

Hong Kong English

Unit 1-1: *INTRODUCTION*

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About HONG KONG 香港

- ❖ **Annexed by Britain in 1842**
- ❖ **Returned to China in 1997 as a ‘Special Administrative Region (SAR)’**
- ❖ **Total area: 1,100 sq. km.**
- ❖ **Population: 6.8 million**
- ❖ **98% of the population are Chinese, and speak Cantonese as their first language**

English in Hong Kong

- ❖ **English has a history of over 160 years in HK**
- ❖ **It is firmly established now as an official language, and a main language of education, commerce, technology, culture, etc.**
- ❖ **HK aspires to be a ‘tri-lingual’ (in English, Mandarin and Cantonese) and ‘bi-literate’ (in English and Chinese) society**
- ❖ **English is taught from the first year of primary school. It is the medium of instruction in some secondary schools, and in all universities.**

Language Use

- ❖ **(Census of 1996) 3% of HK's population claimed to speak English as their 'usual language'**
- ❖ **35% reported speaking English as 'another language'**
- ❖ **By and large the HK Chinese communicate among themselves through Cantonese.**
- ❖ **There are 2 English newspapers in HK, and about 50 Chinese newspapers.**
- ❖ **There are 2 English channels on TV.**

General features of HK English

- ❖ **HK English was originally modeled on British English (because of its colonial past), but the influence of American English is increasingly felt (through movies, TV, pop music, etc.)**
- ❖ **Heavily influenced by Cantonese -- most noticeably in Phonology, and also in Syntax and Semantics.**
- ❖ **A lot of code-switching and loan words (between Cantonese and English)**

Room service (a joke)

- ❖ RS (Room Service): "Moling! loom sirfesee"
- ❖ G (Guest): "Yes....."
- ❖ RS: "Dju witch true odor somefing??"
- ❖ G: "Uh..yes..I'd like some bacon and eggs"
- ❖ RS: "How July it done peace?"
- ❖ G: "What??"
- ❖ RS: "How July it done?... Fi, boy?"
- ❖ G: "Oh, the eggs! How do I like them? Sorry, scrambled please."
- ❖ RS: "Howbow bkan?"
- ❖ G: "Crisp will be fine."
- ❖ RS: "O light. An some DOS?"
- ❖ G: "What?"

Plan of this Module

- ❖ **1-1: Introduction**
- ❖ **1-2: Phonology (1): Vowels**
- ❖ **1-3: Phonology (2): Consonants**
- ❖ **1-4: Phonology (3): Stress & Intonation**
- ❖ **2-1: Lexical Features**
- ❖ **2-2: Grammar (1): Nouns & Subjects**
- ❖ **2-3: Grammar (2): Verbs**
- ❖ **2-4: Grammar (3): Sentence Structure**

Recommended Reading

Bolton, K. (ed.) *Hong Kong English: Autonomy and Creativity*. Hong Kong University Press, 2002.