
*Innovation in Interlanguage
Phonology: Evidence from Hong
Kong English – Part I*

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PHONETIC TRANSFER FROM L1

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Cantonese

跳 [tiu] 

識 [sik] 

HK English

till 

sick 

THEORIES OF INTERLANGUAGE PHONOLOGY


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[ð] ~ [d] *this* [dis] 

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Voiced palato-alveolar fricative in HKE:

[ʒ] *pleasure* [pleʒə] 

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Acquisition of voiceless vs. voiced fricatives in HKE

[ʃ] <i>pressure</i> 	vs. [ʒ] <i>pleasure</i> 
[s] <i>seal</i> 	vs. [z] <i>zeal</i> 
[f] <i>leafing</i>	vs. [v] <i>leaving</i> 

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Word-final obstruent devoicing in HKE:

judge [dʒʌtʃ] 

judges [dʒʌdʒəs] 

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INNOVATIVE FEATURES IN HONG KONG ENGLISH PHONOLOGY

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(1) DIPHTHONG REDUCTION:

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(i) /eɪ/ →


[eɪ]


play 


save 

[ɪ]



lake [lɪk] 



pain [pɪn] 





take [tɪk] 




rain [rɪn] 

(ii) /ou/ → [ou] [u]

low  joke [dʒuk], soak [suk] 

clothe  loan [luŋ], bone [buŋ] 


(ii) /ou/ → [ou] [ʊ]
low  joke [dʒʊk], soak [sʊk] 
clothe  loan [lʊŋ], bone [bʊŋ] 

(iii) /au/ → [aʊ] [a]
now  town [taʊ], noun [naʊ],
house  down [daʊ] 


(ii) /ou/ →


[ou]

low 

clothe 

[ʊ]

joke [dʒʊk], soak [sʊk] 

loan [lʊŋ], bone [bʊŋ] 

(iii) /au/ →


[au]

now 

house 

[a]


town [taŋ], noun [naŋ],

down [daŋ] 


(iv) /ɔɪ/ →

[ɔɪ]


boy 

noise 

[ɔ]

point [pɔɪnt] 

coin [kɔɪn] 

pond [pɔŋ] 

con [kɔŋ] 

Diphthong-Reduction Rule in HKE (first approximation)

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$VV \rightarrow V / _ [+stop (+back)]$

(‘A diphthong is reduced to a monophthong when followed by a (velar) stop’)

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2) RAISING OF /aɪ/ & /aʊ/

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(i)

[aɪ]

[ʌɪ]

tide 

tight 

wide 

bike 

tries 

twice 











dice 





mice 

rice 











nice 





2) RAISING OF /aɪ/ & /aʊ/

(i)	[aɪ]	[ʌɪ]
	tide 	tight 
	wide 	bike 
	tries 	twice 
	dice 	mice 
	rice 	nice 

(ii)	[aʊ]	[ʌʊ]
	loud 	out 
	browse 	house 

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Partial generalisation: ‘[aɪ] and [aʊ] are raised to [ʌɪ] and [ʌʊ] respectively when followed by a voiceless consonant.’

(3) 'SPLITTING' OF THE PHONEME /V/

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/v/ → [f] *even* *leaving*  *rover* 
 → [w] *advice* *event*  *revoke* 

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Counter-evidence:

advertise [ˈɛdʍɜtaɪs] 
advertisement [ɛdˈwɜtɪsmənt] 
province [ˈprɒwɪns] 
provincial [prɒˈwɪnsəl] 

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- Words which are phonologically represented in other varieties with /v/ are represented in HKE with either /f/ or /w/.
- E.g. words like *even*, *leaving*, *rover*, etc. are represented as /ifən/, /lifɪŋ/, /roufə/, etc., and words like *advice*, *event*, *revoke*, *advertise*, *province*, etc. are represented as /ɛdwais/, /iwent/, /riwouk/, /ɛdwətais/, /prouwins/, etc.

(4) [l] ~ [n] ALTERNATION

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[l] words pronounced with [n]


line	37%
lame	27%
longing	17%
lead	17%
loose	17%
loud	17%
lower	17%
lot	13%
lake	13%
leafing	10%
long	10%
low	10%
leaf	7%
let	7%
leaving	7%
light	7%
leave	3%
lumber	3%

[n] words pronounced with [l]

night	33%
no	23%
naked	20%
number	20%
need	13%
not	10%
net	10%
now	10%
noose	7%
nine	7%
name	3%

Alternations between [l] and [n] in two pronunciations of the same word by the same speaker of Hong Kong English:

Speaker 8: *let*,  *leaf, longing, lot, lake, lead, leafing, leaving, loose, not, light, night*


Speaker 14: *lot, light, long, loose*,  *naked, need*


Speaker 1: *loose, loud, number*

Speaker 3: *line, longing*

Speaker 7: *number*

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Hypothesis: [l] and [n] are in **free variation** in the onset of a syllable

(5) ELISION OF [w] GLIDE


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quit [k^wɪt] 

quite [k^wɪt] 

queen [k^win] 

quote [kɔt] 

quarter [kɔtə] 


quota [kɔtə] 

quarrel [kɔrəl] 

coat [kɔt] 

coral [kɔrəl] 


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quarter [kɔtə] 

quota [kɒtə] 

quarrel [kɔrəl] 

coat [kɒt] 

coral [kɔrəl] 

GENERALISATION:

[w] --> 0 / [+stop] __ [V +round]

(‘A [w] glide is deleted if preceded by a stop and followed by a rounded vowel’)

Phonology of Malayalee English

[from Mohanan & Mohanan 2003]

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Alveolar and retroflex consonants:

- Contrastive in Malayalam, e.g.

[pattam] ‘herd’ vs.

[paTTam] ‘kite’

[puli] ‘leopard’ vs.

[puLi] ‘tamarind’

[ki:ri] ‘mongoose’ vs.

[ki:Ri] ‘tore’

Innovative patterns in Malayalee English

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Distribution of alveolar and retroflex consonants:

Alveolar

many [meni]

dine [dain]

valley [wæli]

bell [bel]

atom [ættam]

bet [bet]

Retroflex

money [maNi]

frown [frauN]

volley [wɔLi]

cool [kuL]

autumn [ɔTTam]

cut [kaT]

Generalisation (first approximation):

In Malayalee English, **alveolar** consonants occur after *front vowels*, and **retroflex** consonants after *back vowels*.

References

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