

Survey of Young Educated Hong Kong People's Attitudes towards British English and American English: Comparing differences by tertiary learning experiences*

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Abstract

British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) are the most popular varieties of English to be taught to non-native English speakers throughout the world. As Hong Kong had been under the British rule for a hundred years until 1997, BrE is taught in primary and secondary schools as a required subject and is the norm of English used by the Government and to a large extent the general public. It is legitimate to expect that Hong Kong people are in favour of BrE. However, since Hong Kong is no longer under the British control, and AmE has become more and more influential due to socio-political and economic reasons, it is worth to study whether there is a change of local people's attitudes towards the two varieties of English. A questionnaire survey has thus been done, covering the affective, linguistic and pragmatic dimensions of the respondents' attitudes towards the two varieties of English as well as their attitudes towards speakers of these accents, plus the respondents' own usage of English varieties. The result shows that the notion "Hong Kong people are more favourable to BrE than AmE" is only partially supported by the data, indicating that there may have been a change of young educated Hong Kong people's attitudes towards the two varieties. The research also reveals that language attitudes can be acquired and changed in a relatively short period of overseas learning experience. All these point to the fact that a change in English norm in Hong Kong from BrE to AmE in the future is not totally implausible.

Keywords: British English, American English, Hong Kong English, Language Attitude

1. Introduction

British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) are two prominent varieties of English in the world. Especially in written usage, the two varieties are almost the only norms one can choose between one and other when composing formal English writing such as job application letters, academic papers, newspaper reporting, *etc.* (Crystal 1999: 300-305). Also, as far as TEFL or TESL is concerned, BrE and AmE are the most popular varieties to be taught to non-native English speakers throughout the world. Studies shown that people tend to have different attitudes towards different varieties of English, both the standard ones and non-standard ones (Luhman 1990, Ladegaard 1998), as young as 3-4 years old (Day 1982).

Hong Kong had been under the British rule for a hundred years until 1997. BrE is taught in primary and secondary schools as a required subject and is the norm of English used by the Government and to a large extent the general public. It is legitimate to expect that Hong Kong people are in favour of BrE. However, since Hong Kong is no longer under the British control, and AmE has become more and more influential due to socio-political and economic reasons, it is worth to study the attitudes of people in Hong Kong towards the two varieties of English and to see whether there would be a possibility of changing English norm in the post-colonial Hong Kong. In addition, emigration and overseas studies have been quite common in Hong Kong, and a substantial amount of people who engaged in these activities selected the North America as their destination, a continent where AmE has a greater influence. It is again worth to study whether this group of returnees has different attitudes towards the two English varieties, comparing with those who are educated locally. Also, the correlation between their attitudes towards the two varieties and their practices of English usage will be studied.

2. Clarifying key concepts

The first pair of concepts need to be clarified is the terms *British English* and *American English*. As McArthur (1992) points out, the two terms 'are used in different ways by different people for different purposes.' (p.41) For example, they can be used to refer to 'two national varieties, each subsuming regional and other subvarieties, standard and non-standard.' (McArthur 1992:41) However, in the context of this research, from the viewpoint of a ESL or EFL learner, the two terms normally refer to two international standard varieties that serve as reference norms for users of the English language elsewhere. Here are some illustrations of the differences between the two varieties.

Firstly, comparing the spelling system, BrE is characterised by the spelling of *-re* for words like *centre, theatre*, etc. and *-our* for *behaviour, honour*, etc., and their counterparts in AmE are spelt as *-er* and *-or*, namely *center, theater, behavior, honor*, etc. And there are still some other kinds of differentiations in spelling. Secondly, as far as pronunciation is concerned, BrE adopts the set of pronunciations called Received Pronunciation (RP) while the one for AmE is named General American (GA). By comparing the two sets of pronunciations, it is noticeable that there are different treatments of the phoneme /r/, viz. in GA, /r/ is pronounced in all positions, but in RP, it is not pronounced unless a vowel follows. Another example is the main vowels in words like *dance, pass*, etc. are pronounced as [A] in RP but [æ] in GA. Thirdly, lexical differences are also common between BrE and AmE, e.g. *elevator* (AmE) vs. *lift* (BrE), *eraser* (AmE) vs. *rubber* (BrE), etc. These differences should be recognisable to ordinary advanced ESL or EFL learners, including the subjects of this study, even though they are not specialised in this area.

The next item to be clarified is *attitude*. Attitude is one of the central topics in the field of psychology, especially social psychology. As Baker (1992) pointed out, '[d]efinitions of attitudes are surrounded by semantic disagreements and differences about the generality and specificity of the term.' (p.11) As a working definition, here we adopt the definition suggested by Baron and Byrne (2000: 118):

Attitudes refer to our evaluations of virtually any aspect of the social world (e.g., Fazio & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1994; Tesser & Martin, 1996) – the extent to which we have favorable or unfavorable reactions to issues, ideas, persons, social groups, objects – any and every element of the social world.

According to this definition, attitudes can be regarded as evaluations which are based on one's own affection, cognition, belief and thoughts about the subject matter, and this kind of evaluations has two main tendencies: favourable and unfavourable.

Although a definition of the term *attitude* has been given, it does not infer that the term *language attitudes* is clear enough, especially when one relate this term to various studies done on this topic. As Baker (1992) suggested, '[l]anguage attitude is an umbrella term, under which resides a variety of specific attitudes', including attitude to language variation, dialect and speech style, attitude to language groups, communities and minorities, attitude to the uses of a specific language, etc. (p.29). In my opinion, the term *language attitudes* has at least two meanings: (1) attitudes towards **the language itself**; (2) attitudes towards elements of the social world such as issues, ideas, persons, social groups, objects, etc. **based on (the attitudes to) the language**. It is obvious that (1) is primary while (2) is secondary, deriving from (1). Many of the previous studies do not distinguish the two kinds of attitudes whilst some of them even focused merely on the secondary sense of language attitude, especially for those employing the matched-guise technique introduced by Lambert *etal.* (1960) – a technique to reveal the attitudes towards *speakers* of different languages, but not the languages themselves. Although the findings of the previous research are valuable, the focus of future studies on language attitudes should better be reconsidered. In this research, I shall mainly focus on the primary sense of language attitudes, but also try to work on some aspects of the secondary sense – especially attitudes towards the speakers of the two English varieties.

As for the categorization of language attitudes, some researchers related it with the notion of instrumental motivation and integrative motivation proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and put forward the classification of *instrumental attitudes* and *integrative attitudes*, though attitudes and motivation differentiate from each other in a number of ways (Baker 1992:14). In their study on Hong Kong students' attitudes towards English and its use, Littlewood and Liu (1996:72-76) proposed three types of attitudes: *affective attitudes*, *socio-political attitudes* and *pragmatic attitudes*. In this study, having considered the characteristics of the present topic, I propose the following categories: the *affective dimension*, *linguistic dimension* and *pragmatic dimension*.

To be precise, **the affective dimension deals with the problem of like and dislike**, i.e. whether the subjects *like* to speak, listen, read and write in a certain linguistic variety, and this can be reflected and interacts with their preferences for the culture and other social aspects related to the linguistic variety. This dimension is basically similar to the traditional integrative attitudes and affective attitudes proposed by Littlewood and Liu.

Linguistic dimension deals with the problem of correct and incorrect, i.e. whether the subjects believe that a certain linguistic variety is *the* standard, is more correct, more grammatical and purer. This dimension is, in my opinion, crucial to the study of attitudes towards different varieties of a language.

Lastly, **pragmatic dimension deals with the problem of useful and not useful**, i.e. whether the subjects perceive that the linguistic variety is useful for personal success in the modern world, and this can be reflected from the opinion of which variety should be taught to the next generation in schools. This dimension is similar to the traditional *instrumental attitudes* and is the combination of Littlewood and Liu's *socio-political attitudes* and *pragmatic attitudes*.

3. Hypotheses

There are six hypotheses in this study:

- (a) Overall speaking, Hong Kong people are more favourable to BrE than AmE;
- (b) There are differences in attitudes towards BrE and AmE between Hong Kong people who are educated locally and those who have studied in the North America (i.e. Canada and the USA);
- (c) Hong Kong people who are educated locally are more favourable to BrE than those who have studied in the North America;
- (d) Hong Kong people who have studied in the North America are more favourable to AmE than those who are educated locally;
- (e) There is a positive correlation between the attitudes towards a variety of a language and attitudes towards the speakers of it, *viz.* those who are more favourable to BrE are more favourable to BrE speakers, while those who are more favourable to AmE are more favourable to AmE speakers;
- (f) There is a positive correlation between the attitudes towards a variety of a language and the usage of it, *viz.* when using English, those who are more favourable to BrE tend to use more BrE, while those who are more favourable to AmE tend to use more AmE.

4. Research design

4.1 The questionnaire

The research is done in the form of questionnaire (*cf.* the Appendix). The questionnaire is composed of five sections. Section I is to collect about some background information about the subjects including age, sex, education level and overseas learning experiences (country of study, no. of years spent and the level of school attended).

Section II consists of 22 items regarding attitudes towards BrE and AmE. The subjects are required to show their degree of agreement and disagreement with the items on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). The items or statements are classified and listed in the follow table (part of the statements are adapted from Littlewood and Liu 1996:72-76):

Table 4.1.1 Items used in Section II of the questionnaire of the present research

No.	Statement	Dimension	Tendency	
1	I like the way Americans speak English.	Affective		+AmE
4	American English is creative.	Affective		+AmE
6	I like people who speak British English and their way of life.	Affective	+BrE	
7	I like speaking English in the British accent rather than the American one.	Affective	+BrE	-AmE
9	British English is conservative.	Affective	-BrE	
11	I like people who speak American English and their way of life.	Affective		+AmE
14	I prefer listening to English-speaking singers who have American accent to those who have British accent.	Affective	-BrE	+AmE
16	The British accent of English is beautiful.	Affective	+BrE	
20	I prefer watching British films/TV programmes to American films/TV programmes.	Affective	+BrE	-AmE
			6 items	6 items
3	American English is more correct than British English.	Linguistic	-BrE	+AmE
10	British English is purer than American English.	Linguistic	+BrE	-AmE
12	British English is non-standard English.	Linguistic	-BrE	
15	American English is standard English.	Linguistic		+AmE
18	British English is more grammatical than American English.	Linguistic	+BrE	-AmE
21	British English is formal.	Linguistic	+BrE	
22	American English is colloquial.	Linguistic		-AmE
			5 items	5 items
2	American English is for entertainment while British English is for business.	Pragmatic	+BrE	-AmE
5	It is more useful for my children to speak American English rather than British English if either one of them has to be chosen.	Pragmatic	-BrE	+AmE
8	British English should persist to be the English accent taught in schools after 1997.	Pragmatic	+BrE	
13	American English ought be used more widely in Hong Kong.	Pragmatic		+AmE
17	British English is more important than American English in the world today.	Pragmatic	+BrE	-AmE
19	I prefer using American English to British English when writing job application letters.	Pragmatic	-BrE	+AmE
			5 items	5 items

In Table 4.1.1, the 22 statements are classified into three dimension, as discussed in the last section of this paper. In addition to this, there is a column called ‘Tendency’, in which a ‘+BrE’ indicates that an agreement with the statement infers a favourable attitude towards BrE; A ‘-BrE’ denotes the opposite, *viz.* an agreement with the statement infers an unfavourable attitude towards BrE. Similarly, a ‘+AmE’ means that an agreement with the statement infers a favourable attitude towards AmE, while a ‘-AmE’ implies that an agreement with the statement infers an unfavourable attitude towards AmE. There are items that having a tendency of ‘+BrE’ and ‘-AmE’ simultaneously, and *vice versa*. It is because they are items comparing the two varieties and the subjects have to choose between them, hence a favourable reply to one variety is at the same time an unfavourable reply to another. According to the distribution of item tendencies shown in Table 4.1.1, there are equal numbers of items questioning about attitudes towards BrE and AmE for each dimension.

Section III of the questionnaire is about the subjects’ attitudes towards speakers of the two varieties of English. Due to the limitation of time and resources, the matched-guise technique was not employed. Instead, subjects have to ‘imagine’ a typical BrE speaker and a typical AmE speaker and indicate their degree of agreement on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) about whether it is appropriate to describe the speakers of the two English varieties with the following 20 expressions:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Successful | 2. Progressive | 3. Sympathetic | 4. Ambitious |
| 5. Dependable | 6. Good | 7. Helpful | 8. Self-confident |
| 9. Humorous | 10. Conservative | 11. Trustworthy | 12. Wealthy |
| 13. Intelligent | 14. Frank | 15. Highly educated | 16. Emotional |
| 17. Reasonable | 18. Rational | 19. Friendly | 20. Bureaucratic |

The selection of expressions is partly based on some findings of related studies such as Luhman (1990) and Ladegaard (1998) and partly my own design. Most of the expressions are positive, which implies that an agreement with the expression infers a favourable attitude towards the speaker of an English variety. On the other hand, the four expressions *Ambitious*, *Conservative*, *Emotional* and *Bureaucratic* in the list are regarded as negative, which means that an agreement with the expression infers an unfavourable attitude towards the speaker of an English variety.

Section IV attempts to collect information about the subjects' practices of English usage concerning the choices between BrE and AmE. As mentioned earlier, some noticeable differences between BrE and AmE could be found in spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary. As the questionnaire is done through written media and the subjects might not be familiar with phonetic alphabets, pronunciation differences are not included in this section. 15 contrasting pairs of different spellings and lexicons are contained:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. cheque [BrE] | check [AmE] | 9. labor [AmE] | labour [BrE] |
| 2. honor [AmE] | honour [BrE] | 10. programme [BrE] | program [AmE] |
| 3. eraser [AmE] | rubber [BrE] | 11. cellular phone [AmE] | mobile phone [BrE] |
| 4. catalog [AmE] | catalogue [BrE] | 12. lift [BrE] | elevator [AmE] |
| 5. fall [AmE] | autumn [BrE] | 13. encyclopedia [AmE] | encyclopaedia [BrE] |
| 6. center [AmE] | centre [BrE] | 14. behaviour [BrE] | behavior [AmE] |
| 7. theater [AmE] | theatre [BrE] | 15. dialogue [BrE] | dialog [AmE] |
| 8. favourite [BrE] | favorite [AmE] | | |

Within the above 15 contrasting pairs, only four pairs are lexical differences while the other nine pairs are spelling differences, because the latter, according to McArthur (1992:42), 'serve as emblems or shibboleths of linguistic nationalism'. The subjects are required to pick out one from each pair that represents their daily usage.

The last section, Section V, is an open-ended question: 'Any views you would like to add about the issue of British English and American English?', which aims at collect addition information about the subjects' opinions on and attitudes towards the two varieties of English.

4.2 Data processing

For Section I of the questionnaire, simple descriptive statistics such as frequency count, means, *etc.* applies. For Section II, frequencies are counted item by item, then the scores of items with '-BrE' and '-AmE' tendencies are recoded in reverse order (1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1)iii so that all items are consistent in the sense that the more scores they got, the more favourable attitude is shown. The overall means scores for each item are calculated, and then the means scores of the groups with and without North America learning experiences are calculated and compared. Independent samples *t*-test and paired samples *t*-test are used to check the significance of differences in attitudes between groups and within the same group. Cronbach's Alpha is used to measure the reliability of items of the same dimension.

For Section III and VI, similar statistical means are adopted (negative expressions in Section III mentioned earlier are recoded in reverse order), and Pearson's correlation coefficients are calculated to find out if there is correlations between the attitudes towards a language variety and the attitudes towards the speakers of it, as well as the practice when using the language.

5. Findings

5.1 Section I: Background information

This study is a small-scale research with a sample consisting of 21 young educated Hong Kong people who received their primary and secondary education in Hong Kong. 10 are males and 11 are females. They all aged between 21-30 and are all university graduates. 14 of them have never studied overseas, henceforth *the local group*, while 7 of them received their tertiary education in North America, henceforth *the overseas group*. As for the overseas group, 1 of them studied in the USA while 6 of them in Canada. The number of years studied overseas ranging from 4 to 8 years, with a mean of 5.57 years.

5.2 Section II: Attitudes towards BrE and AmE

5.2.1 Overall results

Table 5.2.1.1 the overall mean scores and percentage of agreement with the 22 statements (from the highest to the lowest)

Rank	Item No.	Statement	Raw Mean Score ^a	Percentage of agreement ^b	Dimension
1	21	British English is formal.	3.9524	79.0%	Linguistic
2	18	British English is more grammatical than American English.	3.8095	76.2%	Linguistic
3	16	The British accent of English is beautiful.	3.5714	71.4%	Affective
4	9	British English is conservative.	3.5714	71.4%	Affective
5	22	American English is colloquial.	3.381	67.6%	Linguistic
6	10	British English is purer than American English.	3.381	67.6%	Linguistic
7	1	I like the way Americans speak English.	3.3333	66.7%	Affective
8	4	American English is creative.	3.2857	65.7%	Affective
9	11	I like people who speak American English and their way of life.	3.2381	64.8%	Affective
10	13	American English ought to be used more widely in Hong Kong.	3.0952	61.9%	Pragmatic
11	14	I prefer listening to English-speaking singers who have American accent to those who have British accent.	3.0476	61.0%	Affective
12	8	British English should persist to be the English accent taught in schools after 1997.	3.0476	61.0%	Pragmatic
13	2	American English is for entertainment while British English is for business.	2.9524	59.0%	Pragmatic
14	5	It is more useful for my children to speak American English rather than British English if either one of them has to be chosen.	2.9048	58.1%	Pragmatic
15	7	I like speaking English in the British accent rather than the American one.	2.8571	57.1%	Affective
16	6	I like people who speak British English and their way of life.	2.8095	56.2%	Affective
17	17	British English is more important than American English in the world today.	2.75	55.0%	Pragmatic
18	15	American English is standard English.	2.619	52.4%	Linguistic

Rank	Item No.	Statement	Raw Mean Score ^a	Percentage of agreement ^b	Dimension
19	20	I prefer watching British films/TV programmes to American films/TV programmes.	2.5714	51.4%	Affective
20	19	I prefer using American English to British English when writing job application letters.	2.5714	51.4%	Pragmatic
21	3	American English is more correct than British English.	2.2857	45.7%	Linguistic
22	12	British English is non-standard English.	1.9524	39.0%	Linguistic

^a Raw mean score refers to the means score before the recoding process mention in section 4.2.

^b Percentage of agreement = Raw mean score/5 x 100%

From Table 5.2.1.1, it can be seen that the overall percentage of agreement with the 22 statements ranges from 39% to 79%. The mostly agreed statements include ‘British English is formal’ (79.0%), ‘British English is more grammatical than American English’ (76.2%), ‘The British accent of English is beautiful’ (71.4%), ‘British English is conservative’ (71.4%), *etc.*, whilst the least agreed statements are ‘British English is non-standard English’ (39.0%), ‘American English is more correct than British English’ (45.7%), *etc.*

In the following I shall study the results of items in each dimension and the differences between groups.

5.2.2 The affective dimension

5.2.2.1 Item analyses

Table 5.2.2.1.1 Ranking of items by percentage of agreement: The affective dimension

Rank	Item No.	Statement	Percentage of agreement
3	16	The British accent of English is beautiful.	71.4%
4	9	British English is conservative.	71.4%
7	1	I like the way Americans speak English.	66.7%
8	4	American English is creative.	65.7%
9	11	I like people who speak American English and their way of life.	64.8%
11	14	I prefer listening to English-speaking singers who have American accent to those who have British accent.	61.0%
15	7	I like speaking English in the British accent rather than the American one.	57.1%
16	6	I like people who speak British English and their way of life.	56.2%
19	20	I prefer watching British films/TV programmes to American films/TV programmes.	51.4%

Table 5.2.2.1.1 shows the degrees of agreement with the statements of the affective dimension. The mostly agreed statement in this dimension is ‘The British accent of English is beautiful’ (71.4%) and the least agreed statement is ‘I prefer watching British films/TV programmes to American films/TV programmes’ (51.4%).

Table 5.2.2.1.2 Distribution of responses to affective items: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Statement	Percentage of agreement
3	16	The British accent of English is beautiful.	71.4%
4	9	British English is conservative.	71.4%
7	1	I like the way Americans speak English.	66.7%
8	4	American English is creative.	65.7%
9	11	I like people who speak American English and their way of life.	64.8%
11	14	I prefer listening to English-speaking singers who have American accent to those who have British accent.	61.0%
15	7	I like speaking English in the British accent rather than the American one.	57.1%
16	6	I like people who speak British English and their way of life.	56.2%
19	20	I prefer watching British films/TV programmes to American films/TV programmes.	51.4%

From Table 5.2.2.1.2, it is observed that the local group and the overseas group hold quite different views on the above affective items. For example, more than 57.1% of the local group agrees with item 9, whilst the majority of the overseas group (57.1%) is neutral; 71.4% of the overseas group agrees with item 14, whilst nobody from the local group agree with it. These may reflect different attitudes towards BrE and AmE by the two groups. In the following, we will study the differences in details and independent samples *t*-test will be employed to check whether the differences are significant.

Table 5.2.2.1.3 Descriptive statistics of affective items concerning BrE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
				Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
3	16	Local	14	2	14.3	8	57.1	4	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	3	42.9	1	14.3	3	42.9	0	0.0
		Overall	21	2	9.5	11	52.4	5	23.8	3	14.3	0	0.0
4	9	Local	14	1	7.1	8	57.1	5	35.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	1	14.3	1	14.3	4	57.1	1	14.3	0	0.0
		Overall	21	2	9.5	9	42.9	9	42.9	1	4.8	0	0.0
7	1	Local	14	0	0.0	3	21.4	7	50.0	4	28.6	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overall	21	2	9.5	7	33.3	8	38.1	4	19.0	0	0.0
8	4	Local	14	0	0.0	4	28.6	5	35.7	5	35.7	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	2	28.6	3	42.9	2	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overall	21	2	9.5	7	33.3	7	33.3	5	23.8	0	0.0
9	11	Local	14	0	0.0	2	14.3	10	71.4	2	14.3	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	1	14.3	3	42.9	3	42.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overall	21	1	4.8	5	23.8	13	61.9	2	9.5	0	0.0
11	14	Local	14	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	78.6	3	21.4	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3	0	0.0
		Overall	21	0	0.0	5	23.8	12	57.1	4	19.0	0	0.0
15	7	Local	14	0	0.0	7	50.0	5	35.7	2	14.3	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	14.3	4	57.1	2	28.6
		Overall	21	0	0.0	7	33.3	6	28.6	6	28.6	2	9.5
16	6	Local	14	0	0.0	3	21.4	9	64.3	2	14.3	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	42.9	3	42.9	1	14.3
		Overall	21	0	0.0	3	14.3	12	57.1	5	23.8	1	4.8
19	20	Local	14	0	0.0	1	7.1	11	78.6	2	14.3	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	85.7	1	14.3
		Overall	21	0	0.0	1	4.8	11	52.4	8	38.1	1	4.8

^a Recoding has applied.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.2.1.4 Descriptive statistics of affective items concerning AmE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t	df	p
3	16	Local	14	3.00	5.00	3.8571	.6630	-2.358	19	.029*
		Overseas	7	2.00	4.00	3.0000	1.0000			
		Overall	21	2.00	5.00	3.5714	.8701			
4	9 ^a	Local	14	1.00	3.00	2.2857	.6112	1.258	19	.224
		Overseas	7	1.00	4.00	2.7143	.9512			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	2.4286	.7464			
11	14 ^a	Local	14	3.00	4.00	3.2143	.4258	3.003	19	.007**
		Overseas	7	2.00	4.00	2.4286	.7868			
		Overall	21	2.00	4.00	2.9524	.6690			
15	7	Local	14	2.00	4.00	3.3571	.7449	-4.451	19	.000**
		Overseas	7	1.00	3.00	1.8571	.6901			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	2.8571	1.0142			
16	6	Local	14	2.00	4.00	3.0714	.6157	-2.559	19	.019*
		Overseas	7	1.00	3.00	2.2857	.7559			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	2.8095	.7496			
19	20	Local	14	2.00	4.00	2.9286	.4746	-5.185	19	.000**
		Overseas	7	1.00	2.00	1.8571	.3780			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	2.5714	.6761			

^a Recoding has applied.

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

Table 5.2.2.1.3 and Table 5.2.2.1.4 present the mean scores of items related to attitudes towards BrE and AmE respectively, plus the statistical results of group differences by independent samples *t*-tests. Items with ‘-BrE’ and ‘-AmE’ tendencies have been recoded so that it is consistent throughout the two tables that the higher mean score an item get, a more favourable attitude towards the concerning English variety is assumed.

It can be seen from the two tables that except item 9, all the other items show significant (p<0.05) or highly significant (p<0.01) differences between the mean scores given by the local group and the overseas group on the same items. In Table 5.2.2.1.3, comparing the mean scores of the local group and the overseas group, the former in general scored higher marks than the latter for all items with significant differences, indicating that the local group has a more favourable attitude towards BrE than the overseas group does.

On the contrary, in Table 5.2.2.1.4, comparing the mean scores again, it is found that the overseas group in general scored higher marks than the local group for all items concerned, indicating that the former has a more favourable attitude towards AmE than the latter does. In addition, out of the 6 items contained Table 5.2.2.1.4, 4 of them have a mean ≥ 4 as scored by the overseas group, which suggests a relatively strong favourable attitude towards AmE. Comparatively, even though the local group shows a favourable attitude towards BrE, the mean scores as shown in Table 5.2.2.1.3 are only around 3. This explains why when members of the whole sample are counted together (‘overall’), most of the items in favour of AmE seem to score higher marks than those in favour of BrE.

5.2.2.2 The affective dimension as a whole

(a) Reliabilities

Table 5.2.2.2.1a Correlation Matrix of affective items for BrE

ITEM NO.	6	7	9	14	16	20
6	1.0000					
7	.6859	1.0000				
9	-.0255	-.1132	1.0000			

14	.4795	.6527	-.0572	1.0000		
16	.4818	.3238	-.3189	.3067	1.0000	
20	.4228	.7083	-.2123	.5053	.1821	1.0000
N of Cases =		21.0				

Table 5.2.2.2.1b Reliability analysis: Affective items for BrE

Item-total statistics

ITEM NO.	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
6	14.3810	5.8476	.7040	.5674	.5558
7	14.3333	4.6333	.7558	.7277	.4997
9	14.7619	9.2905	-.1947	.1833	.8124
14	14.2381	6.3905	.6279	.4452	.5924
16	13.6190	6.8476	.2980	.3495	.6928
20	14.6190	6.6476	.5327	.5355	.6196

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 21.0

N of Items = 6

Alpha = .6899

The above tables shows that the Cronbach's Alpha is only .6899 if all the above items are included as indexes of the same dimension for measuring affective attitudes towards BrE. However, by deleting item 9, the reliability coefficient (alpha) can be raised up to .8124, indicating that it would produce consistent results when administered under similar circumstances. Therefore, the above item will be excluded in the following analyses for attitudes to BrE.

Table 5.2.2.2.2a Correlation Matrix of affective items for AmE

ITEM NO.	1	4	7	11	14	20
1	1.0000					
4	.4583	1.0000				
7	.6481	.4714	1.0000			
11	.5735	.5653	.6537	1.0000		
14	.7095	.6029	.6527	.6149	1.0000	
20	.5671	.2652	.7083	.5129	.5053	1.0000
N of Cases =		21.0				

Table 5.2.2.2.2b Reliability analysis: Affective items for AmE

Item-total Statistics

ITEM NO.	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
1	16.1429	10.4286	.7293	.5831	.8499
4	16.1905	11.0619	.5638	.4456	.8819
7	16.3333	9.6333	.7783	.6688	.8422
11	16.2381	11.5905	.7300	.5419	.8530
14	16.4286	11.5571	.7820	.6386	.8472
20	16.0476	12.1476	.6274	.5406	.8678

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 21.0

N of Items = 6

Alpha = .8783

The above tables shows that the Cronbach's Alpha is .8783, indicating the items are reliable indexes for measuring the affective dimension of attitudes towards BrE and it would produce consistent results when administered under similar circumstances. Although the item-total statistics show that the Alpha can be even raised higher if some of the items are excluded, the amount of increase is not that obvious and vital as the reliability coefficient is already at a satisfactory level.

(b) Affective attitudes towards BrE and AmE: The local group, the overseas group and overall

Table 5.2.2.2.3 Descriptive statistics of overall affective attitudes towards BrE and AmE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Variety	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
BrE	Local	14	2.60	3.80	3.2857	.3570	-5.662	19	.000**
	Overseas	7	1.60	3.00	2.2857	.4289			
	Overall	21	1.60	3.80	2.9524	.6096	N/A	N/A	N/A
AmE	Local	14	2.00	3.50	2.8929	.4009	5.405	19	.000**
	Overseas	7	3.17	4.67	3.9524	.4686			
	Overall	21	2.00	4.67	3.2460	.6575	N/A	N/A	N/A

^a Independent samples *t*-test

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.2.2.3 shows how differently the same variety is viewed by different groups in the sample from the affective perspective. The mean scores listed in the table are the averages of the mean scores of the selected items determined by the reliability tests for the affective dimension of attitudes towards the two varieties done in the previous section. It is noticed that for the affective dimension as a whole, the local group (Mean=3.2857) scored a higher average mark to BrE than the overseas group (Mean=2.2857), suggesting a more favourable attitude towards BrE by the local group. And this group difference is confirmed by the highly significant result of independent samples *t*-test ($p=0.000$). On the contrary, the overseas group (Mean=3.9524) scored a higher average mark to AmE than the local group (Mean=2.8929), indicating that the overseas group is more favourable to AmE than the local group does. And the result of independent samples *t*-test again confirmed this group difference ($p=0.000$).

Table 5.2.2.2.4 Descriptive statistics of overall affective attitudes of the local group, the overseas group and overall: comparing BrE and AmE

Group	N	Variety	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	ta	df	p
Local	14	BrE	2.60	3.80	3.2857	.3570	-2.059	13	.060
		AmE	2.00	3.50	2.8929	.4009			
Overseas	7	BrE	1.60	3.00	2.2857	.4289	4.946	6	.003**
		AmE	3.17	4.67	3.9524	.4686			
Overall	21	BrE	1.60	3.80	2.9524	.6096	1.078	20	.294
		AmE	2.00	4.67	3.2460	.6575			

^a Paired samples *t*-test

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.2.2.4 shows how differently the same group view different varieties from the affective perspective. Paired samples *t*-test is employed to check whether or not the different attitudes towards the two varieties by the same group are statistically significant. It is observed that the local group takes a more favourable attitude towards BrE (Mean=3.2857)

than AmE (Mean=2.8929) from the affective perspective, but as the result of *t*-test shown, the difference was not at 0.05 significant level ($p=0.060$). The overseas group takes a more favourable attitude towards AmE (Mean=3.9524) than BrE (Mean=2.2857) from the affective perspective, and as the result of *t*-test shown, the difference was highly significant ($p=0.003$). The overall result shows that the sample, which represents some young educated Hong Kong people's views, takes a slight favourable attitude towards AmE (Mean=3.2460) than BrE (Mean=2.9524) from the affective perspective, but the result of *t*-test reveals that the figures seem to be insignificant, indicating that the evaluations on the two varieties from the affective perspective by Hong Kong people in general may be indifferent. However, further investigations are needed to confirm this notion.

5.2.3 The linguistic dimension

5.2.3.1 Item analyses

Table 5.2.3.1.1 Ranking of items by percentage of agreement: The linguistic dimension

Rank	Item No.	Statement	Percentage of agreement
1	21	British English is formal.	79.0%
2	18	British English is more grammatical than American English.	76.2%
5	22	American English is colloquial.	67.6%
6	10	British English is purer than American English.	67.6%
18	15	American English is standard English.	52.4%
21	3	American English is more correct than British English.	45.7%
22	12	British English is non-standard English.	39.0%

Table 5.2.3.1.1 shows the degrees of agreement with the statements of the linguistic dimension. The mostly agreed statement in this dimension is 'British English is formal' (79.0%) and the least agreed statement is 'British English is non-standard English' (39.0%).

Table 5.2.3.1.2 Distribution of responses to linguistic items: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
				Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	21	Local	14	2	14.3	12	85.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	2	28.6	2	28.6	2	28.6	1	14.3	0	0.0
		Overall	21	4	19.0	14	66.7	2	9.5	1	4.8	0	0.0
2	18	Local	14	2	14.3	11	78.6	1	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	1	14.3	2	28.6	3	42.9	0	0.0	1	14.3
		Overall	21	3	14.3	13	61.9	4	19.0	0	0.0	1	4.8
5	22	Local	14	0	0.0	6	42.9	7	50.0	1	7.1	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	1	14.3	3	42.9	2	28.6	0	0.0	1	14.3
		Overall	21	1	4.8	9	42.9	9	42.9	1	4.8	1	4.8
6	10	Local	14	2	14.3	8	57.1	3	21.4	1	7.1	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	2	28.6	1	14.3	3	42.9	1	14.3
		Overall	21	2	9.5	10	47.6	4	19.0	4	19.0	1	4.8
18	15	Local	14	0	0.0	1	7.1	6	42.9	7	50.0	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	1	14.3	4	57.1	1	14.3	1	14.3
		Overall	21	0	0.0	2	9.5	10	47.6	8	38.1	1	4.8
21	3	Local	14	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	35.7	8	57.1	1	7.1
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	42.9	3	42.9	1	14.3
		Overall	21	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	38.1	11	52.4	2	9.5
22	12	Local	14	0	0.0	1	7.1	2	14.3	7	50.0	4	28.6
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	14.3	4	57.1	2	28.6
		Overall	21	0	0.0	1	4.8	3	14.3	11	52.4	6	28.6

From Table 5.2.3.1.2, it is observed that the local group and the overseas group hold quite different views on some of the above linguistic items. For example, 85.7% of the local group chose ‘agrees’ for item 21, whilst only 28.6% of the overseas group did so; 57.1% of the overseas group chose ‘neutral’ for item 15, whilst 50.0% of the local group chose ‘disagree’. These may reflect different attitudes towards BrE and AmE by the two groups. In the following, we will study the differences in details and independent samples *t*-test will be employed to check whether the differences are significant.

Table 5.2.3.1.3 Descriptive statistics of linguistic items concerning BrE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t	df	p
1	21	Local	14	4.00	5.00	4.1429	.3631	-1.468	19	.158
		Overseas	7	1.00	5.00	3.5714	1.3973			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	3.9524	.8646	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	18	Local	14	3.00	5.00	4.0714	.4746	-2.105	19	.049*
		Overseas	7	1.00	5.00	3.2857	1.2536			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	3.8095	.8729	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	10	Local	14	2.00	5.00	3.7857	.8018	-2.852	19	.010**
		Overseas	7	1.00	4.00	2.5714	1.1339			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	3.3810	1.0713	N/A	N/A	N/A
21	3 ^a	Local	14	3.00	5.00	3.7143	.6112	.000	19	1.000
		Overseas	7	3.00	5.00	3.7143	.7559			
		Overall	21	3.00	5.00	3.7143	.6437	N/A	N/A	N/A
22	12 ^a	Local	14	2.00	5.00	4.0000	.8771	.375	19	.712
		Overseas	7	3.00	5.00	4.1429	.6901			
		Overall	21	2.00	5.00	4.0476	.8047	N/A	N/A	N/A

^a Recoding has applied.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.3.1.4 Descriptive statistics of linguistic items concerning AmE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t	df	p
2	18 ^a	Local	14	1.00	3.00	1.9286	.4746	2.105	19	.049*
		Overseas	7	1.00	5.00	2.7143	1.2536			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	2.1905	.8729	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	22 ^a	Local	14	2.00	4.00	2.6429	.6333	-.174	19	.864
		Overseas	7	1.00	5.00	2.5714	1.2724			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	2.6190	.8646	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	10 ^a	Local	14	1.00	4.00	2.2143	.8018	2.852	19	.010**
		Overseas	7	2.00	5.00	3.4286	1.1339			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	2.6190	1.0713	N/A	N/A	N/A
18	15	Local	14	2.00	4.00	2.5714	.6462	.408	19	.688
		Overseas	7	1.00	4.00	2.7143	.9512			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	2.6190	.7400	N/A	N/A	N/A
21	3	Local	14	1.00	3.00	2.2857	.6112	.000	19	1.000
		Overseas	7	1.00	3.00	2.2857	.7559			
		Overall	21	1.00	3.00	2.2857	.6437	N/A	N/A	N/A

^a Recoding has applied.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.3.1.3 and Table 5.2.3.1.4 present the mean scores of items related to attitudes towards BrE and AmE respectively, plus the statistical results of group differences by independent samples *t*-tests. Items with ‘-BrE’ and ‘-AmE’ tendencies have been recoded

so that it is consistent throughout the two tables that the higher mean score an item get, a more favourable attitude towards the concerning English variety is assumed.

According to the findings, the overall mean scores of items in favour of BrE (Table 5.2.3.1.3) range from 3.3810 to 4.0476, whilst the scores of those in favour of AmE (Table 5.2.3.1.4) range from 2.1905 to 2.6190 only. This reveals that the subjects as a whole have a more favourable attitude towards BrE than AmE from the linguistic perspective. Moreover, the differences between the local group and the overseas group are less obvious than that of the affective dimension. Especially for item 3, the two groups even have the same mean scores with a slight difference in SD, showing a similar opinion on that item. For the other items except items 12 and 22, it is still the case that in general items in favour of BrE scored higher marks from the local group than the overseas group, while those in favour of AmE scored higher marks from the overseas group than the local group. The results of independent samples *t*-test, however, indicate that only two cases (items 18 and 10) in which the differences are either significant ($p < 0.05$) or highly significant ($p < 0.01$). For items 12 and 22, although the means scores of the two groups are opposite to our expectation, the differences between the scores are only 0.1429 and 0.0715 respectively, which are very slight differences, and the results of *t*-test show that the differences are not significant. Therefore, so far the only conclusion can be drawn from the two items is that in general the two groups have similar views on them.

5.2.3.2 The linguistic dimension as a whole

(a) Reliabilities

Table 5.2.3.2.1a Correlation Matrix of linguistic items for BrE

ITEM NO.	3	10	12	18	21
3	1.0000				
10	-.3419	1.0000			
12	.2206	.0939	1.0000		
18	-.3687	.4558	-.0576	1.0000	
21	-.3850	.5604	-.0684	.7824	1.0000
N of Cases =		21.0			

Table 5.2.3.2.1b Reliability analysis: Linguistic items for BrE

Item-total statistics

ITEM NO.	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
3	15.1905	6.3619	-.3344	.2308	.6407
10	15.5238	2.9619	.4288	.3600	.1758
12	14.8571	4.8286	.0606	.0881	.4852
18	15.0952	3.3905	.4785	.6176	.1704
21	14.9524	3.2476	.5440	.6695	.1134

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 21.0

N of Items = 5

Alpha = .4331

The above tables show that the Cronbach's Alpha is only .4331 if all the above items are included as indexes of measurement for linguistic attitudes towards BrE. However, by deleting item 3 and item 12, the reliability coefficient (Alpha) can be raised up to .6407 and .4852, and up to .8042 if both are deleted. Therefore, both of the two items will be excluded in the following analyses for attitudes to BrE.

Table 5.2.3.2.2a Correlation Matrix of linguistic items for AmE

ITEM NO.	3	10	15	18	22
3	1.0000				
10	-.3419	1.0000			
15	.5549	-.0030	1.0000		
18	-.3687	.4558	-.3465	1.0000	
22	-.6032	.3753	-.3163	.4322	1.0000

N of Cases = 21.0

Table 5.2.3.2.2b Reliability analysis: Linguistic items for AmE

Item-total Statistics

ITEM NO.	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
3	10.0476	4.5476	-.3747	.5447	.3937
10	9.7143	1.7143	.3819	.3378	-.5889
15	9.7143	3.7143	-.1152	.4088	.2308
18	10.1429	2.5286	.2316	.3606	-.1733
22	9.7143	2.9143	.0919	.4263	.0196

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 21.0

N of Items = 5

Alpha = .0999

The above tables show that the Cronbach's Alpha is only .0999 if all the above items are included as indexes of measurement for linguistic attitudes towards AmE. This indicates that there is a considerably large discrepancy among the results of items in this dimension, thus the reliability of grouping the items under the same dimension is affected. By deleting *both* of item 3 and item 15, the reliability coefficient (Alpha) can be raised up to .6794. Though the figure is not yet fully satisfactory, both of the two items will be excluded in the following analyses for attitudes to AmE. Further investigations are needed to improve the scale of this dimension.

(b) Linguistic attitudes towards BrE and AmE: The local group, the overseas group and overall

Table 5.2.3.2.3 Descriptive statistics of overall linguistic attitudes towards BrE and AmE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Variety	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
BrE	Local	14	3.33	5.00	4.0000	.4529	-2.646	19	.016*
	Overseas	7	1.00	4.00	3.1429	1.0516			
	Overall	21	1.00	5.00	3.7143	.7978	N/A	N/A	N/A
AmE	Local	14	1.33	3.00	2.2619	.4563	2.033	19	.056
	Overseas	7	2.00	5.00	2.9048	1.0131			
	Overall	21	1.33	5.00	2.4762	.7346	N/A	N/A	N/A

^a Independent samples *t*-test

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.3.2.3 shows how differently the same variety is viewed by different groups in the sample from the linguistic perspective. The mean scores listed in the table are the averages of the mean scores of the selected items determined by the reliability tests for the linguistic dimension of attitudes towards the two varieties done in the previous section. It is noticed that for the linguistic dimension as a whole, the local group (Mean=4.000) scored a higher average mark to BrE than the overseas group (Mean=3.1429), suggesting a more

favourable attitude towards BrE by the local group. And this group difference is confirmed by the significant result of independent samples *t*-test ($p=0.016$). On the contrary, the overseas group (Mean=2.9048) scored a higher average mark to AmE than the local group (Mean=2.2619), indicating that the overseas group is more favourable to AmE than the local group does. And the result of independent samples *t*-test shows that the difference is close to the significant level ($p=0.056$) if the alpha level is set at .05.

Table 5.2.3.2.4 Descriptive statistics of overall linguistic attitudes of the local group, the overseas group and overall: comparing BrE and AmE

Group	N	Variety	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
Local	14	BrE	3.33	5.00	4.0000	.4529	7.320	13	.000**
		AmE	1.33	3.00	2.2619	.4563			
Overseas	7	BrE	1.00	4.00	3.1429	1.0516	.308	6	.768
		AmE	2.00	5.00	2.9048	1.0131			
Overall	21	BrE	1.00	5.00	3.7143	.7978	3.749	20	.001**
		AmE	1.33	5.00	2.4762	.7346			

^a Paired samples *t*-test

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.3.2.4 shows how differently the same group view different varieties from the linguistic perspective. Paired samples *t*-test is employed to check whether or not the different attitudes towards the two varieties by the same group are statistically significant. It is observed that the local group takes a more favourable attitude towards BrE (Mean=4.0000) than AmE (Mean=2.2619) from the linguistic perspective, and the result of paired samples *t*-test indicates that the difference is highly significant ($p=0.000$). Same as the local group, the overseas group also takes a more favourable attitude towards BrE (Mean=3.1429) than AmE (Mean=2.9048) from the linguistic perspective. Nevertheless, the mean difference of the overseas group's attitudes towards the two varieties is only 0.2381 while that of the local group is 1.7381, suggesting a weaker favourable attitudes towards BrE as well as a weaker unfavourable attitudes towards AmE by the overseas group than the local group. In addition, the result of *t*-test shows that the difference is not statistically significant ($p=0.768$). Finally, the overall result shows that the sample as a whole, which represents some young educated Hong Kong people's views, takes a more favourable attitude towards BrE (Mean=3.7143) than AmE (Mean=2.4762) from the linguistic perspective, and the result of *t*-test indicates that the difference is highly significant ($p=0.001$).

5.2.4 The pragmatic dimension

5.2.4.1 Item analyses

Table 5.2.4.1.1 Ranking of items by percentage of agreement: The pragmatic dimension

Rank	Item No.	Statement	Percentage of agreement
10	13	American English ought be used more widely in Hong Kong.	61.9%
12	8	British English should persist to be the English accent taught in schools after 1997.	61.0%
13	2	American English is for entertainment while British English is for business.	59.0%
14	5	It is more useful for my children to speak American English rather than British English if either one of them has to be chosen.	58.1%
17	17	British English is more important than American English in the world today.	55.0%
20	19	I prefer using American English to British English when writing job application letters.	51.4%

Table 5.2.4.1.1 shows the degrees of agreement with the statements of the pragmatic dimension. The mostly agreed statement in this dimension is ‘American English ought be used more widely in Hong Kong’ (61.9%) and ‘British English should persist to be the English accent taught in schools after 1997’ (61.0%), whilst the least agreed statement is ‘I prefer using American English to British English when writing job application letters’ (51.4%).

Table 5.2.4.1.2 Distribution of responses to pragmatic items: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
				Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
10	13	Local	14	0	0.0	1	7.1	10	71.4	2	14.3	1	7.1
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	5	71.4	2	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Overall	21	0	0.0	6	28.6	12	57.1	2	9.5	1	4.8
12	8	Local	14	1	7.1	6	42.9	4	28.6	3	21.4	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	1	14.3	2	28.6	3	42.9	1	14.3
		Overall	21	1	4.8	7	33.3	6	28.6	6	28.6	1	4.8
13	2	Local	14	0	0.0	4	28.6	4	28.6	6	42.9	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	3	42.9	3	42.9	0	0.0	1	14.3
		Overall	21	0	0.0	7	33.3	7	33.3	6	28.6	1	4.8
14	5	Local	14	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	78.6	3	21.4	0	0.0
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3	0	0.0
		Overall	21	0	0.0	5	23.8	12	57.1	4	19.0	0	0.0
17	17	Local	14	0	0.0	4	28.6	7	50.0	3	21.4	0	0.0
		Overseas	6 ^a	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	16.7	4	66.7	1	16.7
		Overall	20 ^a	0	0.0	4	20.0	8	40.0	7	35.0	1	5.0
20	19	Local	14	1	7.1	2	14.3	3	21.4	6	42.9	2	14.3
		Overseas	7	0	0.0	2	28.6	1	14.3	3	42.9	1	14.3
		Overall	21	1	4.8	4	19.0	4	19.0	9	42.9	3	14.3

^a There is one missing response. Only valid percentages are listed.

From Table 5.2.4.1.2, it is observed that the local group and the overseas group hold quite different views on some of the above pragmatic items. For example, 71.4% of the local group chose ‘neutral’ for item 13, whilst 71.4% of the overseas group chose ‘agree’; 71.4% of the overseas group agree with item 5, whilst nobody from the local group agree with it. These may reflect different attitudes towards BrE and AmE by the two groups. In the following, we will study the differences in details and independent samples *t*-test will be employed to check whether the differences are significant.

Table 5.2.4.1.3 Descriptive statistics of pragmatic items concerning BrE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t	df	p
12	8	Local	14	2.00	5.00	3.3571	.9288	-2.125	19	.047*
		Overseas	7	1.00	4.00	2.4286	.9759			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	3.0476	1.0235			
13	2	Local	14	2.00	4.00	2.8571	.8644	.661	19	.517
		Overseas	7	1.00	4.00	3.1429	1.0690			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	2.9524	.9207			
14	5 ^a	Local	14	2.00	5.00	3.3571	1.0818	-1.701	19	.105
		Overseas	7	2.00	4.00	2.5714	.7868			
		Overall	21	2.00	5.00	3.0952	1.0443			
17	17	Local	14	2.00	4.00	3.0714	.7300	-3.118	18	.006**
		Overseas	6	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.6325			
		Overall	20	1.00	4.00	2.7500	.8507			
20	19 ^a	Local	14	1.00	5.00	3.4286	1.1579	.000	19	1.000
		Overseas	7	2.00	5.00	3.4286	1.1339			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	3.4286	1.1212			

^a Recoding has applied.

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

Table 5.2.4.1.4 Descriptive statistics of pragmatic items concerning AmE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Rank	Item No.	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t	df	p
10	13	Local	14	1.00	4.00	2.7857	.6993	3.134	19	.005**
		Overseas	7	3.00	4.00	3.7143	.4880			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	3.0952	.7684			
13	2 ^a	Local	14	2.00	4.00	3.1429	.8644	-.661	19	.517
		Overseas	7	2.00	5.00	2.8571	1.0690			
		Overall	21	2.00	5.00	3.0476	.9207			
14	5	Local	14	1.00	4.00	2.6429	1.0818	1.701	19	.105
		Overseas	7	2.00	4.00	3.4286	.7868			
		Overall	21	1.00	4.00	2.9048	1.0443			
17	17 ^a	Local	14	2.00	4.00	2.9286	.7300	3.118	18	.006**
		Overseas	6	3.00	5.00	4.0000	.6325			
		Overall	20	2.00	5.00	3.2500	.8507			
20	19	Local	14	1.00	5.00	2.5714	1.1579	.000	19	1.000
		Overseas	7	1.00	4.00	2.5714	1.1339			
		Overall	21	1.00	5.00	2.5714	1.1212			

^a Recoding has applied.

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

Table 5.2.4.1.3 and Table 5.2.4.1.4 present the mean scores of items related to attitudes towards BrE and AmE respectively, plus the statistical results of group differences by independent samples *t*-tests. Items with ‘-BrE’ and ‘-AmE’ tendencies have been recoded so that it is consistent throughout the two tables that the higher mean score an item get, a more favourable attitude towards the concerning English variety is assumed.

According to the findings, the overall mean scores of items in favour of BrE (Table 5.2.4.1.3) range from 2.7500 to 3.4286, and the scores of those in favour of AmE (Table 5.2.4.1.4) range from 2.5714 to 3.2500. This reveals that the subjects’ attitudes towards BrE

and AmE from the pragmatic perspective might be quite similar, but is slightly in favour of BrE.

Moreover, similar to the case of linguistic dimension, the differences between the local group and the overseas group are less obvious than that of the affective dimension. Especially for item 19, the two groups even have the same mean scores, showing a similar opinion on that item. For the other items except item 2, it is still the case that in general items in favour of BrE scored higher marks from the local group than the overseas group, while those in favour of AmE scored higher marks from the overseas group than the local group. The results of independent samples *t*-test, however, indicate that only three cases (items 8, 17 and 13) in which the differences are either significant ($p < 0.05$) or highly significant ($p < 0.01$). For item 2, although the means scores of the two groups are opposite to our expectation, the differences between the scores is only 0.2858, which can be considered as a minor difference, and the result of *t*-test shows that the difference is insignificant. Therefore, so far the only conclusion can be drawn from this item is that in general the two groups have similar views on it.

5.2.4.2 The pragmatic dimension as a whole

(a) Reliabilities

Table 5.2.4.2.1a Correlation Matrix of pragmatic items for BrE

ITEM NO.	2	5	8	17	19
2	1.0000				
5	-.3419	1.0000			
8	.2206	.0939	1.0000		
17	-.3687	.4558	-.0576	1.0000	
19	-.3850	.5604	-.0684	.7824	1.0000
N of Cases =		21.0			

Table 5.2.4.2.1b Reliability analysis: Pragmatic items for BrE

Item-total statistics

ITEM NO.	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
2	12.4000	6.9895	-.2663	.4653	.5572
5	12.1500	4.2395	.2839	.5702	.1324
8	12.3000	4.7474	.1648	.4229	.2528
17	12.5500	4.1553	.4780	.4678	-.0068
19	11.8000	4.3789	.2057	.3473	.2099

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 21.0

N of Items = 5

Alpha = .3130

The above tables show that the Cronbach's Alpha is only .3130 if all the above items are included as indexes of measurement for pragmatic attitudes towards BrE. This indicates that there is a discrepancy among the results of items in this dimension, thus the reliability of grouping the items under the same dimension is affected. By deleting item 2, the reliability coefficient (Alpha) can be raised up to .5572. Though the figure is not yet fully satisfactory, the items will be excluded in the following analyses for attitudes to BrE. Further investigations are needed to improve the scale of this dimension.

Table 5.2.4.2.2a Correlation Matrix of pragmatic items for AmE

ITEM NO.	2	5	13	17	19
2	1.0000				
5	-.4828	1.0000			
13	-.3117	.6766	1.0000		
17	.1018	.2826	.3056	1.0000	
19	.0000	.4830	.3466	.0281	1.0000

N of Cases = 21.0

Table 5.2.4.2.2b Reliability analysis: Pragmatic items for AmE

Item-total Statistics

ITEM NO.	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
2	11.6500	7.2921	-.2415	.3866	.6765
5	11.9000	4.0947	.4177	.6639	.2451
13	11.7000	4.7474	.4868	.4746	.2528
17	11.5000	5.1053	.2875	.2247	.3670
19	12.2500	3.9868	.3953	.3456	.2587

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 21.0

N of Items = 5

Alpha = .4526

The above tables show that the Cronbach's Alpha is only .4526 if all the above items are included as indexes of measurement for pragmatic attitudes towards AmE. This indicates that there is a discrepancy among the results of items in this dimension, thus the reliability of grouping the items under the same dimension is affected. By deleting item 2, the reliability coefficient (Alpha) can be raised up to .6765. Though the figure is not yet fully satisfactory, the items will be excluded in the following analyses for attitudes to AmE. Further investigations are needed to improve the scale of this dimension.

(b) Pragmatic attitudes towards BrE and AmE: The local group, the overseas group and overall

Table 5.2.4.2.3 Descriptive statistics of overall pragmatic attitudes towards BrE and AmE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Variety	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
BrE	Local	14	2.00	4.25	3.3036	.6806	-2.463	19	.023*
	Overseas	7	2.25	3.00	2.6429	.2440			
	Overall	21	2.00	4.25	3.0833	.6487			
AmE	Local	14	1.50	4.00	2.7321	.7170	2.350	19	.030*
	Overseas	7	2.75	3.88	3.4107	.3440			
	Overall	21	1.50	4.00	2.9583	.6907			

^a Independent samples *t*-test

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.4.2.3 shows how differently the same variety is viewed by different groups in the sample from the pragmatic perspective. The mean scores listed in the table are the averages of the mean scores of the selected items determined by the reliability tests for the pragmatic dimension of attitudes towards the two varieties done in the previous section. It is noticed that for the pragmatic dimension as a whole, the local group (Mean=3.3036) scored a higher average mark to BrE than the overseas group (Mean=2.6429), suggesting a more favourable attitude towards BrE by the local group. And this group difference is confirmed

by the significant result of independent samples *t*-test ($p=0.023$). On the contrary, the overseas group (Mean=3.4107) scored a higher average mark to AmE than the local group (Mean=2.7321), indicating that the overseas group is more favourable to AmE than the local group does. And the result of independent samples *t*-test shows that the difference is a significant one ($p=0.030$).

Table 5.2.4.2.4 Descriptive statistics of overall pragmatic attitudes of the local group, the overseas group and overall: comparing BrE and AmE

Group	N	Variety	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
Local	14	BrE	2.00	4.25	3.3036	.6806	1.552	13	.145
		AmE	1.50	4.00	2.7321	.7170			
Overseas	7	BrE	2.25	3.00	2.6429	.2440	-4.322	6	.005**
		AmE	2.75	3.88	3.4107	.3440			
Overall	21	BrE	2.00	4.25	3.0833	.6487	.437	20	.667
		AmE	1.50	4.00	2.9583	.6907			

^a Paired samples *t*-test * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.4.2.4 shows how differently the same group view different varieties from the pragmatic perspective. Paired samples *t*-test is employed to check whether or not the different attitudes towards the two varieties by the same group are statistically significant. It is observed that the overseas group takes a more favourable attitude towards AmE (Mean=3.4107) than BrE (Mean=2.6429) from the pragmatic perspective, and the result of paired samples *t*-test indicates that the difference is highly significant ($p=0.005$). On the contrary, the local group takes a more favourable attitude towards BrE (Mean=3.3036) than AmE (Mean=2.7321) from the pragmatic perspective, but the result of paired samples *t*-test does not show that the finding reached a significant level. For the overall result of the pragmatic dimension, there is a slight difference between the mean scores of BrE (Mean=3.0833) and AmE (Mean=2.9583), showing that BrE is much more preferable in this dimension. The difference, however, seems to be non-significant according to the result is paired samples *t*-test ($p=0.667$). The findings may reflect that both of the two varieties of English are to certain extent favourable for the pragmatic perspective.

5.2.5 The overall attitudes towards BrE and AmE

Based on the results of different groups' attitudes towards BrE and AmE from the three dimensions, *viz.* affective, linguistic and pragmatic, the overall attitudes towards the two varieties of English were calculated by averaging the overall mean scores of the three dimensions. Independent samples *t*-test and paired samples *t*-test will be used to investigate differences between groups and between varieties.

Table 5.2.5.1 Descriptive statistics of overall attitudes towards BrE and AmE: the local group, the overseas group and overall

Variety	Group	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
BrE	Local	14	2.87	4.03	3.5298	.3960	-4.934	19	.000**
	Overseas	7	2.05	2.91	2.6905	.2962			
	Overall	21	2.05	4.03	3.2500	.5410			
AmE	Local	14	1.94	3.33	2.6290	.4192	4.656	19	.000**
	Overseas	7	3.19	3.81	3.4226	.2205			
	Overall	21	1.94	3.81	2.8935	.5252			

^a Independent samples *t*-test

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.5.1 shows how differently the same variety is viewed by different groups in the sample. It is noticed that the local group (Mean=3.5298) scored a higher average mark to BrE than the overseas group (Mean=2.6905), suggesting a more favourable overall attitude

towards BrE by the local group. And this group difference is supported by the highly significant result of independent samples *t*-test ($p=0.000$). On the contrary, the overseas group (Mean=3.4226) scored a higher average mark to AmE than the local group (Mean=2.6290), indicating that the overseas group is more favourable to AmE than the local group does. And the result of independent samples *t*-test shows that the difference is again highly significant ($p=0.000$).

Table 5.2.5.2 Descriptive statistics of overall attitudes of the local group, the overseas group and overall: comparing BrE and AmE

Group	N	Variety	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
Local	14	BrE	2.87	4.03	3.5298	.3960	4.185	13	.001**
		AmE	1.94	3.33	2.6290	.4192			
Overseas	7	BrE	2.05	2.91	2.6905	.2962	-3.940	6	.008**
		AmE	3.19	3.81	3.4226	.2205			
Overall	21	BrE	2.05	4.03	3.2500	.5410	1.546	20	.138
		AmE	1.94	3.81	2.8935	.5252			

^a Paired samples *t*-test

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.2.5.2 shows how differently the same group views different varieties. Paired samples *t*-test is employed to check whether or not the different attitudes towards the two varieties by the same group are statistically significant. It is observed that the local group takes a more favourable overall attitude towards BrE (Mean=3.5298) than AmE (Mean=2.6290), and the result of paired samples *t*-test indicates that the difference is highly significant ($p=0.001$). On the contrary, the overseas group takes a more favourable overall attitude towards AmE (Mean=3.4226) than BrE (Mean=2.6905), and the result of paired samples *t*-test shows that the finding reached a highly significant level ($p=0.008$).

The mean scores of the whole sample show that the subjects, who are young educated Hong Kong people, take more favourable attitudes towards BrE (Mean=3.2500) than AmE (Mean=2.8935). The result of paired samples *t*-test, however, indicates that the difference has not reached the 0.05 significant level ($p=0.138$). This may be due to the discrepancy between the attitudes towards the two varieties of English by the local group and the overseas group. This shows that although young educated Hong Kong people in general tend to take more favourable attitudes towards BrE than AmE, there are considerable differences among them, especially for those who have North America learning experiences.

5.3 Section III: Attitudes towards speakers of BrE and AmE

5.3.1 Overall results

Table 5.3.1.1 The overall mean scores and percentage of agreement with the 20 descriptions of a typical BrE speaker and a typical AmE speaker (from the highest ones to the lowest ones respectively)

BrE Speaker				AmE Speaker			
RANK	Description	Raw Mean Score ^a	Percentage of agreement ^b	RANK	Description	Raw Mean Score ^a	Percentage of agreement ^b
1	Bureaucratic	3.6190	72.38%	1	Friendly	3.7143	74.29%
1	Conservative	3.6190	72.38%	2	Humorous	3.5714	71.43%
3	Highly educated	3.5714	71.43%	3	Successful	3.4762	69.52%
4	Successful	3.5238	70.48%	4	Self-confident	3.4286	68.57%
5	Sympathetic	3.4286	68.57%	5	Ambitious	3.3810	67.62%
6	Trustworthy	3.2857	65.71%	6	Emotional	3.3500	67.00%

BrE Speaker				AmE Speaker			
RANK	Description	Raw Mean Score ^a	Percentage of agreement ^b	RANK	Description	Raw Mean Score ^a	Percentage of agreement ^b
6	Helpful	3.2857	65.71%	7	Helpful	3.3333	66.67%
8	Self-confident	3.2381	64.76%	7	Progressive	3.3333	66.67%
9	Rational	3.1905	63.81%	9	Bureaucratic	3.1429	62.86%
9	Intelligent	3.1905	63.81%	9	Good	3.1429	62.86%
9	Good	3.1905	63.81%	9	Highly educated	3.1429	62.86%
12	Progressive	3.1429	62.86%	9	Frank	3.1429	62.86%
13	Reasonable	3.0952	61.90%	9	Dependable	3.1429	62.86%
13	Dependable	3.0952	61.90%	14	Intelligent	3.0952	61.90%
15	Wealthy	3.0476	60.95%	15	Sympathetic	3.0476	60.95%
16	Friendly	2.9524	59.05%	15	Wealthy	3.0476	60.95%
16	Emotional	2.9524	59.05%	15	Rational	3.0476	60.95%
18	Humorous	2.9048	58.10%	18	Reasonable	2.9524	59.05%
19	Ambitious	2.8095	56.19%	19	Trustworthy	2.9048	58.10%
20	Frank	2.7143	54.29%	20	Conservative	2.6000	52.00%

^a Raw mean score refers to the means score before the recoding process mention in section 4.2.

^b Percentage of agreement = Raw mean score/5 x 100%

From Table 5.3.1.1, it can be seen that the overall percentage of agreement with the 20 descriptions ranges from 54.29% to 72.38% for a BrE speaker and from 52% to 74.29% for a AmE speaker. From the view of the subjects which consisted of young educated Hong Kong people, the mostly agreed descriptions of a BrE speaker include *bureaucratic* (72.38%), *conservative* (72.38%), *highly educated* (71.43%), *successful* (70.48%), *etc.*, while the mostly agreed descriptions of an AmE speaker include *friendly* (74.29%), *humorous* (71.43%), *successful* (69.52%), *self-confident* (68.57%), *etc.* On the other hand, the least agreed descriptions of a BrE speaker include *frank* (54.29%), *ambitious* (56.19%), *humorous* (58.1%), *etc.*, while the least agreed descriptions of an AmE speaker include *conservative* (52%), *trustworthy* (58.1%), *reasonable* (59.05%), *etc.* So far we can see that there seems to be considerable differences between the attitudes towards a BrE speaker and that towards an AmE speaker. In the following I shall study whether the differences are significant from statistical point of view and whether the significant differences correlate with the attitudes towards BrE and AmE.

Table 5.3.1.2 Descriptive statistics of attitudes towards speakers of different English varieties: comparing BrE and AmE

Item	N	Speaker	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
Successful	21	BrE	3.00	5.00	3.5238	0.6796	0.568	20	.576
		AmE	3.00	5.00	3.4762	0.7496			
Progressive	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	3.1429	0.4781	-1.164	20	.258
		AmE	2.00	4.00	3.3333	0.5774			
Sympathetic	21	BrE	2.00	5.00	3.4286	0.7464	1.563	20	.134
		AmE	2.00	4.00	3.0476	0.5896			
Ambitious ^b	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	3.1905	0.6016	2.828	20	.010**
		AmE	2.00	4.00	2.6190	0.5896			
Dependable	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	3.0952	0.5390	-0.439	20	.666
		AmE	2.00	4.00	3.1429	0.5732			
Good	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	3.1905	0.5118	0.568	20	.576
		AmE	2.00	4.00	3.1429	0.4781			
Helpful	21	BrE	2.00	5.00	3.2857	0.7171	-0.326	20	.748
		AmE	2.00	4.00	3.3333	0.5774			
Self-confident	21	BrE	2.00	5.00	3.2381	0.6249	-1.451	20	.162
		AmE	2.00	4.00	3.4286	0.5976			

	Item	N	Speaker	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t ^a	df	p
1.	Humorous	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	2.9048	0.6249	-2.552	20	.019*
			AmE	2.00	5.00	3.5714	0.8701			
0.	Conservative ^b	20	BrE	1.00	4.00	2.3810	0.7400	-3.684	19	.002**
			AmE	2.00	5.00	3.4000	0.6806			
1.	Trustworthy	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	3.2857	0.5606	2.961	20	.008**
			AmE	2.00	4.00	2.9048	0.4364			
2.	Wealthy	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	3.0476	0.5896	0.000	20	1.000
			AmE	2.00	4.00	3.0476	0.5896			
3.	Intelligent	21	BrE	3.00	4.00	3.1905	0.4024	0.568	20	.576
			AmE	2.00	5.00	3.0952	0.6249			
4.	Frank	21	BrE	1.00	4.00	2.7143	0.6437	-1.826	20	.083
			AmE	2.00	5.00	3.1429	0.6547			
5.	Highly educated	21	BrE	2.00	5.00	3.5714	0.7464	2.905	20	.009**
			AmE	2.00	4.00	3.1429	0.5732			
6.	Emotional ^b	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	3.0476	0.5896	2.438	19	.025*
			AmE	2.00	4.00	2.6500	0.5871			
7.	Reasonable	21	BrE	2.00	5.00	3.0952	0.7003	1.369	20	.186
			AmE	2.00	4.00	2.9524	0.4976			
8.	Rational	21	BrE	2.00	5.00	3.1905	0.6016	1.000	20	.329
			AmE	2.00	4.00	3.0476	0.3842			
9.	Friendly	21	BrE	2.00	4.00	2.9524	0.5896	-4.202	20	.000**
			AmE	3.00	5.00	3.7143	0.5606			
0.	Bureaucratic ^b	21	BrE	1.00	4.00	2.3810	0.8646	-2.118	20	.047*
			AmE	2.00	4.00	2.8571	0.5732			
	OVERALL MEAN SCORE	21	BrE	2.60	3.60	3.0929	0.2657	-.870	20	.395
			AmE	2.55	3.95	3.1535	0.2854			

^a Paired samples *t*-test

^b Recoding applied.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 5.3.1.2 shows how differently the same group views different variety speakers. Items with unfavourable tendencies, as mentioned previously, have been recoded in reverse order so that it is consistent throughout the tables that the higher mean score an item get, a more favourable attitude is assumed. Unlike the attitudes towards the two varieties, there does not seem to be a regular tendency of which variety speaker is more favourable. Out of 20 items in this section, only 7 of them have significant results of differences between attitudes towards speakers of BrE and AmE. Out of the 7 significant differences, 3 of them are in favour of the BrE speaker, namely, *ambitious* (mean score for the BrE speaker [recoded]=3.1905, mean score for the AmE speaker [recoded]=2.6190, $p=.010$), *highly educated* (mean score for the BrE speaker=3.5714, mean score for the AmE speaker=3.1429, $p=.009$), and *emotional* (mean score for the BrE speaker [recoded]=3.0476, mean score for the AmE speaker [recoded]=2.6500, $p=.025$). In other words, the results tell us that the subjects think that a typical BrE speaker is less ambitious, more highly educated and less emotional than a typical AmE speaker.

The rest of the 4 significant differences are in favour of the AmE speaker, namely, *humorous* (mean score for the BrE speaker=2.9048, mean score for the AmE speaker =2.6190, $p=.019$), *conservative* (mean score for the BrE speaker [recoded]=2.3810, mean score for the AmE speaker [recoded]=3.4000, $p=.002$), *friendly* (mean score for the BrE speaker=2.9524, mean score for the AmE speaker =3.7143, $p=.000$), and *bureaucratic* (mean score for the BrE speaker [recoded]= 2.3810, mean score for the AmE speaker [recoded]=2.8571, $p=.047$). In other words, the results tell us that the subjects think that a typical AmE

speaker is more humorous, less conservative, friendlier and less bureaucratic than a typical BrE speaker.

The above findings show that there is not a tendency of which kind of speaker is overwhelmingly favourable than the other. In addition, reliability tests have been done and the results support that the 20 items used in this section are reliable scales to measure one's attitudes towards the BrE speaker (Cronbach's Alpha=.7508) and the AmE speaker (Cronbach's Alpha=.8062). Therefore, it is legitimate to draw the conclusion that young educated people in Hong Kong generally do not have one single tendency of which variety (i.e. BrE or AmE) speaker is more favourable.

5.3.2 Correlation between attitudes towards a variety and the speaker of it

Table 5.3.2.1 Correlation matrix between attitudes towards BrE and AmE and speakers of BrE and AmE (N=21)

ITEM	Attitudes towards BrE				Attitudes towards AmE			
	Affective	Linguistic	Pragmatic	Overall	Affective	Linguistic	Pragmatic	Overall
Successful	-.130	.167	-.076	.003	.359	-.130	.233	.192
Progressive	.093	.069	.202	.149	.080	-.079	.178	.075
Sympathetic	.025	.104	-.077	.030	-.075	.022	-.210	-.113
Ambitious ^a	.462*	.258	.534*	.514*	-.112	.170	-.179	-.046
Dependable	.197	.066	.155	.169	.234	-.011	.221	.189
Good	.223	.099	.176	.203	.227	-.061	.189	.149
Helpful	.307	.092	.242	.257	.454*	-.118	.272	.253
Self-confident	-.205	-.057	-.082	-.138	.418	-.108	.303	.257
Humorous	.486*	.076	.175	.290	.310	-.160	-.042	.036
Conservative ^a	.397	-.173	.269	.171	.149	-.069	.033	.042
Trustworthy	.071	.080	.069	.093	.260	.045	.256	.241
Wealthy	.452*	-.005	.087	.202	.119	-.055	.389	.194
Intelligent	.283	.178	.223	.283	.427	.078	.328	.358
Frank	.269	-.199	.120	.051	.321	-.079	.346	.248
Highly educated	-.047	.176	.000	.069	.588**	.107	.537*	.531*
Emotional ^a	.118	.208	.479*	.338	.092	.380	.268	.333
Reasonable	.433	-.009	.284	.272	-.090	.111	-.006	.012
Rational	.190	.084	.278	.224	.545*	.034	.550**	.484*
Friendly	.327	.040	.109	.186	.178	-.462*	.000	-.142
Bureaucratic ^a	-.116	-.221	-.260	-.256	.222	.827	.946	.713
Overall Mean Score	.433*	.100	.312	.337	.052	.859	.112	.162

^a Recoding applied.

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

In Table 5.3.2.1, Pearson correlation coefficients are calculated to investigate whether there are positive correlations between attitudes (affective, linguistic, pragmatic and overall) towards the two English varieties and the 20 items as well as the overall mean score of attitudes towards speakers of the two varieties. Four items about the BrE speaker are found to have significant positive correlation with at least one dimension of the attitudes towards BrE, viz. *Ambitious* with the affective attitudes ($r=.462$), the pragmatic attitudes ($r=.534$) and the overall attitudes towards BrE ($r=.574$), *Humorous* with affective attitudes towards BrE ($r=.486$), *Wealthy* with affective attitudes towards BrE ($r=.452$), and *Emotional* with pragmatic attitudes towards BrE ($r=.479$). Also, it is found that the overall mean score of attitudes towards the BrE speaker positively correlates with the affective attitudes towards BrE ($r=.433$), which is significant at the 0.05 level.

For the case of the AmE speaker, only three items are found to have significant positive correlation with at least one dimension of the attitudes towards AmE, viz. *Helpful* with the affective attitudes towards AmE ($r=.454$), *Highly educated* with the affective

attitudes ($r=.588$), the pragmatic attitudes ($r=.537$) and the overall attitudes towards AmE ($r=.531$), and *Rational* with affective attitudes ($r=.545$), the pragmatic attitudes ($r=.550$) and the overall attitudes towards AmE ($r=.484$). In addition, there is one case that is counter to our hypothesis. The item *friendly* is found to have a significant negative correlation with the linguistic attitudes towards AmE ($r=-.462$).

The results suggest that the correlation between attitudes towards the two English varieties and the speakers of them is true only to a limited extent. There are indeed cases of significant positive correlation discovered in this research, but only a few. In addition, those correlation coefficients range only from 0.433 to 0.588, which indicates that the correlation is not a strong one. Also, one counter example has been found.

5.4 Section IV: The practices of English usage

5.4.1 Overall results

Table 5.4.1.1 The distribution of BrE and AmE usages

Item	N	BrE Usage			AmE Usage		
		Words	Frequency	Valid Percent	Words	Frequency	Valid Percent
1.	21	cheque	17	81.0%	check	4	19.0%
2.	21	honour	14	66.7%	honor	7	33.3%
3.	21	rubber	14	66.7%	eraser	7	33.3%
4.	21	catalogue	17	81.0%	catalog	4	19.0%
5.	21	autumn	13	61.9%	fall	8	38.1%
6.	21	centre	12	57.1%	center	9	42.9%
7.	21	theatre	14	66.7%	theatre	7	33.3%
8.	21	favourite	17	81.0%	favorite	4	19.0%
9.	21	labour	16	76.2%	labor	5	23.8%
10.	21	programme	10	47.6%	program	11	52.4%
11.	21	mobile phone	19	90.5%	cellular phone	2	9.5%
12.	21	lift	14	66.7%	elevator	7	33.3%
13.	21	encyclopaedia	4	19.0%	encyclopedia	17	81.0%
14.	21	behaviour	16	76.2%	behavior	5	23.8%
15.	21	dialogue	16	76.2%	dialog	5	23.8%
MEAN		-----	14.2	67.6%	-----	6.8	32.4%

Table 5.4.1.1 presents the subjects' reports of their daily usage of English. In most of the cases except *encyclopaedia* and *programme*, the majority of the sample opted for BrE words. On average, 67.6% of the choices belong to BrE practices while the rest of 32.4% is of AmE practices. The results should be consistent with the general perception of the practices of English usage in Hong Kong.

5.4.2 Correlation between attitudes towards a variety and the usage of it

Table 5.4.2.1 Correlation matrix between attitudes towards BrE and the usage of BrE

		Attitudes towards BrE			
		Affective	Linguistic	Pragmatic	Overall
BrE Usage	Pearson Correlation	.752**	.509*	.507*	.735**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.018	.019	.000
	N	21	21	21	21

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 5.4.2.2 Correlation matrix between attitudes towards AmE and the usage of AmE

		Attitudes towards AmE			
		Affective	Linguistic	Pragmatic	Overall
AmE Usage	Pearson Correlation	.748**	.451*	.470*	.728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.040	.032	.000
	N	21	21	21	21

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 5.4.2.1 and Table 5.4.2.2 shows the figures of Pearson correlation between attitudes (affective, linguistic, pragmatic and overall) towards the two varieties and the usage of the varieties. All of the correlation coefficients, which range from .451 to .752, are positive and significant, indicating a close relationship between attitudes and behaviour in this aspect. In other words, the more favourable attitudes towards a variety one takes, the more often one follows the practice of the variety.

5.5 Section V: The open-ended question

This section consists of the open-ended question: ‘Any views you would like to add about the issue of British English and American English?’ Only one of the subjects from the overseas group answered this question. The answer is quoted as follows:

Mass media, especially TV, in the U.S. likes to make fun of the British. The stereotype is conservative and cynical. At the same time, Americans think British accent is kind of cool and elegant.

The subject did not talk much about his own attitudes towards BrE and AmE, but mentioned about Americans attitudes towards BrE according to his own experiences. This quotation also reveals when and where (e.g. through mass media) language attitudes are expressed and transmitted.

6. Discussion and conclusion

In section 3 of this paper, six hypotheses have been put forward. Now I shall conclude which hypotheses are supported and which are rejected, based on the findings of this research.

HYPOTHESIS I: *Overall speaking, Hong Kong people are more favourable to BrE than AmE.*

This hypothesis is only partially supported by the result of this research. Both of the linguistic, pragmatic and overall attitudes towards BrE and AmE indicate that BrE is more preferable to AmE, but only the case of linguistic attitudes showed a statistically significant difference between them. And there is one counter example that for the affective dimension, the sample showed a more favourable attitude towards AmE rather than BrE. The figure, however, is not at the 0.05 significant level.

HYPOTHESIS II: *There are differences in attitudes towards BrE and AmE between Hong Kong people who are educated locally and those who have studied in the North America (i.e. Canada and the USA).*

The findings of this research clearly indicate that there are differences in attitudes, no matter affective, linguistic, pragmatic or overall, towards BrE and AmE between the local group (i.e. Hong Kong people who are educated locally) and the overseas group (i.e. Hong Kong people who have studied in the North America). As revealed by the results of independent samples *t*-test, these differences are all statistically highly significant, significant or nearly significant ($p=.056$)

HYPOTHESIS III: *Hong Kong people who are educated locally are more favourable to BrE than those who have studied in the North America.*

The findings of this research strongly support this hypothesis. Significant or highly significant differences between the local group and the overseas group have been found in affective, linguistic, pragmatic as well as overall attitudes towards BrE, and the overwhelming tendency of differences is that the local group takes a more favourable attitude towards BrE than the overseas group does.

HYPOTHESIS IV: *Hong Kong people who have studied in the North America are more favourable to AmE than those who are educated locally.*

The findings of this research strongly support this hypothesis. Significant, highly significant or marginally significant differences between the local group and the overseas group have been found in affective, linguistic, pragmatic as well as overall attitudes towards AmE, and the overwhelming tendency of differences is that the overseas group takes a more favourable attitude towards AmE than the local group does.

HYPOTHESIS V: *There is a positive correlation between the attitudes towards a variety of a language and attitudes towards the speakers of it, viz. those who are more favourable to BrE are more favourable to BrE speakers, while those who are more favourable to AmE are more favourable to AmE speakers.*

This hypothesis is partially supported by this research. Only 15-20% of the items used to describe the speaker of a variety are found to have significant positive correlation with the attitudes towards that language variety, and there is one counter example that an item negatively correlates with the attitudes towards a variety at the significant level, indicating that a more favourable attitude towards the language variety implies a less favourable attitude towards the speaker of it, as far as that item is concerned. Although the degree of correlation of the counter example is merely between weak to medium ($r=-.462$), that of cases which support this hypothesis are also around medium as well.

HYPOTHESIS VI: *There is a positive correlation between the attitudes towards a variety of a language and the usage of it, viz. when using English, those who are more favourable to BrE tend to use more BrE, while those who are more favourable to AmE tend to use more AmE.*

The findings of this research strongly support this hypothesis. Significant or highly significant positive correlation has been found between the usage of a variety and both the affective, linguistic, pragmatic as well as overall attitudes towards the variety, and the degrees of correlation range from medium to high. We may conclude that, in this aspect, the language attitudes have a close relationship with behaviours such as language choice and usage, etc.

There are two main implications of the research findings. Firstly, language attitudes can be acquired and changed in a relative short period of time. All the subjects have similar background and pre-tertiary learning experiences – they all grew up in Hong Kong and attended local primary and secondary schools. The mere prominent difference between the local group and the overseas group is that the latter have an average of 5.5 years of tertiary studies in North America while the former do not have such an experience. I think it is reasonable to assume that subjects in the overseas group had similar attitudes as the local group towards the two varieties of English before they studied abroad, and their attitudes changed sharply within the average of 5.5 years of tertiary studies. Here we may see how language contact and interaction with the speakers of a language/variety change one's language attitudes. I suggest that students in Hong Kong should be given chances to have exposure to different varieties of English, so that they could have more open attitudes towards different varieties of English existing in the world, which may help them to be better communicators in their future careers.

Secondly, it is found that Hong Kong people as a whole do not have consistent attitudes towards BrE and AmE, which may reflect changing attitudes towards the two

varieties. Affectively, although they are taught in the British accent, the American films, pop songs, sports as well as other kinds of entertainments and culture are very popular in Hong Kong. People may find more affectively attached to AmE. However, this does not imply that people dislike BrE. Opinion poll shows that people think that the colonial government performed better than the present government (DPHK 2000). BrE, though as a symbol of colonial past, is not treated negatively from the affective aspect by people in Hong Kong. For the linguistic dimension, Hong Kong people seem to share a belief that BrE is more grammatical and purer than AmE, therefore they strongly in favour of BrE in this aspect. For the pragmatic dimension, although BrE is still the most acceptable norm in Hong Kong hence the attitudes to it is more favourable, Hong Kong people also notice the importance of AmE. For example, a research entitled 'The North American Market for Hong Kong Films', which was conducted recently by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, proposed that 'produce scripts in standard colloquial American English' is an important tactic to improve the commercial viability of Hong Kong films (TDC 2001). This explains why the mean score of AmE in this aspect is close to that of BrE and points out to the fact that a change in English norm from BrE to AmE in the future is not totally implausible.

Due to limited scale of this research, several limitations of the methodological aspect can be found in this study. Firstly, the sample size is only 21, which may be considered as too small, and this study adopted convenient sampling, which may not truly reflect the composition of the whole population of the young educated Hong Kong people, especially for the ratio between the local group and the overseas group.

Secondly, for studying attitudes towards the speaker of a language, the matched-guise method might be considered as an effective means to achieve the aim. This study, however, did not make use of this method due to the limitation of resources. Instead, subjects are asked to imagine a typical BrE speaker and a typical AmE speaker, which might, to a certain extent, affect the validity of the results.

Thirdly, for the study of the practices of English usage by the subjects, a better technique is to gather their genuine writing and spoken data for analysis, rather than putting forward 15 contrasting pairs and ask them to have self reporting about which one he or she uses more often. Again, due to the limitation of time and resources, the former method was not used in this study.

Fourthly, as mentioned earlier, as far as the design of questionnaire is concerned, there are still rooms for improvement as the reliabilities of certain parts of the questionnaire are not fully satisfactory, e.g. linguistic items for AmE and the pragmatic items.

Nevertheless, this study can be regarded as the first pilot study on the attitudes towards the two varieties of English, *viz.* BrE and AmE, and related matters in the Hong Kong context. It provides implications for future large-scale studies on the same topic, and the findings of this research should be regarded as a useful reference of this topic, at least to a limited extent.

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- * I am indebted to Dr Edmund Anderson from the Hong Kong Baptist University for his comments and help. Nevertheless, all errors and shortcomings are my own.
- i The grammatical and syntactical differences between the two varieties are not illustrated here, since comparing to the differences in spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary, this kind of differences is relatively less recognisable to non-linguists such as subjects of this study.
- ii As the title of this paper suggests, 'Hong Kong people' here refer to 'young educated Hong Kong people'. And in this research, 'young educated Hong Kong people' is operationally defined as Hong Kong people aged between 21-30 and have received tertiary education, either locally or overseas.
- iii For items comparing two varieties at the same time, the scores are recoded into new variables and the old scores are kept.

Survey of Hong Kong people's perception on British English and American English

By Ken S.K. Cheng

SECTION I: Background information

- The data collected will be kept confidential and will be presented anonymously and aggregately.

- Please put an "X" in the appropriate boxes or type in your answers accordingly.

- Age group

0-10 11-20 21-30 31-40
41-50 51-60 61-70 71 and above

- Sex

Male Female

- Education Level

Uneducated Primary Secondary Tertiary

- Have you studied overseas?

Yes No (please go to Section II)

- Which country/countries have you been?

Answer: _____

- For how many years?

Answer: _____

- What kind of schools have you attended?

Primary Secondary Tertiary
Others , please specify: _____



programmes.

21. British English is formal.

22. American English is colloquial.

SECTION III: What do you suppose a typical speaker of British English or American English looks like?

Please indicate your degree of agreement and disagreement with the following 20 descriptions by putting an “X” in the appropriate boxes.

(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

	British English Speaker					American English Speaker				
1. Successful										
2. Progressive										
3. Sympathetic										
4. Ambitious										
5. Dependable										
6. Good										
7. Helpful										
8. Self-confident										
9. Humorous										
10. Conservative										
11. Trustworthy										
12. Wealthy										
13. Intelligent										
14. Frank										
15. Highly educated										
16. Emotional										
17. Reasonable										
18. Rational										
19. Friendly										
20. Bureaucratic										

SECTION IV: Which word do you usually select when using English?

Please indicate your choices by putting an “X” in the appropriate boxes.

1. cheque	<input type="checkbox"/>		check	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. honor	<input type="checkbox"/>		honour	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. eraser	<input type="checkbox"/>		rubber	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. catalog	<input type="checkbox"/>	e	catalog	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. fall	<input type="checkbox"/>		autumn	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. center	<input type="checkbox"/>		centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. theater	<input type="checkbox"/>		theatre	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. favourite	<input type="checkbox"/>		favorite	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. labor	<input type="checkbox"/>		labour	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. programme	<input type="checkbox"/>		program	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. cellular phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	phone	mobile	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. lift	<input type="checkbox"/>		elevator	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. encyclopedia	<input type="checkbox"/>	paedia	encyclo	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>		behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. dialogue	<input type="checkbox"/>		dialog	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION V: Any views you would like to add about the issue of British English and American English?

Please send this survey form to ken.cheng@polyu.edu.hk.

Thank you very much for your help.