

Lexical Features of Hong Kong English

In Hong Kong English (HKE), there are a number of words which are

- a. borrowings from local languages (e.g. Cantonese)
- b. English lexical items adapted or created for the local situation

A. Borrowings from local languages

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| a. | <i>dimsum</i> | _____ | geomancy |
| b. | <i>cheongsam</i> | _____ | a red envelope containing money |
| c. | <i>mahjong</i> | _____ | foreigner (esp. Caucasian) |
| d. | <i>fengshui</i> | _____ | a game |
| e. | <i>kwailo</i> | _____ | a long woman's dress with slit sides |
| f. | <i>laisee</i> | _____ | tidbits, delicatessen |

B. English lexical items adapted or created for the local situation

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------|--|
| a. | <i>astronaut</i> | _____ | a person from mainland China with family ties in HK seeking permanent residence there |
| b. | <i>abode seeker</i> | _____ | a payment center |
| c. | <i>to play computer</i> | _____ | a monsoon drain |
| d. | <i>shroff</i> | _____ | a HK person who has emigrated overseas with his/her family, but returns to work in HK, and frequently flies between the two places |
| e. | <i>nullah</i> | _____ | to use the computer for recreational purposes |



C. Choose the correct HKE word for each of the following sentences.

1. Let's get some _____ for lunch.
2. The Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong has been criticized by some _____ practitioners for its sharp edges and its negative symbolism.
3. You can often see groups of men playing _____ in the parks on the weekend.
4. Chinese women will often wear red _____ on their wedding day to bring them good luck.
5. _____ are mainly presented at social and family gatherings such as weddings or on holidays such as the Lunar New Year. Their red color symbolizes good luck and is supposed to ward off evil spirits.
6. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government yesterday began to deport _____ back to the Chinese mainland as some of them filed charges against government departments for administrative misconduct.
7. While Hong Kong immigrant families consist of both parents living with children, Hong Kong _____ families consist of one or both parents living in Hong Kong, with the eldest child participating in decision making and care of siblings in the country of immigration.
8. Many Honk Kong streets are lined with _____ to prevent flooding.

