



Honours Project Research

A5B059 - Bachelor of Education (Honours) (English Language) – Secondary

Exploring local teachers' attitudes towards using Cantonese as the medium of instruction in the Hong Kong Secondary English classroom

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Declaration

I, TONG KA CHUIN, declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of Dr. WONG Ming Har, Ruth, and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

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Abstract

Whether using the first language as part of the medium of instruction (MOI) in a second language classroom has brought controversies over the past few decades. In the case of English language teaching (ELT), scholars that hold the view of using the first language to teach English emphasize the importance of language exposure which concerns how the first language is learnt through comprehensible input only. On the contrary, some scholars argue that the appropriate use of L1 in ELT can foster students' learning in their cognitive skills. In the context of Hong Kong, the emphasis on using English to teach English is promoted by the curriculum development council. Despite this, different opinions concerning the use of Cantonese in English classrooms still appear. This paper investigated Hong Kong in-service teachers' attitudes towards the use of Cantonese in English classrooms. The study adopted semi-structured interviews and collected data from four English teachers in a local secondary school. The result reflected that teachers generally held a negative attitude towards the use of Cantonese in English classrooms, while benefits and limitations of the use of Cantonese are discussed. How to effectively utilize Cantonese as a resource is also discussed.

Keywords: First language use; attitudes; teacher belief; Hong Kong secondary school; English classroom

1. Introduction

Urging both teachers and students to use English only in English classrooms is prevalent across the globe (McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Swain, Kirkpatrick & Cummins, 2011) while using English only is described as holding a ‘hegemonic status’ in some teaching contexts, such as Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore (McMillan & Rivers, 2011). On the other hand, using L1 in the L2 learning setting is not just unrecommended, but warned because it is believed that the constant performance of L1 by students can only lead to their increased use in L1 but not in L2 (Yavuz, 2012). Hong Kong is one of the cities that highly value an English only classroom in ESL due to the general language policy where teachers have to teach English through English in order to promote an interactive English environment (The Education Bureau in Hong Kong, 2010).

The above phenomenon is based on the tradition of a more natural and direct teaching in language classes (Butzkamm, 2003). It seems to make so much sense that teachers who teach students only in English in English classrooms can greatly expose the learner to the language itself. This is the original idea of the L1-L2 hypothesis where we learn other languages just as we learnt our first language through the constant exposure to the comprehensible input of that language subconsciously (Krashen, 1982). Despite this, through the demonstration of results in some pedagogical and sociolinguistic research, it is suggested that using L1 in an L2 learning classroom can actually improve the learning of L2 (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009). For instance, in terms of improving students’ thinking, using L1 can enhance students’ cognitive skills in a sense of utilizing their own mental strategies like making predictions when exposed to information in L2 (Gass & Selinker, 1994). According to Macaro (2001), the fear ‘using L1 in L2 learning reinforces students’ use of L1 and diminishes students’ use of L2’ is irrelevant since no correlation between teachers’ use of L1 and students’ use of L1 is found. Moreover, in the same study, no correlation between teachers’ use of L2 and students’ use of L2 is found as well. The key here is the judicious use of L1, which can be beneficial to students’ understanding and the production of the target language (Butzkamm, 1998). Nevertheless, what can be seen is that the situation of ‘using English only’ in English learning teaching is still highly appreciated and recommended in Hong Kong. As Li (2008) stated, in the Hong Kong English classroom, using Cantonese is considered as something improper. It is not uncommon to see teachers, especially teachers-in-training, getting warnings from the panel or senior teachers because they used Cantonese in their English classes (Swain, Kirkpatrick & Cummins, 2011).

In this regard, this research has been done in aiming to investigate in-service’s teachers’ attitudes towards the use of L1 in L2 classrooms in which the benefits, limitations and judicious use of adopting Cantonese in a Hong Kong English classroom are explored.

2. Significance of study (Research Gap)

The significance of study are the several research gaps to be filled. First and foremost, it is explored that many factors such as city, school, training can affect teachers' beliefs (McMillan & Rivers, 2011). Teachers from different places therefore possess different attitudes towards the use of mother tongue in ELT. Furthermore, the monolingual approach is best used when the teacher is the native speaker of the target language (Phillipson, 1992, p. 194), so local teachers in Hong Kong who wield Cantonese as the first language might not possess the same effects in using English only in English classes. Therefore, local teachers in Hong Kong might suggest different views compared to teachers across the globe.

Apart from that, the mother tongue itself is another variation as one of the functions of using mother tongue in ELT is to represent identity. Thus, using Vietnamese in a Vietnam classroom (Anh, 2012) has a different impact on students' learning compared to using Cantonese in a Hong Kong classroom. Whether Cantonese as the mother tongue to be used in Hong Kong English classrooms can propose more effects on students' learning is worth exploring. This can lead to a different view of the local teachers in Hong Kong.

Last but not least, there is a limitation in terms of the research done regarding the use of English as the only medium of instruction in Hong Kong English classroom (Ho & Man, 2007). Using L1 to aid the teaching of L2 is also seen as a 'sensitive matter' (Shum, 2008, p.4) viewed by many. While on the other hand, several recent researches (Tsang & Lo, 2020; Wong, 2020) done in Hong Kong found positive effects of using L1 in L2 learning. As a result, this research aims to fill the above research gap and further the related educational research.

3. Literature review

3.1. The role of L1 in ELT

The role of L1 in L2 teaching is considered as "one of the most long-standing controversies in the history of language pedagogy" (Stern, 1992, p. 279).

For people who support the use of L1 believe that, firstly, the monolingual approach is not practical since native speakers cannot be teaching in all teaching contexts (Phillipson, 1992, p. 191). Teachers who are non-native speakers of the target language do not possess excellent proficiency of the target language which can reduce their teaching performance if only the target language is allowed (Miles, 2004, p. 9). Secondly, monolingual approach is difficult to be implemented in lower-level classrooms (Vaezi & Mirzaei, 2007).

Combining with the lack of proficiency of teachers who are non-native speakers of English, using English only can lead to isolation between learners and the teaching (Miles, 2004, p. 14). Thirdly, the concept of ‘maximizing the exposure of the L2 can lead to successful learning of the language’ is not true since correlation is not found between the quality, quantity of target language use (how much are students exposed to the target language) and improvement in academic performance (Phillipson, 1992, p. 211). Having considered the importance of other factors such as the teaching plans, aids, materials, methods and the teachers themselves, maximizing students’ exposure to the target language is not the first priority (Phillipson, 1992, p. 210). All in all, there are opinions that suggest using English only is not that superior and effective.

On the other hand, for people who do not support the use of L1 in an ESL class, Anh (2012) suggested three principles elaborated through looking in the different literature. The first one is that we learn any language just as we learn our L1 which is through listening and being exposed to the language directly. That is why maintaining the exposure of English is essential in an English class. As stated in the introduction (Krashen, 1982), when acquiring a second language, comprehensible input is needed and needed alone. Another principle is that the knowledge from the L1 can affect the learning of the L2 (Cook, 2001, p. 407). Krashen (1982) stated that the use of L1 can bring in errors in students’ learning of the L2. The last principle is that using the target language only can help students achieve the communicative purpose and satisfy them as they can really use what they have learnt in the lesson to transfer messages (Cook, 2001, p. 409). Aside from the principles, this monolingual approach suggests that if the teacher is a native speaker of the L2, it would be the ‘best embodiment’ for the language in terms of fluency, appropriateness, culture in which the teacher can act as the ‘final arbiter of the acceptability’ of the language (Phillipson, 1992, p. 194).

3.2. The teaching methods that lead to different opinion

A more traditional approach of teaching English is the grammar-translation method (GTM) which entirely relies on using the first language to foster students’ learning on the target language (Yavuz, 2012). Whenever a new language item or focus appears (grammar rule, vocabulary), it is directly translated into the first language of students, thus, making the frequency of L1 appearance very high (Harmer, 2007, p. 63). According to Stern (1983, p. 455), the use of L1 in a GTM lesson is entirely free and is a reference system in teaching the L2. As slightly discussed in the introduction, students are more comfortable with the use of the first language in the English classroom for their cognitive skills such as memorization skills and prediction skills are enhanced (Gass & Selinker, 1994). While some people believe that this is a more

traditional approach that uses the L1, this approach developed due to the influence of situational language teaching and the oral approach in which the use of L1 is strictly prohibited. Therefore, the GTM appears because some scholars believe that the use of L1 in an ESL classroom is needed (Yavuz, 2012).

On the other hand, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach stresses on the avoidance of mother tongue use (Butzkamm, 2003). According to Richards (2005), the objective of communicative language teaching is achieving communicative competence instead of approaching the language through grammar. Learners learn the language through interacting with other learners or users of the language as well as getting the message and information across through different ways of sayings. Therefore, in a CLT classroom, the focus is put on the language performed by students rather than how they reproduce 'correct' sentences and how errors are strictly prohibited. In this sense, the target language plays a very important role. Some teachers, as a result, view the mother tongue use in CLT class as a counterproductive move (Macaro, 2009).

However, it is crucial to notice that whether mother tongue can be used in CLT is not clearly stated in the general principles (Savignon, 2007) and they are not necessarily incompatible. While one of the features proposed by CLT is emphasizing the interaction through the target language in order to achieve communicative competence (Nunan, 1991), and, on the other hand, the use of mother tongue can enhance the communication in the target language in terms of quality, the accuracy in meaning and quantity which means the amount of utterance in both the first language and target language produced (Macaro, 2005), the use of mother tongue in CLT can theoretically help establish the communicative purpose among the students (McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

3.3. Teacher attitudes' towards the use of mother tongue in ELT

The teacher attitudes regarding the use of L1 in L2 classroom refer to the beliefs held by teachers regarding the pros and cons of using the mother tongue in a second language classroom (McMillan & Rivers, 2011), for example, the belief: using L1 in the L2 classroom is counterproductive (Macaro, 2009) is a manifestation of an attitude towards the use of L1 in the L2 classroom.

Whether teachers should use mother tongue in English classes has been a controversial topic. This does stir up different views and they are all justifiable because all teachers have their own experience in which they learn a new language, receive qualified teacher training, actually teach students in a classroom context, follow certain policies delivered by the government or other authorities (McMillan & Rivers, 2011). The

following looks into the reasons why some teachers agree on the use of mother tongue in ELT while some do not.

For teachers who hold a possible view towards this topic, according to the interview study conducted by Carless (2008), teachers, despite the preference for using the target language in the language class, cannot deny the fact that using the mother tongue language (of the teacher and students) can keep the attention of students. Moreover, the study also shows that students appear to be more interested in the lesson so that they get involved and contribute more to the lesson when mother tongue is allowed in the class. The reasons for that are the capability of the mother tongue to deliver meaning, represent group identity and generate humour. Last but not least, it is suggested that using L1 bottom-up language focused strategies can help students decode difficult words and construct meanings during reading (Wong, 2020)

However, using mother tongue in ELT is not always beneficial to students' learning. Carless (2008) pointed out that some teachers reflected that if teachers use mother tongue more and thus students do so as well, the overuse of mother tongue might be a problem where students cannot practice English enough. This is especially devastating during communicative activities in which teachers cannot keep an eye to every single student to see whether they practice the target language items or simply proceed the task through their mother tongue.

As a result, as stated by (Yavuz, 2012), instead of taking an absolute yes or no for using the L1 in ELT, teachers usually see this question as a methodological problem in which the theories are not playing the essential roles, but their individual experiences and point of views are.

3.4. L1 use in Hong Kong English classroom (Cantonese)

In 2010, the Education Bureau in Hong Kong published the Fine-tuning of Medium of Instruction (MOI). Instead of stating clearly about whether English has to be used in the ESL context, the document states that the schools can evaluate their own MOI arrangement professionally by looking at different provided standards, for instance, the teachers' capability, students' needs and abilities, school-based support and school support measures. However, the policy still expresses a view about English as the MOI in English classroom: in order to enhance students' motivation and confidence in learning English, the exposure of English (e.g. reading, listening, speaking) is needed. Moreover, the policy also values the use of English as the MOI in English lessons as "undoubtedly, a facilitator". Therefore, it is appropriate to state that 'English as the MOI still plays an important role in the Hong Kong English classroom' is still valid.

4. The study

4.1. Participants and context

The study was conducted in a local secondary band 2 school from Kwai Tsing which does not follow a very strict EMI policy. Teachers and students are encouraged to speak English in the English lesson but speaking in Cantonese is tolerated. Examples are that teachers accept students' answers in Cantonese and teachers themselves admit that they speak Cantonese in the lesson from time to time.

The participants are four in-service local English teachers with 3, 8, 10 and 30 years of teaching experience in English respectively. This helps cover a wide range of teaching experience and can gather comprehensive data across different age groups. Three of them are females and one is male. Lastly, all participants speak fluent Cantonese as their first language and English as their second language.

4.2. Research questions

This research aims to explore local teachers' attitudes towards using Cantonese as the medium of instruction in English classrooms. The following questions guides the whole study.

1. What are the benefits of using Cantonese in an English classroom (in teaching vocabulary, grammar and giving instruction)?
2. What are the limitations of using Cantonese in an English classroom (in teaching vocabulary, grammar and giving instructions)?
3. What is the standard for judicious use of Cantonese in an English classroom?

4.3. Methodology

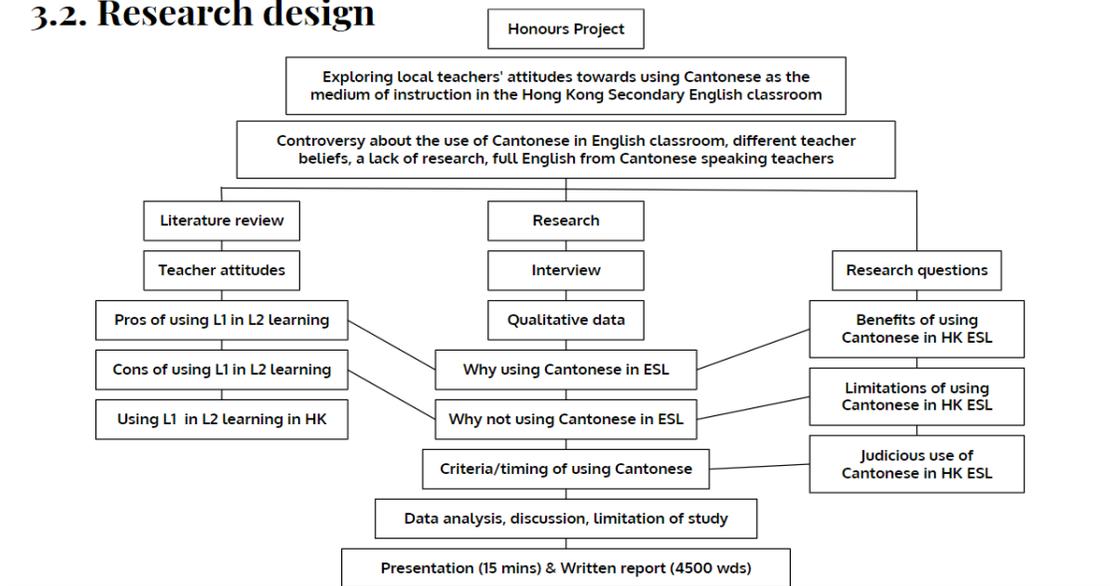
A semi-structured interview (appendix i) was adopted in collecting data, which concerns the how natural and informal the conversation is and how the interviewer and the participants are allowed to have more flexibility in questioning and answering (Longhurst, 2003). The semi-structure can also help increase the reliability and validity of the interview (Segal, Coolidge, O'Riley & Heinz, 2006). The questions designed are open-ended with some prompts for the interviewer to guide the direction of the interview when needed

(to answer the research question more explicitly). The interview aims to answer research question one and two by acquiring teachers' view on the benefits and drawbacks of using Cantonese in English classroom. Also, it aims to answer research question three by exploring the circumstances that determine what is the judicious use of Cantonese concerning the situation and timing.

4.4. Procedure and data analysis

The interview was conducted in two modes, face-to-face and in Zoom. For face-to-face mode, the interviews were conducted in the secondary school of the interviewee and were recorded with the iPhone recorder. For Zoom interviews, it is recorded with the Zoom recorder pre-installed for every Zoom user. As the interviews were delivered in Cantonese, when undergoing the partial transcription, translation was also made. Key evidence was highlighted and notes were made to generate important findings (appendix ii). The following is the overall design of the research.

3.2. Research design



6. Results and discussion

To facilitate the understanding, the following profile shows that the interviewees are referred to as teacher A, B, C and D.

Teacher A - Miss Lee



Year of experience: 30

Use of L1: Yes

Attitude: Positive

Teacher B - Miss Hui



Year of experience: 3

Use of L1: Yes

Attitude: Negative

Teacher C - Miss Wong



Year of experience: 10

Use of L1: Yes

Attitude: Negative

Teacher D - Mr Cheng



Year of experience: 8

Use of L1: Yes

Attitude: Positive

6.1. Benefits of using Cantonese as the MOI in the English classroom (Students)

6.1.1. Improving comprehension of students

Despite the negative attitude towards the use of Cantonese in ESL held by two of the interviewees, all interviewees agree that using Cantonese can foster the understanding of the target language.

Teacher A	<i>The grammar between Chinese and English is too different. And I want students to <u>know the rules more clearly</u> (by using L1).</i>
Teacher B	<i>It really depends on the <u>types of vocabulary</u>, let's say some words that are <u>abstract</u>...I might resort to using Cantonese.</i>
Teacher C	<i>(Using L1) I would say <u>technical terms</u>.</i>
Teacher D	<p><i>...when I teach <u>past perfect tense</u>... I would use 6 words to explain it '<u>比過去更過去</u>'. Using English cannot teach them to understand no matter what...</i></p> <p><i>...you know there are many <u>concepts from English literature</u> that are difficult to explain. Students cannot understand them even if you use pictures as they have never seen them. But they might know the term in Cantonese.</i></p> <p><i>Another example is <u>present perfect tense</u>, let's say in Cantonese '<u>你食左飯未呀</u>' (have you had a meal yet?), the '<u>左</u>' (yet) is the usage of present perfect tense.</i></p>

It is seen that the interviewees have had experience dealing with difficult vocabulary and grammar items using Cantonese.

For vocabulary, according to teacher B, C and D, not every type of vocabulary needs to be explained in Cantonese. Students usually find vocabularies which are technical, abstract and exclusive to a certain field challenging to understand. In this situation, the interviewees would choose to adopt direct translation. According to Biemiller (2004), abstract vocabulary needs to be delivered through verbal definitions, and some examples are “process” and “molecule”. When teaching these words, the teacher B might try to use Cantonese. As for technical words, Chung and Nation (2003) suggest that they are usually vocabulary used in a very specific and specialised field which do not appear in our everyday language lexicon. Relevant examples are “pectoral”, “fascia”, and “trachea”. Teacher C believes that Cantonese can be used as an aid in teaching these vocabulary. As a result, the literature concepts mentioned by teacher D also fall into the category of technical terms, for instance, alliteration, allusion and anachronism. Teacher B, C, D found the above mentioned types of vocabulary easier to be understood by students if direct translation was made.

For grammar items, teacher A believes that students can understand the rules more clearly if Cantonese is used as . Teacher D gave an example of a practice use. He suggested that when teaching the past perfect tense, instead of drawing timelines and explain in English, using only six words uttered in Cantonese “比過去更過去” is beneficial to students’ comprehension of the rules and concepts of this item. Another example given by teacher D is the present perfect tense, where he identifies a certain word from a Cantonese sentence and draw students’ attention to the ‘左’ (yet) in which he further explains the function of present perfect tense.

To sum up, teachers tend to use Cantonese to build basic understanding of abstract, technical vocabulary and complex grammar rules.

6.1.2. Foster the memorization of students

Apart from understanding, teacher A and C acknowledge Cantonese’s role in helping students remember the knowledge of English.

Teacher A	<i>They have already listened to what was said in the lesson (Cantoense), and that they made some notes made in written Chinese form. It is easier to drill the knowledge into their brains.</i>
Teacher C	<i>I would do it with this one (比過去更過去). It is difficult to explain other stuff, but it is like asking them to remember an idiom for this one.</i>

Corresponding to the insights drawn from the literature review where the use of L1 can enhance students' cognitive skills like memorizing strategies (Gass & Selinker, 1994), teacher A also agrees that the use of L1 plays an important role in the drilling process. Especially for students who listen to the Cantonese produced by the teacher and make relevant notes in Chinese, when they refer to what they studied, they can skip the process of comprehending the English they wrote and listen to gain a direct recall so as to increase their efficiency in doing revision and memorizing key points. Teacher C further suggests that using Cantonese to teach key ideas is like asking students to remember an idiom. This is another manifestation of memorizing strategy as students can simply remember a short, precise and concise phrase or sentence to come to grips with the key idea of a certain learning topic.

In this regard, the use of Cantonese can foster the memorization process of students in learning English.

6.2. Benefits of using Cantonese as the MOI in the English classroom (Teachers)

6.2.1. Timesaving

It is worth mentioning that both teacher B and C generally held a negative attitude towards the use of Cantonese in ESL, but a consensus was reached that using Cantonese “is always quicker in explaining things in English”, as teacher C said.

Teacher B	After all, <i>the lesson time is short</i> , so delivering these skill-related things in Cantonese can <i>save some time</i> and let students do more practice
Teacher C	Using the mother tongue is <i>always quicker</i> in explaining things in English.
Teacher D	Using English cannot teach them (past perfect tense) to understand no matter what, <i>you have to draw a timeline...etc.</i> Using Cantonese, you can <i>use 6 words to 'ko' (finish) it.</i>

Teacher B expressed a view which is agreed by many other teachers, teachers just do not have enough time in the lesson. Curriculum (Jin, Yeung, Tang & Low, 2008) is one of the five main sources of stress of Hong Kong teachers as there is so much subject knowledge to cover. In a bid to save time, teacher D mentioned an example of teaching past perfect tense using Cantonese. He described the process as “use 6 words to finish it”, showing that there is a huge time difference in teaching this item between the use of Cantonese and English. Otherwise, he said, the teacher might have to draw a timeline, and take other actions.

As a result, considering how rushed the teaching pace is, using Cantonese as a timesaving tool is recognized by the teachers.

6.2.2. Easier for teachers to explain

Teacher A	<i>I want students to know the rules more clearly, and explain more clearly to them.</i>
Teacher D	<i>Especially for senior forms, there are just too many things to study, and students do not look the words up from the dictionary very often. Using Cantonese to explain words is ‘quick, cool, nice’ (快靚正).</i>

Teacher A and D both raised an idea that using Cantonese, for teachers whose mother tongue language is Cantonese, is actually easier for the teachers to give instructions. Teacher A reckon using Cantonese can help her explain language items more clearly, suggesting an implication that it is possible for teachers to be not proficient enough in a certain area of knowledge and cannot explain that item in a simple manner. As Miles (2004, p. 9) warned, if the teachers are not the native-speakers of the foreign language but a target language only classroom is implemented, it might lead to isolation between the students and the target language. On the contrary, teacher D evaluate the use of Cantonese in certain situations as ‘快靚正’, which explains the advantages of using Cantonese in terms of the timesaving, accuracy, simplicity and direct aspect.

All in all, Cantonese allows teachers to have another language tool to be utilized when a certain language item is too difficult to explain to an extent which is out of a teacher’s league or, it might take a relatively longer time to explain, let alone the complex sentence structure that might also need to be utilized if such explanation comes up, where students might be more confused. In other words, if a teacher needs to use so much time and effort to explain a certain item in English, Cantoense can be used to explain items in an easier manner.

6.3. Limitations of using Cantonese as the MOI in the English classroom (Students)

6.3.1. L1-dependent habit and decreased motivation towards English

All interviewees raised their worries about how students might develop a L1-dependent habit if they are constantly exposed to Cantonese in the English lesson, and their motivation towards English would decrease.

Teacher A	<i>I would worry about the fact that students would rely too much on it (Cantonese). If you don’t use Chinese to explain things, they would not listen.</i>
Teacher B	<i>I would still try to use English first as I don’t want them to get used to it (using Cantonese).</i>

Teacher C	<i>If you give them <u>L1 translation every time</u>, they might <u>wait for your translation every time</u>.</i>
Teacher D	<i>Students know that you only use Cantonese when some important concepts are explained. They will <u>pay full attention to</u> the words you teach in <u>Cantonese</u>. They <u>might not be paying much attention to</u> the words you <u>don't teach in Cantonese</u>.</i>

Students might rely too much on Cantonese instructions given by teachers. As teacher A said, students might lose interest in listening to English instructions, and they would not listen to them. Inside students' heads, a mindset which distinguishes between useful information and information that is not as useful is developed. Teacher D describes this situation in detail. If the teachers use Cantonese when important ideas are introduced, then students can learn to adapt to this style and start to ignore items which are not instructed in English. From time to time, the concern which raised by teacher C might become reality. Students would wait for teachers' utterance in Cantonese.

To conclude, using Cantonese in ESL can make students rely on it. When they receive instructions in English, they might not be paying as much attention as they listen to Cantonese. This is caused by the facts that, first, they have already gotten used to listening to Cantonese, and second, they know that "important information" is delivered in Cantonese. In the long run, a classroom with more exposure to English will only be harder to achieve, which leads to the next limitation.

6.3.2. Decreased English exposure and use

As reviewed in the literature part, in the previous study (Krashen, 1982) argued regarding how the use of L1 in ESL can decrease the English language exposure, the interviewees also held the attitude that reducing the exposure of English is one of the most obvious drawbacks of using Cantonese in the English classroom.

Teacher B	<i>Because...they have limited exposure already, in English lessons, the <u>exposure to English can be maximized</u>.</i>
Teacher C	<i>If we can keep using English <u>consistently</u>, their <u>listening ability</u> can be built up. <i>Afterall it is English lesson. And listening to your instruction is also part of the training. It is training their <u>listening skills and processing skills</u>.</i></i>
Teacher D	<i>To some extent, English teachers using direct translation from English to Cantonese is not beneficial to students' English learning because <u>English learning requires exposure</u>.</i>

Teacher D suggested how English learning requires exposure, while teacher B pointed out that students in Hong Kong do not have enough exposure to English in everyday life, so the environment in an English

classroom becomes especially important. In terms of medium of instruction in the lesson, if English is being used in an ESL setting, students can, according to teacher C, practice their listening and processing skills. Therefore, students are deprived of the chances of learning because teachers use Cantonese and take away the English input. It is also worth noting that teacher C emphasized the consistency of exposure to English. If the exposure to the target language is not consistent, meaning that the teacher switches between English and Cantonese very often, the listening ability of the students might not be able to be built up.

Therefore, not only does English learning require exposure, but exposure which is consistently delivered. Using Cantonese can hinder this exposure where students' chance of practicing listening and processing skills is taken away.

6.3.3. Possible inability to achieve vocabulary application

Although the data collected indicates the positive effects of using Cantonese in ESL setting in Hong Kong by enhancing students' comprehension and memorization of the target language items, such as vocabulary and grammar rules, teacher D admitted that there is a major flaw which can lead to unsatisfactory learning outcomes.

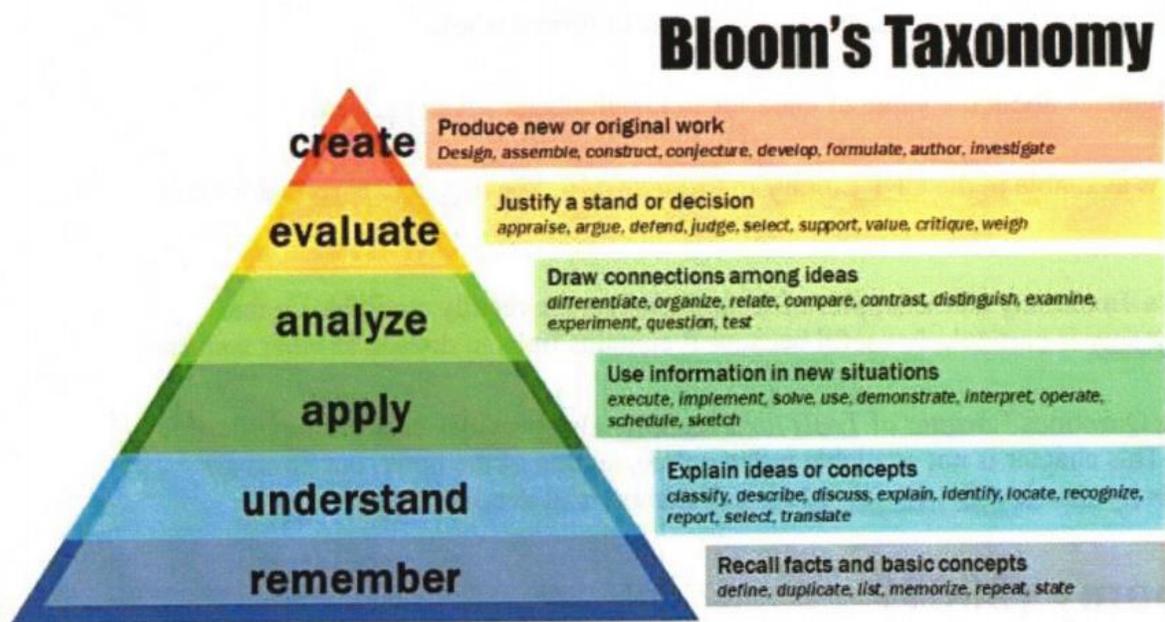
<i>Teacher D</i>	<p><i>...translated words cannot be used directly in English. You must have some collocations or some grammar constructions where you have to follow some rules. Sometimes, students only memorize the Chinese meaning and they use the 'Chinese to English' method (中譯英) which is entirely wrong.</i></p> <p><i>If the teachers 'brutally' translate all English words to Chinese words, students might lose some language concepts in what situation they can use a certain word. Is the word formal or informal? What field does this word appear in? Does this word appear in passive voice or active voice more? All these things would be gone if you only simply translate words from English to Chinese.</i></p>
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Teacher D found that students might try to directly use the English words they learnt through Cantonese in sentence making, neglecting aspects of syntax and context. For instance, students use vocabulary with wrong collocations and grammar constructions. This is due to the fact that some important information about the words, for example, pragmatic, is left out if the word is taught through direct translation in Cantonese. Teacher D suggested a few elements which can be missed in this situation, the situation the word can be used appropriately, whether the word is formal or informal, the field and category the word belongs to (academic, technical, everyday language) as well as whether the word usually appears in passive or active voice.

In conclusion, students' ability to apply the vocabulary they learnt through Cantonese is not satisfactory as, during the direct translation process through L1, different elements of the language, such as syntax and pragmatics are hidden.

6.3.4. Bloom's taxonomy

In this regard, it is possible to draw attention to Bloom's taxonomy to understand the above mentioned problem better. Bloom's taxonomy is a model with different tiers which classify how people think and learn in six cognitive stages where the complexity increases stage by stage, from "remember" to "create" (Forehand, 2010). According to the UW Teaching Academy (2003), in this hierarchy, students who achieve a higher level of cognitive stage should have already completed the lower stages. For teachers, this model outlines the educational goals and products which can be visually understood easily (Krathwohl, 2002). Using the taxonomy to review the use of Cantonese in English classrooms in Hong Kong indicates that the results about the beneficial aspect are not as astonishing as we thought.



Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Bloom, 2001)

From the taxonomy, concerning the first level where students can recall facts, the result of the study (6.1.2.) shows that using Cantonese to teach abstract, technical vocabulary and complex grammar rules can actually

facilitate students' process of remembering those key knowledge. As for the "understand" stage, students need to attain a level where they can construct meaning verbally or in written form and explain it. Interviewees (6.1.1.) also reflected that enhancing comprehension of difficult vocabulary and grammar items is one of the main advantages of using Cantonese in the English classroom. Before giving an absolute acknowledgement to the use of Cantonese regarding the first two stages of cognitive level, it is important to mention that the definition of "remember" includes long-term memory. So, further research has to be done on how long and efficient vocabulary and grammar knowledge learnt through Cantonese can retain.

When looking further into the third stage, "apply", the result above (6.3.3.) suggests that students are found to demonstrate mistakes in vocabulary use where, clearly, the direct translation method (Chinese to English) is used. Relevant mistakes such as improper use of collocation, preposition and usage in an inappropriate context are caused by the Cantonese instruction given by teachers. As the revised taxonomy (2001) defines the stage of "apply" as "the procedure through executing or implementing", neither did students execute the use of vocabulary nor implement it with a proper use in terms of syntax and pragmatics.

As a result, an implication is drawn that Cantonese can be a beneficial tool in helping students undergo the "remember" and "understand" stages from the model, but teachers, in order to promote a higher level of thinking in English, should use English as the medium of instruction in this sense. In clarifying and organizing classroom activities, the objectives of using Cantonese (remember and understand basic concepts) and English (higher order thinking) as mediums of instruction should be made clear.

6.4. Limitations of using Cantonese as the MOI in the English classroom (Teachers)

6.4.1. Difficulty in establishing an English teacher image in front of students and the school

On the positive side, teacher C believes that English teachers should be an "icon" in the school where English is the language students should use when encountering any of the English teachers, and students should take this issue for granted. The word "consistent" is brought up again, suggesting the importance that only by maintaining the culture and atmosphere of using English in the English lessons can students develop a habit of communicating and learning through English. The use of Cantonese can hinder that maintenance.

Teacher C

*We hope that students can **use English when they find English teachers** outside the classroom. This is like **an 'icon'**. If all English teachers can be **consistent** on this rule, then the students should know all they have to use English when facing all English teachers.*

<i>Teacher D</i>	<p>...using Cantonese in an English lesson can affect <i>students' perceptions towards the teachers</i>. For example, you teach English in a Band 1 school and use Cantonese quite often. The students would think that aren't we band 1? Why do you use Cantonese so often? <u>Do you not know how to express things in English so that you use Cantonese?</u></p> <p>If you use too much Cantonese... the <i>teachers with lower percentages (in using English) will be invited to meet the principal</i>. There are definitely consequences. Of course, for contract-based colleagues who concern the permanent contract will feel pressure from it.</p>
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On the negative side, teacher D pointed out that using Cantonese in the English classroom can affect students' perception towards the English teachers. An example given is that students from band 1 school (generally more achieving students) might be confused with the high frequency of Cantonese as they are more comfortable with full English. In a worse scenario, students might even consider the teachers as unqualified and question the ability and professionalism of the teachers. This can greatly harm the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students, and interpersonal relationships with the teachers can affect students' intrinsic motivation in learning (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Students might not listen to the teachers anymore in the worst situation.

Moreover, teachers also face pressure from the school as some schools promote a rather strict EMI policy. As teacher D recalled, how much English is used in the English lesson can actually be reflected by students' evaluation and the school's principal and panel can receive the results. Due to the contract-based policy in hiring teachers, combining with the fact that how school usually expects English teachers to use English in the lesson, English teachers' image becomes very important and a source of pressure.

After all, teachers need to build a professional image in front of the students and the school to maintain a friendly relationship with both parties. Having said that, whether the use of Cantonese in English classrooms can foster the relationships between teachers and students in band 2 or band 3 settings can be further looked into.

6.5. Judicious use of using Cantonese as the MOI in the English classroom

Having discussed the above mentioned benefits and limitations of using Cantonese in the English classrooms, it is obvious that the judicious use of Cantonese is important in minimizing its negative effects and maximizing its potential advantages. The following analysis will look into the two contextual level, micro and-macro factors. Micro factors refer to the individual level of teachers and classroom environment. They include teachers' belief, intention, classroom management, instructions and materials. These directly

affect teachers' use of Cantonese on a classroom level. Macro factors are related to the administrative environment and students' family. In other words, the factors which can affect the decision of Cantonese use outside the classroom. Relevant examples are government policies, school policies, the school background, students' family, background and individual difference.

6.5.1. Micro-factors: Selection of key items to be possibly taught in Cantonese

Inside the classroom, teachers have the full control of the items to be taught as well as the medium of instruction used to teach those items. According to the interview result, teachers held different views regarding what items can be taught in Cantonese and what cannot.

Teacher A	As for listening and speaking , I would basically use English all the way.
Teacher B	Important things like assessment , which should be clearly understood by them (through Cantonese). Let's say some words that are abstract ...I might resort to using Cantonese. But for senior Ss, when explaining DSE papers , or something about skills , I would use Cantonese sometimes.
Teacher C	(Do you use Cantonese in teaching some types of vocabulary?) I would say technical terms . It (比過去更過去) is like asking them to remember an idiom for this one.
Teacher D	In Cantonese '你食左飯未呀' (have you had a meal yet?), the '左' (yet) is the the usage of present perfect tense .

Teacher A emphasized the importance for English use in teaching listening and speaking. It is only reasonable that the skills of listening and speaking of a language can only be learnt through practice, which is listening to English and speaking in English in this case. The use of Cantonese is, by its essence, contradictory to this learning process itself. For teacher B, she put forward the ideas that when it comes to important information such as the instructions about a summative assessment, Cantonese can be used to foster students' comprehension. Also, exam-related skills for the public examination are other crucial points which should be made clear to students. As aforementioned, the interviewees held a positive attitude towards the use of Cantonese in teaching abstract, technical vocabulary and complex grammar items in enhancing students' understanding and memorization. Though, long explanations should be avoided, and short phrases and "idiom-like" sentences are recommended.

To achieve a conclusion here, the interviewees reflected that the justified, judicious use of Cantonese is the moment where teachers need to teach abstract and technical vocabulary, complex grammar items as well

as the important assessment information and skills. When giving the instructions related to the above mentioned items, short phrases and “idiom-like” sentences should be adopted to avoid long Cantonese instruction. On the other hand, using Cantonese to teach English listening and skills is not an acceptable option.

6.5.2. Micro-factors: Alternative of Cantonese use

Despite the potential benefits of using Cantonese in English classrooms as discussed in other parts of the study, the results show that the interviewees would seek other resources before attempting to use Cantonese.

Teacher A	<i>Q: So, showing pictures, and using body languages can help (in teaching vocabulary)? A: Yes.</i>
Teacher B	<i>There are students who are comparatively good in English, so I would ask them, do you know what this means? Can you explain it to others? So, allowing students to say it (Cantonese).</i> <i>I like giving examples in explaining vocabulary. I might give some sentences as examples and say, in this situation, this person is jealous, then I would ask students ‘Can you guess the meaning of jealous?’. I prefer giving simple examples for students to make the guess.</i>
Teacher C	<i>I would choose to elicit the (Cantonese) utterance from students.</i> <i>For junior form students, the instructions language should be kept simple.</i> <i>If they do not understand the steps, they can ask their groupmates.</i>
Teacher D	<i>Of course, avoiding the use Cantonese by showing pictures would be best, or showing the entry photo from the dictionary, that is fine as well.</i> <i>Basically you use Cantonese, an L1 to influence L2, this is called positive transfer.</i>

To start with, teacher B and teacher C both recommended a strategy which is eliciting the utterance in Cantonese from students. Teacher B mentioned her implementation where she would select more achieving students to accomplish this task. By having students say the Cantonese can teachers be able to avoid the risk of damaging one's image. Moreover, teachers can still help students develop a habit of speaking in English in the class because, first, the teacher himself/herself does not speak Cantonese at all, second, only by having the permission from the teachers can students make utterance in Cantonese. Teacher D called this a process of positive transfer.

Apart from the above mentioned, for teaching vocabulary, teacher B shared her experience of contextualizing a sentence and giving examples for students to make predictions when teaching difficult

vocabularies. If a sentence example is not enough, teacher D proposed the idea where teachers can utilize visual aids, such as demonstrating pictures from a dictionary. Furthermore, teacher A agrees with the use of body language and gestures as ways to teach difficult vocabulary. Whether adopting these strategies before using Cantonese is up to teachers.

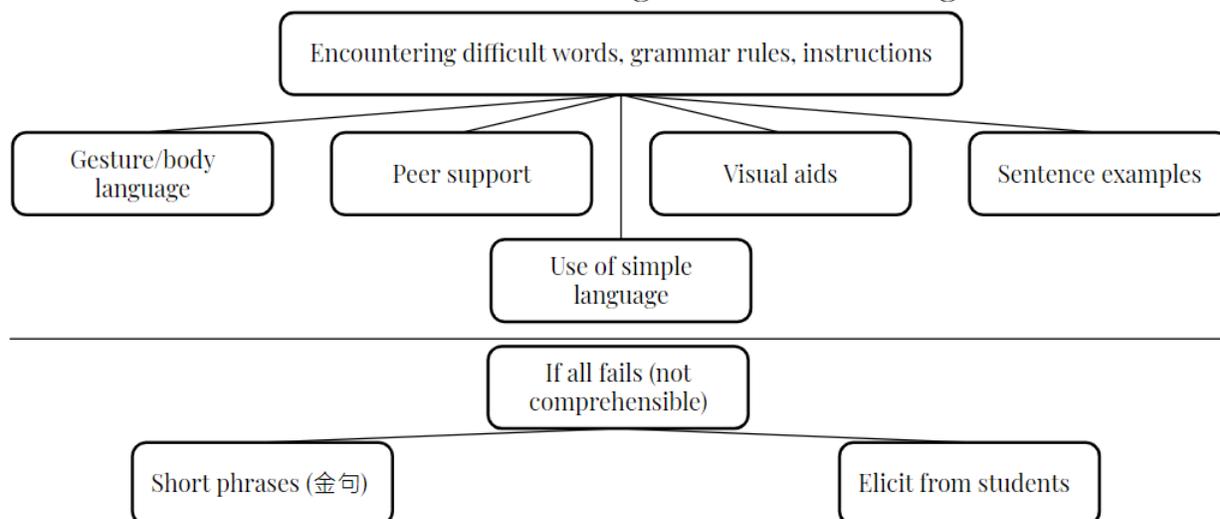
In addition, teacher C's point of view regarding the language use itself in the classroom brought an insight that instructional language might be overlooked by many teachers. The content teachers cover in a lesson is regulated and controlled by the curriculum, but the language teachers use in giving instruction is not as stressed as the content of the lesson. Teacher C recommended using simple language in teaching, which points out that it is entirely possible for teachers to use instructional language which is too difficult for students, whether the curriculum is difficult or not. So, before using Cantonese, repeating the instruction with simple sentence structures and vocabulary can also be reconsidered.

Last but not least, teacher C mentioned the peer collaboration in the lesson where students can seek help from others when encountering any difficult instructions. Teachers can actively encourage students to engage in discussion with their peers in order to achieve a better mutual understanding.

In summary, even though using Cantonese in certain situations seem inevitable, the results found that different resources and strategies, for example, eliciting Cantonese utterances from students, contextualizing vocabulary with the help of visual aids and gesture help, simplify the general instructional language use, encouraging peer collaborative learning in the lesson, are all applicable and should be utilized in the classroom by the English teachers.

In terms of the micro context, the individual level of teachers concerns teachers' belief, classroom management skills and lesson planning. When deciding whether the use of Cantonese is judicious, teachers can evaluate the items, and utilize relevant resources beforehand. The following figure is the visual representation of the micro level.

A micro view of L1 use: Process of using Cantonese in an English classroom



6.5.3. Macro-factors: Influence from outside the classroom

The findings show that there are multiple factors on the macro level which can affect teachers' decision of using Cantonese in English classrooms. Their influence is usually induced outside the classroom.

Teacher A	<i>Realistically, it (using English all the time) is not easy, considering the background of our students (an estate school with more students from grassroot families).</i>
Teacher B	<i>For form 1, the main reason (using Cantonese sometimes) is the fact that they mostly use Cantonese (in the English lesson) in their primary schools, especially in this region (not very wealthy). They have weak family support.</i>
Teacher C	<i>Yeah, and we need to look into school's banding, students' own level.</i> <i>If you have students who are more achieving, then maybe there wouldn't be much effect (Cantonese influencing the English learning). If students are less achieving, then the teachers might have to use Cantonese to cope with different things.</i>
Teacher D	<i>I mainly taught some lower achieving students in the past so I used more Cantonese. I went to two schools, a primary school where students are more achieving, so I used English basically.</i> <i>The school allowed me to use full English in that lesson and let me teach the elite students from the lower band 3. Students managed to follow what was delivered.</i>

First of all, according to teacher A, the background of the students can affect whether teachers use English all the time in English lessons. Teacher B further emphasized the importance of the region, in other words, the region students from and the region of the school. As the school is in Kwai Tsing and students usually are from grassroot families, students do not have enough family support for their learning. For instance, the

educational background of family members, resources for students to enroll in tutorial schools or engage in private tutoring. All in all, the region of the school is one macro factor which can affect teachers' use of Cantonese in English lessons as region is related to how much resource and support students have. However, the region of the school cannot fully determine the support that students have, and where they are from, because of banding. This leads to the second point.

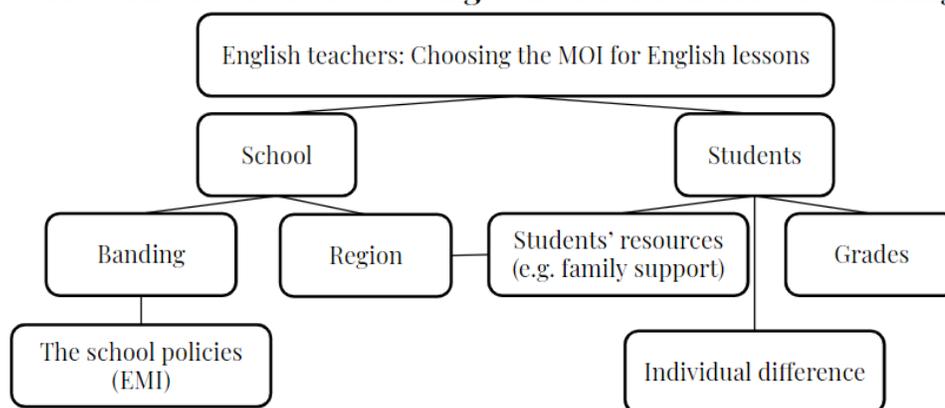
Second of all, as teacher C mentioned, the banding of the school also plays an important role in deciding the use of Cantonese. Banding is related to the general academic performance of students, and this is closely related to students abilities, which is further discussed in the next paragraph. Apart from this, the banding of the school affects the EMI policy of the school and how strict the implementation of it is. Teacher D suggested that the school he once taught allowed him to use full English. Therefore, the EMI policy of the school can affect teachers' decision on using Cantonese. As discussed in part 6.4.1, teachers feel pressured if, in terms of the policy, using Cantonese is forbidden. Then, naturally, teachers will not use Cantonese. So, the banding of the school together with how strict the EMI policy is, can greatly affect teachers' decision of using Cantonese in English lessons.

Third of all, students themselves are the main factor of whether using Cantonese in English lessons is appropriate and suitable. Teacher B admitted that when it comes to the grades of students, her decision of using Cantonese in English classrooms changes. Form one students, for teacher B, requires more instructions in Cantonese as they are more used to this way of teaching back in primary school. Moreover, teacher C and D both stress the importance of students' individual level. They both agreed to use Cantonese for lower achieving students. In this regard, students' grades and abilities are the factors teachers consider when choosing the medium of instruction in English classrooms.

To conclude, when teachers choose between Cantonese and English in teaching English, they consider the following factors, the region, banding and policy of the school as well as students' resource, grades and individual level.

For the macro context, various factors outside the classroom need to be considered. A judicious use of Cantonese in English classrooms should have the background of the school and students contemplated. The following is the visual representation of the macro level.

A macro view of L1 use: Factors of using Cantonese considered as an English teacher



7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study found that teachers generally held a negative attitude towards teachers' use of Cantonese in English classrooms. The reasons are fourfold. First, it makes students rely on the Cantonese input. Second, it limits the exposure of English. Third, students cannot attain the application level in this way. Fourth, it can potentially damage teachers' professionalism and images. However, teachers also see the positive effects that Cantonese can bring. The three benefits are, enhancement of understanding and memorization of target language, the saving of time and simplified instructions. Therefore, strictly speaking, teachers only held the negative attitudes towards the injudicious use of Cantonese. On this aspect, teachers need to consider the following factors on a micro and macro level. For the micro level which concerns teachers' individuality, in the classroom, teachers should select key items to be taught in Cantonese instead of teaching every item in Cantonese. Acceptable items include abstract, technical vocabulary, complex grammar rules and assessment-related information and skills. If teachers encounter the above mentioned items, various resources should be utilized before the use of Cantonese. Instead of using Cantonese in the first place, teachers can consider using visual aids, gesture and body language, contextualized sentence samples, simplified language in instructions and peer support. If all fails to do the task, teachers can either use "idiom-like" sentences and phrases which are very short and can be easily remembered, or elicit the Cantonese utterance from students. For factors on the macro level, which concerns the influence outside the classroom, teachers need to consider these aspects before using Cantonese in the English classrooms. They are the school's banding, region, policy and students' resources, individual differences in ability and grades.

7.1. Implications

To facilitate relevant studies in the future, two research directions can be considered. One is conducting a quantitative study using a standardized test format in investigating two groups of students regarding their memorization (remember) and comprehension level (understanding) about the same test, where one group of students underwent instruction given in the mode of mix-code (Cantonese + English) while the other group underwent full English. This can provide more insight into the effectiveness of using L1 in developing students' cognitive abilities of memorizing and understanding. Further study can also look into how these two groups of students manage the application of the knowledge learnt. For instance, requiring them to engage in a sentence making exercise and see if the two groups of students demonstrate any differences in vocabulary application. Another study direction is how positive transfer can be made between Cantonese and English. This aims to study the conditions in which positive transfer between L1 and L2 can take place.

7.2. Limitations of study

There are two main limitations of this study. The first limitation is the lack of research scale. Only four in-service teachers were involved in this study, and a bigger sample size is preferred for future research to understand a more holistic and general attitude of in-service English teachers in Hong Kong about the use of Cantonese in English classrooms. There is also a lack of research instruments. A quantitative method can be adopted in future studies (e.g. questionnaire) to reflect a representative teachers' attitude towards the use of Cantonese in English classrooms.

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Appendix

Appendix (i) Interview template

Interviewee	
Date	
Medium	(Face-to-face, social applications, phone call)
<p>1. Should teachers use Cantonese in ELT classroom?</p> <p>(Prompts: To teach new vocabulary, grammar, give instructions, other usage...)</p> <p>2. If yes, what are the benefits of using Cantonese in ELT?</p> <p>3. If yes, what are the possible drawbacks of using Cantonese in ELT?</p> <p>4. If no, what are the benefits of not using Cantonese in ELT?</p> <p>5. If no, what are the possible drawbacks of not using Cantonese in ELT?</p> <p>6. If it depends, in what situations it is preferred to use Cantonese in ELT?</p> <p>(Prompts: To teach new vocabulary, grammar, give instructions, other usage...)</p> <p>7. What challenges do teachers face when they (cannot use/ use) Cantonese in ELT?</p>	

Partial transcription

Interview with Miss Lee (Teacher A)

Interviewer	Miss Lee (Teacher A)
How many years of English teaching experience do you have?	30 years already.
Do you use Cantonese in your English lesson?	Would use it if needed.
Can you talk about the frequency of it? Do you use it every lesson? Like many times for one lesson?	It depends on what is being taught. Not every lesson needs it, not like using ‘lesson’ as a unit. Perhaps using ‘the skills being taught’ as a unit.
Speaking of skills, there are different skills in an English lesson like grammar rules, vocabulary meaning. Do you use Cantonese in some of these specific aspects?	Yes. Mainly, I use it when teaching grammar. As for listening and speaking, I would basically use English all the way. As for reading and writing, it depends. When the questions of reading passages are too hard to understand, I would use a little bit of Cantonese. (The interviewee made a contradictory statement, will take the latter statement as her true stance). I do not use Cantonese when teaching writing most of the time. So when it comes to using Cantonese, grammar teaching and reading teaching would be more frequent.
What’s the reason behind the use of Cantonese?	For grammar, the grammar between Chinese and English is too different. And I want Ss to know the rules more clearly, and explain more clearly to them, so Chinese can be used as an aid. For example, Chinese does not have the concept ‘tense’.
Do you think that Ss show obvious improvement after the use of Cantonese	They can understand better. At least when they go back home and do revision, they have already listened to what was said in the lesson, and that they made some notes made in written Chinese form. It is easier to drill the knowledge into their brains.
Do you worry about the possible drawbacks of using Cantonese?	I would worry about the fact that Ss would rely too much on it

	(Cantonese). If you don't use Chinese to explain things, they would not listen. Situations like this do happen. So, striking a balance between using and not using. Like not every grammar item requires Cantonese to explain. Some grammar items might possess a great need. So, make it clear to students that Cantonese will only be used when teaching grammar
Apart from grammar teaching, vocabulary teaching, instructions about class activities, do you use Cantonese regarding these?	Rarely. Those can be explained and Ss can understand, maybe through actions, giving examples. So, a no, don't want to make them rely on it.
So, like explaining by pictures, body language can help...	Yes...yes.
Apart from factors about teaching, are there any factors, such as administration, which foster you use of Cantonese, or discourage you to use Cantonese?	The school does not say an absolute no to Cantonese. Because we need to review Ss' level, and the issues about teaching. It is understood that there is such a need to some extent. Teachers' judgment is trusted. So, there is no 'not allow' out there. But we all know that in an English classroom, enough is enough, we try our best to do this (avoid Cantoense).Striking a balance.
Right, the fine tuning policy suggests that we look into the ability of students, school's resources...	Yea, realistically, it is not easy. Considering the background of our Ss (an estate school with more Ss from grassroots family).

1. Research question 1 (pros):

- a. When the questions of reading passages are too hard to understand (allow Ss to understand reading questions better)
- b. the grammar between Chinese and English is too different (help Ss understand the grammar concepts of English which do not exist within the field of Chinese knowledge, such as tense)
- c. I want Ss to know the rules more clearly, and explain more clearly to them (on one hand, teachers can explain grammar rules in a simple manner. On the other hand, Ss can understand these instructions better.)
- d. they have already listened to what was said in the lesson, and that they made some notes made in written Chinese form. It is easier to drill the knowledge into their brains. (Cantonese input can be memorized by Ss easier. Chinese notes made can also help them

do a better self-revision as they skip a step of reviewing the notes written in English, which is another reading comprehension process.)

2. Research question 2 (cons):

- a. I would worry about the fact that Ss would rely too much on it (Using Cantonese without control can lead to the development of a habit of relying on Cantonese from Ss)
- b. If you don't use Chinese to explain things, they would not listen (Using too much Cantonese can reduce Ss' motivation of listening to English)

3. Research question 3 (judicious use):

- a. It depends on what is being taught. Not every lesson needs it, not like using 'lesson' as a unit. Perhaps using 'the skills being taught' as a unit (considering the skills being taught, not the frequency of usage)
- b. I use it when teaching grammar. As for listening and speaking, I would basically use English all the way. As for reading and writing, it depends. (Listening and speaking are exceptions. Grammar and reading, they depend.

Interview with Miss Hui (Teacher B)

Interviewer	Miss Hui (Teacher B)
How many years of English teaching experience do you have?	This is my third year of teaching.
Do you use Cantonese in your English lesson?	No. Especially the fact that I teach lower form Ss, like, I teach form 1 Ss, for higher form Ss, I teach remedial groups. For form 1, the main reason is the fact that they mostly use Cantonese (in the English lesson) in their primary schools, especially in this region (not very wealthy), they have weak support, family support. So, for most of the time, when giving instructions in the lesson, or other important things like assessment, which should be clearly understood by them, then I would use Cantonese. But, I would still try to use English first as I don't want them to get used to it (using Cantonese). "I can use Cantonese anyway)

<p>So you're afraid that they get used to listening to Cantonese only?</p>	<p>Right, right, right. So sometimes I will tell them, or step by step, let's say at start, I might use more Chinese, but for the lessons to come, I hope that they can use English more, cause I don't want them to get used to using Cantonese. Because, after all, I think that during the English lesson, they have limited exposure already, in English lessons, the exposure to English can be maximized. So rather than using Cantonese, there are Ss who are comparatively good in English, so I would ask them, do you know what this means? Can you explain it to other Ss? So, allowing Ss to say it (Cantonese) instead of me saying it</p>
<p>Apart from the aforementioned instructions and assessment, do you use Cantonese in teaching vocabulary and grammar rules?</p>	<p>For vocabulary, it really depends on the types of vocabulary, let's say some words that are abstract which cannot be explained by showing a picture, so finally I might resort to using Cantonese, but I like to give examples in explaining vocabulary. I might give some sentences as examples and say, in this situation, this person is jealous, then I would ask Ss 'Can you guess the meaning of jealous?'. I prefer giving simple examples for Ss to make the guess.</p>
<p>So putting the word in a context for Ss to guess its... Then how about grammar...</p>	<p>Yes, right. For grammar, I believe it comes to the key points. But for form 1 Ss, the things are easier, such as tenses, prepositions, so I don't tend to use Cantonese so far. But for senior Ss, when explaining DSE papers, or something about skills, I would use Cantonese sometimes, as Ss can understand them better. Also, the group I teach is rather weak. After all, the lesson time is short, so delivering these skill-related things in Cantonese can save some time and let Ss do more practice.</p>
<p>Any factors like language policies, school's attitude, that affect your decision on Cantonese use apart from the teaching and learning?</p>	<p>Maybe it is about different roles. For F1 Ss, I am not just an English teacher, but the class teacher to them as well. So, when dealing with class matters, I would use some time from the English lesson to talk about things like notice, or other important messages from the school. I would use Cantonese in</p>

	those situations. I also think that when coping with disciplinary matters, I would use Cantonese so as to show them I am playing the role as a class teacher right now.
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1. Research question 1 (pros):

- a. for most of the time, when giving instructions in the lesson, or other important things like assessment, which should be clearly understood by them (Ss can understand instructions given by teachers easier if the instructions are in Cantonese.)
- b. For vocabulary, it really depends on the types of vocabulary, let's say some words that are abstract which cannot be explained by showing a picture, so finally I might resort to using Cantonese. (In teaching vocabulary using Cantonese, the types of vocabulary matters, such as whether they are abstract. (Using Cantonese to teach abstract vocabulary can allow Ss to understand easier.)
- c. when explaining DSE papers, or something about skills, I would use Cantonese sometimes, as Ss can understand them better. (understand better)
- d. Also, the group I teach is rather weak. Afterall, the lesson time is short, so delivering these skill-related things in Cantonese can save some time and let Ss do more practice. (Time-saving)

2. Research question 2 (cons):

- a. But, I would still try to use English first as I don't want them to get used to it (using Cantonese). "I can use Cantonese anyway". (The over exposure to Cantonese can lead to the development of a habit of listening to Cantonese, and even the speaking of Cantonese, as the Ss might think they can use it as the teacher uses it as well, which will reduce the target language output from Ss.)
- b. Because, afterall, I think that during the English lesson, they have limited exposure already, in English lessons, the exposure to English can be maximized. (Ss have a very limited exposure to English in daily life already, and English classroom plays an important role in exposing them in an English environment. So using Cantonese will reduce this exposure of English which is already very rare to come by for Ss.)

3. Research question 3 ((judicious use):

- a. For form 1, the main reason is the fact that they mostly use Cantonese (in the English lesson) in their primary schools, especially in this region (not very wealthy), they have weak support, family support. (Depending on the grades and background of Ss, for lower

grades Ss, they might be affected by the teaching in primary school (more Cantonese), so using Cantonese is an option for lower grades Ss. The background also matters, from an estate school with more Ss from grassroot family, they lack the resources and family support. Using Cantonese is an option as well.)

- b. for most of the time, when giving instructions in the lesson, or other important things like assessment, which should be clearly understood by them, then I would use Cantonese. (When giving out important information, like assessment)
- c. So sometimes I will tell them, or step by step, let's say at start, I might use more Chinese, but for the lessons to come (Telling Ss explicitly that the use of Cantonese will be slowly extracted from English lesson, and they are hoped to use more English in the future.)
- d. there are Ss who are comparatively good in English, so I would ask them, do you know what this means? Can you explain it to other Ss? So, allowing Ss to say it (Cantonese) instead of me saying it. (Instead of having the teacher produce Cantonese utterance, the teacher can allow more achieving Ss to accomplish this task, which can cater for the benefits of using Cantonese, and avoid the drawbacks of speaking Cantonese as a teacher.)
- e. For vocabulary, it really depends on the types of vocabulary, let's say some words that are abstract which cannot be explained by showing a picture, so finally I might resort to using Cantonese. (In teaching vocabulary using Cantonese, the types of vocabulary matters, such as whether they are abstract. One example is jealous, an attitude, characteristic, which cannot be shown by one photo.)
- f. I like to give examples in explaining vocabulary. I might give some sentences as examples and say, in this situation, this person is jealous, then I would ask Ss 'Can you guess the meaning of jealous?'. I prefer giving simple examples for Ss to make the guess. (If the vocabulary are easily demonstrated by sentence examples, Cantonese can be avoided, and through this, implicit teaching of vocabulary can be achieved as well.)
- g. Yes, right. For grammar, I believe it comes to the key points.(Cantonese can be used in telling key points instead of making long explanations.)
- h. But for form 1 Ss, the things are easier, such as tenses, prepositions, so I don't tend to use Cantonese so far. (Easier items in grammar, so no Cantonese in teaching grammar for junior Ss.)
- i. But for senior Ss, when explaining DSE papers, or something about skills, I would use Cantonese sometimes,

Interview with Miss Wong (Teacher C)

Interviewer	Miss Wong (Teacher C)
How many years have you been teaching English?	Around ten years.
Do you use Cantonese in your English lesson? And Why?	No. Because the medium of instruction of the school is English for the English subject. And we focus on the fact that if English teachers use Cantonese as well, then Ss expect themselves to use Cantonese in the lesson as well. So it is hoped that whenever Ss encounter English teachers, Ss use English as well. So we would continue to do the same thing (speaking English in English lessons).
So, the reasons are the language policy, and the habit of speaking English in front of English teachers?	Yeah, and we need to look into Ss' banding, their own level, let's say our school, overall, Ss can understand, can listen to English. It is just that they are not willing to listen to English from the start, so if we can keep using English consistently, their ability of listening can be built up.
There are some teachers who think that when teaching grammar rules and vocabulary, using Cantonese can be more effective in time-saving, understanding, what do you think of this?	Using the mother tongue is always quicker in explaining things in English. However, I personally think that if I have to use the mother tongue in my own lesson, it would be a situation where the item is too challenging till a point that no English translation can be used to help the Ss. If all fails and Cantonese should be used, I would choose to elicit the utterance from Ss. If I need to give them the Chinese meaning, they can actually do this by looking the words up from the dictionary.
Can you give some examples that are very difficult? Like some abstract vocabulary, jealous?	I would say technical terms. Even for 'jealous', you can give a situation for Ss to guess the meaning. So in my lesson, I really rarely do L1 translation.
Apart from vocabulary teaching, how about grammar rules? Some teachers believe that using '比過去更過去' is good in teaching past perfect tense.	I would do it with this one (比過去更過去). It is difficult to explain other stuff, but it is like asking them to remember an idiom for this one.

<p>How about giving instructions in class activities?</p>	<p>No. Because giving instructions include steps, and they should be in English. Let's say there is a group activity, if they do not understand the steps, they can ask their groupmates.</p>
<p>So, for now, you think that speaking Cantonese cannot help Ss develop a habit of listening?</p>	<p>I think we should give them more chances to listen to English. If you give them L1 translation every time, they might wait for your translation every time.</p>
<p>Do you think that the overuse of L1 can lead to the situation where Ss think in Chinese every time they attempt to use English?</p>	<p>This depends on the school. If you have Ss who are more achieving, then maybe there wouldn't be much effect. If Ss are less achieving, then the teachers might have to use Cantonese to cope with different things. I think there is no clear cut here.</p>
<p>So you talked about different level. How about different forms?</p>	<p>I think it is quite consistent. Perhaps in some wordings, let's say instructions, for junior form Ss, the instructions language should be kept simple and the language should be simple as well. But for senior Ss, the language can be more complicated, the use of word and vocabulary can be harder. But everything should be in English, afterall it is English lesson. And listening to your instruction is also part of the training. It is training their listening skills and processing skills.</p>
<p>Apart from teaching, are there other factors outside the classroom? Like policies? Beliefs?</p>	<p>It is not how the policies make us teach like this and that, but the original purpose is to give a language-rich environment for Ss. So we hope that Ss can use English when they find English teachers outside the classroom. This is like an 'icon'. If they know that they should use English in the lesson or find the English teachers, even dealing with other small issues. They should know that English is the first language they should use. You are helping them to build up a habit of speaking English when they face English teacher. This is the environment we are building, not just inside the classroom. If all English teachers can be consistent on this rule, then the Ss should know all they have to use English when facing all English teachers. This applies to all forms of Ss.</p>

1. Research question 1 (pros):
 - a. Using the mother tongue is always quicker in explaining things in English.
 - b. I would say technical terms.
2. Research question 2 (cons):
 - a. And we focus on the fact that if English teachers use Cantonese as well, then Ss expect themselves to use Cantonese in the lesson as well.
 - b. so if we can keep using English consistently, their ability of listening can be built up
 - c. if they do not understand the steps, they can ask their groupmates (miss the chance of fostering peer learning)
 - d. If you give them L1 translation every time, they might wait for your translation every time.
 - e. afterall it is English lesson. And listening to your instruction is also part of the training. It is training their listening skills and processing skills.
 - f. It is not how the policies make us teach like this and that, but the original purpose is to give a language-rich environment for Ss. So we hope that Ss can use English when they find English teachers outside the classroom. This is like an 'icon'. If they know that they should use English in the lesson or find the English teachers, even dealing with other small issues. They should know that English is the first language they should use. You are helping them to build up a habit of speaking English when they face English teacher. This is the environment we are building, not just inside the classroom. If all English teachers can be consistent on this rule, then the Ss should know all they have to use English when facing all English teachers. This applies to all forms of Ss.
3. Research question 3 ((judicious use):
 - a. Yeah, and we need to look into Ss' banding, their own level, let's say our school, overall, Ss can understand, can listen to English. It is just that they are not willing to listen to English from the start,
 - b. I personally think that if I have to use the mother tongue in my own lesson, it would be a situation where the item is too challenging till a point that no English translation can be used to help the Ss. I would choose to elicit the utterance from Ss. If I need to give them the Chinese meaning, they can actually do this by looking the words up from the dictionary. (last resort and from Ss)
 - c. I would say technical terms.
 - d. it is like asking them to remember an idiom for this one.
 - e. If you have Ss who are more achieving, then maybe there wouldn't be much effect. If Ss

are less achieving, then the teachers might have to use Cantonese to cope with different things. I think there is no clear cut here.

- f. for junior form Ss, the instructions language should be kept simple and the language should be simple as well. But for senior Ss, the language can be more complicated, the use of word and vocabulary can be harder. (alternative use of English)

Interview with Mr Cheng (Teacher D)

Interviewer	Miss Cheng (Teacher D)
How many years of English teaching experience do you have?	For being a part-time teacher, I have 5 years of experience. For being a full-time teacher, this is my third year as an English teacher.
Do you usually teach senior or junior Ss?	I teach senior Ss in this school, and for the past two years, I teach junior Ss more. Overall, I teach senior Ss more.
Do you use Cantonese in English lessons?	<p>Depending on the situation. I mainly taught some lower achieving Ss in the past so I used more Cantonese. During my practice, I went to two schools, a primary school where Ss are higher achieving, so I used English basically. Another one is an upper band 3 and lower band 2 secondary school. At that time, the original teacher was a NET (Native-speaking English Teacher) who came from the U.K and cannot speak Cantonese. He said that other teachers would use Cantonese, so suit yourself (use Cantonese as you like).</p> <p>At that time, I insisted that even if I go to a Band 3 school, I will keep using full English. In the first four weeks, I managed to use full English to carry out the teaching. Then I found out that it really did not work. Ss' ability of absorption is relatively weak. Starting from week 5, I gave up. Well, not give up, but give in. And I used Cantonese. Then I discovered that Ss' found it easier to absorb knowledge when Cantonese is used, especially for the Ss who do not have a great English</p>

foundation. They could not understand your English instructions, but for Cantonese, they could.

I also went to a lower band 3 school and tried full English as well. Is using full English in a lower band 3 school not an option? I used full English in one lesson, and of course, the school allowed me to use full English in that lesson and let me teach the elite Ss from the lower band 3. Ss managed to follow what was delivered. The teacher who supervised me even believed that the English I used was too easy for them.

In my full time experience, the last school was a top one A band one school, which is quite famous and good. Therefore, the EMI policy was quite strict. It was stated that English teachers shall use English in an English lesson, and using Cantonese to explain things and deliver lessons were not encouraged. The regulations there were quite strict. Questionnaires were given to Ss and ask them whether the teachers use English 100% of the time, or 90%, 80%. So the school really emphasized the use of full English. Yeah, so I rarely use Cantonese in the last school. Though I knew that some colleagues, some ‘perm’ teachers who were older, did not entirely forbid the use of Cantonese, let’s say when they encountered some difficult vocabulary, they still used Cantonese to explain them. So that made me relax a bit, whenever I encounter some words which are too hard, Ss seem to not be able to understand the words, and you need to explain them for so long, I can use two Chinese words to ‘ko’ it. In this situation, I would use Cantonese.

I’ve come to this school. First of all, it is not entirely EMI. Second of all, I reckon the quality of the Ss is upper band 2. So I use Cantonese from time to time.

Does the policy you mentioned greatly affect your use of Cantonese? Like requiring teachers to attain 100%, or 90% of English as MOI.

Definitely, in terms of the MOI in the classroom, if you use too much Cantonese, there will be consequences. For example, in the staff meeting, that will be brought up, of course it is anonymous, with a table which lists a certain class, a certain subject, the percentage of using English is rather low. Actually, the teachers with lower percentages (in using English) will be invited to meet the principal. There are definitely consequences. Of course, for contract-based colleagues who concern the permanent contract will feel pressure from it.

Another thing is, I believe that apart from school policies, a very important fact that you use Cantonese in an English lesson can affect Ss' perceptions towards the teachers. There is a psychological analysis behind this. For example, you teach English in a Band 1 school and use Cantonese quite often. The Ss would think that aren't we band 1 Ss? Why do you use Cantonese so often? Do you not know how to express things in English so that you use Cantonese? Or, if you have gotten used to using Cantonese in the lesson, you will encounter a crisis where, Ss know that you only use Cantonese when some important concepts are explained. They will pay full attention to the words you teach in Cantonese. They might not be paying much attention to the words you don't teach in Cantonese.

How about some grammar rules, and instructions for some class activities, do you use Cantonese for those?

Personally, I don't use Cantonese for instructions as they are so simple. Maybe for some band 3 schools, Ss cannot even understand 'Turn to page.5', then I might use Cantonese. But for usual band 1 and band 2 schools, Ss can understand. As for explaining difficult words, for Chinese meaning, I would use Cantonese. You know Ss nowadays don't look words up from the dictionary very often, even if they do, they might not get the right meaning as one word can possess endless meaning. Maybe they get the first meaning, but you want them to get the third

	<p>meaning, in that case, you might as well use Cantonese to explain it. Especially for senior form, there are just too much things to study, and Ss do not look the words up from the dictionary very often. Using Cantonese to explain words is ‘quick, cool, nice’ (快靚正).</p> <p>For explaining grammar rules, (Cantonese) it is more applicable for junior Ss. Well, I do use Cantonese sometimes, but it depends on what grammar items to be taught. Maybe you can’t seem to make Ss understand no matter what (解極解唔明) using English to explain it, but you can use a few words of Cantonese and Ss can understand it. Let me name an example, when I teach past perfect tense, I would tell them when they have to use past perfect tense. I would use 6 words to explain it ‘比過去更過去’ (more ‘past’ than past). Using English cannot teach them to understand no matter what, you have to draw a timeline...etc. Using Cantonese, you can use 6 words to ‘ko’ (finish) it. Another example is present perfect tense, let’s say in Cantonese ‘你食左飯未呀’ (have you had a meal yet?), the ‘左’ (yet) is the the usage of present perfect tense. Basically you use Cantonese, an L1 to influence L2, this is called positive transfer. I think this is fine.</p>
<p>As for teaching vocabulary, some are more abstract, would you use Cantonese in these situations?</p>	<p>I would definitely use it for myself. Of course, for using body language and showing pictures, yes, some teachers suggest using those. For instance, I taught English literature in the last school, you know there are many concepts from English lit that are difficult to explain. Ss cannot understand them even if you use pictures as they have never seen them. But they might know the term in Cantonese. I think this can save more time. Of course, avoiding Cantones by showing pictures would be best, or showing the entry photo from the dictionary, that is fine as well.</p>

<p>So, using Cantonese can save time, and Ss can understand some difficult words better. But the limitations are that the impression you develop as a teacher can be damaged, and Ss might develop a habit of not listening to English anymore?</p>	<p>Right. There is the third limitation. For translating words, you know that translated words cannot be used directly in English. You must have some collocations or some grammar constructions where you have to follow some rules. Sometimes, Ss only memorize the Chinese meaning and they use the ‘Chinese to English’ method which is entirely wrong. Let’s say ‘avoid’, ‘prevent’, these words, they have pretty much the same meaning, but Ss don’t know how to use them, or that they use them wrongly, they are due to the fact that they basically translate words from English to Chinese. So, there would be a crisis here.</p>
<p>So Ss would try to use their mother tongue to do English work.</p>	<p>To some extent, English teachers using direct translation from English to Cantonese is not beneficial to Ss’ English learning because English learning requires exposure. They should deduce some language uses by looking into the underlying rules. However, if the teachers ‘brutally’ translate all English words to Chinese words, Ss might lose a sense of language in what situation can they use a certain word? Is the word formal or informal? What field does this word appear in? Does this word appear in passive voice or active voice more? All these things would be gone if you only simply translate words from English to Chinese.</p>

1. Research question 1 (pros):

- a. Then I found out that it really did not work. Ss’ ability of absorption is relatively weak. Starting from week 5, I gave up. Well, not give up, but give in. And I used Cantonese. Then I discovered that Ss’ found it easier to absorb knowledge when Cantonese is used. (better understanding)
- b. let’s say when they encountered some difficult vocabulary, they still used Cantonese to explain them. So that made me relax a bit, whenever I encounter some words which are too hard, Ss seem to not be able to understand the words, and you need to explain them for so long, I can use two Chinese words to ‘ko’ it. In this situation, I would use Cantonese.
- c. I would use Cantonese. You know Ss nowadays don’t look words up from the dictionary

very often, even if they do, they might not get the right meaning as one word can possess endless meaning. Maybe they get the first meaning, but you want them to get the third meaning, in that case, you might as well use Cantonese to explain it.

- d. Especially for senior form, there are just too much things to study, and Ss do not look the words up from the dictionary very often. Using Cantonese to explain words is ‘quick, cool, nice’
 - e. Let me name an example, when I teach past perfect tense, I would tell them when they have to use past perfect tense. I would use 6 words to explain it ‘比過去更過去’ (more ‘past’ than past). Using English cannot teach them to understand no matter what, you have to draw a timeline...etc. Using Cantonese, you can use 6 words to ‘ko’ (finish) it. Another example is present perfect tense, let’s say in Cantonese ‘你食左飯未呀’ (have you had a meal yet?), the ‘左’ (yet) is the the usage of present perfect tense. Basically you use Cantonese, an L1 to influence L2, this is called positive transfer. I think this is fine.
 - f. For instance, I taught English literature in the last school, you know there are many concepts from English lit that are difficult to explain. Ss cannot understand them even if you use pictures as they have never seen them. But they might know the term in Cantonese. I think this can save more time. Of course, avoiding Cantones by showing pictures would be best, or showing the entry photo from the dictionary, that is fine as well.
2. Research question 2 (cons):
- a. Therefore, the EMI policy was quite strict. It was stated that English teachers shall use English in an English lesson, and using Cantonese to explain things and deliver lessons were not encouraged. The regulations there were quite strict. Questionnaires were given to Ss and ask them whether the teachers use English 100% of the time, or 90%, 80%. So the school really emphasized the use of full English. Yeah, so I rarely use Cantonese in the last school.(for contract-based colleagues
 - b. you use Cantonese in an English lesson can affect Ss’ perceptions towards the teachers. There is a psychological analysis behind this. For example, you teach English in a Band 1 school and use Cantonese quite often. The Ss would think that aren’t we band 1 Ss? Why do you use Cantonese so often? Do you not know how to express things in English so that you use Cantonese?
 - c. Or, if you have gotten used to using Cantonese in the lesson, you will encounter a crisis where, Ss know that you only use Cantonese when some important concepts are explained. They will pay full attention to the words you teach in Cantonese. They might not be paying much attention to the words you don’t teach in Cantonese.

- d. There is the third limitation. For translating words, you know that translated words cannot be used directly in English. You must have some collocations or some grammar constructions where you have to follow some rules. Sometimes, Ss only memorize the Chinese meaning and they use the ‘Chinese to English’ method which is entirely wrong. Let’s say ‘avoid’, ‘prevent’, these words, they have pretty much the same meaning, but Ss don’t know how to use them, or that they use them wrongly, they are due to the fact that they basically translate words from English to Chinese. So, there would be a crisis here.
 - e. To some extent, English teachers using direct translation from English to Cantonese is not beneficial to Ss’ English learning because English learning requires exposure. They should deduce some language uses by looking into the underlying rules. However, if the teachers ‘brutally’ translate all English words to Chinese words, Ss might lose a sense of language in what situation can they use a certain word? Is the word formal or informal? What field does this word appear in? Does this word appear in passive voice or active voice more? All these things would be gone if you only simply translate words from English to Chinese.
3. Research question 3 ((judicious use):
- a. I mainly taught some lower achieving Ss in the past so I used more Cantonese. I went to two schools, a primary school where Ss are higher achieving, so I used English basically.
 - b. especially for the Ss who do not have a great English foundation. They could not understand your English instructions, but for Cantonese, they could. I used full English in one lesson, and of course, the school allowed me to use full English in that lesson and let me teach the elite Ss from the lower band 3. Ss managed to follow what was delivered. The teacher who supervised me even believed that the English I used was too easy for them.