



HONG KONG ASSOCIATION FOR SELF-ACCESS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (HASALD) SEMINAR: PROF. NATE MING CURRAN

(HOW MUCH) DO STUDENTS PREFER NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHERS? INSIGHTS FROM ONLINE TUTORING PLATFORMS (OTPS)

Online tutoring platforms (OTPs) are digital marketplaces that connect language teachers and language learners for one-off lessons. Because they facilitate users to individually select an instructor from among a wide range of alternative choices, OTPs have the potential to offer significant insights into learners' preferences. In this talk, I will focus on the results of two survey experiments conducted with users of a popular OTP. The results indicate that while English learners prefer Western native speaker tutors to both Mainland tutors and Hong Kong tutors, Hong Kong tutors are preferred to Mainland tutors for English tutoring. The reverse is true for Putonghua tutoring, with Mainland tutors preferred to Hong Kong tutors. I discuss the implications of these findings and draw on interviews with tutors to discuss some of the strategies that non-native speaker tutors adopt to succeed on OTPs. I will conclude by discussing some of the broader implications of digitally-mediated for-profit language teaching.

Nate Ming Curran is an Assistant Professor of Intercultural Communication in the Department of English and Communication at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. His research into the platformization of language education has been supported by Hong Kong's Research Grants Council in the form of an Early Career Scheme (ECS) grant and a General Research Fund (GRF) grant. His research can be found in a wide variety of peer-reviewed journals, including: Applied Linguistics; Journal of Consumer Culture; Continuum; Journal of Sociolinguistics; TESOL Quarterly; Language and Intercultural Communication; and Information, Communication & Society.

Date:
17 April 2026
18:00-19:00

Venue: HHB926,
Department of English and Communication
PolyU Hung Hom Bay Campus

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