in Britain.\(^{47}\) None of the informants spoke English fluently. The researcher came to this conclusion after observing the conversations between the informants and

\(^{47}\) The interview with Helen is indicative that there may be another reason. She told the researcher that attending adult English class was a waste of her time because she did not need to give up her time for lessons that taught English constructions like *This is a clock.* Perhaps the reluctance of Hong Kong
their English-speaking customers. For example, when a male customer accused Anon 1 for overcharging, she did not have enough English to explain to him that she did not charge him for every item that appeared on the bill and that it was for the benefit of the bartending staff that the number of the glasses of tap-water that he and his dinner companions ordered was printed on the bill. The daughters of Anon 2 exaggerated the lack of fluency of their mother’s English and used it as an argument whenever they quarrelled. David’s English was hesitant and A Chahn and Tam stuttered whenever they spoke English. Ken and Helen had trouble in understanding what the customers said sometimes. This was especially so when the customers talked about things other than the food they wanted to order. Probably because of the influence of their Chinese culture, the two informants smiled at the customers and replied in the affirmative. When Wong’s nephew arrived, Wong thought the youth could help at the takeaway by taking orders. He was disappointed to find that his nephew found it difficult to talk with English customers as he did.

Yet for the adult informants who had stayed in Britain for a long time, they were proud of their attainment in English proficiency. The researcher often detected a sense of pride in their voice when they talked about the language problems they had when they first arrived in Britain, specific incidences of misunderstanding between them and English-speaking customers, and their attainment in English language through their own efforts.

The research also yielded insights into their attitude towards standard English pronunciation. All 3 female informants (Anon 1, Anon 2, and Helen) were worried and complained about their children’s English. Anon 1 told the researcher she sent her children to public schools because ‘upper class English’ was important to their future.\(^{48}\) Anon 2 and Helen, who had also sent their children to public schools for several years, told the researcher they scolded their children for using ‘working class English’ and thus wasting the efforts and the money spent on their education.\(^{49}\)

The researcher interviewed the adult informants in Cantonese and a systematic analysis of their English is not possible. Nevertheless, some of their English linguistic practices had been noted and are discussed in the following paragraphs.

\(^{48}\) The phrase she used was suehng lauh sei wuih.

\(^{49}\) The phrase she used was suehng lauh sei wuih.
Some aspects of their English pronunciation were similar to those in Hong Kong and different from the 4 Hong Kong non-link generation adolescent informants and the 12 Hong Kong link generation adolescent informants. For example, many Hong Kong Cantonese do not drop the [h] in words like Bonham and Beckham. The male adult informants always pronounced Beckham as /bek - ham/ when they talked about the football player. Pronouncing consonant clusters was also difficult for some adult informants. For example, Anon 2 pronounced glades as /gleiz/ when she spoke about shopping (the Glades was the name a shopping mall in a London suburb). All the adult informants deleted /l/ in Blair when they talked about the Prime Minister. Stress placement is another difficulty for some adult informants. Helen pronounced essence as /I-sen/ with the primary stress on the second syllable when she talked about cosmetics. Wong and A Chahn pronounced Manchester with equal stress on the second and third syllables. They also pronounced nine as /lain/ and nineteen as /lain-ti:n/ when they told some customers how much their food cost.

The adult informants did not use the with place names like the West End and names of tube lines like the Circle Line. However, it must be noted that these instances were embedded in Cantonese sentences.

Some of the English lexical items and phrases the adult informants used indicated the influence of Cantonese and Hong Kong English, and offered insights into their using Hong Kong English to mark the boundaries of their community. The adult informants always referred Mercedes-Benz, their dream car, as /bens/ or /ben - si/, as many Cantonese in Hong Kong do. However, the researcher’s referring to the car as Mercedes or Merc had not caused any comprehension problems with the adult informants. This indicates that they preferred to refer to the car as /bens/ or /ben - si/. There were other instances that indicated their preference for Hong Kong English. BMW was always referred to as BM, which is what many Cantonese in Hong Kong do.

On the other hand, they used English lexical items which are not often used by Cantonese in Hong Kong to indicate that they were part of a more general community in London. For example, they sometimes used trainers instead of bo haaih [literal meaning: ball shoes] or sport shoes,

49 Both informants overheard their children using ‘working class’ English when they were talking to their friends on mobile phone.
telly instead of dihn sīh [literal meaning: electrical vision] or TV, and occasionally brothers to refer to male customers of African origin. Male informants like David and Ken used slang like bollock and poof and phrases like keep your hair on when they argued with some customers. These terms and phrases are rarely used in Hong Kong.

Political Awareness and Activities.

Hong Kong Cantonese have been described as politically apathetic (HAC, 1985). The research finds that, for the adult informants, political apathy may cover most forms of active involvement in politics like joining a political party or taking part in political canvassing. Only five of the informants were registered voters although they were all qualified to vote. As for their voting behaviour, 3 of the 5 adult informants voted in the General Elections of 1997 and 2001 and out of these 3, 2 voted in the local elections as well. However, as a group, the adult informants’ knowledge of the British political scene separated them from more recent migrants from Hong Kong. This knowledge included factual knowledge (e.g. identifying some of the names of cabinet ministers and their posts in the past and present British governments) to a higher-level type of knowledge like whether it was the 1997-2001 Labour Government or its predecessors that was responsible for the economic boom and how British sovereignty and how the economy might be affected if Britain joined the Euro. They were equally knowledgeable in the political scene in Hong Kong. This knowledge included identifying the names of politicians and political activists and their political allegiance as well as their opinions of the extent of the post-1997 government policies were responsible for the economic downturn in Hong Kong.

As a group, the adult informants were politically conservative in their outlook. They were cynical about environmental policies and they associated these policies with higher taxation. For example, they did not see any urgency to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and they saw the proposed charge for driving into central London as a ploy to raise taxes. Their political conservatism included their lack of sympathy towards industrial action and the plight of workers who were laid off (e.g. the car workers in Dagenham and Luton who were laid off). This conservative outlook may be due to the fact that most of the informants considered themselves to be self-made persons. They believed that because their relative affluence had been achieved through hard work and thrift, others can do the same.
A Summary of the Social Practices of the Adult Informants.

The preceding paragraphs have identified the social practices of the Hong Kong Cantonese adult community and investigated what the 8 adult informants felt as migrants living in the UK. The research showed that there were aspects that are unique to the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London and these aspects mark the community as a community in its own right.

The adult informants were both Hong Kong and British citizens. They held British passports. However, they endured financial loss in order to maintain their Hong Kong citizenship. It is the strongest indication that they did not consider themselves as entirely British. Like many other British, they were concerned with British issues like the Euro issue and the asylum issue. They were also concerned with Hong Kong issues like the economic downturn and unemployment in Hong Kong. As migrants living in the UK, they prefer to live anonymously and resent anything that might bring attention to their existence.

Insecurity plays a part in Hong Kong Cantonese wanting to be ‘invisible’ in the UK. The informants were worried about anything that might bring them to the notice of others. Their resentment of the Lawrences indicated a lack of empathy but it also indicated how insecure they felt about their being an ethnic minority group in London. They feared the Lawrences’ efforts to bring the murderer(s) to justice would stir up racial hatred and racial riots. This insecurity can also be indicated by the informants’ returning to Hong Kong at least once after July 1997 to make sure they would not lose their Hong Kong citizen status.

The informants could be distinguished from other ethnic groups in Britain by their preferences for social practices like the social networks they had created and maintained, and their sense of obligation towards their families in Hong Kong. As already pointed out, the social network they maintained was influenced by their proficiency in English and their long working hours. However, there are also other factors.

Many Chinese in London from South China speak fluent Cantonese. So do a lot of Vietnamese migrants. Yet none of the informants had friends from these ethnic groups. Their contact with
these Cantonese speakers was strictly for business reasons. The research has also pointed out the informants saw these Cantonese speakers from China and Vietnam as competitors. Cultural difference between the Chinese and the informants and xenophobia may be an important factor in causing the hostility between some of the informants and Chinese migrants.

Family obligation as a social practice among the Hong Kong Cantonese informants, as the research shows, was orientated towards Chinese tradition. The informants who still had parents in Hong Kong sent the parents money regularly. Anon 1 bought her mother a flat in Hong Kong not because her mother was homeless. Wong, Ken, and Helen paid for their nephews' education and board in London not because the nephews could not be educated in Hong Kong. These were acts of obligation towards the family.

Chan (1986) believes that Hong Kong Cantonese working in catering want their children to work for them because it is more cost-effective than employing a regular help. He also believes that it is unique to the Hong Kong Cantonese in the UK. The preceding discussion has argued that neither is true. It is because of the working hours that young children will spend the evening in their parents' takeaway. They help their parents because they are there. They are paid as much as their parents would pay a total stranger. Furthermore, small business owners belonging to other ethnic groups in the UK often need their children to help out in their shops.

Social practices like their preferences for food and drink, entertainment, sports and films and TV programmes also reflected strongly a Hong Kong Cantonese cultural influence. The diet of the adult informants was a Hong Kong practice. They preferred Chinese food to food that is characteristic of other ethnic groups in the UK. The research has shown that the adult informants who had an occasional Western meal prepared it with Chinese ingredients and in Chinese way.

Five out of the 6 adult informants who did not abstain from alcoholic consumption drank wine. David had acquired knowledge on wine. Others, like Ken and Helen, started their quest to learn about wine at the time of the research. As wine is less popular in Hong Kong than beer, whiskey, and brandy, their preference for wine indicates that drinking is a social practice that is moving along a trajectory towards a more British social practice.
The television programmes and films that the adult informants watched was a social practice that remained firmly rooted in the culture that is Hong Kong. The research has pointed out the Cantonese population in Hong Kong prefer television programmes produced in the USA to those produced in the UK. The English language television programmes that the adult informants preferred were produced in the USA. They also preferred sport programmes that were popular in Hong Kong when they were young. They knew very little about sport that was quintessentially British.

As a group, the adult informants distinguished themselves from more recent Hong Kong migrants by the knowledge they had acquired on aspects of life specific to Britain. This knowledge included knowing the existing laws and regulations on taxation, rights of consumers, and food hygiene which was relevant to their trade as well as general legal knowledge like applying for various social benefits and other legal rights. Moreover, they knew about aspects of house maintenance that a Hong Kong person do not. These included lawn mowing, maintaining and fixing central heating, and how to get rid of lime scale in pipes. Most of the informants who had a garden spend a part of their free time in looking after it.

This research has also investigated the use of English among the 8 adult informants and found there were aspects of their English that were similar to the English spoken by Cantonese in Hong Kong. These aspects included not dropping the /h/ in words like Beckham, consonant cluster deletion, /l/ becoming /n/ in word initial position, different stress placement patterns from Standard English. As the following sections will show, such aspects of non-native like English were not found in speech data of the 4 non-link generation informants and the 12 link generation informants. The informants also omitted the with place names and names of underground railway lines in code-mixing contexts. The investigation also noted that there were instances of lexical items usage that indicated the informants’ preference for Hong Kong English; Mercedes were referred to as /bens/ or /ben - si/ and BMW as BM. Instances of lexical items and slang usage that marked them as different from Cantonese in Hong Kong were also identified. These instances included trainers, telly, poof, bollock, and keep your hair on.

In sum, this research concurs with the observations made by the HAC as quoted in this section; language, culture, and working hours act to create marginality that keep the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London from engaging in more British-like social practices.
HAC has also noted, this research has shown that by restricting migration of Hong Kong Cantonese only to those who are involved in the catering business, successive British governments before 1991 helped to create a Hong Kong Cantonese community as depicted in this section. However, from the observations and interviews with the 8 adult informants, the research also draws the conclusion that some of the informants' social practices like knowing their legal rights and home maintenance and their linguistic practices can move towards a more British trajectory only over a period of time.

The study on the adult informants has shown that social practices like food and drink, TV and films, family obligation, and social network are the most salient social practices that distinguish them from other ethnic groups in Britain. These practices indicate influence from Hong Kong Cantonese and Chinese culture. The study has also shown that social practices like home maintenance distinguish them from Cantonese in Hong Kong and new Hong Kong Cantonese migrants in London.

The discussion on the 4 non-link generation informants and the 12 link generation informants in the following sections will focus on their social practices like food and drink, TV and films, family obligation, and social network. The discussion will show that these 3 social practices of the younger generation are moving towards a more British trajectory than those the adult informants had. Other social practices like home maintenance are not suitable for comparison between the two generations because the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants and the 12 link generation adolescent informants were not householders.

**Section 4.03  Hong Kong Cantonese Non-link Generation Informants: Their Social Practices.**

Section 4.03 investigates the social practices of 4 Hong Kong young non-link generation migrants, 3 of whom can be categorised as second generation migrants. These 3 informants (JO, JU, and ML) were born in London but were sent back to Hong Kong to be looked after by the extended family there. They returned to London at different ages (see Table 1.02). JO and JU return to Hong Kong regularly - for Christmas and for about six weeks during the summer break.
every year. ML had returned to Hong Kong only once for holiday and to have her citizenship there re-confirmed. The fourth, AF, was born in Hong Kong. He had overseas student status at the time of the interview. He was sent to London at age 9 by his parents so that he could have a better education. He returned to Hong Kong for about two years at age 11 and came back to London again at age 13. The social practices that have been chosen for analysis are food and drink, TV and films, music, reading, education, and social network.

Education: School Life and School Friends.

Their individual experience in school and how they reacted to it had a strong influence on their development. All four of them had experienced some form of racism; they were taunted by their fellow students for their use of English and their ethnic origin. For example:

JO Yeah, definitely, but I haven't actually tried it myself, but I mean, even so, people are just doing a joke, as a friendly joke, you know, it's a joke. It's not harmful, there is sometimes go, "Oi, ching chun, ching chun". Another just going like how you people speak Chinese and I say "Oh, shut up" you know.

JU Well erm, I think, I think like the first two or three weeks, erm, there was there was a kid, erm, who is one year older than me, and he he try to take the piss and call me a Chink. He's a Indian. I go "Amagah, amagard" (laughs).

ML [The name of her school] is mostly white-orientated, so if there was like a group of minorities hanging around each other, we call, you know, we're known as the ethnics, 'cause you know, there is no white people in this, there's us coloured people in our own little group. The vibe is not that good but it's OK, it's OK, it's not bad.... Our school is known to be, erm, racially equal and that's er, you, they don't, the teachers or any one, they don't treat white people and, erm, minorities differently, it's just the same really, but just that, the white pupils themselves think they are more superior to us, you know, thinking they are better, the school's their, you know. It's just those who are causing trouble but teachers are fine.

In Chan's (1986) study, one of his informants reacted strongly to racism in school:

When I was the only Chinese in school, I got teased and beaten up. So I changed school where I ganged up with a few strong Chinese boys. We became the gang in school. Black and white kids had to call us their old brothers.50 (p. 12)

Out of the four adolescent informants in this research, AF was the only one who reacted strongly to the jibes of his fellow students.

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50 'Old brother' is a term of deference and it probably originated as a Triad term.
Er, Basically, it's that, I first come to England, and you see, you don't really know about the culture, the your language and they just bully you all the time... And the one thing, the problem is, I gets trouble a lot, sss, fighting a lot all the time.

Were they white?

Er. Loads of people. White, Indians, black.

Why did they pick on you?

Well, First thing, I didn't know, didn't speak any English much at that time and so it is easy to pick on, you see. You see, some of the language they talk about, and I don't understand, and they can make you angry, by that, so so they pick on you easily.

Because of his low proficiency in English, AF was not able to defend himself and present his case effectively when he faced the school authorities. As a result, he perceived that he was unfairly treated by the school.

So and I was get in foul with er one of the black pupil as well. He was like using all this language, all the stuff, saying "Give me money." all the stuff. And I just say I don't give a damn, all the stuff. And I told off him. And at the end, I got told offfor swearing, swearing at him. I thought that's not fair. I got bully and I tell, tell you about it, and you do nothing and you tell me off. I say, that's not fair then.

ML talked about the problems AF had in school in greater details.

Yeah. 'Cause, 'cause, erm, before they were like, erm, lots of racism in school and 'cause we were Chinese, we had problem in school and so, when the, erm, white people called him name and, he, I don't know, he couldn't use words to express himself, so the only way to it was to fight. Fight. Fight. Fight. That was the problem, really. And I ignored those people 'cause, you know, it's no point really, 'cause, it's no point arguing, they are not going to know any better, so. He fought. I ignored and that was it (laughs).

Unlike the informant in Chan's (1986) study, AF did not find joining a peer group for protection useful.

You have to look after yourself. Or you have to join the group and the groups look after you. You can't rely on them a lot actually. You have to fight yourself alone.

He fought a one-man war against the schools he attended and he ended up as a loner.

There is around 40 some, 40 stu, 40 Chinese students, only 5 students don't have to study English, that's it. They rest of us stay there. And I am the one who go on strike. I say I am not study English. They didn't come out with you.

No one, no one coming out with me.
When they were asked to talk about their best friends from school, 3 of the 4 informants nominated friends from the ethnic minorities. AF could only nominate another Cantonese adolescent as his best friend from school.

JO Emma, Sarika, Aula, and that's about it. Er, one's Arabic, and one's Indian, and one's mixed Indian and French.

JU Well, it's mostly Injrajit, Izzact, Fredua, and Shamir. One's black, one's Finnish, and the other two's Indian.

AF I was going out with my old friends from last school. We go out cinemas, shop, shopping centre.... Well, he, he come here longer than me but he didn't speak any English, so I dispute with him as Cantonese as well.

ML was the only one who had an English friend.

ML She is [name of the person]. And we were, we used to be in the same school, the same class, and we used to, erm, you know, go, go and play, play with each other, and talk to each other, but then when I went to [name of a school], erm, I think, we lost contact and then by chance, we went to [name of another school]... We, we're just like, just good friends in school. We didn't argue. Didn't argue and erm, we helped each other with like, erm, you know, problems, homework, you know, all sorts.... Yeah, well she goes to [name of a third school] now and I haven't quite kept in touch with her for a long time.

Friends They Went Out With.

JO and ML went out with their Cantonese friends whom they met in the Chinese schools they attended and Chinatown in Soho is a popular destination. JU tagged along with JO but AF went out on his own.

JO Saturdays, I still stay at home but sometimes I go to Chinatown, and, hang around, you know, and usually have tea with my friends.

LL You mean *yam chah* [= Chinese dim sum meal].

JO Yes. *Yam chah*.

ML No, but she's one of my closest friends. Her name is Sue Ha, and we've known each other for, well, ever since, at first I went to Chinese school. She was one of my friends, up until now she's still my friend. So just a minute ago, the phone call, that was her, and we're really close and we, er, talk about everything, basically. Everything and erm, we go everywhere together, not all the time, but you know, places we go together and my mum likes her because she's clever

LL What do you guys usually do?

ML What do we usually do? Erm, go out, you know, just, you know, just go up London and have fun, doing girlies' stuff like go window shopping and then afterwards go to a small restaurant and have dinner, you know, just stuff like that.
In sum, the social networks the non-link generation adolescent informants maintained were more similar to the social networks maintained by the adult informants. Although JO, JU, and ML had non-Cantonese friends they met in school, they went out with their Cantonese friends. This indicates that the main barriers which keep Hong Kong Cantonese migrants in London from having more non Cantonese friends do not include their proficiency in English. As the research on the 12 link generation adolescent informants will show, it is the difference between the Hong Kong Cantonese culture and those of other ethnic groups that keep the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents from having more friends belonging to other ethnic groups.

Based on the interviews with the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants, racism existed in schools in London but how it might have affected the social networks of the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants is not clear. AF was the one who was most affected by racism in school but unlike the other 3 non-link generation adolescent informants, he did not have any friends at all, Cantonese or otherwise.

School Organised Activities.

AF, JO and JU did not take part in any school organised extracurricular activities. ML played the violin and was a member of the school orchestra. However, because her parents had to work in their takeaway in the evening, they could not spare any time to attend her performances or pick her up afterwards and she had to give it up.

ML: It's just a school, a school thing, you know, but I didn't, like, if you played in, in an orchestra at school, we have performances, you know, for, eh, like, eh, you know, a show where parents buy tickets and come along and watch, I didn't go to those because, partly because my dad couldn't take me and pick me up after school so I didn't play.

Probably due to their Hong Kong upbringing, JO and JU did not take part in any extracurricular activities at all. Their parents wanted the informants to focus on studying and viewed extra-curricular activities as superfluous and distracting. JO and JU returned home after school although JU occasionally had a burger with his friends after school. AF did not take part in any extra-curricular activities and he justified the omission of this aspect of school life as being superfluous to what he believed as his ultimate goal in London - to study. Furthermore, he had to be at his uncle's takeaway by 4:30 p.m. for his evening meal.
ML was the only one who joined a school club. She played netball and basketball. However, her sporting activities took place mostly at lunch time because she had to be at the takeaway at around four thirty for her evening meal. She took part in a school-sponsored activity to organise a mini-Olympic event for the primary schools in her area.

Music.

JO, JU, and ML developed their taste in English pop music and in Cantopop through a combination of television, magazines, and friends. They liked Puff Daddy, Lauryn Hill, The Vibes, Kula Shaka, Another Level, and Oasis, among others.

JO When I was 10 or, because when I, I didn't actually listen to any music when I first went to Hong Kong because I wasn't, I wasn't into Chinese music and I didn't know any pop star or anything but soon later when I, when I was exposed to magazines that my mum brings home, I soon found out, you know, who this pop star is, and who's that. So I start listening to these pop stars. I listen to people like Aaron Kwok and soon I actually learn quite a lot of Chinese from the songs because I go to, because about when I was about 15, that's when I started went, went to karaoke  
sang songs

JO When I was in Hong Kong. Yes, because I was in international school. I'd be exposed to English music as well because people would just say, "Oh, have you heard that new album?" "Yeah, it's really good."

JU Erm, I think I like rap.

LL How come you like rap?

JU Well, before I came to England, I wasn't really into it because, when I was in Hong Kong, all, all I heard was like Chinese songs and all but when I came to England, 'cause, 'cause I, my class more into rap and like the England songs, so I started like rap.

ML returned to London at too young an age to know much about Cantopop. She met some of her best friends from the Chinese school she attended and was initiated into the world of Cantopop through them.

ML One of my friends, she liked Aaron Kwok and they, she showed me, she, she said, "Oh, he's, he's Aaron." Ne, ne, ne, ne, and told me about him and then I think she gave me a few songs to listen to. I said, "That's good. I think that's really good". And then, and then I, I heard a few songs and I really liked it. So I told my dad, next time he goes up to Chinatown, look for an Aaron Kwok album. So got that album for me and I was like "OK, song's good" and Aaron is good looking." Then yeah. Yeah, and I supported him since, actually.
Homophobia seemed to play a part in their choices of pop idols as indicated by the following extracts. These extracts also show that the informants, JO, JU, and ML kept themselves up-to-date with Hong Kong showbiz gossip, probably through magazines and through their Hong Kong Cantonese friends.

ML She [ML's younger sister] used to like (laughs), she used to like Leon. Laih Mihng.
LL Right. What's wrong with Leon? I think he's good.
ML He is gay. I know I'd never like Leon. so I say to her, "You know, he's so rubbish. He's not good. Oh Aaron is better." and you know. And one day she was like, "Well, actually, he's not all that good." And so she doesn't like Leon anymore.

LL Who are your favourite Cantopop stars?
JU Aaron Kwok
LL What about Leon Lai?
JU [He's gay.

AF did not have any friends at all and this was reflected in his inability to name his favourite pop singers.

AF I listen to all sort of music, actually. Pop, Classical. Well, as long as that guy is, is a good singer and they have good song, I will buy it and listen to it. Well, er, everyone is a for me is favourite pop singer. Because I, they sing a good song, so it's the favourite pop singer. I wouldn't go with the looking at how nice they are, how good looking they are. They can't sing. You mean. If you can't sing, you buy it, and it's, you waste your money. It's a load of money.

Although he said he liked classical music, he was not able to name one classical composer.

AF Er, favourite composer. Well, the, er. Well it's don't know which one. But I listen to the music. That's it. I don't know who is, who guy is it. This is as long as the tune is relax, I just relax myself, actually.

ML got her Cantopop CDs from Chinatown where JO and JU got some of their Cantopop CDs. They downloaded Cantopop music from the Internet and since JO and JU returned to Hong Kong once every year, they bought Cantopop CDs there as well.

JO Sometimes you can actually down-load it from the Internet, or either, we just go outside and buy it from Chinatown.
LL Does your mother send them from Hong Kong?
JO No, we, cause we go back to Hong Kong about once a year, so we buy ourselves and we bring it back to England.

AF returned to Hong Kong once and he bought only one Cantopop CD there.
AF    Well, er, the Cantopop is er bought in Hong Kong last year, so it's still a brand new.
LL    What about your family? I mean, did you ask them to send you some?
AF    They, my brother don't know what taste I am actually. So I say "Any music, as long as good."
     And he just don't bother to get, like to find any good music for me, so, didn't bought me any.
Television and Films.

JO, JU, and ML watched a lot of English and Cantonese films. ML’s favourite English film was Titanic, which she watched on video. JU had joined a video-rental club and JO and JU watched an English language film once a week.

JO We have been watching Antz. We saw Antz. My brother just rented out *The Life Less Ordinary*. Lots of different types. But usually we would rent out the more action type because my brother likes action and I don’t mind it. And I don’t actually like the slow type movies like *Meet Joe Black* ’cause I think they are quite not for me type.

They watched Cantonese films and Hong Kong soap operas which they got from their relatives in Hong Kong or from their friends here.

JU We have the tapes though. No, no, no. It’s these, this, this man known, known as Dinky who, who brings out these tapes every week.. It’s this dude, the guy who likes brings us the tapes.

JO ... my grand gets these Chinese episodes from Hong Kong and I just watch them. Er, no, there’s actually two sources I could get from. One is my grandmother. She rents out tapes from England which are of Chinese episodes or my other grandmother, my mum’s side. She, in Hong Kong, she records movies or different stuff off the TV and she just send it to England and I’d just watch it.

JO was able to get Cantonese films on video-tape from her Cantonese friends as well.

JO No, because in Hong Kong, pirates and things are quite, goes quite fast and they’ve already got their sources and I got it off a friend.

ML was not able to get as many films from Hong Kong as JU and JO could. The two films that she mentioned in the following extract were dated even at the time of the interview. The first film was first shown in Hong Kong in the late 1980s. The second film she mentioned was shown in Hong Kong at least five years before the interview took place.

LL What kinds of Chinese films do you like?
ML Depends on VCD, (laughs).
LL You mean it depends on who’s in it?
ML (laughs) Yeah, depending who is in it. That’s correct.
LL Like Aaron Kwok
ML Yeah (laughs)
LL Have you seen all his films?
ML Not all, not a lot, not a lot. I don’t see a lot
LL Which of his films have you seen?
ML Which one have I seen? I’ve seen *Che Geuk Siu Ji*. 

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The one where he was killed.
Yeah. I've seen *Fung Wahn, haih a.*

AF went to the cinema a lot at one time with his Hong Kong Cantonese friend but when his friend moved away from London, he went to the cinema on his own. When he started to work full time at the takeaway, he did not have the time to go to the cinema at all.

AF Er. Used. I used to go to cinema a lot but now I don't. Now I don't. I've got no time to go to. I was helping as a part-time you see. At that time, I was doing on Friday and Saturday. So I got loads of time to do my other stuff. I start to work full time six days is last year. So, from last year, I start to have, haven't got any private life no more.

All except AF watched British TV. JO's favourite TV were the MTV programmes. For JU, it was sports. ML watched TV whenever she was not working at her father's takeaway. As already mentioned, Cantonese satellite TV stations broadcast soap operas very late so that those who work in catering can watch the programmes after work. The broadcasting hours did not suit the four informants because they had to go to school in the morning and if the programmes were not recorded, they would not be able to watch the programmes. Even if the programmes were recorded, they might be played when the informants were asleep or in school. JU and JO devoted Friday nights and Saturdays to watching films and Hong Kong soap operas. AF did not have this luxury.

AF I mean, it's for me, it's sometimes, it's too late like, it start at mid-night and I got two days to go to school as well, so I can't catch up with those, like.

**Reading: Magazines and Newspaper.**

All 4 non-link generation informants read English newspapers. JO and ML read The Financial Times and The Times because they were taking Economics A-Level. JU read The Metro, a free newspaper on offer at tube stations and train stations in London. AF read The Sun and The Daily Mirror because those were the newspapers where he worked offered to customers.

None of the four informants read Chinese novels. This was due to their lack of proficiency in written Chinese. Like many Cantonese adolescents in Hong Kong and London, AF read Japanese comic books translated into Chinese. His choices of Japanese comics were restricted to those that were popular in Hong Kong when he was there. AF would spend his meagre allowance on these
comic books which he bought in Chinatown at the time before Pokemon was first shown on British TV.

AF    Er, well, the favourite one is Dragonball, actually. And I read them a lot, actually. I still got it in at home, actually.

JO and JU read English computer magazines. ML read English teen magazines. AF read English men’s magazines. ML and AF did not read Chinese magazines much. AF kept a collection of Japanese comics translated into Chinese at home. Lack of knowledge of written Chinese was an obstacle to the pleasure they might have derived from Chinese magazines.

ML    (laughs) Struggle, yes. Like I can’t really read hard one but if something really interest me and I’ll try and read it, and, you know, see ‘cause I read like, I can read bits and then I try and figure out what they’re trying to say but I can read it but understanding it erm, just a little bit. ‘Cause I think it’s erm, the way it is written the language, don’t always understand what they’re trying to say.

As for JO and JU, their extended family in Hong Kong sent them a lot of Chinese magazines and newspaper cuttings.

Chinese Education.

Three of the informants, AF, JO and ML, went to Chinese school once but they were not pleased with the Chinese schools they attended. AF and ML complained that three hours a week of Chinese lessons were not enough.\(^{51}\)

The real reason, as attested in the following extracts, was that the informants did not find knowledge of written Chinese useful to them. Or they confused written Chinese with spoken Cantonese.

AF    I study there 3 years and I didn’t study no more. I found it boring. It’s like every day like, I mean, it’s not English school every day go there. It’s like once a week. And I found it, what’s the point, if it is once a week, and you use to, nothing to learn, actually. I know all the basic stuff. So I found it, alright then, I am leaving.

\(^{51}\) In defence of the Chinese schools they attended, Cantonese students in Hong Kong have about the same amount of lesson time in written Chinese.
Because, because when I did mine, er, because the people I was doing it with, they were taking it a year early and I was only taking my first year. And then say they did their A-Level the first year and say they didn't, so I was the only one left. And then there was a new lot from the GCSE moving to the A-Level and they couldn't accommodate me so they put me into the first year again. And that actually repeating the stuff. And I actually know it. What they are doing is going through the history books which I already could do it by myself.

That's why it's hard 'cause it's once a week. Because if I was to go, like if I was still in Hong Kong I would know the Chinese because you're going to school five days a week and you gotta write it, you gotta speak it, whereas in England, I go to English school five days a week, so mostly I'll be speaking English, communicating in English, writing in, so that's, that's is like, it's not even practice in English, it comes naturally now but because I had, I went to Chinese school once a week, then it's hard because I didn't have constant reminder 'cause like one week one day Chinese school then the rest English, then oh, that's Chinese again, so it's just difficult and, and I quit last year anyway, because it's just, it's school work taking over and I just quit. And my mum says it wasn't worth it anyway (laughs). Yeah, yeah, but, but, you know, if I was to study Chinese like I'm studying French now, then I'd be able to understand it, because I have lessons everyday in French and German, so you know, we read texts, and you know, see what it says, understand it, it's just, once you, once you know the meaning of the word, then it's easy to understand it.

The desire to find employment outside Britain was evident among the informants. Hong Kong was a logical choice for JO. It offered a sense of security she could not get in Britain. She did not feel secure enough to live and work outside Hong Kong. And because of her education in Britain, she felt that it would be easier for her to compete with the people educated in Hong Kong. There is evidence that her insecurity was due to her mother’s work experience in London.

Because there's such a thing as jam haahm seui [= studying abroad] and it's much more, people would look up to you more if you are from another country. That's how the system works, the Chinese people, "Ooh, you are from London, I see, you are from another university, not from Hong Kong universities". Even if it's not a good university but it's still from England, you know, they wouldn't know which university is which university, they only need just the name, you are from London. It's like anyone who hears Cambridge, they'd know, oh, its definitely, yeah? You know, he's in for the job.

Because I've heard of lots of examples of people being discriminated and also my mum has been practising in, well, she practise in England and works in England for quite a long time and she hasn't got anywhere. It's because why, OK, why wouldn't an English person trust a Chinese person when they have the choice of trusting their own same colour. Because I think there would be a better chance of me to earn, to immerse into the atmosphere, because there is such thing as racist in another country. If I work in England, I don't think I'd get quite anywhere, but in Hong Kong rather, it's Chinese people and I myself am Chinese, so I'd, you know, be more like togetherness.

For JO and JU, their life in London the second time around was a sojourn from their life in Hong Kong. They returned to Hong Kong twice a year for their holiday. They wanted to maximise their stay in Hong Kong. They always left for Hong Kong on the last day of school and returned to
London as late as possible. In 2001, JO dropped out from the university she was in and returned to Hong Kong. JU was only 14 at the time of the interview and he did not know what he wanted to study at university or where he wanted to work in the future. He was in a boarding school in 2001 and the researcher lost all contact with him.

ML had a more European outlook. At the time of the interview, she planned to read French with International Studies at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

ML And I've lived in England for about 11 years, 11 years, and I don't really like it here. Because I, I, I don't know, it's a boring country, it's a boring country because not much to it, it's quite boring, there's no life. There is, not a lot, (sighs) it's boring.

ML So basically, it's like Economics but I think it's, it's like, not, it's not just talking about Britain, it's like Europe, it's like broadly based (inaudible) around the world and French is gonna come into it like erm, being able to communicate in French with other countries and other businesses and all that. So that's why I wanna do it.

In 2001, ML was in the University of Coventry reading European Studies. AF was studying an HND course in architecture at the time of the research. He, typically, had no idea whether he wanted to work in Britain or anywhere else.

AF I am the guy who like to work anything, actually. I work like, for me, for me working, I looking at the atmosphere. Is it friendly atmosphere? Is it fun to work? I don't look at the how much they give me all the stuff. I mean you can give me 50 pound a week but your area is nice and cosy and is friendly, I will work there. I mean, you give me loads of money, I would, if I not happy, I am not happy, actually.

In 2001, he was in Greenwich University reading architecture.

Employment.

JO and JU did not work at all. Their parents wanted them to focus on their schoolwork. ML worked at her father's takeaway three nights a week. She was paid £60 per week.

AF worked in the same takeaway. In the beginning, he was like ML. He worked three nights a week and was paid the same amount. In 1999, he worked full time (between two in the afternoon to midnight for six days a week) at the takeaway and earned £160 a week.
The amount that AF and ML earned shows that Chan (1986) might have under-estimated the amount Hong Kong Cantonese children earned when they worked for their parents. Waiters working in restaurants in Chinatown in 2002 earned about £180 a week. They had to work from noon to midnight with a two-hour break six days a week. Furthermore, as the interviews with the 12 link generation adolescent informants will show, working in Chinese takeaways is a way for Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London to maintaining a lifestyle characterised by high consumption.

A Comparison of the Social Practices of the Non-link Generation Informants with the Adult informants.

It is not surprising that some of the social practices of the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants were different from those of the adult informants. Age and family responsibilities were obvious factors that contributed to the differences. For example, the non-link generation adolescents were not asked what they knew about home maintenance and their legal rights. It was assumed that they were at the age when this knowledge was not as important to them as it was to adults. However, there were other social practices in which age and the amount of family responsibilities did not play a part in differentiating the adult informants from the non-link generation adolescent informants.

The preceding discussion has argued that proficiency in English and long working hours were not the only barriers that kept the adult informants from having non-Cantonese friends. The research has shown that for those non-link generation informants like JO and ML, who were more proficient in English and who had non-Cantonese friends they met in school, they would go out with their Cantonese friends only. In this aspect, there was no difference between JO and ML and the adult informants. As for the other 2 non-link generation informants, JV was deemed too young to go out on his own unless it was with his sister. AF, probably because of his personality, had problems with making friends at all. It could also be that he found security in isolation. He was on his own when his only friend, a Hong Kong Cantonese, left London.

JO and ML met their Hong Kong Cantonese friends in Chinese school. They went out, ate out, and carried out activities like shopping with these friends but not with their friends of other ethnic groups. In terms of friends whom they went out with, JO and ML were no different from
the adult informants. The place JO and ML and their Cantonese friends usually went to was the West End where they had Chinese meals although they would also go to fast food shops like McDonald’s.

The non-link generation adolescent informants listened to Western music popular among British youth. While it might be inane to expect the adult informers to listen to the music of Lauryn Hill and Puff Daddy, the fact that the adult informants kept the CDs and tapes of their contemporary Cantopop stars and not those of the Western musicians who were popular in Britain when the adult informants were young indicates that they preferred Cantonese music to Western music. As for JO, JU, and ML, their appreciation of hip-hop and rap show an allegiance to the youth culture in London and in many Western countries. It was an appreciation that crossed ethnic and national boundaries.

JO, JU, and ML also liked Cantopop. They bought CDs of their favourite Cantopop stars in Chinatown and downloaded their music from the Internet. These 3 informants had also acquired knowledge about Cantopop stars, probably from the Hong Kong magazines they read and from what their Cantonese friends told them. For example, all 3 of them stated that they did not like a Cantopop star because he was gay.

JU, JO, and ML watched Cantonese films and soap operas whenever they were available. They relied on the extended family in Hong Kong for a regular supply. JO was able to get Cantonese films on tape and VCD from her Cantonese friends as well. Again, there was no difference between them and the adult informants. What was different between the two groups was that the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants liked English language films as well.

All four non-link generation adolescent informants read English magazines and only one adult informants did. The difference may be due to a difference in English proficiency. However, both informant groups did not read any English novels at all.

In sum, the investigation has shown that the Hong Kong Cantonese community can be identified by the social practices of the 8 adult informants and the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants. The preceding discussion has shown that social practices like social network, films,
music, reading, food preference of the 2 informant groups shared similar characteristics, characteristics which mark them as Hong Kong Cantonese. Both groups had non-Cantonese friends they went out with. Both groups liked watching Cantonese films and television programmes, listened to Cantopop, read Chinese magazines, and liked Chinese food. In addition, neither group read English novels. The preceding discussion has also shown the difference in social practices between the two generations. The 4 non-link generation adolescent informants had non-Cantonese friends in school. They watched English language films, listened to English language pop music, and read English language magazines.

In the preceding discussion, the present work has quoted the Home affairs Committee's observation that it was lack of English, ignorance of rights, cultural differences, scattered settlement and long unsociable hours that kept the Hong Kong Cantonese community from engaging in more British like social practices. The preceding discussion has identified cultural differences and not lack of English and long unsociable hours as the main reason. The investigation of the adult informants shows that the adult informants were not unaware of their rights. In fact, the investigation has shown that knowing their rights is a salient social practice that separates newcomers from Hong Kong Cantonese migrants who have been in London for a long time. Lack of English and long unsociable hours might have kept some adult informants from making friends with members of other ethnic groups. As the investigation has shown that the non-link generation adolescent informants were also reluctant to make friends with people belonging to other ethnic groups, the present work concludes that the influence of long working hours and lack of English play less important roles that the Home affairs Committee gave credit to. As the investigation with the link generation informants will show, the key factor is cultural differences.

In the following section, English language speech data the 4 non-link generation informants will be analysed. The speech data were elicited from interviews.
Six proficiency indicators and six sociolinguistic indicators were identified for investigation (see Chapter 1). These features were suggested to the present researcher by the principal thesis supervisor, Professor Pennington. The six proficiency indicators are: /n/ > /l/ in word initial position for English words, stress placement, English definite article, English past tense marking, the use of English lexis, and omission of object in English sentences. The six sociolinguistic indicators are: word medial intervocalic /l/, HRT, tense alternation in narrative (historical past tense), use of be like and other reporting verbs, the use of you know and init for information staging, and the use of pop terms / slang.

Interviews.

The interviews with the 4 non-link generation informants took place between July, 1998 and October, 1999. The subjects were interviewed and the topics centred on their life in Britain. Aspects such as their school life, their family life, their preferences in music, films and TV programmes, and their reading habits were focuses of the interviews. The interviews were recorded on a Sony Walkman, Model WM-GX614. A Sony wired microphone, Model ECM-T6, was attached to the clothes the informants were wearing. The tapes used were TDK D-90. The interviews with AF, JO, and ML lasted about 90 minutes.

The Findings.

In the following, the findings on the use of the 6 proficiency indicators and the 6 sociolinguistic indicators in the speech data of the 4 non-link generation informants are reported.

/n/ > /l/ in Word Initial Position for English Words.

A segment of the interviews with the 4 informants was selected to look at their pronunciation of English words with an initial /n/. Each segment begins about 10 minutes into the interview and
 lasts for about 15 minutes. There are 332 word tokens with initial /n/ in these 4 segments. The analysis showed that the informants did not replace word-initial /n/ with /l/ at all.

**Stress placement for English words.**

English words with 2 or more syllables in the same segments were analysed. These words include proper nouns (names of persons, shops, films, pop groups, TV channels), mass and count nouns, prepositions (e.g. after), and conjunctions (e.g. because) etc. All have standard English stress placements.

**Definite Article.**

There are 3 uncertain cases in the data. They are listed as follows:

ML Yeah. Erm, I read the school, they have like Independent, an
AF Well, er, the Cantopop is er bought in Hong Kong last year, so it's still er brand new.
JO When I was a kid, I am (?) not allowed to watch TV because my old school, they sent a letter to my family and said TV's not good for the kids, so my mum doesn't, objects the idea of TV, so I don't get to watch TV.

The first uncertain case is excluded from the analysis because *I read the school* does not make sense. It is likely that a head noun is missing from the NP as ML was talking about the newspaper she read. The second uncertain case is excluded from the analysis because the NP was not complete. AF meant he bought a Cantopop CD in Hong Kong. The third uncertain case is excluded from the analysis the researcher had not read the letter and he would not know whether the school was referring to kids in general or the kids in the school.

The framework for the analysis of the 4 informants’ production of *the* is used in other SLA research (Huebner, 1979; Young, 1996). According to this framework, there are 4 contexts.

**Context 1:** [+ specific, + hearer] In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with ‘the’. In terms of function, ‘the’ in this context realises uniqueness and anaphoric reference.
In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with 'a(n)', the, or zero. In terms of function, all three articles realise generic reference.

In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with 'a(n)' and attributive function is realised in this context.

In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with also marked with 'a(n)' or zero. In terms of function, it introduces the first mention of NP in a discourse. (Huebner 1979, p. 25)

There are 261 instances of the for analysis. The appears in front of a proper noun (the name of a film) once: The Life Less Ordinary (JO).

JO We have been watching Antz. We saw Antz. My brother just rented out the Life Less Ordinary. Lots of different types.

There are 13 other instances of non-English like usage in the data and they are listed as follows:

1. JO Hmmhmm Yeah, we sometimes go to the cafe and we just talk, talk, talk. And
2. JO rough, erm, these books she buys from the shops and just go through them with
3. JO my class more into rap and like the England songs, so I started like rap.
4. JO maybe look at like the teen magazines and if if
5. ML and Boot with the suntan lotion for the children and getting money together as
6. AF Or you have to join the group and the groups look after you.
7. AF I decide whether to hang around with the English guys is better
8. AF and you get all this professional, er, certificate, saying you are the real qualifier architecture.
9. AF Give you pressure loads of time, so can't cope with the student pressure.
10. JO: Or sometimes feeling like good, but use 0 phone.
11 ML I went to, like, EFL classes after school erm, and erm, 0 teacher, erm, taught me how to read
12. LL What kinds of Chinese films do you like?
   ML Depends on 0 VCD, (laughs).
13. ML: 'cause I play the violin, erm, I joined in like 0 orchestra at lunch times.

Instances 1 - 9 are instances with non-English like usage of the because they belong to Context 4. Instances 11-13 (all by ML) should have an article (a/an or the) because the NPs in these instances are count nouns. Instance 10 is non-English like usage because in standard English, the is used with institutions like the bank, the bus and so on.
Tense Marking.

The 4 informants talked about their school in Hong Kong and their first schools in London. These extracts were used to analyse how they marked verbs in past contexts.

JU talked about a school he went to in Hong Kong.

JU  Erm, we had Maths, English, and Art, I am not sure about the rest. Well, well, in my class, I had about, erm, about two or three Chinese friends. We did drama, English, History, Science, Maths. Er, we did Mandarin.

ML described her life in a school in London she went to.

ML  I didn’t do any in [name of the school], thank you. (laughs) ‘Cause the clubs were, what, very good. I didn’t like the people who were in the club, like I wanted to do netball but the people who would do netball were too good. And I got a bit scared and so I didn’t do it. They, I think, got a basketball club. That was rubbish. So I quit after that. But, oh, but, and then, ‘cause I play the violin, erm, I joined in like orchestra at lunch times and played in lunch time concerts like a one person performance and I did that and those were scary because everyone used to just watch you and you know (laughs) and I used to be scared that if I made a mistake, every one would laugh.

JU and ML marked all regular verbs in past context with past tense markers and produced the standard past tense forms of irregular verbs.

JO talked about the two schools she went to when she was in Hong Kong.

JO  What did you study there?

JO  [name of school]? There is no specific subject. It’s just an all round thing. Because it is a primary school. So they just basically teach you Maths, the very elementary stuff and do English, no science. There is a bit of geography. And then we would have PE, that’s it.

JO  What about [name of another school]?

JO  [name of the other school] Year 7, we had lots, lots, lots of different subjects. Do I have to list them out? GCSE. I did Maths, History, 3 sciences, CDT, Arts, Mandarin, er, and English, and that’s about it.

JO used verbs in present tense form when she talked about her first school. However, she presented the information in a way as if the states and conditions still held true at the time of the interview, thus justifying the use of present tense. There are also 2 instances of contracted be in
Quirk and Greenbaum (1973, p. 36) and Leech and Svartvik (1973, p. 208) point out that contracted be is not used in past time context in Standard English. JO's two instances of contracted be is not standard English usage.

AF described his school life the first time he was in London.

AF Er, Basically, it's that, I first come to England, and you see, you don't really know about the culture, the your language and they just bully you all the time. And the one thing, the problem is, I get trouble a lot, sss, fighting a lot all the time and so I decide, I give them warning, saying, "If you happen again, I will send you off, send back to Hong Kong." And I can't take it no more, so I just say, "I'm going back then". Don't know what's happen to my headmaster. He's put most of the Chinese people to study English. So on that stage, we all study English, we don't know what's going on on Science, IT, all the stuff. So when we jump on the fifth grade, everyone's no idea what's going on. Yes, it's expensive school, but you see, we all pay for the English course and we don't like it, you see. There is around 40 some, 40 stud, 40 Chinese students, only 5 students don't have to study English, that's it. The rest of us stay there. And I am the one who go on strike. I say I am not study English.

In the beginning, AF presented some of the information in a way as if the information was consensual or universal truths (you don't really know about the culture, the your language and they just bully you all the time). Like JO, he also used contracted be in past time contexts. He also used contracted has. He did not produce any past tense verb form at all in the extract.

Lexis.

Below is a list of words used by the 4 informants that may be influenced by Cantonese. The list is divided into 2 parts, according to whether each particular instance was affected by Cantonese word meaning, Cantonese grammar.

| CS1 | LL     | How did you get those tapes? Did you buy them or was it your family in
|     | JO     | Lent, lent it. (correct English usage: borrowed; Cantonese source je meaning to borrow and to lend)
| CS2 | JO     | And I am sure they earned quite a lot from us. (correct English usage: made a lot of money; Cantonese source jahn meaning to earn as in to earn an income and to make a lot of money from business profit)
| CS3 | JO     | Yeah, definitely, but I haven't actually tried it myself (correct English usage: experienced; Cantonese source si meaning to try and to experience)
| CS4 | AF     | At that time, I was doing on Friday and Saturday. So I got loads of time to do my other stuff. (correct English usage: working; Cantonese source joh meaning 'to do a task' and 'to work')
| CS5 | AF     | You see, I was, I was, I think before I went to Hong Kong last two years, (correct English usage: ago; Cantonese source chihm meaning ago with time
adverbial or the one before with time adverbials and all NPs. For example: chihn chai means ex-wife).

CS6 AF Well, he, he come here longer than me (correct English usage: has/had been; Cantonese source leih meaning to come and to arrive)

CS7 ML and I came back at seven with, erm, my brother, he was nine then (correct English usage: cousin).

CS8 ML And then my small, the smaller brother, erm, he got a bit scared

In the following, it is the difference in grammar that makes the usage problematic:

CG1 AF Well, yes. I was helping as a part-time you see. (correct English usage: part-time worker)

CG2 AF I got two days to go to school as well. (Cantonese source: yiuh as a co-verb meaning ‘have to’)

CG3 JO I sometimes, you know, call them out and says “Let’s go shopping, or something like that.” (Correct English usage “ask them to come out” Cantonese source: giu meaning to call and to ask; cheut leih as a co-verb meaning to come out.

There is also an instance in the data probably caused by blending.

JO Because I think there would be a better chance of me to erm, to immerge into the atmosphere. (Immerge is the blending of immerse and submerge)

Null Objects.

All instances of null objects in the speech data are listed as follows:

1 AF Well, first thing, I didn't know, didn't speak any English much at that time and so it is easy to pick on, you see.

2 JO Er, no, there's actually two sources I could get from.

3 JO No, we, 'cause we go back to Hong Kong about once a year, so we buy ourselves and we bring it back to England

4 ML 'Cause my mum was scared, you know. We were too young and I didn't know the place very well. So she didn't let go out all the time.

5 ML He fought. I ignored and that was it (laughs).

6 ML I think the music's good. Have you got her album? LL The miseducation of Lauryn Hill?

ML Yeah. I want to get hold of, OK.
Discussion.

None of the informants produced any instance of /n/ > /l/ in word medial intervocalic English words or placed stress in the wrong syllables of English words. JU’s English was most native like of the 4 informants because he was the only informant who did not produce any instance of the 6 proficiency indicators in the interview. AF, JO, and ML produced instances of non-English usage of 3 proficiency indicator: the, lexis, and null objects. ML and JO did not have any instances where verb tokens used in past time contexts were not marked in past tense but AF did. Thus, the English of JO and ML was more native like than AF.

In the following discussion, the researcher tries to explore any difference in the social profiles of the four informants that might have cause this variation in their English performance. JO and JU will be discussed together because they were siblings and grew up together. AF and NIL will be discussed together because they also grew up together in London.

JU was born in London. He lived in Hong Kong between age 3 and 11 with his mother and sister, JO. At age 11, he returned to London and lived with his father. JO was also born in London. She lived in Hong Kong between age 7 and 15. The two of them, because of their sibling relationship, were brought up in the same environment. They lived in the same house / flat in Hong Kong and London. They went to the same schools in Hong Kong. Yet the findings indicate the existence of factors that cause JO and not her brother to produce instances of 4 proficiency indicators.

JO was born in London and spent the first 7 years of her life there. According to Towell and Hawkins, she should have learnt English “rapidly, effortlessly, uniformly, and successfully” (p. 60). However, those instances of proficiency indicators showed that she had not.

A possible reason is that as a migrant brought up in a Hong Kong Cantonese family, she might be less exposed to English that, for example, an English child would. Her parents might not have talked to her in English. In addition, JO’s family might not have spoken in English to each other. However, JU was also brought up in the same family as well.

Another possible reason is language loss or attrition. JO might have achieved native like English at age 7 but because she spent 8 years in Hong Kong, her English might have eroded. JU, on the other hand, was unlikely to have achieved native like English at age 3. His English might not have eroded because his parameter setting process might not have been completed.
A third reason may be that JO was more exposed to the English spoken by Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents because she was more a part of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community than JU was. The friends she went out with were Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents she met in the Chinese school she went to. And as more a part of that community, she would use proficiency indicators to mark her membership. On the other hand, JU did not go to Chinese school and he did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese friends of his own. He would be less inclined than his sister to use proficiency indicators to mark her membership.

ML was born in London but lived in Hong Kong between age 2 and 7. She was educated in a school in Hong Kong with Chinese and Hong Kong Cantonese students and teachers. Returning to London at age 7, she was educated in 2 public schools before going to a state school where she still stayed at the time of the interview. AF was born in Hong Kong and stayed in London between age 9 and 11. During his first stay in London, he went to the same public school as ML did. They lived under the same roof. When he returned to London again at age 13, he stayed with ML and her family and went to another public school and at the time of the interview, he was doing an HND course in a college.

A possible factor that can account for the difference in English performance between AF and ML is the critical period or the diminishing ability to attain native speaker proficiency when the critical period has ended. ML was born in London and although she had spent 5 years in Hong Kong between age 2 and 5, she returned to London at age 7 and stayed there up to the time of her interview. AF was born in Hong Kong and did not come to London for the first time before age 9. Furthermore, he spent only 2 years in London before returning to Hong Kong again. Both informants stated they had problems with English in their first school in London. However, AF continued to have problems with his English when he returned to London at age 13 while ML reported that she no longer had the same problem.

During his stay in Hong Kong before age 9 and between age 11 and 13, AF would be exposed to Hong Kong English but ML would only be exposed to Hong Kong English before age 7. This, together with the critical period, might also account for the difference in English performance between the two informants.

Another possible reason is that ML was closer to the core of the general youth community in London than AF. ML had friends from other ethnic groups. She also took an active part in school-organised...
extracurricular activities. As the preceding discussion has shown, AF did not have any friends at all because of his unpleasant experiences in school in London. He did not take part in school-organised extracurricular activities at all. AF would be less exposed to natural authentic English than ML. He might also be more inclined to mark his distance from the core of the general youth community in London with the 4 proficiency indicators.

All 4 informants had spent at least 5 years in Hong Kong before age 13. This made it difficult to evaluate the effects of the critical period on their English performance. Nevertheless, the performance of the 4 informants in their production of the 6 linguistic features offer insights into how cognitive and social factors might mediate in L2 acquisition.

First, none of the 4 informants produce any instance of the 2 phonological proficiency indicators. This indicates that the critical period might not end, for these 2 proficiency indicators at least before age 9 (when AF first arrived in London). It also indicates that it might take 2 years or less (the duration of AF’s first stay in London) for the parameters of these 2 proficiency indicators to be set at native speaker values. Furthermore, Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents, as migrants living in London, might attach special social meaning to standard English pronunciation. As English L2 migrants, they might consider standard English pronunciation as important to their future career in London. This will be explored further in the investigation of their production of sociolinguistic indicators.

Second, JU was the only informant who did not produce any instance of the 6 proficiency indicators in his interview. Like ML, JU was born in London and both informants were sent to Hong Kong between age 2 and 3. ML spent less time in Hong Kong and returned to London at an earlier age than JU did (age 7 vs. age 11). ML should have fewer instances of proficiency indicators in the speech data. The fact that she did not might be attributable to her being closer to the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community than JU was.

JU did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese friend in London at all. ML had Hong Kong Cantonese friends she met in Chinese school. They told each other their troubles and went out together. As she was closer to the core of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London, ML might have been more exposed to Hong Kong English or more inclined to use proficiency indicators to mark her membership in the community. ML described her relationship with one of her Hong Kong Cantonese friends in her interview.
No, but she's one of my closest friends. Her name is Sue Ha, and we've known each other for, well, ever since, at first I went to Chinese school. She was one of my friends, up until now she's still my friend. So just a minute ago, the phone call, that was her, and we're really close and we, er, talk about everything, basically. Everything and erm, we go everywhere together, not all the time, but you know, places we go together and my mum likes her because she's clever.

Third, AF, born in Hong Kong, might have arrived in London after the critical period for the non-phonological proficiency indicators had ended. It could have ended when he was in Hong Kong between age 11 and 13. On the other hand, his unpleasant experiences in London and his being on the margin of the general youth community could be important to his L2 acquisition. He could have been less exposed to English than the 3 other informants because he did not have any friends from school. He would also have been more inclined to mark his position in the general youth community in London with proficiency indicators.

AF, JO, and ML produced instances of the 4 non-phonological proficiency indicators. The preceding discussion has argued that it might be possible for ML and JO to mark their membership in the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London with the 4 proficiency indicators. This raises the question as to whether AF produced instances of the 4 proficiency indicators to mark the same membership or whether it was the result of the critical period. In the following, the 4 informants' production of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators are analysed. It will show that AF was further away from the core of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London than the other 3 informants, thus indicating that his instances of the 4 proficiency indicators were more likely due to other reasons than marking his membership of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London.

The Informants' Use of Sociolinguistic Indicators.

In the following, the non-link generation informants' production of each of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators are analysed and then discussed.
Intervocalic medial /t/.

### Table 4.03 Performance of Intervocalic Medial /t/ of the 4 Informants by Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preceding syllabic /n/</th>
<th>Preceding syllabic /m/</th>
<th>Preceding syllabic /l/</th>
<th>Preceding final schwa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>GT</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JU</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  
- G = glottal  
- GT = glottal plus /t/  
- T = full /t/

As there are so few tokens of inter-vocalic /t/ in word-medial position in the speech data, the analysis can only be of indicative values. Furthermore, the findings indicate gender difference. Only the female non-link generation informants produced instances of the glottal plus /t/ variant.

There were no tokens of inter-vocalic /t/ preceding syllabic /m/ in the analysed segments from both informants. For ML, T-glottalisation was categorical in two environments (across word boundary and preceding syllabic /n/). There were no tokens in the third environment (preceding syllabic /l/). Incidences of JO’s T-glottalisation was high in two environments (across word boundary and preceding syllabic /n/) and categorical in the third environment (preceding syllabic /l/).

### HRT.

There are 22 instances of HRT in the speech data. Some of these instances are listed below:

**JO**  
I went back to Hong Kong about when I was 10 years old. And I stay there for 6 years and now I’ve come back to the UK to do my A-Levels. I’ve been back for two years (rising).

**JU**  
McDonald’s or KFC (rising, slightly). And sometimes Burger King.

**ML**  
And er, I think, I, I went to, like, erm, what do you call those, EFL, you know, those extra courses after school (rising).

52 There is no indication that their performance of intervocalic /t/ was affected by Cantonese. First, their production of the words with intervocalic /t/ did not sound Cantonese. English L2 speakers affected by Cantonese would produce words like [bit]; as two distinct syllables with equal stress [bit] + [ta]. Evidence of this type of pronunciation was not found in the speech data.
JO produced 9 instances of HRT, JU produced one, and ML produced 12 instances. AF was the only non-link generation informant who did not produce any instance of HRT in the data.

**Reporting Verbs.**

The 4 non-link generation informants’ production of *be like* and other quotative verbs was also analysed. The findings are tabulated in Table 4.04 with the percentage in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.04</th>
<th>Individual Use of <em>Be Like</em> and Other Reporting Verbs with Percentage in Brackets.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n= 54</td>
<td>JO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be like</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say</td>
<td>5 (45.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 4 non-link generation informants favoured *say* to other variants. The findings also indicate some gender difference. The 2 female informants produced instances of *be like* and *be* but the 2 male informants did not produce any. There are only instances of *say* but no other variants of quotative verb in AF’s data.

- Examples of *be like* as a reporting verb from the speech data:

  **JO**  It's quite a new game and he's like "Ooh, Jocelyn, come on, play with me".

  **ML**  when they gonna come, and he was like, "Hey, no parents".

- Examples of *go* as a reporting verb from the speech data.

  **JO**  It's a joke. It's not harmful, there is sometimes go "Oie, ching chun, ching chun".

  **ML**  But the pieces were too hard for me and so I just went "No, no, no." (chuckles) Can't be bordered.

- Examples of zero quotative as a reporting verb from the speech data.

  **JO**  You know, just from speaking they think it's alright. "So what's wrong with you? Why, why are they picking on you all the time?"

  **ML**  She doesn't like showing to everyone, "Oh, look, look, look, look, you know, I've got an A this, I've got an A that".
• The only example of *be* as a reporting verb from the speech data.

• ML Because they're so "Why is it you want to study two languages?"

Tense Alternation in Narrative.

During the interviews, AF talked about an near accident he had one evening. JU talked about computer hacking between him and another person. ML talked about how she and her cousins got separated from her aunt and uncle in an underground railway station in Hong Kong when they were children. JO did not give an narrative. Their narratives are broken down and listed.

Orientation Section

| 001 | AF | I was working in a take-away once |
| 002 | JU | Once there was this guy who I, who I, erm, who actually threatened me, |
| 003 | ML | Yeah. Oh, oh, I remember that time at the underground, OK, right, erm, |
| 004 | ML | 'cause we were going out with my, his parents, and the uncle and aunt |

Evaluation Section

| E01 | AF | and it's very busy night |
| E02 | AF | and we was run out of stuff. |
| E03 | AF | So I *have to* go and get it. |
| E04 | AF | And I was about to cross the road, |
| E05 | AF | I *see* no cars |
| E06 | AF | and so I was try to run out. |
| E07 | JU | he *knows* |
| E08 | JU | that I, I'm hacking him |
| E09 | JU | I knew he was trying to hack me too, |
| E10 | JU | which was stop my computer working after a while |
| E11 | JU | and he thought I was still in, at in danger, |
| E12 | JU | while he was, like, having fun walking away, |
| E13 | ML | we thought, yeah, |
| E14 | ML | we thought they wanted to catch the train and |
| E15 | ML | because we just came out from the escalator |
| E16 | ML | we were like calm |
| E17 | ML | he got a bit scared |
| E18 | ML | The smaller one's really scared. |

Complicating Action

| C01 | AF | Sudden a car coming in front of me, |
so I was jump back.
'cause I sent him a file, and then,
and so, so he sent me a file,
so I opened it for the sake of it and then he
and he then actually deleted one of my files,
which, I actually fixed it and so while, I,
I delete quite some file on his harddisk.
and the train doors opened
so we were, "Run, run, run."
we ran in,
stood there waiting for them to come in,
but we were like "You want to come here. You want to come here",
so the door shut
and then the train just went
and they were like,
and then I was like,
we were just standing there,
and I was saying to him, "Do you know where the train's going?"
He said, "No, I don't care."
so we were like, "Shut up, shut up. Don't start crying." and like this.
I was like, "Oh yeah, wherever you're going, I will follow you",
He said, "No, we go home to mommy",
and then he said we should get off the next stop
the next stop came,
we got off, then,
a security guard came
and asked us, you know, where our parents
and we said, "Next station, back there",
and they took us into the office
and then they got in contact with the next station,
and then the parents came,
and he was like, "Hey, no parents".

No instances of tense alternation were found in the orientation and complicating action sections of the informants' narrative. There are 4 instances of present tense verbs tokens in the evaluation section of AF's (E03, E05) and JU's (E07, E08).

The findings of JU and AF production of past tense marking when they talked about their early school life in Hong Kong and London (see above) indicate that E07 and E08 (by JU) are instances of tense alternation as the informant marked all verbs he produced then in past tense. On the other hand, AF’s E03 and E05 might not be instances of tense alternation because he did not mark any verb at all in past tense when he talked about his first schools in London. In fact, he produced instances of past tense verbs in his narrative.
Information Staging: *init.*

No instances of *init* or other question tags appeared in the corpus.

Information Staging and *You know.*

There are 111 instances of *you know* in the speech data of the four informants. JU did not produce any instance of *you know* in his interview at all. There are two instances in AF’s speech data. There are 20 instances in JO’s data and 89 in ML’s.

The *participation framework* that Schiffrin (1987) was used for the analysis of the 4 informants’ use of *you know* in the interviews. Schiffrin (1987) points out that *you know* “create[s] a situation in which the speaker knows about (has meta-knowledge of) knowledge which is shared with the hearer” (p. 269). Such instances were found in the speech data of JO and ML.

**JO**

He approves because he is a restaurateur and he tells me that being a restaurateur isn’t that great, *you know*, it’s hard work all the time. It’s all naturally getting down and doing stuff.

**JO**

sometimes I go to Chinatown, and, hang around, *you know*, and usually have tea.

**ML**

I wasn’t allowed to go out with my friends. ‘Cause my mum was scared, *you know*. We were too young.

**ML**

We didn’t argue. Didn’t argue and *erm*, we helped each other with like, *erm*, *you know*, problems, homework, *you know*, all sorts.

*You know* also marks “the general consensual truths which speakers assume their hearers share through their co-membership in the same culture, society or group” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 275) or shared knowledge. Such instances were found in the speech data of AF, JO and ML.

**General consensual truths**

**ML**

I’ll probably have to take up like night school, extra course in Cantonese and start learning how to write it again, *you know*, it’s hard.

**JO**

Maybe it’s different taste and also, the clothes here are quite expensive compared to Hong Kong, and when you see clothes in the shops like in Miss Selfridge, *you know*, I can get that in Hong Kong way cheaper.
Shared knowledge

AF He is a racist, you can say. Like, you know my Malaysian guy yeah. Er, from the college. He studied there as well. (The Malaysian person had been mentioned previously.)

JO They’re computer magazines, at the back they tell you what new, you know, what new gadgets have come out and they are quite interesting.

ML the Headmistress said erm, said I had a lot of stuff to catch up on, and so I had to repeat a year, so you know, start at Year Eight.

Pop terms.

All four informants produced pop terms in their interviews. These instances are listed below. The glosses, from Green (1998), are given in brackets.

P01 JO I wasn’t into Chinese music and I didn’t know any pop star or anything (interested).

P02 JO but sometimes I go to Chinatown and bugger around, you know (wander).

P03 JU he he try to take the piss and call me a Chink (tease)

P04 JU So I start took the piss of him.

P05 JU Well, before I came to England, I wasn’t really into it (as in P01).

P06 LL So you’ve got loads of TV games, have you?

JU Yeah. Tons (plenty).

P07 LL Do you watch Channel 4?

JU It’s crap (rubbish).

P08 LL I hack someone once or twice, but, but I got quite freaky (unnerving).

PP9 JU Er, I used to, but, but now I think it’s just, just, it’s lame (contemptible).

P10 AF Er. Loads of people. White, Indians, black (plenty).

P11 AF Well, er, how? Well, decide go with the float, like.

P12 LL I’ll bring it around sometime next week and you can record it on tape or something

ML Oh, cool, yeah (good).

P13 ML We lost contact and then by chance, we went to Bexley Grammar together. As, er, oh gosh, you know. So we’re together now (oh God).

P14 ML The vibe is not that good but it’s OK, it’s OK, it’s not bad (atmosphere).

P15 ML Lots. Lots and lots of good friends. Erm. I had loads (plenty).

Of all these instances, only P07 and P10 are problematic. Freaky means unnerving (Green 1998) and it cannot refer to JU. ‘Float’ in P10 was probably was probably a mis-selection and the intended word was flow.
Discussion.

The analysis of the informants' production of the sociolinguistic indicators seems to point to gender difference. The female informants, JO and ML, produced instances of glottal plus /t/ be like, and zero quotative while the male informants did not. JO and ML produced instances of HRT, you know, and go as quotative verb than the male informants. On the other hand, AF did not produce any instance of glottal or glottal plus /t/ variant, HRT, and any variants of say. He produced only two instances of you know. JU, the other male informant, did not produce any instance of glottal or glottal plus /t/ variant or you know. He produced two instances of tense alternation, one instance of HRT, and one instance of a variant of say. However, information on their life in London elicited in the interviews suggests there are other reasons as well.

AF’s life in London was different from JO and ML in many ways. As already discussed, he had a very difficult time in school. Unlike the three other informants, he did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese friends at all. JO and ML, for example, met their Hong Kong Cantonese friends in Chinese schools. AF also went to Chinese school for three years but he did not make any friend there. He did not engage in salient social practices that are salient to the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. For example, he did not listen to Cantopop, or read Chinese magazines, or watched Cantonese films or television programmes. Of the four informants, AF was the one who was the furthest away from the centre of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community. The following statement from AF indicates he was aware that he had to identify and engage in social practices of a community in order to be a member. However, as the statement also shows, he did not identify himself as a member of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community.

AF I mean I am not the one who like to hang around in Chinatown. And I don't know what they want, what their culture look like. You have to hang around with them, everything. You have to come, like, you have to up-date with them. But I wasn't up date with them. I don't know what's going on, or whatever.

Of the four informants, AF was also the one who was the furthest away from the centre of the general youth community in London. He did not have any friend from other ethnic groups in London at all. Despite his unhappy experience with other students and staff in his schools, the interview data showed he made genuine attempts to engage in some social practices that are salient to the youth community in London.
AF Well, er, how? Well, decide go with the float, like, you just see what they want to do, you just like, that's good then, try to follow them, try to communicate with them, try to say, well, they have a life like that, yeah? My life like that is not bad, so, try to update with them, actually.

He listened to Western pop music although he did not have a favourite pop star. He bought the so-called ‘lad’ magazines like *FHM* and *Loaded*. He watched English language television when the takeaway was not busy. However, he seldom went out and he hardly went to the cinema, probably because he did not have any friend.

AF’s not producing as many instances of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators as JO and ML did can be linked to his being further away from the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community and general youth community in London than the two female informants. AF would be less exposed to the six sociolinguistic indicators than JO and ML because he did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese friends, or friends from other ethnic groups. He would also identify himself less with the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community and the general youth community in London and as a result, used fewer sociolinguistic indicators.

JU, the other male informant, did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese friends of his own. At the of the interview, he was not in Chinese school. The only Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents that he knew were through his sister, JO. He tagged along with his sister and her friends to Chinatown on weekends. As far as his school friends were concerned, he went out with them to fast food shops sometimes after school. However, he never went out with them, for example, to the cinema or shopping.

JU did not have any unpleasant experience as AF did in London. He did not have any friends he went out with at all because he was 14 years old and his father did not let him go out without JO’s supervision. He engaged in social practices that are salient to the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community and the general youth community in London. He listened to Cantopop and Western pop music. He watched films and television programmes produced in Hong Kong and in London. He read Chinese and English language magazines. JU would be less exposed to the six sociolinguistic indicators than JO and ML but more than AF did because he went out with his sister’s Hong Kong Cantonese friends to Chinatown, and he had non-Cantonese friends from school. He would also identify himself less with the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent
community and the general youth community in London than the two female informants but more than AF.

JU produced two instances of tense alternation while ML did not (JO did not give a narrative at all). This is intriguing and need to be discussed. One possible explanation is not using tense alternation is a salient linguistic practice in the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. As one who might be further away from the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community than ML was, JU could use tense alternation to mark his closer membership with the general youth community. However, since there are only the data of two informants for comparison, the researcher will wait after analysing the 12 link generation adolescent informants' production or non-production of tense alternation before discussing this further.

In sum, it could be the degree of assimilation in the two communities and not gender difference that resulted in the two male informants' lesser production of instances of sociolinguistic indicators.

The findings also show that there were some sociolinguistic indicators that none of the 4 non-link generation informants produced. They did not produce any instance of the glottal variant of word medial intervocalic /t/, or init. There might be several reasons.

First, it could be the *halo* effect. The informants might regard these linguistic features as more socially stigmatised than other linguistic features like *you know* or glottal plus /t/. To present themselves in a better light, they would be as inclined to produce the glottal variant of word medial intervocalic /t/, and *init* in the interview context.

Second, the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London, whom JO and ML were very much a part of, does not mark the boundaries with these linguistic features. In addition, as English L2 migrants living in London, Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents know that English pronunciation is important to them for their future career. They knew the English proficiency would be judged by prospective employers. Thus, they would be less inclined to use non-standard variants like T-glottalisation.
Pop terms are the only sociolinguistic indicator used by all four non-link generation informants. As a sociolinguistic indicator, pop term can mark the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London as a community different from the Cantonese adolescent community in Hong Kong better than the other sociolinguistic indicators based on the speech data of the four non-link generation informants.

4.05 Conclusions.

The investigation of the linguistic practices has shown that none of the four non-link generation informants achieved full native speaker proficiency in English. It has also shown how their English performance might have been mediated by cognitive and social factors. JU did not produce any instance of the six proficiency indicators. He produced instances of tense alternation, one instance of go as quotative verb, and pop terms. However, he did not produce any instance of glottal or glottal plus /t/, init, and you know. The discussion in the preceding section has argued that it could be the result of the critical period (born in London and living in London from birth to age 3, and from age 11) and his not having any friends at all. JO (born in London and living in London between from birth to age 7, and from age 15) and ML (born in London and living in Hong Kong from birth to age 2;6, and from age 7) produced instances of the 4 non-phonological proficiency indicators. They also produced instances of glottal plus /t/, be like, go, and zero quotative as quotative verb, you know and pop terms. They did not produce any instance of glottal, init, and tense alternation. AF (born in Hong Kong and living in London from age 9 to 11, and from age 13) produced instances of the four non-phonological proficiency indicators. Of the six sociolinguistic indicators, he only produced instances of pop terms.

The investigation also showed how their experiences in London might act as marginality that might have influenced their English performance. Marginality might have come in the form of AF’s unpleasant experiences in his school life. At age 20 when he was interviewed, he did not have any friend he could talk to or any friend he went out with.
Marginality might also be in the form of cultural difference. Although JO, JU, and ML, unlike the adult informants, had non-Cantonese friends from school. JO and ML only went out with their Hong Kong Cantonese friends. Cultural difference, based on the interview data, might come in the form of food preference, their love of Cantopop, Cantonese films and television programmes, or other social practices. JO and ML went to Chinatown with their friends where they had Chinese meals together. They went shopping with the Hong Kong Cantonese friends.

Marginality might also be in the form of perceived racial discrimination. As the preceding section has shown, AF attributed his unpleasant experiences to racial discrimination in school. JO had also been told by her mother that she (the mother) had been discriminated when she worked in London. ML also talked about her experience of racial discrimination in school.

A comparison of the linguistic and social practices of the adult informants and the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants shows similarities and differences. The four non-link generation adolescent informants did not have non-English like pronunciation features in their English but the eight adult informants had. However, with the exception of JU, the non-link generation adolescent informants produced instances of non-English like lexis, as the adult informants did. The adult informants' production of instances of proficiency indicators could be attributed to the critical period as the earliest arrival in this informant group was age 14 (A Chahn). However, marginality, including social practices like long working hours and not having any non-Cantonese friends might have played a significant role in their non-native like English at the time of the research.

The investigation of the social practices of the adult informants has shown that the adult informants engaged in social practices that were characteristic of both Hong Kong and London. The friends they had, the films and television programmes they watched, the music they listened to, the food they ate (only one informant liked non-Cantonese food), the magazines they read, their insecurity as migrants in London, their family obligations, and their sport preference were Hong Kong. These social practices had not changed during their stay in London. Some of them had acquired new social practices like home maintenance and gardening after they arrived in London but other social practices had not changed to more British like social practices.
The investigation of the social practices of the 2 informant groups shows the difference between the two informant groups in terms of social practices. JO, JU, and ML had non-Cantonese friends from school. They went to fast food shops like McDonald’s. All four non-link generation adolescent informants read English language magazines, watched English films, and listened to Western pop music. The two informant groups also had similar social practices. Informants from both groups did not go out with any non-Cantonese friends. They watched Cantonese films and television programmes, listened to Cantonese pop music of their times, preferred Cantonese food, and read Chinese magazines.

The four non-link generation informants were brought up by their Cantonese families in Hong Kong and in London. Their social practices were similar to those of the adult informants. As members of the general youth community in London, they engaged in social practices that mark membership of that community. They also engaged in linguistic practices of the general youth community in London. The discussion has argued that the English performance of the non-link generation adolescent informants might have been mediated by the critical period as well as their membership with the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London.

The investigation of the linguistic practices of the four non-link generation informants helped to pilot the methodology for the later data-gathering and analysis for the main study with the link generation group. While the same six proficiency and sociolinguistic indicators were used when the linguistic practice of the link generation informants was investigated, the valuable lesson that it might not be possible to obtain enough data to analyse their production of these indicators in certain linguistic environments from interview data alone was learnt. A series of tasks, as reported in Section 1.06, was designed to elicit more data from the informants.
Chapter Five  The Linguistic and Social Practices of 12 Link Generation Adolescent Informants.

The investigation of the linguistic and social practices of the 12 link generation adolescent informants is reported in this chapter. The findings of the informants' social practices are reported in Section 5.01. Statements from some of them confirm that cultural difference plays an important role in keeping Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents from having non-Cantonese friends. The investigation also reveals a major source of conflict between some informants and their parents. As reported in the previous chapter, Chan (1986) believes Hong Kong adolescents in London with catering background do not want to work in catering because the hours are long and the work is greasy, among other reasons. The present work shows that, while some informants did not like catering work for the reasons stated by Chan (1986), these informants were attracted by the wages. The major source of conflict between these informants and their parents identified by the rest is the degree of parental control imposed upon the informants. The investigation of the 12 link generation adolescent informants reported in Section 5.01 shows that the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London is a comity in its own right. They have social practices that are unique to Hong Kong Cantonese and their friends were mainly Hong Kong Cantonese.

The account of how the twelve adolescent informants were recruited, their individual social profiles, including their age of arrival, family background, and residence at the time they were interviewed have been given in Chapter One. A brief summary will be given here.

All 12 informants were born in Hong Kong to Hong Kong Cantonese parents. They arrived in England at age 5, age 8, and age 10. They lived in London at the time they were interviewed. Ten of them had catering background. Their parents either owned or worked in Chinese restaurants or Chinese takeaways. Some worked in a Chinese supermarket in Southeast London. The parents of one informant, KN, were estate agents. The father of YH, another informant, was a researcher at University College.
5.01 The Non-linguistic Social Practices of the 12 Informants.

In this section, the non-linguistic social practices of the 12 link generation adolescent informants are examined. The examination is based on participation observation and information elicited from the two interviews. The social practices chosen were based on the interviews and observation of the 8 adult informants and 4 non-link generation adolescent informants reported in Chapter 4.

The investigation of the 8 adult informants and the 4 non-link generation adolescent informants reported in Chapter 4 reveal that those 12 informants did not have any non-Cantonese friends they went out with. The investigation reported in this Section 5.01 shows 7 out of the 12 link generation informants went out only with their Hong Kong Cantonese friends at age 18 when they were interviewed. Statements from some informants will indicate that cultural difference is an important factor.

Social Network.

In Chapter 4, the research examined the social network maintained by eight adult Hong Kong Cantonese informants and four non-link generation adolescent informants. The investigation showed that while the non-link generation adolescents informants like ML and JO had non-Cantonese speaking friends from school, the friends they went out with were Hong Kong Cantonese.

The research shows that the twelve link generation informants had non-Cantonese-speaking friends when they were younger. As they arrived at age 18, the friends seven of them maintained were Cantonese speakers. The exceptions were CC, CT, HN, JW, and EL.

CC did not have any Cantonese-speaking friends at all. The only Cantonese speakers of her age group she went out with JO and JU, her cousins. CC’s best friends belonged to other ethnic groups. CC and her friends went shopping in south Kensington. They went to the cinema and had meals together. They also went to concerts together. They went on holidays together. CC did not
have a boy friend in 2000 and she stated that she had no preference as to the ethnicity of her boy friend when she had one.

CT met a Cantonese boy from Hong Kong one evening at a fish-and-chips shop. They struck up a friendship and through this boy, he met other Cantonese adolescents. However, he hardly went out with them.

CT I don't think I've seen, I don't think I've been to the cinema with one of my Chinese friend, once, this, this particular guy called Ernie. I don't think I've ever been to the, to see a film with him. Erm, the other guy, the British born Chinese, I've seen maybe two movies in two and a half years with him.

By age 18, he moved away from the social network that was his Hong Kong Cantonese friends. At the time he was interviewed, his best friends were non-Cantonese speakers. They were Irish, English, and Asian. His girl friend was an English girl from school. Their favourite haunt was a club in Reading.\(^{53}\) CT also explained why he preferred to have non-Cantonese as friends. As the following extract shows, he blamed it on his family:

CT I've always been brought up, er, in my family to always have a certain degree of mistrust against other Chinese, Cantonese people, like to be aware, basically, you know,

HN had non-Cantonese friends from school. They went to pubs and parties together. Although he still went out with these friends occasionally, at age 18, HN went out with his Hong Kong Cantonese friends whom he met in the arcades in Soho. There were 2 male Filipino adolescents in his group but they were on the periphery. For example, one evening the researcher met up with HN and his Cantonese friends in an arcade in Soho. The 2 Filipino friends came along when the party went to a Chinese restaurant for a meal. The Filipino adolescents did not take part in the conversation. Afterwards, when the party left the restaurant for the Hippodrome, the 2 adolescents did not join them.

\(^{53}\) CT said it was better than any club in London and it was worth the time spent on travelling.
JW had English friends from school. They went on holiday together including places like the Isle of Wight. At age 18, one of the few Hong Kong Cantonese friends that he had was HN. HN and JW would go to an arcade in Romford and have dinner in a Chinese restaurant there afterwards. Although he would venture into Chinatown with HN, his trips to the West End were few and far in between.

EL had non-Cantonese-speaking friends when she was young. At age 18, she had, as her best friend, an English girl called Elizabeth. They went out together and helped each other out.

EL: I know her since I was Year Seven, and erm, we get on, we haven’t had an argument or anything, and erm, I’m always there for her when she’s always upset and er, she’s always there for me, and erm, we go about together, we go out a lot, we talk, text message, and erm, yeah, and we don’t spend a lot of time together but we talk a lot. We can talk about anything, laugh at anything.

However, most of her friends were Hong Kong Cantonese. When EL gave a barbecue on her eighteenth birthday, all her guests were Cantonese. She and her Cantonese friends would go to arcades, pubs, and clubs in Chinatown. In the following extract, she stated she became tired of Chinatown because she knew too many people who hanged around in Chinatown.

EL: I hardly go to Chinatown. I don’t like, cause I don’t like to see my friend. Well I do want to see him but I don’t want to, you know, people keep walking past “Oh, hello” and it’s like “Oh, hello” I walk about some minute later, another person come “Oh hello, how are you?” No, I don’t like it.

EL preferred a Hong Kong Cantonese or an English to be her boy friend. In fact, at the time she was interviewed, she was going out with JH and another Cantonese from Hong Kong as well as an English boy. There was no parental pressure on her to have a boy friend from her own ethnic group.

EL: I don’t, I will, I will not say no to English boy, but I am not racist or anything

EL: but I would prefer English boy, not Indian boy and all that. But no, I know the things I know, whatever to English people, I, no

EL: Have you ever been out with, sort of

The other informants had non-Cantonese speakers as friends when they were young. They met their Hong Kong Cantonese friends in the secondary schools they attended, when they went to Chinese school, on the Internet, and because their Cantonese friends from Hong Kong lived in
the neighbourhood. By age 18, these informants only went out with other Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents.

HG had friends from the London Caribbean community and the Asian community when she first arrived in London. She met them through her cousin when they both lived in Elephant and Castle. She met her Cantonese friends in the Chinese school she went to and through Internet chatrooms. She went clubbing a lot with them. The Hippodrome was her favourite club. She stated that she did not care about the ethnicity of her ideal boyfriend as long as he was nice. She had a boyfriend at the time she was interviewed. He was a Cantonese born in London whose parents were from Hong Kong.

FN had non-Cantonese-speaking friends from school but she went out with Cantonese speakers. She met them in the Chinese school she went to. They went clubbing and to arcades in Chinatown. The club that FN and her Cantonese-speaking friends preferred was the Hippodrome in Leicester Square. In the following extract, FN explained that she preferred the Hippodrome to other clubs because there were more Chinese people there:

FN I've been in other place like Agronauts, Ministry, and Home but they are not English clubs, they're more like, I don't know where there is like, I don't know like lot of mixed race there but Chinese and Hippodrome it's like Monday nights, it's like Chinese people purely, yeah, and it's like all go there and it's like, I know, it's really different to go a club with a lot of Chinese people cause I've been to Chinese parties like but not actually a club like, like that so it's quite, it's nice there I don't feel intimidated at all or any vibes, er, er, I just felt completely at home, and we really enjoyed it and thought it was really good and we really enjoyed meself. I did that and I went, that time when I, I haven't, first time I went there like, I don't know, quite often, like maybe every week... I think there's a lot of people who know, everyone know each other in there, like you see a lot of familiar faces that are no around here any more "Oh look" He goes "Hello" it's like, it's quite a nice place to go but there's a lot of fuck, fights there which is quite bad, (laughs).

YH had an English girlfriend from school. Although they stayed in the same school, they slowly drifted apart because YH became more friendly with two Cantonese girls born in London. She met a lot of Cantonese-speaking friends in the chatrooms. She met her current boyfriend, a Cantonese born in London, there as well. YH did not like clubbing or going to arcades.

YH Usually Saturdays, I have to work, and it's like, well, we drive out of London, we go to places like Bournemouth and Cornwall, (inaudible) it's quite nice. And there's not much to do in London, we just get out for a meal or go out for a film, occasionally we play squash, tennis, and badminton, erm, cause I go to gym as well, so we don't go swimming or anything, we use to, I guess, ice skating, bowling, nothing really exciting, just waiting for time to pass, that's all.
JT did not have any non-Cantonese-speaking friends at all. He would go out to Chinatown occasionally with his Hong Kong Cantonese friends. Once, when his father was bullied by some racists, he called his friends for help. For two days, they looked for those who threw water all over JT’s father and, as the following extract shows, presumably to hand out some rough justice.

JT  Just call some of my friends but erm actually, that day was OK but erm, and the other day just erm, the day after that, about erm, nearly six or seven of us, our friends just come down and try to see any people that, that, erm at that incident, that happen, and erm, actually I think they quite lucky because none of them turn up anyway, none of those kids turn up, so unfortunately we, we can’t do anything about it, you know.

GW had non-Cantonese speaking friends but the friends she went out with were other ethnic Chinese and Cantonese speakers. They would go to the local shopping centres after school. She would go to Chinatown with her Cantonese-speaking friends.

GW  OK. Erm, when I was in Bexleyheath school, erm, yes, there's nothing much to do, cause I still doesn’t really get along with them, I get along with them, but I don’t go out with them, and so you see, I only see them in school and that’s about it, and when I went to my secondary, erm secondary school, erm, that’s where I met more friends so and because I need to like take two bus journey home so erm, I stay up, down Woolwich, and that’s when I come to know quite a lot of people from there cause it’s kind of Cantonese people that actually hang around there so like my friend introduce me to some of them so that's how I know them, yeah.

LL  Alright, so you mean the people you hang out with were not the people from the school.

GW  No

JH had non-Cantonese friends from school. By age 18, his friends were from the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London and they would go to the Hippodrome, or Thai Square, a karaoke bar near Trafalgar Square. Every Chinese-looking person in an arcade in Soho seemed to know him. Occasionally JH would go out with the people in the takeaway. They were older than he was and he found it boring. JH’s girl friends were all Hong Kong Cantonese. These included EL and GW and a Cantonese girl from Hong Kong called Helen. When he and EL and GW broke up, Helen remained and she was still with him in 2002.

KN did not have any English friends at all. He stated that he would only go out with his Hong Kong Cantonese friends. Two of them, Colin and Alan, were neighbours born in London. They would go to arcades and their favourite Chinese restaurant in Chinatown. He met Sue in a chatroom on the Internet.
Some informants stated that it was cultural differences between Hong Kong Cantonese in London and other ethnic groups that kept them from having non-Cantonese friends. HN had a girl friend who was ethnically Russian but he said that he preferred to have a Hong Kong Cantonese girlfriend because they would understand each other better.

HN  Chinese. I mean like the ideal would be Chinese.
LL  Why is that?
HN  It's just, *yaah tong yahm, go ting*. 54
LL  Sorry, *yaah tong*?
HN  *Yaah tong yahm*.
LL  Hahhah,
HN  So like, it's a bit like, it's like an English girl, cause you know, it's like, cause English girls don't think Chinese. Basically.
LL  I see, by *yaah tong yahm*, you mean they are good at the kitchen.
HN  It's just like you can eat the same stuff, you know, and you don't have to adjust or something like that.

FN’s ideal boy friend would be a Cantonese speaker. (In fact, she had a Cantonese boyfriend at the time of the interview). In the following extract, she explained that it was because they would share the same language and the same culture. They would understand each other better.

FN  I do find em, guys my race more attractive than, I am not going to say, oh, I don't think "No, I'm alright, thank you" I might think a black guy is cute but nothing more than cute or sweet or, No, I found them attractive but I don't want anything more than friends from them. It's, it's, I don't know why, but you know, cause I've grown up, you know, in an environment with a lot of Chinese people, and even now yeah, studying in an English school yeah, I go to an English school there is some Chinese people there but em, I go Chinese school too, every Sunday. I use to but I don't any more, but I used to go like, so I see a lot of Chinese people. And all my friends I hang around with at our school are actually Chinese so you know, I'm just used to hang around with a Chinese environment init, so, it's, it's, I use to hang around with English friends more but now I think as I grow older, I stick to erm, Chinese people more. I think in a sense it's like you speak the same language, you know, you think alike more, cause, they understand like, you know, when you talk about the parents, maybe they have the same problem too.

Although JT did not have any girl friend in 2000, he stated that he preferred to have a Chinese girlfriend.

LL  Do you have a girl friend?
JT  No, not yet,
LL  Thinking of having one?
JT  Yeah, thinking, just thinking.
LL  Er, would it be a Chinese or English...
JT  Chinese.
LL  Why?

54 *Yauh tong yahm, go ting* can be translated literally as *have soup (to) drink, that kind (of things)*.
JT It is easy to communicate, with each other, yeah.

GW stated why she preferred having Chinese friends to having friends from other ethnic groups.

GW So that's why it is easier for us to hang out Chinese people, cause it's like we are kind of like going through the same situation whereas the English people they are like, they can go out anytime so it's like quite hard to communicate with them, you know, you know, in a way, that's why yeah, that's why all the Chinese people are together.

In sum, a barrier that kept some informants from seeing friends from other ethnic groups or going out with them was the cultural differences between Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents and adolescents from other ethnic groups. The preceding extracts show that some informants did not want to adjust to the social practices of other ethnic groups and they believed their friends from other ethnic groups would understand them less than their Hong Kong Cantonese friends.

**Parent Control and the Informants' Social Practices.**

Parental control was an important issue with most of the 12 link generation informants. They spoke about the problems they had with their parents although the researcher did not ask them anything about their relationship with their parents.\(^55\)

As adolescents, the informants liked to go out with their friends to clubs and karaoke and stayed out till the wee hours of the morning. Some informants also had expensive habits like smoking and some mounted up huge phone bills. Most of the informants worked to pay for their expenses.\(^56\) These social practices were the main source of conflict between these informants and their parents.

\(^55\) Only 4 informants (CC, HN, JT, and KN) did not speak about the problems they had with their parents. HN hardly talked to his parents at all, based on the researcher's observation and JW's statements.

\(^56\) Ten out of the 12 informants had one to two part-time jobs regularly. The exceptions were CC and KN. HG worked in a JJB branch in Oxford Street on Saturdays and Sundays. She also worked in her parents' takeaway in the evening. CT worked in his mother's restaurant on Fridays and Saturdays whenever there was a staff shortage. HN and JW worked in their parents' takeaways. They worked six evenings a week. FN worked in a Mexican restaurant in Greenwich every Friday and Saturday. YH used to work in a Chinese restaurant in Kingston every Friday and Saturday and she did seasonal work in Marks and Spencer and at the Chessington Zoo. JT worked in a Chinese supermarket in Woolwich every Thursday and Saturday. It meant that he could not go to school on Monday but according to JT, his parents did not object. EL worked in the takeaway owned by her sister three evenings a week. GW taught in a Chinese school in Deptford every Sunday. JH worked in a takeaway three evenings a week in a takeaway in Bexleyheath and earned £100 each week.
The parents saw these expenditures as unnecessary, distracting, and superfluous to what their children’s major goal should be - academic achievement. Furthermore, what they knew about adolescent practices like clubbing was from the TV programmes that they watched. These programmes might have put too much emphasis on substance abuse that took place in clubs. GW’s father destroyed the things she bought for herself and took away her mobile phone. HG had to lie to her parents whenever she went clubbing.

LL Do you have a mobile phone?
GW Did but my dad, he, well, I earned it but my dad, he took it, yep, and he’s using it. Oh yeah, I paid for it myself, you know, in England, yeah, and he just confiscate off me,
LL But if you paid for it yourself, and presumably you paid for the call charges,
GW (inaudible) still, they confiscate a lot of things, five of my walkmans,
LL What happened to your walkmans,
GW Well, cause I don’t know, before I listened to walkman, and then he confiscate it, and the Gameboys, but he smashed it though, yeah, yep (chuckles)
LL Shit happens. (inaudible) I got a guitar and they [LL’s parents] broke it into two,
GW They didn’t use a hammer to smash it.
LL Yes, alright.
GW Yeah (chuckles)

HG They don’t know. I just had to lie to them, init? I lie, well I just say I’m staying over at a friend’s house or my cousin’s house. That’s why they trust me. If they knew about it, they wouldn’t like it beers we’ve got a Chinese channel at home and they show, erm, what’s it like at clubs where they do drugs and then my parents think I’m gonna to do drugs. And they show what it’s like and it’s not very good. So my parents won’t trust me.

LL Did your parents talk to you about your hair?
HG Yeah, they said that I follow my cousin’s footsteps and they think that, they say it’s bad for my hair. I think they are just saying it cause I won’t have to dye it. They say my hair has gone awful now and I’ll get disease and all that. Yeah.
LL Disease?
HG Yeah, cause they said that on the Chinese channel, some girl dyes her hair, she’s got some lumps on her head, some lumps going on on her head. I don’t know.

Employment, social life, and education had their conflicting demands on the informants who worked. For example, JW could not resist the pleasure derived from his lifestyle but, as he believed, his social life, sustained by his wages (£180 a week) and by giving up his spare time on studying, had an adverse effect on his academic pursuit. When he failed to get into a university in 2000, he reacted violently to his parents’ censure (he threw and kicked things about in the takeaway). The following extract was from the interview that took place after he and his parents had reconciled. It showed that JW and his parents realised it was difficult for JW to serve three ‘masters’ at the same time.
JW  Erm, well basically he said the way he brought me up was wrong. He admitted that, you know, he’s wrong. Cause I have to go to college and I have to help out at the shop. And I have to help out at the shop. And I have to go to like, you know, do my homework and stuff like that so that’s no time for anything like entertainment, you know, so he said to me like he can’t blame me for like wanting to go out all the time because I don’t have get the chance to go out because I am at college or at work and things like that. “So you don’t actually like you know blame me for going out and like, you know, fucking up my A Levels and things like that.” And erm then my dad actually agree with that.

The female informants’ parents were more worried about the personal safety of their daughters than with their sons. They imposed more restrictions on the movement of the female informants who saw it as sexist and unique to the Cantonese community.

HG  Cause they don’t like us hanging out with boys. They think you know, get pregnant and all that. Lose face to people, it’s all about them losing face.

FN  I think English parents, they allow the kids to do what they want and you know, they are more relaxed than, you know, open, and like, for example, yeah, if I got pregnant, I wouldn’t go home until my mama, you’ll be laughing at that time, but you know I tend to find that English parents do support their children.

FN  I know as a matter of fact yeah, if that [getting pregnant] happen to me, and my parents would never support me but I don’t know if they’d disown me, but they would not like, approve, basically.

Diet.

All twelve link generation informants had Chinese food at home. On Chinese festival days, the whole family would have a meal in a Chinese restaurant or a feast at home. As part of the youth culture, the informants would go to fast food shops like McDonald’s or Burger King. However, for some informants, they only went to these places when they were short of money. If they had enough money on them, they would go to a Chinese restaurant. CC and CT were the only exceptions. It was not that they did not like Chinese food. It was more because their friends were non-Chinese. It meant that they went to Chinese restaurants less often than the others.

Being friendly with restaurant staff is a Hong Kong Cantonese social practice. It means that there is a shorter wait for a table. It means better and cheaper food. HN and JW had their favourite Chinese restaurant in Romford. They knew every person working there. Once when the
researcher went with them to that restaurant, the two informants took a bagful of VCD disks with
them to distribute among the staff of that restaurant. In return, they were offered free beer. JH
knew the staff of the Chinese restaurant in Chinatown where the researcher first met him and
GW very well. We were offered a ten per cent discount and a free drink one night when we were
there.

The researcher had had Chinese meals with all the informants except FN and HG. He let them
do the ordering to find out what they liked. One thing that was similar among the ten informants
was what they never ordered. They did not like what adult Hong Kong Cantonese in London and
in Hong Kong would consider as delicacies. They did not order dishes containing tripe, duck
foot, stomach lining of cow, or intestine of pig. These dishes were available in most Chinese
restaurants in Chinatown and they were popular among the adult Hong Kong Cantonese in
London.

Extra-curricular Activities.

The previous chapter has reported that only one adolescent non-link generation informant, ML,
took part in school organised extra-curricular activities. Most of the 12 link generation
adolescent informants had taken part in some extra-curricular activities in school. The exceptions
are HN, JW, and JH. All three male informants stated that they did not take part in any extra-
curricular activities at all.

Only three informants took part in extra-curricular activities that was not available to Cantonese
students in Hong Kong. CT played a lot of rugby and cricket. He was a member of the school
cadets. CC was a member of the school rowing team. JT also played cricket but he knew very
little about the sport. He stated he played cricket for one year, but since cricket is a summer
sport, it was more likely that he played six months or less. He did not seem to know a lot of
cricket terminology. For example, he did not use fielder to describe the role he played in the
team. Instead he used a more American term, catcher.

LL So are you a good batsman or
JT Erm, just good erm, but just quite good a catcher, fielding,
LL You are good at fielding then
JT Yeah.
LL  What about bowling?
JT  Bowling, mmm (chuckles) alright.

In any case, JT gave up cricket because he found it boring.

JT  Leave. Mmm, found boring because we lose all the time (both chuckle), so that’s the reason.

Other informants took part in extra-curricular activities that were available in Hong Kong. HN was captain of the school badminton team. KN was editor of the school magazine, a member of the school swimming team, and played competitive chess in the school team once. Two of the six female informants played in the school orchestra. FN played the violin and the flute. More notable was HG. She played steel drums in the school steel band. FN was also in the school track team. EL’s career in track events was cut short when she hurt her knees. YH played in the school basketball team for several years. JW, JH and GW did not take part in any extra-curricular activities.

The extra-curricular activities the informants took part in reflected a strong Hong Kong orientation. With the exception of CC and CT, the others would take up extra-curricular activities that students in Hong Kong would take up. JT took part in cricket for a while but gave up because it bored him.

Music, Films and TV.

Cantopop stars are always inevitably film and TV stars as well. This is particularly true with the younger generations of Cantopop stars. As reported in the previous chapter, ML, JO, and JU talked about two Cantopop stars, Leon Lai and Aaron Kwok. Both act in films and on TV as well. In almost every film made in Hong Kong with a Cantopop star in it, there has to at least one theme song sung by the Cantopop star. Because of this marketing strategy of the Hong Kong film and music industries, it is necessary to discuss the informants’ taste in music, films, and TV together.
CC was the only informant who did not own any Cantopop CDs or tapes. She preferred classical music and occasionally she would listen to English language pop music. All others owned lots of Cantopop CDs.

CT's favourite Cantopop singers were Ekin Cheng and Nicholas Tse. As already mentioned, CT wore a gold necklace and used a chrome Zippo as Ekin Cheng did in his gangster films. He also liked Indie groups like Oasis and Travis. To him, this was what separated Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents that grow up in the UK from Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents that arrived in the UK recently.

CT
I listen to all kinds of music, yeah Cantonese, Cantonese pop, English pop, rock, you know, classical, indie, you know, erm, all kinds, you know, and I've, I've found myself, you know, being more open than the, you know, every time I listen to Oasis or Travis, they go, these are, I'm talking about my Cantonese friends, you know, they look shocked, you know, "(Breath in) Do you listen to that kind of music? God" (laughs) you know, "What do you do that for?" But, erm, you know, yes, so, you know, these, these are, I think, you know, some, some things that separate, you know, Cantonese person from the English person, erm

HN liked the rocker Bon Jovi. His favourite Cantopop singers were Michelle and a rock group called Beyond. He stated that he hated Nicholas Tse, the Cantopop star. However, he sang lots of Nicholas Tse's song when we were in Thai Square, the karaoke bar near Trafalgar Square.

HN
I don't see what's so amazing about that guy, you know. It's like his songs are sometimes good. Yeah, yeah, his songs' good but like even in person, he's just an arsehole. He's just like young and cocky, you know. It's like "Yeah. Look, I'm Nicholas Tse and I'm amazing" sort of thing, you know, "I'm a girl idol", something like that, yeah.

KN liked the Corrs and a Cantopop star called Kelly Chan. He downloaded their music and pictures from the Internet. JW liked Indie bands like Oasis and Blur.

JH and JT were die-hard Nicholas Tse's fan. They got his albums and his films on VCD. They also liked rap and R&B but that was mainly because those were the kinds of music played in a club like the Hippodrome.

The two male informants' taste in music was shared by four of the female informants. They were EL, FN, GW, and HG. They all liked Cantopop and could talk for a long time about the latest gossip of their Cantopop idols. These four female informants liked rap and R&B because these
kinds of music was played in the Hippodrome. YH liked Cantopop music in general but she did not have a favourite Cantopop star.

The discussion on the informants’ taste in music shows that they liked Canto-pop. With the exception of CC, CT, HN, and JW, the informants listened to popular music sung in English. However, their choice of English popular music was restricted to that played in clubs including rap and R&B. They would buy R&B compilation albums so that they could practice dancing.

The following extract shows, because CC did not have any friends in the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London, her social practice of listening to Cantonese pop could not be maintained:

CC  Cause I can’t keep up to date with the scene, the music scene. Let us say. And I don’t know anything when I am in England and then when I go back to Hong Kong, and (inaudible) but I don’t know what to listen to. And then I don’t know who is good and who is bad. So you know, that put me off buying CDs and then discovering whether it’s, it’s not worth listening to, actually.

Hong Kong Cantonese love karaoke. Many of the informants had access to a karaoke machine their parents brought from Hong Kong at home. However, the songs of the karaoke disks they brought from Hong Kong were out-dated by the time the informants were eighteen. They preferred to go to karaoke bars in London where the latest Cantopop songs of their pop idols were available. Thai Square in the West End was a favourite haunt for the informants.

The previous chapter has also reported that ML, JO, and JU did not like Laih Mihng, a Cantopop star, because they believed that he was gay. This has led to the researcher’s speculation that Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London were homophobic. However, there was no evidence of homophobia among the twelve informants of the present study. Many were adamant that the sexual inclinations of their pop idols were no one’s business but their own. So ML, JO, and JU might have been disparaging towards Laih Mihng because the pop star was a competitor to their own pop idol, Aaron Kwok.

All 12 informants liked English language TV and films. Most of them watched American shows Friends, Ally McBeal, X-Files, Roswell High, and Due South and TV programmes produced in the UK like Eastenders, The Bill, and Brookside. JT watched sport programmes only. JH preferred TV programmes about video games (Bit, Cybernet) and a Japanese animated series on Channel Four called The Fist of the Northern Star.
As for English language films, all twelve informants liked going to the cinema. The male informants preferred action-type films which the female informants liked less than the male informants did unless Hollywood hunks like Tom Cruise (*Mission Impossible Two* was shown in London and in the suburbs in the summer of 2000) was in the film.

The informants also watched Hong Kong Cantonese films and TV programmes. Most of them watched these because their parents did. YH was the only exception. Her family did not have a TV set at all until she was sixteen. She was introduced to Hong Kong Cantonese films and TV programmes by her boy friend but she did not like them because of the production and the content.

YH Yeah, I get them, I watch them when I am bored but I don’t really like Chinese films. They are quite typical, I like bigger films, (inaudible) American films, but then the better the pictures, oh, yes, actually, I forgot, when I was younger I use to, I really enjoyed photography, we use to go around taking, I had this little SLR camera, that’s what I did, I don’t really like the quality of certain Chinese videos, VCDs,

LL Those pirate VCDs,

YH Oh, it’s not that, it’s the content as well, sort of not really worth watching. If you make me watch a film that’s (inaudible) sometimes I go to the cinema and watch them, I like bigger films like they spend millions on special effects

CC no longer watched any Hong Kong Cantonese films and TV programmes in 2000 because her mother hid all the video-tapes and VCD disks.

The informants whose social network was Hong Kong Cantonese loved Hong Kong TV programmes. The favourite for the four female informants (EL, FN, , GW, and HG) was a limited series TV programme (40 episodes) called *Wahn Jyu Gahk Gahk* [my translation: Princess Wahn Jyu]. It was made in Taiwan and the Cantonese language version was shown on TV in Hong Kong. It was about the love affairs of a princess in the Manchu Court. EL and FN spent their hard-earned money to buy the latest episodes on VCD format in Chinatown. HG and GW asked their Hong Kong Cantonese friends to lend them the latest episodes. In the summer of 2000, the first episodes of the sequel to *Wahn Jyu Gahk Gahk* were available in Chinatown. EL had bought them in Chinatown.

The male informants preferred mysteries and Kung Fu films and TV programmes from Hong Kong. As already mentioned, some of them loved Hong Kong gangster films. It was not that the
female informants, except YH, would not watch gangster films. But they would not make as much effort to get hold of a Hong Kong Cantonese gangster film or films that contained sex and violence as they would with romance.

All 12 informants watched films and TV programmes in English and Cantonese. With the exception of CC and CT, who did not have many friends in the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London, the informants did not rely on friends and relatives in Hong Kong to send them video-tapes and VCD disks. They relied on the social network that they had and they bought videotapes and VCD disks in Chinatown. YH did not watch anything on TV at all until she was sixteen. It coincided with the time when she began to know more people from the Hong Kong Cantonese community. Like the other nine informants, she began to watch Hong Kong films and TV programmes that suited her taste, her age and her gender.

**Reading for Pleasure.**

Only 3 informants read English language novels constantly since their arrival in London. They were CT, HG, and YH. CT read science fiction (e.g., by Asimov) and HG preferred horrors novels (e.g., by James Herbert and Clive Barker). CT did not read Chinese language novels because he could not read Chinese. HG and YH liked Chinese romantic novels as well.

YH liked English language horrors novels (e.g. by Stephen King) before she met her Hong Kong Cantonese boy friend. Now she reads Chinese romantic novels exclusively.

LL  So what kinds of books do you read now?

YH  Erm, I have just started reading some Chinese books, some teenage books, I don’t know, they’re not very difficult kind of books, I started reading some of those but most of them are Taiwanese authors, actually,

LL  For example? *Kihng Yiuh*?

YH  Oh, yes, yes,

LL  Everybody reads *Wahn Jyu Gahk Gahk* (YH laughs) [note: *Wahn Jyu Gahk Gahk* was written by *Kihng Yiuh*, a female author in Taiwan].

A newcomer to the social practice of reading novels in English was KN. He began reading English language novels (those by John Grisham). He was on his second John Grisham’s book in 2000. Before that, he read Chinese detective / mystery novels only.
EL, HN, JW, and CC did not read any novels in either Chinese or English at all. FN, GW, JH, and JT read only Chinese novels. FN and GW preferred romantic novels while JH and JT preferred science fiction and Kung Fu novels. JH was an ardent reader of Chinese science fiction, as the following extract shows:

JH: Ah, erm, apart from the, once a week. Yeah I borrow like seven books and I could finish it, finish reading it for a week.
LL: Wow.
JH: Well, I don't really sleep at night. Probably sleep at three or four in the morning (rising). As, er, I always read a book at night.

CC and HN did not read any magazines or newspaper in either Chinese or English. CT, KN, and JW read magazines in English only. These were magazines about cars, video games, and computers. JW would read the tabloids his takeaway offered to customers.

Many magazines, especially teen magazines published in Hong Kong, were on sale in Chinatown but hardly anywhere else in London. Four female informants (GW, EL, HG, and FN) who often went to Chinatown would buy the teen magazines on sale there or read them in the shop. Their favourite was a popular magazine among the female adolescents in Hong Kong called Yes. They did not buy any English or Hong Kong newspaper. They only read whatever was available to them. They borrowed the English language newspaper of their school friends and newspaper in the takeaways where they worked. They read the Chinese language newspaper their parents brought home from work.

JT and JH would only read Chinese magazines but not newspaper. JT, for example, bought a magazine published in Hong Kong on European football in a shop in Chinatown the day we were there. JH’s interest was more towards the pornographic kind. JH would occasionally read the English newspaper in the takeaway where he worked. JT did not read any English newspaper at all.

JH and JT liked manga. It is necessary to digress a bit to explain what manga is because it is pivotal in understanding some of the lexis JH used. Manga refers to Japanese comic books and animated cartoons as well. For example, Dragonball, as reported in Section 4.03, and The fist of the Northern Star, as reported earlier in this section were two examples of manga. Both were
available in comic book form and in animated cartoon forms on video-tape and VCD. *Manga* was only available in Chinatown as well.

CC, CT, JW, and HN did not read anything in Chinese at all. Three of these informants could not read Chinese. They had never been to Chinese school. YH and HG began reading Chinese novels and magazines when they began to have friends from the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. As for the rest, they read Chinese novels and magazines published in Hong Kong for pleasure.

The research on reading for pleasure, like music, TV and films shows how many informants began to change in this social practice as they grew older. When they became old enough to go to Chinatown on their own or with their friends, they bought Hong Kong magazines and novels in Chinese there. YH and HG only began reading in Chinese when they began to go to Chinatown with their Cantonese new-found friends. JW did not go to Chinatown frequently and he did not develop the practice of reading for pleasure in Chinese. CC and CT could not read Chinese and HN did not like reading for pleasure at all.

**Identity of the Twelve Informants.**

JW, HG, and CC were the only informants who did not go back to Hong Kong for a new Hong Kong identity card so that they could work and live there without any restriction. JW's parents were anti-Communist and they would not return to a Hong Kong under communist rule.

JW  And so my dad really hates the Chinese government and things like that. So the reason why we came over is because China was going to take over Hong Kong in Ninety Seven, so my dad didn't want us to like live in a country that's governed by the Chinese. So we actually like you know, came over to England just to escape from like, you know, the Chinese communists.

Most of the other informants knew that their parents came to the UK because of the PRC taking over of Hong Kong in 1997. The question of living in a different political system than the one before July, 1997 was, however, less meaningful to them than to their parents.

JH  I don't know. I don't ask much about that. I mean, well I am an adult now, but in them, I am still a child, init? And I just can't care that much, you know, how, what their problem is, I just can't help it.
YH was the only one who refused to get a new Hong Kong identity card when she was there.

YH: and then ever since I went back by myself, I never bothered to go back to get one, I don’t really see the point, my mum has one, I don’t think my daddy, my dad hadn’t change a new one either, I don’t see that as something really important, we get hassled all the time, cause they are all “How come? How come you haven’t got one?”

Note that, despite stating her clear intention of not bothering to maintain her Hong Kong citizenship, YH used go back twice and it shows that Hong Kong still had a claim on her. CT made the following observation:

CT: Erm, they always want, they always want to return to Hong Kong, you know, whereas maybe an English person might go to Hong Kong or go to Majorca. Hong Kong Cantonese will always say, “I will return to Hong Kong.”

CT was adamant that there was nothing in Hong Kong for him and that he was English or British. YH suffered a long period of depression partly because she could not determine whether she was Chinese or British. As the following extract shows, YH believed that she did not belong to either Hong Kong or the UK:

YH: I just looked at England and I don’t feel this is my country. I look at people in history and they really like romantic and they are so patriotic to their country and I really admire that. And I look at people in England. They don’t like their country (rising), they throw rubbish on the floor, I mean that’s really small things, but they say they don’t like it, they want to go to America, they want to go abroad, and I just look at England and I feel I belong here. And I always thought I belonged to Hong Kong, and I went back and I realise everyone is really different, and actually we’re brought up in a different culture to them.

As for the others, they did not have any answers, either. They did not grow up in Hong Kong and they felt they were different from adolescents who grow up there. On the other hand, the UK was the country they migrated to, and they did not feel it was their country. In the UK, they encountered what they perceived as racism. Like the unpleasant experiences ML and AF encountered in school reported in the previous chapter, they had all faced racism in school and at work. Their fellow students laughed at their English when they first arrived. People they encountered on the street told them to go back to where they came from. Some customers at the takeaways were abusive. The informants witnessed their own relatives being bullied. Some of the six male informants, like HN and JW would try to ‘even the score’ with fists and billiard cues. JT
would call up his Hong Kong Cantonese friends to look for the culprits who poured water over his father.

The following extract was from JH. Previously he talked about being beaten up by a student belonging to another ethnic group in school. He summed up this feeling of the majority of the informants. Similar to what ML had said and reported in the previous chapter, JH's message was that discrimination had to be endured. He explained:

**LL** Hmmhmm, has it ever happened, did it, did racism ever happen, OK, let me rephrase that, eh, what about your parents and your sister? Did they have to face this kind of incidents at all?

**JH** Well, they, not always, but yeah, sometimes, but they just take it anyway. I mean, living in people's country, you can't expect that much, init? You have to take it, well take it easy, anyway.

**Conclusion.**

The above discussion has shown that the twelve informants were a part of adolescent community in London. They listened to Western music and watched films and TV in English. They went to fast food chains like McDonald's. However, these social practices also show that they were a part of the adolescent community of practice that is Hong Kong Cantonese. As the above discussion has shown, these social practices changed as they grew older.

With the exception of CC, who never had any friends from the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London, ten of the eleven informants had Cantonese and non-Cantonese speakers as friends when they were younger. The number of Cantonese friends they had depended on the number of Cantonese speakers there were in their school. CT, for example, was the only Cantonese speaker in his secondary school and he made friends with other Cantonese speakers on a chance meeting in a fish-and-chips shop. As the eleven informants grew older, they began to have more Cantonese speakers as friends. The informants met them in Chinese schools and in Internet chatrooms. They were introduced to more Cantonese-speaking friends through these friends. By age 18, six informants went out with Cantonese-speaking friends only. They were GW, FN, HG, JH, JT, KN, and YH. They went clubbing together, a practice that was common among the youth community in London and in the UK. However, as some of the informants
pointed out, they preferred the Hippodrome in Leicester Square because the clientele was mostly Chinese.

The above discussion also shows that most of the informants, even though they had a non-Cantonese speaker as boy / girl friend in 2000, their ideal boy / girl friend would be another Cantonese speaker because it would be easier for them to understand each other.

The above discussion has also pointed out that the essentially Hong Kong Cantonese social network they maintained affected their other social practices.

The twelve informants liked Chinese food. When they went out for a meal, they usually went to a Chinese restaurant. However, the dishes they ordered in the restaurant showed that this social practice was different from the adults’.

The twelve informants all listened to Cantopop and mainstream British popular music. One of the informants, CC, did not maintain the social practice of listening to Cantopop. As the above as shown, it was because she did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese friends in London. There was no one to tell her whose songs to listened to. She could not read Chinese and therefore Hong Kong teen magazines as a source of information was denied to her. CT did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese friends at age 18. However, unlike CC, he still watched a lot of Hong Kong Cantonese films. He knew which popstar was popular through the films he watched. As for the others, they knew about the latest Hong Kong pop-scene gossip and whom they should listen to through their Hong Kong Cantonese friends, and through the Hong Kong magazines they read. They downloaded Cantopop from the Internet. They bought the latest CDs of their pop idols in Chinatown. They lent the CDs to one another for duplication. Like other social practices discussed in this section, to be able to keep up with the pop scene in Hong Kong is costly. These informants had to be financially independent. Cantopop CDs cost about £20 each (circa 2000). Teen magazines like Yes cost about £4.50 (circa 2000). These informants also needed to have enough friends in the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London to maintain interest in Cantopop.

All twelve informants watched Hong Kong TV programmes and films since their arrival in London. However, without a Hong Kong Cantonese social network or financial independence,
they could only watch the video-tapes and VCD disks sent by their relatives in Hong Kong. As the discussion has pointed out, most informants used their hard-earned money to obtain the latest Hong Kong soap operas in Chinatown. They also exchanged films and TV programmes with their friends.

They no longer had to listen to the music their parents liked. They could afford to buy the CDs of the Hong Kong pop idols they had seen on films and TV programmes in Chinatown. Or they could download Cantopop from the Internet or simply borrowed the CDs of their Cantonese-speaker friends. They went to a karaoke bar in the West End where their favourite songs were available.

For those informants who did not read Chinese novels and magazines for pleasure at first, knowing more Cantonese speakers changed their reading habit. YH and HG began reading novels and magazines in Chinese when they had Cantonese friends.

Most of the informants had to wrestle with the double social identity issue. They believed that they were Hong Kong Cantonese and they were British. They did not know that they could be both. YH became depressed when she became confused over this problem of social identity. CC decided that he was English or British and opted for more British social practices. Others, like JH, decided that they did not want to think too much about it and settled the issue that way.

The present work shows that these informants are forming a community of practice of their own through an examination and discussion of their non-linguistic social practices. This community of practice was different from the London Cantonese adult community of practice discussed in Chapter 4. They had non-Cantonese friends. They listened to Western music and watched English language TV and films. Some of them read novels and magazines in English. On the other hand, their social practices were different from the youth community in the UK. They went mostly to Chinese restaurants and they preferred clubs and karaoke bars where the clientele was essentially Chinese. The female informants were very conservative in their choice of clothes and adornment. Most of them coloured their hair. Some of the male informants adopted a Hong Kong gangster image by wearing a gold necklace and using a chrome Zippo lighter. They watched a lot of Hong Kong Cantonese films and TV programmes. Many of the informants read Chinese novels, Hong Kong magazines, and manga. These social practices were not easily available to the
informants. The present work has pointed out several times how costly these social practices were for them. Nine of them took up jobs while studying full-time to maintain these social practices. In terms of the non-linguistic social practices that they had taken up and maintained, these informants formed a community of practice of their own. These non-linguistic social practices are reifications of their own community of practice. The non-linguistic social practices of the twelve informants are summarised in the following tables.

### Table 5.01  Ethnicity of the informants' friends and boy / girl friends and the extra-curricular activities they took part in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Ethnicity of best friends</th>
<th>Ethnicity of boy / girl friend</th>
<th>Extra-curricular activities in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>All non-Cantonese</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>school orchestra; rowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Cantonese at one stage. All non-Cantonese now.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>school rugby team; cadets;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>English and Cantonese.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Non-Cantonese earlier. All Cantonese at age 18.</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>school track team; school orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>Non-Cantonese earlier. All Cantonese at age 18.</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>school basketball team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>All Cantonese</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>None Cantonese earlier. None-Cantonese and Cantonese now.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>English and Cantonese.</td>
<td>English and Cantonese</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>English and Cantonese earlier. All Cantonese now.</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>Caribbean and Cantonese earlier. Cantonese now.</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>English and Cantonese earlier. Cantonese now.</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>school swimming team; editor of the school magazine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.02  The informants’ social practices of reading for pleasure, music, TV and films.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading for pleasure</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>TV and Films</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>English, classical and Cantonese.</td>
<td>Mostly English, some Cantonese TV and films on video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>English science fiction, English magazines</td>
<td>English, classical and Cantonese</td>
<td>Some English, mostly Cantonese TV and films on video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>English and Cantonese</td>
<td>Some English, mostly Cantonese TV and films on video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>Chinese novels and magazines only. Manga.</td>
<td>Cantonese only</td>
<td>Mostly Cantonese TV and films on video. English sports programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>English magazines only.</td>
<td>English only.</td>
<td>Some English, mostly Cantonese TV and films on video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>English and Chinese magazines.</td>
<td>English and Cantonese</td>
<td>Some English, mostly Cantonese TV and films on video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>English and Chinese magazines. Chinese romance</td>
<td>English and Cantonese</td>
<td>Some English, mostly Cantonese TV and films on video.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.03  The Informants’ Employment, Social Activities and Venues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Part-time job</th>
<th>Social activities with friends</th>
<th>Venues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>none.</td>
<td>Shopping and cinema with friends.</td>
<td>South Kensington and Ealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>sales person at weekends. Parents’ takeaway 6 nights a week.</td>
<td>Clubbing and cinema with friends.</td>
<td>Chinatown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>none.</td>
<td>Clubbing with friends.</td>
<td>Chinatown and Reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>working at parents’ takeaway 6 nights a week.</td>
<td>Clubbing and going to arcades with friends. Karaokes.</td>
<td>Chinatown and Romford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>sales person during summer breaks.</td>
<td>shopping with friends.</td>
<td>Kingston and Chinatown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>working in a Mexican restaurant at weekends.</td>
<td>Clubbing and cinema with friends. Karaokes.</td>
<td>Chinatown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>working in a Chinese supermarket 2 days a week.</td>
<td>Football and going to arcades with friends.</td>
<td>Chinatown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>working at parents’ takeaway 6 nights a week.</td>
<td>Clubbing and going to arcades with friends.</td>
<td>Romford and Chinatown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>working at sister’s takeaway 2 nights a week.</td>
<td>Clubbing, shopping, going to arcades with friends. Karaokes.</td>
<td>Chinatown and Erith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>working in a Chinese school on Sunday.</td>
<td>Clubbing and shopping with friends.</td>
<td>Kidbrooke and Chinatown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>working in a Chinese takeaway 2 nights a week</td>
<td>Clubbing, going to arcades with friends. Karaokes.</td>
<td>Chinatown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>none.</td>
<td>Going to arcades and pubs with friends.</td>
<td>Chinatown and Colindale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.04  Where They Go on Holiday and What They Do Now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Holidays aboard</th>
<th>What the informants were doing 2001-2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Hong Kong at least six times. Paris, Japan, Orlando with his family.</td>
<td>Studying in Oxford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>Never been to Hong Kong since arrival. Dublin with family.</td>
<td>Working full time as a sales person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Hong Kong three times (once on his own). The USA, Europe with family.</td>
<td>Studying in Cambridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>Hong Kong once with his family. The USA, Europe with family.</td>
<td>Left home. Whereabouts unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>Hong Kong three times (once on her own).</td>
<td>Studying in University College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Hong Kong once with her family.</td>
<td>Studying in Middlesex University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>Hong Kong once with his family.</td>
<td>Returned to Hong Kong. Became a fireman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>none outside the UK.</td>
<td>Working full-time in his parents’ takeaway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>Hong Kong three times. The USA, Canada. All with family.</td>
<td>Full-time A-Level student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>New York City, Canada. Both with family.</td>
<td>Full-time A-Level student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>Hong Kong once with his family.</td>
<td>Studying in Greenwich University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>Hong Kong three times. Europe, North America, Southeast Asia. (With family and school).</td>
<td>Studying in Nottingham University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the rest of this chapter, the production of the six proficiency indicators followed by the six sociolinguistic indicators of the twelve link generation Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants are analysed and discussed.

5.02 /n/ > /l/ in Word Initial Position for English Words.

Bauer (1983) and Matthews and Yip (1994) point out that one of the sound changes in progress in Hong Kong Cantonese is that /n/ becomes /l/ in word initial position. For example, neih [you] is also pronounced as leih. Bauer (1983) pointed out that /l/ for /n/ in word initial position was common among young male Cantonese speakers. Matthews and Yip (1994) point out the change is neither random nor unsystematic. They point out that that this sound change for the word neih is almost complete among young Hong Kong Cantonese speakers.

The present study chooses /l/ for /n/ in word initial position in English words as a proficiency indicator because native speakers of English do not replace word initial /n/ with /l/. In addition, /l/ for /n/ in word initial position is a sociolinguistic indicator for Hong Kong Cantonese. An investigation of the informants' use of /n/ in word initial position can help answer whether there is a critical period for language learning or the extent the informants would use this as a sociolinguistic indicator to mark the boundaries of a Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London.

The data for analysis are elicited in two ways. First, the informants' use of English words with word initial /n/ in the interviews are analysed. Data are also elicited from two reading aloud tasks.

The informants were asked to perform two reading aloud tasks based on a list of words. The list contains 3 sets of 9 words. Each set of words begins with initial /l, n, s/. Words with initial /l, s/ are included as foils to keep the informants from guessing what the aims of the two reading aloud tasks are. The 27 words have been selected to offer for analysis more, and different linguistic contexts than the data in the interview would offer. Words with initial /l, n, s/ are varied according to vowels and final consonants as follows:
lip, light, lock, lob, led, lag, lame, line, lay, nip, night, knock, knob, ned, nag, name, nine, nay, sip, sight, sock, sob, sad, sag, same, sine, say.

The words were printed on white cards and put in a bag. For each reading aloud task, the researcher drew the cards one by one from the bag. For the first task, the informants were asked to complete the sentence I see with each word drawn from the bag. For example, if the word is nip, the informant should have said I see “nip”. The aim is to investigate the respondents’ pronunciation of word initial /n/ preceded by a vowel. For the second reading aloud task, the word cards are drawn again from the bag. The informants are asked to use the words to complete the two sentences The word is ____; ____ means.... For example, if the word is nip, the informant should say The word is nip. Nip means.... The aims are to investigate their pronunciation of word initial /n/ preceded by a consonant and at the beginning of a clause. The two reading aloud tasks took place after the role playing task in which the informants were asked to give directions to a tourist in London and the pop term task in which they are asked to talk about selected pop terms.

Findings.

Part One: Interviews.

Table 5.05 lists, by informant, the number of words and the five most frequently used word types beginning with /n/ in their interview data. There are no instances of /l/ for /n/ in the interview data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.05</th>
<th>5 Most Frequently Used Word Types with Initial /n/.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC (n = 251)</td>
<td>not (60), know (59), no (50), never (17) now (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n = 348)</td>
<td>know (108), no (85), not (53), now (26), name (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n = 645)</td>
<td>know (342), not (103), no (88), now (32), never (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n = 380)</td>
<td>know (135), no (108), not (53), never (17), now (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n = 765)</td>
<td>know (311), not (157), no (90), night (22), never (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n = 329)</td>
<td>know (93), not (65), no (38), now (28), never (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n = 350)</td>
<td>no (105), know (88), not (69), now (23), nine (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n = 514)</td>
<td>know (245), no (127) not (33), now (23), never (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n = 639)</td>
<td>know (237), no (112), not (93), nice (30), now (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n = 474)</td>
<td>know (175), no (76), not (71) normal (37), now (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (n = 806)</td>
<td>know (402), not (117), no (90), now (48), night (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (n = 327)</td>
<td>know (137) not (71) no (40) now (17) never (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Part Two: Reading Aloud Tasks.

None of the informants had instances where word initial /n/ had been replaced by /l/ in the data elicited from the 2 reading aloud tasks.

However, JT (AOA8) made a few mistakes in pronouncing words with initial /s/ in the 2 tasks. In the first reading aloud task, he pronounced [sob] as [slob]. In the second reading aloud task, he pronounced [sight] as [sine] at clause initial position, [sob] as [snob] twice, [knob] at first as [cock] and then as [clock], [sag] as [snag] twice, and [sip] as [slip] twice.

YH refused to say aloud knob in the second task probably because it means the male sexual organ in slang.

Discussion.

The informants arrived in London at age 5, age 8, and age 10. The findings show, for word initial /n/ at least, there is not a critical period for learning or that the critical period ends after age 10. It is possible that /n/ > /l/ in word initial position for Cantonese words is not a proficiency indicator due to its status as a sociolinguistic variable in Cantonese.

Tarone (1983) has pointed out the importance of attention as a factor in accounting for task variability. She believes that reading aloud tasks would elicit more standard features because speakers would pay more attention when they perform this type of task. The findings show that while attention may be important in explaining task variability, those who perform such tasks do not necessarily use more standard features.

It is likely that JT might have become nervous and worried by the time he performed the two reading aloud tasks. He made one mistake in the first reading aloud task: he pronounced [slob] for [sob]. The mistakes he made in the second reading aloud task came close together and towards the end of the task. After pronouncing [sight] as [sine] at clause initial position, he pronounced [night] correctly in two separate clauses. Then he pronounced [snob] instead of [sob] twice, followed by [sad] and [ned], both correctly both times, and then [knob] as first as [cock].

\[57 \text{[sob]} \text{ as [slob] could be an instance of /n/ becomes /l/}.\]
and then as [clock], followed by [sine] and [lame], both pronounced correctly both times. Then he pronounced [sag] as [snag] both times, and [sip] as [slip] both times.

His nervousness can be attributed to several factors. JT was nervous because he realised these two tasks evaluated his language proficiency. In addition, he was not able to supply any meaning for those words he mispronounced. He also believed that he had done poorly in the pop term task.

Note that however nervous he was, he did not use /l/ in place of word initial /n/ at all. This indicates that JT, like the other 11 informants, had acquired native speaker proficiency in pronouncing /n/ in word initial position.

YH’s refusal to pronounce knob in the second task is unfortunate. There are no instances of knob in the interview data. However, the 65 instances of not pronounced with word initial /n/ in her two interviews indicate that she would not have pronounced the offending item with word initial /l/.

Proficiency Indicator vs. Sociolinguistic Indicator.

As already pointed out, /l/ for /n/ in word initial position is a robust change in progress among the young Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong. That the informants had not used /l/ for /n/ in their English shows that this linguistic feature is not used to mark the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. The present work suggests a number of reasons:

Proficiency in English is important to the informants in their future career in Britain. For the informants, as members of a migrant community, using standard features in L2 pronunciation is more important than using standard features in L2 grammar because nonstandard pronunciation is more noticeable than nonstandard grammar (see Labov 1991; Winford 1996). Furthermore, a linguistic feature like the substitution of /l/ for /n/ in word initial position can be used to judge the informants’ proficiency in English. As the substitution of /l/ for /n/ in word initial position is not a sociolinguistic indicator for native speakers of English, the informants might reject using this linguistic feature as a speech marker for the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in
London because the use of the linguistic feature could be interpreted as a lack of proficiency in English. It may also be that L2 speakers are unlikely to select a (nearly) categorical feature of their L1 as a sociolinguistic indicator of their L2.

Furthermore, these Hong Kong born British informants might use the lack of the substitution of /l/ for /n/ in word initial position in their English to separate themselves from more recently arrived Hong Kong Cantonese migrants in London who substituted /l/ for /n/ in speaking English. Further research is required to evaluate these alternatives.

The informants might also use the substitution of /l/ for /n/ in word initial position or other sociolinguistically significant linguistic features in Cantonese (e.g., dropping of the word initial velar nasal) to indicate their allegiance to the Cantonese community in Hong Kong or, more narrowly, the adult Cantonese community in London. This confirmation or refutation of this point also requires further research, but the researcher has observed informally this usage.

Conclusion.

The findings show that all the informants have acquired native speaker proficiency and that they do not have the tendency to substitute /l/ for /n/ in any context. This indicates that the critical period of learning L2 phonemes could end after age 10, i.e., later than the AOA of the twelve informants. The present work has also suggested that the substitution of /l/ for /n/ in word initial position is unlikely to be a candidate for a sociolinguistic indicator in the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community.

5.03 Stress Placement.

Matthews and Yip (1994) point out that lexical pitch is used in Cantonese to differentiate words that are otherwise the same. Cantonese words have a very simple syllable structure. Each syllable
has an initial and a final.\(^{58}\) For example, gong, meaning harbour, consists of a voiceless velar stop and the back vowel with the unreleased velar nasal makes up the final. Each syllable is a morpheme because Cantonese, being an isolating language, does not allow inflection. Words in Cantonese are often formed by combining two morphemes. For example:

Example:  
hoi - gong  
sea- harbour  
harbour.  (Example and gloss are from Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 49).

The morphemes in hoi-gong are pronounced independently. Thus hoi and gong, which has the same tone (high rising), are pronounced independently whereas, in English, stress is placed on the first syllable and the second syllable comparatively destressed in the standard pronunciation of harbour. Furthermore, stress placement in English operates under a set of rules. For example, the primary stress on economy, a noun, is placed on the antepenultimate syllable while for the adjective, economic, the primary stress is placed on the penultimate syllable.

The difference between Cantonese and English in this aspect at the suprasegmental level may cause difficulty with Cantonese L2 speakers of English. The following is a review of an SLA study by Archibald (1997) that explores this in detail.

Archibald (1997) looked at the acquisition of English stress by native speakers of Cantonese (n = 1), Japanese (n = 1), and Mandarin (n = 2) in a longitudinal study. The subjects were between 19 and 32 at the time of the study. They were asked to read out a list of English two syllable words consisting of nouns and verbs. These words were categorised into six classes depending on grammatical category (nouns or verbs), stress placement (final, penultimate, or antepenultimate). Then the subjects were given training in marking stress placement. After that, the recording of the list as spoken by a native speaker was played to the subjects and they were asked to mark the syllable on which they perceived the stress to be located. The same tests were repeated after a duration of four months. The numbers of errors were t-tested for significant differences. Some of the findings for the subjects who were native speakers of Cantonese and Mandarin, who are the main interest for the present study are as follows:

\(^{58}\) Cantonese does not have voiced consonants other than the nasal consonants. The initials are either consonants or vowels and only two sets of unreleased consonants are allowed in the finals - nasal consonants or unreleased voiceless stops /p, t, k/.
Subjects made many errors in stress placement.
The difference in the production scores of the six classes of words was minimal.
There were no significant differences in the mean scores between the pretest and the posttest.

Archibald's (1997) findings indicates that there may be a critical period of language learning for Cantonese L2 learners acquiring English stress placement rules. None of the Cantonese or Mandarin L1 speaker subjects were able to correctly place stress on the test items 100% of the time. In addition, the existence of a critical period is indicated by the fact that there was no significant difference in the mean scores between the pretest and the posttest taken by these subjects after 4 months of training.

Archibald (1997) points out that for tonal languages like Cantonese and Mandarin, pitch prominence, manifested as tones, is phonemic. It is a fact that native speakers of these languages treat pitch as part of the lexical entry to differentiate different words. Thus they may make the wrong assumption that for the subsequent language (e.g., English) they learn, pitch prominence, rather than stress, is also stored as part of the lexical entry to differentiate different words. They may not be able to work out the rules of stress placement in the subsequent language.

The data for analysis in the present study are elicited in two ways. First, their placement of stress in the interviews are analysed. This includes all polysyllabic words uttered by the informants in the interviews other than the words in a reading aloud task.

The informants were asked to perform the reading aloud task with a list of words. The list contains 6 sets of 3 word tokens with the same root. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set 1</th>
<th>First syllable</th>
<th>second syllable</th>
<th>third syllable</th>
<th>other syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>photography</td>
<td>photographically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 2</td>
<td>Critic, critical, critically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 3</td>
<td>Nationalise</td>
<td>nationality</td>
<td>nationalisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 4</td>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>originate</td>
<td></td>
<td>originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 5</td>
<td>Auditing</td>
<td>audition;</td>
<td>auditorium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 6</td>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>edition</td>
<td>editorial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 6 sets of words are selected to elicit data of the informants' placement of primary stress in syllables in different positions of words with the same root. The aim is to find out if the informants would place primary stress on syllables according to positions or according to the syllables themselves. When confronted with a word they are not familiar with, the informants might adopt the strategy of placing primary stress on the same syllable as they would with other members of the same lexeme. For example, *original* may be pronounced as [original] because origin is pronounced as [origin] in standard pronunciation.

The sets of words were printed on white cards and put in a bag. For the reading aloud task, the researcher will draw the cards one by one from the bag. The informants will be asked to read the words on the cards one by one. The task will be the final task the informants have to perform.

**Findings.**

The findings are grouped in 2 parts. Parts One and Two are a summary of the data elicited in the interviews and in the reading aloud task.

**Part One.**

Table 1 lists the number of polysyllabic words other than the 6 sets of words in the reading aloud task analysed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N (Method One)</th>
<th>Number of polysyllabic words in the data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>13,549</td>
<td>2,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>13,067</td>
<td>1,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>17,332</td>
<td>2,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>12,774</td>
<td>1,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>23,510</td>
<td>2,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>19,296</td>
<td>2,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>11,210</td>
<td>1,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>13,523</td>
<td>2,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>13,905</td>
<td>2,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>18,185</td>
<td>1,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>2,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>16,389</td>
<td>2,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is only instance where the primary stress is placed incorrectly. The instance was produced by JH and the primary stress was placed on the ultimate syllable.

JH They were on about, you know, “The petrol, the insurance, the road tax, and the, the, the, blah, blah, blah”.\(^{59}\)

Part Two.

None of the informants in the AOA5 group had any incorrect placement of the primary stress in words according to standard pronunciation.

In the AOA8 group, the female informants, FN and YH, and JW, a male informant, did not have any incorrect placement of the primary stress in words according to standard pronunciation. JT, the other male informant in this group, was also able to place the primary stress on the correct syllable of the words he pronounced correctly according to standard pronunciation. He pronounced the following words wrongly when he deleted a syllable from each word:

*Nationality* was pronounced as [n\=nationity] with equal stress on both syllables. *Originality* was pronounced as [organality], *originate* as [organate], and *origin* as [organ].

In the AOA10 group, KN was the only informant who placed primary stress in the correct positions for all 18 words. EL could not pronounce *auditorium* and *editorial*. *Originality* was pronounced as [orginity] and *originate* as [orginate]. *Critically* was pronounced as [critjrical]. There are also two instances where she placed primary stress on the wrong syllables. These words were *nationality* and *photographically*. GW could not pronounce *critically*. *Originality* was also pronounced as [orginity]. *Photography* was pronounced as 4 distinct syllables with equal stress: [pho-to-gra-phy]. JH pronounced *nationality* as [nationability]. *Auditing, audition*, and *origin* were pronounced as three distinct syllables with equal stress: [au-di-ting], [au-di-tion] and [o-ri-gin]. There is one other instance where JH placed the primary stress on the wrong syllable - *photography*.

\(^{59}\) There was no rising pitch.
Discussion.

Archibald's (1997) study shows that Cantonese L2 speakers of English may treat English stress or pitch as a lexical entry as in their L1. The data of the reading aloud task indicate what Archibald (1999) has suggested to be the case only to a small extent in this data: in the following, the present research will show how different pronunciation strategies were used by some of the informants when they were asked to pronounce words they were not familiar with and that only some of these strategies were compatible with Archibald's (1999) suggestion that these informants might have stored stress as a lexical entry.

JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) were the only 4 informants who made errors in the reading aloud task. Their errors can be divided into 3 groups. In the first group, the errors are words that the 4 informants pronounced wrong as a syllable was deleted or an extra syllable was added. However, if these words had existed in English, the informants would have placed the primary stress on the appropriate syllable.

JT  
*Originality* was pronounced as [organality]; *origin* as [organ], and *originate* as [organate].

EL  
*Originality* was pronounced as [orginity] and *originate* as [orginate]. *Critically* was pronounced as [critical].

GW  
*Originality* was also pronounced as [orginity].

JH  
*Nationality* was pronounced as [nationality].

There are several reasons that resulted in these instances. The informants were under pressure because they believed the reading aloud task, the last of a series of 6 tasks, was an assessment of their English proficiency and the pressure distracted them. Second, the informants had difficulty with words of 5 or more syllables because they were less familiar with these words. JT might not have had difficulty with *origin*. After pronouncing *originality* as [organality], it was natural for him to continue the strategy of deleting the syllable /i/ when he pronounced the *origin*. Third, pronouncing 'long' words and placing primary stress on the correct syllable the first time is a problem that some native speakers of English also have. However, this does not explain why the other 8 informants did not have this problem.
There may be a psycholinguistic reason as well. Archibald (1997) has suggested that Cantonese L2 speakers might not be able to learn English variable stress rules and they might store stress as part of the lexical entry.

The above suggests a possible critical period effect most likely centring at age 10. However, there is also indication that the critical period is not a sufficient condition to explain the performance of JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10) and JH (AOA10). The other 4 informants in these 2 AOA groups, FN (AOA8), YH (AOA8), JW (AOA8), and KN (AOA8), did not have any difficulty with the words in the reading aloud task. This suggests other factors are involved.

As already mentioned, JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10) and JH (AOA10) experienced stress when performing the reading aloud task which might have affected their performance. Furthermore, there are differences in aspects of the social profiles of the 8 informants in these age groups that might reinforce the suggestion that the critical period is not a sufficient reason to account for the difference in their performance in the reading aloud task.

FN (AOA8), YH (AOA8) and KN (AOA8) took an active part in extra curricular activities. FN was a member of the school track team and a member of the school orchestra for several years. YH was a member of the school basketball team for about 3 years. KN was a member of the school swimming team for about 5 years and the head of the graphic section of the school magazine for about 2 years. Both of them were more assimilated to school life in London than JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) were, who did not take part in school organised extra curricular activities for any long period of time. Like JT, GW, and JH, YH and KN did not have any non Cantonese friends but their contact with non Cantonese speakers through the extra curricular activities they had taken part in meant they would be more exposed to English and would help the informants towards learning English stress rules for all words. Unlike JT, EL, GW, and JH, FN and YH were ardent readers of novels in English. This practice would expose them more to polysyllabic words than JT, EL, GW, and JH, who did not read any novels in English.
Like JT (AOA8), JW (AOA8) arrived in London at age 8. Unlike JT, JW had English speaking friends up to age 18 with whom he went on holidays. Furthermore, JW had an English girlfriend for more than 2 years before the interviews. JW would be more exposed to spoken English than JT would because of the difference in this aspect of their social profiles.

In the second group of errors that JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) had made in the reading aloud task. The second group are instances of words that had two or more primary stresses. 

JT  *Nationality* was pronounced as [nationity]

GW  *Photography* was pronounced as [pho-to-gra-phy] with equal stress on all 4 syllables.

JH  *Auditing, audition,* and *origin* were pronounced [au-di-ting], [au-di-tion] and [o-ri-gin] with equal stress on all syllables, which were pronounced separately, without elision or coarticulation, like individual Cantonese morphemes.

These instances indicate that the 3 informants employed another strategy (other than deleting a syllable) when they were confronted with unfamiliar words. For JH and GW, and to a lesser extent, JT, the strategy was pronouncing the words in a typical way many Cantonese English L2 speakers would. An English word of two or more syllables would be broken up into distinct syllables and equal stress would be given to each syllable.

Like the instances in the previous group, there are two instances of words of 5 syllables in this group (*photography* and *nationality*). As previously argued, these are words that JT and GW might not have been familiar with. JT deleted one syllable from *nationality*, turning it into a word with 4 syllables and placed primary stress on every other syllable. By deleting the syllable where the primary stress should be, JT placed primary stress on the first and third syllable of the nonexisting 4 syllable word. GW broke *photography* up into 4 distinct syllables and pronounced the word in a way similar to how a native speaker would pronounce Cantonese words. All 3 instances of JH in this group were 3 syllable words. Each word was broken up into distinct syllables and equal stress was given to each syllable.

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60 JT played in the school cricket team for a while. He found it boring and stopped playing. GW was in the school track team but she stopped when her knees gave her problems. JH and GW did not take part in any
The third group consists of only instances of words pronounced with the correct number of syllables, not broken up into separate units. JH (AOA.10) pronounced *photography* as [photography], primary stress placed on the penultimate syllable. EL had placed primary stress on the wrong syllables on [nationality] and [photographically].

The fourth group consists of instances of words the informants could not pronounce and they stated outright that they would not pronounce them. EL could not and refused to pronounce *auditorium* and *editorial*. GW could not and refused to pronounce *critically*. The reasons for the problematic instances of these 3 groups could be the pressure the informants felt.

### Position vs. Syllable.

As already pointed out, the six sets of words were selected to tease out the possibility that the informants might elect to place primary stress on specific syllables. For example, they might pronounce [original] as [original] because they knew primary stress is placed on the first syllable in *origin*. The 4 informants did not place primary stress on the wrong syllable; there is only one such possible instance [nationality] in the data, produced by EL. Since EL also pronounced *photographically* as [photographically], the instance of [nationality] cannot be attributed to EL’s being more familiar with *nation* than *nationality* with certainty.

### The Interview Data.

There is only one instance in the interview data where primary stress is placed on the wrong syllable.

**JH** They were on about, you know, “The pet*rol*, the insurance, the road tax, and the, the, the, blah, blah, blah”.

*Petrol* [petrol] is the short form for *petroleum* and it does not have a verb or adjective form in standard English. In fact, the instance indicates that JH might have confused the pronunciation of extra curricular activities throughout their school life up to the time of the interviews.
petrol [petrəl] with patrol [pɑːt ŋəl] or it might be an effect of pre-pausal emphasis related to lengthening.

Stress Placement as a Sociolinguistic Indicator.

Attaining native speaker proficiency in their L2 is important for migrants. The informants in the present study would not feel differently from migrants of other ethnic groups in London and in the UK in this respect. They need English proficiency in their future career in England and in Hong Kong or elsewhere, should they decide to have a career outside the UK. Since stress placement is not a sociolinguistic indicator among native speakers of English, the informants would be reluctant to use stress placement to mark the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London because placing primary stress on syllables other than those in standard pronunciation might be misconstrued as a lack of proficiency in English.

Conclusion.

The data indicates the production of this proficiency indicator by JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) indicating a possible weak critical period effect pre-age 10. However, the data also shows that AOA, on its own, is not a sufficient factor in accounting for the presence of this proficiency indicator for the four informants, JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10). There might be other factors involved as other informants in these two age group, FN (AOA8), YH (AOA8), JW (AOA8) and KN (AOA10) placed primary stress in the correct syllable in the words pronounced in their interview and in the reading aloud task. The research has shown that JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) had felt more under pressure than the other four informants in the two AOA group and this might have accounted for their performance. The research has also suggested that a difference in the eight informants profiles might also have accounted for the performance of JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) of this linguistic feature.
5.04 Past-time Tense Marking

The informants' use of English past tense marking rules were analysed in 2 obligatory contexts: when they talked about their life in Hong Kong and in the first schools in London. Excluded from the analysis was when they talked about their life in the last school they were in before the interview.

In Standard English, contracted *be* is not used in past time context (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973, p. 36; Leech and Svartvik, 1973, p. 208). However, the data show that all the informants used contracted *be* in past time contexts. For example:

CC And for my sixteenth, we, the summer of my sixteenth, we had gone to America instead, of Hong Kong. It's Disneyland.

HG and then when I came here, it's, it's really different.

CT He's, he's definitely, you know, in class above me,

HN It was good. It's good. Er, I had a lot of attention.

FN Before, it's like little girl, init? You know, when I was like fifteen.

YH sometimes they made fun the way I spoke English but it wasn't horrible. And no one's really nice really.

JT It's part OK and people's quite good.

JW that's the only time I had to fight over anything,

EL I arrived in nineteen ninety two, and er that's third, I think it's thirteenth January,

GW How old, erm, I was ten years old when I left. It's Nineteen Ninety Two, the year, yeah

JH I don't exactly know what my father did. Er, he's kind of like some kind of manager in some kind of trading company, I don't know.

KN but I didn't like it because they force you to swim like twenty lanes yeah, and it's so tiring and I keep flunking it.

The examples show that for the informants, contracted *be* can also be a variant of *was* and *were*. There are several ways of accounting for this phenomenon. First, the informants did not know that contracted *be* cannot be used in past time contexts. Second, adolescent native speakers of English might also use contracted *be* in past time contexts. This has to be confirmed by future research. Whatever the reason is, instances of contracted *be* in past time contexts have to be taken out of the analysis because of the ambiguity. It cannot be known with any degree of certainty whether the informants' use of contract *be* were marked for past tense.

Bardovi-Harlig (2000) points out that it is difficult to detect the presence or absence of nonsyllabic past tense markers [t] or [d] when the token is followed by a word with an initial stop that is homorganic. Example are as follows:
CC  And then I learnt to row at school.

HG  I used to read Little Sugar.

Such instances are also taken out of the analysis because of the difficulty of detecting the presence or absence of past tense markers.

The Findings.

CC

There are 52 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in CC's data. 19 of them are the copula be. Of these 19 tokens, 6 of them are in the contracted form 's. These 6 tokens are taken out of the analysis. There are 7 regular verb tokens in the data. There are 11 irregular verb tokens and 15 auxiliary verb tokens. In total, 46 verb tokens in CC's data will be analysed.

Out of the 46 verb tokens, only one of them does not have past-time tense marking. In the following instance, CC was talking about the second school she was in. The next VP would have start was marked as subjunctive mood, past time. It indicates that CC realises she is talking about a school in the past-time context.

CC  Erm, er, (laughs) It's, it's quite a strange school to practice on because, obviously their emphasis on Sanskrit and meditation and erm, they focus on more language like Sanskrit and Greek whereas in most schools, they would have start you off on the modern language.

CC’s percentage of past tense marking  = 45 / 46 x 100  
  = 97.83%

There is one instance of a nonsyllabic past tense verb token followed by a homorganic stop. The verb token is considered to be in past-time form.

CC  And then I learnt to row at school.
There are 82 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in HG’s data. 23 of them are the copula be. Five of these are in contracted form ‘s and are taken out of the analysis. There are 20 regular verb tokens. There is a verb token of this category that is excluded from the analysis:

HG Erm, I’ve lived in **Hong Kong** since I was five, I came here when I was five.

Clearly, HG meant **London** instead of **Hong Kong**. Therefore, this verb token is not included in the analysis. There are 13 auxiliary verb tokens and 26 irregular verb tokens. They are included in the analysis. The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 82.

Of these 82 verb tokens, four of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are as follows:

1. and then I made my friends there, the people, the children at Kidbrooke are like all nice to me, yeah, made me feel welcome
2. I saw people playing this music and it just seems nice.
3. that’s when I started going to school, primary school, and start meeting more people
4. Some of them were strict, some of them were more sane, they just told what we need to learn.

HG’s percentage of past tense marking = 78 / 82 x 100
= 95.12 %

There are nine instances of a nonsyllabic past tense verb token followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and the verb tokens are considered to be in past-time form. For example,

HG *I moved to Kidbrooke.*

Of these nine verb tokens, six of them are verb tokens of *use to* followed by a verb. For example

HG *I used to read Little Sugar.*

There are 94 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in CT’s data. 25 of them are the copula be. 5 of these are in contracted form ‘s and are taken out of the analysis. There are 19 regular verb. There are 27 auxiliary verb tokens and 23 irregular verb tokens. The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 89. Of these 89 verb tokens, 3 of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are as follows:
I don't know, it's, nice place, nice place. The teachers are friendly,
well they are sometimes biased, of course
he would often pop over, you know, you know, give me some books to read
and start blabbering away in Cantonese.

In Instance 3, CT was talking about a teacher he had when he first arrived. He may have failed to mark a past-time verb token. The explanation can also be that CT was using the present tense form of an irregular verb token in past time (See the discussion on HN’s use of this non-standard rule below). On the other hand, it is also likely that give is in non-finite form because it is governed by would although a conjunction like and is required in standard English. The benefit of the doubt is given to CT in this case. The total number of verb tokens is reduced to 87.

CT’s percentage of past tense marking $= \frac{85}{87} \times 100$
$= 97.70\%$

Of these 87 tokens, there are 9 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and all 9 token are considered to be in past-tense form. For example

CT but, er, this other guy seem to have some, some kind of need to dominate the territory.

Of these nine tokens, 8 are instances of use to followed by a verb. For example:

CT There used to be a food mall, erm, on the Trocadalo called Food Street.

There are 3 instances of did followed by a verb. For example:

CT Erm, one of the thing he, apart from English, he did teach me was how to play chess.

Here did is not an error because CT used it to signal contrast between two things his private tutor taught him - English and chess.
There are 107 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in HN’s data. 46 of them are the copula *be*. 6 of these are in contracted form ‘s and are taken out of the analysis. There are 13 regular verb tokens. There are 13 auxiliary verb tokens. There are 35 irregular verb tokens. The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 101.

Of these 101 verb tokens, 7 of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are as follows:

1. they *are* like made sure you got your work done,
2. and I *come* over to England like January Eighty Eight.
3. when I *come* over here, right.
4. when I *come* to England,
5. And the, erm, and then I sort of *hang* around with the right bunch,
6. So I say I *pick* up my English
7. I *study* up to Year, Year Nine.

HN’s percentage of past tense marking = \( \frac{94}{101} \times 100 \)

= 93.07 %

Edwards (1993, p. 220) reports that some native speakers of English use present tense form for an irregular verb token in past time. For example, the past tense form of *come* is also *come* instead of *came* as in Standard English. This is what HN is doing for # 2 to # 5. To support this possibility, some evidence of HN’s propensity to use non-standard English features is listed below:

HN They was born in the UK, yeah.
HN Me and my cousins, we was very popular.

Of these 101 tokens, there is 8 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and all 8 tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. These 8 tokens are verb tokens of *use to* followed by a verb. For example:

HN *we use to live in council flats.*
There are 49 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in FN’s data. 15 of them are the copula be. 2 of these are in contracted form ‘s. They are excluded from the analysis. There are 14 regular verb tokens. There are 10 auxiliary verb tokens and 10 irregular verb tokens included in the analysis. The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 47.

Of these 47 verb tokens, two of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are as follows:

1. but now he sell it to two different people.
2. he start deny that

# 1 may not be the use of present tense form for an irregular verb token in past time. There are two reasons for this conclusion. First, it is the only time that FN has used a present tense form for a irregular verb token in past time. For other irregular verb tokens in the two contexts, she has used the standard past tense form. For example:

FN I came from Hong Kong.
FN I came here when I was very young.

The second reason is the presence of now. It is more likely that FN should have used the present perfect tense form has sold instead.

FN’s percentage of past tense marking = \( \frac{45}{47} \times 100 \)

= 95.74 %

Of these 47 tokens, there are 12 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and all 12 tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. For example:

FN and then they, like, move to Woolwich

Of these 12 tokens, 8 are instances of use to followed by a verb. For example:

FN I use to hang around with English friends more.
YH

There are 109 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in YH’s data. 38 of them are the copula be. None of these are in contracted form’s. There are 15 regular verb tokens. There are 21 auxiliary verb tokens and 35 irregular verb tokens. The total number of verb tokens for analysis are 103.

Of these 103 verb tokens, three of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are as follows:

1. I just sort of feel different
2. He work in Bohk Oih Yi Youhng
3. My dad works in a hospital in Hong Kong

YH’s percentage of past tense marking = 100 / 103 x 100 = 97.09 %.

Of these 103 tokens, there are 6 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and all 6 tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. For example

YH and we moved to South London around Easter,

Of these 6 tokens, 3 are instances of use to followed by a verb. For example:

YH the exercise we use to do in Hong Kong.

There are three instances where the verb tokens are marked twice in the past tense.

YH I remember they use to told me.
YH I really didn’t understood very much.
YH “How did school went today?”
There are 51 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in JT’s data. 18 of them are the copula be. 9 of these are in contracted form ‘s and are taken out of the analysis. There are 8 regular verb tokens. There are 9 auxiliary verb tokens and 16 irregular verb tokens. Two of these 51 verb tokens are excluded from analysis for a different reason. The two verb tokens are:

1 so that’s the only difficulty, just communicate with other people.
2 Problems, er, there’s a, communicate is the same thing and over.

Communicate in the above two instances are NPs. The first one may need further explanation. JT has been talking about the problems he faced when he first arrived in London. He offers the conclusion that he only had one problem and that was communication with other people.

Both verb tokens are excluded from the analysis. The is in the second instance is not included among the tokens for analysis because the researcher cannot be sure JT is talking about things in his first school in England or making a general observation that was still true at the time he was interviewed.

The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 40.

There is not a single instance where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop in JT’s data. Of the 40 verb tokens, only 5 of them have past-time tense marking. These tokens with past-time tense marking are as follows:

LL So what made you decide to join the cricket team and what made you leave the team?
JT Er, actually, erm to join the team, probably, is because, because them PE felt quite fun and a teacher want me to join as well,

LL But why did you leave then?
JT Leave. Mmm, found boring because we lose all the time (both chuckle), so that’s the reason.

LL OK, so you didn’t stay after school?
JT Mmm, no. Yeah, but, erm, sometimes, I did stay and play for erm, cricket, for crick, for, er, school cricket team, for only one year because erm, just felt boring with it

(Here did is not considered an error because JT was contrasting because positive and negative meaning.)

LL Did you parents talk to you as to why you people had to leave Hong Kong and move to England?
JT Erm, erm, they have, they said erm, they worry about erm
In all 5 instances, JT uses the past-time tense form after the researcher used a verb token in the past-time tense form in the question stem. However, the likelihood that the tense forms that the researcher had used may have any influence on how JT mark past-time verb tokens was minimal. There is no evidence of any influence on the other verb tokens in the two contexts in his data.

For example:

```
LL  Did you do well in English?
JT  Erm, no, no, always fail, sometime. (LL chuckles)

LL  OK, did you have problems with the school with homework, with examinations, and so on?
JT  Erm, no, not really, because erm, they don't give too much homework, so it's quite OK.

LL  Why did they pick on you?
JT  Probably I can't speak English well, so, that's the problem, but after is quite OK.
```

The verb tokens that do not have past-time tense marking are:

1. and first time I come here,
2. I come over here as well, eight years old (rising)
3. so they come here because of me.
4. people just like racist, only so, and have a fight lots of time in first
5. because we lose all the time
6. and teachers, they, yeah, I tell them
7. because they keep saying that,
8. make quite a lot of friends, Chinese, especially.
9. they just keep saying some like, Chinks and all that thing,
10. take the mickey out of you all the time,
11. and then it keep going on and going on,
12. and fight with people in class.
13. I make friends with them,
14. so they move here,
15. and teacher help me a lot because erm
16. Erm, no, no, always fail, sometime. (LL chuckles)
17. Err, start to have problems, etc.
18. and a teacher want me to join as well,
19. first is start in class
20. and then just start
21. they said erm, they worry about erm
22. and just I can't take it
23. the first month I can't like really hard
24. They, yeah, they have.
25. Mmm, yeah, I do. Parents,
26. they don't give too much homework,
27. Haven't, just haven't got time
28. Erm, he is a policeman.
29. another reason is
30. my education is not that good in Hong Kong,
31. written English is OK a
32. first is start in class

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33. probably, is because,
34. grammar is that not that good, mmm
35. but after is quite OK
36. But most of them are White. White people.

JT's percentage of past tense marking
\[ \frac{5}{49} \times 100 \]
\[ = 10.20\% \]

JT does not use the past-time tense form for all irregular verb tokens other than say. If he uses present-tense form of irregular verbs in past-time contexts for sociolinguistic purposes, the social meaning of using this variant will be lost to his audience because of his tendency of not tense-marking verb tokens of other types.

JW

There are 68 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in JW's data. 19 of them are the copula be. 2 of these are in contracted form 's and 're and they are taken out of the analysis. There are 22 regular verb tokens. There are 19 auxiliary verb tokens and 16 irregular verb tokens. The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 66. Of these 66 verb tokens, 12 of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are

1. they are really helpful people,
2. my English is not that good,
3. especially they know
4. so they do it like,
5. pay a little bit more attention to me,
6. cause I don't know how to speak English
7. they do try to like, explain to you whenever you ask them,
8. so it take about all fifteen minutes walk every morning,
9. when I start, I didn't know much English.
10. and get about ten pound a week
11. and then start buying shops and things like that,
12. I start cooking on about twelve.

In #1 to #9, JW is talking about his first school in London. In #10 to #12, JW was talking about his parents' first takeaway.
JW’s percentage of past tense marking = \( \frac{56}{68} \times 100 \)

\[ = 82.35\% \]

Of these 68 tokens, there are 8 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and all 8 tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. These 8 tokens are verb tokens of *use to* followed by a verb. For example:

\[ JW \text{ they } use \text{ to } like \text{ send me a learners’ dictionary.} \]

EL.

There are 98 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in EL’s data. 38 of them are the copula *be*. 13 of these are in contracted form ‘s and they are taken out of the analysis. There are 9 regular verb tokens. There are 22 auxiliary verb tokens and 29 irregular verb tokens. They are included in the analysis. The total number of verb tokens for analysis are 85. Of these 85 verb tokens, 20 of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are

1. I arrive in nineteen ninety two
2. Erm, I went to Lesley's Park Primary School when I first arrive here.
3. she help me with it,
4. and help me with it,
5. and teach me how to read and spell, you know,
6. It teach me a lot. And erm,
7. and teach me how to read and spell, you know,
8. I just go in.
9. the next day I have to go to school,
10. Yeah, I do that in school.
11. Erm, they give me lessons. It
12. she erm, come
13. But when I come home,
14. Mm, they, cause they come from a different country like a French,
15. they come from different country (rising),
16. all the people around me, they speak English,
17. if they do speak English with me,
18. my mum and dad don't speak English with me
19. so they speak Chinese to me so, you know. Yeah.
20. cause they think if they do speak English with me

Of these 85 tokens, there is 2 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and both tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. Both tokens are verb tokens of *use to* followed by a verb. For example:
EL: I use to do swimming, running, and everything.

EL's percentage of past tense marking = \( \frac{65}{85} \times 100 \)

= 76.47%

Like HN, EL does not use the past-time tense form for all verb tokens of *come*. Furthermore, she seems to be a more advanced user of this sociolinguistic rule. While HN only uses the present tense form of *come* and *hang* in past-time contexts, EL uses the present tense form of other irregular verb types in past-time contexts categorically. These verb types are *give* (1 token), *teach* (1 token), and *speak* (1 token).

GW.

There are 84 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in GW's data. 30 of them are the copula *be*. 16 of these are in contracted form 's and are taken out of the analysis. There are 22 regular verb tokens. There are 10 auxiliary verb tokens and 22 irregular verb tokens. They are included in the analysis. The total number of verb tokens for analysis are 68. Of these 68 verb tokens, 26 of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are

1. the people there they are like quite friendly, erm,
2. My mum is a housewife, and the, so, even, yeah,
3. Well, yes, my schools are in that area so (note: schools in Hong Kong)
4. Yeah, I'm not a bright student or anything, in Hong Kong yeah.
5. And normally, I'm really quiet (rising) and yeah.
6. that is actually like the same situation as,
7. what I am in (rising),
8. and there is actually erm, about one or two Chinese people in my year
9. Yeah, so that's how they got the place.
10. I come from Hong Kong (rising)
11. they keep thinking they want me to go to a better school, you know,
12. Keep changing, yeah,
13. and then, they know a friend in Chinatown, well,
14. I feel more into it yeah
15. I remember my first day I do not know anything, I feel sort of like isolated and left out,
16. and I don't understand anything they say so
17. they feed me a load of words, so you know
18. Oh I kind of mmm, just pick up the English as it goes along and well,
19. and my dad, he works like for a government, a public, you know, Hong Kong police force,
20. not quite, but work in the office.
21. I live in the Kowloon, yeah
22. it's also my parents' friend introduce us to the school,
23. Oh I kind of mmm, just **pick up** the English as it goes along and well,
24. I did, yep, and we only **decide** to go to that school the day before the school **starts**
25. I did, yep, and we only decide to go to that school the day before the school **starts**
26. but then you just **pick up** the words

Of these 68 tokens, there is 5 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and both tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. For example

\[ GW \quad \text{so you know I learn to adapt the area and new school} \]

Included in these 5 tokens are 3 verb tokens of **use to** followed by a verb. For example:

\[ GW \quad \text{they use to just like "If it's wrong, and change it".} \]

GW's percentage of past tense marking $= \frac{42}{68} \times 100$
$= 61.76\%$

\[ \text{JH.} \]

There are 73 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in JH's data. 18 of them are the copula **be**. There are not any tokens in contracted forms. There are 20 regular verb tokens. There are 19 auxiliary verb tokens and 16 irregular verb tokens. The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 73. There are also 3 verb tokens not included in these 73 tokens that need discussion. They are

\[ \text{JH} \quad \text{I got a C, well I, I probably mucked it up in, in the exams cause in my course work yeah, I done pretty good.} \]

\[ \text{JH} \quad \text{Apart the English, English History and Literature and stuff. I been taking lessons for like, a year or so.} \]

\[ \text{JH} \quad \text{and we been friends afterwards since.} \]

The first instance may be a use of the past participle form of a verb as past tense form as reported by Rickford (1999) for AAVE and Sebba (1993) for the variety of English used in the London Caribbean community.
The other two instance may be the use of unstressed *bin* for has /have been. The unstressed *bin* is a linguistic feature reported by Rickford (1993) for AAVE as a present perfect tense marker. On the other hand, Sebba (1993) points that *been* is an invariant past-tense marker for the variety of English used in the London Caribbean community (p. 150).

Based on the research by Rickford (1999) and Sebba (1993) and on the fact that the three verb tokens are marked for tense, the three verb tokens are included from analysis. The total number of verb tokens to be analysed are 76.

Of the other 73 tokens, there are 9 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and all 9 tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. For example:

*JH*  
*I then move to Thamesmead.*

Included in these 9 tokens are 3 verb tokens of *use to* followed by a verb. For example:

*JH*  
*I use to get As in Hong Kong.*

Of these 73 verb tokens, 14 of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are

1. Can't remember what it is like.
2. I am just too quiet.
3. it really help me a lot,
4. I just muck it up.
5. Help a bit, yeah.
6. I just muck it up.
7. we don't even know the area that much.
8. er, can't be bothered, I guess.,
9. er, the syllabus and I study at home.
10. And some of my friends do help me out,
11. they do help me out a lot.
12. and I just don't chat too much at all
13. otherwise I, I'll be so quiet, not talking at much.
14. probably bring my grade up, init? And just for the actual exam,
JH’s percentage of past tense marking $= \frac{62}{76} \times 100$

$= 81.58\%$

KN.

There are 101 verb tokens in the two obligatory contexts in KN’s data. 25 of them are the copula be. 1 of these is in contracted form ‘s and is taken out of the analysis. There are 22 regular verb tokens. There are 17 auxiliary verb tokens and 37 irregular verb tokens. They are included in the analysis. The total number of verb tokens for analysis is 100. Of these 100 verb tokens, 25 of them do not have past-time tense marking. They are

1. I mean people are so nice to you.
2. in London is Westcombe Point (rising).
3. people there are really nice as well,
4. aren’t they?
5. and I keep flunking it (laughs),
6. they want a better education in United Kingdom,
7. they live here, like two years after me (rising), so.
8. I move back to London
9. and I wait,
10. I play football everyday and yeah,
11. it just drop again,
12. if I stay in school,
13. hardly learn anything, especially Maths,
14. I just stop for about two years.
15. just play all day, so
16. They greet you down “
17. so I drop it,
18. I can do amazing good,
19. alright, I can play for the school team
20. and I can’t believe it myself
21. and I’m going to like a really quite posh school,
22. I’ve been to Rosary Hill School for like five years
23. so I’ve only been but,
24. I’ve been to United Kingdom for about five years then,
25. I’ve only been England two years,

KN might not have learnt the past perfect tense form and past continuous tense form. The conclusion follows from that fact that that verb tokens in # 22 to # 25 referred to a time before a past time signalled elsewhere.
Of the 100 tokens, there are 9 instances where a nonsyllabic past tense verb token is followed by a homorganic stop. The benefit of the doubt is given and all 9 tokens are considered to be in past-tense form. For example:

**KN** and after that we **move to here**.

Included in these 9 tokens are 4 verb tokens of *use to* followed by a verb. For example:

**KN** *I use to like it, but you know,*

KN’s percentage of past tense marking = \( \frac{75}{100} \times 100 \)

= 75.00%

Discussion.

The following table lists the percentage of past tense marking by each of the informant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>% of past tense marking</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>% of past tense marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOA5 CT</td>
<td>97.70%</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>97.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>93.07%</td>
<td>HG</td>
<td>95.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA8 JT</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>YH</td>
<td>97.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>82.35%</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td>95.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA10 JH</td>
<td>81.58%</td>
<td>GW</td>
<td>61.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>76.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The informants can be divided in 4 groups. Group 1 consists of all 4 members of the AOA5 group (CC, HG, CT, and HN) and YH and FN. The range of the percentage of past tense marking in this group is between 93.07% and 97.83%. Group 2 consists of JW (AOA8) and JH (AOA10). The range of the percentage of past tense marking in this group is between 81.58% and 82.35%. Group 3 consists of KN (AOA10) EL (AOA10) and GW (AOA10). The range of the percentage of past tense marking in this group is between 61.76% and 76.47%. Group 4 consists of only JT (10.20%).

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If native-speaker proficiency is defined as language performance that shows nil token of this proficiency indicator, then none of the informants had acquired native-speaker proficiency by adolescence.

From the AOA group perspective, the AOA5 group has the highest percentage of past tense marking of all 3 AOA groups. In addition, there is very little difference between the two gender group. These may indicate that the critical period, for this proficiency indicator at least, ends at around or before age 5.

However, there are other reasons that can explain the high usage of past tense marking of the AOA5 group. All 4 informants had non-Cantonese friends they went out with or talked to when they had problems. CT and HG read a lot of English language novels and magazines. English language novels are mainly written in the past tense and developing reading novels as a habit enabled CT and HG to be more exposed to how English verbs are marked in the past tense.

If the critical period ends at age 5, as the evidence of the findings here suggests, then there is still a need to explain the high percentage the female informants (YH and FN) of AOA8 group has achieved.

Like 5 other informants of the AOA8 and AOA10 groups (JW, JH, KN, GW, and EL), FN and GW had friends who were not Cantonese L1 speakers. However, unlike all other informants of the 2 AOA groups, FN and YH did not work in Chinese catering exclusively. YH, although she worked in a Chinese restaurant, also worked as a sales person in Marks & Spencer and at the Chessington Zoo. FN worked as a waitress in a Mexican restaurant in Greenwich. These jobs required more than waiting on customers and conversing with them. The two informants had to talk with other staff in English. On the other hand, JH, EL, and JW worked in Chinese takeaways. They only needed to take orders from their English-speaking customers. They talked with their colleagues in Cantonese. GW and JT worked in environments where less English is needed. JT worked in a Chinese supermarket and GW worked in a Chinese school. There are fewer clients and colleagues that are English L1 speakers.

A more important reason is that, unlike the other 6 informants in the two AOA groups, YH and FN had developed the habit of reading English novels when they arrived in London. Since
English novels are mostly written in the past tense, they are a source of exposure to how English verbs are marked in the past tense. This will account for the high percentage of appropriate use of past tense forms of YH and FN.

JT was the informant who had the lowest percentage. At age 18, he did not have any non-Cantonese friends at all. His friends since his arrival in London were all Cantonese speakers. He did not read any English books, magazines, or newspaper. The only television programmes in English language he watched was sports programmes. He did not listen to any English language songs other than the ones he played when he danced. Other than in the classroom, he had little use of English. He did not take part in any extra-curricular activities. He worked in a Chinese supermarket, an environment that requires less English than a takeaway. All these have cumulative effects and can explain his low usage of past tense marking.

JW, KN, and JH have similar percentage of past tense marking (75.00% - 82.35%). JH and JW had non-Cantonese speakers as friends when they arrived. KN did not but he took an active part in extra-curricular activities in school. They watched more English language television programmes than JT did. JH, JW, and KN read English language magazines. JW and KN listened to songs in English language. Their taste in Western pop music was more than using it as a medium for dancing. All these would have cumulative effects and can explain their higher percentages.

As for GW and EL, the 2 female informants of the AOA10 group, they did not read English language novels at all. GW worked as a teacher in a Chinese school, an environment where Chinese and Cantonese are used exclusively. EL worked two nights a week in her sister’s takeaway, a job that required some English. Furthermore, EL and GW did not take part in any extra-curricular activities. At age 18, EL was friends with an English girl she still went out with and she was beginning to go out with an English boy around 2000. GW did not have any non-Cantonese friends by age 18. All these may explain why the percentage EL has achieved was closer to the those of the three informants (JW, JH, and KN) that GW’s was.

Because of all these different profiles, GW’s percentage of past tense marking of this proficiency indicator was only higher than JT’s. She was different from JT in 2 social practices although her AOA is higher than JT’s. GW read English language magazines. She had friends who were non-
Cantonese speakers. She watched more varieties of television programmes in English language than JT did.

English has a tense system in which verbs are encoded grammatically for locating “situations in time, usually with reference to the present moment” (Comrie, 1976, p. 6). On the other hand, Cantonese, the informants’ L1, has an aspect system, which is concerned with whether situations are ongoing or complete. It does not have a deictic function. Some of the informants’ difficulty with this proficiency indicator may be explained by this difference of the two languages. The informants, as we have seen, did not use past tense forms with some tokens. The lack of past tense marking may be that some informants considered the hearers could refer some actions may be complete and past tense marking would not be necessary.

However, the discussion has also presented the evidence that some informants used sociolinguistic variants in their tense marking. In the following, the discussion will look at some possible variants the informants might have used in the interviews before presenting a final summary of the informants’ use of this proficiency indicator.

Past-time Tense Markers and Variants of the Past Tense Form.

Both Edwards (1993) and Sebba (1993) have noted the use of the present-tense form of irregular verbs in past-time contexts in varieties of English spoken in the UK.

The research has shown that HN and EL used this variant form for several verb tokens in the interviews. HN, as already pointed out, used the present tense form of irregular verbs for past-time contexts (3 tokens of come and one token of hang). As also pointed out, EL might also have used the same sociolinguistic variant form. In fact, she seemed to be a more advanced user of this variant form as there are more present tense irregular verb types in her data than there are in HN’s.

However, there is no evidence of widespread use of this variation in either informants’ data. This sociolinguistic grammatical rule has not been extended to apply to other irregular verbs like eat,
give, and get in their speech data. This indicates that the 2 informants used this sociolinguistic grammatical rule on a lexical basis.

As already pointed out, there are three verb tokens in JH’s data that may be classified as an invariant past-tense marker been and the use of the past participle form to mark verb tokens in past-time contexts (e.g. done), both reported by Sebba (1993).

JH’s use of past participle as past-tense form occurs once only. If he had really appropriated this variant for social meaning, this variant would have occurred more often. Therefore the inference that he did not use variants of past-form as a sociolinguistic indicator must be drawn.

Other invariant past tense markers which some of the informants employed in the interviews and which may have sociolinguistic meaning are as follows:

- **used to**  
  Used to, according to Leech and Svartvik (1973), “expresses a state or habit in the past, as contrasted with the present” (p. 68). Since used to is invariably employed to contrast past with present, some of the informants might have employed it not as a semi-model but as a general past-tense marker. However, there is only one instance of used to among the verb tokens analysed that does not express a state or a habit in the past; other than the following case, from JH. The conjecture that some of the informants might have used it as a past-time tense marker is not supported by the evidence.

  JH  
  Well, I use to go out one night,

- **Did + verb**  
  Did + verb may be another candidate as a past-time tense marker. Do + verb is sometimes used in affirmative sentences to express emphasis (Leech and Svartvik 1973). Some of the candidates might use did + verb not to express emphasis but as a general (invariant) past-tense marker. However, there were only 4 instances of did + verb among the verb tokens analysed. All four tokens were produced by CT and JT. There is evidence in the conversational context that, for each of these tokens, an element of contrast exists. The conjecture, that some of the informants might have used it as a past-time tense marker is not supported by the evidence. An example of these tokens are:
CT  Erm, one of the things he, apart from English, he did teach me was how to play chess.

- **Contracted forms of the copula be**  In standard English, the contracted forms of the copula be are not used as a variant of was or were (Leech and Svartvik, 1973, p. 209; Collins COBUILD English Grammar, p. 453). As already pointed out, all 12 informants used contracted forms of the copula be in past-time contexts. Use of contracted forms of the copula be in past-time contexts has not been reported by sociolinguists working on the varieties of English used in the UK (Cheshire, 1993; Edwards, 1993). If it is not used found in the speech data of other ethnic groups in London and in the UK, then the contracted forms of the copula be in past-time context mark the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. This has to be confirmed by future research.

**Conclusion.**

To summarise, the data indicate that none of the informants had achieved full native-speaker proficiency. An age-related explanation would argue that indicates that a critical period for language learning would have to end at age 5 or earlier. However, environmental influence cannot be disregarded. The members of the AOA5 group were very much part of the youth community in London. They had non-Cantonese speaking friends from their arrival in London to age 18 when they were interviewed. They read English novels and magazines for pleasure. They took part in extra-curricular activities in their school with other London youth. They listened to Western music and watched a variety of films and television programmes in English as a continuing practice.

The female AOA8 group’s performance in tense marking was on the same level as the AOA5 group. If the critical period ends at age 5, the performance in this proficiency indicator of the 2 female AOA8 informants shows that arrival before the critical period is not a necessary condition for English L2 learners to achieve near native-speaker proficiency. Environmental influence and social practices like having friends who did not speak Cantonese, holding jobs where English is used with colleagues as well as the clientele, watching films and television programmes in English, and reading English novels and magazines for pleasure might have played a role in the 2 informants’ achieving the same proficiency level in the use of this indicator as the AOA5 group.
This discussion has also shown that some of the informants must be participants in a language change that is in progress in London. HN and EL used the present tense form of irregular verbs as past-tense forms. JH used past participles as past-tense forms and *been* as past-tense particle. Furthermore, the 12 informants’ use of the contracted forms of the copula *be* in past-time contexts may indicate that they were practitioners of the youth community in London.

5.05 Definite Article.

The informants’ use of the definite article is classified into the 4 contexts used by Huebner (1979) and Young (1996) in their research of their English L2 subjects’ use of English articles. Huebner (1979) defines the 4 contexts as follows:

Context 1: [+ specific, + hearer] In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with ‘the’. In terms of function, ‘the’ in this context realises uniqueness and anaphoric reference.

Context 2: [- specific, + hearer] In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with ‘a(n)’, the, or zero. In terms of function, all three articles realise generic reference.

Context 3: [- specific, - hearer] In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with ‘a(n)’ and attributive function is realised in this context.

Context 4: [+ specific, - hearer] In this context in Standard English, NPs are marked with also marked with ‘a(n)’ or zero. In terms of function, it introduces the first mention of NP in a discourse. (Huebner 1979, p. 25)

Both Huebner (1979) and Young (1996) omitted from their analysis proper nouns, idioms and formulaic expressions (e.g. *in the morning, by train, in the future*), and commonly used expressions, and NPs that are modified by superlatives. The present study will include names of

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61 All 3 examples are from Young (1996, p. 145).
places, rivers, stations, railway lines, public institutions, schools and universities, magazines and newspaper, languages. It will also include idioms and formulaic expressions.

The reason is that there are rules governing the use of definite article with proper nouns, commonly used expressions, and NPs that are modified by superlatives. *The* is needed in front of names of rivers (e.g. the Thames) and railway lines (the Circle Line). *The* is not used in front of names of stations (e.g. Waterloo Station). In standard British English, some place names in London and elsewhere, names of schools and universities, require *the* and for others, adding *the* is not standard English usage. The patterns are complicated (see Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973; Leech and Svartvik, 1973).

Place names with *the*:
- the Strand; the Haymarket;
- the West End; the USA; the UK.

Place names without *the*:
- Tower Bridge; Convent Garden;
- Chinatown; America; England.

Names of schools or universities with *the*:
- the University of London;

Names of schools or universities without *the*:
- London University;

Names of public institutions with *the*:
- the Millennium Dome;
- the Houses of Parliament;

Names of public institutions without *the*:
- Big Ben; Madame Tussauds

Names of magazines and newspapers with *the*:
- the Sun; the Mirror; the Face;

Names of magazines and newspapers without *the*:
- Loaded; Elle;

Names of languages with *the*:
- Cantonese; Chinese; English;

Names of languages without *the*:
- the Cantonese language; the Chinese language; the English language;
The work will also analyse the 12 informants’ use of the English articles with idioms and formulaic expressions. These include:

Times of the day with the:
- in the morning;

Times of the day without the:
- at night;

Institutions without the;

EL When I go to school,

The 4 contexts used in the present work to analyse the informants’ use of the are operationally defined as follows:

Context 1 [+ specific, + hearer]:

01 Anaphoric reference: The speaker assumes the referent of an NP as known to the hearer.

For example:

EL Bexleyheath school, it’s alright. It’s a nice school. A lot of people like it. And I don’t like it. I don’t like the school. And erm, that’s it really.

CT But erm, actually, it is surprising. This is the point I’ve already mentioned

02 Indirect anaphoric reference: The speaker assumes that the reference of an NP is known to the hearer from the context. For example:

CC Er, my mum makes an attempt at cooking (both chuckle), attempt, emphasis on that. Erm, she tries, she tries, but doesn’t always succeed and then get offended if the food doesn’t get eaten.

LL Well, hmmhmm, why do you like Yes?

EL I don’t know, actually. It’s just because, erm, erm, I like to play those games in there. You know, like I like to read the love letter (= the agony aunt section).
Situation reference: According to Lyons (1999), the is used when “the physical situation in which the speaker and hearer are located contributes to the familiarity of the referent of the definite noun phrase” (p. 4). For example:

LL Where did you get these photographs and posters?
CT From the CD, the album, the lyrics, just cut them off and stick them on the wall, you know?

Cataphoric reference: The speaker establishes the reference of an NP through a restrictive relative clause or a post modifier. For example:

FN I might feel “Oh, it's better if I move out, then they won't know and everything” but you know, that's the way I was brought up, init?

Unique reference: The speaker uses the name of a place or river or the name of an underground railway line, the names of newspaper, names of magazines, or the speaker uses a NP with a unique role or with a unique position. The hearer assumes the referent of the NP is unique because of the common knowledge that both the speaker and hearer share. There may be more than one place called the Strand in the world. There is more than one newspaper called the Sun. However, in the following examples, the researcher assumes the informants were talking about the Strand in London and a newspaper called the Sun that was available in London at the time.

FN Mmm, you walk towards the Strand.
KN go to Waterloo Station, it's the Bakerloo Line.
HG Because you see the River Thames.
EL The Sun. The Sun. It got more stuff in it. The Mirror, Mmm, alright. I know I'm a bit awkward, actually.
JH The head teacher is making a scheme or something to lend laptops to those who don't have computers at home.

There are exceptions. Zero is required for many names in English. For example:

HG Erm, like Elle, I use to read Little Sugar, Bliss, but now I read Elle, Nineteen, Cosmopolitan.
YH Oh, oh, we lived in South Woodford when we first arrived.
Another exception is that no article is required when the speaker uses a predicative NP with a unique role or with a unique position. These NPs are categorised as Context 3 NPs and will be discussed below.

05 **Unique reference** (continued): NPs modified by ordinals or superlatives;

**FN** cause it’s not *the first time* I’ve been clubbing.

**FN** she’s like *the best woman, the best singers, no, the best female singer* in Hong Kong, init?

06 The speaker mentions an NP as a time of day. Both *the* or zero article may occur, depending on idiomatic usage. For example:

**CC** *when you are walking down, especially at night, when people are still a little bit drunk.*

**GW** *but errm. so normally we go out in the afternoon.*

**Context 2 [- specific, + hearer]:**

01 The speaker introduces an NP as generic reference. For example:

**CC** *Erm, we do a lot of gossiping as girls do.*

**FN** *I’ve been in other places but they are not English clubs,*

**FN** *but English people, you tend to find that their parents are more relaxed,*

**LL** *Which would you prefer, pool or snooker?*

**HN** Pool. Pool.

**LL** *Why’s that.*

**HN** *It’s a smaller table and you’ve got bigger pockets.*

**CT** *I think it’s gonna be a more Westernized buffet style kind of reception,*

**CT** *The English would actually be, I mean the white English, would, would be, you know, mixed with, er, mixed race or black people*

02 The speaker introduces an NP as a type of institution and not as a specific entity.

**CC** *Erm, My mum’s friend, Sara, taught me basic English. And then I learnt the rest from, at school.*
03 The speaker uses a predicative NP with a unique role or with a unique position. In English, zero article is a prerequisite. There are no instances of any predicative NPs with a unique role or with a unique position with the in the data. However, there are instances of predicative NPs with zero article. For example:

**KN** I'm head of graphics for the magazine.

04 The speaker mentions an NP which is the name of a language. For example:

**GW** the only language I know is like well Cantonese or English so (laughs).

Context 3 [-specific, -hearer]: The speaker introduces an NP as a non-specific new entity. For example:

**CT** They want you to, you know, become a doctor, or an accountant.

**FN** Erm, my dad was a chef, my, my mum never works.

**CT** I have no idea who, like, the three of them are. I just think they are pretty and I put them on the wall.

**LL** They sure beat Pokemon (both laugh).

**CT** They are models who work for the Gold advertisement.

Context 4: The speaker introduces an NP as a specific new entity.

**CC** And I had a tutor for a while in Mandarin.

**YH** My dad works in a hospital in Hong Kong. He work in Bohk Oih Yi Yeuhng which was just near Yeuhng Lohng, at the edge of that.

In the following, the discussion is on which article is taken with some NPs in the data and on which types of NPs are not included in the analysis.

Two or More NPs in Apposition.

When two or more NPs are in apposition, it is assumed that for NPs without a / an or the, an article is omitted because of ellipsis. For example:

**JT** then take the erm, Piccadilly Line, or Northern Line, go to erm, Charing Cross.
Similarly, if the first NP for two or more NPs in apposition has zero article, the second and following NPs are assumed to have zero article unless a /an or the is present. For example:

CC  It's, it's quite a strange school to practice on because, obviously their emphasis on Sanskrit and meditation.

NPs in False Starts.

A reformulated NP may have two or more determiners. In such a case, only the last one will be included in the analysis. A reformulated NP and its predecessor are counted once. For example:

JT  What happen, er, all the cap, erm, the captains and all the crews die on, on a big storm.

Partitives.

The following types of partitives are considered as two separate NPs. For example:

CC  So I went to, erm, that was the end [non-count noun] of primary school [count noun].
CC  I think that was also mainly a sort [species noun] of shopping trip [count noun].

In the following, although it is difficult to decide which is the head noun of the partitive construction the sort of outlet, both NPs are included in the analysis. The sort in the construction sort of markety places is not included in the analysis because it is an adverbial and not an NP.

CC  when you get to the sort [species noun] of outlet [species noun], sort of markety places where, it's more sort of one size.

When an NP in a partitive construction is a quantifying noun like one, some, and loads, the NP will not be included in the analysis. For example:

CT  It's er, (noise), it should, here we go, it is (laughs) probably one of the first English books I've ever had,
FN  still like some of the guy friends, they've been there,
FN  it's got a bar, with loads of cocktails and a shooter,
Personal Names.

In English, personal names do not have a / an or the. The only situation where a / an is required in front of personal names is to show the hearer that the bearer is someone the hearer has not heard of, (see Leech and Svartvik, 1973, p. 56) or is not a well-known person with the same name as in A Richard Nixon is coming to see you. There are no such instances in the data.

In English, the situation where the is required of personal names is for the purpose of differentiating two or more bearers of the same personal name (see Leech and Svartvik, 1973, p. 56). There is only one instance in the data that goes under this rule.

JH I just change a lot. It's not the real, the Joe I use to be.

All other instances of personal names in the data are not preceded by a / an, the, or other determiners. To include personal names in the analysis to accommodate the instance above would grossly inflate the proportion of appropriate use. Personal names, therefore, are not included in the analysis.

Days of the Week, Months of the Year, Seasons, and Years.

In English, the definite article is only used with days of the week, months of the year, and seasons when these types of NPs are spot-modified. There are no cases of these types of NPs with post-modification in the data. Like personal names, they are excluded from the analysis because their inclusion would inflate the proportion of appropriate use.

Incomplete NPs.

Some NPs are assumed to be incomplete and they are not included in the analysis. For example:

FN Eh, what really. I think more like family (inaudible) but my mum do like to go like shopping.
The Findings.

Table 5.08 shows the number of NPs uttered by each informant with a / an, the, or zero article that are included in the analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.08 Number of NPs Produced by Informants.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ZERO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG 212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT 563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN 350</td>
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<tr>
<td>YH 333</td>
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<tr>
<td>JT 219</td>
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<tr>
<td>JW 225</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL 248</td>
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<tr>
<td>GW 172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN 272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are instances where the informants’ use of a should be zero article, and conversely cases where the informants’ instances of zero article should be indefinite article. However, the present work focuses on their use of the definite article and therefore, these instances will not be discussed in great detail. The following are some examples of these instances:

HG  Erm, at  game place, you know, at Game Zone, or when Namco is open
CT  I would have, er, installed satellite,
HN  The N Sixty Four I bought in cash and carry.
JT  just had drink and chat with everyone.
JW  you’ve got a red concrete.
EL  I will not say no to English boy,
GW  before I listened to walkman.
JH  She just works at home, housewife
KN  Er, no, my mum was secretary.

There are no such instances in the data of CC (AOA5), FN (AOA8) and YH (AOA8).
Some possible explanations can be derived from an analysis of the above instances of the other nine informants. The first explanation is that the informants had difficulty with the English plural marking rules and the following instances may not be instances of alternation between a / an and zero article but instances where a plural marker is missing.

HG  Erm, at game place, you know, at Game Zone, or when Namco is open

JT  just had drink and chat with everyone.

JW  you've got a red concrete. [JW was referring to the road surface outside Buckingham Palace].

The 6 instances by CT, EL, GW, JH, and KN are in Context 3 and a / an should not have been omitted.62

The Informants' Use of The.

247 NPs with (a/an, the and zero article) are identified as instances of inappropriate use of English articles. These NPs are either NPs with the that should have been NPs with a / an or zero article, or NPs with a / an or zero article that should have been NPs with the. These NPs are categorised under the four contexts according to the referential meanings. Other NPs are also included in the following discussion. They are not included in the count because native speakers do not use articles for these NPs in certain contexts (e.g., sometimes parents, like they call me at six o'clock in the morning vs. sometimes my parents, like they call me at six o'clock in the morning). Elliptic NPs are not included in the count but they will be discussed. (e.g., Get a train to, em, get a underground [train] to Charing Cross Station). In other cases, there is difficulty with categorising the specific NPs into one of the four contexts. Rather than making unreliable categorisation, the researcher has chosen to give a discussion of these instances.

These NPs and the 247 NPs will be categorised in the four contexts according to their surface meaning and they are discussed in the following.

• Context 1: (Anaphoric reference; indirect anaphoric reference; situational reference; cataphoric reference; unique reference)

62 CT was really talking about either a satellite television receiver or satellite television programming.
Anaphoric reference:
001 CT this time actually it’s, yeah, XXX same station,
002 FN if XXX friendship is like oh ninety nine.
003 JT they got, they still got XXX series going on.
004 JW because like when I was in XXX takeaway.
005 GW but I do not know XXX Chinese girl in my class.
006 KN remind me of where XXX palace is.
007 KN Italy, I went with XXX school.
008 KN if you come up to XXX station.

Indirect anaphoric reference:
009 CT while saving it to XXX harddisk,
010 CT he picked on like, you know, my friends, and, and XXX staff.
011 JT and XXX teacher help me a lot
012 JW who works at XXX counter,

Situational reference:
013 HG like we would go to XXX seasides every year.
014 YH we use to go to XXX library
015 YH cause I go to XXX gym as well,
016 FN you know shouting at XXX phone,
017 FN I'll go XXX cinema
018 JW you get XXX tube again.
019 EL she don’t trust herself to go to XXX airport by herself.
020 EL we have to go to XXX airport
021 EL go to XXX cinema.
022 EL Well, meeting her tomorrow to go to XXX cinema,
023 GW but I do hope to stay in XXX campus.
024 GW Well, go to XXX tube.
025 GW My mum is a housewife, and my dad, he works like for a government.
026 JH I watch it on XXX cinema.
027 JH I don’t go XXX cinema that often though
028 JH I still talk to them, still chat to them on XXX telephone.
029 KN Something like that. We go out, yes, sometimes XXX cinema.
030 KN they enjoy like going to XXX pub.

In Instance 20, it was the first time that EL talked about any airport. Therefore, Instance 20 is not classified under the category of anaphoric reference but under the category of situational reference. In Instance 25, GW was actually talking about her father working for the Hong Kong government before they migrated.

Cataphoric reference:
031 CT I don't know, it's different to, to, er, XXX friendship I have
032 FN but XXX majority I think English parents, they allow the kids to do what they want
033 FN it's like XXX stuff that I buy a lot more,
There are place names that should have *the* in front. For example, the Hippodrome is the club that a lot of the informants visit. GW, JW, and KN did not mention *the Hippodrome* in their interviews. CC, CT, and YH were the only informants who put *the* in front of *Hippodrome* every time they mentioned the club. As for the rest of the informants, they did not add *the* in front of *Hippodrome* at all.

The Embankment in London is a street name that has *the*. However, *Embarkment (Station)* can also be the name of a tube station on the Embankment. 6 informants (HG, CT, HN, GW, EL, and GW) mentioned *Embarkment*. EL added *the* in front of *Embankment Station*. As for the other five, *the* was not added in front of *Embankment (without Station)* in all instances. In all but one cases, it is difficult to decide whether they were talking about Embankment Station or the Embankment, the street. For example:

---

**HG**  
*That’s Namco Station where you can take a tube from Embarkment.*

**CT**  
*And then, and from Embarkment, take the District Line to St James’ Park.*

**HN**  
*from Embarkment, you get the District Line to Tower Hill.*

**YH**  
*OK. The bit near Embarkment, that’s near Trafalgar Square.*

The following instance of *Embarkment*, uttered by GW, refers to the place and not the station because of the preposition *on*.

---

**GW**  
*You came out and get the tube to Charing Cross on Embankment. And that’s really close. Or walk down there.*

**HG**  
*that goes to XXX Millennium Dome*

**HG**  
*we do go XXX Hippodrome for clubbing*

**CT**  
*than maybe XXX USA,*

**CT**  
*I should know XXX Millennium Dome.*

**CT**  
*you should have put XXX London Eye, (chuckles)*

**CT**  
*until you come to XXX London Eye,*

**CT**  
*and then turn left at XXX London Eye,*

**CT**  
*out of Picca, out of XXX House of Parliament.*

**CT**  
*those are collectively known as XXX House of Parliament.*

**CT**  
*as to how to get to XXX House of Parliament.*

**CT**  
*then you should see like XXX Houses of Parliament*

**CT**  
*which includes XXX House of Parliament*

**CT**  
*OK, OK, I know. XXX Tower of London.*

**CT**  
*OK, let’s change to XXX Tower of London.*
I'd know how to get to XXX Tower of London.
She asked me how to get to XXX Tower of London.
and then we go XXX Hippodrome.
And XXX Tower of London is,
Ouh, I could do XXX Albert Hall.
XXX Albert Hall is quite easy.
you walk past XXX Science Museum
but towards XXX Strand.
but, er, go to XXX Haymarket,
on XXX Haymarket, yeah?
Where's XXX Tower of London?
I don't know how to get to XXX Tower of London
and I don't know where XXX Houses of Parliament is
have you heard of XXX Hippodrome?
So other people mention XXX Hippodrome too.
but Chinese and XXX Hippodrome on it's like Monday nights,
you know, "Oh, yeah, go XXX Hippodrome", "Oh yeah"
So you wouldn't, you wouldn't go back to XXX Hippodrome?
Oh, we don't go XXX Hippo that much,
don't give it, take it that we go to XXX Hippodrome,
cause clubs like that, isn't it, XXX Hippodrome, they meet more, you don't see,
At XXX Hippo, six o'clock, past six, at six o'clock,
XXX Hippodrome finish at three,
“XXX Hippodrome, go”, "No, I don't want you to go"
get use to it, quite like that, XXX Hippodrome's like, you know,
XXX Hippodrome's really more R and B,
last time I saw a fight was in XXX Hippodrome
it's this pizza cafe place, where opposite XXX Hippodrome,
They just walk past like XXX Hippodrome
I've actually been to XXX Millennium Dome.
and then you see XXX House of Parliament,
if you go to XXX House of Parliament,
That's XXX House of Parliament, just outside.
Yeah, at XXX Hippo. That's the first experience.
not like XXX Hippo,
Just try to see what XXX Hippo like.
Yeah, and he go to XXX Hippo a lot, as well
where is the other club is, we just know XXX Hippo,
if you go down to XXX Hippo, it's more expensive
XXX Millennium Dome. I know that one.
it but it take you straight to er, like XXX Millennium Dome.
No, have you been to XXX Macmillan Dome?
Oh, erm, XXX Eyes of London, oh, that one.
Where's XXX Tower of London?
Where is XXX Tower of London?
to go to XXX Tower of London.
To XXX Tower of London.
then walk to XXX Millennium Dome.
Mmm. I just go to XXX Hippodrome,
and you'll see XXX Millennium Dome
the same as XXX Tower of London.
I have no idea where XXX House of Parliament is
and then you pass em, XXX National Portrait Gallery.
to XXX Millennium Dome,
I go down XXX Hippo, Hippodrome
I go down there, or XXX Hippodrome, my, my voice,
only Monday and Saturday night while I go out XXX Hippodrome,
I don't know. Just go down XXX Hippo.
but if I got out XXX Hippodrome,
if I go down XXX Hippodrome, yeah, they do like, you know, play those songs
I don't know where is XXX Tower of London.
in XXX United Kingdom,
in XXX United Kingdom,
goes past XXX Thames River
Em, XXX Thames River,
to XXX Thames River, I don't know.
XXX River Thames is massive.
and then under that you saw XXX Thames River.
I know it's near em, XXX River Thames.
And you see XXX River Thames.
I think I'll choose XXX River Thames,
is it XXX Thames River?
Yeah, XXX River Thames,
and then then there's XXX River Thames.
You go, if you are at River, XXX River Thames.
just XXX Thames river, yeah.
and that's XXX Thames River,
To take them to XXX Thames River, yeah
it's XXX Thames River.
and walk down to XXX River Thames
All I know is XXX Thames River from
and XXX River Thames is right next to it.
em, go to XXX Bakerloo Line,
Em then you take XXX Piccadilly Line
by taking XXX Bakerloo Line
and you take XXX Piccadilly Line
Charing Cross should have one, yeah, XXX Jubilee Line,
is it XXX Victoria Line?
At XXX Victoria Line,
em, go to XXX Jubilee Line
think there might be a way of getting there. Em by XXX Circle Line.
It's XXX Bakerloo Line.
I think it is XXX Bakerloo Line,
XXX Circle Line and Hammersmith,
and XXX Hammersmith and Central Line
take the tube, XXX Northern Line, go northbound

The tube refers to the London underground railway. 5 of the informants use tube to refer to the trains operating on the underground railway, as attested below.
153  JW you can get a tube

In these instances, an alternative explanation, that train, as in a tube train, was omitted, is not considered. First, it is because train had not been mentioned previously. Second, in Instance 150, tubes is marked as a plural noun and it is not likely that YH disliked underground trains and not the underground system.

EL omitted train once. This example has been discussed earlier. It is assumed that train is ellipted from the NP a underground train.

EL Get a train to, em, get a underground to Charing Cross Station.

As for the other informants, HN, EL, and GW did not use tube in the underground railway sense at all, and CC, JT, JH, and KN used the tube throughout. For example:

CC and there's the tube
JT take the tube again,
JH they could catch the tube
KN you can take the tube.

Some informants put the in front of place names where it is not required. Some informants also put the in front of the names of railway and underground stations, which do not require the.63

154  CC the Tower Bridge Station,
155  CC the Waterloo Station
156  YH on foot the Tower Bridge
157  YH to the Buckingham Palace
158  YH the Waterloo Station,
159  JW you cross over the Westminster Bridge.
160  EL when you get to near the Charing Cross Station,
161  EL and when you see the Embankment Station again
162  EL where is the, erm, Trafalgar Square is,
163  EL on and then you see the Big Ben.
164  EL then you see the Buckingham Palace.
165  EL You just go to, go to the Trafalgar Square,
166  GW Same direction to em, the Big Ben.
167  GW that's the Leicester Square tube station
168  JH he got to cross over the Natwest, Westminster Bridge,
169  JH and for the Big Ben,
170  JH he or she will see the Big Ben,

63 In this group, the is acceptable in some cases but generally not to Londoners, who see these as proper names rather than general descriptions - only for bridges and stations.
171 JH the Piccadilly Circus,
172 JH after you cross the Westminster Bridge
173 KN I'm not too sure about the, the Tower Bridge,
174 KN Is that the Tower Bridge
175 KN because I thought the Tower Bridge
176 KN and you can see the Big Ben.

Unique reference (NPs with a unique role or with a unique position; musical instrument; NPs modified by ordinals or superlatives)

177 CT XXX headmaster of Trinity got up,
178 YH there was like XXX rounders club
179 YH and XXX cricket club even I went to
180 YH cause he's in XXX research department.
181 JT for crick, for, er, XXX school cricket team,
182 KN and then XXX school magazine.
183 YH I just play XXX guitar.
184-6 YH and XXX guitar, I still play XXX guitar now, but I don't play very well XXX guitar,
187 YH before I use to play XXX classical guitar,
188 GW she went up to Grade Five on XXX piano.
189 KN Oh, yeah, I play XXX guitar.
190 FN XXX first time I went there like,
191 FN XXX first time I went there
192 JT XXX first time I come here,
193 JT and have a fight lots of time in XXX first and second year
194 JT when you come here XXX first time
195 KN so yeah, swimming for the first year, XXX second year, I didn't do it at all.

In Instance 177, CT was describing an incident that happened in his first school. He did not use the with headmaster of Trinity because he might have been using block language as used in newspaper headlines.

There are three instances that need to be discussed separately. They are:

FN depends you see, from the friendshipwise,

196-7 LL Where does your mum get all these episodes of Jang Chihng?
EL It's on now. Yeah, Chin, on Chinese channels. It's on at the moment.
LL You are not talking about CNE [name of a Chinese satellite television station], alright,
EL No.
LL You are talking about another channel.
EL I am Chinese channel. I am the TVB.

FN probably meant “depends on the friendship” in which case, the NP would be in Context One because she and the researcher had been talking about her friendship with boys. As for the other
two instances, EL omitted *talking about* in the two clauses. *Chinese channel* belongs to Context One although *the other* is missing. There were only two Chinese / Cantonese television stations in London at the time. Previously, EL and the researcher had only been talking about a specific television station, CNE (hence the researcher had to ask EL for clarification because he knew CNE did not broadcast *Jang Chihng* at that time). EL was referring to TVB, the only other Chinese television station available in London at the time. *TVB* also belongs to Context One (unique reference - name) and it does not takes *the*.

Below are three instances that allow either *a / an* (Context 4) or *the* (indirect anaphoric reference). JH was talking about the warranty of his MD player having run out.

```
JH but I don't think I have *warranty* now.
JH yeah, you don't have *warranty* at all,
JH cause it still got *warranty*.
```

Below are another three instances that allow either *a / an* (Contexts 3 and 4) or *the* (cataphoric reference). FN was talking about TVB, a television company based in Hong Kong that also produced films.

```
FN so you got TVB, erm, XXX Hong Kong one, XXX basic film company where they produce films and stuff.
```

In the following instance, the NP, *travel card*, requires *a / an* (Context 2) or *the* (indirect anaphoric reference). Alternatively, the NP should be in plural, in which case, the zero article (Context 2) is needed.

```
FN this is just for XXX *travel card*.
```

**Others.**

The following instances are problematic ones. These instances are not included among instances of inappropriate use in Context One because of their problematic nature. Each instance will be discussed in turn.

In the two following instances, CT was probably telling the researcher to either go to Piccadilly Circus to take a Piccadilly Line train.

225
In the following instance, it is difficult to decide whether *department* is some sort of speech error. If it is, there *pure electronic* is an academic subject and there should be a zero article in front. If *department* is not a speech error, then *the* is needed.

HN I am going back to a different college to do Pure Electronics Department, yeah

In the following two instances, *best friend*, as used by YH and EL, seems to be a generic noun. YH could also have used *best friend* without the as an predicative adjective.

YH so I was like best friend with her
EL I would get a best friend

In the following two instances, the two NPs (*train and computer*) require either *a / an or the*.

JT I think, let' see, take XXX train and then go to a station called Charlton.
FN You download it from XXX computer.

There are also instances in the data where NPs should have been modified by a possessive pronoun like *my*. See the discussion on lexis for a possible explanation.

FN if we go out with parents
FN sometimes parents, like they call me at six o’clock in the morning,
FN But parents, you know, they really pray, cause parents are really really religious, and am I religious?
LL Hmmmmm, did you go to all this places with your parents, on your own, or with your school?
KN Erm, with parents.

**Context 2**: (generic reference; non-specific new entities; times of the day, month, etc.; languages)

198 HG I like watching the chapter films.
199 HG They really like the hippies,
200 CT that the Chinese people'd like to have.
201 CT The Hong Kong people, I don't know, they, they, they seem to only, you know, prefer well known brands.
202 CT but the Cantonese was my main language.
203 HN I prefer the old Chinese movies.
204 FN I don't get the tips,
205 FN where the bills got to come in and out,
but that is the Chinese people,
It's like the tourists go.
but there's been rumours like oh, how people get injected from the stuff.
The parents just know what is good for,
A question I really need to ask is your parents objected to you going back to Hong Kong, did they?
On the financial reason.
I am getting a bit sick of the pollution,
I was more like the English people.
than the Chinese people,
The noodles, I just like the noodles,
you can surf at evening.
Yeah, especially on evenings.
they have to turn the TV on, or have the music.
I can't read it, the newspaper, but carry on.
Yeah, they like the VCD.
you know, to take the blood and everything,
Sometimes, I read the Chinese newspaper,
he wouldn't let me read the Chinese novels,
I only read the Chinese newspaper
Oh I kind of mmm, just pick up the English
they better let me pick up the English first so erm,
and that's how I keep the Chinese up
I'll say the life is really boring.
so I think it's the communication problem.
That's what the kids do in those days.
but I normally leave it till like the Saturday night at about eleven o'clock
they did, actually. Er, cor, what do they call, the language support.
or even the English festival
Don't watch, er, the English TV often.
only at night, yeah, I watch like the manga,
I came here like a few years ago but still the English is, you know, not my first language.
frying the pancake rolls,
but like the people in London are more, you know, cooler.

Instances 198-201, 203-207, 209, 212-214, 222, 228, and 236-237 all have count nouns as the head nouns in the NPs. In English, generic count noun NPs with the must be singular. These 17 instances out of a total of 41 (41.46%) indicate that the informants (HG, CT, HN, FN, YH, JT, GW, JH, and KN) might not have acquired native speaker proficiency in using the singular vs. plural rules governing generic count noun NPs. The informants might have added the in these instances because in Cantonese, the classifier di is “often [applied] to plural or uncountable] items (Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 90).

Instances 208 (stuff), 211 (pollution), 217 (music), 220 (blood), and 231 (support) have non-count nouns as head nouns. These five instances, like the 17 instances discussed above, indicate
the informants (FN, YH, and GW) might not have acquired native speaker proficiency in using the singular vs. plural rules governing generic count noun NPs.

There might be another explanation to account for most of these 17 count noun instances. With the exception of Instances 199, 204-205, 207, and 209, the head nouns in the other 12 instances have modifiers. The informants responsible for these 12 instances (CT, HN, FN, YH, GW, JH, and KN) might have used the with these generic count noun NPs because they were influenced by the rules of Context One (cataphoric reference).

It is also possible the informants added the in these instances as a marker for purpose of differentiation or contrast. In other words the informants added the as part of their information packaging strategies. CT wanted to contrast Chinese and Hong Kong Cantonese (Instances 200-1) from other ethnic groups. So were FN (Instance 206) and YH (Instances 212-3). HG was contrasting chapter films (Instance 198) with other Chinese films and television programmes that she watched. HN wanted to contrast old Chinese movies from newer ones (Instance 203). FN wanted to contrast Chinese parents with parents from other ethnic groups (Instance 209). GW wanted to contrast Chinese newspaper and novels with English ones (Instances 221-3). In Instance 227, GW was contrasting the life she had in London with the life she had in Hong Kong. JH wanted to contrast English festivals and television with Chinese ones (Instance 232-3). He was also contrasting Japanese comic books with Chinese or English comic books (Instance 234). The differentiation motivation with KN (Instance 237) is obvious because of the presence of the post modifier. He wanted to contrast people in London with people elsewhere in the UK.

Instances 199, 204-5, 207, 211, and 227 were instances of a bare count noun NP (NP without modifiers). They were uttered by HG, YH, FN, and GW. In Instances 204-5 and 207, FN might have used the to indicate indirect anaphoric reference because she was talking about her work in a Mexican restaurant in Greenwich. So she was referring to the tips she got and the bills she had to handle in the restaurant, and the tourists who visit Greenwich. In Instance 200, HG might have used the to indicate situational reference (hippies in the 60s and 70s). In Instance 211, YH might have used the to indicate cataphoric or situational reference (the pollution in London).

In Instance 236, JH was talking about his duties in the takeaway he worked in. He might have used the with pancake rolls because pancake rolls are an quintessential item on the menu of Chinese takeaways.
The NPs in Instances 202 (by CT) and Instances 224 - 226 (by GW) are names of languages. The two informants might have omitted *language* when they uttered those instances because of the ellipsis rules.

**Context 3:** (Non-specific new entity).

238  LL There was another guy called *Lauh Sahk Mihng*, or whatever his name was.
    FN Oh, him, he is the *actor*, is it? Is he after her? He’s much better than, cause he’s an actor, he’s quite good looking.

There are two possible explanations for FN to use *the* in front of *actor*. First, she used *the* in front of *actor* to differentiate *Lauh Sahk Mihng*, the actor, from another *Lauh Sahk Mihng* of some other similar professions in the Hong Kong entertainment industry. However, as far as the researcher knows, there has only been one *Lauh Sahk Mihng* in the Hong Kong entertainment industry. The other explanation is that FN wanted to differentiate *Lauh Sahk Mihng*, the actor, from the same *Lauh Sahk Mihng*, who was also a Cantopop singer.

**Context 4:** (A specific new entity).

239  CC And I went back the er Christmas for Jocelyn’s sixteenth birthday.
240  CT He only recently came back from the funeral in Ireland.
241  CT and eating the fish and chips,
242  HN Whenever I’m not busy and get the people together.
243  JT Yeah, got the VCD upstairs,
244  EL *Biu Muih Gut Cheuhng* [name of a soap opera] is the different one.
245  EL and then we went in the shop.
246  GW so normally after school I like to go out just like window shopping (laughs) or call the friends.

In Instances 239, the researcher did not know anything about CC returning to Hong Kong in the Christmas of a specific year. In addition, it was clearly not the Christmas before the interview took place. Jocelyn, aka JO an non-link generation informant, was 18 when the researcher interviewed her and that interview with CC took place more than two years after the interview with JO. So *the* could not have been used instead of determiners like *last*. However, *the* could be instead of other determiners like *one*.

In Instance 240, CT did not mention anything at all about a funeral in the interview previously. That was a clear case of a newly-mentioned count noun NP modified by *the*. 

229
In Instance 241, CT was talking about how he made a new friend in a fish and chips bar. He used *the* with *fish and chips* probably because fish and chips are an quintessential item on the menu of fish and chips shops.

Instance 242 (by HN) and Instance 246 (by GW) are very similar. Both informants were talking about going out with their friends. HN’s friends, as part of the conversation, had been mentioned before the instance was uttered. However, the last time he mentioned his friends was 871 words ago (Method 2) and he had been talking about other things (Cantopop, films, television, and extra-curricular activities) in between. Therefore, Instance 242 is considered to be an instance of inappropriate use. In Instance 246, it was the first time GW talked about her friends in the interview. Before the instance was uttered, she had been talking about her life in Hong Kong and her first schools in London. *The* might have been used instead of determiners like *my*.

In Instance 243, JT and the researcher had been talking about VCDs previously. The researcher had just commented on the number of VCDs JT had got in the lounge where the interview took place. Therefore, Instance 243 is neither a case of anaphoric reference (Context 1) because JT was not talking about the VCDs in the lounge nor is the instance a case of generic reference (context 2) because he was talking about specific VCDs. Instance 243 fits Context 4 because JT was talking about a new entity - the VCDs he got elsewhere in the house. JT could also be using *the* as a marker to contrast the two sets of VCDs he got in two different places.

In Instance 244, EL was explaining to the researcher that *Biu Muuh Gut Cheuhng* was a sequel to another soap opera discussed previously. Her use of *the* in this instance was probably influenced by the modifier *different*, or because she wanted to use *the* as a marker to contrast the two soap operas.

In Instance 245, EL was talking about her shopping trips to a shopping mall called Bluewater. Instance 245 would have been native-like (indirect anaphoric reference) if *shop* had been marked with the plural marker -s.
Discussion.

Table 5.09 shows the total number of inappropriate use of NPs with the in the 4 contexts for each informant. This table is restricted to the informants’ use of the. The percentage is given in brackets.

Table 5.09  Number of Inappropriate Use of NPs with The Produced by Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Context 1</th>
<th>Context 2</th>
<th>Context 3</th>
<th>Context 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC (n=614)</td>
<td>02 (0.326)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>1 (0.163)</td>
<td>03 (0.489)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n=430)</td>
<td>06 (1.400)</td>
<td>2 (0.465)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>2 (0.465)</td>
<td>10 (2.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n=1026)</td>
<td>25 (2.437)</td>
<td>3 (0.292)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>1 (0.097)</td>
<td>29 (2.826)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n=429)</td>
<td>01 (0.233)</td>
<td>1 (0.233)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>02 (0.466)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n=663)</td>
<td>33 (4.977)</td>
<td>6 (0.905)</td>
<td>1 (0.151)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>40 (6.033)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n=674)</td>
<td>19 (2.819)</td>
<td>4 (0.593)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>23 (3.412)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n=332)</td>
<td>20 (6.024)</td>
<td>3 (0.907)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>1 (0.301)</td>
<td>24 (7.232)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n=567)</td>
<td>11 (1.940)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>11 (1.940)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n=457)</td>
<td>25 (5.470)</td>
<td>3 (0.654)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>2 (0.438)</td>
<td>30 (6.565)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n=405)</td>
<td>11 (2.716)</td>
<td>11 (2.716)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>1 (0.247)</td>
<td>23 (5.679)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (n=534)</td>
<td>22 (4.120)</td>
<td>6 (1.124)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>28 (5.244)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (n=430)</td>
<td>22 (5.116)</td>
<td>1 (0.233)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>0 (0.000)</td>
<td>23 (5.349)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AOA Advantage.

Based on the percentage of their inappropriate use of the in Context 1, the informants can be divided into 3 groups. CC (0.326%) and HN (0.233%) are in Group 1. HG (1.400%), CT (2.437%), YH (2.819%), JW (1.940%), and GW (2.716%) are in Group 2. FN (4.977%), JT (6.024%), EL (5.470%), JH (4.120%), and KN (5.166%) are in Group 3.

There is a possible AOA advantage with the use of the among the informants. The 2 informants in Group 1 are the AOA5 group. Group 2 consists of 2 informants (HG and CT) of the AOA5 group, 2 informants (YH and JW) of the AOA8 group, and GW of the AOA10 group. 2 other informants (FN and JT) in the AOA8 group are in Group 3 with the 3 informants (EL, JH, and KN) of the AOA10 group.

Although there is an AOA advantage in the use of the article, none of the twelve informants had achieved native speaker proficiency using the nil proficiency indicator rule. In the following, the
discussion will focus on the informants’ inappropriate use of *the* in the four contexts in turn. Instances of inappropriate use under the category of unique reference will be discussed first because these instances constitute the bulk of the 197 instances in Context One.

**Context One.**

**Unique Reference: Names of Places, Institutions, and Stations.**

SLA researchers like Hubener (1979) and Young (1996) do not examine their informants’ use of *the* with proper nouns like place names. These researchers focus on their informants’ use of *the* with common nouns. The findings show that the exclusion of non-common noun NPs from analysis is a serious omission. There are 142 instances of inappropriate use with different kinds of names (including *the tube*) out of a total of 197 NPs of inappropriate use in Context 1 (72.08%).

**Transfer as an Explanation.**

As already pointed out, Cantonese does not have an article system. It is likely that cross linguistic effects is an explanation for place names without the prerequisite *the* in the interviews.

135 out of the 197 Context One NPs (68.53%) are place names, names of stations, names of rivers, names of organisations, and names of London underground lines. 32 instances of the 197 Context One NPs (16.24%) are instances of *Hippodrome* without *the*. The Hippodrome, as already pointed out, is the favourite venue among Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London. CC and CT were the only two informants who mentioned the club as *the Hippodrome*. They were also the only two informants who did not have any Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents as friends at age 18. For those informants who mentioned the club as *Hippodrome* without *the* (HG, HN, YH, FN, JT, EL, and JH), YH was the only one who stated she did not like clubbing. The other six informants went to the club with their Hong Kong Cantonese friends.

11 informants mark names with either premodification or postmodification with *the* or zero article inappropriately. The work will argue that an AOA effect can be shown through the informants’ use of *the* with this type of names. It will also argue that the influence of Cantonese
is a possible explanation. It will begin with a breakdown of this type of names into 3 subtypes and identifying the informants who uttered instances of inappropriate use in these 3 subtypes. Then the present work will argue that how these instances may be the result of transfer.

Out of the 197 NPs, there are 38 names of places, institutions, and stations with premodification. These include Tower Bridge Station, Buckingham Palace, the Millennium Dome, and the London Eye. These 40 NPs can be divided into two types. Type 1 consists of 24 NPs that do not take the but were marked with the by some of the informants. These informants were CC, YH, JW, EL, GW, JH, and KN. Type 2 consists of the other 14 NPs that require the but were marked with zero article by some of the informants. These informants were CT, HG, YH, JT, JW, EL, JH, and KN. So CC, and GW only uttered Type 1 NPs. CT and JT only uttered Type 2 NPs. YH, JW, EL, JH and KN uttered both types.

Type 3 consists of 22 names of places and institutions with postmodification. These names require the. These are the Houses of Parliament and the Tower of London. CT, FN, JT, EL, GW, and JH were the informants who uttered these names without the.

The only informant who had no instances of inappropriate use with these three types of names was HN. He belongs to the AOA5 group.

Having identified the informants who uttered instances of inappropriate use in the 3 subtypes, the present work will now argue that how the instances in these 3 subtypes may be the result of AOA and transfer.

Type 2 NPs are names that take the. All 4 informants in the AOA10 group uttered instances of inappropriate use of this subtype. 3 informants in the AOA8 group uttered instances of inappropriate use of this subtype. They were YH, JT, and JW. The 2 informant in AOA5 group who uttered instances of inappropriate use of this subtype were HG and CT. Influence of Cantonese may be a possible explanation because Cantonese does not have an article system.

Type 3 NPs are also names that take the. 3 informants in the AOA10 group uttered instances of inappropriate use of this subtype. These informants were EL, GW, and JH. 2 informants in the AOA8 group uttered instances of inappropriate use of this subtype. They were FN and JT. Only 1
informant in AOA5 group uttered instances of inappropriate use of this subtype. He was CT. Influence of Cantonese may be a possible explanation because Cantonese does not have an article system. Apart from HN, CC was the only informant who did not utter instances of inappropriate use of these 2 subtypes.

Type 1 NPs are names that do not take the. All 4 informants in the AOA10 group had instances of inappropriate use of this subtype. Two informants in the AOA8 group had instances of inappropriate use of this subtype. They were YH and JW. The only informant in AOA5 group who produced instances of inappropriate use of this subtype was CC. The influence of Cantonese does not seem to be the only explanation of inappropriate use of the with this type of NPs because they do not take the. Over-generalisation of the rule governing names with either premodification or postmodification is an additional explanation that can account for the data. These informants marked this types of NPs with the instead of zero article because Type 1 NPs are NPs with premodification.

The inappropriate use of the zero article in front of some of these three subtypes of NPs might be the result of the researcher misleading them by not using the definite article in front of the place names written on the cards (Tower of London; Millennium Dome; Houses of Parliament; Albert Hall; River Thames) in the role playing task. However, the extent of the misleading effect may not have had too much bearing on the informants, for several reasons. First, there were also other place names in the data that should have had the such as the London Eye, the Science Museum, the Strand, and the Haymarket. Second, some of the informants added the in front of the other place names on the card (Big Ben; Buckingham Palace; Madame Tussauds; Tower Bridge; Westminster Abbey). Third, some of the informants added the in front of place names where it is not required (e.g., Westminster Bridge; Trafalgar Square). Fourth, except Instances 090 and 123, all other instances are embedded in a clause.

There are 7 instances of tube with a. The informants who uttered these instances (HG, CT, YH, FN, and JW) were using tube in the sense of an underground train. In standard English, the is omitted in prepositional phrases with by preceding means of transport (e.g. by train; by car). The train meaning might have been actuated by analogy.
Unique Reference (continued).

There are 19 instances of common nouns categorised under unique reference. The head nouns of these NPs should be unique because the informants were talking about school teams, school clubs, school magazines and so on. 6 of these instances are NPs with ordinals. 5 of these 6 instances were uttered by FN and JT of the AOA8 group. One was uttered by KN of the AOA10 group. Of these 19 instances, 14 of them were uttered by 3 members of the AOA8 group, FN, YH, and JT. Four of these 19 instances were uttered by 2 members of the AOA10 group, GW and KN. CT, belonging to the AOA5 group uttered one instance.

Anaphoric Reference.

There are 12 instances of inappropriate use of the under the categories of anaphoric reference and indirect anaphoric references. The 8 instances of inappropriate use of the in the category of anaphoric reference were uttered by CT (AOA5), FN (AOA8), JT (AOA8), JW (AOA8), GW (AOA10), and KN (AOA10). GW and KN uttered 4 of those instances. FN, JT, and JW uttered three. CT uttered one. This indicates an AOA advantage.

The 4 instances of inappropriate use of the in the category of indirect anaphoric reference were uttered by CT (AOA5), JT (AOA8), and JW (AOA8). This does not support an AOA advantage but suggests, since these three informants are males, a possible gender advantage.

18 instances out of 197 fall under the category of situational reference. Out of these 18 instances, there was only one NP with a that should have had the instead (Instance 025). The other 17 were all marked with the zero article. The informants who uttered these 17 instances, HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8), YH (AOA8), JW (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), JH (AOA10), and KN (AOA10), have not achieved native-like use of the with reference to “institution[s] shared by the community” (Leech and Svartvik, 1973). It seems possible to infer an AOA advantage for this context. 12 of these 18 instances were uttered by the 4 informants of the AOA10 group. 5 instances were uttered by YH, FN, and JW of the AOA8 group. HG (Instance 13) uttered only
one. Note that the NP of Instance 13 was marked with the plural -s. HG was probably using the NP as a Context 4 NP.

Context 2.

There are 40 instances of inappropriate use of NPs in Context Two. The discussion of these 40 instances undertaken earlier shows that the informants who uttered these instances of inappropriate use might have been influenced by other English grammatical rules (ellipsis; plural marking rules governing generic NPs) and information packaging (contrasting two or more items).

All 4 informants in the AOA10 group produced 21 instances (52.50%). 3 informants of the AOA8 group produced 13 of these 40 instances (32.50%). They were FN, YH, and JT. HG, CT, and HN of the AOA5 group uttered 6 of these 40 instances (15.00%). Therefore, it seems that there may be an AOA advantage.

Context 3.

There is only one instance of an NP with the in Context 3. As already discussed, FN was probably trying to use the for the purpose of differentiation although it is not clear with what or who she wanted to contrast the actor. No conclusion can be drawn from this about AOA.

Context 4.

There are 8 instances classified under this context. It is possible that the informants who produced these instances, CC (AOA5), CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), and GW (AOA10) could have used the instead of other English determiners (e.g. some) and possessive pronouns. Furthermore, one informant, JT, might be using the with the NP for contrastive purposes (Instance 243), and one informant, EL, could have made an non-native like instance (Instance 245) because of her difficulty with English plural marking rules.
Conclusion.

The findings show that all 12 informants had not achieved native speaker proficiency in their use of this proficiency indicator. However, the findings indicate that there is an AOA advantage with NPs in Context 1 in general. AOA advantage becomes less clear when the NPs in Context 1 are analysed according to specific Context 1 functions. Since the AOA8 group uttered more instances of inappropriate use of NPs with unique reference than the other two groups, any AOA advantage does not seem to apply to all subtypes.

The use of *the* with NPs in the category of indirect anaphoric reference also makes any AOA effect less clear since the 4 instances of inappropriate use under this category were produced by 3 male informants of the AOA8 and AOA5 groups and the AOA10 group performed better than the other two groups.

The findings also indicate the informants' inappropriate use of *the* in Context 2 is influenced by Cantonese. Cantonese does not have an article system. It uses noun classifiers like *di* with plural count nouns and noncount nouns. The findings indicate that the informants used *the* with count nouns in Context 1 as the noun classifier *di*. Examples are *the bills* and *the tourists*.

The findings also indicate the inappropriate use in this context by over-generalising other English grammatical rules. These rules include the following:

- NPs with premodification and postmodification take *the*. The informants had extended this rule to include names like *the Waterloo Station*, *the Big Ben*, and *the Tower Bridge*. They had also extended to include generic NPs in the data like *the Cantonese* (the language) and *the people in London*.

- Plural count nouns in Context 1 take *the*. Examples of over-generalisation of this rule are generic NPs including *the kids* and *the parents*.

- Noncount count nouns in Context 1 take *the*. Examples of over-generalisation of this rule are generic NPs including *the blood*.
The informants had problems in choosing between the and zero article for 242 out of a total of 246 instances analysed in the study. Only the instance (238) in Context 3 and 3 instances in Context 4 (239-241) were a choice between the and a/an. This may be due to that the informants had achieved a high proficiency in English plural marking rules with NPs in Context 1.

At the beginning of the section on findings, examples of inappropriate use of NPs in Contexts 3 and 4 have been offered. They are reprinted here and numbered for the convenience of reading.

| Example 1: | HG | Erm, at game place, you know, at Game Zone, or when Namco is open |
| Example 2: | CT | I would have, er, installed satellite, |
| Example 3: | HN | The N Sixty Four I bought in cash and carry. |
| Example 4: | JT | just had drink and chat with everyone. |
| Example 5: | JW | you’ve got a red concrete. |
| Example 6: | EL | I will not say no to English boy, |
| Example 7: | GW | before I listened to walkman. |
| Example 8: | JH | She just works at home, housewife |
| Example 9: | KN | Er, no, my mum was secretary. |

The data show that 9 informants had problems in choosing between a/an and zero article for NPs in Context 3 and 4. The exceptions were CC, FN, and YH. Although it is not the remit of the present work to investigate the informants’ use of these NPs, the work will offer an explanation.

The explanation is transfer from Cantonese. Six of the above examples have singular count noun NPs in object position. Another one (example 4) might also be a singular count noun in object position. They should have taken a/an instead of zero article. Matthews and Yip (1994) point out that, in Cantonese, the presence of a noun classifier with a subject NP or a topicalised object “denotes a definite person or object” (p. 89). The present work has argued earlier that some informants might have used the as the Cantonese noun classifier di. The informants who uttered these 6 examples might have extended the Cantonese rule quoted from Matthews and Yips (1994) in this paragraph to cover singular count noun object NPs in Context 3 and 4 by abduction. The new rule being: for singular count noun object NPs in Contexts 3 and 4, it is not necessary to use a/an.
A Boundary Marker of the Hong Kong Cantonese Adolescent Community in London.

A proficiency indicator like *the* does not make a good boundary marker for the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. Boundary markers for an adolescent community often involves the use of linguistic features that are variants of standard linguistic features. The present work has shown through the work of Eckert (2000), Labov (1972a), and to a lesser extent, Cheshire (1982) that the boundaries of the adolescent communities these researchers have examined are marked by non-standard variants. However, these non-standard variants are still part of the L1 of those communities. The findings have shown that the informants had not been able to achieve nil proficiency indicator status with their use of *the*. For the Hong Kong adolescent community in London, variational use of standard English grammar rules governing the use of *the* may signal to outsiders that the users of variants with *the* is an indicator of a proficiency level lower than native like.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a good boundary marker with this proficiency indicator. The informants had been able to use *the* appropriately with names of cinemas (e.g. *the Warner Village*), pubs (e.g. *the Moon in the Water*) and bars (e.g. *the Sport Bar*). As discussed earlier, HG and HN of the AOA5 group, FN and JT of the AOA8 group, and EL and JH of the AOA10 group uttered *Hippodrome* without *the*. This non-standard usage is categorical for these 6 informants. They are also the informants who went to the Hippodrome. CC, CT, and YH did not go to the club. *Hippodrome* without *the* is a good boundary marker for the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. However, this boundary marker has limited potential to be identified as such because it is a proper noun.
5.06 Null Object.

There are 33 instances of null object in the data. There are no null object instances in the data of CC, CT, and HN. The 33 instances are listed below. All instances of null object are marked with XXX.

- **Instance 1** (HG was talking about her teachers)

  HG  some of them were more sane, they just told XXX what we need to learn. Some of them didn't really bother.

- **Instance 2** (HG was talking about films made in Hong Kong)

  HG  I like watching Chinese movies cause they are funny. They are different. I like watching XXX, I just basically like watching films.

- **Instance 3 and Instance 4** (FN was talking about going to the cinema)

  FN  And stuff like cinema, often, very often, things like new films, it's like not much to do, I don't think, but we use to like go when I was younger, now we don't see XXX, I haven't been XXX two years now,

- **Instance 5** (FN was talking about the Hippodrome)

  FN  this is the stuff I'm a bit put off by that, cause clubs like that, isn't it, Hippodrome, they meet more, you don't see, I don't really hear XXX that's why, they are more about fights not like drugs and stuff like that, so I'm not sure.

- **Instance 6** (FN was talking about Cantopop stars)

  FN  Yeah, I feel that like they are really good friends but I never knew who Leuhng Hohng Mahn was until like, I think, five years ago but like Jehng Sauh Mahn and Heui Jih On, always knew XXX. I thought, I feel that they're really good friends, apparently, and Heui Jih On and Jehng Sauh Mahn went out, init?

- **Instance 7** (FN was talking about buying CDs)

  FN  It's really good, er I think I’ll take the Pure Garage album, not the second one, it's not that good. It's the first one, I bought XXX like before, I think it's, when did I buy it, erm more in March I think,

- **Instance 8** (FN was talking about the plot of a Hong Kong film)

  FN  he's her jung suk fan, anyway and how he wanted to, I don’t know, he got a bit crazy and wants to go after XXX, do you like that one?
• Instance 9 (FN was talking about film rental).

FN I get films from there every week. I get four tapes (rising) erm, I don’t go Chinatown to get XXX, cause they did go out to Chinatown,

• Instance 10 (FN was talking about renting video-tapes)

FN Yeah, they do and it’s cheaper, too, cause you buy a, you get a tape from the shop I think it’s two fifty, pound for a tape, but we get XXX for two pound thirty and they do a door to door service, so why not.

• Instance 11 (YH was talking about Chinese novels)

YH and some, I don’t know, I got pass on to them cause my sister have got a lot of Hong Kong friends and they read those books and pass XXX on me, cause they came over when they were fourteen, so I read them,

• Instance 12 (JW was talking about different schools)

JW you know when you are studying, nothing that much to do with school so I didn’t really like to take XXX into account, so I went there anyway

• Instances 13 -14 (JT was talking about his work in the Chinese supermarket).

JT Erm, mmm, maybe, on, because I work on Thursday, and Saturday, so Thursday, yeah, interfere with XXX.
LL So you miss a lot of school
JT Mmm, not really but sometimes, on, mainly on Friday, I miss XXX.

• Instance 15 (JT was talking about his sister sending video-tapes to him).

LL OK, I see, so it is really TVB programmes, broadcast here.
JT Mmm, yeah, some of them are and some of them is my sister record it, from Hong Kong and send XXX here.

• Instance 16 (JT was talking about reading novels in Chinese).

LL OK, let’s go to books, do you read books at all?
JT Erm, yeah, but is all Chinese, just borrow XXX from somebody else,

• Instance 17 (JT was talking about his huge NTSC TV set he got at home).

LL Where did you get this TV set?
JT TV set, Hong Kong la. We just bring XXX from Hong Kong la, all the way.
• Instance 18 (EL was talking about music).

EL I do listen some old music. I think they are quite, you know, nice but I don’t really think, I am on my own. With my mum then, then I listen XXX.

• Instances 19-22 (EL was talking about Chinese magazines).

EL They don’t do it in there, that’s why. We use to order it, then my mother went “Oh, you, just a waste of money.” So then I stop ordering it, but everytime when I go out, then if I miss XXX, then I’ll buy XXX, buy like, if I miss XXX two week, then I’ll buy XXX to two week and then I’ll buy like three

• Instance 23 (EL was talking about newspaper).

LL What do you, but you hardly buy them
EL Always ask my friend. When I go to school. A lot of the boys always buy XXX, to look at the football, or whatever, I mean, I don’t know.

• Instance 24 (EL was talking about contacting with her relatives).

EL Phone, go back and, yeah, With the auntie in Australia, then I use E mail. All of them in Hong Kong, just phone XXX. Yeah.

• Instances 25 - 26 (GW was talking about CDs).

LL Where did you get your Chinese CDs?
GW Er, sometimes my elder sister send XXX over from Hong Kong, but sometimes I collect XXX from here which is quite expensive.

• Instance 27 (GW was talking about Hong Kong TV programmes).

LL Have you been watching the second series of Wahn Jyu Gahk Gahk?
GW Yeah, my friend got it. I carry over like twenty tapes home to watch it.
LL OK.
GW Yeah, I like watching XXX, when I am at home, I watch quite a lot of TV, cause you know, there’s not a lot of things to do.

• Instance 28 (GW was talking about how she got her teaching job).

GW , so she wants to offer that, her job, that Chinese, she’s teaching Chinese also, she want to offer XXX to my sister, oh, my mum didn’t want to do it because she is good, my sister went there, so I said, “oh, I need money,” so I went (chuckles),

• Instance 29 (GW was talking about Internet chatrooms).

LL People make a lot of new friends in the chatrooms
GW I mean you know I do talk to XXX but I prefer to see the people, who I talk to

• Instance 30 (GW was talking about her father).

LL Do you have a mobile phone?
GW Did but my dad, he, well, I earned it but my dad, he took it, yep, and he’s using it. Oh yeah, I paid for it myself, you know, in England, yeah, and he just confiscate *** off me,

- Instance 31 (GW was talking about her neighbour).

EL Yeah, it’s like little kids, you know, kicking balls, throwing stuff, you get everywhere.

- Instance 32 (JH was talking about complaining to the school).

JH At that time, yeah, I was too shy. I just don’t like to talk *** alone.

- Instance 32 (KN was talking about downloading music from the Internet).

LL OK, let’s do MD then. How often do you download from the Net?

KN Whenever, don’t know, whenever I listen to ***.

- Instance 33 (KN was talking about Hong Kong TV programmes).

LL you talked about Gam Chihn Yaht earlier,

KN Yeah, I watch ***. I’ve seen all the VCDs.

33 instances of null instances have been identified. Below is the breakdown and the percentage of non-English lexis in each informant’s data (Method One).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (n)</th>
<th>Number of instances of null objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC (n=13,549)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n=13,067)</td>
<td>2 (0.015%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n=17,332)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n=12,744)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n=23,510)</td>
<td>8 (0.034%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n=19,296)</td>
<td>1 (0.005%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n=11,210)</td>
<td>5 (0.045%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n=13,523)</td>
<td>1 (0.007%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n=13,905)</td>
<td>7 (0.035%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n=18,185)</td>
<td>6 (0.043%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (n=17,000)</td>
<td>1 (0.006%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (n=16389)</td>
<td>2 (0.012%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Based on the number of instances of null objects in the data, the informants can be divided into 4 groups. Group 1 consists of CC (AOA5), CT, (AOA5), HN (AOA5), YH (AOA8), JW (AOA8), JH (AOA10). The percentage of instances of null object in their data ranges from 0% to 0.005%. KN (AOA10; 0.012%) and HG (AOA5; 0.015%) belong to Group 2. Group 3 consists of FN (AOA8), JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10) and GW (AOA10). The percentage of instances of null object in their data ranges from 0.034% to 0.045%.

Table 5.11  Grouping of Informants by Instances of Null Objects Produced by Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of instances of null objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>AOA5 CC (n=13,549)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AOA5 CT (n=17,332)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AOA5 HN (n=12,744)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AOA8 YH (n=19,296)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AOA8 JW (n=13,523)</td>
<td>1 (0.007%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AOA10 JH (n=17,000)</td>
<td>1 (0.006%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>AOA10 KN (n=16389)</td>
<td>2 (0.012%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AOA5 HG (n=13,067)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>AOA8 FN (n=23,510)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AOA10 GW (n=18,185)</td>
<td>6 (0.043%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion.

The findings indicate that there is a possible AOA effect on the informants production of overt objects. The informants in Group 1, who produced nil errors on this proficiency indicator in their speech data, all belong to the AOAS group (CC, CT, HN). The other 3 members of Group 1, who produced only one error each, belonged to the AOA8 group (YH and JW) and AOA10 group (JH). In Group 2, KN arrived in London at age 10 and HG at age 5. In Group 3, FN and JT arrived at age 8 and EL and GW arrived at age 10. If there is a critical period for learning to supply objects, it might end at age 5. It is possible that the ability to learn to supply overt objects declines over time and that for informants like JH (AOA10) and KN (AOA10), although they may not have been able to achieve full native speaker proficiency with regard to object suppliance, they had been able to produce fewer instances than the other members of the AOA10 group and some informants of the other 2 AOA groups as well.
The findings also indicate that there is no gender difference in producing this proficiency indicator. All 3 groups include of informants of both sex.

Conclusion.

The present work has shown that there is a possible AOA effect on the informants’ production of objects in speaking English. The data supports a close of the critical period at age 5 since the only 3 informants who had no instances of this proficiency indicator belonged to the AOA5 group. However, other informants, YH (AOA8), JW (AOA8) JH (AOA10) produced only one instance each, suggests that the ability to learn not to omit objects might diminish over time. If so, these data are negative for null / overt object to constitute a parameter in the usual sense and also for the usual sense of a definite cut-off point for the critical period.

5.07 L1-Influenced Lexis.

From the speech data of the informants, the researcher has identified English lexical items that are used in non-native-like ways. The discussion of the informants' use of English lexical items is divided into five parts. Part One includes English lexical items used by the informants that are collapsed into one single lexical item in Cantonese. For example, the Hong Kong Cantonese verb hoi can be used in the following ways:

**Example 1:**

hoi dang  
*turn on light*  
*Turn on (the) light.*

**Example 2:**

hoi muhn  
*open door*  
*Open (the) door.*

In English, however, one has to use *turn on* (the light) and *open* (the door).

The English lexical items discussed in Part Two are those used by the informants whose Cantonese equivalents are governed by different grammatical rules. For example, the English
verb *board* can be used as an ergative verb as in *The flight is boarding*. In Cantonese, only humans can board a flight.

Part Three deals with English lexical items and phrases for which the informants’ usage shows a strong Hong Kong Cantonese cultural influence. For example, Hong Kong Cantonese call the head-waiter in a restaurant *captain*. In English, however, *captain* is a rank in the military services.

Part Four deals with those English lexical items used by the informants that do not fit into the first three categories but which are judged to represent non-native performance.

Part Five is the discussion of the findings.

**Part One.**

A common error among the Hong Kong Cantonese ESL speakers is the failure to distinguish how adjectives like *bored vs. boring* and *shocked vs. shocking* should be used. When the researcher decided whether the 12 informants had failed to make the distinction, he had to decide, in some cases, what, for example, *bored* or *boring* referred to, because the informants omitted the subject as in Example 3 or the object as in Example 4.

**Example 3:** (JT was comparing life in London with life in Hong Kong.)

*JT* but compare to Hong Kong, like mmm, spor, a little bit boring here, because I, it haven't got a lot of things to play or go, mmm, definitely all I can say.

**Example 4:** (JT was talking about why he left the school cricket team.)

*LL* But why did you leave then?

*JT* Leave. Mmm, found boring because we lose all the time (both chuckle), so that’s the reason.

In Example 4, the object of the verb found was omitted. The researcher assumed that the omitted object was cricket although it was possible that JT was saying (I found) I was boring). In Cantonese, *hou muhn* means either bored and boring as in the first of the following invented examples. In the second of the following invented examples, the equivalent of *hou muhn* can only be boring. However, in the last of the following invented examples, it is difficult to telling whether it is the speaker that is bored or that, something like cricket is boring.

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Example 5:  Hou muhn a very bored/ boring PRT (I am) bored / (Something) is boring.

Example 6:  Ngoh gwok dak muhk kauh hou muhn a I feel cricket very boring PRT I find cricket boring.

Example 7:  Ngoh gwok dak hou muhn a I feel very boring PRT I find (I am) bored / I find (cricket) boring.

Because of this ambiguity in Cantonese, the researcher had to give JT benefit of the doubt and assume that he did not fail to make the distinction when he made that utterance.

The followings are all the instances where the informants failed to make the distinction between adjectives ending in *ing* vs. adjectives ending in *ed*.

- Instance 1 (JT was talking about his school life).

  LL  OK, so you didn’t stay after school?
  JT  Mmm, no. Yeah, but, erm, sometimes, I did stay and play for erm, cricket, for crick, for, er, school cricket team, for only one year because erm, just felt boring with it, aft, after in school teams playing cricket, it’s quite cold as well, so yi, some, our schools

  The subject of the verb *felt* was omitted. The omitted subject cannot be *cricket* because of *with it*. The conclusion must be that *I* was the omitted subject and that JT failed to distinguish how *bored* and *boring* was used.

- Instance 2 (JT was talking about the Millennium Dome).

  LL  That’s fine. Actually, have you ever been to the Dome?
  JT  No, because erm friend’s been going to it but he says it’s quite bored, just some, only one or two places, mmm, good to see, that’s it.

  Clearly, JT should have used *boring* instead of *bored*.

- Instance 3 (KN was talking about a television programme)

  KN  Southpark. Well in the beginning I like it, but it’s get bored, because basically they’re just like pictures and they swear.
• Instances 4-6 (EL was explaining why she did not go to Chinatown anymore).

LL OK, you’ve said that for a few times, I meant to ask you the first time but we were talking about something else, what made you stop going
EL Waste of money (rising) Well, really don’t really, money don’t really bother me, but it’s just getting bored, getting bored, not with the people, no nothing. It’s getting bored keep going out, don’t do nothing, we do just keep there drinking, smoking, and just talk a lot of rubbish, basically.

• Instance 7 (YH was talking about finding out that she and a friend shared the same birthday)

YH I remember I didn’t know English not at all, I wrote down a bit of paper “It is my birthday”, she was my best friend and she goes “Yes, it is my birthday too” And she was shocking. She went to the same secondary school and we ended up in the same class.

• Instance 8 (YH was talking about her family life)

• YH we use to like the news, even watch the news as well, the news is so bored and there’s nothing else on,

• Instance 9 (CC was talking about her mother)

CC And erm, she’s been nagging me to do my work but erm she trusts me to do it, to be responsible enough to do my work, and so there’s so much nagging that makes it so much more relaxed (LL laughs).

• Instance 10 (FN was talking about romance among film stars)

FN Brat Pitt has been with a lot of girls, and it’s like he always say oh they’re going get engaged (inaudible) Gwyneth Paltrow, they were always together (rising) and afterwards they break up anyway, erm, but I don’t know, it’s quite surprise they are a good couple, they look good together, so wish them the best, init?

• Instance 11 (FN was talking about her job in a Mexican restaurant)

FN I am quite experience and I, I know the till, and I catch up, so the job is much easier now, cause just before, it use to be really tiring, and now it’s much more relax

In Hong Kong, Cantonese ESL learners often fail to make the distinction between turn on and open, hear and listen, and read and see. For example, Cantonese ESL students often say see a book instead of read a book. The non-native usage of see can be attributed to the Cantonese verb tai which can be used in the following ways:

Example 8: Tai su
read book(s)
Example 9: Tai dihn si/
    watch TV

Example 10: Tai hei
    see film(s)

In Example 11, EL was able to make the correction when she realised she should have used
watch instead of see.

Example 11: (EL was talking about watching a Hong Kong soap opera with her mother).

EL My mum does, so I have to see it, watch it with her. Fun, init?
LL I mean, yeah, OK
EL Well, I have miss quite a few cause I went back to Hong Kong (LL laughs) but I watch it when I
    was in Hong Kong as well, so.

Similar instances are found in the data.

Tai vs see, look, watch, and read.

Two informants, JH and JT, had difficulty in distinguishing the usage of the English verbs see,
watch, and read.

- Instances 12-14 (JH was talking about reading for pleasure)

LL Who are your favourite writers?
JH Er Ei Hong,
LL Right.
JH Have you heard of it?
LL Yeah,
JH I just watch the science fiction Waih Si Lei64 and Yeuhn Jahn Hahp65 and stuff.
JH No, they don't. They just send me comic books.
LL Hmmhmn. I thought Dragonball Z66 is a bit too old by now, init?
JH Yes, it is. I got, er, I finish watching them though. I only watch like, alright, the last few chapters
    so they sent it.
JH Well, I, er, I watch it, I use to watch it, you know, in Hong Kong, yeah, and now, it translate to
    English, yeah, so might as well watch it again, init? Nothing to do, er, I do watch comic books,
    yeah, Dragonball Z, erm, er, the, erm, those football games, football, Jeuk Gauh Siu Cheuung, I
    don't know what you call it, those old comics.
LL You are talking about books now. You are talking about
JH Yeah.

---

64 Name of a character created by the said author, the Cantonese equivalent of Indianna Jones, if you will. Incidentally, the stories weren't really science fiction, not by Asimov's definition. The stories were thrillers with emphasis on technology and witchcraft.
65 Another character created by the same author.
66 Name of a Japanese comic series.
Instances 15-17 (JT was also talking about reading for pleasure).

LL Do you ever download the magazines from the net?
JT Erm, take quite a lot of time but just see it on the net, much faster,
LL OK, you just read it from the net,
JT Yeah, just read it from the net.

LL Which newspaper do you read?
JT Erm, yeah,
LL Which ones do you read?
JT Er, Pihng Go wakh jeh Dohng Fong67.
LL Did you buy it in Chinatown or did you download it?
JT Erm, Chinatown, and sometime we can go on the net and see it, sometimes,

LL Do you ever look at manga?
JT Erm, manga, no.
LL Do you know what it is?
JT I know what it is but erm, I see few of them as well.

Gahp vs. watch and find.

In Hong Kong Cantonese, gahp can be used as a variant of tai. Gahp can be used to mean to watch, look for, and to find (Example 12 to Example 16 are invented examples).

Example 12:  
Gahp jyuh keuih  
Watch ASP him / her  
Watch / Keep an eye on him / her.

Example 13:  
Tai jyuh keuih  
Watch ASP him / her  
Keep an eye on him / her.

Example 14:  
Ngoh gahp dou tiuh kwahn hou leng  
I see / find ASP NC dress very pretty  
I saw / found a pretty dress.

Example 15:  
Ngoh tai dou tiuh kwahn hou leng  
I see / find ASP NC dress very pretty  
I saw / found a pretty dress.

Example 16:  
Tuhng ngoh gahp ha yauh mouh dik si  
Co-verb I see / find PRT have not have taxi  
Find me a taxi.

• Instance 18 (KN was talking about how he was introduced to chess).

KN Oh yeah, erm, I’m a school prefect, I don’t know, and I’m head of graphics for the magazine and play for the chess team (rising), I saw it, I don’t know how I got in yeah, cause I can’t play chess

67 Translation: Pihng Go [the name of a magazine published in Hong Kong] or Dohng Fong [the name of another magazine published in Hong Kong].
again. It's basically like, oh, it's so, it's like some friends yeah, I play with my friends, cause one of my best friend here is one of the best in school.

The problem with Instance 18 lies with the object pronoun *it*. What *it* referred to is not clear from the data. A plausible interpretation is that KN might have used *I saw it* to mean he had watched people playing chess.

- Instance 19 (JT was talking about what he did someone threw water over his father)

  JT the other day just erm, the day after that, about erm, nearly six or seven of us, our friends just come down and *try to see* any people that, that, erm at that incident, that happen.

  JT used *try to see* any people to mean *try to find some of the people who threw water at his father*.

- Instance 20 (EL was talking about a Taiwanese soap opera)

  EL Use to and then people I know "It's really good. Watch it" and I thought "No, look, then I don't like it. It must be boring" But after second episode, feels really good. I can, I can just sometime I can just play and play it over and over again. I mean it's quite good. Yeah.

  EL was probably trying to use *look* to mean *watch the soap opera*. However, there is also the possibility that EL could be saying *Have a look* with the verb *have* and the indefinite article *a* omitted. The benefit of the doubt is given here.

  *Tai vs. depend on.*

  *Tai* also means *depend on* as in the English joke in Example 17. An invented example of *tai* meaning to depend on is given in Example 18.

  Example 17:  
  *Is life worth living? It depends on the liver.*

  Example 18:

  Speaker A: *Neih gam man heui mh heui so ho a?*  
  you tonight go not go Soho PRT  
  Do you want to go to Soho tonight?

  Speaker B: *Tai hai ngoh gui mh gui la*  
  Depends PRT I tired not tired PRT.  
  Depends on whether I am tired or not.

  JT failed to make the distinction once.
• Instance 21 (JT was telling me why it was difficult for Cantonese people in London to have English friends).

LL  Why is it so difficult for us, Cantonese people to make friends with the English?
JT  Actually, it's not that hard. It's not. It has to see what kinds of people you try to be friends with.

Waan vs. play.

Another Hong Kong Cantonese word that caused problems with some of the informants is waan. Waan can be used in the following ways:

Example 19:  
Waan yam ngaauh  
play music [meaning a musical instrument].

Example 20:  
Waan gong kahm  
play (the) piano.

Example 21:  
Waan disco  
go clubbing

Example 22:  
Waan gung jai  
play (with) (a) toy/ toys

Example 23:  
Waan yauh hei gei  
play video games

Two informants failed to distinguish different usage of the English verb play and the instances are listed below:

• Instance 22 (YH was talking about the activities she had taken up in school).

YH  There was like rounders club and cricket club even I went to, erm, apart from, oh, I played music when I was in secondary school, and I gave it up because it clashes with their timetable,

• Instance 23 (EL was talking about clubbing)

LL  Do you ever go clubbing at all?
EL  I don’t like it, lot of people like going play disco. I don’t like it. I rather go karaoke than go disco, clubbing and all that, whatever. I don't like it, I've been but I ain't really, you know, some people really you know, saying that I would like it, and I kind of go "Yeah" but no.

Cho vs. come.

In Hong Kong Cantonese, cho means to sit. Cho can also used in the following ways:

Example 24:  
cho pub  
go to (a) pub

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Example 25: leih nogh doh cho come my place sit Come to my home.

• Instance 24 (JH was talking about a Hong Kong Cantonese friend that he found irritating).

JH But Henry, he just, I don’t know where he came from, he just came on, on and on about it, and all the friends was like “I don’t fucking sit here again. I fucking chop you out. Blah, blah, blah” and he was on about with me yesterday.

JH meant his friends would not go to a certain place again.

Ji saat vs. commit suicide and attempt to commit suicide.

In Hong Kong Cantonese, ji saat [self + kill] means either committing suicide or attempting to commit suicide. It is not possible to tell whether a person succeeded in committing suicide or not when ji saat is used. Example 26, Example 27, and Example 28 came from magazines published in Hong Kong. In Example 26, the man who killed himself and his children died. In Example 27, the man who tried to kill himself did not die. In Example 28, the man who tried to kill himself did not die, either.

Example 26:
Yaht chihn, Lohn Wahn Bak Chyuhn foat sang mahn fu gaai gi neuih days before [place name] happen blind father with son daughter A while ago (a) blind father turned on (the) gas and killed himself and his son(s) and daughter(s) in.

hoi myuh hei ji saat turn on coal gas commit suicide Lohn Wahn Bak Chyuhn (Dohng Jau Hon, p. 28, June 21, 2001)

Example 27:
Joi geui cheung ji saat, chuhng seung fan maiz Then lift gun commit suicide seriously wounded unconscious (He) then (tried to) commit suicide (by) shooting himself. (He was) seriously wounded and (was) unconscious. (Dohng Jau Hon, p. 98, June 7, 2001)

Example 28:
Loh yu sauh dahn seung ji saat wohk gaau Loh co-verb launch PREP commit suicide co-verb save Loh (tried to) commit suicide in (his) launch (but he was) saved. (Yaht Jau Hon, p. 21, February 24, 2002)
Instances 25-26  (FN was telling me about a Hong Kong Canto-pop star's suicide attempt)

FN  Erm, I don't read much about Leon any more now, cause it's I don't buy magazines especially but ages ago. Did you hear how he commit suicide?

LL  No, no,

FN  Apparently, Leon was suppose to er, commit suci, commit suicide or something because erm, the girl he like dumped him, Leuhng Si Keih, you know who she is? Well, apparently, she didn't like him or something and then she broke up with him and he couldn't take it and he, er, tried to commit suicide by taking an overdose or something like that.

Note that FN knew the difference between committing suicide and an attempt to commit suicide. That she was able to do that could be attested by the underlined utterance she made after Instance 25.

_Jau vs. run and leave._

In Hong Kong Cantonese, the verb _jau_ is used to mean _to run or to leave._

Example 29:

_Mh hou jau la. Cho ha tim._
_Not leave PRT Sit / stay ASP PRT_  
_Don't leave. Stay (a little) longer._

Example 30:

_Mh hou jau la. Hou ngaih him ga_  
_Not run PRT Very dangerous PRT_  
_Don't run. It is dangerous._

Instance 27 (JT was talking about what he did after a barbecue with his friends).

LL  OK. So you had a barbecue, and then?

JT  And then, just after this, sort of er ran, we go to some snooker club, try to play some snooker but erm some people got kick out by accident, doesn't it? Erm, because they talking too noisy, or something like that and they got kick out.

Clearly, JT should have use _left_ instead of _ran._

_Sau vs close and stop._

In Hong Kong Cantonese, _sau_ can be used in the following ways:

Example 31:

Di basi sau saai a  
_NC buses stop all PRT_  
_All the buses (have) stopped._
Example 32:

Gaan pou sau jo la.
NC shop close ASP PRT
The shop is close.

- Instance 28 (JT was talking about how he got home in the early hours of the morning).

LL There aren’t anymore trains from Charing Cross after three o’clock on a Sunday morning
JT Because at er eleven, twenty past eleven, they, the train is all close, and the tube as well, so we have to take a night bus.

Instance 28 clearly shows that JT mixed up close and stop.

Cheut heui vs go out and not at home; Duhk syu vs study, read, and revise.

Previously, the researcher has discussed tai and commented how the difference in usage between tai and the English verbs see, look, watch, and read might have caused some of the informants to use those English verbs in ways that native speakers of English would not use. The Hong Kong Cantonese verb duhk, which means to read aloud, to study/learn a subject in school and to revise. Duhk is usually followed by the noun syu, which means books. Thus

Example 33:

Teacher to student: Neih duhk ni dyuhn syu
you read this section book
Read this section of the book (out loud).

Example 34:

Keuih hai ying gwok duhk syu
he/she in Britain study
He/she studies in Britain.

Example 35:

Keuih hai fohng duhk syu
he/she in room study/revise
He/she (is) studying/revising in (his/her) room.

Native speakers of English say *I go out for a drink every evening* to mean that they habitually have a drink outside their home. The drinking can take place, for example, in the pub. It does not necessarily mean that the people who made such an utterance have to walk out of their home to
go to the pub. It is possible that those people go to the pub from other places like their place of work.

The Hong Kong Cantonese equivalent of go out is cheut heui. Example 36 and Example 37 show that the usage of cheut heui is similar to the usage of go out.

Example 36:
Ngoh cheut heui sak faang
I go co-verb eat meal
I go (somewhere outside home to) have my meals / I eat out.

Example 37:
Ngoh cheut heui yah jahn gaan
I go co-verb a while
I (am) going out (for) a while.

• Instance 29

JH So can’t really write too much essays, can’t really write, whereas Chemistry and Maths, yeah, take it, you know, just (inaudible). I also took, er, A Level Chinese

LL OK

JH Chinese History, but I didn’t go out and study it, er, can’t be bothered, I guess. So my friend lent me those, er, the syllabus (rising) and I study at home. Well, I didn’t actually study but the night before the exam (LL laughs), I took like six hours revising it. And I took it, so I don’t know how, how good I do though.

What JH actually meant is that he did not study Chinese History in school and that, as he said later, he studied the subject at home. What made go out and study it in Instance 29 an non-native usage is that native speakers of English would say I did not study (a subject) in school.

Furthermore, native speakers of English would interpret I didn’t go out and study it as used by JH to mean I did not go out (for example, to the library) to study it.

Bei vs allow / let, assign, and give.

In Hong Kong Cantonese, the verb bei can be used to mean to allow / let, assign, and to give.

Example 38:
Keuih bei jo di chin ngoh
he / she give ASP NC money me
He / She gave me some money.
Example 39:

Ngoh bahba mh bei ngoh cheut heui
my father not allow me go co-verb
My father (will) not let me go out.

Example 40:

Louh sai bei jo ni go kei si ngoh
boss assign ASP this CL case me
(The) boss assigned this case to me.

- Instance 30 (GW was talking about housework).

GW and he wants us to cook, normally we try to avoid it,
LL You are talking about your older sister, aren’t you?
GW Yeah, yeah, but cause she actually works now, so normally they just give me to do, but you
know I try not to.

This instance of non-native usage of English is also discussed in the section that deals with
omitted object of the verb do. However, there is no omitted direct object of the verb give because
GW used give to mean let.

Do vs much and many.

Hong Kong Cantonese does not have the much /many distinction as English has for count nouns
and non-count nouns. The Hong Kong Cantonese word for much and many is do.

- Instance 31 (JT was talking about his neighbourhood).

JT What’s there. Club, snooker, bowling, er, cinemas, and shopping centres and, and that’s it,
really, but haven’t got too much thing to do.

- Instance 32 (JT was talking about what he did with his time).

JT Mmm, well just shopping and erm, just, don’t know because I haven’t got much friends I can’t
really do many things yet.

- Instance 33 (FN was talking about the people who worked in a Chinese supermarket).

FN but the thing, the thing I notice yeah, it’s true, they, they don’t care if you don’t come back, it’s
like, there’s so much Chinese people.
• Instance 34 (JH was talking about mobile phones).

JH I always carry my mobile, yeah, and too much ringing, too much friends, you know, phoning me, if I listen to the music, yeah, just couldn't hear the, er, the ringing, init?

Instance 35 is a doubtful case in the data that needs to be discussed.

• Instance 35 (YH was talking about going to Hong Kong)

YH I mean I feel the world’s just really big and, that’s a lot of things to look at, and it’s not just Hong Kong, it’s too much relatives, visiting relatives.

The benefit of the doubt has to be given. It was likely that YH was saying it’s too much, visiting relatives for two reasons. First it does not show from the data that YH confused the usage of it is with there is. Second, it does not show from the data that YH used it’s as a contraction of it has. Third, it seems very likely that YH reformed the utterance.

• Instance 36 (GW was talking about her father)

GW A lot, he asks us to pay for it and yep when people call me he shouts because I get so much phone calls,

Si u vs few and little.

Unlike English, Hong Kong Cantonese uses siu for count and non-count nouns.

Instance 37

JH Yeah, they, cause there're too little of them and they just couldn't do nothing, really.

Giu vs call and order (food).

In Hong Kong Cantonese, the verb giu is used when a person calls someone (meaning to ask someone to come to the person) and to order food.

Example 41:

Yauh yahn giu ngoh cheut heui
EXT person call me go co-verb
Someone asked me to go out (with him/her).
Example 42:

Giu jo fahn saam man jih
order ASP NC sandwich
(1) ordered a sandwich.

Example 43:

Giu jo ngoih maaih
order ASP food delivery
(1) order (some) food to be delivered (here)

• Instance 38 (JH was talking about his diet).

LL Hmmmmm, when would you have fish and chips?
JH About once a month (rising). Twice a month (rising). I don't know. Depends init? Depends if me mum and dad have, have the mood to eat fish and chips. Or otherwise I always Chinese food, always cook at home or maybe calling Chinese takeaway.
LL And they deliver
JH Yeah.

Instance 38 shows that JH confused call with order.

Daaih vs superior and big and sai vs small and minor / not serious.

In Hong Kong Cantonese slang, ddaaih lou [literal meaning: bigger brother] is a rank in the Triad, a Chinese crime syndicate. Conversely sai is a noun that refers to the people who are under a ddaaih lou. In Hong Kong Cantonese, sai can be used to mean minor or unimportant.

Example 44:

Kihn si hou sai je
NC matter very minor PRT
The matter is not serious. / It is a minor matter.

• Instance 39 (JH was talking about Chinese gangsters in a club in Leicester Square).

JH Too many, what you call it, different gangs, all the, all the heads, yeah, they, they sit up the restaurants and all the little gangsters, they just dance on the dance floor. So I go down there, I really have to be very careful, you know.

68 Note that the “rank and file”, if you will, of the Triad are never called sai louh.
• Instance 40 (HG was talking about Chinese gangsters in the same club).

LL I just interview a boy yesterday and he told me the trouble he had at the Hippodrome.
HG Is it? People would tend to start on you. If they don’t know who you are, they start on you. And they want to show like who’s bigger. That’s it. That’s what they do. Yeah, but the music there is quite good. It’s good there.

In Instance 39 and Instance 40, JH and HG were not talking about size when they used little and bigger. They were using those words to refer to different ranks in the hierarchy of the Triad.

Instance 41 (JT was talking about people throwing stones into his house)

LL Did you call the police?
JT Erm, no, because it’s just only small quite and we can’t see any, we, because erm, when it happen we all was going out, so we didn’t know who’s done it or not, so.

In Instance 41 JT used small to mean minor.

• Instance 42 (HG was talking about how she and her family celebrated various Chinese festivals).

HG When we celebrate we have the big, you know, the big food like, erm, crab, you know, luhng ha, what’s luhng ha?
LL Lobsters
HG Lobsters, yeah, lobster, chicken, and er yeah.

Hong Kong Cantonese who work in the catering industry in London originally call dishes with, for example, a whole chicken or a whole fish daaih tau yeh [literal meaning: big size thing]. It is culturally unacceptable to have half a fish or half a chicken to celebrate Chinese festivals.69 Naturally, there are exceptions. It is not practical to serve a whole pig or a whole cow. However, if they have beef or pork with daaih tau yeh, there would be a lot of pork and beef on the table. It is because Hong Kong Cantonese people usually have a celebration meal with friends and relatives. So daaih tau yeh is extended to mean a large dish or food. HG was probably translating daaih tau yeh into English because daaih tau yeh does not have an English equivalent.

69 For example, fish in Hong Kong Cantonese culture represents surplus and having only part of a fish for a festival celebration meal is not propitious.
**Hahng vs walk and travel.**

The Hong Kong Cantonese verb *hahng* means to walk and to travel.

**Example 45:**

*Ngoh fohng ga jung yi jau wai hahng ha.*
*I holiday like everywhere travel ASP*
*(When I am on) holiday, I like to travel to everywhere.*

**Example 46:**

*Ngoh yahht yahht hahng faan hohk.*
*I day day walk co-verb school*
*I walk to school every day.*

- Instance 43 (JT was talking about how he went to work).

JT

Why, erm, because, my mum works there (rising) so, he, she can take me to work, every morning (rising), don’t have to travel, and get bus etc.

JT should have said *don’t have to walk* instead of *don’t have to travel.* He did not have to walk to the place he worked because his mother drove him there but he still had to travel to work.

Two instances (Instance 20 by EL and Instance 35 by YH) are taken out of the analysis for reasons given. The other 41 instances were made by the following informants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.12 Number of Instances of Non-English Like Lexis Produced by Informants in Part One.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of instances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC (AOA5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (AOA5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (AOA8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (AOA8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JT (AOA8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (AOA10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (AOA10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (AOA10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (AOA10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Two.

Part Two deals with English lexical items used by the informants for which Cantonese equivalents are governed by different grammatical rules.

**Ngaaih.**

- Instance 44 (EL was talking about smoking).

  LL Tried to give up smoking meself.
  EL I can, I can. I mean I can have a fag and I can just stop. I can last until tomorrow, I can. But that's asking a lot.

The Hong Kong Cantonese verb *ngaaih* means *last*. However, unlike *last*, it is not required to have a quantity of something as the subject of *ngaaih*. The person who consumes the quantity of something can also be the subject of *ngaaih*, as Instance 44 shows.

**Jaahn.**

- Instance 45 (GW was talking about the problems she had with her father).

  LL Do you have a mobile phone?
  GW Did but my dad, he, well, I earned it but my dad, he took it, yep, and he's using it. Oh yeah, I paid for it myself, you know, in England, yeah, and he just confiscate off me.

The Hong Kong Cantonese verb *jaahn*, unlike *earn*, does not require an amount of money as its object. The object can also be an object the money bought. However, *earn* can also mean *deserve*. In that sense, *earn* does not require an amount of money as its object.

There is no indication that GW was using *earn* in the *deserve* sense of the word from the data. As a matter of fact, *I paid for it myself* is indicative that GW was using *earn* in the *earning an income* sense of the word. However, benefit of the doubt must be given and the conclusion that GW was using the *deserve* sense of the word must be drawn. GW could be saying that she worked very hard and she deserved the mobile phone.

**Yall jeuhng.**

- Instance 46 (KN was talking about his performance when playing for the school chess team).

  KN ... and cause I won the first two, yeah, then we got into the champion one, yeah, and then I play the same people again, and I lost, I lost every match (laugh) yeah I thought “OK, then (inaudible)
not so much”. I lost every match (laugh) yeah I thought “OK, then (inaudible) not so much”.
Still, I mean, I am still got impress because I, I should be playing bottom board.

Unlike impression, its English equivalent, the Hong Kong Cantonese noun, yah jeuhng, does not have a verb form. So there are no syntactic equivalents of I impress him or I was impressed in Hong Kong Cantonese. The syntactic equivalent of I impress him with yah jeuhng can only be used in the following two ways:

Example 47:

\[
\text{Ngoh bei keuih yaht go hou yah jeuhng.} \\
I \text{ give him one NC good impression} \\
I \text{ gave him a good impression.}
\]

Example 48:

\[
\text{Ngoh lauh hah yaht go hou yah jeuhng (bei keuih).} \\
I \text{ leave ASP one NC good impression co-verb him} \\
I \text{ left (behind) a good impression (to him).}
\]

Example 47 and Example 48 show that it is impossible to use yah jeuhng with the ones who are impressed as the sentence subject. Also note that for the Hong Kong Cantonese construction of Example 48, an indirect object is not compulsory.

I am still got impress shows that KN had difficulty with how impress is used because of the Hong Kong Cantonese grammatical rules governing yah jeuhng. His selection of I instead of, for example, people and his selection of an English passive voice construction made it impossible for him to say what he truly meant, namely, that people were impressed by his performance.

There are only three instances in Part Two. They were made by EL, GW, and KN. All 3 informants belonged to the AOA10 group.

Part Three.

Part Three deals with English lexical items and phrases for which the informants’ usage shows a strong Hong Kong Cantonese cultural influence.

• Instances 47 - 51 (JH was talking about his work at the Chinese takeaway).

JH Down in a takeaway in Bexleyheath, near the Bexleyheath Bus Garage. Er, as a counter, but the, the boss, yeah, the governor, expects me to do much more work than I should be.
LL So you are going to cook, are you?
JH Hey?
LL You are going to cook.
JH No, er, just as a counter. Cause normally weekdays yeah, the governor takes the counter's place, init?
JH My friend William, his cousin use to work down there, but er, he, er, as a part time and er, he found it difficult to come back here and work as er, he works out in Bank.
JH Mm, me mum and Dad don’t work at all. Sometimes my mum er, helped out er, one of the friend, and working down the Chinese takeaway as a counter just for a part time and me mum and dad don’t work at all (inaudible).

Hong Kong Cantonese working in the catering industry in London call people who work at the counter *counter*, people who work part time *part time*.

- Instances 52 - 57 (HG was talking about watching Hong Kong soap operas and films in the VCD format).

HG I like watching Chinese movies cause they are funny. They are different. I like watching, I just basically like watching films. Don’t really watch much TV, English TV at home cause I don’t find that interesting. Erm, I am always watching Chinese channel, all the chapters, all the film chapters, and basically that’s it.

LL OK. Let’s talk about the Chinese channels. What are your favourite soap operas on the Chinese channels?
HG Erm, I like watching the chapter films because they don’t last for that long and you get a lot of funny ones.

HG Chapter films like erm, I don’t know what it’s called in English?
LL What is it in Cantonese?
HG Jan Chihng.

HG Alright. The soap opera thing. OK, what other, are they called chapter film?
HG Chapter film. Kehk jahp [literal meaning: drama episode; a Hong Kong Cantonese word for soap opera].

HG Yeah. It was very popular. Erm, we’ve got the tapes at home. Erm, Grace’s gonna lend me some because I haven’t watched the first chapter.

Chapter plus a number usually appears at the beginning on the TV screen when one plays a Hong Kong produced soap opera on the VCD format. For example, *Chapter 2* appears when the VCD disk containing the second episode of a soap opera is played. This helps the audience know which episode they are watching. *Chapter* was also used by another informant.
Instance 58

LL  So how many hours of Hong Kong films and TV do you watch every day? Or every week?
JH  Mmm. Five to ten hours, not much.
LL  A week? Or a day?
JH  Sometimes, I don't know. Cause I just watch overnight. If I really like that programme yeah, that, I just watch like, a few chapters every night.

• Instance 59

LL  It's near Newport Place, no, it's not. Is it near the
KN  OK, OK, say this is leuhng ting yeah? This is Leicester Square, yeah, you come out and then you go here to get in here, yeah? to leuhng ting, yeah? Instead of turning the first one yeah, that's like the main road, if you go straight yeah, that's like Mr. Wu Buffet yeah? And this is Garden.
LL  Alright.
KN  They sell bread as well.
LL  Right, that's where they sell the gai mei baau and
KN  Yeah,

KN was not talking about the bread that is sold in a supermarket. The bread that KN was talking about was like baps with stuffing inside.

• Instance 60 (EL was talking about driving to Heathrow).

LL  You've got some friends or relatives coming from Hong Kong, have you?
EL  Mmm, from America. Yes, it my sister, well, it's my dad best friend, well, we call him uncle, I can call him uncle anyway. My uncle's daughter. She just went on holiday in America, so she come back.

Hong Kong Cantonese use kinship terms to refer to the friends of their parents. A male friend of their parents is often addressed as suk suk or uncle. A female friend is usually addressed as sam sam or auntie. This way of addressing the friends of one's parents is also practised among native speakers of English. However, Hong Kong Cantonese extend this usage of kinship terms to include the children of the friends of their parents. They are addressed as brothers and sisters.70

• Instance 61 (JH was talking about his girl friend having another boy friend).

JH  And I was, chose to, you know, to spilt up, yeah, you know, to let them get along, cause, you know, I don't feel like, you know, being into this kind of, you know, treble, triangle, I don't know, relationship, yeah.

JH was talking about the menage a trois he was in.

70 In Hong Kong Cantonese kinship terms, cousins, especially those on the father's side, are brothers (go go and dai dai) and sisters (je je and muih muih).
• Instance 62 - 65 (FN was talking about her parents)

FN  if we go out with parents

FN sometimes parents, like they call me at six o’clock in the morning,

FN But parents, you know, they really pray, cause parents are really really religious, and am I religious?

• Instance 66 (KN was talking about his holidays)

LL Hmhmhm, did you go to all this places with your parents, on your own, or with your school?

KN Erm, with parents.

Hong Kong Cantonese does not have the equivalence of parents unless it is used in a very formal context. Cantonese people usually use saai baht (masculine) and baht mou (feminine) together to refer to the parents of their friends. When referring to one’s parents, bahba (masculine) mamah (feminine) are used together. FN and KN used parents to refer to their own parents.

There are 20 instances in Part Three. HG (AOA5) was responsible for 6 of them, FN (AOA8) for 4, EL (AOA10) for one, JH (AOA10) for 7, and KN (AOA10) for 2.

Part Four.

Part Four deals with those English lexical items used by the informants that do not fit into the first three categories but which are judged to represent non-native performance.

• Instance 67 (JT was talking about playing cricket).

LL So are you a good batsman or

JT Erm, just good erm, but just quite good a catcher.

LL You are good at fielding then

JT Yeah.

JT was probably using a baseball term. He meant he was a wicket-keeper or that he was good at fielding. The use of the baseball term indicates that he could confuse cricket with baseball or that he might not be familiar with terms used in cricket.

• Instance 68 (JH was talking about his UCCA application).

JH And they didn’t just give me no reply, so, I’ll just cross fingers, isn’t it, finger cross, see if my grades come out yeah and it’s alright, I’ll probably apply for some uni around this area, init?
• Instance 69 (EL was talking about why she liked the magazine Yes).

LL  Well, hmmhmm, why do you like Yes?
EL  I don't know, actually. It's just because, erm, I like to play those games in there. You know, like I like to read the love letter, and star sign, and being nosy, reading all about the pop star and everything. Like up day news, about the pop star.

• Instance 70 (EL was talking about the TV programmes she watched).

LL  What other programmes do you like to watch?
EL  Mmm, Top of the Pop (rising),
LL  OK
EL  A bit up day music, init?
LL  Yeah.

Instances 67-70 show JH and EL had not mastered the use of some English idioms and set-phrases. It is very likely that JH realised he had made a mistake when he said I'll just cross fingers, isn't it and corrected himself with finger cross. EL, however, used up day instead of up to date twice in her interviews.

• Instance 71 (JH was talking about his MD player)

JH  Yeah, hmmhmm, but I don't think I have warrantine now. I should have fixed it a long time ago but, don't listen to it no more.

JH blended two words, warranty and guarantee to form the word warrantine.

There are 5 instances in this part. JT (AOA8) was responsible for one instance, EL (AOA10) for 2, and JH (AOA10) for 2.

Part Five: Discussion.

71 instances of non-English-like usage of lexis have been identified. Two of these instances have been given the benefit of the doubt, leaving 69 instances for further discussion. Below is the breakdown and the percentage of non-English lexis in each informant's data per total of all words (Method One).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>Number of Instances of Non-English Lexis (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>13549</td>
<td>01 (0.007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>13067</td>
<td>08 (0.061)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>17332</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>12774</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>23510</td>
<td>09 (0.039)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>19296</td>
<td>03 (0.016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>11210</td>
<td>14 (0.125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>13523</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>18185</td>
<td>08 (0.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>13905</td>
<td>03 (0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>17000</td>
<td>17 (0.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>16389</td>
<td>05 (0.031)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table lists the averaged rate of inappropriate use by group and by gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% of inappropriate use</th>
<th>% of inappropriate use</th>
<th>AOA group average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOA5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>AOA5 0.034</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA8</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>AOA8 0.027</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA10</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>AOA10 0.033</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows an AOA advantage. The AOA5 group scored a lower percentage of inappropriate use of this proficiency indicator than the two other AOA groups. The AOA8 group scored a lower percentage of inappropriate use of this proficiency indicator than the AOA10 group. Furthermore, the male AOA5 group scores the lowest percentage of inappropriate use of this proficiency indicator among all six AOA groups by gender. However, the female AOA5 group has a much higher percentage than all other groups except the male AOA8 group and the male AOA10 group. This can be explained by HG’s use of *chapter* six times. If all six instances of *chapter* were counted as one, the average percentage of inappropriate use of this proficiency indicator would fall to 0.016%, making the group with the second lowest rate, after the male AOA5 group. In fact, if the instances of *chapter* are counted as one, and the same adjustment for FN’s use of *committing suicide* and *parents*, and EL’s use of *up day* is made, then a clear AOA advantage among the three female AOA groups can also be clearly seen. The following table lists the averaged rate of inappropriate use by group and by gender after the above mentioned adjustment.
Table 5.15 Percentage (adjusted) of Instances of Non-English Like Lexis Produced by AOA Groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male % of inappropriate use</th>
<th>Female % of inappropriate use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOA5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>AOA5 0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA8</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>AOA8 0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA10</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>AOA10 0.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender average</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher has pointed out, for every instance discussed above, how the informants’ use of the lexis may have been influenced by Cantonese, their L1. In the following, an explanation as to why some informants used more of these Cantonese-influenced English lexis than others.

JT (AOA8) fares the worst and he scores the highest rate of inappropriate use of this proficiency indicator. If we look at the group rate for the female AOA8 group, and the fact that JW, the other member of the male AOA group, scores the lowest possible percentage (0%), it becomes clear that the critical period hypothesis cannot account for JT’s poor performance in his use of this proficiency indicator without incorporating a social component into the explanation.

JT was the informant with the least exposure to English. He had no friends who were not Cantonese speakers. He did not read English for pleasure. He watched very little English language TV. He did not take part in any extra-curricular activities. On the other hand, YH and FN had a lot of exposure to English. Although neither had an English-speaking boyfriend at or before age 18, they had friends with whom they had to speak English. They read English language novels and magazines, and their jobs required them to converse in English more than JT’s job required. It is not surprising that the two female informants fare much better than JT in this proficiency indicator, as in others.

It is not surprising that JH fares worse than KN for the same reasons. In terms of exposure to English, the only advantage that JH had over KN was that JH had friends who did not speak Cantonese. On the other hand, KN read English magazines and JH did not. KN took part in extra-curricular activities and JH did not. KN did not just dance to Western music but listened to music by groups like The Corrs while JH just danced to R&B and rap. All these gave KN an advantage over JH in acquiring English lexis.

This explanation can explain why EL fares better than GW. GW’s percentage is higher than EL’s (0.044 vs. 0.022). Neither of them took part in any extra-curricular activities. On the other hand,
EL had non-Cantonese friends and GW did not. EL had an English-speaking boyfriend and GW did not. EL worked in a takeaway for two days where English was required. GW worked in a Chinese school that should require less use of English.

The use of English lexis among the informants shows that some English lexical items in the data can be used to identify the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London as a community. These items are culturally based. JH’s and HG’s use of *chapter* (Instances 52 - 57) and *the big food* (Instance 42), JH’s use of *counter* and *part time* (Instances 47 - 51), EL’s use of *sister* (Instance 59), and KN’s use of *bread* (Instance 58) are just some examples using of English lexis that Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London have appropriated for use in their community of practice. These lexical items are linked to their social practices. *Chapter* is related to Hong Kong television programmes they watched. *The big food, counter and part time* are related to their jobs and the socio-economic background they have. *Bread and the big food* are related to their diet and their tradition. *Sister* is related to their social network. It can even be argued that this appropriation of English lexis in Chinese-identified contexts and practices is diffusing from concrete nouns to other categories of content words like *big, little and small* for *superior, inferior, unimportant, and minor*.

The above mentioned instances might be the result of a lack of proficiency in English. However, this interpretation is unlikely because, apart from the argument that these instances are culturally based, the informants responsible for these instances should have achieved a level of English proficiency to use *episode* instead of *chapter*, *friend* instead of *sister*, *pastry* instead of *bread*, *high ranking, top or important* instead of *big*, and *minor or low ranking* instead of *little*. JH could have said *I have a part time job* instead of *as a part time* and *I work at the counter* instead of *as a counter*.

To conclude, the use of this proficiency indicator shows an AOA group effect. There is also a gender effect. However, there is also evidence that some of the informants’ use was influenced by the social practices of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London.
5.08 Word Medial Intervocalic /t/.

The feature of glottalisation, in place of /t/ especially in word medial intervocalic position (e.g. *butter*), is well-researched. Williams and Kerswill (1999) point out that the variant is a common feature of London and Cockney English which has spread "across geographical and social space" (p. 159) and that it is a feature that has been "rapidly adopted by young speakers across Britain" (p. 159).

Tollfree (1999) identifies 2 accent groups of native speakers residing in South East London. The 2 accent groups are South East London Regional Standard (SELRS) and South East London English (SELE). The SELRS accents are the "local form of near-RP" (p. 164) and SELE encompasses "medially to maximally broad varieties" (p.164). Her findings on the performance of the 2 groups with regard to T- glottalisation as a variant of word medial intervocalic /t/ are summarised in Table 5.16.

| Table 5.16 T-glottalisation Among Tollfree's (1999) 2 Accent Groups |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Context                        | SELE (n = 25)   | SELE (n = 7)    | SELRS (n = 37)  | SELRS (n = 21)  |
|                                | (aged 15-30)    | (aged 54-89)    | (aged 15-30)    | (aged 54-89)    |
| Inter-vocalic                  |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Preceding high-incidence       | high-incidence  | high-incidence  | frequent        | frequent        |
| syllabic /n/ (e.g., button)    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Inter-vocalic                  | high-incidence  | high-incidence  | not frequent    | not frequent    |
| Preceding syllabic /m/ (e.g.,  |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| bottom)                        |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Inter-vocalic                  | high-incidence  | high-incidence  | not frequent    | not frequent    |
| Preceding syllabic /l/ (e.g.,  |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| bottle)                        |                 |                 |                 |                 |

The spread of T-glottalisation across the geographical area of the UK is attested by the research by Williams and Kerswill (1999) conducted in Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull. These researchers' findings on T-glottalisation are summarised in Table 5.17.

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All terms (including the examples) that appear in Table 5.16 are Tollfree's (1999, p. 171). She has not explained the differences between 'high-incidence', 'frequent' and 'not frequent' in the text.
Table 5.17: The Percentage T-glottalisation as Variant of Inter-vocalic /t/ by Adolescents in 3 Towns According to Gender and Class (After Williams and Kerswill, 1999, p. 160).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Middle Class</th>
<th>Working Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
<td>25.40</td>
<td>48.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>14.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>30.90</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-glottalisation is losing its status as a stigmatised linguistic feature. Wells (1984) points out that a bare glottalisation “as the realization of word-internal intervocalic /t/... suffers some degree of overt stigmatization” (p. 324). He further points out that T-glottalisation “in the environment of a following syllabic” (e.g. butter, bottle) are “not RP or even Near-RP” (p. 300). Yet, as already pointed out, the research of Tollfree (1999) and Williams’ and Kerswill (1999) shows that T-glottalisation is beginning to be accepted by the younger generations with middle class background and as well as by young speakers of Near-RP in London.

Data of the informants’ instances of T-glottalisation were collected throughout the interviews when they talked about themselves as well as in a specially designed reading task. The 18 words selected from the reading tasks were intended to vary the following context systematically. These were bitter, better, butter, later, litre, litter, letter, latter, waiter, metre, bottle, kettle, bottom, scrotum, button, mutton, writing, and setting. The words were written in block letters on white cards. During the task, the researcher drew the cards at random from a bag and the informants were asked to read out loud words on cards one by one.

In what follows, the data collected are grouped into 3 variants and 5 contexts. The variants are /t/, glottalisation with following /t/ and bare glottalisation. The contexts consist of the variant followed by: velar nasal (e.g., getting), alveolar nasal (e.g., written), lateral (e.g., little), fricative (e.g., British), full vowel (e.g., photo), and schwa (e.g., later).

Findings.

This section is divided into 2 parts. In the first part, the informants’ data for the 3 variants in word medial, intervocalic position collected from the interviews are listed in tables according for each informant. In the second part, the informants’ data for the 3 variants collected from the reading task are listed.
Part One.

Tables 5.18- 5.29 present each informant’s use of the 3 variants in word medial, intervocalic position are listed according to 7 contexts in the interviews. The percentage given in brackets is the percentage use of each variant in a particular context.

Table 5.18    CC’s Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC (n = 44)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>Glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.19    HG’s Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HG (n = 31)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>Glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>3 (27.27%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All 3 instances of the glottal and /t/ variant are tokens of better.

Table 5.20    CT’s Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CT (n = 42)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>Glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.21: HN's Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HN (n = 49)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>09 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>06 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.22: FN's Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FN (n = 45)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>01 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>01 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>03 (75.00%)</td>
<td>01 (25.00%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>04 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>04 (33.33%)</td>
<td>08 (66.67%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>07 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FN’s instances of the glottal and /t/ variant are one token of *notice* (followed by pause), 3 tokens of *later* (one followed by pause and 2 by a vowel), and 5 tokens of *better* (one followed by pause, 1 by a vowel, and 3 by a fricative).

### Table 5.23: YH's Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YH (n = 31)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.24: JT's Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JT (n = 39)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.25  JW’s Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JW (n=31)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>14 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.26  EL’s Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL (n=45)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>06 (85.71%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>01 (14.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>04 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>09 (52.94%)</td>
<td>03 (17.65%)</td>
<td>05 (29.41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>07 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EL’s instances of the glottal and /t/ variant are 2 token of *later* (followed by pause) and 1 token of *better* (followed by pause). Her instances of the bare glottal are 1 token of *eating* (followed by pause), 4 tokens of *better* (3 followed by pause and 1 by a fricative) and 1 token of *letter* (followed by pause).

Table 5.27  GW’s Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GW (n=13)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.28  JH’s Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JH (n=63)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>31 (77.5%)</td>
<td>08 (20.00%)</td>
<td>01 (02.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>06 (85.71%)</td>
<td>01 (14.29%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JH’s instances of the glottal and /t/ variant are 1 token of *little* (followed by a vowel), 6 tokens of *better* (4 followed by pause, 1 followed by bilabial /w/, and 1 by a fricative), and 2 tokens of
computer (followed by a vowel). His only instance of the bare glottal is a token of better (followed by pause).

Table 5.29 KN's Use of the 3 Variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KN (n = 32)</th>
<th>/t/</th>
<th>glottal and /t/</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preceding velar nasal</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding alveolar nasal</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding bilabial nasal</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding fricative</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding full vowel</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding schwa</td>
<td>18 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preceding lateral</td>
<td>0 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two.

Eleven informants used plain /t/ for the words they read out in the reading task. These informants were CC, HG, CT, HN, FN, YH, JT, JW, GW, JH and KN. EL was the only informant who used the other 2 variants. The bare glottal was used by EL in later, little, letter, and better. The glottal plus /t/ variant was used in metre and bottle.

Discussion.

Gender and Class.

The findings in Part One show that only 4 informants used the bare glottal and the glottal and /t/ variants. These informants were HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8), EL (AOA10), and JH (AOA10), the latter being only male informant of the four. This may indicate that the use of these two variants is more favoured among the female informants than male.

The 3 female informants, HG, FN, and EL, were more rebellious and more likely to adopt stigmatised features than the 3 other female informants, CC, YH, and GW. According to their own statements, HG and FN were resentful to the control their parents imposed upon them on their freedom of movement, association, and in EL's case, the right to smoke. The parents of CC and YH did not impose these types of control on them. GW, although she resented parental control on her movement, had come to term with it and believed that it was because her parents loved her. Moreover, she believed that it was her duty to keep the family in harmony. HG, FN,
and EL, while they would not confront their parents, were resentful of them and might have used the nonstandard variants as part of their speech repertoire to express their independence of their parents.

Three of the male informants, CT, HN, and JW, also resisted parental control over their freedom of movement. CT, HN, and JW would confront their parents openly about this. For CT, HN, and JW, there was less need to express their independence with nonstandard linguistic features because they were more confrontational than HG, FN, and GW were.

Six informants have previously been identified as having a working class background. Their parents were semi-skilled or non-skilled workers employed in restaurants, takeaways, and a Chinese supermarket in Southeast London. These informants were FN (AOA8), JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10). Three of the 4 informants who had the bare glottal and the glottal plus /t/ variants belonged to this socioeconomic class, suggesting that these 2 variants are more favoured among the informants with a working class background. According to Wells (1986), the bare glottal is overtly stigmatised, and EL and JH, 2 of the informants with working class background, were the only informants who used the bare glottal variant. HG, with a middle class family background, and FN, with a working class family background, did not use the bare glottal variant at all. In this respect, the findings here are similar to the findings of Tollfree (1999), Wells, (1984), and Williams and Kerswill (1999) in that although bare glottal is still stigmatised, it has begun to lose its stigma.

On the other hand, the informants who had middle class backgrounds (their parents were employers who owned restaurants and takeaways, or they were academics, and other non-manual workers), CC (AOA5), CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), YH (AOA8), JW (AOA8), and KN (AOA10) did not use the two variants at all. JT (AOA8) and GW (AOA10) were the only two informants with a working class family background who did not use these two variants at all.

Thus, there are aspects of the findings in this study that are different from those of Tollfree (1999), Wells (1984), and Williams and Kerswill (1999). First, only one (HG) of the 7 informants with a middle class background had the glottal plus /t/ variant. Second, of the other 3 informants who had a working class family background, only 2 of them (EL and JH) used the bare glottal variant. Furthermore, there is only one instance of use of the bare glottal variant in
JH's data (out of a total of 63 instances analysed). What follows is a discussion of other possibilities that might help to explain why some informants used the 2 variants while others did not.

**Other Factors: Television and Job Prospects.**

Williams and Kerswill (1999) have pointed out as one of the reasons for the spread of the two variant pronunciation of /t/ that the spread takes place “through the tremendous increase in radio and TV stations and programmes directed at young people” (p. 162). All the informants told the researcher that they watched English language TV programmes. However, only HG, CT, FN, EL, and JH named British made shows as among their favourite TV programmes (e.g., *Bits*, *Cybernet*, *Eastenders*, *Family Affairs*, and *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*). The other informants did not name any favourite English language TV programmes or they named only those made in the USA, in which T-glottalisation would not be used in most contexts, as their favourite ones (e.g., *Ally McBeal*, *Frasier*, *Friends*, *Rosewell High*, and *X-Files*). That HG, FN, EL, and JH, the informants who used the two glottalised variants, were also the informants who preferred British TV programmes, indicates their use of these two variants might have been influenced through watching British TV programmes.

On the other hand, their watching British television may be an indicator of their sociolinguistic profile, thus an effect or a correlative feature of /t/ glottalisation rather than a causal factor.

Another explanation may be connected with the perceived importance among the informants of using standard pronunciation as well as having a good education for their future career. The informants, as migrants who settled in London, might perceive the significance of using standard pronunciation in ways different to those perceived by the subjects in Tollfree (1999) and Williams and Kerswill (1999). The informants in the present study might associate the use of all nonstandard pronunciation features with a lack of L2 proficiency. Or they may prefer not to associate themselves with those local non-Cantonese who employ this stigmatised form.

For many young Hong Kong Cantonese migrants in London, like the informants, the ability to speak “good” English and acquiring the “right” education is their passport to gaining financial
security and employment outside the Chinese catering industry. CT and YH, for example, chose to read disciplines at the universities they had selected not because they liked the disciplines but because they knew having a degree in those disciplines meant financial security.

CT I want to do Psychology, or maybe do Medieval History. These subjects which I enjoy. Erm, when I came to choosing a degree, they are all tossed out the window and, you know, I don't blame anyone for it really because, you know, I'm sure if I, you know, do well at Law, I'll have a fairly good standard of living, you know, and a stable job, particularly because of the high standard of the universities I've applied to. I'm afraid I appear too arrogant (both laugh).

YH I have always liked History and but I realise that my English is not actually that good, and if I was to do like with History, it'd probably be preferable to do with English History, Psychology, or something, another language and I thought erm about my future, and it might be more beneficial to do a science base degree and I actually do enjoy Chemistry, quite a bit more as well.

On the other hand, EL and JH, the informants who used the bare glottal variant, were resigned to the idea that they would not get into university or that they would not get a job outside the Chinese catering industry in London because they belonged to an ethnic minority group in Britain. These two informants may have had less incentive than the other informants to use standard pronunciation because they were resigned to their lower status. On the other hand, they may have wanted to associate with those who made use of T-glottalisation and for this reason, adopted those two variants.

JH I don't know, I don't really know, I mean it's quite hard for us, yeah, you know, outsiders, or shall I say, you know, foreign people, to work in people's country like, in the morning from nine to five, it's really hard. It seems like all the Chinese, yeah, all the foreign people, yeah, working like that, or you know, working in Chinese takeaways and stuff, you know, you just really can't, you know.

LL Are you going to university?
EL I wish.
LL What do you mean, you wish?
EL I'm not going to get in it. No way, no chance I'm going to get in it.
LL Why not?
EL Don't trust myself I can go to any university. If I could, then I mean, the day I go to university, the day I become a millionaire, just to say that.
LL OK, I'll come around and ask you for a few penny
EL (laughs) Yeah, I don't mind if I become a millionaire. It just I don't trust myself to go to university cause I don't, I know I can't, I know I ain't got a, ability to go in, in university, really, no way I could go in university.

In sum, the use of the two T-glottalisation variants among the informants may be partly influenced by socioeconomic class. Three of 4 informants who used T-glottalisation (FN, EL,
JH) had a working class family background. Female informants like FN and HG might also have used T-glottalisation because they resented parental control. In addition, some informants, because of their migrant status, might be more reluctant to use nonstandard pronunciation features or to affiliate themselves with a nonstandard speaker group. The present discussion has also pointed out these 4 informants might be influenced by the British TV programmes they watched. Furthermore, the present discussion has linked the use of the bare glottal variant, which is still “overtly stigmatized” (Wells, 1984), to JH and EL, who were least motivated to use the standard variant.

The Variants and Linguistic Contexts.

For the 4 informants (HG, FN, EL, and JH) who used the glottalised variants, the findings indicate that their usage has a lexical pattern instead of or in addition to a phonetic one.

Most of the instances of the 2 nonstandard variants fall into the context of the variant preceding schwa (e.g. latter). Out of the 31 instances of the 2 nonstandard variants in the data, 28 of them (or 90.32%) appear in this context. There is one instance each in the 3 contexts of a non-standard variant following a fricative (notice), velar nasal (eating), and lateral (little). No instances in the contexts of a nonstandard variant following an alveolar nasal (e.g., written), or bilabial nasal (e.g. bottom) appear in the data.

Furthermore, 20 are instances of the word type better. Table 5.30 lists the number of instances of the two non-standard variants according to word types and the 4 contexts: preceding schwa, fricative, velar nasal, and lateral.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word type</th>
<th>Schwa</th>
<th>fricative</th>
<th>velar nasal</th>
<th>lateral</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This indicates that the acquisition of the two nonstandard variants is at an early stage for the 4 informants, or that they have elected to adopt these variants selectively.

The Reading Aloud Task.

As already mentioned, only one informant, EL, used the two nonstandard variants in the reading aloud task. Furthermore, her use of the two nonstandard variants included both the schwa context and the lateral context. The 3 other informants who used the two nonstandard variants in the interviews, HG, FN, and JH, did not use either nonstandard variant at all in the same task.

What Tarone (1983) has observed about task variability can explain the variability in the use of the variants for the 3 informants. Tarone (1983) believes that data elicitation tasks like the reading aloud task in this study would elicit a more careful style, that is, one which the speaker pays a relatively high amount of attention, which would include the use of standard variants. The explanation for the variability in the use of the variants for the 3 informants, HG, FN, and JH may be that they paid more attention to the task at hand.

EL, on the other hand, had become distressed before she performed this reading aloud task. She had been apologising to the researcher for not doing well in the preceding task (another reading aloud task) and she could not be persuaded that she had not done poorly at all. She also turned down the researcher’s suggestion that she should take a break before she began the task. The distress that she felt at the time would have made her pay less attention to the reading aloud task than the three other informants.

Conclusion.

T-glottalisation, especially in word medial, intervocalic position, is not a sociolinguistic indicator that either marks the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London or shows these informants’ affiliation to the larger community of speakers. The findings have shown that only 4 of the informants used the two non-standard variants and that the acquisition of the two nonstandard variants is low level.
The present work has suggested several factors that might have shown a causal or correlational pattern in relation to the informants’ use and nonuse of the nonstandard variants of medial /t/. These are socioeconomic class, resentment against parental control, watching British TV programmes, and job type and education expectation. Out of the 4 informants who had the nonstandard variants, 3 of them had working class family background; 3 of them were female who resented parental control; all 4 of them watched British TV programmes and 2 of them did not expect to go to university or expect to get a job outside the Chinese catering industry even if awarded a university degree.

5.09 High Rise Terminal (HRT).

A sociolinguistic indicator that the present work investigates is the high rise terminal contour (HRT) in declarative sentences. This linguistic feature is a new innovation that has only been reported by sociolinguistic researchers for the past twenty years.

HRT may have been actuated by Maori speakers of English in New Zealand (Britain 1998) or it could have started in Australia (Burridge and Mulder 1998). On the other hand, it could have begun in the UK. Mees and Collins (1999) believe that HRT became a salient feature of Cardiffian English in the late 1950s when Beverley Collins heard “English visitors to the town regularly commented on the lines of “Why do Cardiff people always seem to be asking questions when they are actually telling you something?” (p. 195). Furthermore, the researchers have found instances of HRT use in data they had collected there in 1976. Cruttenden (1997) points out the use of HRT in northern British cities like Belfast, Glasgow and Liverpool and Birmingham in the Midlands. It is also likely that the HRT in Britain is an innovation independent of its development in Australia and New Zealand. Since it was also found in Canada (James, Mahut, and Latkiewitz 1989) and the USA (Ching 1982), it most likely originates in the English of the British Isles although it is also obviously a feature which has spread rapidly in the past half century.
Wherever HRT might have started, it has been spread quickly in English speaking countries and have acquired the status of sociolinguistic indicators because its use have been associated with different social groups and communicative contexts. Burridge and Mulder (1998) point out that HRT is prominent among young native speakers in Australia and New Zealand. Cruttenden (1997) notes that HRT has appeared in London and is “typical of the speech of what might have been called ‘New Yuppies’” (p. 130).

Sociolinguistic researchers have different ideas about the communicative functions of HRT in declarative statements. Burridge and Mulder (1998) believe that HRT has two communicative functions. First, it is used to “regulate the conversational interaction” (p. 69). These include checking whether the listener has understood, asking for the listeners reaction, seeking empathy from the listener, and signalling to the listener that the speaker wants to continue talking. The second function is to “signal positive politeness towards the listener, actively inviting the listener’s participation and emphasising the common ground between the speaker and listener” (p. 70). Britain (1998) believe that HRT is used as a positive politeness marker “to emphasize speaker-hearer solidarity and to assist in the cooperative management of talk” (p. 232). In sum, HRT is believed to have an affective goal (e.g., to convey positive politeness) as well as an instrumental one (e.g., to regulate conversational management).

Findings.

The numbers of instances of HRT in the data are listed in Table 5.31 according to informants. The percentage of instances of HRT produced by each informant is given in brackets (Method One).
Table 5.31: Number of Instances of HRT by Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Number of instances of HRT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC (n = 13,549)</td>
<td>31 (0.229%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n = 13,067)</td>
<td>38 (0.291%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n = 17,332)</td>
<td>44 (0.254%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n = 12,774)</td>
<td>12 (0.092%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n = 23,510)</td>
<td>78 (0.332%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n = 19,296)</td>
<td>74 (0.383%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n = 11,210)</td>
<td>24 (0.214%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n = 13,523)</td>
<td>52 (0.385%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n = 18,185)</td>
<td>26 (0.143%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n = 13,905)</td>
<td>58 (0.417%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n = 17,000)</td>
<td>90 (0.529%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion.

The informants can be divided in 3 groups according to the percentage of HRT in their data. The grouping is listed in Table 5.32.

Table 5.32: Grouping of Informants by Instances of HRT Produced by Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Number of instances of HRT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>HN (n = 12,774)</td>
<td>12 (0.092%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL (n = 18,185)</td>
<td>26 (0.143%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>CC (n = 13,549)</td>
<td>31 (0.229%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HG (n = 13,067)</td>
<td>38 (0.291%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CT (n = 17,332)</td>
<td>44 (0.254%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FN (n = 23,510)</td>
<td>78 (0.332%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JT (n = 11,210)</td>
<td>24 (0.214%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KN (n = 16,389)</td>
<td>45 (0.275%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>GW (n = 13,905)</td>
<td>58 (0.417%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YH (n = 19,296)</td>
<td>74 (0.384%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JW (n = 13,523)</td>
<td>52 (0.385%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JW (n = 17,000)</td>
<td>90 (0.529%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group 1 consists of EL (AOA10) and HN (AOA5). Group 2 consists of CC (AOA5), HG (AOA5), CT (AOA5), FN (AOA8), JT (AOA8), and KN (AOA10). The range of this group is between 0.214% and 0.332%. Group 3 consists of YH (AOA8), JW (AOA8), GW (AOA10), and
JH (AOA10). The range of this group is between 0.384% and 0.529%. The grouping indicates that there is no AOA effect.

The grouping indicates that the use of HRT among the informants is not related to socioeconomic classes they belonged to. HN (Group 1), CC (Group 2), HG (Group 2), CT (Group 2), KN (Group 2), YH (Group 3), and JW (Group 3) had higher socioeconomic backgrounds because their parents were owners of Chinese restaurants and takeaways, academic researcher, or clerical workers. On the other hand, EL (Group 1), FN (Group 2), JT (Group 2), GW (Group 3), and JH (Group 3) had lower socioeconomic backgrounds because their parents were semi-skilled or unskilled workers.

**Gender and the Use of HRT.**

The average percentage of the instances of HRT for the 6 female informants is 0.345695% and higher than the average percentage of 0.303% for the 6 male informants. HRT, being a new innovation, has not achieved the status of a stigmatised sociolinguistic indicator. In addition, observations by researchers like Cruttenden (1997), who points out that HRT is more favoured by the New Yuppies in London than by the working classes, indicate that it is not a stigmatised sociolinguistic indicator.

**Individual Difference and the Use of HRT.**

As a new sociolinguistic indicator, HRT may not carry as much social meaning as other sociolinguistic indicators like *init* and T-glottalisation at this point in time. The preceding discussion has also pointed out that it is not a stigmatised sociolinguistic indicator. Therefore, it is not surprising that socioeconomic class is not a good predictor of the use of HRT among the 12 informants. Britain (1998) links the use of HRT among his subjects with *positive politeness* and he concludes his female subjects favoured HRT more than his male subjects because “women, more than men, pursue speech styles based on solidarity and support” (p. 228). This may explain why there is a slight gender difference in the use of HRT among the 12 informants and may also help to account for the individual difference among the 12 informants - some were more positively polite to the researcher than others.
Communicative Goals and the Use of HRT.

HRT is used to mark the semantic relations between clauses and would facilitate better understanding. Some of the most common semantic relations marked by HRT in the text are elaboration (expository); elaboration (exemplifying) and causal conditional (general). Some such instances are listed as follows:

**Elaboration; expository.**

CC  And, and my dad had got me a job in Hong Kong, well, and working for the electronic, Electrical Engineering Department in Hong Kong University (rising), and, but unfortunately, he forgot to get me a work permit, which meant I couldn’t actually get paid,

HG  Yeah. Horror stories. Erm, basically I read horror books when I was young. From Year Seven when I was about eleven (rising) er, till about Year Ten.

CT  I don’t really have many claims to, you know, being from Hong Kong, you know, I was born there but I moved at a fairly young age, five or six years old (rising). Erm, I think I’ve gone back occasionally for holidays.

FN  Oh, my father is still a chef. He works at Blackheath. He is a chef in a Chinese restaurant (rising). My mum also doesn’t work now, she’s still a housewife.

YH  It was to do with family, and I just, it’s just different, I just felt like I didn’t belong here (rising) and then I went to Hong Kong.

JT  But normally it’s the score is quite about twenty to ten to ten eight or something like that. (rising).

JW  I think that’s another word for a buffin, as well. Someone who’s really doing very well in school (rising).

EL  Cause my mum always go out, and then I go out there, and then meet my friend, to see my friend, we always go to The Moon on the Water, the pub (rising), you know that one?

GW  Erm, I watch Ally McBeal, I watch Friends, I watch cartoons like the Simpsons and South Park, anything that is interesting (rising).

JH  No, they are BBC, or shall I say, British born Chinese (rising) erm,

KN  OK, OK, say this is Leicester Square, yeah, you come out and then you go here to get in here, yeah? Instead of turning the first one yeah, that’s like the main road (rising), if you go straight yeah, that’s like Mr. Wu Buffet yeah? And this is Garden.
Elaboration; exemplifying

CC  OK. *George of the Jungle*. Erm, *Aladdin*. Erm, er, I think something like *Something about Mary*. Er, *Sleeping Beauty* (rising), and mmm, I am joking, I don’t know, er, *Congo*.

HG  I did English (rising), Maths, Science, IT, Geography, Textiles, Art, that’s seven, Art, and I can’t remember what else.

CT  The mannerisms, the way they dress is er particularly, you know, informative. The way they speak (rising), er, the way they treat English people.

FN  Oh, I’m doing A Levels Maths, English and Business (rising), er, But er, then, I go to college too.

YH  Oh we went to all the attraction places like London Bridge (rising), Madame Tussards, and then we went quite far out as well, like Oxford, Cambridge, Dover, er, Bristol as well.

JT  Mmm, London and mmm, like, mmm, Trocadalo (rising) and Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, mmm, LV, mmm, Thai Square etc.

JW  I mean the furtherest place I’ve been to is er, well, any place that I’ve been to is like Brighton (rising)

EL  Oh, er, we had lobsters (rising), we have, er, chicken. We have some vegetables, beers, and everything, can’t remember.

GW  We went Madame Tussaud (rising), and we went to that science museum right next to it, and where else did we go? Erm, we went to Buckingham Palace.

JH  Maths, I guess, always Maths, er Chinese (rising), er those Chinese literature and stuffs. It’s quite cool.

KN  Erm, pop stars, Cantonese is Kelly Chan and Ekin Cheng (rising), and English I really don’t have my favourite. Any, any music I like, yeah.

Causal conditional; general

CC  They drew up a nice map of this er, restaurant, where we can like good, this good beef thing (rising), but we ended up outside Armani instead. (LL laughs). I don’t know, er, we got (chuckles) very lost.

HG  and then I lived, I moved to Kidbrooke, and then that’s when I started going to school, primary school, and start meeting more people (rising).

CT  Erm, yeah but after that period of time, I think, I think, it was because I met these people I realised that I wasn’t, you know, er, what they were (rising). And they were Hong Kong people. They were Cantonese

HN  I think it was the teacher to put us to work in like groups and all that and I was in the same group (rising) and then we started talking to each other like, (pause).
FN but I mean like I do want a bit of freedom, that's why I actually want to move out (rising), cause in a sense, yeah, if they weren't like that in the first place maybe, er, I would want to live at home.

YH and I was like, I use to ask my teacher for homework after we did the exercise in class cause I didn't have a TV at home (rising).

JT Lager, yeah, is it? Em, something like just beer yeah? Mmm, don't really mention it, anyway, because erm, you don't really drink lager (rising) (chuckles).

JW All they do is just like listen to my uncle s or auntie and things like that and that's it. So I think that was really unfair (rising).

EL Nothing happen really. It's just because I am the youngest (rising), so I think people, all my friends spoil me, I mean ah, whatever I want, they give me.

GW I suppose erm, he doesn't have that many friends in here, not anyone he can talk to, so I think he keeps only to himself (rising) which I do understand his situation.

JH we were playing pool and he just started on me, so, so I fought back (rising), and afterwards, er, he got his friends and beat me up

KN In London, the Parliament is quite big. So, oh, yeah, if you, as soon as you, em, once you get to the London Eye, and you can see the Big Ben (rising).

Sociolinguistic Indicator.

The use of HRT among the informants indicate that they are a part of the more general adolescent community in London. Although there is little research on the use of HRT among adolescents of other ethnic groups in London, and consequently there is no baseline data to indicate where the informants had been using HRT more or less than adolescents of other ethnic group, the present work hopes that it has taken a first step into the research on the use of HRT among different ethnic groups in London.

Conclusion.

The present work has investigated the use of HRT among the informants and has not found any AOA effect. It has also found that the use of HRT was not related to the socioeconomic classes the informants belonged to. Individual difference in the use of HRT could be explained as a difference in the way individual informants express positive politeness.
The present work has also investigated how HRT was used as an information staging strategy to mark semantic relations between clauses to facilitate better understanding. The use of HRT among the 12 informants also indicates that they are a part of the more general adolescent community in London.

5.10 Tense Alternation in Narrative.

Narrative and Its Structure.

Labov (1972a) defines narration as “one method of recapitulating experience by matching a verb sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred” (pp. 359-60). These clauses are ordered in temporal sequence and are part of the complication action, a structure within the narrative. Labov (1972a) identified several other structures within a narrative. These structures are abstract, orientation, evaluation, and coda. The abstract is where the narrator summarises the whole story in one or two clauses. The orientation section is where the narrator identifies “the time, place, persons, and their activity or the situation” (p. 364). In the evaluation section, the narrator indicates “the point of the narrative, its raison d’être: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at” (p. 364). The coda is “one of the many options open to the narrator for signalling that the narrative is finished” (p. 365). In the following extract, CC told the researcher how she and her grandmother became lost when they were looking for a specific restaurant in Kyoto, Japan. 01 and 02 belong to the orientation section because CC was identifying the time (in the evening) activity (having decided to look for the restaurant). 03 - 06 belong to the evaluation section because the information in 03 - 06 makes the story interesting - the restaurant was not far from the hotel in which they were staying and it was on the main shopping street but yet she and her grandmother lost their way. Later on in the narration, there are two clauses (08-09) that belong to the evaluation section because CC wanted to keep the story interesting and to account for the content in the two narrative clauses (07, 10). 11-15 belong to the coda section because CC was signalling the end of her story.

01 and we had erm the evening off from the rest of the tour,
02 and then we decided we would go to this restaurant.
Erm, it wasn't far.
It was basically, the hotel is on the main shopping street, erm,
and this restaurant was supposedly off one of the, the roads leading off this, the shopping street.
So it looked really simple of the map.
So we were like “Hmm, this is a strange place”
because apparently, this, erm, the street that we were walking down
had, you know, big name, brand name shops
and we were like “No.”
They didn’t believe we couldn’t find it
when we got back
and told them.
But we, we didn’t know
what went wrong.

Tense Alternation in Narrative.

The fact that native speakers of English alternate between present and past tense in narration is well attested by empirical research. The present tense forms of verbs in narrative is commonly known as the historical present. Leech and Svartvik (1973) believe that the historical present is used “to describe events vividly as if they are happening” (p. 69). COBUILD English Grammar (1990) also believe that present tenses are used in narration to “make a story seem vivid” and that “the simple present [is used] for actions and states and the present continuous for situations” (p. 257). Using the definition offered by Labov (1972a) researchers like Leith (1995), Schiffrin (1981) and Wolfson (1978; 1979) agree that tense alternation mostly takes place in the complicating action part of narratives.

The Informants’ Narratives.

To look at their patterns of tense alternation in narrative, the researcher asked 8 informants to elaborate on something that had happened to them and which had been previously mentioned in the interview. This might have impacted on the structure of the 8 informants’ narratives. They did not give an abstract section in their narratives. There was no need for these informants to

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72 The other 4 informants (HG, CT, JW, and KN) went into a narrative without any prompts from the researcher.
offer an abstract section to summarise the whole story because the summary was already known to the researcher.

However, the lack of an abstract section may be the result of narrative style as well. The informants might not have wanted to spoil the suspense of their stories with a summary. For the 4 informants (HG, CT, JW, and KN) who gave a narrative without any prompts from the researcher, only JW signalled what followed was a narrative by telling the researcher that he wanted to tell him a story. KN was answering a question about the Sunday school when he decided to tell the researcher about a funny incident that happened. He signalled with “But it’s quite funny last time” but it was hardly a summary of the story he was going to tell. The researcher was congratulating CT for getting into the University of Cambridge when he told the story about the trick he played on his mother. He began with “You know my mum” to tell a story that involved his mother. HG was talking about how strict her parents were when she decided to tell the story about what happened when they caught her sister with a group of boys.

LL Alright. If I’ve left out any questions can I call you on the phone?
JW Yeah, yeah. I mean, there is one actually, one interesting story I want to tell you, actually.
LL OK.
JW Erm, what happened. Erm, like I told you, I am going to a new college, yeah?

LL Do you use the English Bible or the Chinese Bible?
KN Mmm, I use the Chinese one. But it’s quite funny last time.

LL A rather belated congratulations, man.
CT Thank you (three times). You know my mum, well, in about a week before, she had already planned like she’s just going to take me there, and what’s going to happen, and I rather said that “No, nothing like that is going to happen.

HG But my mum sometimes comes down ten minutes later to open it for us cause my dad is really angry. My sister went out once and erm, let’s see. I think she sneaks out.

In sum, none of the 12 informants gave an abstract of the narratives. This might be due to the fact that they knew the researcher knew something about the stories. On the other hand, it might be the narrative style of the informants not to give a summary of their stories at the beginning.
Findings.

CC talked about how she and her grandmother had lost their way in Kyoto. HG talked about how her parents had literally dragged her sister away from a group of boys back into their house. CT talked about a trick he had played on his mother the day his A-Level results came out. HN talked about a fight he had had in school. FN talked about a fight she had seen outside the Hippodrome. YH talked about her first game of rounders. JT talked about what had happened to his father when he was washing his car. JW talked about a quarrel between him and his parents and how they had made up. EL talked about how she had got lost when she was young. GW talked about a doctor and a nurse taking a blood sample from her mother. JH talked about how he had been beaten up at school. KN talked about how he had tried to fool the teacher in his Sunday school. Table 5.33 lists the number of verbs in the stories told by each informant according to their tense forms and their occurrences in orientation, complicating action, evaluation, and coda.
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<th>Location</th>
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<th>Evaluation</th>
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Orientation Section.

- CC talked about her aunt and cousin giving her a map to locate a restaurant in Kyoto before she and her grandmother set off for Japan. Apart from an instance of contracted be, all the verbs are in past tense form.

- HG set the topic of the story (her sister went out) with a verb in past tense form for one verb and the other in present tense form.

HG001 my sister went out and erm, I think she sneaks out.\(^73\)

- CT told the researcher that his mother had planned to come along with him to school to get his A-Level results. Two of the verbs were in past tense form and 2 were contracted be.

- HN told the researcher that he did not start any of the fights he had been involved in. Both verbs were in the past tense.

- FN informed the researcher that she had seen a few fights in the Hippodrome or outside it. There were 2 verbs in past tense forms and two verbs were contracted be. There were 4 verbs in present tense forms in clauses that describe the club and what people do to indicate the states and actions were in the timeless present (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973, p. 41).

FN001 Quite a lot of fights are around there,
FN002 after the club and everyone come out
FN003 the club finish at three, init?
FN004 And everyone get out at three thirty.

- YH described herself, her school, and the time the rounders game took place. There were eight verbs in past tense form, two contracted be, and 1 verb in present tense form (YHO01) to indicate a state to in the timeless present. YHO01 should have been in past tense form because YH was describing a condition of the first school she was at age 8 or about.

\(^73\) HGO01 does not belong to the complicating action section. Her complicating action section begins with the next clause "She comes out of the window."
Otherwise, we did swimming in the winter cause we have a swimming pool in our primary school as well.

• JT explained to the researcher what his father was doing when the story took place. Both actions were in the past tense.

• JW identified to the researcher the source of conflict between him and his parents. They didn’t like the college he had enrolled into. Two present tense form verbs were used to indicate the states were in the timeless present and one in present progressive form to indicate the action was in the limited present (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973, p. 41).

• EL told the researcher how old she was and who she was with when the story took place. All the verbs were in the past tense form.

• GW told the researcher that she met a girl who gave her a teaching job in a Chinese school. Apart from the two instances of contracted be whose tense form cannot be determined, all the verbs were in the past tense form.

• JH explained to the researcher that he got beaten up over some pad balls and described another character in the story. The tense form in JHO01 is present tense form. JH might be describing how pad ball is played to the researcher. The tense form of JHO02 cannot be determined because the finite verb was omitted if it was in passive voice.

• KN was talking about the Sunday school he was still attending at the time of the interview when he broke into the story. He described the people in the school with a present tense form verb. He used past copula be to describe where he was when the story took place and a specific teacher’s state with a verb in past tense form. It is unclear how long before the interview the story took place and the teacher might have left, died, or he might no longer practised Christianity.
KNO01 Most people like who go there are actually BBC [British born Chinese] and the teacher was
Christian, yeah?

In sum, there are 2 instances of present tense form in the orientation section of the informants’
narratives that might be instances of inappropriate use. YHO01 would have been in past tense
form had it been spoken by native speakers of English because the state that occurred took place
a long time before YHO01 was uttered. HGO01 might also have been in past tense form because
sneak is a punctual verb and HG was describing an act that took place at a point of time in the
past.

Evaluation Section.

• CC used the present tense form for 5 verbs (CCE01-5) in this section. All 5 verbs were used
to describe states that might still be true at the time the story was told, which was about two
months after CC went to Japan. CC used past tense form to describe states that might not have
been true because they could not be verified. These states were marked with supposedly (in
CCE01 and CCE05).

CCE01 the hotel is on the main shopping street, and this restaurant was supposedly off one of
the roads.
CCE02 This looks more like sort of red light district to us.
CCE03-4 It just kept on getting doggier and doggier and doggier. And then, there aren’t any,
there are no pavements to speak of.
CCE05 But it was, it was supposedly on one of these streets that links to, erm, two main
streets together.

• The researcher cannot determine when HG’s story took place. She used past tense verbs to
describe conditions and actions. Her sister was with a group of boys and they were shouting.

• CT told the researcher the story about two months after it had happened. There are 5 verbs in
present tense form in this section. CTE01 and CTE02 describe states that were still true at the
time the story was told. CTE03 is a borderline case. The past tense form can be used because
CT had already been accepted by the University of Cambridge. On the other hand, his being
accepted took place about two months before the story was told. Present tense form verbs
were used to describe states in the past in CTE04 and CTE05.
because she [CT’s mother] doesn’t listen too much.

cause Warren is like one of my best friends,

Because Warwick is my second choice, you know,

because the morning, it needs sort out, the grades, and the names, and stuff.

So er, I queue up, you know, with like a lot of friends I haven’t seen for a couple of months.

• HN used two contracted be and their tense form cannot be determined.

• There are 2 instances of verbs in present tense form for FN. She was outside the Hippodrome when a fight broke out.

FNE01-2 I don’t know what’s happening, init? So, it looks like it’s not far away from me.

• YH used 2 present tense form verbs to describe what she thought to be universally true. As already mentioned the story took place when YH was in her first school in the UK.

YHE01-2 For a child of that age, it is easier to hit a ball than to catch a ball, and probably that’s why it takes longer for the ball to get back to the base.

• JT used 3 present tense form verbs in negative statements to describe some things that had not happened. It cannot be determined when JT’s story took place. The other present tense verb was embedded in reported speech.

JTE01-3 because none of them turn up anyway, none of those kids turn up, so unfortunately we, we can’t do anything about it, you know.

JTE04 my dad just come in and ask me to go down, and just stand there and watch what they are doing,

• JW’s story took place about a month before it was told in the interview. JWE01-3 might have been true when the story was told. JWE04-8 might also have been true when the story was told. However, since the story was about how JW and his parents had repaired their relationship, it was unlikely that the states in JWE04-8 were true when the story was told. For example, the relationship between JW and his father was not really bad when he told the researcher the story. In fact, the theme of the story was about how the relationship had improved. It was no longer true that they did not speak to each other when the story was told. Nor was it true they did not sit down and have a conversation for like hours and hours. In JWE09, what JW’s father was thinking about was probably that JW had to go to school and work in the takeaway, and tried to have a social life at the same time, things that were still
true when the story was told. In JWE10, JW used a verb in present tense form to describe an action that had taken place at a specific point of time (yesterday).

JWE01-3 cause cause like I explained to myself like they haven’t actually been anywhere close to the college. All they do is just like listening to my uncles or auntie and things like that.

JWE04-8 And er the relationship between me and my dad is really bad. Alright? Like I, we don’t like really speak to each other, we like see each other and we like say Hello and things like, you know, but we don’t actually like sit down and have a conversation for like hours and hours, right?

JWE09 and my dad was like actually had tears in his eyes cause erm, he actually like thought about what’s been like going on all these years.

JWE10 So yesterday I crashed my car and the first person I phone was my mum.

- There was only one instance of present tense form verb for EL. What she could not get cannot be determined.

ELE01 and there was so, so, so many people there. I just can’t get, you know, I lost, lost my way.

- GW used verbs in past tense form only.
- JH used 3 verbs in present tense form to describe states in the past.

JHE01 At that time, yeah, I was too shy. I just don’t like to talk alone.
JHE02 He just went to the teacher, you know, and grass him up. And he don’t care.
JHE03 And he came swinging at me and I just did nothing, really. Can’t help that much.

- KN used verbs in past tense form and a contracted be.

In sum, the informants displayed different patterns in using tense forms to describe states in the past in the evaluation section of their narratives. Some states might have been true when the stories were told. CC (AOA5) used verbs in present tense form to describe where certain places were unless she could not verify the location, in which cases, the past tense form of verbs was used. CT (AOA5) used verbs in present tense form to describe his mother and Warren being his best friend. YH (AOA8) used verbs in present tense form to describe what she believed to be universally true.
For states that were true when the story was told, CT (AOA5) used the present tense form of the cognitive verb need (CTE04). HG (AOA5) used past tense form verbs to describe who her sister was with. FN (AOA8) used verbs in present tense form to describe her past cognitive states. JW (AOA8) used verbs in present tense form (JWE04-8) to describe the relationship he had with his parents, conditions that were no longer true when the story was told. The theme of the story was about how the relationship had improved and JW could have preferred present tense form because he did not want to spoil the story which he would have had he used past tense form of the verbs in JWE04-8. JH (AOA10) used verbs in present tense form to describe states in the past.

CT (AOA5), JT (AOA8), and JW (AOA8) used verbs in present tense form to describe dynamic situation or processes, or acts in the past. CTE05 described a process that was no longer true when the story took place. JTE01-3 described acts that had not taken place. JWE01-3 described acts and processes that might still be true when the story was told. JWE10 was an act that happened at a point of time.

Complicating Action.

• CC had only one verb in present tense form.

CCA01  And then, there aren't any, there are no pavements to speak of, so we slip, got run over a few times as well.

• HG had only one verb in present tense form.

HGA01  She comes out of the window. And then there's a lot of noise.

• CT had 5 verbs in present tense form.

CTA01  So er, I queue up, you know, with like a lot of friends I haven't seen for a couple of months
CTA02-4  then suddenly I was like, you know, "Oh, God, it's my turn," you know, and so I run up to the desk, you know, told them my name, and er, signed, er, a piece of paper, take the envelope, run outside, and I saw this girl, this really good looking girl.
CTA05  and then I kind of walked off to a corner somewhere, er, you know, open it [the envelope], you know, looked in, and the first thing I saw was like er, full of As.
• HN had 7 verbs in present tense form.

HN A01-3 I was walking, walking I think walking along the corridor, someone comes up to
me, pulls his eyes, then like calls me something like Chink or something like that
HN A04-5 and then I turned around and said like, point at him, pushed him and he pushes me
back.
HN A06-7 And then we got pull inside by a teacher and he goes "Why, why did you get into a fight
for?" and I go "He was being racist."

• For FN, all 9 verbs were in past tense form.

• YH had only one verb in present tense form.

YH A01 But I think I sort of got the idea. So I just keep running. I didn’t even hit the ball.

• JT had 7 verbs in present tense form.

JT A01-5 two kids went up to my dad and then got the erm, they got the water bucket and then
just throw all the water and then erm my dad just come in and ask me to go down, and
just stand there and watch what they are doing, and stuff like that. and then erm, oh, we
just like sit there, yeah, and then I just call some of my friends but erm actually, that day
was OK.
JT A06 The day after that, about erm, nearly six or seven of us, our friends just come down and
try to see any people that, that, erm at that incident.

• JW had only 1 verb in present tense form.

JW A01 So I stormed out my shop. There was a couple of oil cans like empty oil cans at the back
of my shop. I start kicking them all over the place, went into my car and I drove off.

• EL had 4 verbs in present tense form.

EL A01-3 I just couldn’t even remember where, where was the shop and everything. And then I
start crying and then, a woman come up to me to, you know, turn out, “What’s the
matter? You lost you parents?” And everything. Stop crying and she took me back to, to
the security room and everything.
EL A04 And she called them my name, saying that “Blah, blah, parents, please come to the
control room and blah, blah” and so (chuckles) my mum and dad just quickly come and,
and then I just couldn’t stop crying.
• GW had only 1 verb in present tense form.

GWAO1 He told the girl to get my mother to roll up her sleeves. I didn’t like it and I was like crying. I was like 17 at the time. He start calling me a coward and everything.

• JH had 2 verbs in present tense form.

JHA01 one of the black guy call, call Ray, Ray Thomas, he er, when we first started playing, yeah, he then, lend, he then borrow my ball.

JHA02 I just don't like to talk alone. He just went to the teacher, you know, and grass him up.

• KN had 5 verbs in present tense form.

KNA01-5 They ask me for, to help and then they are like “Yeah, we’ll have John, Chapter One, Verse One to Five” I’m like, well, in English erm I’m like “Yes” (chuckles), I goes “OK, I’ll read it.” I stood up and started reading. Then the teacher look at me, came over, and took a look at my bible.

Coda.

• For CC, all 6 verbs were in past tense form. She spoke about telling her aunt that she and her grandmother could not find the restaurant when they returned to Hong Kong and that they did not know why she and her grandmother could not find it.

• For HG, 3 verbs were in past tense form and there were two instances of contracted be. HG was describing states that were still true when the story was told.

HGC01-3 Cause they [HG’s parents] don’t like us hanging out with boys. They think you know, get pregnant and all that. Lose face to people.

• For CT, all 4 verbs were in past tense form. He talked about how long he stayed in a pub with his friends, what he drank in the pub and what time he got home.

• For HN, both verbs were in past tense form. He told the researcher that the other student was punished and that he was not.

• For FN, two verbs were in the past tense form and there was one contracted be. She talked about the girlfriend of a person who was stabbed.
• For YH, both verbs were in past tense form. She signalled the end of her story by telling the researcher that the people in the story were from her school and that it had happened a long time ago.

• For JT, the only verb in this section was in the present tense form. Previously he had been telling the researcher that he and his friends could not find the two boys who drenched his father and thus signalling that the story had come to an end.

JTC01 I think they are [the two boys who drenched his father] quite lucky.

• For JW, all 6 verbs were in the past tense. He ended the story by telling the researcher why his parents left Hong Kong.

• For EL, 5 verbs were in present tense form and there was one instance of contracted be. Her story ended when she told the researcher that getting lost is something that happens to everybody.

• For GW, 2 verbs were in present tense form, one in the past tense form, and there was one contracted be. She told the researcher that the Chinese girl who came to her home with the doctor offered GW’s sister a job.

GWC01-2 so she wants to offer that, her job, that Chinese, she’s teaching Chinese also, she want to offer to my sister.

For JH, all 5 verbs are in the present tense form.

JHC01 but afterwards, yeah, probably religious change him at all.
JHC02-5 He, he, he’s been so good afterwards and he always talk about Jesus and stuff. He has actually changed and we been friends afterwards since.

For KN, one verb was in past tense form. The other was contracted be.

Discussion.

CC used 5 verbs in present tense form in the evaluation section of her story. The clauses in which these 5 verbs were embedded in described locations of shops and so on. These were states or conditions that might not have changed when the story was told since the information was only
about two months old. In the same section, CC used verbs in past tense form to tell the researcher where the restaurant she was looking for was supposed to be. Thus CC marked states and conditions that she believed to be existing at the time when the story was told with verbs in present tense and states and conditions that she could not verify as existing with verbs in the past tense. In the complicating action section, she only used 1 verb (CCA01) in present tense form out of 18 (or 94.44%). The percentage of past tense verbs in her narrative is similar to the percentage of past tense verbs (97.83%) when she talked about her school and her life in Hong Kong. There was only one instance of present tense form verb in either section and the lower percentage in her narrative section does not indicate that CC used tense alternation. In fact, together with her use of verbs in past tense form in other sections of her narrative, it indicates that she did not use tense alternation in her narrative. In the coda section, CC talked about the reactions of her relatives when she returned to Hong Kong from Kyoto. Verbs in past tense form were used throughout.

In HG’s narrative, there was a punctual verb (sneaks) in present tense form in the orientation action (HGO01). HGO01 was immediately followed by her first clause in the complicating action section, HGA01, which contained a punctual verb in present tense form (comes). The verbs in both instances were marked for agreement with a third person singular subject. Both instances made the acts more vivid and more interesting. HG’s sister did not leave home through the door. She left home to join with a group of boys who were waiting for her outside her home through a window because of her parents’ objections. In the coda section, she talked about what she thought were her parents’ reasons to stop her and her sister from going out with boys. These were states or conditions that had not changed when the story was told. The use of verbs in present tense from was appropriate. HG’s use of tense alternation in narrative was minimal. Her percentage of marking verb tokens in the past tense when she talked about her schools and life in Hong Kong was 95.12%. Out of the 9 verbs in the complicating action section of her narrative, 8 of them were in past tense form (88.88%). Like CC, HG did not use tense alternation.

In CT’s narrative, there was not any instance of verb in present tense form in the orientation section. In the evaluation section, there were 5 instances. CTE01-2 describe states or conditions that had not changed when the story was told. As already pointed out, CTE03 is a marginal case. The verbs of CTE04-5 were not punctual verbs and it is debatable whether using the present tense forms of these verbs would make the story sound more vivid. Out of the 47 verbs in the complicating action section, 42 were in past tense form (89.36%). The percentage is lower than
the percentage obtained in the analysis of the sections when he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (96.59%). This is the strongest indicator that CT used tense alternation in his narrative. In the coda section, he talked about what he had drunk in the pub with his friends and what time he got home. Verbs in past tense form were used throughout this section.

HN was the most prolific user of tense alternation in narrative of the 12 informants. In the orientation section, there were two verbs both of which were in past tense form. Both verbs in the evaluation section were contracted *be* and the tense form cannot be determined. In the orientation section, 7 out of the 14 verbs were in past tense form (50.00%). The percentage is lower than the percentage obtained in the sections of the interviews when he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (93.07%). Of the 7 verbs in present tense form in his narrative, the verbs of HNA01-3 and HNA05-6 had third person singular grammatical subjects. These verbs were all marked for person agreement.

In the analysis of the sections when HN talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong, it has been concluded that HN used present tense form for irregular verb tokens in past time contexts. HNA01 (*comes*) offers further proof that this conclusion was correct. HNA01 shows that HN differentiated between *come* as past tense form and *come* as present tense form because HNA01 was marked for agreement with its third person singular grammatical subject. Note that 2 of these 7 verbs were the quotative verb *go*. Both verbs in the coda section were in past tense form. HN talked about the aftermath of the fight; he said he was not punished by the teacher but the other person involved in the fight was.

There were 4 verbs in present tense form in the orientation section of FN’s narrative. They described states and conditions of the Hippodrome and what people do when it closes. As it is likely that these states and conditions and habitual actions had not changed when FN told her story, the use of present tense form is appropriate. Out of the 18 verbs identified in the evaluation section, there were two instances of verbs in present tense form. Excluding the two instances of contracted *be*, the percentage of verbs in past tense form for this section is (87.5%). This percentage is lower than the percentage of appropriate use of past tense obtained in the sections when FN talked about her schools and life in Hong Kong (95.74%). FNE01-2 make the story more vivid and more interesting because FN reinforced the idea that she was in harm’s way because of her close proximity to where the fight took place and because she did not know what
was happening, there was no reason for her to move away from where she was. On the other hand, none of the verbs in the complicating action section was in present tense form probably because she was no longer in a dangerous situation unwittingly. The percentage of past tense forms in this section was 100%. In the coda section, she used verbs in past tense form to describe the conditions of the girlfriend of the person who was stabbed. In sum, FN used tense alternation to make her story more vivid but she did not use tense alternation in the complicating action section.

Of the 11 verbs in the orientation section of YH’s story, there was one instance of a verb in present tense form. YH01, as already pointed out, is a case of inappropriate use of present tense because the condition YH described - there being a swimming pool in her primary school - existed long before the story was told. There were two verbs in present tense form in the evaluation section. Both were used by YH to describe what she believed to be universal and the present tense form is appropriate. YHA01, the only instance of verb in present tense form in this section makes the story more vivid. YH used kept running to reinforce a theme of her story, that she did not know the rules of rounders. Had she been familiar with the rules, she would not have run from one base to another without stopping. In the coda section, both verbs were in past tense form.

Out of the 19 verbs in the whole of JT’s narrative, 8 of them were in past tense form (42.11%). This percentage is higher than the percentage of appropriate use of past tense obtained in the sections when he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (10.20%). This difference indicates that JT used more verbs in past tense form in his narrative probably because narration of past events in sequence heightened his sense of temporality. In the orientation of his narrative in which he told the researcher what he father was doing before he was drenched by two boys, he used verbs in past tense form only. There was one instance of verb in past tense form in the evaluation section. That day was OK described a state in the past. Out of the 12 verbs in the complicating action section, 5 were in past tense form (41.67%). The only verb in the coda section was in present tense form. It described a state in the past and the use of present tense was not appropriate.

Of the 9 verbs in the orientation section of JW’s story, there were 3 verb in present tense form. JW used these verbs in clauses to describe states and conditions that still existed when the story
was told and the use of present tense was appropriate. Of the 32 verbs in the evaluation section, 3 were contracted be and 19 were in past tense form. Of the 10 verbs in present tense form in this section, JWE01-3 described states and conditions that still might have existed when the story was told and the use of present tense was appropriate. JWE04-8 described states and conditions that no longer existed when the story was told. However, as already pointed out, the use of present tense form for these instances made the story more interesting by keeping the researcher as the hearer in suspense. The researcher had known about the poor relationship between JW and his parents before the story was told. The use of past tense would have signalled that the relationship had changed or improved and spoiled the story. JWE09 described the state (going to school, working in the takeaway, and having a social life) that JW had been living in up to the time when the story was told and the present tense form (present perfect continuous) is appropriate. JWE10 makes the story more interesting. It described an act that was a direct result of what had happened. The relationship between JW and his parents had improved since that night the story took place and the act as depicted in JWE10 was a confirmation of how the relationship had improved. In the complicating action section, 37 out of 38 verbs (97.37%) were in past tense form. This percentage is higher than the percentage of appropriate use of past tense obtained in the sections when he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (82.35%). This is a further indication that JW used tense alternation in the evaluation section to make the story interesting. However, this strategy was not used in the complicating action section. Like JT, JW was probably more sensitive to the concept of temporality in narration. Finally, in the coda section, JW talked about why their parents wanted to leave Hong Kong - cognitive states that existed about 10 years or more before the story took place.

The 4 verbs in the orientation section of EL’s story were in past tense form. She talked about where she was, who she was with and how old she was when the story took place. The use of past tense form verbs was appropriate. In the evaluation section, there was only one instance of a verb in present tense form. Unfortunately, ELE01 was reformulated before EL completed the clause and what she could not get had not been made clear. In the complicating action section, there were 6 verbs out of a total of 10 in past tense form (60.00%). This percentage is lower than the percentage of past tense marking obtained in the sections when she talked about her schools and life in Hong Kong (76.47%). However, like HN, EL also used present tense form for irregular verb tokens in past time contexts. EL did not mark ELA02 (come) for person agreement.
although the grammatical subject was third person singular. This indicates that the verb may not be in present tense form.

Going through the transcription of her interviews, the researcher has not found any instance of a main or auxiliary verb in present tense form that is not marked to agree with a third person singular subject. The past tense forms of copula be, auxiliary be were also not marked to agree with first and third person singular subjects. This indicates that ELA02 may not be in present tense form. If ELA02 and ELA04, both instances of the verb come, were in the past tense, the percentage of verbs in EL’s complicating action section goes up to 80.00%. A different conclusion, that EL did not use tense alternation for this section, must be drawn. In the coda section, EL told the researcher that getting lost happened to everyone; and the use of present tense for the 5 verbs in this section was appropriate. In sum, EL might not have used tense alternation in narration at all. This conclusion is based on the interpretation of ELA02 and ELA04 as verbs in past tense.

Of the 6 verbs in the orientation section of GW’s story, 3 were in past tense form. The other 3 were contracted be. She spoke about the girl who gave her a teaching job in a Chinese school. All 3 verbs in the evaluation section were also in past tense form. There were 4 verbs in past tense form out of a total of 5 verbs in the complicating action section (80.00%). This percentage is higher than the percentage of past tense marking obtained in the sections when she talked about her schools and life in Hong Kong (61.76%). In the coda section, there were two instances of verbs in present tense form. GWC01-2 described past cognitive states of the girl who offered GW the Chinese school job and the use of present tense form was not appropriate. In sum, GW did not use tense alternation in her narrative. She used verbs in past tense form more consistently in the orientation and evaluation sections. There was only one instance of a verb in present tense form in the complicating action section. Like JT and JW, the use of verbs in past tense form was more robust when GW told her story than when she talked about her schools and her life in Hong Kong. Since the coda section is the last section of a story, GW’s sensitivity to the use of verbs in past tense form in this section of her story lessened and she began to use verbs in present tense from again.

Of the 4 verbs in the orientation section of JH’s story, one was in past tense form and one was contracted be. As already mentioned, the tense form of JHO02 cannot be determined as JH
omitted the auxiliary be. In JHO01, JH was probably telling the researcher how pad ball is played and the use of present tense form is appropriate. In the evaluation section, 3 verbs were in past tense form (50.00%). This percentage is lower than the percentage of appropriate use of past tense obtained in the sections when he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (81.58%). This is the only indication that JH might have used tense alternation in the evaluation section of his story. There were 5 verbs in past tense form in the complicating action section out of a total number of 7 (71.43%). The percentage is also lower than the percentage of appropriate use of past tense obtained in the sections when he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (81.58%). In the coda section, none of the 5 verbs were marked in past tense form. JHC02-5 described states and conditions that might be exist at the time the story was told and the use of present simple and present perfect tenses is appropriate. JHCO1 may be in present tense form without marking for agreement with its third person singular subject.

Going through the transcription of JH's interviews, the researcher has found instances of a main or auxiliary verb in present tense form that were marked to agree with a third person singular subject. The past tense forms of copula be, auxiliary be were also marked to agree with first and third person singular subjects. These findings indicate that JHC01, JHA01, and JHA02 may be in past tense. These instances might not have been marked with -d because it was difficult for him to use the past-tense form of regular verbs. In sum, JH did not use tense alternation in his narrative nor had his concept of temporality been heightened by his awareness that he was telling a story.

One verb in the orientation section of KN's story was in present tense form. He described the state of pupils who attended his Sunday school and the use of the verb in present tense from is appropriate. As already discussed, it is difficult to decide whether it is more appropriate for KNO01 to be in past or present tense form. The teacher might have died and past tense form would be appropriate to mark a state (being a Christian) that no longer existed. Out of the 3 verbs in the evaluation section, two were in past tense and the third was a contracted be. In the complicating section, there were 6 verbs in past tense form out of a total number of 11 (54.55%). The percentage is lower than the percentage of appropriate use of past tense obtained in the sections when he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (75.00%). KNA01-4 are quotative verbs and they made the story more vivid. In the coda section, apart from an instance of
contracted *be*, the only other verb was in past tense. KN, like HN was another prolific user of tense alternation.

**Grouping the Informants According to Their Use of Tense Alternation.**

KN (AOA10) and HN (AOA5) belong to Group 1. Both have very similar patterns in the use of tense alternation in narrative. Both informants used verbs in both tense forms appropriately in the orientation and coda section. HN only used contracted *be* in the evaluation section; KN used past tense verbs appropriately in the evaluation section. Their use of tense alternation took place in the complicating action sections of their stories. This pattern is similar to the patterns described by Schiffrin (1981) and Wolfson (1978; 1979). Within the complicating action section, the two informants shared another similar pattern. All their quotative verbs were in present tense. The only difference between the 2 informants in their use of tense alternation is that KN’s use of verbs in past tense form had increased. The awareness of narrating an incident that happened in the past kept KN focused on using verbs in past tense in 3 sections of his narrative.

CT (AOA5) belongs to Group 2. He used tense alternation to make his story more interesting and the acts more vivid. He is not in Group 1 for two reasons. First, none of the quotative verbs that appeared in the complicating action was in present tense. Second, there were instances in the evaluation section that should not have been in present tense.

HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8), and JW (AOA8) belong to Group 3. They used tense alternation in the evaluation section but they hardly used tense alternation in the complicating action section. Labov (1972a) believed that evaluation is the most important element of a narrative after complicating action clauses because it is the means for the narrator to “indicate the point of the narrative, its raison d’être: why it is told, and what the narrator is getting at” (p.366). HG used tense alternation in the evaluation section to tell the researcher why the story would be interesting; her sister *sneaks out* without the permission of their parents. JW used tense alternation in the evaluation section so as not to spoil the story because it was about how a state - the relationship between him and his parents - had changed. FN used tense alternation in the evaluation section to make the story more interesting. She was close to where a fight took place but she did not know about it at first.
The context of narrating an incident that happens in the past had also made JW increase his use of verbs in past tense. This tendency is most obvious in his use of past tense verbs in the complicating section.

CC (AOA5) and YH(AOA8), belong to Group 4. They hardly used tense alternation at all. Their narratives were characterised by their use of past tense in the four sections.

JT(AOA8), EL (AOA10), and GW(AOA10), belong to Group 5. They did not use tense alternation at all. In fact, for Group 5, the context of narration increased the use of verbs in past tense. Narrating a past event had kept their sense of temporality in focus.

JH (AOA10), the lone member of Group 6, did not use tense alternation in his narrative. Like the informants in Group 5, he did not use tense alternation as a story telling strategy. Unlike them, the context of narration had not increased his use of verbs in past tense.

**Tense Alternation: L2 Proficiency vs. Sociolinguistic Competence.**

The findings indicate that tense alternation indicates, first of all, the informants’ proficiency in the use of past tense. The percentage of verbs in past tense marking is higher for informants like JW (AOA8), JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), and GW(AOA10) in the narrative context than in the contexts when they talked about their life in Hong Kong and their early school life in London. In other word, the findings of this research indicates that past tense marking is sensitive to contexts. This indication raises the question whether a critical period of language learning for the use of English past tense forms exists can be determined by analysing speech data of ESL speakers in a limited number of contexts. There might be contexts other than narratives that would enable ESL speakers like the 4 informants to increase their percentage of past tense marking even higher.

The findings show that tense alternation is a robust sociolinguistic indicator. CC (AOA5) and YH (AOA8) were most conservative in using other sociolinguistic indicators like *you know, init*, and pop terms. As the findings has shown, they were also the most conservative among the informants in their use of tense alternation. HG (AOA5) and FN (AOA8) were the most prolific
users of you know, init, and pop terms among the female informants and they were also the most prolific female users of tense alternation.

The findings indicate that 4 male informants, CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), JW (AOA8), KN (AOA10) used tense alternation in narration as well. However, some of these informants did not restrict their use of tense alternation in the complicating action section of their narratives. For JW, there was a higher use of past tense verbs in the orientation, complicating action, and coda sections than in the evaluation section. JW’s (AOA8) use of tense alternation was similar to HG (AOA5) and FN (AOA8). The 3 informants used tense alternation only in the evaluation section. These similarities cannot be explained as chance happening. For these informants, the evaluation section may be the most important section of the narrative because it tells the listeners why they should listen to the story.

For KN, there was a higher use of past tense verbs in the orientation, evaluation, and coda sections than in the complicating action section. KN’s (AOA10) use of tense alternation was similar to HN’s (AOA5). Both informants used tense alternation in the complicating action section only. The quotative verbs as used by both informants were in present tense.

The findings also indicate possible gender difference in the use of tense alternation. Only two female informants, HG and FN used tense alternation in narration. And as already pointed out, the tense alternation for these 2 informants took place in the evaluation section. On the other hand, 4 male informants, CT, HN, JW, and KN used tense alternation in narration. Furthermore, HN and KN and to a lesser extent, CT, used tense alternation in the complicating action. JW was the only informants who, like HG and FN, the two female informants, used tense alternation in the evaluation section.

**Conclusion.**

In sum, it can be argued that the findings show that a critical period for learning the use of English past tense forms and tense alternation cannot be readily pinpointed without taking the effects of societal components into consideration. JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) did not use tense alternation because they had not achieved a certain proficiency
level in their use of verbs in past tense form. For KN (AOA10), although his percentage of appropriate use of past tense verbs in the sections where he talked about his schools and life in Hong Kong (75.00%) was lower than EL’s (76.47%) and JH’s (81.58%), his use of tense alternation in narrative was similar to HN (AOA5).

The difference in one aspect of the social profiles of KN vs. JT, EL, GW, and JH may account for the difference in their use of tense alternation. KN was an ardent participant in school-organised extracurricular activities and the others were not. KN was a member of his school swimming team and chess team. He was the head of the graphic section of the school magazine. He went on holiday in Italy with his school. He had also taken part in school organised work experience programmes in which he stayed in Denmark and Sweden with English L1 fellow students. JT, EL, GW, and JH, on the other hand, hardly took part in any school organised extra curricular activities. JT only played cricket for the school team for a short period of time. EL took part in track events for a while but an injury stopped her from taking part any further. JH and GW did not take part in any extra curricular activities at all. While KN, like JT, EL, GW, and JH, did not have any non-Cantonese friends at age 18, he had more contact with non-Cantonese speakers than these other 4 informants and through this contact, KN could have acquired the use of tense alternation in narrative.

Although JW (AOA8) did not take part in school-organised extra-curricular activities, he had English friends whom he went on holidays with. He also had an English girlfriend for at least 2 years before turning age 18. While EL had an English boyfriend, the relationship only started at around age 18. EL also had an English girlfriend whom she described as her one of her best friends; however, that English girl might not use tense alternation in narrative because as this study shows, tense alternation as a sociolinguistic indicator is more robust with male adolescents than with female.

In sum, the use of tense alternation is partly an indicator of L2 proficiency. Its use depends on L2 proficiency because it entails the use of verbs in past tense. Similar to the findings of the informants’ use of verbs in past tense in the sections where they talked about their school and life in Hong Kong, the findings of their use of tense alternation shows age of arrival played a role in the informants’ use of tense alternation. The findings show that for those informants who did not use tense alternation in narration (CC, YH, JT, EL, GW, JH), 4 of them, JT, EL, GW, and JH,
arrived in London at age 8 or age 10. Their use of past tense verbs increased when they narrated an incident that took place in the past. Tense alternation is also a robust L2 sociolinguistic indicator for the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. CC, HG, CT, HN, FN, YH, JW, and KN were the informants who were more assimilated to the British way of life. They had non-Cantonese friends and went out or even went on holiday with them. Some of them had non-Cantonese boyfriends and girlfriends. They listened to Western pop music as much as they listened to Cantopop. Some of them took an active part in school organised extra curricular activities.

Two of these informants (CC and YH) did not use tense alternation as they would not use other sociolinguistic indicators investigated by the present work. For those informants (HG, CT, HN, FN, JW, and KN) who used tense alternation, some aspects of their use of tense alternation were different from the use by native speakers as reported in Labov (1972a) and Wolfson (1978; 1979). HG, FN, and JW used tense alternation in the evaluation section and not in the complicating action section of their narratives. CT, HN, and KN, on the other hand, would use tense alternation only in the complicating action section of their narratives.

This clear division of where in the narratives of the six informants tense alternation appeared is intriguing. A possible explanation is that HG, FN, and JW had been developing a linguistic feature through the use of tense alternation in the evaluation section as a special identifying feature of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. However, further research on how native speakers of English use tense alternation is needed to confirm or disprove this idea. At the beginning of the study of this linguistic feature, the present work has quoted what COBUILD English Grammar (1990) observes as how tense alternation is used in the UK - tense alternation is to make acts and states more vivid. The question is whether there is the same clear division of tense alternation usage in different sections of narrative among native speakers of English. If there is not, as further research would determine, it would be further indication that Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents have begun to use tense alternation as a boundary marker for a community of their own.
5.11 Information Staging: Init and Question Tag.

COBUILD (1990) defines a tag as “a short structure that is added to the end of a statement to turn it into a question. ... The whole sentence, consisting of the statement and the tag, is called a question tag” (p. 433). In several varieties of British English, init has developed as an invariant tag form. Kerswill and Williams (2002) report the use of init in Milton Keynes and Reading. In the varieties of English spoken in these towns, init “needs not agree with its antecedent in number, person and model verb”.

The discussion of the informants’ use of init and its variants are divided into two parts. Part One is a description of these instances grouped according to the variants, and the subjects of the clauses onto which these variants are tagged by informants. The instances of tags in the data are mainly divided into four groups. All instances with init fall into one group. Another group is entitled Standard English Question Tag. Instances in the data are grouped under this category based on the following criteria:

- Each instance must contain a statement and a question tag made by the same informant.

- The antecedent subject in the statement is coreferential with the subject in the tag. Furthermore the antecedent subject must not be omitted.

- The verbs in both the main clause and tag agree in tense form, model verb, and number marking.

- There must be positive vs. negative opposition between the statement and the tag. If the statement is a positive statement, the tag must be in the negative; and vice versa.

An example of a standard English question tag in the data is as follows:

\[ \text{JH} \quad \text{But I just didn't know, did I? I hardly know at all.} \]
Instances where one or more criteria for the Standard English Question Tag group are not met will be in a separate group entitled *Non-standard English Question Tag*. This is the third group. The following instances are examples from the data of the informants that do not satisfy some of the criteria. There are 26 such instances in the data.

- The statement and the tag were uttered by two different persons.

  **LL**  *Apart from Oxbridge and Manchester being the top universities, would a part of the reason is that you girls want to move away from home?*

  **CC**  *Erm, isn’t it?*

- The antecedent subject and the subject in the tag are not coreferential.

  **FN**  *so but I think every parent is like that, isn’t it?*

- The antecedent subject is omitted in the statement.

  **CC**  *But it was, it was supposedly on one of these streets that links to, erm, two main streets together which is, isn’t it?*

- No agreement in tense form or number marking.

  **HG**  *So my mum looked out of the window. And there was, she was with boys, isn’t it?*

- There is no positive vs. negative opposition between the statement and the tag.

  **EL**  *My mum, well, she don’t smoke, but, she can’t do much, couldn’t she? Cause she let my sister smoke,*

21 of these 26 instances of non-standard English question tags share a set of common characteristics. Apart from not satisfying the four criteria of standard English question tags as listed above, these 21 instances have *is it* or *isn’t it* in the tag. The present work will call this nonstandard English question tag as (+ / -) be. How the informants use this tag and its significance will be discussed later.

In the fourth group, there are 3 instances of *ain’t it* in the data. Two were made by JH and one by FN. *Ain’t it* is treated as a variant that is independent of the other three groups of variants. These
instances are grouped separately and discussed independently. In Part Two, the implications of how the informants used these variants are discussed.

Part One.

In this part, instances of *init* and other question tags by informants are discussed. There are some instances where no possible antecedent subjects or verbs are present in the statements. Each of these instances will be marked with an X in front of the number the instance is assigned to.

CC.

There are only six instances of tags in CC's data. In these six instances, 3 are standard English question tags (Instances 1-3). The subjects in these 4 instances are either first person nouns or third person nouns. There is only one *init* (Instance 4) in CC's data, embedded in a quotation. What CC had said in Instance 5 shows that she was aware of the use of *init*. By associating *init* with *wicked* in a quotation, she indicated that she and her friends did not use *init*. Furthermore, Instance 5 shows that she associated the use of *init* with Cockneys. In Instance 6, the *isn't it* was tagged on to the subject in an clause unit uttered by the researcher.

**Standard English Question Tags.**

01 CC once upon a time, *Laugh Dak Wah.* And *he doesn't* seem to do very much music anymore, *does he*?

02 CC Mmm, I suppose. *You can't* give me the bus number, *can you*?

LL That's true (CC laughs), that's true. So true.

03 CC Yes, but *that just* makes it more fun then, *isn't it*?

**Init.**

04 CC I have very limited vocabulary. Erm, I think it's more like you do it in a cockney accent, rather than saying it with, you know, normal accent. We use it when we start taking the piss out of Ali G, (squeaking, imitating Ali G) *"It's wicked, init?"* (chuckles), sort of that but that's mainly how we use it.

**Non-standard English Question Tags.**

X05 CC But it was, it was supposedly on one of these streets that links to, erm, two main streets together which is, *isn't it*?

06 LL Apart from Oxbridge and Manchester being the top universities, would a part of the reason is that you girls want to move away from home?
CC  Erm, isn't it?

HG.

There are 8 instances (01-08) of *init* in HG's data. In Instances 01-07, the subjects are first person or third person nouns, singular or plural. It is not clear what the subject for Instance 8 is. In Instance 9, HG used a more standard tag than *init*. However, the *isn't it* in Instance 9 does not agree with the subject she or the tense of the main verb *was*.

**Init.**

01 HG  but not many times cause I get in on VCD. I can watch it at home, *init?*
02 HG  And they were all like shouting. And then my dad, *she* told my dad, *init?*
03 HG  They don't know. I just had to lie to them, *init?*
04 HG  and then *they* were just shouting at her and dragged her away, *init?* It's like that.
05 HG  It's about, sometimes I get it from my friend. *They* copy it for me, *init?* From the computer.
06 HG  Yeah. But then *they* would get use to my old name, *Hung*, *init?*
07 HG  So we just kicked them out. *It's* sort of like you know just "Could you leave?" *init?*
08 HG  so my brother just gets angry and just hits them, you know, a little fight, *init?*

**Non-standard English Question Tags.**

09 HG  So my mum looked out of the window. And there was, *she* was with boys, *isn't it?*

CT.

There are six instances (Instances 01-06) of standard English question tags in CT's data. The subjects in these instances are second person and third person (singular and plural) subjects. Instance 7 is less like a standard English question tag because the *isn't it* does not agree with the subject, which is existential *there*. The *isn't it* in Instance 08 is embedded in a quotation.

**Standard English Question Tags.**

01 CT  it's near Piccadilly Circus Station, OK, and actually, you *don't need* to turn that early, actually, at Piccadilly Circus, *do you?* No, I won't tell her that.
02 CT  Mmm (drinking), em in England, there's a difference. In America, I think, because in America, *they call* it potato crisps, *don't they?*
03 CT  And then, actually, no, OK, OK. Em, oh, but there isn't, no actually, there isn't, you *don't get* the Thames River in Hyde Park, *do you?*
04 CT  Saveloy, it's a sausage, *isn't it?*
05 CT  Thank you. Well, we use it, we don't use it to say thank you although we understand that people, you know, use it to say thank you. Because em, I don't know, it's, it's a bit gay, *isn't it?* (Chuckles).
06 CT  Saveloy is like long, long sausage, *isn't it?*
Non-standard English Question Tags.

07 CT You go to Leicester Square Station and then you take, em, the line, take one stop to Charing Cross, there's more, isn't it? No, sorry. It's two stops to Embankment and em, you know, seeing one of my mates going, going lucky, you know, going lucky with a couple of girls, and then we'd say "He's a lad, isn't it?"

HN.

There are 5 instances of init in HN's data (01-05). The subjects in these five instances are first person, second person, and third person subjects. Instance 6 is a non-standard English question tag. The main verb in Instance 6 may be a contracted has or a contracted be.

Init.

01 HN I don't know. I learn to use it cause it sounds funny, init? Cause everyone does.
02 HN You read out the whole dictionary, init?
03 HN Hard to explain what it means, though. "It's tacky, init?" It's, I can't explain tacky.
04 HN I didn't have many other row with people being racist, init?
05 HN he, he's like trying to save us some money for the future, init?

Undecided.

06 HN Well, that's all gone down the drain, isn't it?

FN.

There are 73 instances of question tags and init in FN's data. There are 7 instances of standard English question tags in FN's data (01-07). The subjects in all these 7 instances are third person singular subjects. There are 58 instances of init (08-65). There are 8 instances of non-standard English question tags in FN's data (66-73). Note that Instances 50 and 51 are spoken immediately one after the other.

Standard English Question Tags.

01 FN It's rude, now and then but I don't use it that often. It's not really a nice word, is it?
02 FN it's a car, isn't it?
03 FN and something like that. Crisp as in it's chilli chips, isn't it?
04 FN it would be quite like to study there and it's like different from London, isn't it?
05 FN Why, Chinese people talk and then it just gets around so, I mean, that's why face is quite important, isn't it?
06 FN it's like Safeway, which is Asda. Round the corner, init? but most like the places isn't it?
07 FN I think it's like a bit more at ease and more at home, isn't it?
I work in weekend and I am more like part time waitress, init.
Erm, parents believe in Buddha, which is about, about, you know, I think so, I believe in it, init?
so you know, I'm just used to hang around with a Chinese environment init,
I'll go cinema and watch errn, films, stuff like that, init,
rather than go to one of those where all, all Chinese people, init?
finally there's this big group, like crowding around, and, er, I don't know what's happening, init?
Oh, I go with my friends, init, and it's like, it's my best friend, Anne they look good together, so wish them the best, init?
but it's like different, the way they make it, but more less, it's still fish, anyway, I don't mind, init, there's no difference.
before I like pop, but I don't like pop no more. I use to like, I don't know, I was sort of young, init?
when it starts ringing like that, "Shit, it's like my mum ringing me. What can I do?" It's like "You pick it up and then I'll take you home, init?"
We have rice, well, rice, boiled rice, init?
I work customers basically and you get more open and you talk to them and have to be really, can't be really shy, init?
Oh, bad as in "You think you are bad" "You think you are hard, didn't you?"
I know I'll do a bit of accounts cause it's like a bit of Maths too, init
I know. It's really good, it's really good, init. You know what it's like, so it's like every Monday about seven o'clock, so it's really easy, init?
It's obviously a bit different, init, I mean, I don't know, you know, much more nicer, so
And nine hundred ninety nine means "I love you" and stuff like that, so it's different meaning, init? Do you make them?
Yep, I've been making it for a friend; that's why, that's why I wanted it, and then, you know, cause it's just nice, init? It doesn't take that long.
Oh, Chinese? If it was errn to go like Chinese shopping, it's definitely Sei Woh Hohng, init, cause it's so close,
yeah, so it's a part time job. It's to earn a bit of money, init, so I don't like taking no money off my parents cause I work for myself, basically,
I am not saying it's wrong to be gay or lesbian but I'm saying that, it's up to you, your private life, init?
it's more like that they have more pressure their daughters and sons to do well cause it's like face, init?
but I never knew it's true, like you know, rumours, init? It's always gossiping.
Erm I use to when I younger but now I'm not into football no more. Before, it's like little girls, init?
you know, chips and burgers, things like, it's always in the middle, init?
so it's quite late, init, so when I get home,
I think my parents don't mind as much, because the fact that he is a guy so it would be apparently less dangerous and you know, this and that, but it's sexist, init?
it's like Safeway, which is Asda. Round the corner, init?
Yeah, it's typical, init?
I only use piss as in you are drunk. Or like, you are pissed, init?
they don't have to, it's like "You come here to buy stuff," init? "Fair enough, we are serving you"
he’s not all that old, like twenty, maybe, he was nineteen, twenty, twenty one. He’s so young, init?

She’s mad about him, she’s like, she’s wrong, for God’s sake cause he’s quite young, init?

and we come out and she is like the, like the same age as me, init?

That was him, init?

and she’s like the best woman, the best singers, no, the best female singer in Hong Kong, init?

Erm, my dad was a chef. My, my mum never works, she stays at home, init?

but Jehng Saah Mahn (inaudible) init, er, Jan Mihng Tin Ji, That’ that

and then it’s like, after the club and everyone come out and it’s, it usually finish at about, the club finish at three, init?

but maybe he thought that he should, you know, show his love for the person, the person, init?

Saveloy. That sausage thing, init?

In the fish and chips shop, init? That sausage thing.

Everyone gets laih sih, init?

February, last year was February, January, something like that, but normally in the spring time of the year, init?

I might feel “Oh, it’s better if I move out, then they won’t know and everything” but you know, that’s the way I was brought up, init?

this year, I got a present instead, and well, laih sih is something, init?

I don’t think Leon is gay, they’re just jealous, init?

And they was like “Why you are with a Chinky? What’s wrong with you, yeah?” init? “You like fried rice?”

I feel that they’re really good friends, apparently, and Heui Jih On and Jehng Saah Mahn went out, init?

Heui Jih On? I think so, they’ve been going out for ages, init?

She was cussing. And the police got involve but the black guys run away, init?

But I think the parents just know what is good for, erm, daughters and sons, init?

Girls and boys, init? basically.

I don’t know, and then, that’s, that’s right, ten, twelve years’ difference, init?

but like, you know, he does go and play majhong obviously, I suppose there’s no harm, init?

OK, your phone’s ringing

it’s like a little later activities ain’t it?

Non-standard English Question Tags.

Oh, him, he is the actor, is it? Is he after her?

It’s like no matter what happen in the day, there’s, cause they have little story lines, isn’t it?

It is not even worth it. So they don’t bother, I mean, they don’t need to, really, is it?

so but I think every parent is like that, isn’t it?

What? They talk English up there, isn’t it?

There’s two Manchester uni, isn’t it?

Has to look after my brother and sister, isn’t it?

So I am more free but some more a bit strict, isn’t it?
YH.

There are 2 instances of question tags and *init* in YH’s data. Both are instances of standard English question tags.

01 YH it’s one of the greater London boroughs isn’t it?
02 YH it’s just a straight road, isn’t it?

JT.

Instance 01 in JT’s data is a standard English question tag. There are 3 instances of *init* in the data. The subjects of these instances are third person singular subjects. The subject in Instance 4 is embedded in a clause in JT’s previous turn. *Isn’t it* of Instance 5 is a non-standard English question tag because the subject is *you*.

Standard English Question Tags.

01 JT Thames River. Er, it’s a long one, *isn’t it*?

Init.

02 JT And it’s some kind of drug as well, *init*?
03 JT So that’s different, *init*?
04 JT Crisp is some sort of potato, really thin, crispy thing (rising), and chip is just some sort of big thing,

Non-standard English Question Tags.

05 JT I forgot what that mean but I know you can, you got two meanings, *isn’t it*?

JW.

In JW’s data, there is one instance of standard English question tags (01), one instance of *init* (02) with a third person singular subject, and two instances (03-04) of non-standard English question tags.

Standard English Question Tags.

01 JW *you can* get a tube to Buckingham Palace, *can’t you*?
Init.
02 JW Saveloy. That’s em, the name of the sausage, init?

Non-standard English Question Tags.

03 JW But grass, that can be em, squeaking as well, couldn’t it?
04 JW Lager. That’s er, name of a beer, is it?

EL.

There are 25 instances of question tags and init in GW’s data. In EL’s data, there is 4 instances of standard English question tags (01-04). There are 19 instances of init in her data. They are numbered from 05 to 23. The subject of Instance 05 is second person you, referring to the researcher. Instances 24-5 are non-standard English question tags.

Standard English Question Tags.

01 LL Yeah, the headmaster was a guy called Wong or something.
EL It’s a woman, isn’t it?

02 EL Tokai, it’s not Japanese, is it?
03 LL Did you wonder what Canada would be like, or whether your life would be better in Canada?
EL I don’t know. Probably [it] would be, wouldn’t it? Although if I go to Canada, I would know my best friend now,
X04 EL Weed? Weed? No, I never heard people use it. Is it, not weird, is it?

Init.

05 EL I don’t, the way I talk to my sister, you thought I was talking to my friend, init?
06 EL And yeah. I haven’t got, I have still got friend in Hong Kong. But I mean, well, everyone’s busy init, in Hong Kong now,
X07 EL I’ve been to that, so really not a concert though, init?
X08 EL Yeah, Heuhng Fei. Died in a car crash. Sad, init, she only young.
X09 EL My mum does, so I have to see it, watch it with her. Fun, init?
10 EL From Burger King, it has to be, init? (LL laughs). Mmm. I just go to Hippodrome, just cross the road (laughs).
11 EL (chuckles). That is easy, because that is true, init?
12 EL No, I think it’s quite far, actually, walking down there. Cause it’s past McDonald, init?
13 EL So it’s no point in me wasting the paper, init?
14 EL Yeah, yeah. We go or sometime we go to like Fridays, TGI Friday, that’s something special, init?
15 EL Some people just think, I don’t know really, it’s just do whatever they want, init?
16 EL And sometime I can just, when I was not home, go out, then cause erm Jung Chihng is really late on, init, in Hong Kong, it start eleven or half ten.
X17 LL What’s the difference between crisps and chips?
18 EL Thinner, init? Crisp is that round thing but chip is one long thing, yeah.

19-20 EL "Oh, he is more popular than him. I don’t like him" That’s why. But I don’t think that. I mean, he’s more popular because it is the talent he got, init?

LL Just don’t like him, you think he’s nice?

EL No, I think it would, I think I could get that sort of haircut for five quid (laughs), init.

EL for a fiver, init.

21 EL Can I answer that? (Talk in Cantonese on her mobile to her sister) Sorry, it was my sister, don’t talk like my sister, init? I don’t, the way I talk to my sister.

22 EL so yeah, we, probably it’s nice and kind of cause lots of Chinese people in there init, hmm,

23 EL A bit upday music, init?

Non-standard English Question Tags

24 EL My mum, well, she don’t smoke, but, she can’t do much, couldn’t she? Cause she let my sister smoke,

25 EL I know it is bigger, but the thing that, it, it just because always people go up, didn’t they?

GW.

There are only two instances of question tags in GW’s data. Both of them are instances of init. The subjects in the clauses of both instances are third person singular subjects. init in Instance 2 is embedded in a quotation.

01 GW Yeah. Weed. That’s some kind of drug, init (chuckles)?

02 GW Yeah. When I was in primary school, we use that word a lot. “Oh, it’s wicked, init?”

JH.

There are 100 instances of question tags and init in JH’s data. There are four instances of standard English question tags in JH’s data (01-03). Instances 05-89 are instances of init in JH’s data. The subjects in 04-84 are singular or plural first person, second person, and third person nouns and pronouns. Instances 90 and 91 have ain’t it as tags with I as the subject in both instances. Instances 92-100 are instances of non-standard English question tags. The subjects in these instances are singular or plural first person, second person, and third person nouns and pronouns.
Standard English Question Tags.

01 LL You shouldn't win all the time.
   JH That's the way it is, isn't it?

02 LL You have to hustle.
   JH But I just didn't know, did I? I hardly know at all.

Init.

03 JH yeah, what can I do, init?
04 JH I'll probably apply for some uni around this area, init?
X05 JH it translate to English, yeah, so might as well watch it again, init?
06 JH if I listen to the music, yeah, just couldn't hear the, er, the ringing, init?
07 JH No, just, I bought it off my friend, init?
08 JH well she said it behind my back and I was so piss off, init?
09 JH and I told her to, you know, get away, init?
10 JH So I was like "Neah, I give up" init? and er, one night, yeah,
11 JH I told her not to bother, init?
12 JH So now we just stay at this stage, init? Don't go any further.
13 JH so one of us has to be hurt, init?
14 JH the what shall I say, the right education I'll be alright, init?
15 JH There's this guy, Ian, yeah, I don't really like him, init?
16 JH I'll just come, come and work for me, init,
17 JH I've been waiting for like half a year and couldn't get no pirate VCD from my
   friend, init?
18 JH if I go back Hong Kong, I could still go to uni, init?
19 JH but in them, I am still a child, init? And I just can't care that much,
20 JH I lived in my aunt's place, init?
21 JH but it was on before, we broke up before exams, init?
22 JH Friends, like loads of them supplying me tapes and CDs. We're buddies, init?
23 JH I am working for him, so I have to go along, init?
24 JH So, and I just do my best, init? I can't do anything else.
25 JH but I don't want him to get into trouble, init?
26 JH I always keep on and on, see what they are going to do, init?"
27 JH I only take jokes off my friends, init?"
X28 JH From all the black mates, init? Don't know what it means.
29 JH If it is a male, yeah, I, I, you know, I'll just show him the way, init?
30 JH Oh, it is around my age, I'll just take them to my place, init?
31 JH I told you, init? I went to my bosses house.
32 JH but if you say it, in a Chinese way, it's like fuck it, init?
33 JH I just don't care anymore, init?
34 JH I never thought about that, cause er, as I told you, init?
35 JH Sunday night. Look, sometimes I, I take a day off, init, for Sunday night.
36 JH Just for the course work, yeah. Cause I spent loads of time on me course works,
   init?
37 JH you can't expect that much, init? You have to take it, well take it easy, anyway.
38 JH "Oh, why I do fancy you but my feelings against, er, you is not as strong as it use
   to be, init?"
39 JH you know her fancy me and another guy at the same time, init?
40 JH you really have to guess, you know, if you ain't know this guy not well, init?
41 JH cause you can change any sym cards you like, init?
42 JH you can't, you know, have a good job, init?
Wicked. Something which is good. Always describe girls, init? “She’s wicked, man”.

No, well it’s just a cushion, init? The cushion will be there.

I’ll show him the way to Trafalgar Square, which is easy, it’s just down the road, init?

It’s a good, you know, it’s a technique, init?

he then, lend, he then borrow my ball, init?

and the take away starts at half five. So he just gave up, init?

she phone me up and she told me to go down Morrison, just down there, yeah and have a chat with me, init?

the governor takes the counter’s place, init?

No, the other one is in England, init?

English Language is not my first language, init? It’s not my mother tongue, so,

And she was, she’s kind of piss off at me, init? before you came.

she’s gonna try and forget him, init?

And er, she afterward, she, she came back to me, init?

She was wearing Sam’s watch, init?”

Sam gave her a watch, init? One of his watch, yeah, that she was wearing all the time.

it still, you know, it still got out bad memories, init?

and they didn’t do nothing. And I think it’s just not useful, init?

but it’s just me mum and dad are staying here, init?

she, er, she met her, him in Broadway, init?

I am dizzy and I swear and I speak er, the way I shouldn’t be, even. Er, nobody cares, init?

we just say “Hi”, a friend is a friend, init?

you know, the, the, this kind of business is not good, init, at the moment,

No, if I go out West End, yeah, Chinatown, I, well, that depends when I go out, init?

Twice a month (rising). I don’t know. Depends init?

it has some sort of like meanings but that depends when you say it. init?

Not much but er, half an hour to an hour. Depends, init?

you don’t have no insurance, so, depends init?

It depends if it is a male or female, init?

There is a way, errn, to, depends which, you know, which end you want to go, init?

the main reason is that my English is not that good, init?

How long is a degree? Two or three, three years?

Three or four, init?

Some of them are buddies, init?

And, but they don’t know what it means, init? Do they?

Cause my friends know I am drunk, init? Yeah, they just forgive me.

they are all pirates, yeah, and so if they send it to me, yeah, sometimes, they check it, init?

Yeah. I’ve got three aunt, yeah and they don’t have children at all. So they treat me as their own son, init?

so afterwards, me and my parents went to the police, init,

Well, yeah. That’s what I saw was, you know, they are my friends, init?

And they were like loads of computers and stuff, init,

I must be seventeen, to learn to drive, so, they are just old fashion, init?

On, on my course works, I got all As, probably bring my grade up, init?

There’s a karaoke down there, init?

Cor, those big guys, init? They are about six foot.

I mean “What do you think?” I mean, “Don’t you think I’d be piss off?” init?

“Well, what’s the point, you know, being so clever”, init?
They say they gonna burn my house and all this stuff, yeah?” so (chuckles) I don’t know.

Jesus Christ.
Jesus Christ, init?

Ain’t it.

I want to hang out, ain’t it?
Just, just move as they go along, ain’t it?

Non-standard English Question Tags

I don’t know, maybe Canterbury. Brighton, a bit far though isn’t it? So.
Well, if I lose it, I could do nothing, can I?
just have to learn how to do the, all the different dishes, isn’t it?
She told her that she fancy him, too, behind my back, and I’m so piss off, isn’t it?
because I don’t want to live outside, isn’t it?
We’re, we were like mates, isn’t it? We go down footfall and er, stuff,
You could play those Playstation games start on your PC, can’t you?
And also Greenwich yeah, I heard it, it’s not good, isn’t it?
Don’t know. Lager is beer, isn’t it?
And there is a bus going down there, isn’t it?

KN.

There are 5 instances of question tags and init in KN’s data. Instance 1 is a standard English question tag. Instances 2 - 4 are instances of init. Instance 5 is a non-standard question tag.

Standard English Question Tags.

and so I mean people there are really nice as well, aren’t they?

Init.

What? You want me to describe a jar, init?
Weed. That’s a drug, init?
Jerk. I mean that’s a bit slang, init?

Non-standard English Question Tags

I want to celebrate my Christmas here, in England, isn’t it?
Part Two.

The following table shows the number of instances of each variant produced by each informant. The percentage, given in brackets, is calculated by the number of instances of each variant produced by each informant divided by the total number of words in the data of each informant (Method One) and multiplied by 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (n)</th>
<th>Standard English Question Tags</th>
<th>Init</th>
<th>Non-standard English Question Tags</th>
<th>ain’t it</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC (n=13,549)</td>
<td>3 (0.022)</td>
<td>1 (0.007)</td>
<td>2 (0.015)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>6 (0.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n=13,067)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>8 (0.061)</td>
<td>1 (0.008)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>9 (0.069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n=17,332)</td>
<td>6 (0.035)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>2 (0.012)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>8 (0.046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n=12,744)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>5 (0.039)</td>
<td>1 (0.008)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>6 (0.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n=23,510)</td>
<td>7 (0.030)</td>
<td>58 (0.247)</td>
<td>8 (0.034)</td>
<td>1 (0.004)</td>
<td>74 (0.315)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n=19,296)</td>
<td>2 (0.010)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>2 (0.010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n=11,210)</td>
<td>0 (0.009)</td>
<td>3 (0.027)</td>
<td>1 (0.009)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>5 (0.045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n=13,523)</td>
<td>1 (0.007)</td>
<td>1 (0.007)</td>
<td>2 (0.015)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>4 (0.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n=13,905)</td>
<td>4 (0.029)</td>
<td>19 (0.137)</td>
<td>2 (0.014)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>25 (0.180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n=18,185)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>2 (0.011)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>2 (0.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (n=17,000)</td>
<td>2 (0.012)</td>
<td>36 (0.506)</td>
<td>10 (0.059)</td>
<td>2 (0.012)</td>
<td>100 (0.588)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (n=16389)</td>
<td>1 (0.006)</td>
<td>3 (0.018)</td>
<td>1 (0.006)</td>
<td>0 (0.00)</td>
<td>5 (0.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grouping of Informants by Their Use of *init*.

Based on the frequency of their use of *init* as the percentage of the total number of words in the data, the 12 informants can be divided into 3 groups. Group 1 consists of CT (AOA5) and YH (AOA8) who did not use *init* at all in their interviews, and CC (AOA5) and JW (AOA8) since CC (0.007) and JW (0.007) used *init* once in their interviews. Furthermore, CC only used *init* in a quotation and she stated that she and her friends only used *init* in jest (See CC’s Instance 04 above). Group 2 consists of JT (AOA8; 0.027), GW (AOA10; 0.011) and KN (AOA10; 0.018). HG (AOA5; 0.061) and HN (AOA5; 0.039) belong to Group 3. Group 4 consists of FN (AOA8; 0.247) and EL (AOA10; 0.149). JH (AOA10; 0.506) is the sole member of Group 6.
Table 5.35: Grouping of Informants by Instances of HRT Produced by Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>JH (n=17,000)</td>
<td>86 (0.506)</td>
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</table>

The grouping shows that AOA did not have any effect on the informants’ use of init. The 4 informants of the AOA5 group are in Group 1 and Group 3. The 4 informants of the AOA8 group are in Groups 1, 2, and 4. The informants of the AOA10 group are in Groups 2, 4, and 5.

Possible Explanations.

Several explanations can account for the different proportion of init in the data. The first explanation is related to socioeconomic classes the informants belong to. Socioeconomic classes as a predictor of language variation is well-attested in sociolinguistic research (Eckert, 2000; Labov, 1972b; Trudgill, 1974). Members of lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to use socially stigmatised variants than members of higher socioeconomic groups. Trudgill (1974), for instance, divided his informants into six classes: professionals; employers and managers; non-manual workers; foremen and skilled employees; semi-skilled employees; unskilled employees. He found that socially stigmatised linguistic features like negative concord and present tense
form of irregular verbs in past time contexts were never used among his middle class (professionals; employers and managers) informants.

Init is a popular albeit socially stigmatised linguistic feature. Like other socially stigmatised linguistic features, its use or non-use is related to socioeconomic classes. Although the family background of ten out of the 12 informants was catering, there were differences in their family backgrounds. Some informants’ parents were employers or owners. Some were professionals or non-manual workers while others ranged from skilled to non-skilled workers. These differences in socioeconomic status seem to be indicative of patterns of use of init. There are 4 informants who had low or nil use of init. These were exactly the informants who came from what can be argued to be the higher socioeconomic groups among the informants.

The link between low or nil usage of init and high socioeconomic groups is indicated by the family backgrounds of Group 1. YH, who did not use init in her two interviews at all, did not come from catering background. Her father was a medical researcher in the University of London. YH came from a professional background. CC, who used init only once, and CT, who did not use init at all, came from restaurant owner background. JW, whose parents owned more than one takeaway, used init once. The parents of CC, CT, and JW were employers. The family background of these four informants were different from most of the other informants, who used init more frequently than they did with the standard English question tags and non-standard English question tags.

On the other hand, the informants with lower socioeconomic backgrounds used init more frequently than they did with the standard English question tags and non-standard English question tags. FN’s father (her mother did not work), EL’s parents, GW’s father (her mother did not work), and JT’s and JH’s parents were all employees in takeaways, in restaurants, or in the same Chinese supermarket in Southeast London. Their background ranged from skilled employees (FN’s father was a chef in a Chinese restaurant) to semi-skilled (JH’s parents worked in Chinese takeaways) and unskilled (EL and JT’s parents worked in the Chinese supermarket).

There were three exceptions. Three are informants with higher socioeconomic backgrounds. The family background of KH was non-catering. His parents were estate agents (non-manual workers). He used init more frequently than CC, CT, YH, and JW. HN’s parents owned a
Chinese takeaway (employers). HN and KN used *init* more frequently than they did with the standard English question tags and non-standard English question tags. HG’s background was a bit more ambiguous. Her parents owned part of a Chinese takeaway. She used *init* 8 times out of a total of nine tags (88.88%).

**Use of Other Linguistic Features.**

The variation in use of *init* among the 12 informants may also be due to individual differences. A pragmatic function of these instances of *init* is to elicit agreement from the hearers. Another function is to find out if the hearers agree with an opinion. In terms of these functions, *init* as used by the 12 informants can be in alternation with other linguistic features like *yeah* and *right*. Informants like YH and CT, who did not use *init* at all, might have preferred to use *yeah* or *right*. The present work has not explored the use of *init* in connection with these linguistic features as used by the informants for several reasons. First, standard English question tags, nonstandard English question tags including (+ / -) *be*, and *ain’t it* are closer in form and in origin with *init*. Second, although linguistic features such as *right* and *yeah* and *init* can be tagged on to the end of a statement, the former have never been part of a larger grammatical unit whereas *init* is derived from standard English question tags. Third, these linguistic features may not share the same social status as *init*. YH, for example, did not use *init* in her interviews. She would, however, used *yeah*.

**YH** but even they were part of the education system *yeah*? Apart from that, I really didn’t have much, shopping (chuckles).

**YH** it might be more beneficial to do a science base degree and I actually do enjoy Chemistry, quite a bit more as well. Maths is just a middle one to go with the things, *right*?

**LL** *Yeah, sort of the key to everything*.  

The use of *init* can also be in alternation with larger linguistic units like clauses. For example:

**YH** *Or is it, do you mean the smoking things as well?*

**Gender Difference in the Use of Init.**

Another explanation in the variation in the frequency of use of *init* in the data may be due to gender difference. There is an indication that there is a possible gender difference in the use of...
init exists among the 12 informants. The female informants used init less frequently than the male. The female informants used init 88 times out of 186 instances of init (47.31%). The male informants used init 98 times (52.69%). Since this difference is relatively small and ignores considerable individual variation, there is no way to know whether it has any great social significance.

Identifying Advanced Users of Init.

Other than the high proportion of use, there are other indications that some informants favoured the use of init. In the following, two ways of identifying the advanced users of this variant are discussed.

Identifying the Advanced Users by Linguistic Environments Where Init is Present.

Since init is invariant, it should be present in any linguistic environment. Therefore, an advanced user of this linguistic variant should also use init with most, if not all possible linguistic environments preceding clause-final positions, for init. The possible linguistic environments are:

- The antecedent subject in the statement. This can be further divided into 6 environments: singular and plural first person, second person, and singular and plural third person, and existential there.

- The verb type of the finite verb in the statement. This can be further divided into 6 environments: main verb, auxiliary verb.

- The tense form of the finite verb in the statement.

Group 5.

JH is the only one informant in Group 5. He used init more frequently than the other 11 informants. For JH’s instances of init, the antecedents subjects in the main clauses are first
person singular and plural pronouns, second person pronouns, third person singular and plural nouns and pronouns and existential *there*. The verbs in his instances are main verbs (including copula *be*) and auxiliary verbs in both present tense form and past tense form. In other words, he used *init* in all the linguistic environments listed above.

**Group 4.**

FN and EL are in Group 4. For FN’s instances of *init*, the antecedent subjects in the main clauses are first person singular and plural pronouns, second person pronouns, third person singular and plural nouns and pronouns, and existential *there*. The verbs in her instances are main verbs (including copula *be*) and auxiliary verbs in both present tense form and past tense form. In other words, she used *init* in all the linguistic environments listed above. For EL’s instances of *init*, the antecedent subjects in the main clauses are second person pronouns, and third person singular and plural nouns and pronouns. She did not use *init* with first person nouns or pronouns. The verbs in her instances are main verbs (all of them are copula *be* except the verb *thought* in instance 5) and auxiliary verbs. All the main verbs with the exception of *thought* in Instance 5 are in present tense form or the tense form cannot be determined because the verbs are in contracted form. EL also used *init* twice to express agreement to a statement made by the researcher (Instances 19-20).

**Group 3.**

HG is in Group 3. For HG’s instances of *init*, the antecedent subjects in the main clauses are first person singular pronouns and third person singular and plural pronouns. The absence of *init* with second person antecedent subject pronoun may be because *you* is less frequently used by interviewees in interviews than first and third person nouns and pronouns. The verbs are main verbs (including copula *be*) and auxiliary verbs in both present tense form and past tense form.

HN is also in Group 3. For HN’s instances of *init*, the subjects in the main clauses are first person singular pronouns, second person pronouns, and third person singular and plural pronouns. The verbs in these instances are main verbs (including copula *be*) and auxiliary verbs in both present tense form and past tense form.
Group 2.

JT, GW and KN are in this group. For JT, all three instances have third person singular antecedent subjects. The finite verbs are copula be. Only the tense form of one of the three finite verbs can be determined, as present tense form. The other two instances of copula be are in contracted form. GW's both instances of init have third person singular antecedent subjects. The finite verbs in these two instances are copula be but the tense form cannot be determined because both are in contracted form. For KN, there are 3 instances of init. One instance has second person pronoun as its antecedent subject. The finite verb in that instance is want. The other two instances has third person singular antecedent subjects. The main verbs in those instances are copula be.

Group 1.

CT and YH did not use init in their interviews. CC used init once. The antecedent is the third person singular pronoun it. The main verb is copula be in contracted form. JW also used init once. The antecedent is the third person singular determiner that. The main verb is copula be in contracted form.

Based on the above discussion, JH and FN were the most advanced users of init. Their use of this invariant form is spread across all the linguistic environments examined. In terms of the linguistic environments examined, HN was as advanced a user of init as FN and JH. Although there are only 5 instances of init in the data, HN used init with first person antecedent subject pronoun (singular), second person antecedent subject pronoun, and third person singular antecedent subject pronoun.

These 3 informants are closely followed by HG and EL. There are only 8 instances of init in HG's data. She had not used init with second person antecedent subject pronoun. This can be explained by the fact that there are only 8 instances of init in the data and because you may be less frequently used than the other two person pronouns in interviews. EL had the most instances of init among the three informants of this group. There is not one instance, out of a total of 19 instances of init with a first person antecedent subject pronoun, singular or plural. In fact, EL did
not use any of the four variants with a first person antecedent subject pronoun, singular or plural at all. Perhaps, EL might not need the present research to express agreement with what she did or did not do.

As for the other informants, the number of instances of *init* are too low for the researcher to discuss as meaningfully as he did with HG, HN, FN, EL, and JH. The researcher notes the low incidence of *init* among the other 7 informants does not mean their use of *init* is restricted to one type of antecedent subject or one verb type in one tense form. There is simply not enough data from the 7 informants for this type of analysis.

*Init*: A Change in Progress.

Cheshire (1982) reports the use of *in* as in *in I?* in question tags among her Reading adolescent informants. Twenty years on, Kerswill and Williams (2002) report the use of *init* as an invariant tag form in Reading and Milton Keynes and to a lesser extent in Hull. This suggests that *init* is a change in progress. *Init* allows a simplification of the standard English question tag paradigm progressively to one single form. It can be argued that some of the informants might simplify the standard English question tag because L2 learners have a propensity to simplify L2 paradigms. There is enough evidence from the interviews and from the language data to show that many of the 12 informants use *init* because they were taking part in this sociolinguistic patterns of the adolescent community, which means they were also part of the pattern of spread of this change in progress. The present work has already discussed how some of the 12 informants like HN, HG, FN, EL, and JH favoured the use of *init* to standard English question tags and how their use of *init* were present in the linguistic environments examined earlier. These were also the informants who had friends from other ethnic groups in London. CC, CT, YH, JW, and GW also had friends from other ethnic groups but the present work has pointed out the use of *init* was constrained by the social economic classes the informants were in. The taking part in a change in progress and the evidence of a class constraint point towards the sociolinguistic competence of the informants. They also show that these informants are part of the larger youth community in London.
Ain't it vs. Init.

One new form that appears in the data is *ain't it*. There are only three such instances in the data. They were uttered by FN and JH. These were two of the three informants (the other one was HG) who had Black friends. A salient feature of London Jamaican English is the use of negative concord (Sebba, 1993). In varieties of English that have negative concord, *ain't* is the favoured negative negator (Cheshire, 1982; Labov, 1972b; Rickford, 1999). It is possible that the two informants, who used negative concord and who had speakers of London Jamaican English as friends, used *ain't it* as a variant of *init* by analogy.

The data showed that both FN and JH used *ain't* as a negator. For example:

*FN*  
*she ain't all that pretty, anyway.*

*JH*  
*Mm, there ain't no places down Si Wu.*

(+ / -) *be* vs. *Init.*

The data has shown a large number of instances of *isn't it*. With the exception of YH, EL, and GW, the other nine informants used *is it* and *isn't it* in non-standard English ways. Out of 26 instances of nonstandard English tags in the data, there are 21 instances with *is it* or *isn't it*. With one exception (FN’s 67), *is it* and *isn't it* share many environments with invariant *init* as used by these informants.

- The subjects in the main clauses can be singular or plural first person pronouns or singular or plural third person pronouns. The subjects can also be existential *there*.
- The verbs in the main clause can be copula *be*, a main verb, or an auxiliary verb.
- *Isn't it* can be used to express agreement with a statement made by another person.

However, unlike invariant *init*, the use of *isn't it* by the informants shows that there are constraints. First, *isn't it* is used with an affirmative clause. If the main clause is in the negative, *is it* is used. Instance 67 in FN’s data is the only exception. Second, the verbs in the main clauses are in present tense forms. Third, *is it* and *isn't it* is not used with second person pronoun subjects.

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Standard English Question Tags vs. *Init.*

Out of a total of 246 tags examined here, only 29 of them are standard English question tags. YH used only standard tags. However, it must be remembered that there are only two instances in her data. CT used standard English question tags in 6 out of 8 cases and CC used standard English question tags in 3 out of 6. JW used standard English question tags in 1 out of 4 cases. Both JT and KN used standard English question tags in 1 out of 5 cases. EL used standard English question tags 16% of the time in 4 out of 25 cases. FN used standard English question tags in 7 out of 74 cases. JH used standard English question tags in 2 out of 100 cases. HG, HN, and GW did not use standard English question tags at all.

Length of Stay Effect and *Init.*

HG and HN, who used *init* in all environments, arrived in London at age 5 and had been living in London for thirteen years by the time they were interviewed. FN arrived in London at age 8 and had been living in London for ten years when she was interviewed. FN still used standard English question tags with third person singular antecedent subjects. The finite verbs are all copula *be.* JH and EL arrived in London at age 10 and had only lived in London for eight years when they were interviewed. EL did not use standard English question tags or *init* with first person antecedent subjects. Her standard English question tags have third person antecedent singular subjects. The finite verbs are all copula *be.* JH used standard English question tags with first and third person singular antecedent subjects. The finite verbs in the statement are copula *be* and *know.* The patterns derived from the use and non-use of standard English question tags by these five informants can be applied to an apparent time method to construct a possible trajectory of change from using standard English question tags to using only *init* for these 5 informants.

After spending 8 years in London, the informants still used standard English question tags with first and third person antecedent singular subjects. The finite verbs in the statements would be main verbs and copula *be.* By the tenth year, they would not use standard English question tags with first person antecedent singular subjects. The finite verbs in the statements would be confined to copula *be.* By the thirteenth year, they would not use standard English question tags at all.
It must be pointed out that the length of stay did not have an effect on all 12 informants and only affected those informants who used *init* to replace standard English question tags in their use of English. CC and CT had been in London 5 years longer than EL and JH did. YH and JW had been in London 2 years longer than EL and JH did. Yet CC, CT, YH, and JW used *init* less frequently than JH and EL. Furthermore, the former used standard English question tags more often than the latter. EL and JH also used *init* to replace standard English question tags in more linguistic environments than CC, CT, YH, and GW. Therefore, there are other factors involved. The present work has investigated how social factors like the socioeconomic classes the informants came from plays an important role in the informants’ use of *init.*

**Conclusion.**

The evidence presented here indicates that there is no AOA effect on sociolinguistic competence, as part of the language development of the informants. The evidence is summarised as follows:

- Some of the informants who arrived in London at age 8 and age 10 used *init* rather than standard English question tags more frequently and in more linguistic environments than those who arrived at an earlier age or at the same age. FN arrived in London about 3 years after CC and CT. She arrived in London at the same age as JW and YH did. JH and EL arrived in London 5 years after CC and CT, and 2 years after JW and YH. Yet as the present work has shown, FN, EL, and JH were more advanced users of *init* than CC, CT, JW and YH.

- The socioeconomic classes the informants belonged to are a better predictor of the use of *init* than AOA. The parents of FN, EL, and JH were employees. These informants had different social economic background from CC, CT, JW, and YH whose parents were restaurant owners, takeaway owners, or a medical researcher.

- The data indicates that there is indication of a length of stay or AOA effect. The present work has explored the linguistic difficulty in replacing standard English question tags with *init* when the antecedent subject in the statement is a third person singular noun or pronoun and the finite verb is copula *be*. The data has suggested that it would take eleven to thirteen years for the informants to replace standard English question tags with *init* completely.
Based on the findings of Cheshire (1982) and Kerswill and Williams (2002), the present work has argued that the use of *init* is spreading. With the exception of CT and YH, the informants had used *init* as a variant of standard English question tags in their interviews. The work has shown that the use of *init* among 5 of them, HN, HG, FN, EL, and JH, was more advanced than the others. The data has also shown that some of the informants, used two other variants (+ / -) *be* and *ain't it*.

The study has also shown that there might be a possible gender difference among the informants' use of *init*. The female informant group used *init* less frequently than the male.

5.11 Information Staging (con't): *You know*.

**Participation Framework and Pragmatic Functions of *You Know*.**

For the analysis of the informants' use of *you know* in the interviews, the present work uses the participation framework that Schiffrin (1987) uses in her analysis of the pragmatic functions of *you know* as a discourse marker.

The interviews between the researcher and the informants entailed cooperation between them. In the interviews, information was exchanged between the researcher and the informants. It was mainly the researcher who asked the informants about their life and social practices in Hong Kong and in London. The informants did not always know whether some of the information they were going to give was already known to the researcher. For example, the researcher and the informants had both lived in Hong Kong and in London. They knew they shared some information about the two cities. They knew they belonged to the same ethnic group. However, they did not know if they shared a specific piece of information about their background. Previous to the following extract, CT had been talking about fashion shopping in London. CT did not know where the researcher bought his clothes and because the researcher was taller and larger than CT was, the informant did not know if the researcher knew where clothes fitting CT could
be bought. CT used you know to "create a situation in which the speaker knows about (has meta-
knowledge of) knowledge which is shared with the hearer" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 269):

CT  I'm a very small person, so I like buying clothes and I find that only a select few of the bigger
companies will stock you know, er, small sizes.

The informants knew that some information was important to the researcher for him to
understand their actions and values. Furthermore, they knew that the researcher had not had that
information previously. You know was used to bring that piece of information to the state of
meta-knowledge. Previous to the following extract, GW had been telling the researcher how
unreasonable her father had been at times. He had made her change schools eight times in Hong
Kong and London. The researcher had asked GW why she had not objected. The information,
that GW wanted her family to live in harmony above her dislike in her father's actions, was
important in understanding why she had not raised any objections at all. It was also a piece of
information that GW knew the researcher had not had. It was a piece of information about GW's
values that had not been mentioned previously.

GW  I know he, he wants the best for me, but I mean, it's like I do want, I kind of like know what I
want to do, but if he wants me to do that, and you know, I just want every, like the family to be
happy (laughs), so I understood, yeah.

The informants also used you know to mark "the general consensual truths which speakers
assume their hearers share through their co-membership in the same culture, society or group"
(Schiffrin, 1987, p. 275). Previous to the following extract, JH had been talking about his not
being able to make any friends when he first arrived in London. He knew that English not being
his first language was a piece of information the researcher had already had. JH probably marked
this information with you know because it was important to understand why he was quiet when
he first arrived in London and to obtain the researcher's agreement.

JH  Well, while I came, yeah, well, you know, my mother, first language is not English and I just
don't chat too much at all and I am just too quiet.

According to Schiffrin (1987), you know is used with formulaic expressions to mark "general
consensual truths" (p. 274). Previous to the following extract, JW had been telling the researcher
how he and his parents had made up. JW uttered a Cantonese formulaic expression (he then gave
an accurate translation in English). Both the Cantonese formulaic expression and the translation
were given as a general truth and JW marked them with you know three times. The general consensual truth embedded in the Cantonese formulaic expression is that ‘real’ fathers and sons must hate each other at some times. JW’s purpose of using the Cantonese formulaic expression was to tell the researcher that the feud between him and his father was natural and that this kind of conflict happens to every male person. The yeah (with a rising intonation) at the end of the utterance was to elicit an agreement from the researcher.

JW I mean like you know now I sorted out my problem with my dad, like you know, I mean, er, there is a saying in Chinese, you know, “Mouh sauh baht sihng fu ji” you know, you got to hate each other to be like you know, father and son basically, yeah?

Schiffrin (1987) also points out that you know is used with general description to mark general consensual truths. Previous to the following extract, GW and the researcher had been telling the researcher why her parents had only had Hong Kong Cantonese friends. She accounted for this social practice of their parents’ with a general description of what Chinese people are like:

GW Chinese people, they are like, really erm, erm protect themselves, you know, you know, (laughs).

Schiffrin (1987) points out that you know is present with tautology to mark general consensual truths. Instances of tautology that convey general consensual truths include war is war and boys will be boys.74 There are no such instances in the data.

In sum, you know has two discourse functions. The first function is to bring about the transition of a piece of information that the hearer may not have to becoming shared knowledge. The second function is to mark a piece of information as general consensual truth or shared knowledge.

You Know as a Stigmatised Linguistic Feature.

Linguistic researchers have suggested why you know is sometimes perceived as a stigmatised linguistic feature. Andersson and Trudgill (1990) point out it is because people believe that expressions like you know are not necessary and that they are merely fillers. Schiffrin (1987) points out that you know is stigmatised because people interpret it “as revealing a speaker’s

74 Both examples are from Schiffrin (1987, p. 275).
dependence on others for his / her own talk, simultaneously forcing the hearer into a (perhaps unwanted) relationship of exchange and reciprocity” (p. 311).

Findings.

Table 5.35: Number of Instances of You Know Produced by Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General consensual truths</th>
<th>Information previously known to the researcher</th>
<th>Information previously unknown to the researcher</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC (n = 13549) 0 0 16 (0.118) 16 (0.118)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n = 13067) 0 0 24 (0.184) 24 (0.184)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n = 17332) 6 (0.035) 0 273 (1.575) 279 (1.610)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n = 12774) 1 (0.008) 0 76 (0.595) 77 (0.603)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n = 23510) 5 (0.021) 2 (0.009) 125 (0.532) 132 (0.562)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n = 19296) 0 0 04 (0.021) 04 (0.021)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n = 11210) 0 0 13 (0.116) 13 (0.116)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n = 13523) 11 (0.081) 1 (0.007) 167 (1.235) 179 (1.324)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n = 18185) 0 4 (0.022) 58 (0.319) 62 (0.341)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n = 13905) 2 (0.014) 0 59 (0.424) 61 (0.439)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (n = 17000) 0 6 (0.035) 107 (0.563) 113 (0.665)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (n = 16122) 1 (0.006) 0 23 (0.143) 24 (0.149)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YH belong to Group 1. Her data yield the lowest percentage of you know (0.021). CC (0.118), HG (0.184), JT (0.116), and KN (0.149) belong to Group 2. The percentage of you know in their data ranges from 0.118 to 0.184. EL (0.341) and GW (0.439) belong to Group 3. HN (0.603), FN (0.562), and JH (0.665) belong to Group 4. JW (1.324) and CT (1.610) belong to Group 5.

Table 5.36: Grouping of Informants by Instances of You Know Produced by Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Group 1 YH (n = 19296) 04 (0.021)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>CC (n = 13549) 16 (0.1180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HG (n = 13067) 24 (0.184)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JT (n = 11210) 13 (0.116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KN (n = 16122) 24 (0.149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>EL (n = 18185) 62 (0.341)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GW (n = 13905) 61 (0.439)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>HN (n = 12774) 77 (0.603)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FN (n = 23510) 132 (0.562)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JH (n = 17000) 113 (0.665)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>CT (n = 17332) 279 (1.610)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JW (n = 13523) 179 (1.324)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Gender and the Use of *You Know*.

There are more instances of *you know* in the data of the male informants (685 instances) than in those of the female (299 instances). The three informants who used *you know* most frequently were all male. These informants were CT, JW, and JH. The proportion of *you know* in their data is higher than the top three female informants - FN, GW, and EL. The informant who used *you know* the least frequently was also female - YH.

As already pointed out, *you know* is a stigmatised linguistic feature. It is possible that the female informants were more conservative than the male informants in their use of stigmatised linguistic features like *you know*. For example, YH (AOA8, female) used *you know* least of all 12 informants. She was idealistic, conservative, and judgmental on people’s behaviours. In the following extracts, she told the researcher about her ideals and that she did not like England because of the ways people behaved.

YH  I just looked at England and I don’t feel this is my country. I look at people in history and they really like romantic and they were so patriotic to their country and I really admire that. And I look at people in England. They don’t like their country (rising), they throw rubbish on the floor, I mean that’s really small things, but they say they don’t like it, they want to go to America, they want to go abroad.

YH  I don’t know, I don’t know how it should be neither. There, because there’s some ideals that I look up to such as I feel people should love their country, and they should be loyal to their country and things like that.

YH was also the most conservative of all the 12 informants in using stigmatised linguistic features and sociolinguistic indicators. She had the fewest instances of *init* (0 instance), *be like* (1 instance) and *go* (1 instance) as quotative verb, and pop term types (3 instances) in her data.

Socioeconomic class and the Use of *You Know*.

Based on the same socioeconomic class categorisation used in Trudgill (1974), the informants can be divided into several socioeconomic classes according to their parents’ professions. YH had professional background because her father was a medical researcher. KN had nonmanual worker background because his parents were estate agents. CC, HG, CT, HN, and JW form one
group because their parents were employers. FN, JT, EL, GW, and JH from one group because their parents were employees in Chinese restaurants and takeaways, and a Chinese supermarket in Southeast London.

The findings show that the socioeconomic class of the male informants is not a good predictor of the number of instances of *you know* in their data. *You know* is a stigmatised linguistic feature and should be more robust with working class informants. In fact, CT (1.610%) and JW (1.324%), whose parents were employers and owner of restaurants and takeaways, had the highest percentage of *you know* in their data.

On the other hand, the findings also show that the socioeconomic class of the female informants is a good predictor of the number of instances of *you know* in their data. FN (0.562%), EL (0.341%), and GW (0.439%), the three female informants whose parents were employees, had higher percentages of instances of *you know* in their data than CC (0.118%), HG (0.184%), and YH (0.021%), whose parents were employers or professionals, had in theirs.

That the socioeconomic class of the female informants is a good predictor must be taken can be considered in connection to the relationships the female informants had with their parents. FN, EL, and GW were dissatisfied with the ways their parents imposed their control over them. HG, although she had a lower percentage than the three informants mentioned above, had a higher percentage than CC and YH. The use of *you know* among these 4 female informants was more robust than that of CC and YH, who were happy with the relationships they had with their parents.

CT, HN, JW, and JH were also angry with their parents. Their use of *you know* was more robust than that of JT and KN. In the following, the issue of parental control and the use of *you know* will be examined in more details.

**Parental Control and the Use of You Know.**

Some female informants were unhappy with the female role they had to play in the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. In particular, they were dissatisfied with the constraints
imposed upon them by their parents. Their parents objected to their having boyfriends. They tried to stop their daughters from going out. Parental constraints on the female informants’ freedom of association and their freedom of movement was a central issue with the female informants. The issue was raised by the informants voluntarily without any prompts from the researcher. For example, YH was telling the researcher about how she spent her time and YH raised the issue of parental control as an explanation of her freedom.

YH  Well I spend quite a lot of time doing my homework, especially History. I read a lot of books and while you didn't really need to at the age of eleven, I realise, but erm, I don't know, when I got a bit older, I went out with my friends down to London because my parents were quite liberal, they let me out and we came from a lot of backgrounds.

For CC, parental control over her freedoms of movement and association was not an issue because she seldom went out. Three female informants were especially dissatisfied with their parents and the Hong Kong Cantonese community over this issue. GW justified the constraints imposed by her parents as parental concerns and protection. HG told her parents that she was spending the night with her cousins whenever she wanted to stay out late. FN chose direct confrontation and quarrelled with her parents over this issue.

FN was the most angry and frustrated of the six female informants. She was angry and frustrated because she believed that she lived in a sexist environment that was Chinese. Unlike her younger brother, she had to live with constraints imposed upon her by her parents who still tried to stop her from going out or that she could not stay out late when she was 18. She had to hide the fact that she had a boyfriend from her parents. At the same time, she noticed that female adolescents in other ethnic groups, especially the English, do not live with the same constraints. In the following extract, she told the researcher that English and Chinese parents would behave differently towards the pregnancy of their unmarried daughters:

FN  It’s still about, they [English girls] still have their parents to support them but I know as a matter of fact yeah, if that happen to me, and my parents would never support me but I don’t know if they’d disown me, but they would not like, approve, basically.

Of all the female informants, FN was the one who used stigmatised linguistic features and sociolinguistic indicators the most. She led the female informants group in their use of you know, init, be like and zero quotative as quotative verb.
EL had more freedom of movement than FN, HG, and GW. Her parents did not object to her going out. However, her parents were concerned over the boyfriend issue. Furthermore, EL was unhappy with her parents over her right to smoke:

EL (laughs) Well, they [EL's parents] found out, and I still said “No, it's not mine.” Well, I was blaming it on Joe and my best friends, and I still say “No” Well, it just, I just said “No, I don't smoke” Well, this time, the last time they found it, they found out, I just say “Yeah, mine. I've been smoking” I admitted to it.

EL Me mum was always sarcastic to me, you know, “You always go out. You can, you can smoke with everyone” It just turn out I don't smoke, it just turn out that I don't smoke. Really, I just keep saying that I don't smoke. Or I say “I don't smoke cigarette. To tell you the truth, I smoke cigar.” (LL laughs) That's what I say to them.

The male informants were subjected to this sort of parental constraints to a lesser degree. For example, JH’s parents did not like his staying out late. JH, while feeling guilty, insisted on having complete independence over his freedom of movement.

JH Oh, no, cause I am an adult now. They don't care that much, sorry (JH spills some water). And, well they do but while, while I always come back at five in the morning, yeah, they do. They just don't go to sleep, they wait for me. And yeah, I feel sorry (laughs) but what can I do? I want to hang out, ain't it? I want to hang about.

CT, HN, and JW all had similar problems with their parents. However, their parents’ concern with more over the time spent on clubbing and other social activities than on personal safety. CT’s mother wanted him to devote his time studying instead of going out with his friends. The parents of HN and JW also wanted their sons to spend time studying and working in the takeaways instead of spending their time in clubs. This led to open conflict between CT, HN, JW, and their parents.

Those informants who were happy with their parents used you know the least. CC and YH, as already mentioned, did not have any problem at all with their parents over the issue of going out. JT and KN did not have this kind of problem with their parents, either. They were the informants who used you know the least.

You know is a better candidate for the informants to show separation from parents than other stigmatised sociolinguistic indicators because their parents, belonging to older age groups, might be more familiar with you know than with new sociolinguistic indicators like, for example, init.
As migrants who had lived in London for eight to thirteen years, the parents would be familiar with the misconception that *you know* was only used as fillers. As parents who wanted their children to succeed in education and in their career, they might be more upset when their children used *you know* than when their children used *init* because they might believe that the presence of *you know* indicated a lack of speaker fluency in their children’s L2.

**Participation and the Use of You Know.**

Most of the instances of *you know* in the data had been categorised as information previously unknown to the researcher. Of the total 984 instances of *you know* in their data, 945 instances (or 96.37%) belong to this category. The high percentage of instances in this category may not be abnormally high because the data were elicited from interviews where information new to the researcher had been passed on to him by the informants. The high percentage indicates that the informants used *you know* to “create a situation in which the speaker knows about (has meta-knowledge of) knowledge which is shared with the hearer” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 269) to participate with the researcher in the interviews.

**Conclusion.**

The informants mainly used *you know* to mark new information they gave in the interviews. As a stigmatised sociolinguistic indicator, *you know* was more common in the speech of the male informants regardless of socioeconomic class than with the females. This finding is in line with the view that females are more conservative than males in the use of stigmatised linguistic features. The findings also show that the socioeconomic class of the female informants was a better predictor with the use of *you know* but not for the males. The present work has pointed out that *you know* was likely to be used by the informants who were least happy with their parents, thus suggesting that use of a stigmatised variable may be connected to adolescent rebellion from authority.
5.12  *Be like.*

Romaine and Lange (1998) point out that *like* is going through a grammaticalisation process. The latest stage of this change in progress is that *like* functions as a marker with quotative function. The researchers offer the following examples to illustrate the different functions of *like*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>She looks <em>like</em> her father. [preposition]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Winston tastes good <em>like</em> a cigarette should. [conjunction]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>He bought along things for the picnic, foods, drinks, and <em>such-like</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>The sculpture looked quite human-<em>like</em>. [suffix]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>And there were <em>like</em> people blocking, you know? [discourse marker]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Mary’s <em>like</em> “Kim come over here and be with me and Brett”. [discourse marker with quotative function]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(all examples and glosses from Romaine and Lange 1998, p. 253)

Romaine and Lange (1998) observe that *be like* appears in the informal conversations of young people in Britain. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) analyse the use of the reporting verb *be like* among university students in Britain and in Canada. The researchers report the following findings on the use of reporting verbs:

- *Say* (31%) is the most popular form among their British subjects.
- *Go* (18%), *think* (18%), and *be like* (18%) are less popular than *say* but they are equally robust.

Zero quotative (10%) makes up the majority of the rest in their data.

**Table 5.37:** Distribution of Reporting Verbs in British and Canadian English (after Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999, p. 158).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting verbs</th>
<th>British English (%)</th>
<th>Canadian English (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be like</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zero quotative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be just</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to be</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) also report the following:

- Their British female subjects favour *be like* more than their British male subjects.
- Their British subjects favour to use *be like* with first person grammatical subjects.
In English, there is a clear division of labour between say and think. Say is used to report what someone has said (or external dialogues) and think is used to report thoughts (or external dialogues). Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) report that be like, go, and zero quotative were used by their British subjects for marking both external and internal dialogues. The present study also finds instances of be like, zero quotative, and go in the data that seem to mark internal dialogues.

For example:

**KN** he is like “Oh, erm, I’m playing internationally, and not for the school” or something like that.

**EL** and I XXX “Hey, I like him”, then I buy the CD.

**HG** You see a top in a shop and you go “Tacky”. Or something’s dirty.

These can be instances of internal dialogues because they reported an attitude of each of the speakers. However, it is more difficult to decide whether other instances of go, zero quotative, or be like were used to mark direct speech or thoughts. For example:

**CC** So we were like “Hmm, this is a strange place.” because apparently, this, erm, the street that we were walking down had, you know, big name, brand name shops. [On getting lost in Japan]

**KN** and he was like “No, Chan is better than me.” but then I haven’t even started for like three months, I don’t play for ages, I don’t even like it, so XXX “OK then, I’ll just play then”, I am glad I won some (chuckles), it’s funny, that is. [On how he became a member of the school chess team.]

Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) differentiated external dialogues from internal ones using the following criteria:

If the constructed dialogue reported an attitude or a general feeling of the narrator or group of people, then it is considered internal dialogue. If it was contained in a sequence of reported dialogue (i.e. complicating action) which advanced the story line, or was part of an utterance to which the protagonists responded, it was coded as direct speech. (p. 156)

The researchers also offer examples of how instances of quotative verb are categorised as external or internal dialogues. In the following example, the researchers categorised the final instance (Instance 7) of quotative verb as a marker of internal dialogue.

1 She’s like “Right, you know, we’re taking you out.”
2 I was like “Ah, I don’t want to go out. Please no.”
3 And they’re like “Come on, go and get dressed.”
4 And Sue Parker – Sue Parker’s dad makes home brew wine
5 and it’s so strong it’s absolutely lethal.
6 So she bought a bottle of that round and we drank that
7 I was like “OK. I want to go out!” (p. 156)
Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) have not used mutually exclusive criteria for their differentiation between internal and external dialogues. This makes the categorisation of instances of quotative verb into internal and external dialogues unreliable. Instance 2 of the above extract expresses an attitude of a narrator and should be an instance of internal dialogue. On the other hand, the instance is also contained “in a sequence of reported dialogue (i.e. complicating action) which advanced the story line” (p. 156) and it therefore should be an instance of external dialogue. Instance 7, which the researchers classified as an instance of internal dialogue, expresses an attitude of the same narrator. It was also contained in a series of complicated actions (we drank that; I was like).

The present work notes the importance of investigating whether the informants used *be like* to mark internal dialogues. Such instances would indicate that the informants took part in “its expansion from use in constructions of hypothetical speech events imputed to a particular speaker to an introducer of all types of constructed dialogue” (Tagliamonte and Hudson, 1999, p. 156). However, in light of the difficulty in differentiating instances of internal dialogue from external ones marked with *go*, zero quotative, and *be like*, the researcher will not explore this aspect of quotative verb.

**The Informants’ Use of Quotative Verb Forms.**

There are 479 instances of quotative verb forms in the data. Table 5.38 shows the number of instances of quotative verb uttered by each informant according to the verb forms.
Table 5.38: Distribution of Reporting Verbs by Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zero (n=21)</th>
<th>Be like (n=52)</th>
<th>Say (n=57)</th>
<th>Go (n=24)</th>
<th>Think (n=62)</th>
<th>Others (n=28)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>05 (23.81%)</td>
<td>03 (14.29%)</td>
<td>08 (38.10%)</td>
<td>04 (19.05%)</td>
<td>01 (04.76%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>06 (11.54%)</td>
<td>06 (11.54%)</td>
<td>30 (57.69%)</td>
<td>07 (13.46%)</td>
<td>03 (06.77%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>20 (35.09%)</td>
<td>03 (05.26%)</td>
<td>27 (47.37%)</td>
<td>04 (06.67%)</td>
<td>03 (05.26%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>15 (62.5%)</td>
<td>01 (01.61%)</td>
<td>01 (01.61%)</td>
<td>05 (20.83%)</td>
<td>02 (08.33%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>19 (30.65%)</td>
<td>20 (32.26%)</td>
<td>05 (08.06%)</td>
<td>07 (11.29%)</td>
<td>06 (09.86%)</td>
<td>05 (08.06%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH</td>
<td>05 (17.86%)</td>
<td>01 (03.57%)</td>
<td>18 (64.29%)</td>
<td>01 (03.57%)</td>
<td>01 (03.57%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>02 (33.33%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
<td>04 (66.67%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>13 (22.03%)</td>
<td>01 (01.69%)</td>
<td>36 (61.02%)</td>
<td>05 (08.47%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
<td>04 (06.78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>24 (25.53%)</td>
<td>07 (07.45%)</td>
<td>34 (36.17%)</td>
<td>17 (18.09%)</td>
<td>09 (09.57%)</td>
<td>03 (03.19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>01 (6.25%)</td>
<td>00 (00.00%)</td>
<td>08 (50.00%)</td>
<td>04 (25.00%)</td>
<td>01 (06.25%)</td>
<td>02 (12.50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>22 (35.48%)</td>
<td>08 (12.90%)</td>
<td>11 (17.74%)</td>
<td>14 (22.58%)</td>
<td>03 (04.84%)</td>
<td>04 (06.45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>10 (23.81%)</td>
<td>13 (30.95%)</td>
<td>08 (19.05%)</td>
<td>03 (07.14%)</td>
<td>06 (14.29%)</td>
<td>02 (04.76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>63 (12.05%)</td>
<td>190 (36.29%)</td>
<td>71 (13.58%)</td>
<td>29 (5.54%)</td>
<td>28 (5.35%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Say is the most favoured quotative verb among the informants. Out of the total 523 instances of quotative verbs in the data, there are 190 instances of say or 36.29%. The percentage is higher than the percentage (31%) reported by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999). Say was the most popular form for eight informants. They were CC (AOA5; 38.10%), HG (AOA5; 57.69%), CT (AOA5; 47.37%), YH (AOA8; 64.29%), JT (AOA8; 66.67%), JW (AOA8; 61.02%), EL (AOA10; 36.17%), and GW (AOA10; 50.00%). The exceptions were HN (AOA5; 1.61%), FN (AOA8; 8.06%), JH (AOA10; 17.74%), and KN (AOA10; 19.05%). For HN (62.5%) and JH (35.48%), the most popular form was zero quotative. Be like was the most popular form for FN (32.26%) and KN (30.95%).

Zero quotative was the second most favoured quotative verb for CC (23.81%), CT (35.09%), FN (30.65%), YH (17.86%), JT (33.33%), JW (22.03%), EL (25.53%), JH (35.48%), and KN (23.81%). Go was the second most popular form for HG (13.46%), HN (30.83%), and JH (22.58%).

The informants can be divided in 4 groups according to the proportion of be like to other quotative verbs in the data. HN (AOA5; 1.61%), JW (AOA8; 1.69%), JT (AOA8; 0%), and GW (AOA10; 0%) are in Group 1. CT (AOA5; 5.26%), YH (AOA8; 3.57%), and EL (AOA10; 7.45%) are in Group 2. CC (AOA5; 14.29%), HG (AOA5; 11.54%), and JH (AOA10; 12.9%) are in Group 3. FN (AOA8; 32.26%) and KN (AOA10; 30.95%) are in Group 4.
Table 5.39: Grouping of Informants by Instances of *Be Like* Produced by Informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Be like</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>HN AOA5 (n=24)</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JT AOA10 (n=06)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JW AOA8 (n=59)</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GW AOA10 (n=16)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>CT AOA5 (n=57)</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YH AOA8 (n=28)</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL AOA10 (n=94)</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>7.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>CC AOA5 (n=21)</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HG AOA5 (n=52)</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>11.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JH AOA10 (n=62)</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>FN AOA5 (n=62)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KN AOA10 (n=42)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AOA does not have any influence on the use of *be like*. Groups 1 and 2 consist of informants from all 3 AOA groups. Group 3 consists of 2 informants (CC and HG) from the AOA5 group and one (JH) from the AOA10 group. For Group 4, FN belongs to the AOA8 group and KN belongs to the AOA10 group.

There is little gender difference. The female informants (37 out of 523 instances of quotative verb or 7.075%) used *be like* slightly more frequently than the male informants (26 out of 523 instances of quotative verb or 41.27%). This finding is different from the finding on gender difference in the use of *be like* in Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) study. The researchers report that their female British subjects use more *be like* than their male subjects do has also been reported by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) also report that the use of *be like* is favoured in first person contexts. The findings of this study show that the use of *be like* among the informants was favoured in third person contexts.
Table 5.40: Instances of *Be Like* Produced by Informants According to Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First person subjects</th>
<th>second person subjects</th>
<th>third person subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC (n=03)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n=06)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n=03)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n=01)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n=20)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n=01)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n=0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n=01)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n=07)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n=0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (n=08)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (n=13)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>17 (26.98%)</td>
<td>1 (1.59%)</td>
<td>45 (71.43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Quotative Forms.

Other quotative forms were produced by the informants. These quotative forms included *ask, feel, tell, and think*. There are 4 instances of *be* and 2 instances of *like* without *be* as quotative verb.

These 6 instances are listed as follows:

- FN: And I was “Oh, God, what happen to her?”
- FN: And they were “Oh, she’s old, she’s out of then (inaudible)”
- JH: They were on about, you know, “The petrol, the insurance, the road tax, and the, the, the, blah, blah, blah”
- JH: If you are on about this guy, yeah, or some girl who is fit, “oh, she’s bad, man”.
- HG: There’s at least one Chinese person there and they would like “Yeah”
- GW: Erm, they use to just like "If it's wrong, and change it".

All 4 instances in the data were produced by 2 informants, FN and JH. The percentage of *be* as quotative verb in the data (0.76%) is lower than the percentage in the British data (2%) of Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999). Cross linguistic influence of Cantonese is a possible explanation to account for the informants, as a group, abstaining from using *be* as quotative verb. Cantonese allows copula deletion and the copula *haih* “would not be used except as a focus
marker in an emphatic sentence or to refute a claim” (Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 129). The informants might have avoided using be as quotative verb because of the differences in grammar and pragmatic rules governing the use of the copula be in English and the copula hath in Cantonese.

Another explanation is that the informants may not have known about or acquired this usage.

The 2 instances of like as quotative verb without be were produced by HG (AOA5) and GW (AOA10). It is possible that a new quotative verb from has been developed by these informants. However, this seems unlikely because like as quotative verb has not been reported and because there are only 2 such instances out of a total of 523 instances of quotative verb in the data. A more likely explanation is that these two instances were either due to cross-linguistic influence from Cantonese, which allows copula deletion, or were simply (developmental) errors. Without further instances, it is impossible to know what these cases mean.

Discussion.

The findings indicate that there was no AOA effect on the use of be like among the informants. However, unlike the findings in the study by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999), there is not any clear gender difference.

Say was the most popular quotative form of quotative verb for 8 informants. These informants were CC, HG, CT, YH, JT, JW, EL, and GW. They contributed 165 instances of say out of a total of 523 instances of quotative verbs in the data (or 31.55%). The percentage is close to the one (31%) given by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) for their British subjects.

Another similarity between the findings of this study and those in Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) is that be as a quotative verb is used less frequently than say, be like, go, and zero quotative. In fact, only two informants, FN and JH, used it twice each.

However, there are other differences between the findings of this study and those of Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999). The informants of the present work used be like less frequently (12.05%)

353
than the British subjects (18%) of Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) and unlike the latter subjects, who used *be like* predominantly with first person subjects, the informants of this study used *be like* mainly with third person subjects (71.43%).

Furthermore, the informants in the present study differed from the British subjects of Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) in their use of *go*, zero quotative, and *be*. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) report the same percentage (18%) of *go* and zero quotative in the data of their British subjects. *Be* constituted 2% of the quotative verb forms in their data. The informants in the present study, as a group, preferred zero quotative (142 out of 523 instances of quotative verbs or 27.15%) to *go* (71 out of 523 instances of quotative verbs or 13.58%). As a group, the informants did not prefer *be* as quotative verb (4 out of 523 instances of quotative verbs or 0.76%).

FN (32.26%) and KN (30.95%) were the only two informants who had more instances of *be like* than instances of other quotative verb forms in their data, including *say*. As already pointed out, Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) found that females use *be like* more than males do. FN was one of the 3 female informants who expressed that they were unhappy with the constraints imposed upon them by their parents. For example, they had to ask for permission to go out and they had to return home by a certain time. FN believed that the constraints were sexist because her brother was treated differently by their parents. She also believed that the constraints were idiosyncratic of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. FN could use *be like*, because it is preferred more by females than by males, to express her frustration.

**FN**

Like my brother, he's coming seventeen, so and so, he doesn't like to go out but because he's a guy, I think my parents don't mind as much, because the fact that he is a guy so it would be apparently less dangerous and you know, this and that, but it's sexist, init? Girls and boys, init? basically.

**FN**

but English people, you tend to find that their parents are more relaxed, and you know, you know, happy about what they do. But they allow their daughter to do something, they even take their boy friend home at sixteen. But my parents never let me take my boy friend home until I'm like, I don't know, (laughs) at uni, it's like, about I know that like my friends like, when I was sixteen and I went school together, more or less, she never, a lot of them took their boyfriends home, a lot of them would like smoke in front of their parents but obviously you find a few that won't, but majority I think English parents, they allow their kids to do what they want and you know, they are more relaxed than, you know, open, and like, for example, yeah, if I got pregnant,

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75 The other two were HG and GW.
I wouldn't go home until my mama, you'll be laughing at that time, but you know I tend to find that English parents do support their children.

Thus, it can be said that FN was perhaps more likely than some other subjects to rebel and innovate in her behaviour, including her linguistic behaviour.

In contrast, KN did not report that he had problems with his parents. He might have used be like more often than other informants because as an individual who was relatively assimilated in the general youth culture in London, sociolinguistic indicators as indicators of assimilation are not relevant. KN took part in extra-curricular activities organised by his schools. He swam and played chess for the schools. He was a prefect and the head of graphics for the school magazine at age 18. He had had contact with non-Cantonese students through these activities and he learnt to use be like, go, and zero quotative as well as say and think because they belonged to a community of students who shared similar extra-curricular activities. However, the friends he went out with were all Cantonese speakers. He might not have used be like in the same proportion as other male adolescents in London or elsewhere in England because he did not belong to friendship networks that included non-Cantonese speakers.

8 informants (CC, CT, HN, YH, JW, JT, EL, and JH) used a higher proportion of zero quotative than be like and go. Zero quotative is the potential sociolinguistic indicator that marks their Hong Kong Cantonese community in London. That zero quotative is chosen over other possible sociolinguistic indicators such as be like and go maybe partly a result of crosslinguistic influence of Cantonese, which, being a topic prominent language, allows omission of the grammatical subject of a clause “where it is already established as the topic of the discourse” (Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 83). For example:

A: Leth jung-mh-jungyi sihk Chiujau choi a? 
   you like-not-like eat Chiujau food PRT
   “Do you like Chiujau food?”

B: Ganghaih jungyi la.
   of-course like PRT
   “Yes, of course I do.” (Example and gloss from Matthews and Yip, 1994, p. 83)

The informants might have preferred zero quotative to other quotative verb forms because constructed speech with zero quotative is close to Cantonese constructions with omitted subjects.
Apart from FN and KN, two other informants, HG and GW, did not prefer zero quotative to be like. The proportion of be like and zero quotative are the same in HG’s data. Like FN, HG was frustrated by the constraints imposed on her by her parents. HG could use be like, because it is preferred more by females than by males, to express her frustration.

HG It’s my parents, they think I am too young to be talking to boys and said they didn’t like me going out cause they think I would be talking to boys, and do stupid things, cause basically I had to lie to them.

HG It’s like that. Cause they don’t like us hanging out with boys. They think, you know, we’d get pregnant and all that. Lose face to people, it’s all about them losing face.

GW was angry at the constraints imposed on her by her parents. However, unlike FN and HG, she was less rebellious. She did not lie to her parents in order to go out with her friends, as HG did, nor did she ignore her parents’ displeasure, as FN did. On weekdays, GW would spend some time with her friends after school and returned home at six thirty in the evening, just before her father returned to work. She accepted the constraints for two possible reasons. Unlike FN and HG, GW would not find the constraints as sexist because she did not have a brother who was given more freedom than his female siblings. Another reason may be that it was her nature to accept what she was told to do or not to do. Furthermore, unlike FN and HG who thought that the constraints were motivated by face, she believed that her parents were genuinely concerned with her safety.

GW I just want every, like the family to be happy (laughs).

GW No. I mean my parents, they don’t really want me to go out. They don’t really cause it’s like this stuff they heard from the news, it’s like they are scared and safety.

GW only went out with her Cantonese friends. The fact that she had not belonged to any social group that had non-Cantonese members might explain why she had not used be like at all. GW had the lowest percentage use of zero quotative (6.25%) and the highest percentage use of go (25.00%) among the informants. GW’s patterns of the use of quotative verb were different from the others because she spent little time with her Cantonese friends.

So far, the present work has suggested social network, extra-curricular activities of the informants, and crosslinguistic influence as explanations to account for the informants’ patterns of use of quotative verbs. What follows are two possible reasons to account of the different patterns found in this study and those in Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999).
The difference in subject/informant profiles between the present study and that of Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) may account for some of the differences. The subjects in the Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) study were university students in York while the informants in this study were secondary school students. The informants in the present study use quotative verbs in ways that are different from those in the Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) study because they belonged to different groups of students. In addition, the British university students in the Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) study would have been 18 or over when the data were collected. The informants in the present study were all 18 when the interviews took place.

Furthermore, the student subjects in the Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) study might have been undergoing dialect levelling. It was likely that the British university students in Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) study were originally from different parts of Britain and came to York and shared their life in the same community for the duration of their studies. These university student subjects might have had different patterns of quotative verb usage before they arrived in York but they avoided the differences in their use of quotative verbs. The informants in the study, on the other hand, lived in London and the ways they used quotative verbs might have reflected those that were used in London or Southeast England.

Quotative Verb as Sociolinguistic Indicator for the Informants.

The informants’ use of quotative verb indicates that they were part of the greater youth community. The informants used say, zero quotative, be like, and think. Say was the favourite quotative verb for 8 informants and for all 12 informants as a group. The preferred choice of say is similar to the findings in the study conducted by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999).

Although there are instances of be like in the data, the percentage of this quotative verb in the data is lower than the percentage of be like given by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999). Furthermore, the informants in the present study preferred to use be like with third person

76 Williams and Kerswill (1999) define dialect levelling as “a process whereby differences between regional varieties are reduced, features which make varieties distinctive disappear, and new features emerge and are adopted by speakers over a wide geographical area” (p. 149).
subjects while the subjects of Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) preferred to use be like with first person subjects.

As already pointed out, there is little sociolinguistic research on how youths in London use be like. If youths of other ethnic groups in London have the same patterns of use of quotative verb as the British subjects in Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) study, then be like can be used by Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London to mark the boundaries of their own community because they preferred to use be like with third person subjects. It would also indicate that Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London are at the peripheries of a greater youth community in London.

The preference of zero quotative among the informants as a group suggests that it is the most suitable quotative verb to mark the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London. All 12 informants used zero quotative. Another reason is that, as a group, the percentage of zero quotative of the informants (27.15%) was higher than the percentage (18%) in the data of Tagliamonte and Hudson’s (1999) study. Furthermore, the percentage of zero quotative in the data of 9 informants (CC, CT, HN, FN, JT, JW, EL, JH, and KN) was higher than 18%. The range for these 9 informants was between 62.5% (HN) to 22% (JW). The percentage of zero quotative of YH was 17.86%.

Go is a less suitable candidate than be like and zero quotative for the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents to mark their community boundaries. Only 11 informants used go as quotative verb. The percentage of go as quotative verb ranged from 25% (GW) to 0% (JT). It fell below the 18% mark for 6 informants (HG, CT, FN, YH, JT, and KN).

Be is a candidate for marking the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community in London by its absence. There are only 4 instances of be as quotative verb in the data.

Conclusion.

The present work has looked at the informants’ use of quotative verbs. It has found patterns of use that are similar to those reported by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999). On the other hand, there are differences in the patterns of use reported by the two studies. The main differences lie
in the subject context of *be like* and the Hong Kong informants' preference of zero quotative to *be like* and *go*. The present work has also suggested that the differences indicate that Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents in London form a community of their own by their use of zero quotative and *be like*.

5.13 Pop terms.

The discussion of the pop terms used by the informants are divided into three parts. Part One describes the pop terms used by the informants. Part Two discusses the self-reports the informants made on their use of pop terms. Part Three is a discussion of the findings discussed in Part One and Part Two.

**Part One**

Part One begins with a list of the pop-term types used by the informants. The gloss of each of these types, from Green (1998), is given in parentheses. The list also includes a description of how these pop-term types were used by the informants. Each pop-term type is categorised according to its root word and its meaning.

For example, *boss* was used by the informants with two different meanings. *Boss* means *superior* and it also means *the manager*. Thus *boss* meaning *superior* and *boss* meaning *the manager* are two separate types. *Clue* and *clueless* share the same root word. However, *clue* means *knowledge* and *clueless* means *ignorant*. *Clue* and *clueless* are also treated as two separate types.

The meaning of some of the pop terms is based on how the informants used the terms. For example, the meanings and usage of *hang around*, *hang about*, and *hang out* are so close that it is more expedient to group the three pop terms under the same entry, as *hang about*.

*JH*  And yeah, I feel sorry (laughs) but what can I do? I want to *hang out*, init?

*JH*  I want to *hang about*. I don't have any savings at all.
And they hang around with like themselves, like all their friends.

I don't. I don't hang out with them.

107 different pop terms were identified. All but one were found in Green (1998). The exception is marked with *.

The list of pop terms as used by the informants.

Arsehole / Asshole (a derogative term)

Yeah, yeah, his songs' good but like even in person, he's just an arsehole.

Sorry?

He's just an arsehole.

*Be there for (to support / to help)

she was always helping me, she's always there for me, and everything,

we haven't had an argument or anything, erm, I'm always there for her

she's always upset and er, she's always there for me.

Bet one's bottom dollar (be certain)

I can bet my bottom dollar on that, you know

Big head (a conceited and arrogant person)

Things like that, yeah. Not being a big head or anything (LL laughs).

and they are rich, so automatically, they become a bit like, you know, a bit too big headed, and then not as nice, people, some of them (laughs).

Bird (a girl)

This bird called Michelle and a few others. I can't remember their English names.

Bloke (a man)

I've got nothing on the person you want me to be. It could be either Tom Cruise or Vinnie Jones, I don't care.

It's a bloke?

Bloody hell (an expletive)

so we are going to see MI Two, "Tom Cruise's in it, he's nice". "Bloody hell, alright then, if he's nice, then (inaudible) then go there, go and see it tomorrow." Yeah.

he came along and he told her they fancy her and her, bloody hell.
Boss 1 (superior)

CT this other guy seem to have some, some kind of need to dominate the territory, as it were, and made sure that I knew **who was boss** (laughs)

Boss 2 (*the employer / the manager*)

JH but the, **the boss**, yeah, the governor, expects me to do much more work
JH **my boss'** brother, yeah, he came from Belgium on a holiday
JH **my bosses** had a new house, yeah?
JH That depends if, if **the boss** fires me or not?
JH I told you, init? I went to **my bosses** house.

Brilliant (excellent)

CC I don’t have enough energy to go anywhere. So you know, social life was dead.
LL (chuckles) OK.
CC Not that it was **brilliant** anyway but it was more dead.

Buddy (a friend)

JH Some of them are **buddies**, init?

Bump into (to meet accidentally)

YH and another Chinese girl, I **bumped into**, she’s still in Kingston

Bunk off (to play truant)

FN when I bunk school or something like that

Can (to throw out)

HN Madame Tussauds. Last time I went I got **canned** (LL laughs).
HN I couldn’t tell you where it was. I got **canned** last time.

Chat (to talk familiarly)

JT we just go to Trafalgar Square and just sit there and just **chat** to each other,
JW We actually like you know, **chat** about loads of things for about three hours, you know,
KN They, they just **chat** outside or play majhong, and we play majhong as well.
YH I saw her quite a few times (rising) and we **chatted**, like as we was in normal old times
YH I don’t really like pubs, cause I don’t drink (rising), unless I go there for a **chat**.

Cheers (thank you)

HN yeah, please. Cheers.
JH Or even got, where you got a Chinatown, you buy them, yeah, they are, they are **pirates** (LL pours JH some more mineral water) Cheers.
JH Yeah. Sorry can I have a tissue? (LL gets up and gives a box of tissues and gives it to JH). OK. Cheers.

Chink, Chinky (Chinese)

FN And they was like “Why you are with a Chinky” What’s wrong with you, yeah?” init? “You like fried rice?”
HN Like people like who you are, like Chink and all that, you know.
HN someone come up to me, pull his eyes, it’s like up and then like call me something like Chink or something like that
JH And there was some racists, just call me Chinks and stuff, so, I, I just didn't take it.
JH I got beaten up once by a half caste, a half white, half black, er, he call me Chink or something,
KN she’s like a Chinese person and she call me a Chink yesterday, yeah?
KN he’s like “If my friend call me a Chink, I’ll beat him up or something” (chuckles)
JW they were saying things like Chinky and stuff like that, like I should be like in China

Chuck (to throw)

EL I gonna chuck it away after I read it, so,
JH She said, “No” so I chuck that six thousand gi hok [paper cranes] to her,

Clean (guiltless)

JH Yeah and I, er, take charge of the money. Hmmhmm. I've been clean shall I say?

Clue (knowledge / information)

CT (mumbles) Em, mmm, other than ringing up my friend and asking him, I wouldn’t have a clue where this place is as well.
EL Er, I don’t know, got a clue about any of those place. Abbey Hall, Westminster Abbey, and that, mmm.
EL No. I don’t know. I am not got a clue.
HN Cause I never had a clue who they were but they know me.

Clueless (ignorant)

KN Oh, I don’t actually know a lot, I mean, I’m actually clueless about music, the world, but just technology,

Cocky (arrogant)

HN He's just like young and cocky, you know. It's like “Yeah. Look, I'm Nicholas See and I'm amazing” sort of thing, you know, “I'm a girl idol”, something like that, yeah.

Cool (good)

HN Alright, yeah. Yeah, yeah. They are normally quite cool
JH And then I watch it on the cinema. It's quite cool.
JH I can't remember the name of it. It's quite cool. And er, I watch the latest Jet Li film, Romeo Must Die, have you heard of it?

JH Ouch, that's cool.

JH Yeah, LV, Las Vegas pretty cool.

JH Well as I say, Funland, LV, or even Namco Station. It's cool down there.

JH So I practice it at home, yeah, and I show off. It's quite cool out there, you know.

JH If I go down Hippodrome, yeah, they do like, you know, play those songs and it's quite cool.

JH Yeah, he's quite cool. I like him. Yeah, all the girls like him.

Cool (dispassionate)

KN like the people in London are more, you know, cooler, and think they are better than you, you know.

Cor (God)

JH Well, the GCSE subjects? Cor, oh, cor, mm, English, science, double science, maths, for sure, erm, GCSE geography, business studies, music, er, that was it, I guess.

JH Cor, those big guys, innit?

Crap (inferior)

CC May be I'll use it to say something's really shit, as in something's like crap or something. Or just, in general it's not good.

JH can't remember all the others, NEC, er, they are all crap.

Cuss (to insult)

FN She got quite violent cause it was like cussing her, like talking about her, and afterwards and she sort of walked away but I heard she was quite nasty too. She was cussing. And the police got involve but the black guys run away, innit?

Dim (stupid)

EL "You so dim."

EL She is, sometimes she just dim. I don't know what can I say about her.

Dodgy (dubious)

CC We just kept on walking and walking and walking and it just kept on getting dodgier and dodgier and dodgier. And then, there aren't any, there are no pavements to speak of, so we slip, got run over a few times as well.

Draw (cannabis)

HN People use to smoke draw and stuff like that. Yeah.

HN It's like, it's just like I'm at different parties, you know, I'm just like total draw in the last minute.
Dump (to get rid of / to dismiss / to be punished)

FN Apparently, Leon was suppose to commit suicide or something because the girl he like dumped him, Leuhng Si Keih, you know who she is?
HN and he goes "Why, why did you get into a fight for?" and I go "He was being racist." So like he got dump for it and I got off.

Fall down (to fail)

CC the minute I walked out, of the exam. I erm, I fell down quite badly on the essay paper, so. There is nothing much I can do about that now.

Fag (cigarette)

EL I can, I can. I mean I can have a fag and I can just stop.
HN You can. I mean, we get fag breaks. So
JW and we were having a fag together as well.

Fancy (to find attractive)

CT at the moment I fancy one of the friends that I mentioned earlier
EL And I don’t, don’t fancy going out anymore.
HN and then she sort of like she looks like she’s fancying me all of a sudden and I sort of like her a bit more and then we start going out.
JH Probably my mother tongue, my first language. Quite er, fancy reading er Chinese books
JH Yeah, first, I fancy this girl name Elisa yeah,
JH but she felt, she actually felt that I fancy this girl Elisa,
JH I didn't know that Helen fancy me at that time,
JH but she just says "Oh, why I do fancy you but my feelings against, er, you is not as strong as it use to be, innit?"
JH she fancy him but I didn’t know it.
JH he came along and he told her they fancy her and her, bloody hell,
JH "I am not like that. You know. I mean, yeah, I fancy you. I feel for you
JH but you know, you fancy us both at the same time,
JH you know her fancy me and another guy at the same time, init?
JH Otherwise I still know that she fancy him

Fed up (bored)

HN Yeah. But you get fed up with it as well.

Feed (to bore)

GW they rather want me to get use to the English thing, China, feed me a load of words, so you know
Fit (good looking)

CT Naturally. So, erm, I’ll tell her this time, OK? Turn, turn left at Burger King, OK, presume, I’m hoping it is a different fit tourist, OK?

Flunk (to fail)

KN they force you to swim like twenty lanes yeah, and it’s so tiring and I keep flunking it

Fresh (arrogant)

CT so he’s gonna have a bit of trouble there. Yeah, because he is fresh, you know, he express his own opinion,

Fuck up (to ruin)

JW So you don’t actually like you know blame me for going out and like, you know, fucking up my A Levels and things like that.”

Fuss (a fight)

FN I think it is this little phase that everyone to stay above from the rest and then, you know, little fuss, but I think to give advise, be careful, it’s stupid there, it’s like vice own culture and things I think but people still do it.

Gay (homosexual)

EL I don’t think he is, people say that, people say a lot about nice people, anyway. Lots of people say Michael Owen is gay, well, I don’t think he is.
EL in Hong Kong, so. Oh my god, I don’t believe that. He does look gay, a lot of people say he gay.
EL OK, I got, I don’t believe it. I know many people say he’s gay. Just thought, “He can’t be and everything”, but he is.
EL But Michael Owen finish that, you know. (LL laughs) People thinks he’s gay.
EL I was like “How is he gay?”
EL he says “Shut up, you, Michael Owen is gay.”
EL I went, “How is he gay?”
EL He’s not gay,” you know, they just jealous of him,
FN Yeah, Leslie is gay.
FN I always thought, I’ve heard of rumour but I never thought it’s true. So he’s gay.
FN you know, it’s up to you whether you are gay.
FN I am not saying it’s wrong to be gay or lesbian.
FN Yeah, and then there was that one, that the guy, erm he was like, supposed to be gay.
JT Yeah, just like Ricky Martin, he’s gay, isn’t it, as well, so
JT Yeah, he’s, before he said, yeah, before that he said he is gay. Yeah.
JT and then we heard the news said, mmm, he is gay.

Gay (stupid)

CT I don’t know, it’s, it’s a bit gay isn’t it?
Get (to victimise, to annoy)

CT I was fairly new to, to the system and just thought you know, "If this guy gonna get at me,
CT I'll get at him back" (laughs) which often got me in trouble.

Get on (to irritate)

HG and er a lot of people start to get on you these days. More young girl, little girls coming out and then they’re really rude,

Give a shit (be concerned)

JW If they didn’t care, they wouldn’t give a shit what you do,

Go (an argument)

JW my dad really had a bad go at me (rising), and things like that.
JW I tell you, you know, you gonna have a go at me.
JW I don’t tell you. You still have a go at me.
JW Don’t be afraid that, you know, we are going to have a go at you.”

Go down the drain (to be lost forever)

HN Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, that’s all gone down the drain, isn’t it?

Go for it (to make an effort)

CT she'd never, you know, take up the lead, as it were, and say that I should join something unless it was Maths class, of course, then she would say, "Yes, go for it, go and do some more Maths”
CT She, you know, seemed to laugh it off and said you know, "Yeah. Great. Go for it.”, You know in a sarcastic kind of way. Erm.

*Go lucky (to be successful in seduction)

CT when we’re out, you know, on the pool, whatever, and erm, you know, seeing one of my mates going, going lucky, you know, going lucky with a couple of girls, and then we’d say “He’s a lad, isn’t it?”

Go over the top (to be beyond the usual bound of behaviour)

HG some people are friendly. But when people are drunk, they get too, they go over the top.

Governor (the employer)

JH but the, the boss, yeah, the governor, expects me to do much more work
Grand (a thousand pounds)

CT you see a big number, one hundred and twenty five grand and you know whether the guy is gonna get, you know, it up any more.

JW it will pull the cost up to like you know, five and a half grand or something, you know.

Grass up (to inform)

JH He just went to the teacher, you know, and grass him up. And he don't care.

JH That Ray came back to me, er, er, you know, "Oh, why did you grass me up for,

Hang about / hang around / out (to wait about / to linger in one place)

CT They hang around in Chinatown.

EL And they hang around with like themselves, like all their friends.

EL I don't. I don't hang out with them.

EL I know them but I don't hang out with them.

EL but I don't hang out with them. I just see them say, "Hello"

EL But I don't hang out with them or anything.

FN so I see a lot of Chinese people. And all my friends I hang around with at our school or are actually Chinese (rising) so you know, I'm just used to hang around with a Chinese environment init?

FN Yeah, I've been place like that but it's not somewhere I hang out.

GW I do not know Chinese girl in my class, so I hang around with the English girls in there so and then, nothing much to say anyway.

GW or call the friends, just hang out for a while, before I go home, yep.

HG Yeah, cause more of them hanging around there.

HG Cause they don't like us hanging out with boys. They think you know, get pregnant and all that.

HN And the, erm, and then I sort of hang around with the right bunch, you know, and they are, they looked after me,

HN No, they didn't cause erm, (pause) we sort of hang around like in different like

HN cause apart from hanging round with the,

HN well the great bunch I hang around with,

HN Well, there's one in Colindale where erm it's Japanese anyway and er, all the mates hang out.

JH One, no, er, one with the white guys. They hang about er on their own.

JH So, erm, erm, and some of them like are us Chinese, yeah, and with the black guys hang about.

JH If I got down there, I probably know all of them cause I been hanging down there (coughs) quite lately often

JH There is no white guys in Chinese hang about, at all. Don't know why.

JH I am not saying I am racist but, you know, it's just hang about with them

JH And I use to hang around down Segaworld Funland.

JH And I met them and er, we just hang about in at West End now.

JH I want to hang about. I don't have any savings at all.

JH I do hang about Leicester, only Monday and Saturday night while I go out Hippodrome,

JH Yeah, they're all Chinese. All the people hang about there are Chinese.

JH we do hang about, we do like sit around and eating turkeys and stuff, but nowadays,
JH yeah, I just don't, I just hang about with my friend, going out.
JH And yeah, I feel sorry (laughs) but what can I do? I want to hang out, init?
JW He just hang around in arcades.
KN whoever has come back from England and I know them, say. I hang around with them, yeah.

Hang on (requesting a pause)

CT I suppose I couldn't express myself, in a way that they understood that I was saying, you know, “Hey hang on, this guy did this first, maybe, you know. Maybe we should both be punished.”
CT oh God, hang on, em, you see, this river’s up here.

Hassle (nuisance / to annoy)

CC and it’s not, it’s not that I don’t want to but it’s just the hassle of getting myself organised, buying ticket, finding a means of transport there and back, because all these end quite late.
CC Oxford is a good distance away. It’s an hour and a half, so. She could still turn up at my doorstep unexpectedly (LL laughs) but, mmm, it’s quite a hassle to come up.
HN I can’t be hassled to like saving up the money for it. I don’t save up.
YH And I thought it was a bit of a hassle, but it’s not a problem.
YH we get hassled all the time, cause they are all “How come? How come you haven’t got one?”

Hell (expression of disbelief)

KN I was really amaze, I was shocked as well, I thought “How the hell?”

Lay back (to relax)

YH she push herself quite a lot whereas I am very laid back and so on, I don’t care.

Lay into (to attack)

HN and then I turned around and said like point at him, pushed him and he push me back and then erm, we laid into each other, that’s about it.

Mag (magazine)

CT now I just read, you know, the so called lads mags, you know, FA Champs, and er, Arena, many things.

Major (serious / a term of approval)

JH I mean it's not major, if I go back Hong Kong, I could still go to uni, init?
Help a bit, yeah. But still find this is difficult, you know, doing English Histories and stuff, the poems, the poetry, killing me, man. (LL laughs)

my mates, and my mum and dad use to tell me,

Yeah, I see them quite a lot and some of my primary school students like, yes, my mates

But she, I don’t know, I don’t know about her, man, she’s just messing me about, I guess.

Oh, at first, I was messing about yeah,

I mean, in school, even though you have good friends you just messing around.

I don’t know. Never mind but erm, but that’s the way they work and there’s nothing I can do about that. And I knew I messed up the Chemistry paper.

He reads quite a lot. Actually he does. A lot more than me. Harry Potter (chuckles), yeah.

He’s got the latest? The latest came out yesterday.

Yeah, that’s right, a bit that messy, and I am like “Oop”, I mean I just can’t read it. No, I can’t. Yeah.

I don’t know but erm, but that’s the way they work and there’s nothing I can do about that. And I knew I messed up the Chemistry paper.

I do moan a lot and then I don’t like to go back home and stay and read

I don’t blame her, it’s her first baby, she was pregnant, she must be moaning.

Well, I like listening to them yeah, but I don’t that do muck lo (PRT), like Kelly Chan (rising).

Er, just go out and muck about and everything, cause well, they, my sister is the youngest one, actually, she is seven and the oldest one is about twenty two, quite a lot of them are quite young,
EL  Yeah I have, that was when I was in primary school (chuckles). That was just like, you know, mucking around. just, I mean, he was English, but you know. He was fine.

**Muck up (to make a blunder / damaged / out of order)**

JH  I took my GCSE, I got a C, well I, I probably mucked it up in, in the exams
JH  And just for the actual exam, I just muck it up. Sorry. Brought me back down to a C.
JH  Every year I got an A but it was in Chinese, though. When I came, I just muck it up.
JH  and well I could say I mucked up in my GCSEs so, cause at that time, I been like every time I, er, I, off school yeah, I went to snooker club,
JH  But I bet I muck up in Chemistry though. Probably failed though.
JH  I had an MD player, yeah, but the lens is seem to, you know, mucked up, and, er, I just didn't have time to fix it.
JH  well, er, it didn't, the, the flip has er, has er, mucked up a bit,
JH  some of them are mucked up so, I am now just using the T Twenty Eight.

**Nick (to steal)**

CC  And er, just don’t bother with it. I’ll trust my cousins and then just nick their CDs when they come back. When they are here.
EL  Not really. My sister buy them, and I keep nick it off her.

**Nigger (a derogative term for a Black person)**

KN  So I mean, yeah, and worse like “Nigger” yeah, that’s meant to be racist I think,

**No way (absolutely not)**

EL  I’m not going to get in it. No way. No chance I’m going to get in it.

**Paki (a derogative term for any British Asian immigrant)**

KN  Erm, no real examples, cause I haven’t seen it, but then you always hear people calling them Pakis

**Pants (useless)**

LL  How good are you at pool?
HN  How good? Alright, not amazing but not pants.

**Pick on (to pick a quarrel with)**

JW  like they ask me like “Did you get pick on in school?” I said, “no, no, no”

**Pissed (drunk)**

FN  we like to go and, not to drink till you pissed or drink till you can’t get up.
FN  Drinking till you pissed isn’t that much fun though,
Piss off (a state of anger)

JW And I got really pissed off and er I actually stormed out of the shop
JW I stormed out of the shop cause for like I was really pissed off (rising),
JW that is the only thing I am piss off about.

Pit crammed (crowded)

FN (laughs) Alright, you’ve been, I went Thai Square but I didn’t like it that much. It was pit crammed on Sundays.
FN It was like, you wouldn’t expect, I went on a Sunday, yeah it was pit crammed. So we didn’t like it.

Plug (to persist)

HN I don’t know. I probably read them if you plug them into me but em, I just don’t find the time and effort into it.

Poke (to protrude)

HG I think she was Somalian, and people would sort of tease her, by poke things at her.

Posh (smart / pertaining to the upper class)

CT I heard someone like my posher friends use it.
KN and I’m going to like a really quite posh school, yeah, you see,

Puke (to vomit)

JH Yeah, but I don’t puke. I know I am drunk, yeah,

Quid (a pound)

HN If you gonna pay three hundred quid for it.
JH I then call a cab but a few odd quid to Thamesmead, so
JH I work, like three days, three nights, yeah, (rising) earn like a hundred quid or so,
JW It cost about twenty quid a month
KN Yeah, I mean, if you think about it, and it’s thirty quid a day (rising),
KN then you’ve got like your own room and everything like that, dinner, and everything, and breakfast as well, so thirty quid is not expensive at all.
KN so then they only charge you like forty quid a year,

Reckon (to suppose)

CT He, he’s Muslim, but I don’t think he, I reckon his father and I think he's second generation English, you know.

Scrounge (to beg off others)

CT you know, he scrounges off people, apparently
Slag (a prostitute)

JW they say like Essex girls, are like, slags and things like, you know,

Stooper (cigarette stub)

JW We were smoking stooper which we never done before.

Shit 1. (inferior)

CT It’s shit. So she probably must have help, I think.
JH I mean, if I use those shitty one, I get laughed at.
JW that college, like in my parents’ eyes, yeah, that college is really, really shit or whatever,

Shit 2. (possession)

JH I got like, seven, eight phones (rising) (LL laughs), seven or eight, they are all the shit you want.

Smart ass / smart arse (people who see themselves cleverer than they really are)

JH and they, they just couldn’t take it (LL laughs), so that’s why I got beaten up, so. I don’t have to be a smartass. Afterwards is, I don’t play that much. For even though I am good, yeah, sometimes I just lose on purpose.
LL You have to learn how to hustle.
JH Otherwise, you don’t have friends at all. They just don’t like smartass, I guess.

Smoo (vagina; a female)

CT I didn’t say smooth. Smoo.

Snog (sexual preliminaries)

CT then you come to a massive park, you know, very scenic, very beautiful, lots of, you know, people in love, you know, having a snog

Sort out (to deal with violently)

HG One single incident. Erm, we had two kids sorted out before. I think my brother did that because he couldn’t take it.

Start on (to be a nuisance)

HG Is it? People would tend to start on you.
HG If they don’t know who you are, they start on you. And they want to show like who’s bigger.
HG Cause there’s more of your people there and you feel more comfortable but then some of the people do start on you and it’s out I haven’t been to a different club before but er, I won’t consider it.
JH No, no gangs at all but we just help each other out. Somebody starts at me, you know, they just back me up.
JH They are about six foot. And, er, they just start on you, for no reasons.

Swop (to exchange)

FN so basically in the week, I get eight tapes, and we swap around.

Swop (to deceive)

HG you said something bad like you swap your friend, then you say “Ah, I’m sorry”.

Tacky (off-putting)

CT Er, I don't know Channel Five. Channel Five is a bit tacky. (laughs) yeah. I don't know. Their Friday night movies are good though.

Take (to accept)

CT They've kind of taken if you're Western idols, maybe role models and they adapted it so that it looks, you know, different but quite good.

Take in (to be victimised)

HG We went like “No” we just say “No, no, no” you know, and they just say like “Oh, you Chinese people were like that” and we got to take it in.

Take the mickey (to tease)

CT Yes, so, very often people would, people would be, you know, Hong Kong people would taking the mickey, would be taking the mickey.
JT because they keep saying that, take the mickey out of you all the time,

Take the piss (to tease)

CC when people are still a little bit drunk, and then they start taking the piss, or what do you say, er, making silly sort of everything.
CT when I get annoyed and I want to take the piss, I would use it.

There you go (What did I tell you?)

JW There you go, yeah. It's that bad you know.

Thick (stupid)

EL She’s so, owuh, thick, she went “Did you do your work?” I mean, “No, it’s not even work”.
EL “Well, he’s helping away.” “No,” “Oh, oh, oh (rising) no. Oh no.” Oh, she’s so thick.
EL I just went “Oh, you so thick.
Thingy (an unnamed object)

JT And then in between those two thingies, is erm, er what is it, tape thing, tape recorder,

Thrash (to defeat)

JH They guess they could beat me once, at least but, sometimes I just thrash them.

Topsy-tuvey (up side down)

HN It was, it was getting really bad there. Every, everything was getting topsy tuvey, and everyone's throwing stuff at the windows, like nothing was doing, nothing was happening in the class.

Whack (to hit)

JW I went up to him, I had a cue like so I whacked him

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Total pop-term types</th>
<th>total words (Method One)</th>
<th>% of pop-term types</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>13,549</td>
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<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>08</td>
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<td>0.061</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT</td>
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<td>17,332</td>
<td>0.0132</td>
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<td>HN</td>
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<td>19296</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13523</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL</td>
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<td>GW</td>
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<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17000</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16389</td>
<td>0.085</td>
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Table 5.42: Instances of Pop Term Tokens Produced by Informants

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>total pop terms</th>
<th>total words (Method One)</th>
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<td>18185</td>
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<td>GW</td>
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<tr>
<td>KN</td>
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<td>16389</td>
<td>0.098</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.41 shows the number of different pop terms, or types, used by each informant. Table 5.42 shows the number of times these pop-term types was used by each informant. The two tables indicate that there is gender difference among the informants in the use of pop terms.

On the whole, the male informants used more pop-term types and tokens than the female informants. However, there is one exception. Among the 12 informants, JT used the fewest pop-term types (0.027%). Only one informant used fewer pop-term tokens than he did. She was GW (0.022%).

The next male informant who used the fewest pop-term types was KN. There were 0.085 pop-term types for 100 words he used. This figure was higher than that of the female informant who used the most pop-term types (HG with 0.612%).

KN used more pop-term tokens than all but one of the female informants. The exception was EL who used gay, meaning homosexual, eight times.
Table 5.43: Instances of Derogatory Pop Term Types Produced by Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>HN</th>
<th>JH</th>
<th>JT</th>
<th>JW</th>
<th>KN</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>EL</th>
<th>FN</th>
<th>GW</th>
<th>HG</th>
<th>YH</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fuck up</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piss off</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>slag</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smoo</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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Table 5.43 is a selection of derogatory pop terms used by the informants. CC was the only female informant who used one of these, and only once.

Table 5.44: Instances of Most Frequently Used Pop Term Tokens Produced by Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Token</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>HG</th>
<th>HN</th>
<th>EL</th>
<th>FN</th>
<th>GW</th>
<th>JH</th>
<th>JT</th>
<th>JW</th>
<th>KN</th>
<th>YH</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hang / out / about /around</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chink / Chinky</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequently used pop-term token among the 12 informants was hang about / around /out. It was used by 10 of them. The second most frequently used pop-term token was Chink / Chinky. It was used by 5 of them.

Part Two

Part Two begins with how the informants reported on the pop terms supplied to them.

- **Bad**

Six of the informants reported that bad could be used to mean good or hard. These six informants were CT, FN, GW, HG, JH, and KN. They also stated that they did not use bad in these senses.

**CT**

Or “that’s bad, man”. That means it’s good (chuckles).

**HG**


**FN**

Oh, bad as in “You think you are bad” “You think you are hard, didn’t you?” it’s like you think you are bad, that means you think you are tough, you think you are hard, you know.

**GW**

Yeah, they go “Woa, it’s bad”. That means it’s good (chuckles)
JH  Bad, bad, er, well I heard it from my black friends, yeah, oh, how do you say it? Er, for example, if you (clears throat) well, it’s double negative.\(^\text{77}\)

KN  But then, in London, all those rude boys “I’m bad” (chuckles). Meaning, they’re, they think they’re hard or something.

- **Banger**

EL, JH, JT, and KN were the only four informants who did not know *banger* means a *dilapidated old car* or *sausage*. The other informants offered either one or both meanings.

- **Blotto**

*Blotto* means *being drunk*. HN was the only one informant who had heard of this pop term and knew what it means. He reported that he did not use the pop term although he did not give any reason.

HN  Pissed as in drunk. Oh, right. Yeah, “I’m *blotto*, man”.

- **Chill**

YH did not report that she knew *chill* in any other sense than the temperature sense of the word. JH had not heard of the word but he made an effort at guessing what it meant.

JH  Chill? I always hear people saying it but I don’t know what it is, what the meaning is but if you say it, in a Chinese way, it’s like fuck it, init?

As for the other informants, they used *chill* and *chill out* to mean *relax* and *calm down*.

CT  we use that less that we use to. But chill means to relax and stuff. Like just take it easy. Keep calm.

GW  Chill. I would say, English people, they’d say chill out, as in cool down. But I would say calm down (chuckles).

FN  You know. Chill, mmm, I don’t say it but my mate does. Boys as well. Mostly boy. To tell the true. I don’t really know. But boys. Mostly boys as well. I think most of the time, yeah, from boys. It is. I’m not being sexist or anything but loads of boys, you know, half the boys, well not half, most of the boys say it.

HG  No. It’s more like an American word to me. In er, books, when I read books, they might say erm, like chill out or on TV (rising). Some people use it on TV.

HN  I just use chill as in calm down. When I tell someone to calm down.

JW  Chill. That’s the word I’d use, I use for relax. I don’t use this word a lot. But most people do.

\(^\text{77}\) JH meant *semantic inversion*. 
but I'd probably think it's like a London word again (chuckles). It means calm down, yes. We use it sometimes.

- **Chip**

According to Green (1998), *chip* is used as a noun by native speakers of AAVE to mean a *stolen mobile phone*. Of all the twelve informants, GW was the only one who did not own a mobile phone when she was interviewed. However, HG and JH were the only 2 of the other 11 informants who reported that they used *chip* as a verb to mean *to unlock a mobile phone* so that it can be used in two or more phone networks.

HG Chip, when you chip your phone, when often when you want your phone to be able to use up networks. Yeah, that's it.

JH Chip. Well, erm, normally if I use this word, yeah, it's always to talk about computers, or mobiles, to chip it, you know, to unlock it, using this, 

According to JH, *chip* is also as a verb meaning *to upgrade* a computer, a mobile phone, or a video game console.

JH You know, chipping your computer, your console, or your mobile phones, that's when we use this word... For example, if you, if you want to upgrade a Nokia Thirty Two Ten, yeah, to make it having vibration, yeah, what they say is they chip it, they put some cards, some sort of a chip into it yeah, to make it vibrate or probably changing the vibrating battery, I don't know.

- **Cool**

JW and KN were the only two informants who stated that they used *cool*. EL and HN stated that they did not use *cool* at all.

JW Yeah. Cool. That's a good word. I use that word. "That's cool".

KN I think probably everyone use this word.

HN I know the word cool but I never use it.

EL Cool (laughs). Cool. I don't use it.

Many of the informants observed that the use of *cool* was salient with members of ethnic groups other than the Chinese.

EL but my mate use it. He always use it. You know, "You're cool". And "Just cool down a bit". And he use a lot. I don't know. Mostly boys use that word. I think.

FN Yeah. I would say more English friends, they would use cool. If I heard anything interesting, I'd say. But not many of my friends say that.
HG  No. Some of them won’t use it. American people use it. As in like American films.

JT  er, use, mostly, I think like black guys use it often, that one.

- Crisp

All twelve informants reported that as snack, *crisps* were different from *chips*. Green (1998) points out that *crisp* means *attractive* or *first rate*. These meanings correspond closely to another explanation of *crisp* as offered by CT.

CT  Em, I mean, I read crisp as a, you know, as a replacement for sharp. Yeah, “He’s very sharp”. “He’s very crisp”. You know, it means he’s very, you know, I suppose smooth, and he knows what’s he’s doing. He’s on the ball. So he’s sharp.

- Fag

All twelve informants reported that *fag* meant *cigarettes*. *Fag*, as an abbreviation for *faggot* or as a term of abuse, was reported by CC, FN, HG, HN and KN. *Fag* also means male homosexuals. However, CC was the only informant who pointed out that *gay* refers to *male homosexuals*. CT was the only other informant who pointed out the association between *gay* and *homosexuality*. However, he did not make the distinction between male and female homosexuals.

CC  or some people use it to erm, sort of derogatory term for gay men. I mean one, people are sort of homophobic. and we don’t, and we use it more as another word for a cigarette.

CT  Fag. Em, which describe as gay, gay people.

- Grass

EL was again the only informant who did not report that *grass* could be used to mean *cannabis*. JT was the only male informant who did not report that *to grass* could mean *to inform*. Among the female informants, CC and FN were the only ones who reported that *to grass* means *to inform*.

CC and CT pointed out that they and their friends would not use *grass* in the *to inform* sense. CC thought it was out of fashion and CT believed that it was not strong enough.

CC  Erm, oh, in the old days, if someone grass on someone, then it’s like someone telling on someone else... They wouldn’t say someone grass on someone.
CT   grass is like, of course, a grasser, you know, someone who snitches. Traitor. “He is a complete traitor”. It sounds more powerful.

- Jar

According to Green (1998), *jar* means *a container, fake jewellery or drugs*. None of the informants reported that they used *jar* in these sense. *Jar* can also mean *beer*. None of the male informants and four of the female informants used *jar* to mean *to annoy* and *jar* as a noun to refer to people who annoy. The other two were CC and YH, who did not report to the effect that they were aware of this usage.

EL   Jar. Always use that as well. Always, always use that. What. Jar? Someone really angry would jar my head in. (Inaudible) jar my head in or “you’re jarring me”. Yeah. They’ll say “You’re a jar, this is jarring me”... Yeah. When I call people a jar, when “you are a jar, you are. Just go away.” Yeah.

FN   A jar as in like you are jarring me, the same thing as in like you are annoying me, you are getting on my nerves. Yeah, we’ll go “He’s jarring me.”

GW   When people say they’re jarring someone, they really, is that the same meaning?

HG   Jar. Like, he’s jarring.

FN and HG also stated that they did not use *jar* in that sense anymore because it was out of fashion.

FN   I think I use that word more often before, something like fashion. It’s like people used it more then than not, than it is now.

HG   Erm, people have been using it. People don’t use it anymore. Like hip people don’t use it anymore. I don’t hear people say it no more.

None of the male informants reported to the effect that they had heard of *jar* in the annoying sense of the pop term. However, JH reported that he had heard the term being used and that the pop term was used by another ethnic group.

JH   Jar. Heard of it but I don’t know what it means. From all the black mates, init? Don’t know what it means. I never asked.
Jerk

Ten informants reported that jerk is used as a term of abuse. EL and YH reported that they did not know what the word mean. CT was the only informant who reported that jerk also means to masturbate. JH was the only informant who reported that he used jerk.

JH A jerk. I always call people a jerk ... Like Henry Lam, he’s a jerk. Cock sucker, that’s what I call him.

The other five male informants offered alternatives to jerk. CC was the only female informant who stated that she would use bastard as an alternative.

CT but he’s a jerko, because he’s a bastard.

HN whenever we call someone, instead of calling someone a jerk, we call him an arsehole. Or a cunt, or a prick, or a dickhead, or a shit, you know, everything.

LL What else? A butthead?

HN No, that’s another American. You wanker, cunt, shit, fucker, fucking cunt, fucking wanker, stupid cunt, you know, there’s loads.

LL Do you use it at all?


HN stated that he did not use jerk because it was American and well as not being English, and that it was not strong enough.


CT was being deliberately ambiguous and it is not clear that he was stating that jerk was a term more used by girls.

CT But boys jerk off because nature calls for it (chuckles). Girls would use it much more commonly than boys.

FN believed that it was more common to come across jerk in films than in real life.

FN No, not really. You see that more in like films and movies.
YH pointed out that she would never use the word.

YH Jerk. It’s not really nice. No way (chuckles) Mmm, I don’t know. You hear people use it down the street, on TV.

- **Knacked**

All twelve informants reported *knacked* means *tired*. CC, and JT were the only informants who stated that they and their friends did not use *knacked*. CC believed that it was because “it was crude”.

*Knacked* is a pop term that is specific to the English culture, according to GW.

GW Oh, my sister say that. Em, they only use it here. Because when we, when my sister was in America, em, you know, they don’t understand.

- **Lad**

According to Green (1998), *lad* means *an inanimate object or a penis*. None of the informants reported that they used the pop term in these senses.

CT and his friends used *lad* to express admiration and as a form of address.

CT seeing one of my mates going, going lucky, you know, going lucky with a couple of girls, and then we’d say “He’s a lad, isn’t it?” but normally, you know, it’s, you know, lad goes in the same group as stud.

CT just sometimes it’s like, er, you know, occasionally, when we, as a friendly, you know, term, rather than using his name, you know. Some of my friends. They might say, you know, “Do you want a drink, lad?”

The other informants reported that *lad* was an alternative to *guy* or *boy*. Some of the informants stated that they did not use *lad* for various reasons:

*Lad* is used by members of other age groups.

CC I use guy. Lad’s sort of, I don’t know. It just seems more sort of old fashioned. “He’s a nice lad, isn’t he?” That’s the sort of thing your granny would say. Obviously not my granny. it’s sort of middle aged. Older generations, sort of.

JT Lads. Boys. Guys etc. Some old people calling some young people (chuckles)?

*Lad* is used by members of other ethnic groups.

EL Not all of them use it. Only one of my friend use it, really. He’s English. “I’ll go out with all the lads” You know.
Yeah, only English people use it. So I'd never heard Chinese people use it.

*Lad*

Lad is used by people living in other regions.

No. Lad is a male of some sort. I think in the North, they call everyone lad.

- **Lager**

KN was the only informant who did not know that *lager* was a kind of beer.

- **Lout**

Only CC and CT had come across *lout* and they explained what it means.

Em, very, very, rarely. Maybe we use lout as a, (coughs) yeah, as a description of someone who’s, you know, very unruly, you know, very yobbish (chuckles), you know, he drinks a lot, then he’s a lager lout,

Lout is sort of generally rowdy, unsociable, not unsociable. But not quite socially accepted behaviour.

- **Mate**

All twelve informants reported that *mate* means a friend. The informants also showed that *mate* could be used as a form of address.

None of the female informants would use *mate* in either meaning. CC stated that it was not a word used by girls. HG believed that it was used by “people with a strong accent. People from Essex, Southend, yeah. They’re like that, yeah.” EL did not offer any reason. FN believed that *mate* was not friendly enough. GW believed that it was the English who used *mate*. YH believed it was only the Australian who used *mate*. This observation of YH is so interesting that it is worth a full quote.

No. Mate, it’s like a friend, I think. They use it in Australia. They don’t use it here, surely.

JT was the only male informant who reported that he did not use *mate* but he did not offer any explanation.

- **Nerd**

EL and JT were the only informants who reported that he had not heard of *nerd*. CC, CT, and GW reported that they did not use it at all. CC reported that she and her friends would use *geek*. 
CT would use gimp. GW reported that she and her friends would not use it and that nerd was used by “proper English people”. HG reported that geek was the American alternative to nerd.

• Pint

All twelve informants reported that pint is associated with drink. JW was the only one who reported that pint was synonymous with beer.\(^78\) It is probably because beer is becoming out of fashion.

JW | Pint. Measurement for liquid. Or it can also mean a pint of beer. When you go down the pub, you’d say “Can I have a pint please?”... “You fancy a pint?” means like you fancy a beer, or a lager of some sort.

CC | And then sometimes, you say “Come down for a pint”. A pint of beer or something.

KN | Pint, as in a pint of beer?

EL | Only the boy use that word. Yeah, girls just say “Can I have a glass?”

FN | Pint. Pint is like a pint of lager. I don’t know how much it is but it’s a big glass, basically.

JH | I know what a pint is, you know, having a drink, a pint of drink, and stuff, but I don’t know how much a pint is. If I go out, I always drink bottles, I don’t go for a pint of Budweisers, a pint of, I don’t go like this. I always order a bottle.

JT | We only go to bar. We don’t go to pub. So that’s different, init?

• Piss

Piss has so many different meanings that the informants preferred mentioning the phrases piss could be embedded in than to offering the meanings. YH was the only informant who stated that she did not use piss at all. The others reported that they used piss in various meanings.

CT | that we use, when there is a piss up, a piss tank, er, take the piss, er, you know, em, going for a piss, a piss head, piss take, going for a tinkle. dick, dickhead.


\(^78\) GW, for example, said “I would say people use it with a pint of wine, a pint of drink, or whatever. But I say a pint of milk (chuckles). I drink milk more than I drink alcohol”. It is likely that GW was using the Hong Kong Cantonese word jau which is a generic word for all kinds of alcoholic drink. Beer, wine, and whiskey, for example, are jau.
EL  Piss. Pissed off? Yeah, pissed off. We use it loads of time, I’m pissed off. I’ll just say “Go away, just piss off”. And yeah. Yeah, always use that word. Bad word like shit like, always use it. Pissed off. Pissed off. Always use it. Em, when I tell people to piss off, I tell them to go away.

FN  Piss as in erm, urine, piss as in you’re pissed off from someone, you are angry with someone. Or piss as in taking the piss, as in you know, you’re taking too serious, no, not too serious, take advantage or what, of the situation or piss as in you’re drunk. I only use piss as in you are drunk. Or like, you are pissed, init?

GW  Piss? Well, people say they’re piss off. A lot of people say that (chuckles). Er, yes. Really. And when people, they’re drunk. They say piss. Yeah, my friend say that everytime she’s drunk. She goes “I’m piss” (chuckles). Yeah. Oh, when you say you’re like, em, when you are annoyed or something, you use that. But when I have a hectic day or something, I would say that.

HG  Piss. When you want to go to toilet. Yeah, piss off, to go away. That’s it.

HN  Piss, is it? When will we take a piss, man? Want to take a piss, man? Yeah, something like that. all I, all I, “You are taking a piss” you know, that sort of thing. “You’re taking a mick”. “Piss off”. What else? I don’t know. We just use it either to piss off, you’re taking a piss, or I want to take a piss. As in you’re going to toilet.

JH  Piss, er, piss, I don’t know, Yeah, but two different meanings, yeah (rising). Piss as in piss, or, you know, it’s someone taking the liberties of you, you know, you just say “Piss off a”, “He’s just pissing me off”. Sort of like, you know, he makes me angry, and so on. That’s what I use, that’s when I use it.

JT  Piss, ahhhh, I know this one. Er, yeah, on Sunday we have use this word. Someone er, drink too much and then you’ll say piss himself. ... Yeah, sometimes.

JW  Piss as in urine, piss. Or you can be pissed off means you are annoyed with someone. Er, it can also mean you’re leaving the place. You’d say “Oh, I’m pissed off now” it means you are leaving. Er, piss as in you’re drunk. When you have too much to drink, you’d say “Ah, I’m really pissed” so it means drunk. Em, or it can mean mickey, taking the mickey. Or taking the piss out of someone means taking the mickey out of someone. Em, you can tell someone to piss off means like, you know, go away. Em, and you can actually say, when you don’t like something, you can, it can also mean like, well, me and my friends use it as same context as shit. When you say something “Oh, that is shit” it means “oh, that is piss”. Yeah. Or it can mean easy. Easy, oh, same thing. When you’ve done something, say em, for example, you move this furniture to another place, which is really heavy. You moved it and you say “oh”, you know, “that’s, that’s really hard”, and like, you know, or you can say “Oh, that was piss”, that was easy, that was piss easy. Yeah.

KN  Piss. Well, yeah, this, the general meaning would be like, em, as in to take a piss? But then, it can really be like, it can also be use like piss over, as in annoyed. If you say someone is pissed, it means they’re drunk or something. That’s right, yeah, if you take the piss out, then it is piss. Yeah, but, that’s all I’d say. Well, people say take the piss out of someone, I’m not sure whether it is this piss though. Er, so, say take the piss out of someone, it means make fun also for himsell, yeah. (chuckles) Yeah

YH  Oh, piss. That’s when people go to toilet.

LL  Hmmmm. Any other meaning?

YH  Drunk.
• **Saveloy**

GW and KN were the only two informants who did not know that there was a kind of sausage called *saveloy*.

According to Green (1998), *saveloy* is slang for *a boy*. However, three informants reported that *saveloy* was used to refer to girls.79

EL  Hmm, I heard people say saveloy, you know, to like girls. Yeah. Don’t know why. But yeah, don’t know why they say it. Don’t know. I don’t use it quite a lot. I don’t use it at all.

JW  People do say em, to a nice looking girl like, “Oi, oi, saveloy”. That’s what they say, sometimes. But I don’t really see the connection between a girl and a sausage.

HN  Oh, saveloy, Yeah, I know. Em, I know. Some sort of nice bird. Yeah, yeah. We have something, something like, like some sort of, at night in the street, we go “Oi, oi, saveloy”. I don’t know. I learn to use it cause it sounds funny, init? Cause everyone does. Any. Basically, anyone who’s in Essex. Yeah. Yeah. It’s sort of Essex boy language, you know.

• **Shit**

10 of the 12 informants reported that they would use *shit* in its various meanings. FN stated that she did not use it much because it was not nice. The other who stated that *shit* was not a word she would use was YH.

FN  It’s rude...I don’t use it that often. It’s not really a nice word, is it?

Alternatives were offered by some informants. EL said that she would use *sugar* as an alternative instead of using *shit* in an exclamation. CC said she and her friends would use *crap* or *bollocks* more when they wanted to describe something as *inferior*.

• **Stout**

Only CC and CT knew that *stout* was a kind of beer.

• **Ta**

JT was the only one informant who reported that he had not heard *ta* being used.

JT  Ta. I haven’t seen that word before. I don’t know. Ta. Mmm, no.

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79 The link between *saveloy* and girls is probably the fact that *saveloy* is a kind of Jewish savoury snack with sausage and bread.
The rest all knew it means thank you. However, eight informants reported that they did not use it more various reasons. CC did not use it because she believed that it was Coronation Street. CT did not use it because he believed that it was used by middle-aged females. HG reported that she used it only when she was younger. YH stated that it was kids who used it because it was easier for them to use ta than thank you. GW, JH, and KN reported that they did not use it. They believed that it was only used by the English and that it was not used by the Chinese in London or in England.

Only four informants reported that they used ta. JW reported that he used it when he addressed customers in his takeaway. HN used it because it was Essex, where he lived. FN reported that ta was used more by the English than the Chinese. EL believed that Chinese people did not use ta but she used it.

CC I don't really do Coronation Street. I would, I've never used it. Erm. But sometimes my friends would go "Ta very much". Just like in their sort of mock, is it Mancur, Manchester, sort of fake, northern accent. That's definitely something I would hear more on TV, than in sort of like general sort of conversations with my friends, or any people I know, northern sort of people.

CT it seems a bit like a old forty year old lady's use.

HG Yeah. Ta. Erm, when someone gives you a drink, like someone buys you a drink, you go "Ta". Thanks. No, I use to use it (chuckles) when I was so young.

HN It's in the, it's, cause, cause I'm in Essex as well, and I can tell an Essex boy, you know, "Ta mate", you know. His thumbs up as well.

LL OK. Do your mates use it?

HN Yeah.

LL Chinese?

HN No.

FN Ta, as in thanks. Yeah I use it quite a lot, I think ta is used more by ,erm, my friends, they use it more at school than like my Cantonese friends.

YH Ta. It's like thank you.

LL Do you use it?

YH No. But I know kids use it. Cause my sister taught in a nursery school. And she teaches us and they all have to be taught to say ta and they can't say thank you. It's too long.

LL Do you use it?

JW Sometimes. Sometimes I'd say ta, or cheers, or thanks, you know. Just, another, another for of saying thank you to someone.

LL do your mates use it?

JW No, not really, no. They might say to me "Oh, cheers, mate" and things like that. But they don't actually say ta or thank you, no.

EL Ta. Loads of people say the word. Ta. No one said thank you. Yeah. Cheers or ta... I do and not always, sometimes it's like "Hello, ta" when someone pass me something, I'll say ta. And my
mates and, Chinese people don’t really use it, but English people, yeah, they do. They’re like, they got something, they pass it to them or he do something, they say ta. Yeah.

GW No. No. My English friends, they, they use it. When they ask (inaudible), they say that. They say that a lot. Yeah. You know Chinese, they don’t use it.

JH I always hear, you know, all the, the white guy says it. Yeah? I always use cheers. I never say, or thanks. I would never say ta. I don’t think it’s (inaudible) to use for Chinese guy to saying ta. All my friends don’t use it.

KN I think it’s probably just London. Really. I just say thank you but I’ve heard of it, you know. Sometimes, not often. English. Yeah. Chinese don’t use it.

- **Tacky**

EL, JH, and JT reported that they had not heard of *tacky*. As for the rest, only two informants, CC and CT, reported that they used *tacky*.

FN explained that it was not *her*. HG suggested it was only used by the *posh* people and the English. HN believed that it was used by anyone except the Chinese. KN believed that it was only used by English people.

- **Weed**

All but one of the informants knew that *weed* means *cannabis*. The exception was EL. CT pointed out *weed* was no longer in fashion. He said that *toke, a bit of smoke, and skunk* were the popular pop terms of this kind of drugs.

CT Illegal. Well, you know, *weed* as cannabis or whatever. But that’s quite a long time ago, you know. People used it then... They just don’t mention it as weed, anymore, you know. They say *toke*, or a bit of *smoke* or something like that. Er, the word weed actually doesn’t come up that often, you know, but then again, er, maybe *skunk*, or you know, buy, I don’t know, for sure. But I know when people buy, they just refer to the, the weight value. Buy an eighth

HG also volunteered *space* as an alternative to *weed*. However, *space*, according to Green (1998) means *crack* or *cocaine*. It is likely that HG had mistakenly thought that *weed and space* were synonymous. It is also likely that HG was referring to *crack* because she used *smoked space*.

HG You smoke *weed* that’s when you smoke *space* or something.

HN was the only informant who offered another meaning of *weed*, not mentioned in Green (1998).

HN Weed as in you pathetic little wank. *When someone’s weak and feeble, we call him a weed.*
• Wicked

YH was the only informant who did not say that *wicked* can also mean *good* or *wonderful*. Three informants insisted that they would not use *wicked*.

CC  Erm, in slang, it’s erm, if something’s really great, then you go “oh it’s really wicked”. Erm, I don’t but I have very limited vocabulary. Erm, I think it’s more like you do it in a cockney accent, rather than saying it with, you know, normal accent. We use it when we start taking the piss out of Ali G, (squeaking, imitating Ali G) “It’s wicked, init?” (chuckles), sort of that but that’s mainly how we use it.


LL  Oh, well. You’ve heard Caribbean Jamaicans use it.

HN  Yeah. Yeah. “It’s wicked, man”.

JT  Wicked. Saying something really cool. Yeah. Mmm, don’t know, it’s like I don’t use it. My friend don’t use it at all, really. Emm, probably, don’t really know.

As for the others, some of them liked *wicked* very much.

JW  That’s my favourite word. Yeah, wicked. You might see me, I mean, you might hear me using that word quite a lot, actually.

EL  I use it. I say a lot. I say “wicked” and everything.

JH  Always describe girls, init? “She’s wicked, man”. Maybe, er, some kind of game, a game, a consort, er, you know, er, engineering thing, if it is very good, yeah? “Ah, it’s wicked.” Just when I use it.

KN  It’s quite, such a word that you can probably use in any situation, I’d say (chuckles).

Some of the informants observed that *wicked* was becoming out of fashion and that it was not used by the Hong Kong Cantonese in London.

EL  No. Hardly any of them use that word. Never, say, never heard them, never heard them say the word before (signs).

GW  Yeah. When I was in primary school, we use that word a lot. “Oh, it’s wicked, init?” Yeah. Not now (chuckles). We say “cool”.

HG  No. They don’t use it? I think younger people would say “Yes, it’s wicked”. Kids, little boys, “It’s wicked. It’s wicked.” yeah I hear, I hear lots of little boys say it.

JW  No. I mean I am about the only person who use the word wicked.

80 *Hahk gweih* is a Hong Kong Cantonese derogatory term for the Blacks.
• **Yob**

Only three informants, CC, CT, and HN knew what *yob* means. They all stated that they did not use the term. CC was the only one who offered an explanation.

CC  
Yob. I don’t think I use it. But that was quite eighties, at least that’s not my generation (chuckles).

**Part Three.**

Before the general discussion on the informants’ use of pop terms, it is important to point out that an informant’s not reporting a certain usage of a pop term should not be taken to mean that the informant does not know the pop term could be used in that way. It is well known (e.g. from Labov’s work) that informants are notoriously unaware of their usage, and this fact should be kept in mind as regards the present group of informants. GW reported that she knew that *cool* means *cold* (the temperature sense). She then reported that she did not know of any other usage. Later on, when she was commenting on *wicked*.

GW  
Well, yes, (chuckles). It means cool. Even though if you check on a dictionary, you don’t know. It’s means really bad but then yeah. People, they say “Oh, it’s really bad” but they means it’s really good in some way. Yeah?

KN reported that *cool* was something teenagers used when they approved of it. However, he had used *cool* in another sense earlier.

KN  
like the people in London are more, you know, *cooler*, and think they are better than you, you know.

**Gender Difference and Design Limitations.**

In Part One, the researcher have made the observation that there is gender difference in pop term usage among the twelve Hong Kong Cantonese informants. This observation was based on the fact that as a group, the male informants used more pop-term types and pop-term tokens than the female informants. The male informants also used more derogatory pop terms.
This observation about gender difference is supported by the informants’ self-reports summarised in Part Two. Three of the male informants, CT, HN, and JW had fun punning some pop terms with sexual activities and trying to shock their interviewer. For example:

CT But boys jerk off because nature calls for it (chuckles). Girls would use it much more commonly than boys.

HN Mate as in a friend. We don’t use it as in like friends, not like literally a mate’s mate, but you know. Not in a sexual kind of way.

JW Mate, mate is a, what, if you look at it technically, mate is someone you mate with (LL chuckles).

HN Weed as in you pathetic little wank

YH, the female informant, was offended by the pop terms in the self-report, where she began to talk less than she had in the preceding parts of her interviews. The researcher had to ask her questions as to whether she and her friends used some of the pop terms. Her typical responses were a yes or a no. And later on, she refused to read out knob when she was reading aloud the words on a word list. She refused to read out the offending item even when the researcher asked her to mentally remove the letter k from the word knob. There was no evidence that the other female informants were offended by the pop terms in the self-report.

Another female informant, HG, stated explicitly that she did not want to discuss piss any more.

HG Piss. When you want to go to toilet. Yeah, piss off, to go away. That’s it.

The gender difference observed in the self-report was perhaps, in part, a product of the researcher’s own culture. As a male Hong Kong Cantonese who spent his adolescence in London and Manchester, pop terms in the area of drinking and swearing were more salient to the researcher than pop terms used by female. As a result of this up-bringing, he might have imported more pop terms that were salient to the male informants than pop terms that were salient to the female informants.

Sociolinguistic Awareness.

Eleven of the informants reported that they used or did not use certain pop terms in the self-report for different reasons. JW was the only informant who reported that he used all of those he knew.
CC and CT reported that they and their did not use certain pop terms because those terms were used by other age groups, or because the terms were no longer in fashion. For example:

CC I use guy. Lad’s sort of, I don’t know. It just seems more sort of old fashioned. “He’s a nice lad, isn’t he?” That’s the sort of thing your granny would say.

CT Illegal. Well, you know, weed as cannabis or whatever. But that’s quite a long time ago, you know. People used it then... They just don’t mention it as weed, anymore, you know. They say toke, or a bit of smoke or something like that.

The other nine informants noted that certain pop terms were used by other ethnic groups and less often by the Chinese or the Hong Kong Cantonese. For example:

EL And my mates and, Chinese people don’t really use it, but English people, yeah, they do.
HN Jerk. That’s American, that’s American. That’s like American for an arsehole. Never heard English people use the word jerk.
HG No. It’s more like an American word to me.
FN my friends, they use it more at school than like my Cantonese friends.
GW No. No. My English friends, they, they use it.... You know Chinese, they don’t use it.
JH I always hear, you know, all the, the white guy says it. Yeah?... All my friends don’t use it.
JT er, use, mostly, I think like black guys use it often, that one.
KN So I’d never heard Chinese people use it.
YH Mate, it’s like a friend, I think. They use it in Australia. They don’t use it here, surely.

Clearly, some of the informants mistakenly thought that certain pop terms were exclusively used by certain ethnic groups or people from other English-speaking countries. Few of the informants stated explicitly that they did not use certain pop terms because they thought those terms were used by other ethnic groups. HN was the only informant who stated, on different occasions, that he did not use some pop terms because it was used by other ethnic groups. For example:

HN Wicked. I wouldn’t even go near that word (LL laughs). American service... I’ve heard, I’ve heard hahk gweth [literal meaning: black ghosts], is it?

Apart from CC and CT, 3 female informants, GW, FN, and HG reported that they did not use certain pop terms or did not notice them being used any more because they were no longer in fashion.
FN  I think I use that word more often before, something like fashion. It’s like people used it more then than not, than it is now.

HG  Erm, people have been using it. People don’t use it anymore. Like hip people don’t use it anymore. I don’t hear people say it no more.

GW  Yeah. When I was in primary school, we use that word a lot. “Oh, it’s wicked, init?” Yeah. Not now (chuckles). We say “cool”.

Whether people acquired language from watching TV has been discussed in another section (on word medial intervocalic /t/). The reports made by some of the informants indicate that they did not use certain pop terms because they associated the usage of these terms with fictional characters on television and films and the social groups these characters belonged to.

CC  I don’t really do Coronation Street. I would, I’ve never used it.

FN  No, not really. You see that more in like films and movies.

HN  American service “Yeah, dudes” sort of thing, “That’s wicked, man” sort of thing,

HG  No. It’s more like an American word to me... In er, books, when I read books, they might say erm, like chill out or on TV. Some people use it on TV.

YH  Jerk. It’s not really nice. No way (chuckles) Mmm, I don’t know. You hear people use it down the street, on TV.

Performance of the Informants and AOA Effects.

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<th>Table 5.45: Instances of Most Frequently Used Pop Term Tokens Produced by AOA Groups.</th>
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The above table indicates gender difference in the use of this sociolinguistic indicator within each AOA group. For the AOA5 group, the male informants used 2.26 times more pop term tokens and 2.54 times more pop term types than the female informants. The male informants in the AOA8 group used 2.04 times more pop term tokens and 3.1 times more pop term types than
the female informants. The male informants in the AOA10 group used 2.79 times more pop term tokens and 3.91 times more pop term types than the female informants. In addition, the AOA8 male group, with the lowest average in pop term types and tokens of all 3 male AOA groups, had a higher average in pop term types and tokens than all 3 female AOA groups.

Based on the percentage of pop term types in the data, the informants can be divided in 3 groups. Group 1 consists of FN (AOA8), YH (AOA8), JT (AOA8) and GW (AOA10). The range of the percentage of pop term types in their data ranges from 0.0156% (YH) to 0.0383% (FN). Group 2 consists of CC (AOA5), HG (AOA5), and EL (AOA10). The range of the percentage of pop term types in their data ranges from 0.0495 (EL) to 0.0612 (HG). Group 3 consists of CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), JW (AOA8), JH (AOA10) and KN (AOA10). The range of the percentage of pop term types in their data ranges from 0.0854 (KN) to 0.1726 (HN).

Based on the percentage of pop term tokens in the data, the informants can be divided in 4 groups. Group 1 consists of YH (AOA8), JT (AOA8) and GW (AOA10). The range of the percentage of pop term tokens in their data ranges from 0.0268% (JT) to 0.0311% (YH). Group 2 consists of CC (AOA5), HG (AOA5), and FN (AOA8). The range of the percentage of pop term tokens in their data ranges from 0.0766 (FN) to 0.0886(CC). Group 3 consists of CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), JW (AOA8), EL (AOA10) and KN (AOA10). The range of the percentage of pop term types in their data ranges from 0.0976 (KN) to 0.02349 (HN). JH belongs to Group 4 with 0.04588%.

The grouping shows that JT was the male informant who used pop term types and tokens the least among all 6 male informants. JT also used fewer pop term tokens than all 6 female informants and fewer pop term types than 5 female informants (with YH being the exception). JT was the informant who was more isolated from the general youth culture in London than any of the other 11 informants. He did not have any non-Cantonese friends. He did not take part in any school-organised extracurricular activities. He watched little English language television programmes other sport. He did not read any English language novels or magazines. This non-participation of these social practices meant less exposure to pop term usage for JT than the other informants and it might have impacted on his usage of English pop terms. On the other hand, JT's non-participation of these social practices may indicate that he did not want to be part of the general youth culture in London. This would also have impacted on JT’s being the informant with the least usage of English pop terms.

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If there is an age-of-arrival (AOA) effect on the use of pop-terms among the 12 informants, then it is natural to hypothesise that the AOA5 group would use more pop-term types and tokens than the AOA8 group, who in turn, would use more types and tokens than the AOA 10 group. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that the those informants who arrived in London at an earlier age would have spent more time than those who arrived later and ipso facto, those who arrived earlier would have more opportunity to learn pop terms.

Gender difference in the usage of pop terms shows that the hypothesis is not proved. While the above table indicates that the AOA5 group used more pop-term types and tokens than the other two groups, the table also indicates that the AOA10 group used more pop term types and tokens than the AOA8 group. The only AOA effect would be among the male informants. The male informants in the AOA5 group used more pop term types than the male informants in the AOA8 group, who in turn, used more pop-term types than those in the AOA 10 group.

Conclusions.

An environmental explanation fits better with the findings on the informants' usage of pop terms than an AOA explanation. Pop terms are often regarded as socially stigmatised and the findings show that the male informants favour the use of pop terms than the female informants. YH had been identified as the most conservative informant of the 12 partly because she was offended by some of the pop term items the researcher asked all 12 informants to discuss and because she used the fewest pop term types and tokens than all other informants with the exception of JT.

JT was the only male informant who had fewer pop term types than tokens than all other informants. It was not because he was conservative but because he was the informant least exposed to the general youth culture in London or because he did not want to take part in the general youth culture in London.
Chapter Six  Conclusions.

6.01 Proficiency Indicators.

None of the informants achieved full native speaker proficiency in their production of all of the 6 proficiency indicators.

*l for /n/ in Word Initial Position for English Words.*

None of the 12 informants produced instances of word initial /l/ for /n/ in their English in the interviews or in the two reading aloud tasks. On this basis, it concluded that the critical period for this proficiency indicator might end after age 10. The work has also pointed out that this linguistic feature, as a sociolinguistic indicator in Hong Kong Cantonese, has not affected any of the 12 link generation adolescent informants in their English possibly because this linguistic feature is not used by other ethnic groups in London as a sociolinguistic indicator and had the 12 link generation adolescent informants used it, it would have been interpreted as a lack of English proficiency.

**Stress Placement.**

There is only one instance of incorrect stress placement in the interview data. JH (AOA10) produced *patrol* instead of *petrol*. The present work has concluded that this instance could be a case of selecting the wrong word, and one instance is at any rate not sufficient to make claims about the critical period for learning to produce correct stress placement in English words. The data elicited from the reading aloud task give some evidence that the critical period for learning to produce correct stress placement in English words, if it exists, ends before age 10. JT (AOA8), as well as EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10) and JT (AOA10) produced instances of incorrect stress placement in English words in the reading aloud task.
The present work has also concluded that these instances of incorrect stress placement in English words could have only indicative value. These 4 informants found the reading aloud task very distressing and this state of distress might have affected their production. Furthermore, the correction production of stress placement in English words in the interviews and in the reading aloud task by other informants of AOA8 and AOA10 groups indicate that arriving in London after the critical period is not a necessary condition for producing this proficiency indicator in spoken English.

Past-time Tense Marking.

There are instances of verbs in past time contexts that do not have past time tense marking in the speech data of all the 12 informants. If there is a critical period for learning English tense marking rules, the data indicate that it ends at around or before age 5. The AOA5 group has the highest percentage of past tense marking of all 3 AOA groups. Although the group had not been able to achieve full native speaker proficiency in past time tense marking, they had been able to achieve near native speaker proficiency. For this group, the percentage of past time tense marking ranges from 93.07% (HN) to 97.83% (CC).

However, the data also show that two AOA8 informants, FN (95.74%) and YH (97.09%), had a similar percentage of past tense marking as the AOA5 group. This may indicate that there are factors other than the critical period that affect the production of this proficiency indicator, or that the critical period does not close at the same time for different individuals. The investigation of the social profiles of FN and YH shows that these two informants had non-Cantonese friends, took part in school-organised extracurricular activities, watched English language television programmes, and read English language novels. These social practices of these two informants were different from a male informant of the same AOA group, JT, who marked 10.20% of the verb tokens in past contexts, did not have non-Cantonese friends, did not take part in school-organised extracurricular activities, did not watch English language television programmes, and did not read English language novels. This finding indicates that there may be a link between these social practices and past-time tense marking for the AOA8 group. The present work has concluded that engaging in these social practices might have allowed FN and YH more exposure to how English verbs in past contexts are marked for tense. For example, English
novels are written mostly in the past tense. On the other hand, it may be that the informants’
social practices were an indicator of their (pre-existing) English proficiency, thus raising a
possible ‘chicken-and-egg’ issue.

The findings also indicate that 3 informants HN (AOA5), JH (AOA10), and EL (AOA10) used
non-standard past tense markers in their speech data.

Definite Article.

There are instances of Context 1 NPs that do not have the in the speech data of all the 12
informants. If there is a critical period for learning English definite article rules, the data indicate
that it ends at around or before age 5, as the AOA5 group had a slight AOA advantage over the
other two AOA groups. There is also a possible AOA effect for Context 2. Otherwise, the effects
are attributable to individual factors.

The present work has shown that the majority of the instances of inappropriate use of the definite
article are names of places (e.g. the Hippodrome), names of underground railway lines (e.g. the
Circle Line), and names of railway stations (Waterloo). This finding shows that SLA research on
definite article could benefit by adding production of proper nouns. The present work has also
shown that, for the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community, omitting the in the
Hippodrome can be used as a marker for identifying that community.

Null Object.

The findings indicate that there is a possible AOA effect on this proficiency indicator. The
critical period for learning to produce an overt object would seem to close at probably ends at
age 5. 3 informants (CC, CT, and HN) in the AOA5 group and none in the other 2 AOA groups
produced nil instances of null object, that is, had full command of English objects.

However, the findings also show that some informants of the other 2 AOA group, YH (AOA8),
JW (AOA8), and JH (AOA10), achieved near native speaker proficiency in their spoken English
regarding the production of this proficiency indicator as each of these 3 informants produced only one instance of null object. This leads to the speculation that the ability to learn to supply overt objects, or to suppress the tendency to null objects diminishes over time rather than all at once. The implication is that the critical period may close gradually rather than all at once.

**L1- Influenced Lexis.**

Only 3 informants, CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), and JW (AOA8) produced nil instances of this proficiency indicator in the speech data, suggests some AOA advantage before age 5. The AOA5 group performed better than the AOA8 group and the AOA8 group better than the AOA10 group with regard to this proficiency indicator. The findings also indicate a possible gender effect for the informants in the AOA8 and AOA10 groups. The female informants of these 2 AOA groups performed better the males. The data also indicate a social dimension to the informants' use of lexis.

**Summary of Patterns.**

In sum, the 12 informants’ production of these proficiency indicators suggest a different pattern with respect to the critical period for each of these 6 linguistic features. The findings also show that there is variation in production of some of these proficiency indicators within each AOA group. This points to the argument set out in Chapter 1 to Chapter 3 of the present work, that there are social factors at play in language learning, and that these may cause individuals to behave differently from others in the same age cohort. In the following section, the present work will explore how the social profiles of the 12 informants might be linked to their production of these 6 proficiency indicators.
6.02 Social Practices of the 12 Informants.

The aim of this section is to explore possible links between the social practices of the informants and their production of the 6 proficiency indicators. Each of the AOA groups will be discussed in turn.

The 12 informants’ instances or percentage (plus rank order) of the six proficiency indicators are summarised in the following table.

Table 6.01 Instances or Percentage (plus rank order) of the 6 Proficiency Indicators of Each Informant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>/n/ &gt; /l/</th>
<th>stress</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>The</th>
<th>0 object</th>
<th>lexis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC (n= 13549)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.17% (12)</td>
<td>0.489% (11)</td>
<td>0 (10)</td>
<td>0.007% (08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HG (n= 13067)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.88% (08)</td>
<td>2.33% (09)</td>
<td>0.015% (05)</td>
<td>0.061% (02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT (n= 17332)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.30% (11)</td>
<td>2.826% (08)</td>
<td>0 (10)</td>
<td>0 (09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN (n=12774)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.93% (07)</td>
<td>0.466% (12)</td>
<td>0 (10)</td>
<td>0 (09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN (n=23510)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.26% (09)</td>
<td>6.033% (03)</td>
<td>0.034% (04)</td>
<td>0.039% (04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YH (n= 19296)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.91% (10)</td>
<td>3.412% (07)</td>
<td>0.005% (09)</td>
<td>0.016%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT (n=11210)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>89.8% (01)</td>
<td>7.232% (01)</td>
<td>0.045% (01)</td>
<td>0.125% (01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW (n=13523)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.65% (06)</td>
<td>1.940% (10)</td>
<td>0.007% (07)</td>
<td>0 (09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (n=18185)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.53% (04)</td>
<td>6.565% (02)</td>
<td>0.038% (03)</td>
<td>0.044% (03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW (n=13905)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38.24% (02)</td>
<td>5.679% (04)</td>
<td>0.043% (02)</td>
<td>0.022% (06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH (n=17000)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.42% (05)</td>
<td>5.244% (06)</td>
<td>0.006% (08)</td>
<td>0.011% (07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN (n=16389)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25.00% (03)</td>
<td>5.349% (05)</td>
<td>0.012% (06)</td>
<td>0.031% (05)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The AOA Group.

CC was the informant in this group whose production of the 6 proficiency indicators was the most native like of the 4 informants in this group. Other than a single instance in the lexis category, in which both male informants produced nil instances, CC produced nil or the fewest number of instances in 5 other categories.

CT and HN closely followed CC. The 2 male informants produced nil instances in 4 proficiency indicators. CT had more instances of inappropriate use of the in his data than HN did. Although HN’s percentage of inappropriate tense marking is higher than CT’s, some of HN’s instances
were non-standard tense marking. It seems that HN had a slight advantage than CT in the production of the 6 proficiency indicators. HG, the other female informant, produced more proficiency indicators in terms of categories and in terms of instances than the other 3 informants in this group.

The differences between CC’s social profiles and social practices, and those of HG might explain the difference in their English performance. First, CC had been educated in public schools from arrival in London to age 18 while HG only went to state schools. Second, CC never had any Cantonese friends she could talk to or went out with. Her best friends were all native speakers of English. On the other hand, HG, although she had Black and Asian friends when she was younger, by age 18, her best friends, those she talked to and went out with, were all Cantonese adolescents.

Social network, in terms of the ethnicity of the friends the informants had, seems to be able to influence the informants’ production of the 6 proficiency indicators. CT and HN, whom the preceding discussion argued had produced more native like English than HG, also had English L1 friends at age 18. Both had English speaking girlfriends. However, the suggestion that social network is linked to English performance needs to be investigated further.

**AOA8 Group.**

JW was the informant in this group whose production of the 6 proficiency indicators was the most native like of the 4 informants in this group. He produced nil instances in 3 proficiency indicators while FN and YH, the 2 female informants in this group could only produce nil instances in 2 proficiency indicators. In fact, in terms of producing nil instances in the 6 proficiency indicators, JW fared better than HG of the AOA5 group. JW produced fewer non-native like instances with *the* than the other 3 informants in this group.

YH and FN produced nil instances in 2 proficiency indicators. FN had more instances of inappropriate use with the other 4 proficiency indicators than YH did. It indicates that YH had an advantage over FN in the production of the 6 proficiency indicators. Like HG of the AOA5 group, YH produced nil instances in the same 2 proficiency indicators. However, YH produced
fewer instances in the 3 other proficiency indicators than HG did. This indicates that some factors had neutralised HG’s AOA advantage. This suggestion will be explored further in the discussion below.

JT was the informant whose production of the 6 proficiency indicators was the most native like of the 4 informants in this group. He produced nil instances in only one proficiency indicator. He produced more instances in 4 proficiency indicators than the other 3 informants did. In fact, JT produced more instances in the 4 proficiency indicators than the other 11 informants did. This indicates that some factors had neutralised JT’s AOA advantage over the AOA10 group.

Social network, in terms of the ethnicity of the friends the informants had, again seems to be an important factor. JT did not have any friends he talked to or went out with other than Hong Kong Cantonese since he arrived in London. On the other hand, JW still had English speaking friends at age 18 and an English speaking girlfriend. This might have given JW an advantage over YH and FN of the AOA8 group and HG of the AOA5 group.

Other social practices seem less important. CC, HN, and JW did not read English language novels at all while HG, CT, YH, and FN did. These 4 informants also read English language magazines while the other 3 informants did not. Yet not engaging in this social practice had not kept JW from out-performing HG, YH, and FN nor engaging in this social practice allowed FN and YH to neutralise the AOA advantage enjoyed by HN.

JT was the informant who did not read English novels and magazines, who did not take part in school-organised extracurricular activities, and who watched only sport programmes on television. Not engaging in these social practices as well as having only Cantonese friends neutralised the AOA advantage he had over the AOA10 group. This is still a chicken-and-egg question. Which came first - his low proficiency or lack of English-based practices? And to what extent was avoiding both or either of these his choices?

In sum, the discussion so far has indicated that still having non-Cantonese friends at age 18 might explain the variational performance in the speech data of the 2 AOA groups. It remains to be seen whether this can hold true with the AOA10 group.
AOA10 Group.

KN was the informant in this group whose production of the 6 proficiency indicators was the most native like of the 4 informants in this group. He produced nil instances in 2 proficiency indicators while the other 3 informants in this group could only produce nil instances in 1 proficiency indicator. In terms of production in 2 other proficiency indicators, KN fared better than the other 3 informants because KN only produced more instances of inappropriate usage of *the* than GW, more instances of null object than JH.

The other 3 informants had only one proficiency indicator category where they produced nil instances. Table 6.01 shows that the general performance of these 3 informants were quite even. None of them could show having an advantage over the other two. As a group, the 4 informants performed better than JT of the AOA8 group but these 4 informants did not perform better than the other 3 informants in the AOA8 group.

EL was the only informant in this group who had a good English girl friend at age 18. She also began to go out with an English male adolescent around the time of the interview. However, she was not able to produce more native like performance in terms of the 6 proficiency indicators than FN and YH of the AOA8 Group. A possible explanation is that there is a smaller AOA advantage between age 5 and 8 which can be neutralised by social factors/practices like social network but the difference in AOA advantage age 8 and 10 is too great for such social factors/practices to neutralised.

Another possible, and more likely, explanation is that EL and her English girlfriend were not as close as EL had claimed. Furthermore, EL could only nominate one English speaking person as her best friend while CC (AOA5), CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), and JW (AOA8) had more.

In sum, the present work has linked a social practice, that of social network, with the variation in the production of the 6 proficiency indicators. It has also linked the non-engagement of social practices like reading English novels, taking part in school-organised extracurricular activities with JT’s performance.
Engaging or not engaging in these social practices might affect the performance of the 12 informants in several ways. Engagement indicates they are more assimilated to the British culture. It also means more opportunity for them to be exposed to English as used by non-Cantonese people including those who are native speakers of English. It remains to be seen whether these social practices might influence the informants’ production of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators.

6.03 Sociolinguistic Indicators.

HRT.

All 12 informants produced instances of HRT. The findings have also shown that the informants used HRT as a conversational strategy. However, the findings did not show any gender or socioeconomic class differences in the production of HRT among the informants. The present work has argued that, as a new linguistic feature, the social meaning of HRT has not been noted or assimilated by the informants.

Word Medial Intervocalic /t/.

The findings show that the 12 informants did not favour the 2 glottalised variants of the word medial intervocalic /t/. Only 4 informants, HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8), EL (AOA10), and JH (AOA10) used the glottal plus /t/ variant and EL and JH were the only informants who also used the full glottal variant.

The present work has suggested that the non-production of the 2 variants among the other 8 informants may be due to the importance the informants, as migrants in London, attached to standard English to their future career prospect. JH and EL, who used both variants, had stated they had little chance of getting a university education or finding a job outside the Chinese catering industry. The present work has also suggested that FN and HG used the glottal plus /t/
variant as a kind of rebellious behaviour to show their resentment of the parental control imposed upon them.

**Tense Alternation in Narrative.**

The findings have shown that only KN (AOA10) and HN (AOA5) used quotative verbs in present tense in the complicating action section of their narratives. The others, like CT (AOA5), HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8), and JW (AOA8) would use tense alternation in other sections, especially the evaluation section, to make the narratives more interesting. CC (AOA5) and YH(AOA8) hardly used tense alternation at all. JT(AOA8), EL (AOA10), JH (AOA10) and GW(AOA10) used more or same amount of past tense marking in their narratives as in other past time contexts.

The findings indicate that as a group, the informants did not favour the production of tense alternation in narrative. Thus the non-production of this linguistic feature marks the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community. Furthermore, that some of the informants (CT, HG, FN, and JW) used tense alternation in the evaluation section and less often in the complicating action section, a pattern that is different from the pattern reported by, for example, Labov (1092a), indicates the potential of using the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent informants' pattern to mark the boundaries of their community.

**Be like and Other Quotative Verbs.**

The findings show the informants' production of *be like* and other quotative verbs is similar to the findings in Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) in only one aspect - the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese informants and the British subjects in Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) favoured *say* to other variants. There are other differences between the two studies.

The findings in the present study show that the Hong Kong Cantonese informants used *be like* less frequently than the British subjects of Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) used *be like* mainly with third person subjects, unlike the latter subjects, who used *be like* predominantly with first
person subjects. Furthermore, the Hong Kong Cantonese informants, as a group, preferred zero quotative to *go* or *be* as quotative verb. In addition, the findings of the present study failed to identify any gender difference in the production of *be like* among the 12 informants.

The present work suggests that the informants, while as part of a general youth community in London that used non-standard variants of quotative verbs, might favour zero quotative to mark the boundaries of the Hong Kong Cantonese adolescent community.

**Information Staging: *Init*.**

The findings show that only 10 informants produced *init* as a means to stage information. The present work has suggested that as a sociolinguistic indicator with social meaning, *init* was rejected by informants with higher socioeconomic class backgrounds like CC (AOA5), CC (AOA5), YH (AOA8) and JW (AOA8). On the other hand, because *init* is a stigmatised sociolinguistic indicator, it was adopted by informants who belonged to lower socioeconomic classes as well as by informants who resented the parental control imposed upon them, like HN (AOA5), HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8), EL (AOA10) and JH (AOA10). The findings do not identify gender difference in the production of *init* among the informants.

**Information Staging: *You Know*.**

The findings indicate that there is a slight gender difference in the informants' production of *you know*. The male informants as a gender group favoured the production of *you know* than the female informants. The present work has suggested that the male informants favoured *you know* because it is a socially stigmatised linguistic feature.

Furthermore, the findings show that the production of *you know* may be indicative of rebellious behaviour on the part of some of the link generation informants. These informants were four female informants, HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8), GW (AOA10) and EL (AOA10), and 4 male informants, CT (AOA5), HN (AOA5), JW (AOA8), and JH (AOA10). These 8 informants produced more instances of *you know* than the other 4 informants.
Pop Terms.

The findings show that there is gender difference in the production of pop terms among the informants. The male informants favoured pop terms more than the female informants. The present work has suggested that it may be because female informants viewed pop terms as being rude or stigmatised.

6.04 Sociolinguistic Competence of the Informants.

An important finding in the investigation of the informants' production of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators is that the informants as a group produced instances of these sociolinguistic indicators. This indicates that the informants are part of a general youth community in London.

Another important finding in the investigation of the informants' production of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators is that there is no or little gender difference in 5 of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators. This possibly indicates that as sociolinguistic indicators in their L2, these linguistic features might have social meaning different to the informants than to native speakers of English.

The present work has suggested that resentment against parental control might be related to some informants' producing some of these sociolinguistic indicators. This factor is evident with HG (AOA5) and FN (AOA8), who stated how much they resented their parents.

The present work has also suggested that as L2 speakers of English, the informants encountered a layer of social meaning in the production of some sociolinguistic indicators that native speakers of English would not. For example, the informants might view the production of the 2 non-standard glottalised variants of /t/ in word medial intervocalic position as a lack of proficiency in English.

In addition, the findings show that there are aspects in the informants' production of these sociolinguistic indicators that are different from those of native speakers. For example, the...
informants favoured zero quotative while the British subjects in Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) favoured *go* and *be*. Some of the informants favoured tense alternation in the evaluation section of narrative while native speakers of English, according to sociolinguistic research by researchers like Labov (1972a), favoured tense alternation in the complicating action section. These differences would allow Hong Kong Cantonese adolescents like the 12 informants in the present study to use the unique aspects of their production of these sociolinguistic indicators to mark the boundaries of their community.

Three informants stood out, among the rest, as the informants with the fewest instances of the 6 sociolinguistic indicators in their speech data. The informants were CC (AOA5), YH (AOA8) and JT (AOA8). CC and YH, as the most conservative and least rebellious of the 12 informants, would be most sensitive to the social meaning of the sociolinguistic indicators and as the most conservative and least rebellious of the 12 informants, the 2 female informants would favour the production of some of the sociolinguistic indicators the least.

On the other hand, as the preceding discussion on JT has argued, JT, being the informant most isolated from the general youth culture in London because of his not engaging in social practices salient to the British culture, would be the least willing to adopt the 6 sociolinguistic indicators.

In sum, the investigation of the informants' production of these 6 sociolinguistic indicators indicate their sociolinguistic competence. They produced instances of these 6 sociolinguistic indicators to mark their identity as practitioners of the British culture and as practitioners of the Hong Kong Cantonese culture in London.

6.05 The Findings and the Research Question.

The research question of the present work was stated in Chapter 1 and for convenience is reiterated here.
Research Question.

Based on previous work in SLA, the present work does not consider the null hypothesis that all subjects, having arrived in London pre-critical period, will have achieved full native language competence - defined here as showing nil proficiency indicators and high sociolinguistic indicators - by age 18. Rather, the work assumes variable competence in this group and asks the question: How do social factors mediate cognitive factors in learning a second language before adulthood?

As the findings stated in Chapter 5 has shown, none of the informants have achieved full native language competence by age 18. The findings have also shown variable competence among the informants' in their production of the 12 proficiency and sociolinguistic indicators. The findings indicate an AOA advantage for the production some of the proficiency indicators among the informants that might be mediated to a certain extent by engaging in social practices like having friends from other ethnic groups.

The Hong Kong Cantonese culture acted as marginality that kept some informants from making more friends with members of other ethnic groups in London. Unlike the adult informants of the present study, most of the 12 informants had not shown any racial fear or bias against other ethnic groups. In fact, many of the 12 informants had friends from other minority groups in London. However, only 4 informants (CC, CT, HN, JW and EL) still claimed that they had non-Cantonese friends at age 18. Some of the informants suggested that they, as Hong Kong Cantonese, were brought up differently from members of other ethnic groups. The informants felt it was difficult for non-Cantonese to understand them and difficult for them to explain this difference to their non-Cantonese friends. In addition, their preference for Cantonese food could also keep them from having more non-Cantonese friends. In these senses, cultural difference acts as marginality that kept some informants from having more friends from other ethnic groups.

FN And all my friends I hang around with at our school or are actually Chinese, so you know, I'm just used to hang around with a Chinese environment innit, so, it's, it's, I use to hang around with English friends more but now I think as I grow older, I stick to erm, Chinese people more. I think in a sense it's like you speak the same language, you know, you think alike more, cause, they understand like, you know, when you talk about the parents, maybe they have the same problem too but English people, you tend to find that their parents are more relaxed, and you know, you know, happy about what they do.
GW So that’s why it is easier for us to hang out Chinese people, cause it’s like we are kind of like going through the same situation whereas the English people they are like, they can go out anytime so it’s like quite hard to communicate with them, you know, you know, in a way, that’s why yeah, that’s why all the Chinese people are together.

HN So like, it’s a bit like, it’s like an English girl, cause you know, it’s like, cause English girls don’t think Chinese. Basically.

LL I see, by *yauh tong yahm*, you mean they are good at the kitchen.

HN it’s just like you can eat the same stuff, you know, and you don’t have to adjust or something like that.

As for the informants’ production of sociolinguistic indicators, the present work has shown how, as members of the Hong Kong Cantonese community, some informants were influenced by the reality that they were migrants living in London. Informants like HN (AOA5), HG (AOA5), FN (AOA8) and GW (AOA10) were aware of their Cantonese identity and culture, and were aware they had social practices that were different from the social practices of other ethnic groups. JH (AOA10) did not feel that he was British and as such, he was not different from other British living in London.

JH I mean, living in people’s country, you can’t expect that much, innit? You have to take it, well take it easy, anyway.

However, as the preceding discussion had argued, it is those informants who favoured the use of the sociolinguistic indicators.

On the other hand, some informants felt more British and less Cantonese. CC (AOA5), CT (AOA5), and YH (AOA8) had practically given up social practices that are salient to the Hong Kong Cantonese adults and adolescents in London. Unlike informants like HG (AOA5), HN (AOA5), FN (AOA8), JT (AOA8), EL (AOA10), GW (AOA10), JH (AOA10), and KN (AOA10) who expended a lot of effort in getting the latest television soap operas from Hong Kong, not to mention the adult informants, these 3 informants only watched Cantonese films and soap operas if they were available at home. CC and CT did not have any Cantonese friends at age 18. These 3 informants favoured the use of the sociolinguistic indicators the least among the 12 informants.

In sum, the findings indicate that the informants adopted some sociolinguistic indicators to mark their ethnic adolescent community in London.
6.06 Limitations of the Present Work and Suggestions for Further Research.

In this section, the limitations to the present work will be mentioned. Steps were taken in the research to minimise the effects of these limitations to the reliability and validity of the findings. It is hoped that the effects of these limitations has been successfully or reasonably contained.

The Halo Effect and Speech Accommodation.

The 3 informant groups were invited to speak about their life in Hong Kong and their social practices in interviews. It was possible that some of the informants might have tried to present themselves in a better light than reality was. The English speech data of the non-link generation informant group and the link generation informant group elicited in the interviews were used for the analysis of their production of the 6 proficiency indicators and the 6 sociolinguistic indicators. The informants might have converged to the researcher’s English because they and the researcher all were Hong Kong Cantonese living in London or diverged from the researcher’s English because he was older than they were. In addition, the 4 non-link generation informants and the 8 link generation informants might have converged to or diverged from the English they used in other situations like talking to their friends in school.

The researcher had intended to elicit speech data from the informants in group sessions after the second interview. However, as he had narrated in Chapter 1, getting all the informants together was difficult, if not impossible. Some informants, like HN would not be interested. Others like JH, EL, and GW were no longer on speaking terms with each other.

It is hoped that the participant observation lasting 2 years for the adult informant group and about 6 months for some link generation informants, the extensive literature review, and the application of well-established models for the analysis of the 12 proficiency indicators and sociolinguistic indicators would minimise the halo effect and the effects brought about by speech accommodation.

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The Observer Paradox and Researcher's Bias.

It is also hoped that the effects of the limitations of the observer paradox were minimised by the lengthy period of the participant observation. The most significant limitation of the present work is that as a Hong Kong Cantonese migrant living in London, the researcher would be biased in his investigation. This limitation could be overcome by further research conducted by those with other ethnic backgrounds.

Selection of Informants.

The informants of the 3 informant groups were not randomly selected. Furthermore, most of the informants were involved in the catering business. Hong Kong Cantonese were not well-represented in the research. All 8 adult informants had catering background and were successful in their trade. The researcher could not find any willing candidates in that informant group who did not own a restaurant or a takeaway. The 4 non-link generation informants also had catering background. Of the 12 link generation informants, 10 of them had catering background.

However, there were also 3 distinct advantages to conducting the research among the Hong Kong Cantonese in London who were involved in catering. As already discussed, the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London comprises mainly of people involved in catering because of British immigration rules up to 1990. It was appropriate for the research to focus on those whose catering profession has characterised the Hong Kong Cantonese community for half a century. Second, by focusing on Hong Kong Cantonese involved in catering, the research offered a better basis of comparison with the findings of previous research (Chan, 1986) on the Hong Kong Cantonese in London and in the UK.

Absence of Cantonese L1 Data.

Another limitation is the absence of Cantonese L1 data. The 12 link generation adolescent informants might have used Cantonese to mark their status as Cantonese adolescents as well as link generation migrants living in London. The present work cannot rely on previous research as there is no previous research on the use of Cantonese among the Hong Kong Cantonese.
community in London. However, the main focus of the research was the English of the 12 link generation informants and as a pioneer study on the linguistic practices of the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London, the present work took the first step into better understanding the linguistic practices of that community.

SLA Research

The research has shown that the critical period and the PP model and its application in SLA research cannot describe language acquisition adequately. The research on the 12 link generation adolescent Hong Kong Cantonese informants has shown that the individuals in the group do not reference their performance to the same targets. The work has offered a more realistic description of the informants’ target of acquisition and of the social factors (e.g. age, gender, socioeconomic status, and social practices) interacting with age constraints in language acquisition.

6.07 Final Remarks on the Research.

In the last month of 1996 and after an absence of nearly two decades, the present researcher returned to a London which he loved since his undergraduate days. He found the way multiculturalism was celebrated in Britain, debates on racism and on what it meant to be British a refreshing change from the arguments in support of a mono-cultural Britain like the ill-conceived cricket test in the 1980s.

In 2001, the government suggested that some Chinese caterers were responsible for the foot-and-mouth outbreak. The accusation was quickly retracted due to a lack of evidence. Because of the horrendous events that took place in New York City and Washington D. C. that year, and the racial riots in Lancashire and Yorkshire as well, the present government has been deliberating on policies of targeting the cultures of ethnic minorities for shifts towards the ‘mainstream’ culture.

The framework of Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, and Roberts (1978) has reared its ugly head again. However, the identifiers of scapegoats are no longer the press but the government. TV news footage showed that the rioters in Oldham and Bradford were young enough to have been born in
Britain; but the government has targeted first generation immigrants for English language and English culture tests, loyalty oaths, and suggestions that British nationals should not marry people outside Britain and that marriage should not be arranged. These policies are not likely to be the answer to national security. They are mere regression towards mono-cultural ideals. Worse still, these policies simplify the life of a sizeable portion of the British population who have two or more cultures - including not only the large Chinese groups in London, but also Indians, Pakistani and other ethnic minority groups.

The present research on the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London has given a close-contact view of a group that has moved over one hundred years from marginal to more assimilated status. In addition, through investigating the linguistic and social practices of the 12 Hong Kong Cantonese link-generation migrants in London, the research has shown that the Hong Kong Cantonese community in London has maintained its symbolic boundaries.
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