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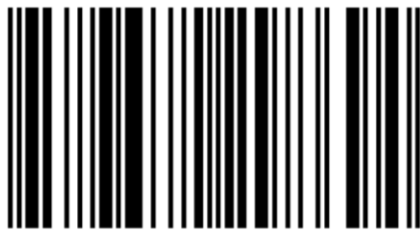
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Chinese students' evaluative reactions to Hong Kong English

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to elicit experimentally evaluative reactions to female and male Hong Kong English speakers among China university students by using “verbal-guise technique”. Two one-minute recordings depicting a plan of the underground facilities of a museum were recorded by two speakers in their own words. 30 English major students from a university in Shandong Province of China rated the two recordings on the bipolar semantic scale with 16 adjectives. Data analysis shows that the evaluation of male recorder overall is higher than that of female recorder. The students gave more positive evaluations to the speaker of the same sex as themselves.

Keywords: Evaluative reactions, verbal-guise technique, Chinese students, Hong Kong English

Introduction

“Hong Kong English (HKE)” refers to the English used by Hong Kong people, which reflects the characteristics of Cantonese at the phonetic, grammatical, lexical grammatical and conversational levels (Edwards, 2015). Especially in the aspect of phonetics, researchers believe that there is a local Hong Kong accent (Gisborne, 2009), which is influenced by the phonological features of Cantonese, reflecting systematic features of its own (Hung, 2000).

Among the studies related to Hong Kong English, a considerable part of them paid attention to the attitudes towards HKE (Chan, 2016; Edwards, 2015; Luk, 1998; Zhang, 2013). These studies generally showed that native exonormative varieties are more highly evaluated, and HKE accent often gets negative evaluation compared with British English and American English. However, the research objects of these studies are all Hong Kong people. Since the political transition in 1997, the communication between Hong Kong and China mainland has grown rapidly (Ye, 2008). It is necessary to understand the evaluation of HKE accent by Chinese mainlanders, which will give some enlightenment to Chinese people's views on Hong Kong people's identity.