

**Towards a Bourdieuian Understanding of the South  
Asian Language Minorities' Language Acquisition  
in Hong Kong**

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By

Kam Yin WONG

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## **Abstract**

The inadequacy of Chinese language skills of the South Asian language minorities has raised concerns among educators and policymakers in recent years. Further to the notification given by the Equal Opportunities Commission to the Education Bureau of its concerns about the education of language-minority students, the provision of educational support to them became one of the priorities in the “Initiatives of the 2014 Policy Address” of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. This study adopts habitus as a research method to gain a deeper understanding on the South Asian language minorities’ language acquisition in Hong Kong.

Whilst there are a number of initiatives to enhance the teaching and learning of Chinese for language-minority students, in this study I work closely with a group of six language minorities who studied in and graduated from the most historical designated school in Hong Kong. In attempting to understand the complexities of language practices and strategies employed by the participants to cope with their language needs in Hong Kong, I draw heavily from Bourdieu’s notions of symbolic power, habitus, capital and field.

The study uncovers the familial and linguistic habitus of the participants. All of them were multilingual speakers with various degrees of proficiency. Socioeconomic status appeared to have an effect on the motive for the student participants to re/produce Chinese language as their cultural capital. Meanwhile, Chinese language in terms of Cantonese was much valued by the graduate participants when they had opportunities to interact with their Chinese counterparts after they had left the designated school.

The acquisition of Chinese language among the South Asian language minorities presents an interesting issue for those working in the educational field. Lacking primary familial and linguistic habitus of Chinese, the language minorities rely heavily and even entirely on the schools to help them cultivate their linguistic habitus of Chinese. I draw specifically from the relational notions of habitus and field to argue that the language minorities’ linguistic habitus of Chinese can only be inculcated effectively through exposures and immersion in arenas where the Chinese counterparts are located.

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## **Abbreviations**

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CUHK	Chinese University of Hong Kong
ESF	English Schools Foundation
EOC	Equal Opportunity Commission
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
MOI	Medium of Instruction
NCS	Non-Chinese Speaking
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PRC	People's Republic of China
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
VIP	Very Important Person

## **Prologue - My Personal and Professional Context**

In this prologue, I articulate my reflective narrative from the colonial time in Hong Kong which acts as an analogous backdrop to the entire study focusing on the language acquisition and practice of South Asian language minorities in post-colonial Hong Kong. Acknowledging that doctoral research is conducted within contexts, I construct this study within the context of my own personal and educational histories. I draw from experiences and events that combine to produce a partial story of how I came to acquire the English language in those colonial days. I recognise that the story presented here is conducted through my interpretative lens of research resulting in my interpretations and perspectives of the past and hence its partial nature. In producing this account of the trajectory of my experience as a researcher, I am interested in reflecting upon the cultural, historical, social and political influences that have informed my inculcation and actions in relation to language acquisition, language practice and further education.

## **An expedition in the British era**

I lived as a part of a language minority in Hong Kong in the 1980s. When most secondary schools adopted English as the medium of instruction (abbreviated as MOI), I spent my whole secondary level education in a Chinese school and had to take the Higher Level Examination instead of the Advance Level Examination, the result despite achieving merits, was often regarded as second-class. With a devalued education qualification and limited English skills, I was in a situation similar to the South Asian school leavers nowadays, and so my choice in tertiary education and employment was much constrained. With an understanding of Bourdieu's (1991) notion of symbolic power, I have come to realise that my previous subordinate Chinese schooling was legitimised as a product of domination under the British administration.

Adopting Bourdieu's (1986) fundamental concepts including 'habitus', 'field' and 'capital', I draw from my family values and the strategies employed in order to transmute or exchange one form of capital into another. At issue, on reflection, is how I came to combine and produce the narration on how I came to acquire the legitimated English language and to progress into tertiary education in the English-speaking regime.

### ***When East met West***

“Language cannot be analysed or understood in isolation from its cultural context and the social conditions of its production and reception” (Jenkins, 1992: 99).

I indicate my social position as a member of a language minority in the given historical and political climate by narrating the story of my family in which the English language was non-existent before my generation. Notwithstanding the absence of the familial reproduction system of English, being the coloniser’s language before the political handover, this piece of work examines the possibility of upward social mobility through aspiration, cultivation, strategising and effort directed towards my own development of English. The comparison that follows, between two political epochs, is elaborated in order to create a multi-layered scene as a backdrop for the stage set for an exploration of the South Asian language minorities’ language acquisition and practice issues that constitute the substance of my research.

### ***The inferior languages***

My late father’s first language was the Taishanese (台山話), a local dialect of the Guangdong province in Southern China. Occasionally, he soliloquized a few words in Russian which smoothed his sweet recollection of the old school days in Mainland China when the Sino-Russia relation was a positive one. To escape from the Great Chinese famine induced by a political movement, he left his hometown to take a

gamble to live in Hong Kong in the 1950s. In Bourdieu's terms the social field of my father was historically located and complex (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 102). With few qualifications and the lack of any language competence being valued in colonial Hong Kong, he maintained his living by accepting any manual job offers. On my mother's side, she is the sole survivor of her family during the Second World War. Being brought up by clans in Hong Kong, she managed to speak Cantonese as well as to read and write basic traditional Chinese characters. No family member from either of his or her side could speak or understand English.

For many new immigrants, language is a principal barrier in determining economic outcomes in terms of serving as a means in accumulating human capital and labour market opportunities (vide Casey and Dustmann, 2008; Posel and Casale, 2011). English, being the sole official and legitimate language of Hong Kong from 1883 to 1974, was a must for civil servant employment and it was almost a prerequisite for all decently paid jobs. Under the meritocratic education system in the earlier colonial days, the study of English was not free; people were required to pay tuition fees. Both of my parents were deprived of education opportunities with a financial implication, English to them was merely a distant 'high' language of the dominant foreigners and of a small circle of prosperous Chinese.

In colonial Hong Kong, English language was not only cultural capital that had

exchange value, it also constituted symbolic capital that served as an official and legitimate language to reinforce the colonial administration (Bourdieu, 1991: 43-45). People who possessed good English language ability would be recognised as allies and eventually be empowered to compete in the capitalised market. Those who lacked the legitimate language competency, just like my parents, were subjected to forms of suppression and in effect barred from any possible trajectory of upward social mobility leading to better living standards (Gao, 2011: 252). In my parents' mind, the English language was equivalent to power and a guarantee of living, while education was the only means for acquisition. They held high expectations and aspirations for their children and did their best for them to succeed through the available education system that they believed was a process leading to the construction, legitimisation and imposition of an official language (Bourdieu, 1991: 48).

### ***Position-takings***

My parents, especially my father, were deeply influenced by the doxa (Bourdieu, 1977: 167-168) of Confucius who held that education has a high status among traditional Chinese values. I believed that they were very much influenced by a frequently-heard Chinese proverb that “all jobs are low in status, except study, which is the highest” (萬般皆下品，唯有讀書高). In other words, my parents believed that fluency in English as a result of academic success could be achieved through hard

work and persistence. With the unchallengeable belief that education is not only important as a ladder up the social hierarchy, but also as training towards the better development of the whole person (Gow et al., 1996: 109), my parents did their best to start the education game by sending me to a highly competitive aided Catholic girls' primary school where English was the MOI. They were so determined that their children would fulfill ambitions they were unable to achieve due to the political and social circumstances that restricted their education chances and employment choices.

To prepare me for the admission examination, my parents mobilised their available resources by reducing their daily spending in order to hire a private tutor a year before to coach me to recite not only colours, shapes and objects in English but also the complicated multiplication table for calculation. Resembling the South Asian parents' situation, my parents lacked the language as the primary habitus inculcated in their childhoods (Bourdieu, 1990: 53) or through the secondary habitus of institutional learning (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 47) to provide direct assistance or supervision of my English language learning. But their aspirations and values of the Confucian educational philosophy lay emphasis upon malleability and the importance of self-improvement (Chen & Uttal, 1988: 351). These aspirations and values were deeply embodied within the behaviours and attitudes of my parents forming part of their habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 19-23). Their senses of the educational

game, served to drive them to employ a similar strategy to make an attempt to induce transformations in their children.

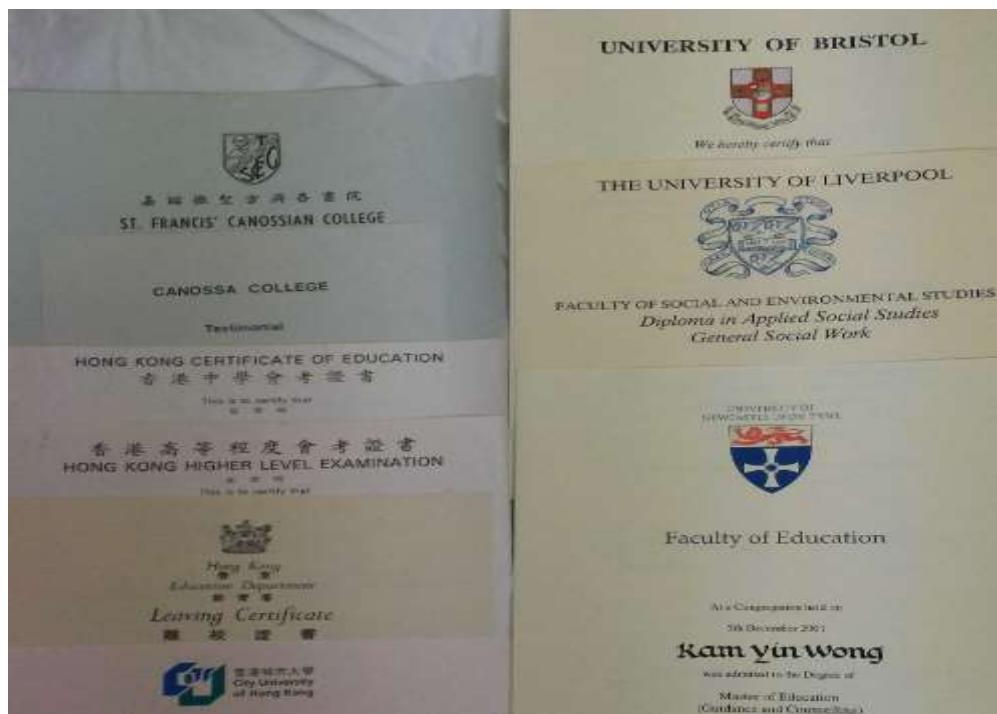
The Chinese philosophy of Confucius rejected categorization of human beings as good or bad, and stressed the potential for improvement through the creation of favourable environmental conditions (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992: 4-7). With this internal belief in the ultimate positive effects of hard work, my parents' strategised the practice that consisted in setting and achieving long-term positioning advantages involving efforts of two generations. In other words, they followed the practical logic (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 22) according to their senses of the game to narrow down their children's academic achievement gap through the employment of pragmatic strategies to concentrate on immediate manoeuvres in the rigid education system. Viewed through a Bourdieuan lens, my parents' educational values reflected an aspirational habitus that prompted and supported my own trajectory in the world of education.

### ***Settings of the Secondary Habitus - My Primary and Secondary Schools***

After much perspiration and tears, I was finally admitted into a high performing primary school. With little English language support during the six-years of primary school study, my academic performance was far from satisfactory. Subsequent to the completion of study at the primary school, I was rejected by a number of English

secondary schools for further study. Grateful to my mother's strategising to deploy her social resources in support of my education (Rollock et al., 2014: 2) by asking assistance from a neighbour who had close connections with a religious group, I was assisted and arranged to study in a better girls' school where Cantonese was adopted as the MOI. Although I was still much left behind in most subjects owing to my previous negative education experiences and low self-esteem, in the first year of my secondary level of study, I did surprisingly and comparatively well in the subject of English. Language being a form of cultural capital can be acquired in the absence of any deliberate inculcation and therefore quite unconsciously (Bourdieu 1986: 238).

The intervention from the primary school that used English as the MOI in fact enabled me to gain the cultural capital in terms of the English language ability, as distinct from of my family-based habitus. Being seen and empowered as a meritocrat, opportunities for academic and emotional support were offered by the school teachers who all contributed to my subsequent academic achievements in the secondary school education. Unexpectedly, the storage and accumulation of credentials as a form of cultural capital (as shown in Photo 1) would contribute to my eventual position as to progress into the doctorate level of study.



**Photo 1: My academic credentials as a form of cultural capital**

Habitus is described as “embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and thinking” (Bourdieu, 1977: 93-94). For the acquisition of the Chinese language among the South Asian language minority children, local studies (Hau, 2008; Hong Kong Unison, 2009, 2011) suggest that those children should be encouraged to attend local kindergartens as early as possible. Immersion in a Chinese-speaking kindergarten environment is believed to facilitate the children’s language adaptation when proceeding to primary and then secondary schools in Hong Kong. To interpret the above suggestion given in those studies, the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977: 93-94) is employed as detailed in the next chapter.

### ***Insights into Habitus and Capital - My Post-secondary Education***

In the mid-1980s, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (abbreviated as CUHK) was one of four institutions that provided a small number of aided higher education places for Chinese secondary school graduates consequent to the non-recognition of the Higher Level Examination in colonial Hong Kong. Although I was rejected by CUHK owing to high competition, I was taken in by the newly open City Polytechnic of Hong Kong (now renamed as the City University of Hong Kong), which used English as the MOI, for a sub-degree programme based on the merits gained in my secondary school education. Regarding my secondary level of education, I was glad to be awarded a trump card (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 98), that is, a Distinction grade in the English subject as the second language in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination whose results were widely recognised. Yet I have to admit that I was rather weak in communicative English as the said syllabus did not include any training on this aspect.

Experiencing a taste of the power and market value of institutional cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986: 284), which was the academic qualification and concomitant credential issued by the authorised school and the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority, I was awakened with a sense of reality that a social ladder did exist and one could ascend it through not only adequate equipment with cultural capital in terms of the English language, but also employment of suitable educational

strategies from the very beginning which may traverse generations. Through the lens created by the reading of Bourdieu's habitus (*ibid*), I have become to understand the role and importance of one's own value to perceive how the family value system can make an impact on the language minority students' educational behaviours and attitudes.

### ***The dominant language***

I was anxiously awaiting the final year result and unclear about my future. Having an aspiration to cultivate the first university graduate of the family, my parents encouraged me, by saying that they could lend me their savings to further study in England, which was considered to be a very expensive yet prestigious game for a family with relatively limited resources at their disposal. With limited choice available in Hong Kong then, I took their offer and started to look into the universities that would recognise my qualification issued by colonial Hong Kong. During the long and complicated application process, I developed a strong urge to consolidate my confidence. I did something which ultimately constituted a trajectory interruption (Byrom, 2008: 4) which was an unexpected event in my social and educational trajectory. What I did was to make an ascetic expedition to explore India and Pakistan through the Silk Road of China with the savings gained from my part-time jobs. In the

late 1980s those places were as remote as a brave new world to Hongkongers. India and Pakistan, which both had a similar history of British colonial administration, were the places that I could constantly practice my broken English; meanwhile it could be understood in a realistic communal manner. The consequential feeling of rebirth not only increased my self-confidence but also enriched my portfolio with the symbolic efficacy of independence (Carrington & Luke, 1997: 97) in my language journey.

Another significant trajectory interruption was when the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bristol offered me an undergraduate place to study the social policy programme after seeing my portfolio and having an interesting face-to-face conversation conducted in English about India during her visit to Hong Kong. The possession of a degree itself did not prompt me to enter into the professional job market, but it was the ownership of symbolic capital, that is being a graduate from a leading university, actually facilitated my sequential education trajectory in Britain.

Planning to be a qualified social worker and to earn my living after spending sufficient time in studying for an academic degree, I strategised to get a place in the competitive social work programmes in England where the qualification was being recognised both in England and Hong Kong. Positioning myself as a graduate from the University of Bristol and an ethnic minority, I was eventually selected from hundreds of applicants to attend an interview. Subsequently, I was offered one of the

small number of places to study at the University of Liverpool upon the implementation of affirmative policy to promote equal opportunity. In the meantime, I was offered a scholarship by the colonial Hong Kong Government to study in Liverpool based on the merits and cultural capital gained and accumulated during my previous education.

### **Initial Reflection**

I humbly acknowledge that my education trajectory is complex and multi-layered, and my opportunities in higher education during the colonial time are not often associated with the language minority students in contemporary Hong Kong where the political and economic practices are ever-changing. Whilst the political landscape is different to when I acquired the dominant English language, I am interested in discovering the habitus and factors that relate to the South Asian language minorities in language practice and acquisition particularly the new dominant Chinese language under the Chinese administrative regime.

In this study, I avoid the term ‘non-Chinese Speaking’ (abbreviated as NCS) which has been used by Hong Kong’s Education Bureau, but adopt the inclusive term ‘language minority’ because certain numbers of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong do speak and understand Cantonese to varying extent though it may not be their

mother-tongue (Carmichael, 2009: 8). In sharing my story, I am attempting to improve the understanding and to discover habitus and the relational characteristics of the field and capital concepts that ensured my personal transformation (Bourdieu, 1996: 1; Byrom, 2008: 4).

## **Chapter Summary**

My personal contextual information illustrates how the acquisition of valuable cultural capital of the English language was conducted through the practical logic of one particular education game that dominated the colonial era in Hong Kong. I have shared that my parents' familial habitus in terms of aspirations and values were core to induce transformation in their daughter. Having established my own story, this thesis builds from a desire to understand how the new dominant Chinese language is acquired by the South Asian language minorities under the new political regime.

In exploring a small number of South Asian language minorities, I attempt to examine the characteristics of their familial and language habitus in Hong Kong. In addition, I want to look into the motives and/or factors that relate to their language acquisition in the post-colonial era. To explore the relational concepts of habitus and field, I am interested in exploring the language acquisition situations of three designated school students spending certain periods of their time in the confined

school environment and three graduates who worked or further studied together with their Chinese counterparts in the society. Before moving onto the next chapter, I detail the structure of the thesis.

**Chapter 1** starts with the public concern on inequalities encountered by South Asian language minority students in education as a result of lacking adequate Chinese language skills under the new Chinese administration. Amongst the growing body of literature and academic study featuring the lack of Chinese language skills among language minority students in Hong Kong, I seek to challenge a number of studies conducted after the transformation of administration in Hong Kong that has positioned the South Asian language minorities into a dualism in which they are almost automatically presumed as failures whenever they are studied under the Chinese political regime.

**Chapter 2** adopts Bourdieu's (1991) notion of legitimate language to look into the inequality phenomenon experienced by the contemporary South Asian language minorities which has taken place within the new Chinese administrative political context. I also employ the thinking tools of habitus and capital within a number of fields: the familial-cultural and socio-political contexts to widen perspectives to

understand the language acquisition choices made by the South Asian language minorities.

**Chapter 3** details the research methodology of this qualitative based study. It discusses my epistemological and methodological approach to the study. I articulate the way I understand human action and focus on habitus as a determinant of action. In this regard, I justify why I have chosen to adopt a phenomenological hermeneutic/interpretivist approach within the study. I also detail the sample, scope, methods and analytical approach.

**Chapter 4** is the first of two findings chapters in which I explore the characteristics of the participants' habitus and their transformations to adapt into the local cultural and political contexts. Regarding their linguistic habitus, I have found that all participants are multilingual speakers with various degrees of proficiency. Moreover, English is the sole common language used by all participants despite the fact that the status of the Chinese language has been raised after 1997. I argue that this may be attributed to the repercussions of cultural imperialism.

**Chapter 5** is the second chapter of findings. Based on Mosaic analysis result, I have

found that higher socioeconomic status can be a buffer against the motive for some of the participants to produce or reproduce Chinese language as their capital. Looking into the inculcation of the linguistic habitus of Chinese in different fields (within and outside the designated school), I show that Cantonese is valued only when the participants can strongly identify themselves as Hongkongers and when they have opportunities to employ the language to interact with their local Chinese peers, all these being experiences which have happened mostly outside the designated school. I thus argue that the current educational policy to single-out language minority students from their Chinese counterparts in acquiring the Chinese language violates the practical logic of immersion.

**Chapter 6** collates the main issues that have arisen from the study. I reflect on the present practices and arrangements of designated schools for the absence of collaboration to eliminate the educational inequality encountered by the language minority students. I argue that social and cultural integration to provide welcoming immersion environments should be prioritised in all schools and in the Hong Kong community. The new knowledge I am contributing will be presented in this chapter too.

In the **Epilogue**, I narrate my reflexivity and reflection on the study and what I have learnt throughout this five year journey.

## **Chapter 1 Exploring Language Minorities**

This chapter articulates the Chinese language acquisition issues of the South Asian language minorities in contemporary Hong Kong and set out the purpose of the present study. I outline the theoretical lens that facilitates my understanding of the political and social pattern of language inequality.

## **South Asian Language Minorities in Hong Kong**

Among 451,183 ethnic minorities constituting 6.4% of the whole population in Hong Kong, Indians (6.3%), Pakistanis (4.0%) and Nepalese (3.7%) formed the largest local South Asian ethnic groups in 2011 (Census and Statistics Department, 2013). The reported numbers are not a simple coincidence, but they are historically constructed as a product of British colonialism. In Hong Kong, South Asians refer to people originating from the Indian subcontinent being hired or encouraged by the East India Company or the British Empire to take risks in settling in Hong Kong during the colonial period (Fisher *et al*, 2007; Knowles and Harper, 2009). 'South Asian' is the term usually confined to people from lands that associated with those old colonial days, which are today the nations of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka as well as Nepal (*ibid*).

As compared to the 38.2% of the whole population in 2011, there were only 25.95% of ethnic minorities aged 15 and over studying full-time post-secondary course (Census and Statistics Department, 2011: 59). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established the Experimental World Literacy Program in 1966 and characterized literacy as being a fundamental human right (UNESCO, 2008). The Program for International Student Assessment (abbreviated as PISA) proposes a definition of 'Literacy' as "An individual's capacity

to understand, use and reflect on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society" (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006: 46). This definition acknowledges that one benefit literacy may confer is the ability to participate in society (Keefe & Copeland, 2011: 93).

A survey initiated by the Equal Opportunity Commission (abbreviated as EOC) further reveals that South Asian students accounted for 3.2 % (5452 people) of primary school pupils but dropped to only 1.1% (1826 people) of senior secondary students and 0.59% (98 people) of tertiary education students (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2011: 2 ). This under-representation in local higher education catches the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (2013) where the situation of the South Asian language minorities has been of paramount concern. The educational issue of the South Asian language minorities eventually has become one of the priorities for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, as evidenced in the 'Initiatives of the 2014 Policy Address – Support for Ethnic Minorities' (Chief Secretary for Administration's Office and relevant Bureaux, 2014).

Inequalities and marginalization encountered by South Asian students in education as a result of illiteracy or partial literacy in terms of having inadequate Chinese language skills in writing and reading, listening and speaking under the new

Chinese administration have attracted intensive academia and public concern (vides: Chan, 2002; Loper, 2004; Poon, 2004; Ku et al., 2005; Carmichael, 2009; Gao, 2011, 2012; Kennedy, 2012; Law & Lee, 2012, 2013).

The term ‘linguistic minority’ appeared for the first time in Hong Kong in 2009 and Carmichael argued that ethnic minorities and linguistic minorities were not necessarily synonymous (2009: 6-8). Carmichael critiqued the term as an inaccurate as well as discriminatory description of South Asian students, whose first language was not Chinese as Non-Chinese Speaking (abbreviated as NCS), because many of them did speak some Cantonese. Focusing on the positive aspect of the South Asian students’ multilingualism, I decide to employ the term ‘South Asian language minorities’ to describe the participants whose first language is not Chinese, in this study.

### **Bridging the Research Gap**

Acknowledging that literacy is a right and not a privilege, Loper (2004) was the first academic in Hong Kong who attempted to show her legal concern about the educational right of the minority groups. Through documentation and cases compiled of potentially discriminatory treatment towards ethnic minority students in post-colonial Hong Kong, she recommended a real commitment to prohibiting

discriminatory treatment to inform policy and law makers going forward. Carmichael (2009) later provided a picture of the problems faced by linguistic minority students in Hong Kong from the legal perspective. She criticised the new Chinese administration for failing to provide discrimination-free education for South Asian linguistic minorities in Hong Kong.

Ku *et al*, (2005) explored the difficulties faced by ethnic minorities in two local designated secondary schools. Recommendations were made on policy changes and improvements in educational opportunities, the role of teachers and social workers, curriculum and cultural aspects (*ibid*, 95-101). However, the major stakeholder, that is the language minority students, were being ignored in the recommendation list as if they were unable to speak for themselves and unrelated to the issue.

Cunanan (2012) conducted a contrasting study, which attempted to analyse the influences of educational language policies concerning South Asians. In spite of the fact that qualitative methodology was employed to examine the language policy, the curriculum and the school practices in the above study, the debate and recommendation unavoidably focused on the education and language policies whereas the language minority students' voices were ignored.

The language policy in Hong Kong has shifted to trilingualism to speak fluent Cantonese, Putonghua and English, and biliteracy to master written Chinese and

English since the handover in 1997 (Evans, 2013). In a research report on the education of South Asian groups in Hong Kong conducted by Ku and his colleagues (2005), the majority of the South Asian participants thought that they were poor at listening and speaking, reading and writing when asked about their Chinese language proficiency. Notably, these ethnic groups' underachievement of Chinese language skills is often held to be the main cause of their low socioeconomic status against the sociopolitical context of Hong Kong (Ke & Tucker, 2016: 4). Improving South Asian students' Chinese proficiency in terms of listening and speaking, reading and writing is hence of utmost significance (*ibid*: 5)

I am aware of and reject the idea that the world is construed simply as a 'spectacle' for academic interpretation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 39) as the above research studies seem to indicate. Instead, the world should be seriously regarded as posing a series of concrete problems affecting the lives of people living in Hong Kong that deserve practical solutions (*ibid*). However, the common denominator of the research studies identified above, in particular those concerned with South Asian language minority students, was a predominant focus on external factors. The relational forces between those factors which interacted with the participants were omitted from the perspective of objectivism suggested by Bourdieu (1991: 12). Although such studies are relevant and useful to understand the many challenges

faced by students who are members of language minority, and the origin of their educational challenges, the language minority students were denied a voice and put in a powerless position with little or no control over the elusive problems in Chinese language acquisition. In this case, the major stakeholder, namely the language minorities, seemed to be detached from choices and solutions that might possibly be initiated by them. In this study, I attempt to challenge a number of studies conducted over the past eighteen years that have positioned the South Asian language minorities into a traditional dualism, according to which they were almost automatically presumed as failures under the proclaimed unfavourable education system.

I understand the importance of possessing the societal-valued language abilities as cultural capital facilitating social interaction and exchange in the commercialised market. The current educational landscape and language policy differ from when I was a language-minority student under the British rule. Upon my experience and realisation that habitus is pivotal to my relative success in the educational field, the questions that I seek to explore are an attempt to understand language practice particularly the Chinese language acquisition among the South Asian language minorities. Chinese language skills in this research refer to the competence in speaking Cantonese while reading and writing traditional Chinese characters in the

Hong Kong context. I thus pose two main research questions for this study:

**Question 1:** What are the characteristics of the familial and linguistic habitus of the

South Asian language minorities in Hong Kong?

**Question 2:** What are the factors that affect the South Asian language minorities'

production and reproduction of Chinese language as their cultural capital?

### **Language and Symbolic Power**

“Language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power... Competence implies the power to impose reception” (Thompson, 1984, 46-47).

Although this study focuses on language acquisition, it also explores the impact of political power on language practice, reflecting of Bourdieu’s work and critique on the production and reproduction of legitimate language. I utilise Bourdieu’s concepts here, to illustrate that language is a mechanism of power and the way that language is recognised as legitimate through the education game. In exploring the development of official languages in Hong Kong, I refer to Bourdieu’s notion of language and symbolic power which presents the language landscape and explains the subtle discrimination against those language minorities whose cultural, economic and linguistic backgrounds are different from those of the dominant (Blackledge, 2000: 4).

### ***Invisible Power***

Bourdieu contends that linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 142). Linguistic relations are constituted through utterances, making people see and believe, confirming or transforming their vision of the world. This in turn perpetuates a social structure favoured by and serving the interests of those people who are already dominant (Bourdieu, 1991: 70). Also, the relations are exercised on markets which enable actors to convert one form of capital into another (Bourdieu & Boltanski 1977: 61-69) and social agents do not take into account the totality of the structure of powers that is present in the exchange, hence it is invisible (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 143). Very often, the power maintains its effect through the misrecognition of power relations through institution systems, in particular education (*ibid*: 168).

Before 1997 in Hong Kong, the superposed bilingualism or diglossic language policy, with English being treated as the high status language while Chinese was a low-status subordinate language, was employed during the British colonial era in Hong Kong (Poon, 2004: 54; Goa, 2011: 251-252). Despite the small number of British as opposed to the large Chinese population living in Hong Kong, English enjoyed a supreme status in the colony while Chinese could not compete with English even after it was made a co-official language in 1974 (Poon, 2004: 54; Hu, 2007:

85-87). To sustain the high status of English institutionally so as to enhance power and influence on the subordinate groups, the British colonial government made mastery of English the prerequisite for access to the civil service, higher education and British-based professional-qualification examinations such as accountancy, medicine and engineering (Hu, 2007: 87). English mastery became a major criterion for the selection of local Chinese as well as other ethnic minorities into the elite group in colonial Hong Kong. As a result, English was used in high status work situations and hence is considered the language of power and educational and socio-economic advancement in the area (De Mejía, 2002: 192).

Emphasizing the use of English in all economic and official affairs, the lingua franca of spoken Cantonese and written Chinese changed to an inferior language at home and in social communication by the majority of the Chinese population. Much of the population of Hong Kong deeply believed and thus misrecognised that English was an essential tool for upward mobilisation (Hu, 2007: 87-90). My family and I belonged to a small group of Chinese people who tried hard to acquire English as cultural capital for potential capital exchange through participation into the long term education game in those colonial days.

### ***Reunification and Stratification***

Language can be the instrument par excellence of social integration, as an instrument of knowledge and communication. Bourdieu argues that such systems make possible consensus on the sense of the social world, so making a fundamental contribution toward reproducing the social order (Bourdieu, 1991: 166). Functioning as an instrument of domination, the dominant culture contributes to the real integration of the dominant class by ensuring immediate communication among all its members and distinguishing them from other stratifications. Individuals who cannot master or refuse to utter the language of the dominant class may experience potential isolation and even segregation. As a result, an official language is used to integrate society as a whole as well as demobilise the dominated classes through legitimisation of the designated languages as distinction tools. Bourdieu thus addresses the relation of an official language to the imposition of political unity in an artful way (*ibid*: 45-46).

When over 93% (6.83 million) of the local population is Chinese (Census and Statistics Department, 2013: 7), the power game enables the Chinese language to become the dominant language during the new Chinese regime. Under the symbolic system, language is power and language education is both the medium and the message (Goa, 2011: 252). Through a Bourdieuan lens, educational systems play a decisive role in the process, leading to the construction, legitimisation and imposition

of an official language (Bourdieu, 1991: 48-49). Education policymakers try all means to devalue the previous dominant language by imposing a new medium of instruction in schools. As a result, the educational system, imposes recognition of the Chinese language as the new legitimate language, becomes a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 15).

Since the handover in 1997, the instrument of the language system has shifted the language policy to ‘biliteracy and trilingualism’ while the Chinese medium of instruction policy has been adopted to help Chinese regain symbolic power in the form of knowledge and communication. The ‘biliteracy and trilingualism’ policy is characterised as post-colonial, representing the features of the blooming economic power of China and thus naturally recognised as pragmatic and legitimate. Individuals who possess trilingual skills are naturally in advantageous positions in which these changing language policies create changes in symbols of power (Goa, 2011: 254). The local South Asian language minorities, who have inadequate Chinese language skills across generations, are hence prone to suffer from the biliteracy and trilingualism policy.

### **Implications for the South Asian Language Minorities**

Through a Bourdieuan lens, the possession of the dominant language

competence as cultural capital symbolises and underlies social, economic and political advantages. For those who are placed in positions of subjugation within the new hegemonic order and lacking such capital are doomed to be subjects of struggles. Bourdieu thus argues that the possession of the valued linguistic capital is associated with the acquisition and use of other forms of capital and eventually this empowers people possessing such capital in the struggle for social status and recognition (Goa, 2011: 119).

The English MOI as an instrument of knowledge and communication was once adopted to fulfill the political function as instruments of legitimization of domination. The English education policy produced the dynamics of cultural assimilation and facilitated British colonial governance, within which South Asians had the social status of British subjects that they were entitled to full British nationality. Being allowed and facilitated to attain English competence as a source of symbolic power and symbolic capital in the elite schools, the South Asians enjoyed a certain degree of social mobility during the colonial era. Therefore, South Asians who succeeded in acquiring English competence as their cultural capital, especially those who excelled in the British colonial education system, chose to seek opportunities in colonial Hong Kong, where English was then more supreme, and they were just like ‘fish in the water’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127).

The year before the handover of the Hong Kong sovereignty, English was the MOI in over 80% of the schools at secondary level (Dickson & Cumming, 1996: 42). Upon the implementation of nationalism is largely reduced to approximately 30% (114 schools) while the rest has to adopt the Chinese language as the MOI (Poon, 2004: 58). In addition to a satisfactory grade in the subject of Chinese as part of the prerequisite for admission into local universities in 1997, the South Asian language minorities are disadvantaged within the order of domination, gradually and finally being excluded from higher education in Hong Kong.

On the employment level, English competence brought competitive advantages and its proficiency was used to be the sole-language prerequisite for civil service as well as other well-paid employment under the British administration. Indians (now called as South Asians), were brought to Hong Kong during the colonial rule to work in the police force and British army-related jobs to facilitate the British administration. They could enjoy a certain degree of social mobility because English was used in their workplaces (Goa, 2011: 253). However, the implementation of the Chinese mother-tongue language policy in effect forces all new civil service recruits to recognise the necessity of gaining a pass in the Chinese Language in addition to the English standard since 1997. Such requirements have in effect halted the South Asians from following in their parents' footsteps to become civil servants in Hong Kong for

stable living as well as opportunities for upward social mobility. The South Asian language minorities are not only manipulated within the orders of domination constituted by the Chinese rule, but also exposed to symbolic violence which is being misrecognised as legitimate within the education system (Bourdieu, 1998: 103).

### **Chapter Summary**

Whilst language can be taken merely as a method of communication, it is actually a mechanism of power. The change of MOI in schools and the substantial rise of the Chinese language as an official language have created profound impact on the language minorities' education and employment. In the next chapter, I will detail Bourdieu's set of thinking tools and the use of the tools to understand the education inequality of the South Asian language minorities.

## **Chapter 2 Conceptual Framework**

I refer to Bourdieu's notion of habitus in relation to capital and field to explain how the language practice of language minorities' can be shaped or delimited. I draw upon these notions to explain and illustrate the phenomenon of the South Asian language minorities under the Chinese administrative era.

## **The Thinking Tools**

The research employs Bourdieu's habitus as an analysis tool and as a research method, similar to a number of other studies that explore social injustice in education and in society (vide Reay, 1998, 2004; Mills & Gales, 2007; Byrom, 2008; Harrits, 2011). In seeking to explore the two research questions, I refer to Bourdieu's notion of habitus in relation to capital and field to explain how one's language practice can be shaped or delimited in accordance with the position of the speaker. As such, it provides the conceptual framework through which I have understood my own journey and that of the language minorities in Hong Kong.

### ***Habitus, Capital and Field***

In order to provide sociological explanations for the struggles of the South Asian language minorities in the invisible site of domination, I refer to Bourdieu's theoretical concepts or thinking tools for answers, including: Habitus, Capital and Field.

### ***The Notion of Habitus***

"Habitus is a socialized subjectivity"  
(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 126)

The notion of habitus is powerful in a way that it provides space to examine the intersection of biography and history in seeking to comprehend human interventions.

In this study, it is about the inculcation of the South Asian language minorities' linguistic habitus.

Habitus is a set of acquired dispositions. Training and life experiences instill in an individual's new abilities, categories and desire that are specific to a particular cosmos or situation. It holds that practical mastery operates beneath the level of consciousness and discourse in which mental understanding is of little help, and it indicates that sets of dispositions vary by social location and trajectory in which individuals with different life experiences will have gained varied ways of thinking, feeling and action (Swartz, 1997: 101).

Furthermore, habitus is a way of describing the embodiment of social structures and social history such as social stratification and culture in individuals. The embodied process of internalisation of objective structures, such as cultural value and language, are not only a mental process but a corporeal one as well. The chances for success and failure common to social agents are thus incorporated in bodily form as well as in cognitive dispositions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133; Swartz, 1997: 107). In other words, it is the embodiment of memory, which is crystallized through practical interaction with the structure of the environmental surround (Throop & Murphy, 2002: 188).

Also, habitus results from early socialisation experiences in which external

structures are internalised. The individual's earlier experiences or primary habitus, inculcated in childhood, tends to be more durable than the secondary habitus or institutional habitus, which may be learned later through education (Power, 1999: 49). Human action is practical because it is carried out with a tacit, informal and taken-for-granted degree of awareness (Swartz, 2002: 62). Thus game playing such as language acquisition requires not just knowledge of rules but a feel of the language or a practical sense for learning through time and experience. The social agent is never perfect at that and it takes prolonged immersion to develop it. This sense is habitus (Calhoun, 2003: 292-293). In Bourdieu's word, habitus can be summarised as:

"[a] system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

Habitus is a hopeful concept because it is a product of history and an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 133). In the case of the South Asian language minority children, about 86% of them attended kindergarten compared to 94.7% of the whole population in Hong Kong (Ku, *et al*, 2005: 9). Even if the language minority

children attend kindergarten, they may not have learned Chinese or they may not have been able to pick up the language as easily as their Chinese counterparts since parental involvement or the parents' Chinese language skills are very limited or completely missing (*ibid*). The primary habitus for these children to acquire the language of Chinese as their linguistic capital within their families is apparently absent. Subsequently, these children can only rely on the secondary or institutional habitus through education to develop their Chinese language skills.

### ***The Notions of Capital and Field***

Bourdieu extends capital beyond the traditional ideology of monetary exchange and economic sphere. He proposes three more capitals other than economic capital which are cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital. Economic capital is a fundamental one to other capitals in that it may alter one's possessions of cultural and social as well as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986: 44-47).

Cultural capital refers to assets such as competencies, qualifications and skills which enable social agents to mobilise cultural authority. Embodied cultural capital consists of both the consciously acquired and the passively inherited properties usually from the family through socialisation, of culture and traditions (*ibid*: 47). Language skills or linguistic capital is an example of embodied cultural capital which links to the concepts of fields and habitus. It is not transmissible but rather it is

acquired over time as it impresses itself upon one's habitus, so becoming more attentive to or primed to receive similar influences. Meanwhile, symbolic capital is based on prestige and honour which is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual. Social capital accrues with durable networks of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 119).

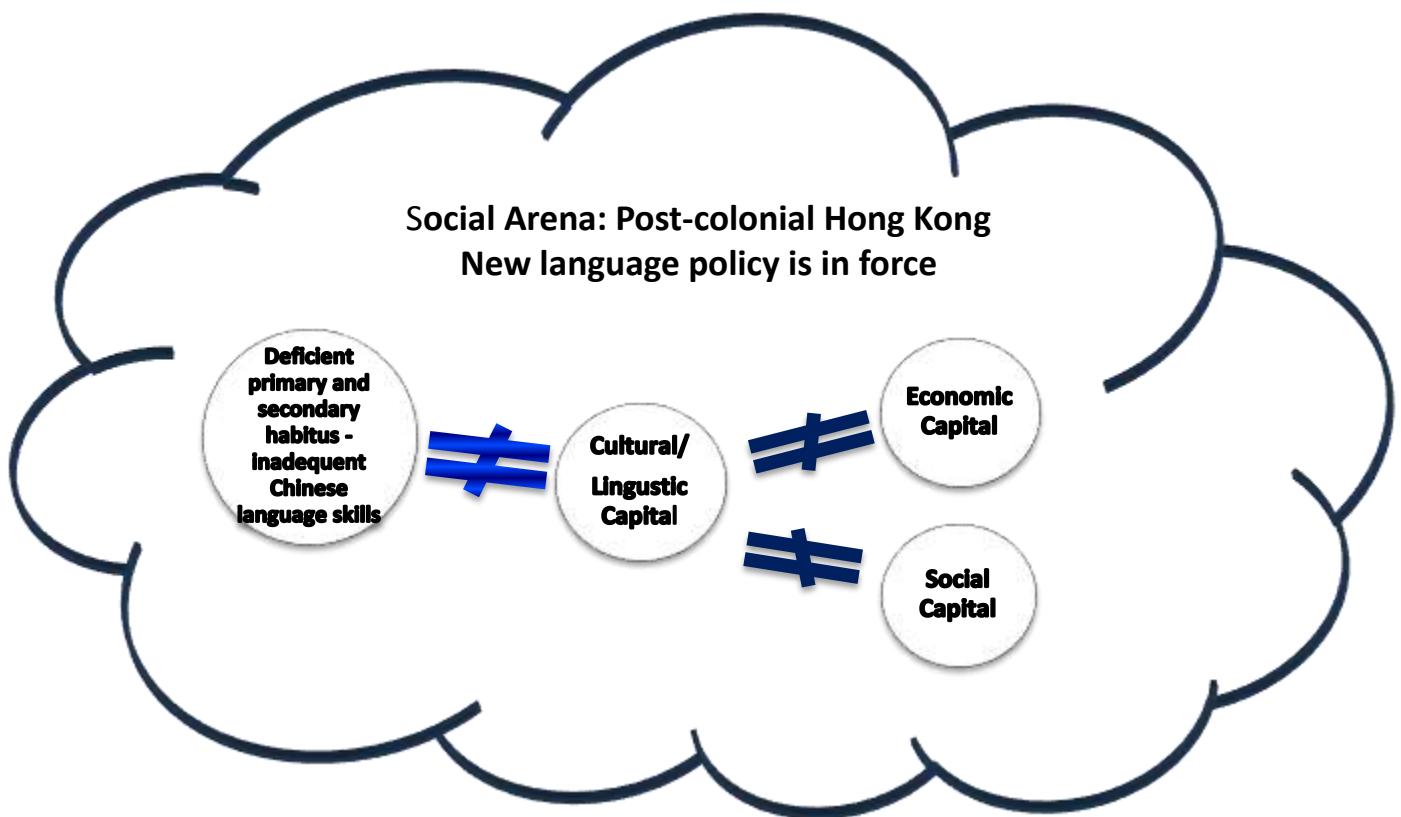
Bourdieu conceptualises field as a setting in which agents and their social positions are located. More specifically, a field is a social arena of struggle over the appropriation of certain species of capital. To think in terms of field is thus to think relationally (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 96). Those who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage. In this regard, a capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field. It confers a power over the field, over the materialised or embodied instruments of production or reproduction whose distribution constitutes the very structure of the field which defines the function of the field and thereby over the profits engendered in it (*ibid*:101).

In the case of language acquisition, the acquisition of linguistic capital is identical to the formation of habitus. It is an integration of mind and body harmoniously adapted to specialised fields and transposable beyond them (Grenfell, 2008: 110). Different uses of language tend to reiterate the respective positions of

each participant. Linguistic interactions are manifestations of the participants' respective positions in social space and categories of understanding. The language one uses is designated by one's relational position in a field or social space in which this determines who has a right to be listened to, to interrupt and to ask questions.

In accordance to Bourdieu's practical logic, good education for cultural capital means speaking a dominant language that acts as linguistic capital in order to help get a good job which pays well for economic capital, and gains prestige for symbolic capital. In this regard, I thus contend that the Chinese language acquisition situation encountered by the South Asian language minorities is originated to their secondary habitus not tie up with transformation within the domination field. Consequently, it halts their capital exchange and eventually affects their upward social mobility. My argument of the language minorities' Chinese language acquisition is represented in

Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** The South Asian language minorities' capital exchange is halted due to inadequate Chinese language skills

### Using Thinking Tools to Understand Symbolic Violence in Education

Schools legitimise the worldview of the dominant by establishing acceptance of their norms, hence the pathway to educational attainment, economic success, and social mobility. Linguistic competence thus is not a simple skill but a statutory required ability. The more official the linguistic market, the more it conforms to the norms of the dominant language, and the more the market is dominated by the dominance of the legitimate linguistic competence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 145-146).

The Hong Kong language policy has brought about a subsequent significant redistribution of linguistic capital, a subset of the cultural capital, upon the status of spoken Cantonese and written Chinese, which have been upgraded as an official language. For South Asian language minorities who are not positioned in ways that give them access to the linguistic capital that would otherwise enable them to study or to work abroad in countries adopt with English as an official and national language, they have to rely on the local education system and the employment market to meet their financial needs, where the Chinese linguistic capital is now valued.

The formation of embodied linguistic capital, the Chinese language skills referred to in this study, entails the prolonged exposure to a specialised habitus or immersion environment in which Cantonese should be widely spoken while traditional Chinese characters should be read and written for daily usage. When the South Asian language minority children fail to cultivate the valued Chinese linguistic habitus through their families, they have to turn to and rely heavily on the education system - schools then become a mechanism for inculcation into the education field.

The British colonial government established designated schools to cater for students of Indian diaspora in order to reproduce allied elites who could master the mimicry type of English language. Although the Education Bureau officially stopped using the term designated for these schools in 2013-2014, the nature and contexts of

these schools remain the same (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2013). In consideration of the Chinese language which has been upgraded as a valuable capital, the designated school system has been seen as a field of exclusion and segregation within which South Asian language minority students are isolated from the majority of their Chinese counterparts and thus unable to learn Chinese through immersion. Even if there are Chinese students in designated schools, South Asian language minority students are very often arranged to study the Chinese subject in separate classes in which they are delimited to interact with Cantonese speakers and therefore unable to cultivate the Chinese linguistic habitus.

Under Chinese nationalism, education is ruled by the dominant's values that are legitimised by governmental intentions to shape policies aligned with political and economic drivers in post-colonial Hong Kong. In regard to the language issue, the dominant inherit and/or acquire the appropriate cultural capital (that is, Chinese culture and language), social capital (that is, connections), and habitus (that is, Chinese language skills) that permits them to easily fit in, particularly in schools (that is, field). Schools are designed to perpetuate inequitable power relations and to reward the dominant's capital such as the ability to communicate in Cantonese. In contrast, the cultural capital of the dominated and other marginalised groups is devalued. Social agents such as the South Asian language minorities, who have gained little

political power in Hong Kong history, have differing habitus' and thus will discard their ideologies in favour of capital values to move up in dominant status. When the new Chinese rulers and policymakers insist that success and achievement will be earned by those who become most like the dominant group, the South Asian language minorities are subjected to experience an understated and unrecognised form of symbolic violence in the present education system that mainly serves the dominant.

### **Chapter Summary**

Whilst education is traditionally perceived as a place for cultivating knowledge, this study has shown that it is a place to produce and reproduce inequality when the South Asian language minorities are marginalised in its language-in-education policy. To explore the habitus of the South Asian language minorities and broaden the views that affect their reproduction of Chinese language as their cultural and linguistic capital, I now move on to articulate the methodological approach before I detail the research setting and participants.

## **Chapter 3 Methodological Approach**

In this chapter, I detail the selection of the South Asian language minority participants and the reasons for their inclusion in the study. Providing an overview of the epistemological orientation utilised in this study, I outline the methods employed to collect the participants' stories. I also provide an overview of the analytical processes involved in understanding the participants' language acquisition processes and practices.

## **My Epistemological Stance**

I have perceived strengths of qualitative research and commit to employ it to achieve rigour and derive multiple truths from a phenomenological hermeneutic stance in this research (Hamel, 1997: 99). I believe that the multiplicity of perspectives (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004: 16) is one of the features of human experience. To my understanding, human beings do not have a single, central, dominant point of view. Rather, a plurality of perspectives and points of views do exist. Bourdieu objects to the presumption that an interviewer must necessarily be socially distant and culturally different from interviewees (Karadağ, 2011: 41-42).

Indeed, when studying suffering, the contributing field researchers should be intimately familiar with the persons and positions that they studied (*ibid*). Performing an experiment in qualitative methodology in sociology, Bourdieu demonstrates a ‘democratisation of the hermeneutic posture’ in this case the interpretation can be grasped immediately (*ibid*: 100-101).

## ***Habitus as a Research Method***

Obtaining inspiration from Rapport and Lomsky-Feder (2002), Reay (2004), and Byrom (2008) to employ ‘habitus’ as a methodological tool to use in educational research, I attempted to become a pioneer here in Hong Kong in adopting habitus as a method to analyse the familial and linguistic habitus particularly its inculcation and

transformation of the South Asian language minorities in this research. That is, I have used ‘habitus’ as a manner of asking questions in the context of the data rather than just as a concept to apply to data analysis (Reay, 2004: 431).

The notion of habitus accounts for what is the truth of human actions (Wacquant, 1996: 220) that enables individuals to draw on transformative and constraining courses of action (*ibid*). It is a collection of mostly subconscious dispositions, which an individual initially acquires in early childhood via familial interactions and which are then constantly modified by subsequent life experiences (Devine, 2012: 3). An individual’s dispositions are expressed as their thoughts, preferences, beliefs and aspirations, concerning themselves and the structure of the social world around them (*ibid*: 3). Then the dispositions influence how a person would behave in a particular situation.

Reay (2004) argues that the same habitus can lead to very different practices and stances depending on the state of the field and an individual’s positioning within it. She also argues that habitus can be viewed as a complex internalised core from which everyday experiences emanate. Choice is thus the heart of habitus in which it is bounded by the framework of opportunities as well as constraints the individual finds himself/herself in certain external circumstances (*ibid*: 435). The generation of the logic of practice is the interaction of habitus, cultural capital and field while the

habitus is the principle of most modes of practice (Bourdieu, 1990: 65). Bourdieu allows for the experience and understanding of an individual to underpin a wider explanation of an educational phenomenon, allowing the explanation of the particular to elucidate the general (*ibid*). Therefore, insights from even a relatively small sample of participants can still be used to understand the language minorities' behaviours.

Habitus has mostly been used as a method to understand inequalities within education that continue to produce unequal outcomes according to class or taste (vide Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron 1990; Byrom, 2008; Byrom & Lightfoot, 2013). In order to understand the language acquisition and practice of the South Asian language minorities, it is necessary to understand the contexts within which they live, that is, the primary habitus that drives their decisions and practices. In this study, habitus becomes the core method through which the individuals' experiences are understood. Whilst I seek to understand language acquisition as a practice of the South Asian language minorities, I have to view such experiences through understanding the contextualised and historical backgrounds of these participants in order to locate their habitus.

### ***The Hermeneutic Phenomenology Stance***

"[To] uncover the most profoundly buried structures of the various social worlds which constitute the social universe, as well as the mechanisms which tend to ensure their reproduction or their transformation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 7)

Habitus, 'being a product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subject to experiences' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 133) hence is particularly suitable to be explored and studied through qualitative methodology.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with human experience that may be taken for granted as it is lived with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding (Laverty, 2008: 21). Byrom (2008) illuminates the linkage between Bourdieu's logic of practice and its application in understanding class-based habitus and the situated nature of experience that is determined by the interaction of habitus and field. Specifically speaking, experience of the social world and action determined by the habitus is 'situated' within many complex interactions both historical and social (*ibid*: 80).

Much of the literature on South Asian language minorities focused on the 'situated' nature of their education experiences was frequently constructed as 'other' from the intellectualist point of view. For instance, Chan (2002) examined the language minorities' problems as an educational expert while Loper (2004) and Carmichael (2009) tried to illuminate the language minorities' situations as legal

experts in human rights. Understanding the situated nature of the habitus and the influence on language acquisition of language minorities require a reciprocal meaning making process involving myself and the other participants in the study. This involves personal understanding of my own life history and the meaning I attribute to my own social trajectory in addition to facilitating the participants to share their experiences.

The motives for engaging with a particular study topic are never a naïve choice and research cannot be value free (Caelli *et al.*, 2008: 5). In adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I am aware that my own background and experiences influence how I view the social world. Of importance to this study is the meaning the participants attribute to their experiences of language acquisition and usage in different fields. The most powerful accounts that detail language minority experiences are those built from the words of the participants themselves. Through their words, it is possible to gain a first-hand account of their experiences.

In addition it is possible to identify the factors that contribute to their language practice and acquisition in Hong Kong. The stories I have presented in this thesis invariably reflect my own perceptions and interpretations of my understandings. My own experiences cannot be omitted from both my approach to and understandings of the participants' experiences. In addition, 'all research is in one way or another autobiographical' (Reay 1998: 2). This is why I have narrated my own story and

articulated the education trajectory as a language minority member as an attempt to uncover my own experience in the Epilogue. Therefore there is a sense of being and distinct understanding of my language acquisition in the past and the cultural capital I possess.

### ***The Life History Method***

The life history method involves collecting personal stories from participants in their own voices, followed by the interpretation of the researcher for meanings. It symbolises a rejection of positivism and a continuous interest in the life course exploratory approach (Ojermark, 2007: 2) so as to provide deep insights into the lived realities of the target participants. The life history method hence can provide much information on habitus not only about individuals and their lives, but also the social, economic and political spaces that they inhabit.

Thompson (2000) argues that life history has radical implications for the social message of history as a whole and thus can inform social change. It is often conceived of as a methodology that enables people who have been hidden from history to be heard. The distinguishing feature, therefore, of oral history has been to include the perspectives of non-authoritative voices so as to reclaim the experiences of marginalised groups (Kothari & Hulme, 2004: 7). With its primary focus on those who have been left out, oral history from language minorities not only allows

evidence from a new direction, shifting our focus, but it also opens up new or under-researched areas of inquiry. In doing so, the diverse complexities of reality are illuminated since ‘it allows the multiplicity of standpoints to be created’ (*ibid*). Life history does not necessarily illuminate the chronological progression of ‘real’ past events but rather highlights the meanings ascribed to these occasions and thus explores the workings of memory (*ibid*: 8). The life history method hence is deemed appropriate to uncover individuals’ personal trajectories and stories that weave between past and present, that is, the habitus.

A focus on habitus as a method for understanding the South Asian language minorities’ experiences enables individual trajectories to be studied as ‘habitus has a history and discloses the traces of its origins in practice’ (Nash, 1999: 176). Whilst I focus on individual experiences in this study, I am unable to view such experiences as being isolated from the contexts of which they are a product. That is, through understanding the contextualised and historical backgrounds of the South Asian language minorities, it is possible for me to locate their habituses. Therefore, the languages the participants used as being different from their family members and/or clans could suggest a change in habitus (Byrom, 2008: 78). To create meaning and achieve a sense of deeper understanding of the participants’ personal experiences, using ‘habitus’ as a manner of asking related questions for their life histories from the

hermeneutic phenomenology stance seems feasible and appropriate as the research method for this study.

## **Research Setting and Participants**

In Hong Kong, there is a system of English-medium schools which used to be known as ‘designated’ schools. These primarily serve language minority students of which a majority tend to be less financially well-off and other than of Caucasian ancestry (Evans, 2000: 189). To hear the voices of the language minorities about their life histories, I tried to select the most historical designated school as the research setting to locate suitable participants.

### ***Selecting the Setting***

‘Designated schools’ were originally designed by the then Education Department and now Education Bureau with additional resources and focused support to enhance the learning and teaching of students located in language minority groups (Education Bureau, 2014). However, those schools have been accused of exercising segregation between the language minorities and local Chinese students so that the former are deprived of opportunities to learn Chinese language in a natural environment (Loper, 2004; Carmichael, 2009; Centre for Civil Society and Governance at the University of

Hong Kong and Policy 21, 2012; Cunanan, 2012). Obtaining approval to conduct the research in any one of the designated schools was a very challenging task. Initial enquiries were made with the Education Bureau to explore the possibility to conduct my research in any one of those designated schools; I was, however, informed that no assistance could be rendered since each school was independent to make its own decision.

The research school was participating with the ‘Supporting Secondary Schools in the Teaching and Learning of Chinese for Non-native Learners’ programme, I endeavoured to locate my research subjects through personal connection from this school as it was the first designated school in Hong Kong. The school was previously private and mainly catering to the Indian community during the colonial administration in Hong Kong, in which it was the first local school where Hindi and Urdu languages were included in the school curriculum. I targeted three language minority students and three language minority graduates of India, Pakistan and/or Nepal ethnicities who were studying in this school and had left the school to the work/further study in the outside world as my research participants.

### ***Access and Securing Informed Consent***

I positioned myself strategically as an old friend of the school where I was a volunteer in the 2000s. I wrote an email to the principal articulating my previous

services and involvement in the primary school. Upon email correspondences, the principal agreed to meet me to gain a fuller picture of my research. After sharing information about my previous service in the primary school and giving a condensed presentation of the research aims, I showed him a two-page information sheet and a consent form (Appendix 1 & 2). Since many researchers had written asking for his permission to conduct research in this historical designated school, his permission and support were given to me due to my connection with the school with the following conditions:

- To keep the research small scale and low profile;
- To involve only Secondary Five (S5) students who were free from public examination and comparatively mature to make decisions in relation to their participation;
- To find a teacher willing to be the liaison person between the researcher and the students;
- To contact the chairperson of the Parent-Teacher Association (abbreviated as PTA) regarding the graduate participants.

### ***Identifying the students***

I decided to locate student participants from the school first. Miss Now (pseudonym), whom I already knew, kindly rendered her assistance to introduce me to students who might be interested to participate in my research. To ensure the safety of the student participants as well as to facilitate the data collection, the principal kindly gave his verbal permission for me to access to the school but restricted this to the

'student corner' located by the entrance of the lobby during the selection and data collection process.

In 2014-15, there were five classes of Secondary Five (S5) in the designated school. South Asian language minority students in this research refer to those of India, Pakistan and/or Nepal ethnicities who were attending the GCSE Chinese class to prepare for the GCSE Chinese examination. In line with my research aims and the research questions, suitable students were those who met all of the following criteria:

- Students studying S5 who were free from taking any public examination in 2014-2015;
- They were attending the GCSE Chinese class and would attend the GCSE Chinese examination in the coming year for one of the following reasons (Education Bureau website, retrieved on 1.9.2014):
  - i. The student has learned Chinese Language for less than 6 years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
  - ii. The student has learned Chinese Language for 6 years or more in schools, but has been taught an adapted and simpler curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in local schools;
- They were of Indian, Pakistani or Nepalese origin;
- Being available during the data collection period in between September and November 2014.

Equipped with the knowledge that certain students would meet the salient criteria for my research and that they provided a type of 'purposive' sample (Moriarty, 2011: 2), I introduced my research to Miss Now face-to-face and provided her with a written information sheet (Appendix 1) explaining my work in details with a consent form (Appendix 2) in English for the students and their parents or guardians. As arranged, I paid two visits to the school. During my second visit, Miss Now had invited two girls

of Pakistani origin and one boy of Nepalese origin to meet at the student corner. After a brief introduction of myself and my story, I explained my research with the provision of the participant information sheet and the consent form to them (Appendix 1 & 2). Employing affirmative consent approach to obtain guardians or parents' endorsement on the consent forms, all three students eventually declined to join my study. With the subsequent advice given by my supervisor Dr. Byrom to consider and try the alternative opt out consent approach that is very often associated with increased participation (Monaghan *et al.*, 2011), three students including two girls of Pakistani and Indian origin and one boy of Indian origin gave their informed consent prior to my short but frank presentation.

### ***Identifying the graduates***

On the other hand, with a suggestion to contact the chairperson of the PTA who was an alumnus, the principal kindly liaised and obtained his email for my correspondence. The PTA was set up to enhance school-home cooperation and improve communication between parents and children (Pang, 1997: 81) so that it provided a base and network to locate graduates who might meet the sampling criteria.

In 2014-2015, Mr. T, who was of Indian origin and a graduate of the secondary section of this designated school, was elected as the chairperson of the PTA when his

elder son was studying S5 in the school. After sending an email to Mr. T to introduce my background and provide him with a consent form and written information sheet explaining my work in details in English (Appendix 1 & 2), he gave his favourable response and not only kindly agreed to be one of the participants but also recommended two more graduates to be the research participants.

"Graduates" in this research refer to those South Asian language minorities who completed their primary and/or secondary education in this designated school. In line with my research aims and the research questions, suitable participants were those who met all of the following criteria:

- Previous students who completed their primary and/or secondary education in this designated school;
- Of Indian, Pakistani or Nepalese origin;
- Available during the data collection period in between September and November 2014.

Mr. T wrote to recommend two graduates who were brothers and completed their primary education in this designated school to be my research subjects. The following two documents were sent to all three participants for their information in individual emails:

- "Participant Information Sheet" (Appendix 1)
- "Consent Form" (Appendix 2)

Shortly after the confirmation of all six participants, it was discovered that Mr. T and the boy student were father and son. The combination of the father and son, and

two siblings as participants provided precious opportunities to examine whether the same or similar habitus could lead to different language practices and stances in different fields (Reay, 2004: 434).

## **Methods of Data Collection**

Smartphones are both technologies and an integral part of green information systems that make serious contributions in social research (Pitt *et al.*, 2011; Scarpino & Alshif, 2013). To provide multiple means for the collection of both text and visual data, the popular and convenient recording and instant messaging subscription service for smartphones, namely the Whatsapp Messenger and email were selected to be the communication media between the researcher and the participants in addition to the face-to-face interviews. My designated smartphone number and the Nottingham Trent University email address were provided on the information sheet for correspondence. Meanwhile, the participants who consented would exchange their smartphone numbers with me for correspondence.

### ***Collecting Habitus Data***

Bourdieu argues that linguistic habitus is a sub-set of complex dispositions acquired in the course of learning to speak in particular contexts such as in the family,

the peer group and the school. It is also inscribed in the body and forms a dimension of the bodily hexis (Bourdieu, 1991: 17). To understand the South Asian language minorities' experiences and decisions made in language acquisition in all these years, the type of data that is needed to understand habitus includes:

- Insight into the characteristics of the family structure, background and history;
- Understanding of social networks and the influence of these on cultural (linguistic) capital acquisition and re/production;
- Influential factors when decisions on language acquisition and practice were made.

Through multiple methods, data that can illuminate the process and decisions involved in acquiring languages is required. The types of methods used were separated into text-based and visual as follows.

### ***Text-based Methods***

Interviews, e-mail and Whatsapp communication were used to collect both oral and written data in this research. These primary data sources were used to access the voices of the students directly.

#### *Interviews*

Interviews were chosen as a source to explain the dynamics of poverty among the oppressed people by Bourdieu (1999). It is through this interview process that the participant objectification or voice is possible. Under this qualitative methodology,

each of the social agents chosen in the context was based on the qualities of testimonies of individuals considered as agents of dispositions and social positions by which suffering could be studied from a sociological point of view (Hamel, 1997: 101).

Considering the restrained time offered by the school principal to conduct this research between September and November, it was in small scale that in-depth one-to-one interviews were deemed most suitable to collect personal stories as data from each research subject respectively. Miller (2000) argues that narrative is the active construction of life stories through the interplay between interviewer and interviewee. The finished text is the result of the collaborative project, and the participants' viewpoint treated as a unique perspective, mediated by social context. Communications thus become the core means to conduct interviews so that the establishment of rapport and trustful relationships with each of the interviewees was considered important. Among the students and the graduate participants, an appointment was made with each of them for an interview.

To guide the conversations I made use of an open-ended interview schedule (Appendix 3) to allow flexibility to touch on relevant content and to broaden the discussion related to their practice and decision making on language acquisition. In this case, I, being the core and sole researcher of this research was the key instrument

of data collection through communication, analysis and interpretation. Three main questions were posed as follows:

- Tell me about your family and living in Hong Kong;
- Tell me about your experience of learning languages;
- Tell me about the language practice /usage in your daily living.

The interviews lasted for about fifty minutes to an hour and were audio recorded with the participants' consent. I subsequently transcribed each interview recording for coding and analysis. Whatsapp messages and email were used to contact the participants for further information and to clarify some specific terms and points afterwards.

### *Smartphone and Email*

Byrom (2008), who studies the effects of a school-based institutional habitus on student choices and decisions, argues that the use of technology to communicate contributed to the co-construction of data that the participants could act as co-authors in the process of meaning making and direct access to their thoughts and feelings as well (*ibid*: 93). Smartphones are the most popular electronic device being used by Hong Kong people for internet or Wi-Fi access due to its convenience, cheaper or even free provision (Lai, 2014).

Meanwhile, the free-of-charge instant texting software 'WhatsApp' providing instant text messaging, sending images, video and audio media messages, has been

the most favoured mobile messenger used in Hong Kong (Olsan, 2014). This messenger helps develop rapport (Rambe & Chipunza; 2013) with the participants (Scissors *et al.*, 2008). Also, it provides great flexibility and nimbleness to enhance relationships in the rapidly paced Hong Kong.

Being a novice and having the privilege to get to know my participants' cultures during the interview with as little interruption as possible, I was provided with continuous opportunities by the WhatsApp messenger to clarify issues, terms and even pose further questions to the participants. In view of the fact that all six participants possessed WhatsApp in their smartphones, this instant messenger was adopted as the medium of communication for multiple purposes. Meanwhile, the participants were informed that the WhatsApp telephone number was used for the research only and it would expire in twelve months.

### ***Visual Methods***

Photography was adopted in this research study not only as a means to generate data, but also an optional source of data to provide participants with the opportunity to find other means of expression when words were inadequate (Byrom, 2008: 96). Photography can be used to provide rich descriptions of discovery and investigation (Schultheis *et al.*, 2009: 452) and to uncover and illuminate aspects of habitus which

is deeply embedded set of largely unconscious dispositions (Sweetman, 2009: 493).

Scarles (2010) thus argues that visual photography opens space of understanding and

transcends the limitations of verbal discourse where words fail.

For participants who own smartphones with cameras and using WhatsApp as well as email daily, photography is considered as an established part of their pop culture for exchanging information. During the small presentation and after the interviews, they were asked to take and/or provide photos of their daily activities, organisations or persons that they considered important in or related to their language practice so as to elicit conversation, to enrich and supplement the interview contents.

### **Challenges in Sampling**

Relying on Miss Now and Mr. T's recommendations to find other students and graduates who meet the eligibility criteria, I realised that snowball sampling depended greatly on the initial contacts and connections made by these two liaison persons (Moriarty, 2011: 2).

To comply with the rules and administration of the secondary school, I had to depend on Miss Now to select and identify suitable students to attend my presentation and then hopefully they would agree to be the participants. Although Miss Now had tried her best to give the students options to volunteer participation upon their wishes,

there was a possibility that certain students agreed to meet me on account of Miss Now's position as their teacher with authority. In this situation, I would be misperceived as a Very Important Person (abbreviated as VIP). Bourdieu warns the existence of this kind of bias as:

"That linked to the position that the analyst occupies...in the objective space of possible intellectual positions offered to him or her at the moment, and, beyond, in the field of power...are furthermore situated near the dominated pole of the field of power and are therefore under the sway of forces of attraction and repulsion that bear on all symbolic producers" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 39).

Since 'I' being the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in my research, I am thus also aware that the on-going reflexivity is essential in order to explore systematically the "unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought" as well as guide the practical carrying out of social inquiry (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 40). Once I have noticed and reflected on my role in the research process, I accept more easily the fact that students do have the right to reject participating in my study or fail to attend the interviews as scheduled. I should be happy as all these acts might indicate my success to position myself and their acceptance of me being a member of language minorities.

Furthermore, I made the decision to tell all participants my own story, highlighting my background and the fact that I was a language minority student during the British administrative period in order to encourage them to participate in

my study. Since the participants would have to narrate their own stories and disclose information related to their families, I felt that the relationship between the participants and myself should be an open and honest one from the start. I wanted to enter the research process with the relationship between myself and the participants as equal as it could possibly be given the context of future interactions with them. As

Rubins states:

"[Qualitative interview] emphasises the importance of building a relationship of trust between the interviewer and interviewee that leads to more give-and-take in the conversation...the relationship one forms with an interview, like any other friendship, assumes a fair degree of reciprocity" (2011: 36).

On the other hand, Mr. T's knowledge and connections were the key factors in locating the hidden graduates in this research. This sampling strand was thus heavily reliant on the skill of Mr. T being the first informant conducting the actual sampling, and that his ability to vertically network and find the other two appropriate participants (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981: 150-151). Furthermore, Mr. T and one of the student participants Edi are father and son while Joe and Ni are brothers, a situation in which the familial and linguistic habitus within the same family are supposed to be at least similar. I was thus concerned about the homogeneity of the stories they would provide in the beginning. However, the ultimate findings have indicated that habitus is a structuring mechanism that operates from within each

individual agent in accordance with their positioning in the fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 18). In fact, the participants' habitus is strongly shaped by their growing up experiences and trajectories. Once the social spaces where they have gained their experiences varied, the habitus they have inculcated is actually diversified. Being a novice qualitative researcher employing habitus as a research method, I was haunted by my previous positivism training but eventually learnt to lay down the conventional notions of random selection and representativeness that is integral to quantitative research.

In contrast, this qualitative based research takes the position that an interpretive understanding is only possible by way of uncovering and/or deconstructing the meanings of the participants' experiences. Therefore, each language minority participant's life world is a social, cultural and historical product as well as a pole of individual subjectivity with equal value and being unique (Fossey *et al.*, 2002: 720). From the interpretive paradigm, randomness and representativeness no longer constitute a barrier in my adoption of snowball sampling to locate suitable individuals as participants.

### **The Issues of Validity and Reliability**

This qualitative research is located within the constructivism paradigm and is

based on a philosophy that truth is subjective and knowledge is a constructed reality (O’Leary, 2004: 10). Therefore, it is impossible to use the quantitative logic of replication in terms of validity and reliability as a check on credibility (Devers, 1999: 1163). However, a few measures were applied to ensure the quality and to establish the trustworthiness of findings in this research.

I therefore chose to reflect and disclose information about myself in order to make my subjective position transparent so as to minimise bias at the data analysis stage (O’Leary, 2004: 58-59; Byrom, 2008: 97). The ‘self’ is recognised throughout this piece of research. I narrated my life history and personal experiences as a language minority student during the British era. My lens to see and to understand the experiences of the South Asian language minorities are influenced by my ethnic culture, family background and my competency in Chinese language.

Employing the life history approach to explore the South Asian language minorities’ stories, each individual was asked to introduce herself/himself, tell the story of her/his life in her/his own words to begin the interview with the early childhood and to proceed to the present. In addition, the visual method of photography was employed as a supportive source of data to reflect the interview contents and to provide further opportunities for the participants to reveal meaning about an experience. A consistent approach and compatible methods, ensuring

dependability, credibility and validity (O'Leary, 2004: 59-60), can illuminate at experience.

On the other hand, authenticity is also concerned with truth value (*ibid*: 61). This research employs a qualitative approach which recognises that each story is unique, as there is no more single valid truth and truth is in the eyes of the beholder. In this sense, rigour and reflexive practice have ensured that conclusions are justified, credible, and trustworthy (*ibid*).

## **Ethical Issues**

The methodological approach was discussed at length with my supervisors based at the Nottingham Trent University. The research was carried out in accordance with the guidelines set by the British Educational Research Association (abbreviated as BERA) in line with a set of fundamental principles within the Code of Practice for Research developed by Nottingham Trent University to ensure the protection of human participants. The Code of Practice for Research can be downloaded from the Nottingham Trent University website (2014). In August 2014, I was notified by email that the ethical approval of my research was granted (Appendix 4).

Informed consent is a main feature of the research (BERA, 2011; Fletcher & Hunter, 2003). Since the research involved students and graduates with a deep

connection with the school, permission and support had to be sought from the principal to approach and to locate suitable South Asian language minorities. Those who wished to participate had time to reflect on the information provided. The opt-out consent arrangement in which consent forms were signed by those who refused to participate was adopted to enhance participation (Davis *et al.*, 2011; Monaghan *et al*, 2011).

Prior to commencing the interviews, participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that they could decline to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable with. Furthermore, the participants involved were assured of their anonymity and were provided with an opportunity to choose a pseudonym by which they would be referred to in any academic papers and also the thesis itself. To protect the privacy and personal data of the participants, visual data include photographs that produce visually identifiable or potentially identifiable individuals would not be shown in the study.

## **Data Analysis**

Atkinson (2002) argues that the movement toward life histories in the participants' own words is a movement towards acknowledging personal truth from the subjective point of view as well as a movement toward the validity of narrative

(*ibid*: 125). The aim of life histories is thus not to find one generalisable truth but to bring up many truths or narratives (Byrne-Armstrong 2001: 112). I thus intend to identify underlying ideas, patterns, and assumptions hidden in the participants' life histories through their narratives in order to provide answers to the two research questions be raised in Chapter 1.

### ***Thematic Analysis of Life Histories***

Thematic Analysis gives an opportunity to understand the potential of any issue more widely (Alhojailan, 2012: 10). Themes capture events and data in relation to the research question, and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 85). That is, thematic analysis focuses on the human experience subjectively (Guest *et al.*, 2012: 12). This allows the participants to narrate their stories or histories in their own words, free of constraints from fixed-response questions. Thematic analysis thus fits well to understand the participants' familial and linguistic habitus.

On the other hand, thematic analysis aims to uncover themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008: 81). Also, it shares the key features of any hermeneutic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 388). In this case, thematic analysis allows me to identify patterns of meaning across the life-history dataset and to interpret the data once they

are uncovered based on the intentions of the research during the process of analysis.

Most importantly, thematic analysis can be used within different theoretical frameworks and in this case Bourdieu's conceptual tool of habitus. Since thematic analysis is not wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework, it can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. Thematic analysis was thus considered to be an appropriate data analysis method for the research.

In addition, thematic analysis seeks to discover truth using interpretations (Alhojailan, 2012: 10). The interpretation of the life-history data starts immediately when one story is selected out of any number of other possible stories, and it continues during the entire research process. It provides a systematic element to data analysis that allows me to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole content. This not only ensures relevancy and depth but also enhances the whole meaning of the research. The results then can be translated into chronicles of the language minority participants' logic of practice. With such information, I seek a deeper and broader understanding of the South Asian language minorities' Chinese language acquisition in order to inform the practice, policy and future research. An example of the transcript for data analysis is attached in Appendix 5.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided detailed description of the selection of the participants in my research. I have illustrated how they were representative of a group of South Asian language minorities living in Hong Kong though the samples were small in number. I then explored the methodological approaches used and focused on the role of habitus in generating and analysing data. In the next two chapters, I detail the findings in an attempt to draw out the complexities of the habitus and the language practice of each individual participant.

## **Chapter 4 Habitus in the Relational Fields**

In this chapter, I explore the characteristics of the familial and linguistic habitus of the participants and their family members. I examine their habitus related to gender and ethnicity in order to understand the constitution and the interrelationship of their habitus in Hong Kong. I argue that the local context influences the familial and linguistic habitus of the participants and their families, where partial or complete transformations indicate that habitus is an open system of dispositions subject to change.

## **Introduction**

There is much literature that features the relational concepts of habitus and field in the sense that they function fully only in relation to one another (vide Byrom, 2008; Morberg *et al.*, 2011; Wacquant, 2011; Czerniewic & Brown, 2013; Jo, 2013; Lehmann, 2014). Within a Bourdieuan framework, habitus is creative, inventive but within the limits of its structures or particular fields. It is incomplete without a notion of structure that makes room for the organised improvisation of agents (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 19). Having this understanding, I intend to answer the first research question through uncovering the characteristics of the familial and linguistic habitus of the six participants as well as their families.

## **Backgrounds of the participants**

The notion of habitus is conceived at both the level of society and the level of the individuals. The whole collective history of family and ethnicity that the individual is a member of constitutes one's habitus (Reay, 2004: 434). With that in mind, I have gained insights into the contexts including the participants' family structure, backgrounds and then their histories respectively. By the time of the data collection through interviews, three student participants were studying Secondary 5 in the selected designated school. Meanwhile, another three participants were graduates of

the designated school who were doing business and studying in two different tertiary institutions respectively. Their pseudonym, gender, age, ethnicity, family composition and their generation positioning in Hong Kong are detailed in Table 1.

Pseudonyms	Gender/ Age	Ethnicity/ Religion	Family Composition	Generation in Hong Kong
Mar	Female/ 18	Pakistani /Muslim	Father, mother and one younger sister	Third
Jas	Female/ 17	Indian/ Sikh	Step father, mother, one elder brother, one younger sister and one newly born brother.	Third
Edi	Male/ 16	Indian/ Hindu	Edi is the son of Mr. T. He is living with Mr. T, his mother and one younger brother.	Second
Mr. T	Male/ 46			First
Joe	Male/ 20	Indian / Catholic	Living with parents and being brothers to each other	First
Ni	Male/ 18			Second

**Table 1:** The background information of six participants

### **Mar**

Mar is the elder daughter of her four-person nuclear family and a Muslim. She knew very little about her paternal and maternal grandparents since they had passed away before she was born. She assured me that her father was born in Hong Kong while her mother was born in Pakistan. Her father had married her mother in Pakistan

about twenty years before and she was born about a year later. She learnt to speak Hindko and Punjabi when she was living in Pakistan with her mother.

### **Jas**

Jas and her three siblings were all born in Hong Kong. She is a Sikh. Jas's late father passed away when she was about five years old. Since her mother was unable to take care of three children alone, she and her younger sister were brought to India to be looked after by relatives for a year. It was at that time that Jas learnt the Punjabi. As her mother spoke Cantonese as well as English at home, she considered Cantonese and Punjabi as her mother tongues.

### **Edi**

Edi is the elder son of his four-person family and a Hindu. He came to Hong Kong with his parents when he was about 11 years old. Since his parents spoke mainly Tamil to him at home, he considered the language of Tamil as his mother tongue and himself as second generation in Hong Kong.

### **Mr. T**

Mr. T is the father of Edi. He was born in Chennai, the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He and his two younger brothers arrived in Hong Kong to join

their parents in 1981. He joined Form Two in the first and only designated school for South Asian language minorities where he first learnt Hindi. Mr. T has two sons who were studying in two different designated schools. Tamil was the major language spoken within Mr. T's household.

### **Joe**

Joe was born in the South India and a Catholic. A multinational company relocated from India to Hong Kong twenty years before hired his father. His parents brought him to Hong Kong when he was about 10-month old. At the age of three, he started attending the English section of a local Anglo-Chinese kindergarten and then the designated 'Indian school' for primary schooling. Being identified as an Indian, he attended Hindi class in primary school, a language he had never used. The designated primary school was also the institution where he started learning Chinese. He completed his secondary education in a self-financed Catholic secondary school in which English was adopted as the MOI. He was encouraged to learn the language of Konkani with his maternal grandmother as well as parents in family gathering.

### **Ni**

Ni is the younger brother of Joe. He was born and baptized as a Catholic in Hong Kong. Similar to Joe's educational trajectory, he attended the English section of a

local Anglo-Chinese kindergarten, the designated ‘Indian school’ and the self-financed Catholic secondary school for his primary and secondary education respectively. The designated primary school was the place that Ni first came into contact with and learnt Hindi and Chinese. Similar to his elder brother Joe, he learnt some Konkani but was unable to use it to converse.

### **Characteristics of the Participants’ Familial Habitus**

Hong Kong Chinese simply name any person from the Indian Subcontinent as Indian or South Asian. Very often, stereotypes come along that male as superior and dominant while female inferiority, poverty, with large families and live in crowded homes usually come along with the names. It is as if every single individual originated from South Asia is oppressed as well as oppressing others (Das & Singh, 2014, 69-79; Qureshi et al, 2014: 261-279). Examining the backgrounds and histories of six participants, their ethnicities, religion, languages, aspirations, and personal experiences are in fact diverse though there are similarities. The findings reflect that there are certain adaptations and transformations of all six participants’ primary habitus that facilitate their living in Hong Kong.

### ***Household size***

The average household size in Hong Kong dropped from 4.5 in 1971 to 3.1 in 2001 while domestic households comprising more than 4 members have been on the decline in Hong Kong since 2006 (Census and Statistics Department, 2012: FA8 -9).

Before the interviews, I had assumed that the South Asian participants mostly came from big families composed of grandparents and multiple siblings. In fact, Mar, Edi and Mr. T, and Joe and Ni's families actually came from families which were of nuclear household size, consisting of a pair of adults and their children (Merriam-Webster Online, 2014). These participants' households had followed the trend towards smaller family sizes in Hong Kong. This might be attributed to the congested living environment and expensive living standard in Hong Kong so that they made a compromise as regards the reality on their living arrangements. Nevertheless, the strategy of living in the same neighbourhood and/or forming a community were employed to maintain kinship and liaison. Jas, Ni and Edi shared that:

Jas: Then my auntie... So if I need some help I just go to her. Because she is a housewife, she is always at home and lives in the next building. (Jas: interview)

Ni: My aunt, my cousin and his wife just live round the corner. We go to the church together every Sunday, and visit each other almost weekly. (Ni: interview)

Edi: Because in Hong Kong, we have an association, call Tamil Association, we all Tamil people in Hong Kong gather together. So even the coach where he is, all Tamil people gather together. So we can know more about them. We meet we make many friends in that association. (Edi: interview)

This finding matches an enduring phenomenon as observed by Vaid (1972) and White (1994) that the South Asians' extended families work as core communities to provide strong support to their members. It includes a responsibility to clothe, house, and find employment for any relatives or kin who may arrive on their doorstep in Hong Kong (White, 1994: 2). In other words, these communities are quite secluded from the rest of Hong Kong society (Vaid, 1972: 32). This finding may partially explain that this familial habitus may delimit their need to mingle with and to acquire the Chinese language from their Chinese counterparts.

### ***Gender roles***

The traditional role of South Asian women used to be stereotyped as passive and subservient to the husband, performing domestic chores, and bearing children (Qureshi *et al*, 2014: 262). When I assumed that two girl students and the mothers of the participants would possibly be discouraged to work outside homes, the findings showed completely different stories. Jas's mother was working full-time in a local hotel and being one of the breadwinners to support the family with three dependent

children. Although Mar's mother was a full-time housewife, Mar revealed that her mother was a capable woman and was able to give views and had made decisions on her education arrangements. Also, Mar 's adoration by her father had enhanced her capacity to negotiate with him about her future.

My dad is always busy at his job, his own shop. So she (i.e. my mother) has to go out, even for our admission... and stuff. She has to go out and do everything.

Because my dad, I force my dad to put me in this school because I have a lot of EM [i.e. Ethnic Minority] friends here. Actually he wanted, you know, to put me in that school... But my mum said let Mar do whatever she wanted. (Mar: interview)

Moreover, Mr. T's wife, who is the mother of Edi, had obtained a masters degree in economics in India. To utilise her academic knowledge, she helped Mr. T run his trading business. Moreover, she spared time to work as a part-time tutor in a non-governmental organisation helping ethnic minority children in their school work, which Mr. T was proud of:

My wife goes to a wet market, a normal wet market...My wife and I lived in Turkey [for trading business]...She is a housewife but sometimes that she takes tutorial classes for Maths and English, part-time job...(Mr. T: interview)

When Joe and Ni's parents came to Hong Kong twenty years before, they knew very little about the education system in Hong Kong. However, their parents, in

particular their mother who was educated with a Bachelor degree and a professional, had invested time and energy in order to help her two sons obtain educational attain credentials in Hong Kong. For this, Ni showed his appreciation of his mother:

My mum used to work in a bank, to supervise our homework, to be the PTA and SMC (abbreviations for Parents Teachers' Association and School Management Committee) member, to find the secondary school for us. She's the boss. (Ni: interview)

Culturally, only sons had full rights of inheritance and so remained family members all their lives in the essential logic of South Asian migrants' families while at marriage daughters left their natal home (Qureshi *et al*, 2014: 262). Mar came from a Pakistan Muslim family with two daughters and there was no boy in her family which was traditionally uncommon in her culture and religion extolling virtues of patriarchy and large families (Dhami & Sheikh, 2000: 352-353). Unlike the rhetoric of hybridity that comes with a sense of resistance to the dominant culture (Hall, 1973; Bhabha, 1994), Mar fully accepted the contemporary family trend and defended what she believed to be normal in her neo family culture in Hong Kong. She proudly took the family structure and composition as natural, which she thought was a matter of course in Hong Kong:

What? You don't believe it? So many people feel the same when they hear my family has four people only. We are just a normal Hong Kong family! (Mar: interview)

Being part of the millennium generation, Jas and Mar in fact not only dared to

dream but also took action to pursue their career dreams. Jas wanted to be a flight attendant so she had looked for information to prepare her own future.

I am so short...because I saw the thing in the website of Cathy Pacific. They say we have to reach 208 cm with like no shoes on. (Jas: interview)

Meanwhile, Mar wanted to be a social worker, for which she not only had got support from her parents but also had her father defend her whenever people challenged her wish.

At this moment, actually because of my parents, they support me in this. And then because of their confidence and stuff, I have got something inside me. I will do this and I can do this. (Mar: interview)

Even though there was still a long way before Mar could be a social worker, she became a source of help and advice for her relatives as if she had already been in the helping profession despite the fact that she was a girl in her extended family.

Whenever I met some kind, like my auntie or something, she said 'Mar, please help try to find some kind of jobs for my husband, or for my son' because they have facing a lot of financial difficulties, and all. (Mar: interview)

With the emergence of Western culture developed during the British administration, a mix of traditional Chinese culture and Western values created a unique culture or habitus of Hong Kong. Along with the rapid economic and social development of Hong Kong, women in Hong Kong are generally more independent,

monetarily autonomous and assertive, and more prominent when compared with women in other Asian countries (Lee, 2003: 4). The familial habitus of the language minorities follows a practical logic through which they assert themselves in the improvisation in the renewed situations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 19-22). The family structure, size, composition and the gender roles of those participants and their families might imply their familial habitus adaptations and transformations as a result of struggling within active forces. To play the living game in Hong Kong, they had to improvise by synthesising the living-in cultures in order to succeed in their transition and adaptation into the Hong Kong living environment.

### **Characteristics of the Linguistic Habitus**

Habitus is an internalised, embodied disposition toward the world. It comes into being through inculcation in early childhood with immersion in a particular sociocultural milieu, that is, the family and household as well as institutions (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 46-47). Linguistic habitus, a set of dispositions that are acquired to speak within particular contexts through inculcation into any social milieu (Bourdieu, 1991: 17), emerged to be a set of complications for the language minority participants. It was strongly shaped by their growing up experiences and trajectories. The six participants' linguistic habitus through language acquisition is listed in Table

2.

Participants	Languages inculcated through family	A dual mechanism	
		Languages inculcated through institutes (formal)	Languages inculcated through peers (informal)
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Hindko and Punjabi from her mother; and</li> <li>♦ Chinese from her father</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Chinese, English and Urdu from the primary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ Chinese and English from the secondary school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Urdu and Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK.</li> </ul>
Jas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Chinese from her mother; and</li> <li>♦ Punjabi from relatives in India</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Chinese, English and Hindi from the primary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ Chinese and English from the secondary school in HK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Urdu and Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK.</li> </ul>
Edi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Tamil from both parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ English from the primary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ Chinese and English and from the secondary school in HK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK</li> </ul>
Mr. T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Tamil from both parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Tamil and English from the primary school in India;</li> <li>♦ English and Hindi from the secondary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ Turkish from a private institute in Turkey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Cantonese and Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ Turkish from the locals in Turkey;</li> <li>♦ Tamil from his clans and Cantonese from acquaintances in HK</li> </ul>
Joe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ English and Konkani from parents and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Chinese, English and Hindi from the primary school;</li> <li>♦ Chinese and English and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Hindi and English from schoolmates in primary school in HK;</li> </ul>

	maternal grandmother.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>French from the secondary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ English in the university in HK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ English and Cantonese from schoolmates in secondary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ Cantonese from peers in the university in HK</li> </ul>
Ni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ English and Konkani from both parents and maternal grandmother</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Chinese, English and Hindi from the primary school;</li> <li>♦ Chinese, English and French from the secondary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ English in the tertiary institute in HK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ English from schoolmates in primary school in HK;</li> <li>♦ English and Cantonese from schoolmates in secondary school in HK</li> <li>♦ Cantonese from peers in the tertiary institute in HK</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** The six participants' linguistic habitus and language acquisition

### ***Multilingualism***

When news reported incessant disputes in Kashmir and the numerous military conflicts fought between the two states of India and Pakistan, I was amazed to witness the sincere friendship between Mar and Jas who were studying in the same class. They attributed their friendship and commonality to the use of Punjabi as their native language originating from a place called Punjab. To deepen my understanding of their mutual linguistic habitus, I researched the history of India and Pakistan and

uncovered that relations between the two states were defined by the partition of British India in 1947. Through mutual linguistic habitus, Mar originally from Pakistan and Jas originally from India got along peacefully in Hong Kong.

Mar was born in Pakistan and spent three years with her mother in the homeland till they moved to Hong Kong. In those three years living with her mother, she learnt to converse in a local dialect called Hindko which is similar and close to Punjabi. The primary school was the first place that Mar had the opportunity to learn the language of Urdu from a qualified teacher originated from Pakistan. Further studying in the present designated secondary school, she attended all classes in English except the subjects of Chinese Language and the Urdu Language. When I asked what language was used in her family, she thought for a second and informed me that no single language was employed, but multiple languages were used.

[My mum speaks] ‘Hindko’, it’s like Punjabi. Urdu, we use Urdu, basically Urdu, Punjabi. And my dad use Chinese, mainly Chinese, English. (Mar: interview)

A similar phenomenon happened to Jas’s family too. Jas was born in Hong Kong. She attended a local kindergarten, a designated primary school and then the present designated secondary school. She emphasised that her stepfather and mother could speak fluent Cantonese because they were the second generation Indians born and brought up in Hong Kong. While I thought Chinese (Cantonese) was Jas’s mother

tongue, she gave my thinking a different turn by noting an interruption of her social trajectory. She learnt to speak Punjabi due to a rupture caused by her natural father's death. Shortly after her father's death, Jas and her younger sister were brought to India to be looked after by relatives who lived in the region of Punjab for a year when she was about five years old. It was the period of time and arena that meant she had to learn to converse in Punjabi. Since her parents, elder brother and the younger brother knew very little about Punjabi, the languages of Chinese, English, Hindi and Urdu, which they learnt in the schools in Hong Kong criss-crossed in her household. She did find this natural as it was but did express annoyance whenever people made comments on the languages used in her family.

My parents, they know English, Chinese, our languages and we speak Punjabi at home...We talk in Hindi and Urdu with our brothers and sisters because that's the languages we use with our friends...And someone talks in English and all mixed up. I mean, we do not feel really special about it. It's really normal for us. But when people hear us, like, doing that, they feel really awkward. (Jas: interview)

On the other hand, Mr. T was born and raised in Tamil Nadu where Tamil is the first language of the majority people residing there. Due to the anti-Hindi sentiments in Tamil Nadu during the post-Independence period, many Tamils had preferred English in education (Pandian, 1996: 3323). Although Mr. T had lived in India for a dozen years before, the designated school in Hong Kong was the arena where he came

into contact with and learnt the language of Hindi for the first time. As revealed, he chose this language as one of his subjects because the selection was made merely based on his identification of the language as an Indian one. Also, he could speak other foreign languages such as Turkish:

We were given a choice to learn either Chinese, Urdu, Hindi or French. I chose Hindi because it is an Indian language...

I have lived in so many countries and I know foreign languages... I lived in Turkey. OK. There was no English in use at all. So we were forced to learn Turkish. My wife and I forced to learn every day. Now I can speak like a local person... (Mr. T: interview)

Edi, the son of Mr. T, came to Hong Kong in his early teens. Chinese and Hindi were completely new to him. He was studying in a primary school in Chennai where English was adopted as the MOI. Meanwhile, Tamil was used at home in India and in Hong Kong. After he came to Hong Kong at the age of eleven, he was admitted into a designated primary school and then the present designated secondary school for education. His father Mr. T was the chairperson of the Tamil Association in Hong Kong and had organised Tamil classes for children originating from the region of Tamil Nadu. Tamil was the major language being spoken by Edi and his family.

In Hong Kong, we in school, I speak Hindi, English. I only use these two languages. But at home in my daily life, I only use Tamil and English. (Edi: interview)

An interesting observation was that none of these South Asian participants was a

native Hindi or Urdu speaker. Hong Kong somehow became the place where they were encouraged or made to learn the Hindi or Urdu language though these two languages were hardly used in their daily living. Joe and Ni, who had left the designated school were now studying in two tertiary institutes where the majority was Chinese and noted that:

Joe: At home I use both English and Konkani which is my mother tongue. I've learned Hindi in my primary school for 5 years. But I think it is not very good and barely communicable.  
(Joe: interview)

Ni: I've learned a bit of Hindi in primary school and I can fairly understand it to a point that I can follow a normal conversation but I have trouble speaking the language as I wasn't brought up in a Hindi language speaking environment. (Ni: interview)

Born in India but studying in two designated schools and living in Hong Kong, Joe has acquired five languages in Hong Kong that were developed to various degrees of proficiency. After the interview, he sent the information of his language proficiency in LinkedIn as shown in Photo 2 to the researcher through the instant messenger.

Languages	
<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>
Native or bilingual proficiency	Full professional proficiency
<b>Konkani</b>	<b>Cantonese</b>
Native or bilingual proficiency	Limited working proficiency
<b>Hindi</b>	
Limited working proficiency	

**Photo 2:** Joe's language proficiencies presented on his LinkedIn webpage 2014

The separation of sociology and history is a disastrous division (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 90). The national-language status for Hindi as well as Urdu has been a long-debated theme (Pandian, 1996: 3323-4). The former was envisioned to be the sole language for governmental and bureaucratic matters in India. However, English is still used very widely due to resistance from many individual areas of India that wanted to keep their traditional languages (*ibid*). Since these two languages have been misunderstood and misrecognised as the native languages of all Indians and Pakistani in Hong Kong, the teaching of these two languages as subjects could be a means of reinforcing the effect of misrecognition (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 145). Furthermore, as now the Chinese Language has become an essential subject in all designated schools under the Chinese rule, the acquisition of multiple languages at the same time could become a burden to the students.

### ***Linguistic imperialism and utilitarianism***

Linguistic habitus is the social ability to adequately utilise this competence in a given situation and a linguistic market (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 145). A noteworthy finding is that the language of English, being the official language of England as well as of the former colonies of Hong Kong and India, was still playing a dominant role in the lives of the six participants to a certain extent. English was

adopted as the official and major MOI in the Hong Kong designated schools. On the other hand, the English language had made continuous impact on the six participants alongside the complex historical process.

Mr. T, the graduate of the 1980s, reminisced that Chinese students always wanted to learn English from Indian students in designated school. Emphasising the value of English, he considered it as his second but not a foreign language through the inculcation of the school.

[English was] taught as the second language. All learnt English, even today... While, the Chinese students picking up their English from us. (Mr. T: interview)

For Mar and Jas, English was linked to a possibility to emigrate to Britain where history had led some of their extended families settling there. Habitus, as a generative spontaneity which asserts itself in the improvised confrontation with endlessly renewed situations, follows a practical logic (*ibid*: 22), Mar thus started working hard to improve the language of English since her father told her about the possibility of immigration.

Because I have lot of my relatives and all living in UK... So I think, I mean if I concentrate to learn Chinese more, it will not help me in UK or something. So I basically change to improve my English and all. (Mar: interview)

Meanwhile, Jas also mentioned that her stepfather had an idea to emigrate to the United Kingdom and thus encouraged her to work hard on this language.

My parents said that they want to move to the UK. Because they said Hong Kong is like China now...Because my father's sister they are in UK. They are calling us so applying for the visas is easy. Because they have British passports. (Jas: interview)

Edi was inculcated with the English linguistic habitus during his primary education in India. Edi's betterment in the language of English thus facilitated his transition from India to Hong Kong, as English continues to be the official language in both places. Also, he could name a number of postcolonial countries where English was used as the sole or one of the official languages and he believed that it was important for him to continue learning English.

If you go to other countries, if you go to foreign country like Canada, Australia, you need to know English. That's most important that you have to know English. (Edi: interview)

Having a lived experience that English was pragmatic and widely accepted across the world, Edi strongly believed that it was sufficient for him to concentrate on English and not Chinese. His continuity in Chinese language was thus limited as a school subject in order to meet his parents' expectation regarding his academic performance.

On the other hand, having been raised and having lived in Hong Kong for almost two decades, the two brothers Joe and Ni were able to communicate in fluent English and basic Cantonese. Through the inculcation in the family and schools, the English that they used in the home environment and with friends of other language minorities

such as Catholic Filipinos was their lingua franca. These two brothers perceived English as their first language and a cultural capital that it was not only able to be converted into academic attainment but also helped them to be popular among the Chinese peers because it is employed as the MOI in the tertiary institutions they were studying.

Joe: At class, I would use English with English-speaking classmates and Cantonese with local classmates... My English language ability does help me communicate with my peers and classmates in university...I do have the upper hand when it comes to working with people who don't speak at a native level.  
(Joe: interview)

Ni: English helps me in my degree studies and has made me more popular in my programme...During group work I often edit the work of the group by correcting their English sometimes even redoing a lot. (Ni: interview)

'Linguicism' or linguistic discrimination is culturally and socially determined due to a preference for the use of one language over another (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 2008: 2898-2910). Structural and cultural inequality ensures the continued allocation of more material resources to English than the other languages. English has emerged as the dominant and legitimate language in Hong Kong while it has been chosen as the designated medium in designated schools to suit the needs of the language minority students mostly from the former British colonies. Seen through a Bourdieuian lens, it benefits those students who are proficient in English or those with

the English linguistic habitus so that they can reproduce cultural capital such as academic achievement more easily than those without it. Joe and Ni, who used English to communicate in their family, were superior to their Chinese counterparts who had other linguistic habitus and proficiency. Considering English was a language inculcated through familial and institutional habitus, Joe and Ni who mastered English well were advantaged in academic performance as if a fish in water (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127).

Educational research worldwide has shown that students learn better through their mother tongue (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989; Baker & Sienkewicz, 2000; Cummins, 2000, 2001; Baker, 2014). While the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development and has positive effects on children's linguistic and educational development (Cummins, 2001; Buhmann & Trudell, 2008), it is unlikely that students like Mar and Jas could benefit from the mother-tongue education due to their unique linguistic habitus produced and reproduced within their households. The current finding might shed light on the phenomenon about the academic underachievement of most South Asians studying in designated schools (Gao, 2011; Kennedy, 2012; Tsung & Gao, 2012) as English was hardly their mother tongue.

### ***Inverse Immersion***

The findings also indicate that the longer the generation of the participants such as Mar and Jas in Hong Kong, the more the languages they acquired and used in the daily living. In addition to their mother tongue of Punjabi, the languages of English, Chinese, Hindi and/or Urdu were learnt and taught in the designated school. Being overwhelmed by the heavy school workload, Mar and Jas quitted the elective subjects of Hindi and Urdu in their Secondary 5 study. While they were expected then to be better off in the Chinese language under the provision of the systematic Chinese lessons, an unusual phenomenon that I would describe as '*inverse immersion*' took place to cater for their social needs in the school. Mar acquired Urdu and became fluent in this language through daily conversation with her peers.

With them... I speak Chinese and English, Urdu. With that guy, like, I speak with them in Urdu. Actually mostly in my class is like all Pakistani, Indian and Nepalese. So I speak Urdu because even Nepalese understand Urdu. So we speak Urdu, Urdu and English. (Mar: interview)

The national language of India and Pakistan 'Standard Urdu' is mutually intelligible with 'Standard Hindi' because both languages share the same Indic base and are all but indistinguishable in phonology and grammar (Lust *et al*, 2000: 637). Upon analysis, languages were in fact acquired through a dual mechanism within the designated school. The first mechanism was provided through the official curricula. The majority of the language minority students were grouped into the GCSE Chinese

Language class so that they were isolated from the Chinese native speakers of the HKDSE Chinese Language class. In this regard, there were very few, or even no Chinese counterparts studying with the language minority students in the same class. The second mechanism, unofficial but powerful, was established through peer entities enabling the participants to become actively immersed in such language environment. Consequentially, an interruption took place and that the language minority students were inversely immersed in a language environment full of Hindi and Urdu speakers. Gradually, the student participants developed their various degrees of proficiency in Urdu and/or Hindi from daily interaction with the other South Asian peers in the class.

Habitus is about cumulative exposure to certain social conditions and it instills in individuals an ensemble of ‘durable and transposable dispositions’ that internalised the necessities of the extant social environment (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 13). Through the Bourdieuan lens, immersion through interactions in a selected language speaking environment seems to be a key factor and pedagogy for successful language acquisition at least in conversation level.

## **Conclusion**

To speak of habitus is to assert that the individual, and even the personal, the subjective, is a social collective (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 126). In societies with

education, the primary habitus inculcated through the family then comes into contact with a system - the school (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 47). When I assumed that Mar was fluent in Urdu simply because she was a Pakistani whilst the rest should be fluent in Hindi because of their Indian ethnicity, the findings indicate my lack of awareness in the South Asia histories and its language complexities.

Jas, who had been given the chance to learn Cantonese from her mother since birth and continued to use this language to converse with her mother and stepfather at home, was the only one of the six participants that could speak fluent Cantonese in terms of being able to use a variety of vocabulary to communicate with the researcher. Then Mar, who learnt basic Chinese from her father while Punjabi continued to be the dominant language used at home, was able to speak basic Chinese in her daily life. Meanwhile, Edi and his father, Mr. T, who had learnt to speak, read and write the language of Tamil and continued to use this language at home in Hong Kong, were confident in using this language as well as identifying themselves as Indian Tamil. Meanwhile, Joe and Ni, who had been taught Konkani at home, were confident with their English.

Based on the cultivated gaze, immersion under certain language contexts/fields do shape the language minorities' linguistic habitus in order to gain the valued linguistic capital. On the other hand, the transformations of the participants' habitus

suggest that their submission resided in the unconscious fit between their habitus and the fields they operated within (*ibid*: 24). With this understanding in mind, the field is the locus of relations of force and of struggles which aim to transform it, and therefore of endless change (*ibid*: 103).

## **Chapter Summary**

The findings in this chapter refer to the background contexts of six South Asian language minority participants. In examining the household size and the gender roles, I have outlined the characteristics of their familial habitus which they had improvised by synthesising the living-in cultures to succeed in their transition and adaptation into the Hong Kong environment. Moreover, I have outlined and articulated the complexities of the participants' linguistic habitus. Compared to their local Chinese counterparts just focusing on Chinese and English in schools, the South Asian language minorities very often had to learn at least three languages in designated schools, namely Chinese, English and Hindi/Urdu. English was seldom their mother tongue, while it was the MOI in the designated school; this sheds light on the underachievement of most South Asian students in the local designated schools.

On the other hand, I have highlighted that immersion through interaction seems to be important for successful language acquisition. I now turn to focus on the

factors/motives that affect the language acquisition of the participants and that facilitate their improvisations in Hong Kong.

## **Chapter 5 Adaptation and Transformation of Linguistic Habitus**

This chapter explores the factors that lead to the adaptation and transformation of linguistic habitus of the language minorities in different fields. Based on the participants' residential addresses, I utilise Mosaic Hong Kong to explore their home locations to interpret their socio-economic status and languages used in the neighbourhoods. I illustrate that for those designated school student participants being segregated from their Chinese counterparts, the acquisition of the Chinese language was stressed only when it was a prerequisite for their ideal jobs. Also, I examine the participants' opportunities to interact with the local Chinese counterparts which were key factors in their Chinese language acquisition.

## **Introduction**

The findings of the last chapter illustrate that the participants' familial and linguistic habitus underwent transformation in order to adapt into the Hong Kong environment to make the place their homeland. Through a Bourdieuian lens, they struggled over the scarce resources within the new sovereign power, and the accompanying rewards based on the rules of the game played in Hong Kong. To win the game, they adapted gradually and transformed their habitus strategically, given their relations with others (King, 2000: 425).

Habitus in the field provides not just internalized dispositions towards a certain practice based on the social position, but a feel for the rules of the game and a sense of likelihood of various outcomes derived from the practices. Drawing on this Bourdieuian understanding, I contend that habitus is not only an unconscious embodiment of social structure but also a conscious and intellectual sense of acts in the field (Byrom, 2008; Crozier *et al.*, 2011; Jo, 2013). I therefore refer to the participants' socio-economic status and the environments where they acted daily as social arenas to examine the adaptation and transformation of their linguistic habitus, in particular their language practice.

## **Socioeconomic status**

Socioeconomic classifications are frequently employed to understand where individuals are positioned in terms of class habitus in educational research (vide Barbeau *et al.*, 2004; Archer *et al*, 2005; Geyer *et al*, 2006; Byrom, 2008; Crozier *et al.*, 2011). Investigation into the socioeconomic status of the participants may shed light on whether class fraction would relate to the participants' re/production of Chinese language as cultural capital.

Housing is the most scarce and valuable resource in Hong Kong and therefore provides the potential to be used as a component of socioeconomic status measure. Furthermore, location and housing types are generally recognised as the most important determinant of residential property or housing value and thus able to reflect the socioeconomic status of the households (Coffee *et al*, 2013). Empirical research results indicated the importance of neighbourhood socio-economic effect on human development, with those living in higher socio-economic areas showing more positive results in educational achievement, behavioural and emotional outcomes (Coffee *et al*, 2013; Martens *et al*, 2014). In the absence of the information about participants' household income provided by the participants, Mosaic Hong Kong was adopted as the major component for socioeconomic classifications in the research.

Mosaic Hong Kong is a geo-demographic segmentation system that classifies all

Hong Kong households and neighbourhoods into 38 unique Mosaic types and 12 groupings that share similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics (Hongkong Post Circular Service, 2012; Experian, 2015). Information about statistical items and the segment types of Mosaic Hong Kong is shown in Appendix 6. The housing and neighbourhood types, the information about the households of the participants are listed in Table 3.

Participants	Housing Type	Neighbourhood Types	Household information			
			Participants or Parents' Occupations (students only)		Participants or Parents' Education Background (students only)	
			Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Mar	Public rental housing	G22 - G23 Average families in affordable public blocks	Custom clothing shop owner	Housewife	F.3 in Hong Kong	Junior secondary in Pakistan
Jas	Public rental housing	F18- F21 Mid-to-low income families living in urban & suburban subsidised homes	Law firm clerk (Stepfather)	Hotel receptionist	F. 7 in Hong Kong (Stepfather)	F.5 in Hong Kong
Edi	Privately owned flat in expatriate residential area	B05 Well-off Families	Trading company owner	Part-time tutor and housewife	Master's degree in Business from India	Master's degree in Economics from India
Mr. T			Trading company owner			
Joe	Average urban private housing	C09 Middle-class Pleasure	Multi-national company manager	Bank administrator	Bachelor degree in Science from India	Bachelor degree in Banking from India
Ni						

**Table 3:** Socioeconomic status of the participants' households

## **Class-fraction-based language practice**

Action is not merely a personal choice but a strategy that emerged from an unconscious calculation of profit and a strategic positioning within a social space to maximise individual holdings with respect to their availability (Grenfell, 2004: 44).

Research findings indicated that there were associations between the participants' socio-economic status and their practice to acquire the Chinese language.

Upon cluster analysis of Mosaic Hong Kong, Mar's domicile was classified as Type G22 - G23 the 'Grass Roots Living Average Families in Affordable Public Blocks' with the following characteristics:

It symbolises the average households living in large public housing complexes in urban or new town areas...There are a high proportion of young and teenage children within this group. The adults tend to have relatively low education. Most of them work in manufacturing, wholesale or construction...They earn an income that is below average...Some of the public blocks have a small shopping centre with supermarkets, wet markets, kindergartens and bus stations nearby (Hongkong Post Circular Service, 2012)

Mar and her family were living in a public housing flat where households were predominantly Chinese and thus the facilities and service provisions were in the language of Chinese. When Mar's father was at work while her mother was unable to converse in Chinese language, Mar, being the elder daughter, became the person helping her mother in household chores. Chinese language became a pragmatic tool for her to accomplish the daily activities.

Actually, I really notice something. When I go to the Chinese shop, when they see me speaking Chinese, 平 d 啦, 学生嚟, 無咁多錢, 唔該你... (translation in English: cheaper please, I'm a student, have no money, please...). 你又識中文, 几好呀! ok, 好啦, 平 d 比你 (translation in English: It's good you know Chinese. Ok, cheaper for you). (Mar: interview)

Bourdieu believes that habitus leads people to be pre-occupied by certain future outcomes inscribed in the present they encounter only to the extent that their habitus sensitises and mobilises them to perceive and pursue these outcomes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 26). Although Mar shared that her family was financially self-sufficient, less affluent extended family members surrounded her. Being perceived as a source of assistance by her relatives, she was nurtured with a wish to be a social worker so that she could help all Pakistanis who were in need. Despite her parents' comparatively low education, their emotional support became Mar's aspiration to pursue her career dream. She attributed her plan as a social worker to her father's teaching and encouragement.

And all the aunties...always come to me and say "I have no money for this and baba... because my husband only has 6000 salary or 7000 salary". Whenever I hear all these, and I really want to be a social worker, and I want, you know, work out on these things...I want to be a social worker, so I hope so I can do it social worker...This thing comes from parents. They are like, even from basically my dad he always teaches us to help others and his job. So whenever he comes, he likes, "Maybe you can do this, Mar, you'd better, like it's not like Chinese, you have to take it serious and accept". Then I always tell him that you always teach us to respect the elderly and give them their right. (Mar: interview)

Being determined to be a qualified social worker in Hong Kong to help her people, Mar developed a sense of the game that informed her about the appropriate acts to become a social worker. She understood that she had to pass the GCSE in Chinese in order to be eligible to enrol into any local social work training programme. Also, she knew that she had to be able to speak and write Urdu so that she could be hired to serve the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

Actually, language, language, first of all. An overseas Chinese (examination) in Hong Kong, then I need to pass the qualification, I mean, up to their standard...If I want to be a social worker, I surely help my Pakistani and Indian... So I need Urdu as well to communicate with them. If they only know how to write Urdu, if they write something, so I can tell my Chinese colleague what they are writing, what they are saying. For that sense, I want to learn Urdu as well. (Mar: interview)

On the other hand, Jas and her family were living in a public housing flat. Both of her parents were semi-professional employees while her elder brother was working as a full-time pub manager. With a bigger household size and being able to pay more rent, her domiciliary of Mosaic Hong Kong was classified as Type F18- F21 ‘Mid-to-low Income Families Living in Urban and Suburban Subsidised Homes’ with the following characteristics:

Comfy Subsidised Homes are inhabited by lower-middle class families residing in better quality public apartments...mostly in the new town areas, or in high-end public rental estates. Many of them are young and growing families with school-age or grown-up children...Most of them have completed secondary

school education, earning average income. They work in a variety of occupations, as white collar workers, shop sales and service workers (Hongkong Post Circular Service, 2012).

Jas and her family did their shopping in a local supermarket where goods labels were displayed in both English and Chinese. However, the experience told her that competence in the Chinese language was essential as it was the language in which to converse with the supermarket workers hired to serve mainly local Chinese.

Because living in Hong Kong and we know Chinese, you feel a bit like... you do not feel helpless. Because when we look at other people, like other people from our country, and they do not know Chinese. Like even if you saw them anywhere in the place, like some ParknShop, some shops, they cannot communicate, it's really difficult for them to find stuff they need (Jas: interview)

Just like her parents and elder brother, further study was not Jas's option. Following the familial habitus of her parents and elder brother who were working in the service industry, Jas was eager to pursue her career dream to be a flight attendant after the completion of her secondary school education. To play the game to be a flight attendant, she kept assessing her eligibility for the job. So when she was asked whether there was any barrier for her to pursue her career dream, she was clear of the language requirements of the job.

Because I think the other requirements are easy. They need written and spoken English which I am really good at. So spoken Chinese only, they don't need written and they need like another language. So I think I pass in that. We know Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi... they don't need written stuff, only spoke. Yes! (Jas: interview)

In the case of Jas, she had already been inculcated with the partial valued linguistic habitus from her parents and extended family so that she was able to speak the languages required for her dream job. As a result, she was satisfied with her linguistic capital and thus not really motivated to make further effort in any language acquisition.

[Hindi] is not my subject. I choose geography, THS tourism for my elective...I am ok with other languages...(Jas: interview)

Edi, who was living in the private middle-class expatriate housing area, provided a different story. Edi, dressed in an ironed uniform and shiny leather shoes, lived in the Western District of Hong Kong Island classified by Mosaic segmentation tool of neighbourhood types as ‘Type B05 Well-off Families’ with the following characteristics:

Well-off Families represents a collection of middle-aged, married couples with children living in upper-middle class communities. Most adults are well educated and well paid white-collar professionals, managers and executives...They have a median household income of HK\$38,000, and half of them are homeowners without a mortgage (Hongkong Post Circular Service, 2012).

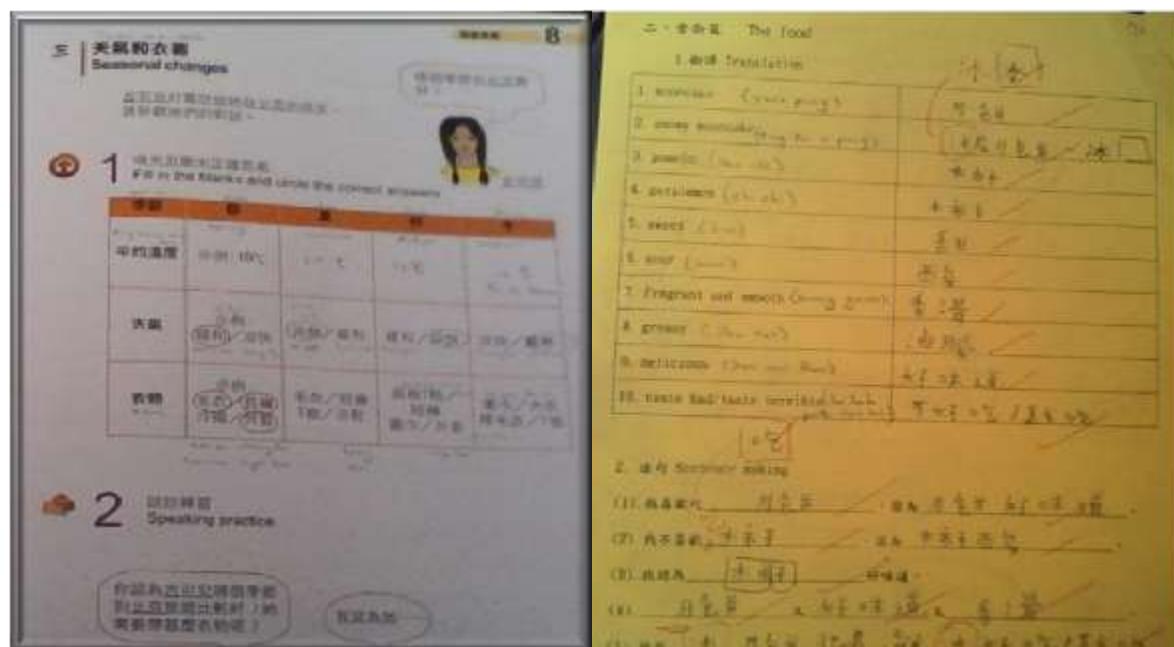
Edi had a unique view on Chinese language acquisition. He viewed himself as different from his South Asian schoolmates in socioeconomic terms. He was free to play basketball that required no language and was able to have tea with friends after school. Chinese was purely a school subject to him while it was an instrument for those schoolmates who had to acquire it to earn their living.

So basketball for me, this sport does not need communication. You don't need language. You just ask, you just throw...if I am with my school friends or friends which I know, I go out with them have lunch or dinner...Pakistani and Indian can speak fluent Chinese because they work outside part-time job, so it's important for them to learn Chinese. So they have learnt. So they know fluent Chinese. (Edi: interview)

Being sufficiently provided for by his parents, Edi did not view that he had to learn Chinese in order to find himself a part time job. Also, he did not have any reason to learn Chinese when life comfort could be obtained through Tamil or English in Hong Kong. To Edi, the Chinese language was purely a compulsory subject of no use and he had very little interest in it. He tried to cope with the Chinese homework by viewing it as drawing lines and figures.

In P.6, I had a really bad handwriting in Chinese. Later I became better and better because of my drawing. My drawing skills make me have a good handwriting in Chinese. I draw Chinese out, just copy and paste. (Edi: interview)

He showed the researcher his Chinese language text book and worksheet that he found boring and meaningless (Photo 3):



**Photo 3:** Edi's Chinese text book and worksheet

Having sufficient financial resources, he did not have to speak the local providers' language for what he wanted. Instead, he was free to choose and purchase services from providers who could speak his languages, which were Tamil or English. He learnt yoga and badminton from a Tamil speaking instructor and he learnt painting and drawing from a Chinese teacher who could explain the skills to him in English. He and his family would consult physicians who spoke English when they felt unwell. Moreover, a taxi was chosen when he and his family went out together so as to save them from language hazards.

[B]ecause of my dad. Because in Hong Kong, we have an association, call Tamil Cultural Association, we all Tamil people in Hong Kong gather together. So even the coach where he is, all Tamil people gather together ...

He just need to guide me how to draw, he just need to show me how to draw so that I can learn. But he knows how to speak English, I can learn many things from him....

We make our [medical] appointment by phone, because it's a machine talk to us in phone so that it talks to us in English.

When I got on the taxi with my family, we wanted to go to Canton Road in Tsimshatsui... Canton Road, which one? He just asked it in English. (Edi: interview)

Despite research studies identifying inequalities encountered by the South Asian language minority students in education as a result of having inadequate Chinese language skills (vide Loper, 2004; Ku *et al*, 2005; Carmichael, 2009; Gao, 2011; Cunanan, 2012; Ngo, 2013), having insufficient Chinese language skill did not create any barrier for Edi at all. His economic and cultural capital allowed him to escape from the competition field in Hong Kong and to be free in making choices of his study plan in places where the language of English was used.

So that I have planned business and account in Australia or Canada...and it depends on the language. In Australia and Canada, mainly talk in English. So it's really easy to put up and communicate with others in English if you have a doubt. (Edi: interview)

The class habitus of Edi and the economic capital provided by his parents not only enabled him to access various services but also cultivated him to reproduce

continuous class-fraction cultural capital in terms of hobbies, life-style, aspiration and language practice. The language of Chinese was thus never a must for Edi to acquire or to be inculcated through the secondary habitus as his cultural capital. As a result, he declared his disinterest in speaking the Chinese language.

I am not interested in making Chinese friends. And second is...if you know Chinese, you can make Chinese friends. If you learn Chinese, you know how to speak Chinese, you can make Chinese friends. If you don't know, if you don't speak Chinese, then sometimes, some people make Chinese friends, some people don't. I don't. (Edi: interview)

Although Edi's class habitus allowed him to be free from the Chinese language acquisition, his father Mr. T who has the same class habitus under the same roof, told a different story. Mr. T, could surely survive in Hong Kong with merely English as many expatriates did. However, it was interesting to note that he adapted his linguistic habitus since he had departed from the confining designated school environment. The world views of the one bounded within the arena of the designated school and the one outside the school appeared to be different.

### **Identification and Participation as Hongkongers**

The legal status of Cantonese was firmly established for the first time only after the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. The language policy of bi-literacy

referring to written Chinese and English; and tri-lingualism referring to spoken Cantonese, English and Putonghua (Lee & Leung, 2012: 2) was conceived and implemented by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Policy Address of 2001 (Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2001: 11). Also, it is being adopted as a tool to unify the people of Hong Kong. Mr. T accepted the reality grudgingly.

Since Cantonese is the culture of the Hong Kong people, they need to look after it; they want their children to learn...Now my children are studying in primary and secondary schools. They are made to learn Chinese as compulsory. (Mr. T: interview)

Hall (2013) argues that the first layer of social identity can be defined by one's membership in categories in which one was born such as religion and race, while the second layer may develop through one's involvement in various activities of social institutions that comprise communities (*ibid*: 31). Since Cantonese functions as the lingua franca in the Hong Kong Chinese community, the locally-born children of immigrant dialect speakers had to assimilate to the majority-community's Cantonese norm through schooling in order to call themselves 'Hongkongers' (Bauer, 1984: 58-59; Phillipson *et al.*, 2011: 5-7). However, when local South Asian language minorities in Hong Kong are expected to be competent in three languages, students of the designated schools were deprived of the opportunity to learn Chinese with the

other Chinese students that was contradictory to the existing language policy. Mr. T noted discontentedly that:

Even today in primary school, they are separating the students. The local Chinese students are put in another class. They don't want the standard of Chinese to come down, fine. So they are putting other language minority students into another class. They find a difference in the standard. But it doesn't happen in English. The Chinese students' fluency is not that much but they are still in the same class. So, is it a kind of discrimination, I don't know?  
(Mr. T: interview)

The distribution of different kinds of capital determines how people act in a market, a structured space of positions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 100-101).

Although Mr. T noted that English was an official language and language minorities could survive with it in Hong Kong, he agreed tacitly that Cantonese was an important cultural and symbolic capital of which he possessed little. When an interruption took place and Mr. T wanted to access the local political field, he managed to compromise on utilising his limited Cantonese skill in order to participate in the meetings of the District Council aiming to represent local interests.

We have a new arrival committee. In that, I am a member... I am a language minority person, the meeting conducted in Chinese because every member is Chinese... So normally they communicated in Cantonese. With my fluency and Cantonese, maybe 20% I can understand the conversation. The rest I can guess. The chairlady or the chairperson helps in the translation. Another member always helps me with the main points. If I don't understand, I ask. It's how it works. (Mr. T: interview)

Being a non-Chinese member in the New Arrival Committee under the District Administrative Department where it was dominated by Chinese, Mr. T made his compromise to attend the meetings conducted in Cantonese.

Bourdieu argues that an official language can be considered as linguistic capital which affords its holders symbolic power while it underlies the process of linguistic unification (Bourdieu, 1991: 46-48). As suggested in the Thematic Household Survey of 2013 (Census and Statistics Department, 2013: 8-12), Cantonese was used as Hong Kong people's main daily language in a wide range of domains, such as interactions with family members, friends and colleagues, movies and television programmes, workplace meetings, as well as court inquests, Legislative Council and District Councils debates, the MOI at schools, and government press releases (Lee & Leung: 2012: 2). The socio-political history of Hong Kong has enforced Cantonese as the linguistic habitus of Hongkongers.

In fact, when local language minorities seek to promote social approval as primarily Hongkongers, the spoken language of Cantonese is always selected as the distinctive cultural and symbolic capital for such identification (Tong *et al.*, 1999: 282-283). Mr. T's compromise in language in the tri-lingual Hong Kong might signal his affiliation with his new identity (Pennington, 1998: 7). That is, his participation into the new arrival committee, despite the fact that all meetings were conducted in

Cantonese, might signify the adaptation and on-going habitus transformation with his new social identification from an immigrant into a 'Hongkonger'.

The mechanisms which underlie the process of linguistic unification presuppose the political or economic unification that they help in turn to reinforce (Bourdieu, 1991: 50). Joe admitted that the language of Cantonese functioned as a pathway for him to get more up-to-date information of local politics and thus provided him opportunities to get involved. An interruption eventually took place in the second year of Joe's study. He was invited by Chinese fellow students to run the departmental committee together. Joe was recognised by the local Chinese as one of their own group.

The political experiences of Mr. T and Joe illustrated that inclusion and unification lead to the use of Cantonese as their second common spoken language. It provided them as users with linguistic, economic and symbolic capital. They in turn had an interest in supporting the adaptation and transformation of their linguistic habitus that allowed them to exert symbolic domination and mastership in certain extent.

### **Social Affiliation and Mutual Acceptance**

After graduating from secondary school, Joe and Ni entered into tertiary

institutions where their colleagues were no longer language minorities. The majority were local Chinese who spoke Cantonese. Perceiving the institution as a field, it is a network, space of potential and active forces. It is also a field of struggles aimed at preserving or transforming the configuration of the forces (Wacquant, 1989: 39-40).

Joe recalled his social struggle in the university where the majority of students were Chinese.

Since almost everyone in my department are local Chinese. I have no choice but to communicate in Cantonese with my classmates. There're times that I struggle with communicating with them and expressing myself. I have no choice and that's the only way I can fit in with them. (Joe: interview)

To safeguard or improve the positions in the tertiary institutions, where Chinese students dominated the informal network, Joe and Ni maximised their English language ability as their valuable capital, given that English was adopted as the medium of instruction and the required language for assignments. Strategically, Joe and Ni chose not to act as the South Asian language minority members they had been in the designated school but positioned themselves as the rare native English speakers. As a result, their cultural capital converted into social capital that they won not only recognition but also friendship from their Chinese peers.

Joe: My English language ability does help me communicate with my peers and classmates in university... I do have the upper hand when it comes to working with people who don't speak at a native level. (Joe: interview)

Ni: English has made me more popular in my programme it is because I'm one of the few non-Chinese students. Some people are genuinely curious to make friends and know more about people who speak English. Therefore some people come up to me to talk. (Ni: interview)

When Joe and Ni, who were inculcated with the linguistic habitus of English, encountered English as the MOI in the tertiary institutions, they were like 'fish in water' without feeling the weight of the water. They did not feel any stress of using English but took the designated MOI environments for granted as if they had been at home (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127-128). The strategies were considered meaningful because they exhibited the symbolic relevance that Joe, Ni and their Chinese counterparts considered such strategies to be of significant value. Subsequently, a positive network of relations developed which gradually enabled Joe and Ni to transition from out-group to in-group members in the communities dominated by Chinese students.

In-group Hongkongers are the native speakers of Cantonese in Hong Kong (Lai, 2005: 366) or those Hong Kong people who can communicate with the in-group language of Cantonese (Tong *et al.*, 1999: 285). Since the peer group identification was strong, the local Chinese students tended to use the in-group language of Cantonese to communicate with Joe and Ni. To transform and qualify Joe and Ni to be in-group members within the Chinese student communities in the tertiary

institutions, these two brothers were enabled by their Chinese peers to develop the new linguistic habitus of Cantonese through their daily encounters. Joe and Ni shared their experiences of being inculcated with the linguistic habitus of Cantonese that:

Joe: In my department, I have to use Cantonese with them. When there're meetings, always in Cantonese...

I learned Chinese by slowly learning new words off my local friends and I started practicing it by speaking to them. The only way to learn the language is to keep using it and applying it to situations in daily life.

Learning Chinese has helped me to engage in a conversation with most Hong Kong people. It has also helped me make many friends and makes me have a sense of belonging toward Hong Kong. It has also made me more involved with politics in Hong Kong. I would definitely say Chinese is very important in Hong Kong (Joe: interview)

Ni: I... try my best to communicate in Chinese with my Chinese friends usually when I order at restaurants, communicate with shop keepers or communicate with people while playing basketball. I would speak Chinese, however if the conversation gets too complex I would squeeze in some English words or seek help from friends that could translate... My friends often teach me Cantonese slang in exchange for me teaching them some English ones. (Ni: interview)

Gradually, Joe and Ni's habitus including spoken languages, diet, thinking, feelings and behaviours underwent transformation under the influence of his Chinese peers.

Habitus acts as a kind of transforming machine that leads social agents to reproduce the social conditions of their production (Klibthong, 2012: 73). The tertiary institutions of fields formed the interactive and inclusive environments so as to motivate Joe and Ni to acquire the language of Cantonese to be fit in the identification of Hongkongers. Being recognised and included as in-group members as Hongkongers, by their Chinese peers, Joe and Ni were more eager to reproduce Cantonese as their cultural capital in order to communicate with their local Chinese counterparts. Being able to inculcate with the new linguistic habitus of Cantonese, Joe and Ni were enforced to identify themselves as Hongkongers in reciprocal terms.

Although habitus is personal and subjective, it is social and collective (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 126). Back to the early 1980s about twenty-five years ago, another South Asian language minority member, Mr. T, first contacted and developed his linguistic habitus of Cantonese through ‘inverse immersion’ that is similar to the social affiliation experienced by Joe and Ni nowadays. He shared that:

In 1981, I joined the [designated] school. In those days, there was no Chinese language class... We had a lot of Chinese friends in the class. I learnt Chinese from the classmates because we were in the same class. I learnt it when communicated with them. So there was no pressure to learn Chinese in those days. We didn't know how to read or write Chinese. Because of the friendship with the Chinese, we learnt how to speak. (Mr. T: interview)

As the above findings may imply, social affiliation and friendships providing

interactive learning environments have been deemed to be significant and effective factors for the South Asian language minorities to acquire Cantonese as their cultural capital in the colonial and post-colonial eras. Research across the world also indicates that friendship is one of the key and effective factors in offering immersion condition for people learning a foreign or second language (*vide* Noels *et al.*, 2003; Harrison & Thomas, 2009; Cohen, 2014).

In other words, social affiliation provides social arenas for the language minorities to cultivate their proficiency in Chinese through exposure in the natural and realistic environment, in addition to acquiring an understanding of the local Chinese culture. Through the Bourdieuan lens, immersion can be one of the effective ways to empower the language minorities to succeed in adapting and transforming their habitus so as to produce the language of Chinese as their cultural capital.

## **Conclusion**

The above findings are an attempt to understand the language minorities' preferences in action by using the relational notions of habitus, capital and field. Bourdieu understands the social world as being divided up into a variety of distinct arenas or fields of practice. The three designated student participants spending a significant proportion of time in the confining designated school environment, the

social spaces that they were living in were classified as various class fractions that operated with each of their own acts and certain practices. For example, Mar was located in the working-class fraction field as suggested by the Mosaic analysis that the Chinese language was required for her to accomplish daily activities and as an essence to formulate her career plan. With a sense that Chinese dominated the job market, and the language of Chinese would be a must, she had to follow the game rule of the given field, that is, to produce Chinese language as her cultural capital.

On the other hand, Jas claimed that she was fluent in Cantonese, Punjabi, English and Hindi which she had inculcated through her familial and institutional habitus. Living in an environment and planning to work in the field where all the above languages would be used; Jas felt content with her existing language competences and thus became passive in reproducing Chinese language as her cultural capital.

Being competent in the Tamil and English languages that were inculcated through his familial and institutional habitus, Edi felt congruent and content in his middle-class fraction living style where both Tamil and English languages could be used. In the case of Edi, his middle-class fraction habitus was the ultimate factor that enabled him to choose to live in a non-Chinese-speaking field. Under the circumstance that Edi did not require to live in a field where Chinese language was dominant, it made sense that he had no urge or motivation in producing Chinese

language as his cultural capital.

Linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power through which relations of force between the speakers and their respective groups are actualised in a transfigured form (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 142). Individuals who have strong group identification will hence consider language as an important symbol of their identity (Tong *et al.*, 1999: 283). Although Mr. T, Joe and Ni were also classified as middle class, their linguistic habitus underwent gradual transformation after they had proceeded to the arenas dominated by the Chinese counterparts, that is, immersed in a Chinese speaking world. Even though Mr. T, Joe and Ni could rely on their English to live in Hong Kong as many other expatriates did, findings suggest that self-acceptance or identification as Hongkongers and being accepted as in-group members by local Chinese peers that provided opportunities and experiences for immersion could be determining factors for them to acquire the language of Chinese particularly the spoken Cantonese as their social and cultural capitals.

## **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have examined the experiences and views of the participants to re/produce languages as their capital for market exchanges and livelihood to expand our understanding of the twenty-first century language landscape of the language

minorities in Hong Kong. I have focused on the economic positions of the participants and outlined their language practice according to their class fractions in different fields. Among the student participants, I have highlighted that Chinese language acquisition is important only for those who want to re/produce it as a capital for economic exchange. By highlighting the experiences, I have illustrated that the middle-class participants who can rely on English as their capital may have little motivation to acquire Chinese as their capital. However, I have shown that social identification as Hongkongers and being accepted as in-group members by local Chinese peers overruled the class-fraction-based buffer in Chinese language acquisition. In fact, they are strong factors that could motivate even the tenacious well-off language minorities to adapt and transform their linguistic habitus. I now move on discuss the findings in more detail and raise some concerns about the language minority participants' production of Chinese in designated schools and in contemporary society.

## **Chapter 6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I return to the research questions and consider how they have been addressed within the study. I outline how this study contributes to the understanding of the language practice of the South Asian language minorities; and also that which utilises the thinking tools of Bourdieu as a conceptual framework for exploring factors that attribute to the inculcation of Chinese language as linguistic habitus and capital.

## **Introduction**

Through the Bourdieuan lens, this study began by sharing my story and my journey to inculcate English as my linguistic habitus and cultural capital. I articulated the political history of Hong Kong on how the languages of Chinese and English were used and valued. I outlined the characteristics of the habitus of the participants in which a series of adaptations were observed so as to facilitate their living in Hong Kong. I shown that socio-economic status, social identification as Hongkongers and positive social relation with local Chinese were all related to the linguistic adaptation and transformation of the language minorities.

I now return to each of the posed questions and discuss in detail how they have been answered through this research:

**Question 1:** What are the characteristics of the familial and linguistic habitus of the South Asian language minorities in Hong Kong?

**Question 2:** What are the factors and/or motives that affect the South Asian language minorities' production and reproduction of Chinese language as their cultural capital?

## **What are the characteristics of the familial and linguistic habitus of the South Asian language minorities in Hong Kong?**

The research set out to explore the habitus of a group of South Asian language minorities, who were and had been students of the most historical designated school by the time they were interviewed for their stories. As such, the stories presented are not reflective of all language minorities. In exploring the experiences of this group of South Asian language minorities living in Hong Kong, a number of factors influencing the participants' language practice as they responded to their living experiences in Hong Kong are raised:

- The familial and linguistic habitus in relation to different social spaces
- Class fraction based language practice

## **Understanding Habitus and Social Space**

Family background including the family history, and the languages used in the family is one the determinants of language practice among the language minorities. Research findings indicate strong links between generation time and language adaptation of language minorities (vide Schmid, 2001; Lawrence *et al.*, 2012; Campbell, 2014). Also, others mention that parental talk is influential for child language outcomes (vide Caskey *et al.*, 2011; Baker, 2014). Such findings do not just occur, they are situated and constructed within struggles and historicity.

Familial habitus or the primary habitus is an embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history. It is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product (Bourdieu, 1990: 56; Reed-Danahay, 2005: 47). It is acquired initially by the young child in the home as a result of the conscious and unconscious practices of its family. Through observation and listening, the child internalises proper ways of looking at the world, ways of acting and behaving. In this research, the languages spoken by the language minorities within their families, which constitute their linguistic habitus, are strongly influenced by their familial habitus.

The language minority participants, whose parents and/or caretakers were born in places where dialects were used, were exposed to those dialects which were brought into those families where the process of inculcation had taken place. For Mar, it was Hindko and Punjabi; for Jas, it was Cantonese as well as Punjabi; for Mr. T and Edi, it was Tamil while it was the English as well as Konkani for Joe and Ni. Once a particular language exists and is used within the household, the younger generation acquires it from the older generation. Associated with immersion in a dialect speaking home environment, each participant has been undergoing the process of inculcation to acquire the linguistic habitus that guides her/his partial linguistic outcomes. The upbringing of the language minorities is clearly a decisive factor in the attainment of their own heritage languages.

Furthermore, multilingualism that characterises all six participants' linguistic habitus has illustrated the *complexity* of their familial habitus in terms of identity choices and cultural interaction of the language minorities in Hong Kong (Kwok & Narain, 2003: 271-278). As a strategy to be a 'South Asian', an 'Indian', a 'Pakistani', a 'Hongkonger' or any combinations of these ethnic identities living in an ex-colony heavily populated by Chinese while the families continue having the links with India or Pakistan, it provides the participants opportunities with different linguistic capitals to struggle for better positions in various social spaces.

Many citizens of former British colonies share a cultural connection with Britain. In the decades following decolonization, migrants from the New Commonwealth such as India and Pakistan settled in Britain and some chose to come to Hong Kong before 1997. English in a way is a bridge to join people of former colonies together. On the other hand, English has transformed from a colonial language to a global language when economic and political leadership passed from Britain to the United States in the early twentieth century (Evan & Green, 2001: 248). With the express wish of joining extended families in England or further study in any English-speaking country, Mar, Jas and especially Edi all believed that English was still important to them in different aspects. As a result, they spent a significant proportion of time, energy and resources in acquiring English language as their cultural capital.

As the findings show, the linguistic habitus of Chinese is basically absent in most participants' familial habitus. Jas was the only participant who was able to converse in Cantonese in the research interview. Jas was a third generation Indian in Hong Kong. Besides her one-year stay with her relatives in India where she picked up Punjabi, she counted on her mother and stepfather, who were born in Hong Kong and being able to speak Cantonese, to cultivate her spoken Chinese to a fluent level. On the other hand, the other five participants could only rely on the institutional or secondary habitus through education to develop their Chinese language skills.

Habitus is durable because it is formed over a long period of socialisation. For any household where the linguistic habitus of Chinese is absent, institutions become the second chance and most importance arena for the language minorities to inculcate such linguistic habitus to be part of their cultural capital. Through institutional habitus cultivation, the participants acquired English, Hindi, Urdu and Chinese as their 'second' language in the designated school. Between these four second languages, the linguistic habitus of Chinese was comparatively under-developed than the rest of the other three languages in the history of their designated school. In this case, the Chinese subject cannot simply be taught in designated schools as the first language as for the local Chinese students. A separate curriculum and assessment tool of teaching Chinese as a second language in the context of multilingualism have to be developed

to cater the students' unique educational needs.

Through a Bourdieuan lens, language is not merely a method of communication, but also a mechanism of power. Two years after the social-historical transition happened in Hong Kong in 1997, the Hong Kong government attempted to change the language situation by introducing the policy of 'biliterate in English and Chinese while trilingual in English, Cantonese and Putonghua' (Zhang, 2006: 104). The language issue has thus become a political war zone while education has become a language battlefield in Hong Kong.

Language acquisition requires not just knowledge of rules but a feel of the language or a practical sense for learning through time and experience, which the social agent is never perfect at and that takes prolonged immersion to develop it. The Chinese language is comparatively a new language that compulsorily brought into the education system of the designated school after 1997. However, the arrangement to separate the language minority students and the Chinese students into different classes is entirely unfavourable to Chinese language immersion. When English was employed as the MOI in the designated school while inverse immersion of Hindu and Urdu kept taking place in the classrooms, the participants were located in a social space that eliminated opportunities for language minorities to mingle with their Chinese counterparts.

The research findings are not purposed to scrutinise the historically-structured segregation arrangement of the designated school. Instead, the findings focus on uncovering the factors in relation to the South Asian language minority students being unable to inculcate with the linguistic habitus of Chinese effectively despite the fact that extra professional support has been provided for years. Unless the language minorities can be extensively exposed to a specialised habitus or immersion environment, the chance that they can be inculcated with the valued linguistic habitus of Chinese literacy will continue to be delimited within the present designated school environment.

### **Understanding Class-fraction-based Language Practice**

The socioeconomic status appear as an issue probably for the first time in a local study that it is associated with the language acquisition and practice of the South Asian language minorities. In this research, class analysis was not a matter of classifying and placing participants into pre-defined groups, rather it was used to look at the quantity and the types of capital the participants had, and the time they held that type of capital (Jewel, 2008: 1161). Therefore, the term 'class' here in the study is referring to the participant's specific place within a social sphere or field, as determined by the value, composition, and trajectory of her or his capital holdings

(*ibid*: 1162). The participants' linguistic practices hence are perceived and understood as part of their class-fraction-based practices.

By looking into the information of the segmentation tool of neighbourhood types by geographical areas in addition to participants and/or their parents' occupations, participants with higher socioeconomic status are equipped with much more capital that played a central role in societal power relations, as this provided choices and/or privileges in varying markets (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 46-47). Habitus is a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which integrating past experiences functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 18). The familial/primary habitus thus becomes an aspect of predisposing the children to engage in the processes of cultural reproduction in the setting of family. For Edi, Joe and Ni, whose parents are university-graduates, receiving or to receive tertiary education where English is employed as MOI became a natural choice and strategy of these three participants to maintain their social positions.

Also, the research findings show that class-fraction based habitus is a buffer as well as a driving force on the language minorities' Chinese language acquisition which it is particularly distinctive among the student participants. Findings suggest that class fractions, determined by a combination of the varying degrees of social,

economic and cultural capital could reflect trends in the participants' consumption correlating with their fit in society. Although Cantonese is the unmarked language for spoken communication, English is used in commercial and residential areas wherever expatriates and the educated middle-class are present (Evan and Green, 2001: 247).

Having a higher socioeconomic status meant that the language minorities could have choices and/or privileges in extensive dining, social and recreational facilities and schoolings where English as well as languages other than Chinese are used to serve expatriates and the prosperous group. Moreover, residing in the areas where store or restaurant staff could hold conversation in English, Edi who was inculcated with the 'high-class' language eventually felt it was pointless to produce Chinese language as his cultural capital.

Given that English as an international language for business and a historically preferred language for elites and professionals, participants who fall into these categories even knowing little Chinese tended to be of lesser importance for their daily living. For instance, although Mr. T spoke limited Cantonese and could not read or write any Chinese, his knowledge of English had contributed to his trading business success in Hong Kong. For many other language minorities doing business in Hong Kong, they can always mobilise their economic capital to hire bilingual staff to cope with the language needs of their business.

Unlike Mar and Jas, who needed to show their employability in the Chinese-speaking job market, Edi's further study plan in an English-speaking country would lead him and distance him from the Chinese speaking field. For participants who have comparatively less capital and have to compete with their Chinese counterparts in the semi or non-professional labour market, their lack of proficiency in Chinese can become an impediment to pursuing their career dreams when fluency in Chinese is a prerequisite.

Now I move to outline other influential factors which are core to the participants' decision to acquire the Chinese language as their capital.

**What are the factors and/or motives that affect the South Asian language minorities' production and reproduction of Chinese language as their cultural capital?**

In addition to the class-fraction based habitus, self-identification as Hongkongers and being accepted by local Chinese as in-group members are two other key factors that attribute to the South Asian language minorities' production and reproduction of Chinese language as their cultural and social capital. I have found that these two factors are particularly influential for the language minorities when they have direct interaction with the local Chinese after they left their designated school. The fields that valued the language of Chinese in this research included:

- the field of politics;

- arenas that one to accept and to be accepted as Hongkongers.

## **Understanding the Politics of Hong Kong**

Linguistic competence is not a simple technical ability, but a statutory ability. It functions effectively and is most visible in politics where spokespersons, being granted a monopoly over the legitimate political expression of the will of a collective, speak not only in favour of those whom they represent but also very often in their place (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 146-147). The sovereign powers of the English language as the language of administration in Hong Kong shifted to the sovereign powers of the Chinese language following the transfer of the government of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in 1997. Since then, the socio-political context has undergone apparent transformation, while linguistic competency has been exercised as a strategy to differentiate alliance and opposition.

An apparent change is that all expatriate official posts have been gradually disappearing since the post-colonial localisation policy has been implemented (Huque, 1998: 10). Meanwhile, a certain level of competency in the Chinese language becomes a pre-requisite for civil servant recruitments. On the other hand, non-Chinese no longer exist in the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, while there was only one language minority member who was elected as one of the 431

representatives for the 18 district councils (District Council Election, 2015).

Linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 142). In the last two District Council elections, there were two language minorities successfully elected as District Councillors. However, they encountered difficulties in not only attending the meetings conducted in Cantonese but also accessing district council papers and information on matters of public interest being available in Chinese only (Chan, 2012: 1). When the meetings and information were linguistically inaccessible to the language minorities, they were suppressed by the invisible symbolic violence that their political power was eventually impeditive to their political career in Hong Kong under the Chinese rule.

Mr. T was eager to preserve the member role of the new arrival co-coordinating committee where the language of Chinese was in use. To play the political game being dominated by the local Chinese, Mr. T compromised and chose to play the Hongkonger role. He surrendered himself to the language requirement of the committee meetings that were conducted in Cantonese—

Linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power through which relations of force between the speakers and their respective groups are actualised in a transfigured form (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 142). Individuals who have strong group identification hence consider language as an important symbol of their identity

(Tong, et al., 1999: 283). Although Mr. T might not be a swimming fish in the water, at least he was able to be a fish staying in the water. Due to Mr. T's proper strategy to be collaborative, the committee was given a chance to show the world about its intercultural capacity and inclusiveness. The research findings suggest that self-identification as a Hongkonger, while being accepted as an in-group member by the local Chinese, were partial determining factors for the language minorities to acquire the language of Chinese as their social and cultural capital.

### **Understanding Mutual Acceptance**

Every field constitutes a potentially open space of play whose boundaries are dynamic borders which are the stake of struggles within the field itself (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 104). The designated school used to be a popular school because the medium of education was English. In the 1960s, it attracted not only South Asians for admission but also local Chinese whose parents were desperate to send their children to receive affordable education in English. Currently, the students are multi-racial, predominantly coming from non-Chinese speaking communities. However, non-Chinese language minorities of better financial resources generally patronise the English Schools Foundation (abbreviated as ESF) institutions (Kwok & Narain, 2003: 136). Even nowadays, the general belief is that the designated school has attracted

children from poorer families, the stereotype of the family background being that the father is a watchman or a driver while the mother is a housewife or a worker (*ibid*: 32).

According to the notion of field, position-taking is unavoidable as agents have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution. To struggle for social capital in addition to cultural capital, local Chinese tend to patronise famous Anglo-Chinese schools or international schools where English is used as the MOI. When the number of the non-Chinese students significantly outnumbers Chinese students in the designated school, they have limited opportunities to interact with Cantonese speakers to cultivate the new linguistic habitus through immersion.

On the other hand, the university and the college where Joe and Ni were studying adopted cultural diversify approach. Cultural diversity is encouraged in Joe's university so that stereotyping against non-Chinese is weakened. Joe was perceived as a capable bi-lingual student. When all course work and presentations were required to be completed in English, Joe's linguistic capital of English not only led him to be one of the popular students but also won him a few Chinese friends in the programme. Similar to the experience of Mr. T, Joe decided to surrender to the local political norm that the departmental committee meetings were conducted in Cantonese. After he

utilised his linguistic capital of Chinese to understand the meeting contents, other members helped interpret the rest of the contents for him according to the Chinese reciprocity norm (Hwang, 2012: 93). Through the constant interactions and struggle in the embracing field of university, Joe admitted that he had learnt faster and picked up more Cantonese vocabulary which could outnumber the words he had learnt during his primary and secondary education. Through a Bourdieuian lens, Joe's linguistic habitus of Chinese had undergone transformation in relation to a field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 101).

On the other hand, Ni's institution attempted to take the 'global' approach to show the society that it was a leading institute that offered high quality degree programmes (THEi website, 2015). Having an outgoing personality and positioning himself as a native English speaker, Ni's linguistic capital of English was highly appreciated by the teaching staff and his course mates. He successfully attracted a lot of local Chinese peers to make friends with him soon after the programme started. Mingling with the Chinese peers in and out the lecture theatres, Ni interacted and soon integrated with them so that his linguistic habitus of Cantonese was able to be cultivated exquisitely.

Linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power through which relations of force (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 142). Following the promotion of

respect and appreciation of cultural diversity, mutual acceptance comes alive. It then creates an ideal atmosphere for language acquisition through immersion.

## **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study builds from and contributes to a number of literatures:

- Adopting habitus as a research method to gain a deeper understanding of the familial and linguistic habitus of the South Asian language minorities in Hong Kong;
- The language practice and acquisition of the South Asian language minorities in Hong Kong;
- Class-fraction based language practice;
- Inverse immersion in the designated school.

This study provides an understanding of the South Asian language minorities' linguistic habitus and their acquisition of the Chinese language through a Bourdieuan lens. The language practice is a series of complexities and it is far more than just a choice between Chinese and English. More specifically, the study explores the notion of language practice through the examination of factors that relate to the adaptation or transformation of the participants' habitus.

The participants' familial and linguistic habitus is acquired during primary and secondary habitus. Primary habitus refers to the socialisation that comes from the family during childhood. The participants' languages being inculcated during childhood is an education that is linked to the social positions of the parents as well as

other important family members in the social spaces. The secondary habitus results from the participants' education at schools and universities, but also from other life experiences. The primary habitus as embodied history, internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history never loses its impact and always influences the development of the secondary habitus (Walther, 2014: 13).

Habitus is strongly connected to field. The possibility of pursuing individual strategies by exchanging capital suggested that the language minorities are not puppets whose actions are manipulated by external field forces. Instead, they have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution (*ibid*: 14). As a result, the participants have a certain degree of liberty in their choice of strategies and practices. For example, Edi of middle-class background did not see his need to learn Chinese simply because all his daily needs could be met in the markets where English or Tamil was used. However, Mar who attempted to be a poverty fighter would have to acquire the Chinese language as a prerequisite in order to dip her toes into the local social work field. Each participant acted in accordance with the field specific rules as they tacitly recognised the value of the stakes of the game and the practical mastery of its rules (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 117).

This study explores not only the fundamental problem of student segregation but

also the ethnicity imbalance of the designated school that actually delimited the students' opportunities and abilities to undergo transformation of their linguistic habitus in an immersion environment. The lower enrolment rate of the Chinese students in designated schools and the arrangement to separate the language-minority students and the Chinese students into different classes not only eliminated their mingling chance but also distanced themselves from Chinese language immersion.

## **Policy Implications**

Positive experiences of constant interaction with Chinese Hongkongers in natural environments are shown to be an effective method for the participants to acquire Chinese for social development. Immersion is not only about acquiring the language in a suitable environment but also about the length of time for one being exposed to it. As experienced and favoured by Mr. T, to teach the language minorities to speak Cantonese through immersion would be most welcomed and practical. He contended that:

If you want to improve the Chinese standard of the students, you should put the local students and others into the same Chinese class, they will learn a little more than what they are learning now. The companionship, the friendship and peer-ship increase will improve; then they will converse in Chinese (Mr. T: interview).

However, I am concerned with the preliminary condition for social and cultural integration to provide a welcoming and embracing environment for immersion when a Chinese teacher of the designated school shared her heartfelt observation as the follows:

Cultural integration is just for writing on paper. We can behave nicely to make friends with EM (ethnic minorities), to be guest in special occasions but not to an extend that to integrate... For students, they have different hobbies and habits...They can be acquaintances but difficult to be close friends. (Teacher of the Chinese Language: interview)

To help develop the new linguistic habitus of the South Asian language minorities, promoting cultural responsiveness in the field of education requires immediate action. Policymakers and school personnel should encourage positive school environments for language minorities by inviting diversity into the field of education, schools and classrooms. The primary goal of culturally responsive education is to help all intra-school and inter-schools students become respectful of the multitudes of cultures and people that they will interact with once they are within and exit the educational setting (Villegas & Lucas, 2002: 21).

To provide an embracing immersion language environment for the language minorities to practice functional Cantonese in designated schools where the Chinese students are under numbered, buddy programmes between designated schools and non-designated schools and/or intensive peer-to-peer tutorial class to pair up Chinese

Hongkongers with language minorities may be an option. On the other hand, language minorities should be encouraged and empowered to utilise opportunities and take initiatives such as volunteer in various local activities organised by schools, non-governmental organisations and governmental agencies so as to acquire and to enhance their ability in Chinese language in natural environments while public education on racial harmony and integration should be intensified in the community.

When this study commenced in September 2014, there was little attention paid to the idea of immersion for the language-minority students. Following a brief encounter with the Career Guidance Headmistress of the designated school, an immersion programme in the form of partnership-mentorship with a local hotel was organised in the school year of 2015-16. In addition to broadening the language-minority students' academic portfolio, the programme provides students with opportunities to acquire and practice their vocational Cantonese in a real working situation. It is hoped that the cultural responsiveness and language immersion will be implemented thoroughly in all schools in Hong Kong.

### **Directions for Further Study**

Habitus is a complex notion and as a research method which seeks to explain language practice in this study. To formulate tailor-made immersion language

programmes, more information is needed about the South Asian language minorities' social backgrounds, the development of their primary and secondary familial and linguistic habitus. I am interested in the following areas worthy of further study:

- To explore and develop habitus as an inquiry method to gain deeper understanding on individuals' life histories and/or personal experiences in the social work and counselling field.
- An exploration of the possibilities and formats of Chinese immersion programme to enhance language minorities' adaptation and transformation of their linguistic habitus so that they can re/produce the language of Chinese as their cultural capital.

## **Chapter Summary**

South Asian language minorities make their decisions about language practice including the acquisition of Chinese as their capital based on a number of complex interactions mediated through educational and life processes. The habitus is instrumental in them positioning themselves and identifying an appropriate strategy that best reflects the emerging habitus in different social spaces. The next chapter offers my reflections on carrying out the Doctorate of Education study.

## **Epilogue - My Personal and Professional Reflexivity**

Be alert. Be watchful. Listen with a kind of fresh mind.

That's not easy, either listening with a fresh mind,

without prejudices, without fixed formulas

(De Mello, 2012: 16)

I narrate my reflexivity and reflection on the study. After nearly five years of training in the intellectual, I take this opportunity to explore the transformation of my personal and professional habitus.

## **Enlightenments**

Although I did not take my ladder-like education trajectory for granted, I used to attribute most of it to fate and luck, a belief that could be attributed to my Chinese habitus. In fact, it was only upon opening discussions with my supervisors regarding Bourdieu's work that I gradually became inspired by the space his writings open for thinking. After nearly five years of explorations of my research topic with Bourdieu's thinking tools, I came to realise that individual attitudes or decisions are made in light of the structural context surrounding actor s' lives (Horvat, 2003: 4).

Before knowing Bourdieu's interpretation of language as the notion of symbolic power, I could merely perceive language as a simple tool of communication. His notions of symbolic power and violence helped me focus on the important hidden and intrinsic rules of our social world, and guided me to look at individual action as a response to social systems and to examine the ways in which individual action shapes social structures. As a result, the goal of this study was not to examine individual interaction with the educational system or the language policy but rather to uncover the rules and power dynamics which governed social interaction. Bourdieu's attention to revealing the language systemic mechanisms that perpetuate patterns of domination and subordination eventually liberated me from the political haunt.

Despite being a candidate for this doctoral study, from the outset I had initially considered myself a fake imitation of a doctoral student as the concepts of ontology and epistemology used so much in research at first seemed entirely alien. Only when I commenced reading "An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), I eventually discovered that my positioning in the research and my reflexive practice throughout the research were fundamental to qualitative research in terms of rigor and coherence (Sullivan *et al.*, 2012: 158-166). To my understanding, Bourdieu adamantly opposes efforts to generate theory in the absence of data. Indeed, he sees theory and empirical work as inextricably intertwined, not merely linked. This is why he refuses to identify the use of habitus, field and capital to understand agents' practices as a theory. Sharply critical of positivism, he argues that it is only through questioning how we examine the social world that we can achieve a degree of objectivity. Bourdieu's epistemological stance calls for an integration of theory formulation, data collection, and measurement (Horvat, 2003: 4-5). His key concept of habitus, the set of transposable dispositions and preferences rooted in personal history, which is both created by and generative of individuals and structures, transcends the traditional dichotomies of subjectivism and objectivism. Habitus is his powerful tool attempted to transcend the subject and object dichotomy rooted in positivism (*ibid*: 5).

On the other hand, I followed my supervisors' vital suggestion of keeping a research journal to record my reflections and document my reflexive standpoint along these research years. In retrospect in the local research that I had read to prepare the literature review for the thesis, the South Asian language minorities were frequently perceived as 'oppressed', 'less affluent' or 'loser' (Loper, 2004; Ku *et al.*, 2005; Carmichael, 2009; Kennedy, 2012) even though those researchers might have good intention. Immersed in those single tone research studies, I lost track on my dedication to rigour and complexity (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). I was gradually and unconsciously inculcated with the monological-perception research-based habitus, that is, stereotyped the language minorities as what they used to be located in a powerless position and lacking appropriate choice. Taking reference from my research journal, I was able to break down assumptions that fit into practitioner views of ethnic minority students and their abilities. I looked into my research journal and found the following irony words written on the Christmas Day of 2014:

Too many 'assumed' and 'unexpected' about the students in the findings. Stereotype? Ignorance? Why and where do they come from? Aware, aware and aware! (My research journal )

In this case, the reflexivity on South Asian language-minority students entails my willingness to acknowledge and takes account of my influence on the findings and thus what comes to be accepted as knowledge. Without the research journal as my

reflexive tool, I would easily escape from my unconscious thinking and emancipation (Ryan, 2005: 3).

### **Comprehension**

I am influenced and touched by Kincheloe's dedication to creating a critical pedagogy (Tobin & Kincheloe, 2006) that helps individuals reshape their lives and become better scholars to create better modes of education and a more peaceful, equitable, and ecologically sustainable world. Having a chance to challenge positivist epistemology in my present research, I drew from Bourdieu's reflexivity and adapted a methodology based upon habitus. To put my dedication and reflexivity into practice, I employed the thinking tool of habitus not only as a concept for data analysis and interpretation but also adopted it as a research method to ask related questions in the thesis.

I have noticed that the South Asian language-minority students' realities were interpreted individually to explore and understand their educational experiences by taking a hermeneutic phenomenology stance in this study. However, the interpretation process involved other social and cultural artefacts and therefore inevitably became social (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 111). Stepping back from the world as I have been accustomed to seeing it, I as the qualitative based researcher, in being reflexive should

construct the perceptions of the world anew. I am thus aware that the current knowledge production obtained from singular or one-sided narratives of the students might reflect only partial reality. To discover new dimensions of knowledge and expand the interpretive horizons, the principle of difference to gain multiple perspectives is desirable.

About ten years ago, I was a counselling practitioner working for domestic violence survivors. Since positivism was employed as a training framework under the label of social science in my earlier academic life, I was inculcated with the monological-perception habitus that my viewpoint was very much monopoly or tended to be dualistic; that is, everything could simply be classified as right and wrong in accordance with observable 'symptoms'. With a narrow scope of the social world, I felt troubled and very helpless in coping with complaints and disturbances caused by persons saying that they were being accused of exercising violence against their partners and/or children. As a result, I ignored the voices and welfare needs of many of those people I judgementally called 'abusers' or 'perpetrators'.

I have recently been deployed to work for individuals and families involved in domestic violence once again. Learning from my qualitative research, I comprehend that my understanding of the world and myself is socially constructed this time. With this fresh understanding, I have paid attention to the differing ways individuals from

diverse social backgrounds construct facts and make meaning of daily life (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997: 206). I have therefore come to uncover and realise that realities could be complex and multiple in the beholders' eyes.

With a stance that a fact can be defined in multiple ways and viewed from many perspectives that grant it not only diverse meanings but also different ontological statuses (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004: 7), I no longer intuitively judge who is right or wrong to restrict myself to work with only one party of any spouse battering or child abuse cases. Being equipped with the paradigm knowledge that multiple voices and perspectives coexist, I am now feeling more comfortable with a sense of sophistication and maturity to talk to both parties in order to have in-depth understanding of their unique experiences so as to formulate a feasible welfare plan with them. The counselling motto 'being empathetic' finally has created comprehensibility and has been deemed feasible in my professional practice.

Rewards do come along in my case handling and official report writing skills after these five years of academic training. I remember that I used to have indescribable difficulty in preparing job-related social investigation reports. Now I recollect my own past, I have realised that my difficulty was due to my shallow analysis and depthless understanding of the incidents. Training in the field where rigorous forms of multidimensional scholarship have been emphasised, I am now

better equipped with essential and fundamental knowledge to comprehend social and political constructed human sufferings. Coincidentally, my skill in conflict resolution in handling custody rival has been enhanced.

## **Fulfilment**

Although my late father, who was a believer in '*ars longa, vita brevis*' ('Art is long, life is short'), would not be able to attend the graduation in person, I sincerely believe that his soul has been proud of my determination striving to be educated and actualised. The challenges coming with this Doctor of Education study is an extraordinary experience and it means more than just a degree to my educational and social trajectory. It was as if I had been riding on a roller coaster of multiple inversions without horizon for five years. There was joy, excitement and moments of despair.

The joy and excitement of being accepted as a candidate of the doctoral programme evaporated shortly after the submission of my first research proposal. Being a doctoral programme candidate, I should be committed to producing new knowledge and not to simply replicate research previously conducted by other scholars. It was the guidance and patience from my superb supervisors, and the mutual support from the fellow students which enabled me to reach the shore lastly.

Bringing the findings altogether, I would like to share and uphold my intellectual habitus with you all as the follows:

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference**

(Quoted from the *Serenity Prayer*)

-END-

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## Restricted

### **Participant Information Sheet for Students and Parents/Guardians**

Name of university: **Nottingham Trent University, England**

Title of the study: **Towards a Bourdieuan understanding of language minorities' education in Hong Kong**

#### **Introduction**

Hello / नमस्ते / ନମସ୍କାର / خوش ، my name is Wong Kam-yin. You are welcome to call me Peggy as many of my friends do. Currently, I am a student of a doctorate programme in education of the Nottingham Trent University in England. I have been concerned about and involved in the language minorities' education since I was serving as a member of the School Management Committee of the Sir Ellis Kadoorie (S) Primary School between 2001 and 2007. Having such an experience, I am motivated to explore factors that may be attributed to language minorities' socialization in learning and acquiring competence in the Chinese language.

#### **What is the purpose of this investigation?**

This study aims at exploring the experiences of children and their families in developing understandings and competence in the use of Chinese language, along with some of the barriers you experience in attempting to gain knowledge of Chinese in your daily living and daily activities. My concern in conducting this research is to open debate about the experiences of language-minority students and to provide options to them in Hong Kong.

#### **Do you have to take part?**

This is a small qualitative research project requiring close collaboration between the researcher and four participants. Three participants for this study will be selected on the basis that they are attending xxxxx Secondary School.

Your participation in this study is purely voluntary; you may leave at any stage. Your anonymity is assured and your responses and all of the data obtained during the research will be remained confidential. Only I, being the principal investigator working on this project will have access to your responses. You can also choose to have any data that you provide in this study completely destroyed after the study. Otherwise, the materials that you complete will be kept for five years, but after that period, these will be destroyed.

### **What will you do in the project?**

You are invited to use a smart phone with the ‘WhatsApp Messenger’ to record, describe and send a week of your daily activities that relate to the acquisition of the Chinese language by your own choices to **the smart phone no. of 64 65 0100**. Then you will be invited to attend an interview to share and compile your daily experiences in learning Chinese language individually.

In addition one graduate, whose child is currently attending this school, will be invited with his/her child to share experiences in learning the Chinese language during the colonial administration period and at present. All participants will be given an opportunity to find out more about this research and to ask any questions by the end of the interview as debriefing.

The project tasks will take place in September and October 2014. The interviews will be conducted in this secondary school or at the Man Fuk Road Campus of the Hong Kong College of Technology located in Homantin upon the mutual agreement between the researcher and you with the consent from your parents/guardians.

In recognition of your collaboration, participants who assist in completing the research tasks will be offered HKD100 Haagen-Dazs Gift Voucher by the end of the interview session.

### **Why have you been chosen?**

I am looking for students and a graduate with his/her child is currently studying in this secondary school, and who may be interested in participating in such research project. As a result, you are recommended by the school personnel to me.

### **What happens to the information in the project?**

I will make every effort to prevent anyone outside of this project from connecting individual subjects with your data and responses. The visual data in addition to the text data collected from the interviews will be stored on safe electronic devices in order to minimize the risk of accidental confidentiality breaches.

### **Who do I contact for more information or if I have concerns?**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the study at any stage, you can contact:

Name:	Wong Kam-yin (Peggy)
Telephone number:	852- 64650100
Email:	kam.wong022011@my.ntu.ac.uk

## Consent form

**Please return the completed form only if you do not agree to participate in this research**

**Please tick to indicate you consent to the following (Add or delete as appropriate)**

I have read and I understand the Participant Information Sheet.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the answers I have been given regarding the study and I have a copy of this consent form and information sheet.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to the researcher collecting, processing and storing my information and all data provided.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If I decide to withdraw from the study, I agree that the information collected about me up to the point when I withdraw may continue to be processed.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to the researcher to use and show the data in this research project and other related academic paper.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that no material, which could identify me personally, will be used in any reports on this study unless I give my permission.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I know who to contact if I have any questions about the study in general.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to being a participant in the project	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I wish to receive a summary of the study.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

**Declaration by participant and the parent/guardian:**

I do not want to take part in this study.    I do not want my child to take part in this study

(for participant under 18, please complete this part)  
Parent/Guardian's

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_ name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration by the researcher:**

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project to the participant, and have answered the participant's questions about it.

I believe that the participant understands the study and has given informed consent to participate.

Researcher's name: Wong Kam-yin (Peggy)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

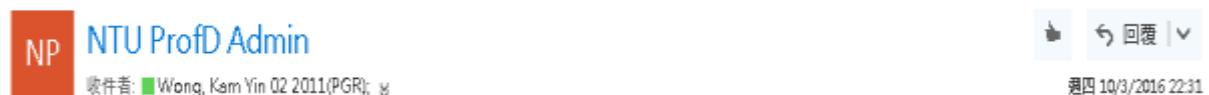
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **The open-ended interview schedule**

1. Warm-up chat.  
Show appreciation to her/his participation.  
Introduce the research and myself to the participant
2. Core personal information of the participant:  
Ask about the name and how s/he would like to be named in the research.
3. Ask about the family and living in Hong Kong.
4. Ask about the experience of learning languages.
5. Ask about the language practice /usage in your daily living.
6. At last, ask about the age and address in Hong Kong (the name of the building and its location only).

## **Confirmation of Ethical Approval**

Professional Doctorate Ethical Approval Confirmation Document 3, 4, 5  
and 5- WONG Kam Yin - N0445903



Dear Kam Yin,

Thank you for submitting an ethical approval application for ProfD Document 3, 4 and 5.

I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application was approved by the Professional Doctorate Research Ethics Committee (PDREC) on 25 November 2014.

Kind regards

Dawn James  
Graduate School Administrator  
Nottingham Trent University  
Burton Street, Nottingham, NG1 4BU

Location: Chaucer 4711  
Tel: +44 115 848 8154  
Fax: +44 115 848 6616  
Email: [dawn.james@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:dawn.james@ntu.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.ntu.ac.uk](http://www.ntu.ac.uk)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/NTUGradSchool](https://facebook.com/NTUGradSchool)  
Twitter: [@ntuHOGS](https://twitter.com/ntuHOGS)

## Appendix 5

### A sample transcript for data analysis

Interviewed with Jas on 21102014

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Main themes</u>	<u>Sub-themes</u>
P	May you introduce yourself to me?		
J	My name is Jas, as you know, I study in EK, S5. And I am 17. That's it... I don't really know myself.		
P	Can you tell me about your family?		
J	My family, my mommy, my dad, me, my brother, my sister and my little brother. 6 of us. I have an elder brother, then it's me, little sister and my brother. My little brother is just 2 months.	Family composition	
P	You and your siblings are studying?		
J	My elder brother is working now. He left school at S5 from MRC, he has no interest in studying. He just left and working at a bar now. He's a manager. And my little sister is in P.6. in EK, the same school. (P: you graduated from EK?) Yes, I'm from EK.	Family habitus	
P	Do you know whether simplified or traditional Chinese was taught in the EK primary school?	Chinese language	
J	Simplified, just like in this school. Kind of...it's really hard for us to learn the words, so it's all simplified.		
P	What are your parents doing in Hong Kong?	Family	parents
J	My father is a secretary of a lawyer, and my mom works at a hotel.	Family	parents
P	What languages do they speak?	Language	
J	My parents, they know English, Chinese, our languages and we speak Punjabi at home. But we also communicate in Urdu, Hindi which is the same...We talk in Hindi and Urdu with our brothers and sisters because that's the languages we use with our friends. So we are used to it. But then like we are talking to our older family members like our grandma, grandpa, because they know Hindi, so we talk to them in Punjabi.	Language habitus	Multi-lingual
P	How about the Chinese language?	Language habitus	Chinese
J	We four of us often because my mom was born in here. She doesn't really understand Punjabi, doesn't really understand our own language. It's really, like... we use Chinese often. When my father and mother are talking, they use Chinese. They do not speak in our language.	Language habitus	
P	Can you tell me about your dad?		
J	Yes, also born here. My father is a second generation over here. Even my mom, the second generation. Me, the third.		
P	Your parents studied in this school before?	Family habitus	
J	Yes, same school, SE. My father tried university, but he did not and he could not get into it. My mom also here, only S5.	Family habitus	
P	What is your mother tongue then?		
J	Punjabi! We went to, I mean we studied in India for a year. My dad passed away when I was five. So this is my stepfather. So it was very hard for my mom to take care all of us. So me and my little sister had to go to India for one year. She was just like a baby like she was just born. And I studied there for one year and that's how I know Punjabi.	Language habitus	Mother tongue
P	Thanks. Can you tell me about your friend circle?		
J	Normally all of them are like Indians, Pakistanis and Nepalese. Not many Chinese friends. And all my Chinese friends are from like from our school. Like, not really friends, just like in my class, we just talk, hi and bye; that's it. We do not really get along with Chinese people, because we think our thinking are really different from them.	Language habitus	Little Chinese friends
P:	Can you tell me more about it?		
J	Things, like, the topics, they talk about when they are in the friend circle, it's really different from ours. Because we are normally talking about like outside world. But they are talking about their families, their studies and stuff, not really interested in that. So we don't get along. It's not we don't like them or stuff, but we just ...our topics just don't match.	Language habitus	Reasons of having little Chinese friends
P	Can you tell me the usage of Chinese in your daily living?		
J	For us, we have to use it every day because we have to come to the school, so we have to talk to the teachers. Well it is really awkward for us to talk to our Chinese teacher in English. So we use Chinese normally. So we use English and Chinese both every day. Actually most of the languages every day.	Language habitus	Chinese used in school with teachers only

P	How about outside the school?		
J	English mostly. Chinese, if, someone, if we meet Chinese friends outside. I have a few friends who live nearby my house. So if we hang out with them, we have to talk in Chinese. Because they study in local Chinese schools, they don't know English. We have to use Chinese to communicate.	Language habitus	
P	Do you have to do translation for your family?		
J	No, they all know Chinese so it's easy for them. So they do not need to call us to the hospital or anything because...  I need to go with my grandma. She knows Chinese but she she's a bit shy. She does not use that often. So if she has to go to the document things or hospital, I have to go with her. Just to communicate.	Language habitus	Chinese used in daily living
P	How useful is your Chinese language skill help you in your daily living?		
J	A lot, really. Because living in Hong Kong and we know Chinese, you feel a bit like... you do not feel helpless. Because when we look at other people, like other people from our country, and they do not know Chinese. Like even if you saw them anywhere in the place, like some ParknShop some shops, they cannot communicate, it's really difficult for them to find stuff they need.  Because if you go somewhere and you cannot find the thing, and you can just tell the keeper and tell them you need the thing. But they go there and tell them, they do not understand what they need, so... it's really hard because... I don't know....	Language habitus	Chinese used in daily living
P	Ok, can you tell me your career plan?		
J	I WANT to be a flight attendant which I can't because I am so short. I am 159 cm.  No... because I saw the thing in the website of Cathay Pacific, they say we have to reach 208 cm with like no shoe's on so... I tried that at home and I am still... still behind	Aspiration	
P	How about other jobs?		
J	But that's the one what I want! Because I always wanted to, you know, I don't know... because I always... I don't know how to explain.  Whenever we fly, we go by Cathay Pacific. So when I was really small, when I told you I went to India... that was the first time I think about it. Because like I saw all the flight attendants in the plane and I feel so proud of it and I am going be one of these one day.		
P	Beside the height, anything stops you to persuade your dream?		
J	Well, nothing at the moment. Because I think the other requirements are easy. They need written and spoken English which I am really good at. So spoken Chinese only they don't need written and they need, like another language. So I think I pass in that. We know Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi... they don't need written stuff, only spoke. Yes!  I do not have other plan because that the one I want to be. I do not think about other things, I do not think I will fail.	Language habitus and abilities	Career plan
P	Will you take the GCSE exam in Chinese?	Language habitus	Chinese language acquisition
J	Yes, we all will after S6.		
P	How about Hindi?		
J	That's not my subject. I choose geography, THS tourism for my elective.	Language habitus	Other language acquisition
P	Are you confident in the exam?		
J	Confident? Not at all. Confident, it's really scared me. In S5, we are so near but we do not know anything. It's not scared that I will fail. I do not, like, fail normally but...there's something really difficult. I am ok with other languages, but geography, maths, I don't understand them well.	Educational development	
P	Then how do you seek help?		
J	Well, my parents and my auntie that... my mom didn't study that... my mom is not a graduate. Then my auntie, my mother's sister she is a university graduate. So if I need some help I just go to her. Because she is a housewife, she is always at home and lives in the next building. If I don't know anything or I want to know more about something, I just go to her and she will like help me.	Family habitus	Assistance and support from other members
P	Where does your aunt live?		
J	Just the same building.		
P	Private or public housing?		
J	Government.		
P	How's relationship with your neighbours?		
J	We are nice to each other. We greet when we see each other. They are from mainland of the next door. But they have been in Hong Kong for many years. So they speak good Chinese.  Well manner people, not like mainlanders.		
P	If now I say a few words to you in Chinese, do you understand?	Language habitus	Chinese
J	明，讀同寫唔識 (English translation: Understand! But cannot read and write).		

P	Can you write a few Chinese words to me?		
J	No... no way. My Chinese was good before. But then once I have studied her, my Chinese is regressing. I don't want to learn Chinese anymore. I forgot most words I learnt before in the primary school. We do not really have interest in Chinese lesson. Because we think that we know what need to know. Because normally the things they teach in school, like simple. We really feel annoyed when the teacher tells us that...we know that, don't teach us that. Some students they don't know anything. So the teachers have to start from the bottom. <u>But for people like us, it's a bit boring in Chinese lesson. So we just do not feel like having Chinese lesson.</u>	School as an intervention	
P	How other Chinese class outside the school?	Chinese language intervention other than school	
J	Yes, we do go to Caritas for Chinese lesson. That's a university professor he teaches Chinese for EMs. We just went there last summer holiday. Because they have this every summer holiday. It's a programme by the Kowloon Police Force. They are encouraging EM students to read and study Chinese to join their force. So I went there because my friend she's a social worker there. And she introduced me like you can improve your Chinese there. They do not teach us basic, they teach us the things we need to know, like the things that we do not know. I go there, I wake up at 8 in the morning on Sunday and Saturday. And I like going there because I could really learn something not like school.		
P	You go after the summer?	Persistence?	
J	They still have classes but most of the students don't go. They have classes after school from 5 to 7, I guess. But we feel very tired after school so we don't go. Only on Saturdays and Sundays in Prince Edward.		
P	What language do you use with your siblings?	Family and language habitus	Mixed and any identity doubt?
J	Punjabi. Actually all the languages. Punjabi mostly. My dad, just like mom, he doesn't really know Punjabi. So Chinese. Me and my little sister actually are the ones who know Punjabi because we spent a year in India. So my parents and my brother are not really good at it. Sometimes when we say something... What is that?		
P	So what languages are using at home?		
J	Mixed. Someone say it in Chinese and we reply in Punjabi. And someone talks in English and all mixed up. It's not interesting for us. I mean... we do not feel really special about it. It's really normal for us. But when people hear us, like, doing that, they feel really awkward. Because like talking one language, but it's not like that for us. It's normal.		
P	What language do you prefer then?	Language habitus	English is still preferred
J	English. Because I am confident in it. As I told you, I am really good at Chinese anymore because we do not use Chinese that often now. We only use Chinese at home mostly. My friends are all our people so we use English and Urdu only.		
P	Will you stay in Hong Kong?		
J	I am planning to stay in Hong Kong. My parents said that they want to move to the UK. Because they said Hong Kong is like China now. We do not want to stay in China. They came to Hong Kong because of freedom and stuff. But hen that's no more. So they said they don't want to stay here.	Plan to emigrate to UK	
P	When did they say that?		
J	Just this year. Just when I started S5 in September. They said that we would go to the UK after S6. When you finish your secondary, we will move like that. No I don't want to go. (P: are they serious about it?). They are serious. Because my father's sister they are in UK. They are calling us so applying for the visas is easy. Because they have British passports. That's right. I don't want to go, I don't want to leave. It's good over here. This is the place we grow up, its' our homeland, we do not want to leave. But I don't think my mom will leave me alone here.		
P	Thank you. If I need further information, may I contact you? (J: sure).		

## Mosaic Hong Kong

### Understanding your segments - Types

Learn about a Type by clicking a tile.

A01	A02	A03	B04	B05	B06	B07
At The Peak 成就之巔	Mature Wealth 穩健富裕	Low Risk High Yielders 淨高收益	Educated Leaders 高薪才俊	Cosmopolitan Convenience 優越地利	Property & Prosperity 藍籌風光	Affluent Aspiration 致富階梯
C09	D10	D11	D12	E13	E14	E15
Settled & Secure 安穩高富	Owners On The Up 上車一族	Quality Outskirts 城郊豪庭	Old Town Comfort 舊區風貌	Carefree Families 逍遙優裕	Grown-Up Generations 成年子女	Mid-Rank Earners 中層白領
E17	F18	F19	F20	G21	G22	G23
Sandwiched Locals 比下有餘	Connected Countryside 近郊便捷	Island Serenity 小島民風	Village Communities 鄉村薄紙	Inner City Setters 扎根地區	Busting Neighbourhoods 車水馬龍	Working Class Market Town 墟市工友
H25	H26	H27	H28	I29	I30	I31
Well-Connected Locals 街坊鄰里	Middle Aged Periphery 邇邦中年	Blue Collar Enclaves 藍領大廈	Maturing Families 繁家店兒	Frugal Prospects 儉樸生活	Striving Multi- Generations 萬世生機	Ageing Traditions 屋邨情懷
J33	K34	K35	K36	K37	L38	
Brand New Renters 最新租戶	Elderly Settlement 年長社區	Fading Nostalgia 逝舊交替	Quiet Retirees 退休長者	Remote Empty Nesters 邊城空巢	Government Quarters 公營家庭	

### Data required for Segments by Geographical Areas

<b>Home</b>	<b>Target Profile Selection</b>	<b>Help &amp; More Info</b>										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Quick Start</b></td> <td>Building type</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Who we are</b></td> <td>Number of rooms</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>How we make a living</b></td> <td>Number of storeys</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Our financial circumstances</b></td> <td>Property build date</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Where we live</b></td> <td>Tenure</td> </tr> </table>			<b>Quick Start</b>	Building type	<b>Who we are</b>	Number of rooms	<b>How we make a living</b>	Number of storeys	<b>Our financial circumstances</b>	Property build date	<b>Where we live</b>	Tenure
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<b>Our financial circumstances</b>	Property build date											
<b>Where we live</b>	Tenure											

Source: <http://www.segmentationportal.com/Segments/Index?pid=a33c9614-8828-4e6b-9a5b-86bb0785d14a>