

<b>Title:</b>	Does studying abroad legitimize Hong Kong English? The role of Study Abroad programs on attitudes and perceptions of HKE accent
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## Abstract

This project explored the role of study abroad programs on attitudes and perceptions of Hong Kong English accent among university students in Hong Kong. This study was carried out in two main sections: A mixed-method study was first adopted to uncover the reasons behind the typical attitudes of Hong Kong English accents among university students. Face-to-face interviews with qualitative measures were then employed to investigate how study abroad programs shape or reconstruct their perceptions of Hong Kong English accent. A total of 24 university students, including 20 local students and 4 study abroad students, participated in this study to share their valuable views and experiences regarding Hong Kong English.

The study revealed that most local students hold unfavorable and biased stereotypes towards Hong Kong English accents due to the learned process in their upbringings. Surprisingly, study abroad programs contributed to a shift in attitudes by exposing students to closely communicate with people from diverse linguistic backgrounds around the globe. As a result, students have increased attention to different language varieties and a growing appreciation for the uniqueness of Hong Kong English, and eventually acknowledging Hong Kong English as a legitimate and recognized variety of English.

This study on the legitimization of Hong Kong English holds educational implications for Hong Kong society, as it calls for reflection on people's perceived language attitudes and the significance of embracing the beauty of language diversity, including the unique Hong Kong English. Studying and understanding the legitimization of Hong Kong English can promote recognition and appreciation of Hong Kong English, and contribute to a more linguistically and culturally inclusive society in the long run.

## Reflection

Throughout my undergraduate studies, I am grateful of meeting lots of nice professors and friends who have guided me along the way through professional advice and delightful moments. Beyond the solid knowledge gained from lectures and assignments, I hold dear the unforgettable experience of studying abroad at the University of Waterloo in Canada. This journey has brought me immense joy and has been of irreplaceable importance in honing my English language skills and communication with people around the globe. It has also inspired me to choose Hong Kong English as the topic for my capstone project, prompting reflection on my language attitudes as a born-and-bred Hong Kong individual and fostering a deeper appreciation for the uniqueness of Hong Kong English. As an English major at CUHK, I wholeheartedly hope that more students will be encouraged to explore the beauty of English as a universal language to join people around the world and share love.