Abstract

LIANG ZHANG. When English Meets Cantonese --- A phonological and prosodic study on Hong Kong English. (Under the direction of Professor Walt Wolfram and Erik Thomas.)

This study provides a detailed description of HKE phonology and prosody based on public interviews and public speech of 4 Hong Kong celebrities, 2 university students, and 2 interpreters, birth year ranges from 1954 to 1983. With the help of acoustic analysis by Praat, the phonological research of HKE vowels generally confirms Hung’s reduced vowel system theory, but shows significant differences in the duration of vowel contrasts which contradicts Hung (2000) and Deterding’s (2008) previous study. The research also shows the vowel of GOAT becomes more diphthongal over time. The rhythm of the speakers, using the Pairwise Variability Index (PVI) devised by Low, Grabe and Nolan (2000) shows a median PVI range from 0.406 to 0.602, which indicates native HKE speakers show slightly less stress-timed speech than native English speakers and a tendency to become more stress-timed.