

Exploring the Education of Hong Kong's Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Secondary
Students

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the Education of Hong Kong's Non-Chinese Speaking Secondary (NCS) Students

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Hong Kong's educational landscape has been shifting to include Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) students in public and government subsidized schools. Policies surrounding language of instruction, curricula and literacy practices have involved a negotiation of power, space, and belonging for Hong Kong's NCS ethnic minority population. The thesis explores how secondary school is experienced by NCS students, facilitated by the teachers of NCS students, and designed by policy makers through the discourse of Hong Kong's Education Bureau (EDB). By obtaining a post-structuralist theoretical framework (Foucault, 1980; Bourdieu, 1989, 1991; Bell & Russell, 2000; Robinson-Pant, 2001), and through in-depth interviews, and an analysis of the EDB's printed materials this study suggests that 1) Non-Chinese Speaking students' experiences of school do not align with the discourse of Hong Kong's Education Bureau, and 2) that the experience of the category of "Non-Chinese Speaking" is problematic as it refers to much more than students' Chinese language skills. The findings from this study suggest that the current practice of schooling NCS students requires a rethink, as the experience of the category of "Non-Chinese Speaking" leads students to develop ideas about their exclusion from the community, which directly impacts their ideas about what it means to be a citizen of Hong Kong.

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DEDICATION

To my heart,
Tyler Morency

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Chapter One:

Establishing the Context

In this chapter, I briefly outline the socio-political context where this research has been situated. Next, I detail my multiple identities as a Non-Chinese Speaking foreign teacher and a researcher, and describe my relationship to my research-participants. This section also explains the rationale behind the research project, and justifies my motivation for undertaking the study. The chapter concludes with the research questions that ground this study.

Introduction: Socio-Political Context

Post-colonial Hong Kong's educational landscape has been shifting to include ethnic minority Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) students in its public and subsidized schools. Since 1978, the government of Hong Kong's Education Bureau has provided subsidized public education to all children between the ages of 6 and 15 who are the holders of a Hong Kong ID card (Education Bureau, 2010a). The Education Bureau subsidizes Direct Subsidy Scheme and local public schools, and therefore by "admitting these children [the schools] will be provided with a School-based Support Scheme (SBSS) Grant to operate school-based support programmes for them" (Education Bureau, 2010a, p. 1). As a secondary student, the government will subsidize a student's education up to Form 3 (grade 9, in a Canadian context), but the quality of education and the access that the student has to schools is marked by language ability, socio-economic status and connections, or cultural, social and economic capital

(Bourdieu, 1986). In this, the term ‘Non-Chinese speaking’ (NCS) has developed into a type of cultural marker, an identifier of socio-economically disadvantaged status, where ethnic minorities are portrayed as “culturally alien and linguistically and socially handicapped” (Shum, Gao, Tsung, & Ki, 2011, p. 6). Policies surrounding language of instruction, curriculum and literacy practices involve a negotiation of power, space, and belonging for Hong Kong’s NCS minority population. Who are the NCS population in Hong Kong?

According to Hong Kong’s 2006 census, of the 5% of the population who are considered “Non-Chinese,” 1.64% are Filipinos, 1.28% are Indonesians, 0.3% are Indians, 0.23% are Nepalese, and 0.17% are Thais, 0.16%, but not all of these Non-Chinese speakers are offered subsidized education (Fang, 2011, p. 251). In the Education Bureau’s discourse, ‘Non-Chinese’ refers to students who do not speak Chinese as a first language. However, the 2006 census refers to ‘Non-Chinese’ as people living in Hong Kong who are not ethnically Chinese (Chinese includes Hong Kong-born and Mainland-born Chinese people). The distinction between Non-Chinese as language and Non-Chinese as an ethnicity is often unclear, and any definition of NCS relies upon the assumptions of the listener.

The role of English in postcolonial Hong Kong is complicated through the schooling of Hong Kong’s NCS populations. Varying access to economic capital has led to a tiered secondary school education system for the NCS population: the privileged attend international for-profit schools while the economically marginalized overwhelmingly attend ‘local’ government and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools. Many DSS schools include separate curricula and

English as the language of instruction for local-born Non-Chinese Speaking students and Chinese as the Language of its instruction for its Chinese-speaking Hong Kong Chinese students. Two different curricula exist in two different languages- and at the school that served as the locus of the research, these two groups are kept quite separate, with few opportunities to build relationships due to their separate access to curricula, out of school activities, leisure areas (like the lunchroom and basketball court) and reticence to interact, in part due to language challenges.

The discourse of ‘Chinese Speaking’ versus ‘Non-Chinese Speaking’ is further complicated by the understanding that ‘Chinese Speaking’ in the case of Hong Kong refers to Cantonese, not Mandarin (the official language of Mainland China). Using the word ‘Chinese’ to signify the language ‘Cantonese’ must be understood in relation to the politics of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China, and as a potential form of resistance to the language and politics of Beijing. In Hong Kong, the word “‘Chinese’ is used to confer common ‘ethnicity’ on the local population...distinctions are made by local Chinese people between historic and recent migrants from the mainland...” (Knowles & Harper, 2009, p. 15). Hong Kong’s Education Bureau has the stated goal of schooling all students in the public realm into “bi-literate and tri-lingual” citizens, referring to the reading/writing of traditional Chinese and English and the listening/speaking of Chinese [Cantonese], Putonghua [Mandarin] and English, (Education Bureau, 2010a, p. 2). Language and politics are inextricably linked in Hong Kong as learning,

Cantonese can strengthen a person's sense of identification with Hong Kong as a distinctive culture; learning Putonghua [Mandarin] can strengthen a person's sense of identification with [Mainland China]; learning English before 1997 could strengthen a person's identification with Hong Kong as a colony of the United Kingdom (Morris & Anderson, 2010, p. 147).

What about Hong Kong after 1997? How do Hong Kong's language of instruction policies affect the ability for Non-Chinese Speaking students to pursue higher education? Who decides which language and literacy practices count for Non-Chinese Speaking students, and where it is appropriate (or not appropriate) to be a multilingual student? In the context of post-colonial Hong Kong, Chinese and English are 'legitimate' or 'dominant' and knowing (or not knowing) and producing (or not producing) these languages provides linguistic capital to its speakers (Chan, 2002, p. 272)? The home languages spoken by the NCS students involved in the study are diverse and include: Bangla, English, Hinko, Kashmiri, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, and Urdu. The children of Hong Kong's socio-economically disadvantaged immigrants fit into this complex discussion of the politics of language and power, and their experiences provide an opportunity to think critically about the discourse provided by the Education Bureau in its discourses.

Researcher Location

From 2008 until 2010, I worked as a Native English Teacher at a Direct Subsidy Scheme school in an economically disadvantaged area of Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, there was no societal expectation for me to learn Chinese, as a Caucasian Non-Chinese Speaking person with *perceived* economic capital.

However, my obvious ‘otherness’ and my position as a Non-Chinese Speaking person allowed me to be marginalized within my own participation as a teacher in the school. My position in the school as a foreign teacher, and as a “participant observer” must be understood as being politically, historically and socially located (Dyer & Choksi, 2001, p. 30). I had preconceived notions about what I thought multiculturalism and inclusion should look like in school: including all students in all activities, working with students to create community within the school, allowing all parents access to participate in school life and have the opportunity to share stories, cultural practices and histories with one another through the lens of the inclusive school. After two years, I felt that I had successfully created an inclusive community within my classroom, but not many other places in the school. With this history in mind, I have set out to understand the way that twenty students in my former school view themselves and their language practices, what it means to be categorized as NCS, their sense of belonging, and perceptions of future opportunities.

It has been two years since I worked at the Direct Subsidy School where I taught the student-participants and worked with the teacher-participants. After these two years, both students and teachers have reported a demographic shift within the school: there are increased numbers of NCS students which has led to a power shift between NCS and Chinese Speaking students, and a whole new set of challenges for the school. This was but one matter that peaked my interest and prompted me to consider this setting for my Masters research.

I have situated my research in an attempt to make the ‘invisible’ seem ‘visible’ (Usman, 2010, p. 194). As a Caucasian-Canadian living in post-colonial Hong Kong, I taught English (one of Hong Kong’s official languages), and I worked with a minority population who I believed were being treated inequitably within the context of the secondary school. These views influenced my interactions in the school, and have influenced the way that I came to perceive the lack of alignment between the discourse of the EDB, and the NCS students’ experience of secondary school in Hong Kong. My relationship to my research subjects as both former-teacher and confidante must be made explicit, and situated politically and ideologically.

Research Questions

Kanno and Norton (2003) point to the concept of “imagined communities” as “groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination,” (p. 241). To expand on the idea of “imagined communities,” I would like to use this idea to apply to 20 Non-Chinese Speaking Students’ perceived notions about their conceptual, linguistic, and social border crossings (Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002), in order to have access to higher education, to feel a sense of belonging in school and in Hong Kong and to access opportunities in the future. What these students imagine for themselves is potentially different from what the EDB and the school provides--this distinction is the primary focus of my qualitative, ethnographic research. With this in mind, this qualitative and ethnographic study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do Non-Chinese Speaking students view themselves in relation to their language practices, post-secondary opportunities and sense of identity in a Hong Kong government-funded secondary school?
2. How do Non-Chinese Speaking students' perceptions of scholastic and future opportunities, language practices and sense of belonging in secondary school align with the discourse of Hong Kong's Education Bureau?
3. To what extent do teachers of NCS students fill in the space between the Education Bureau's discourse and the NCS students' experiences?
4. How is Non-Chinese Speaking defined by NCS students, their teachers, and in the discourse of the EDB?

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

This chapter is organized into four sections, so that I may provide the socio-political and theoretical framework that my research project is situated in. First, I will explain Hong Kong's historical background and current socio-political context. Second, I will elaborate on Hong Kong's educational model, and describe an overview of its language of instruction policies. With the theoretical guidance provided by post-structuralism, I will examine language, culture, and identity, and explore the discourse surrounding the schooling of NCS ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. I will end the chapter by discussing the theoretical considerations provided by the New Literacy Studies, and its implications about the use of local understandings of 'literacy' as a marginalizing tool.

Historical Background and Socio-political Context

Hong Kong's Colonial Legacy

The legacy of colonialism in Hong Kong has not been "only [linguistic and] cultural but also demographic". Throughout the 155-year period of British rule, colonized peoples from across the British Empire moved their labour (both voluntarily and involuntarily), which changed Hong Kong's ethnic and cultural make-up (Law & Lee, 2012, p. 120). Since its independence from Britain in 1997, Hong Kong has operated as a Semi-Autonomous Region (SAR) of China. This political shift has changed what it means to be a citizen and an ethnic

minority in postcolonial Hong Kong. Problematically, ethnic minorities born in Hong Kong since 1997 have had their ground to claiming China as their nation shifted due to the influence of Mainland China's laws on Hong Kong. This influence has had negative consequences for Hong Kong's ethnic minorities as Law and Lee note:

The Nationality Law of [Mainland] China does not recognize the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong as Chinese citizens even if they are allowed to continue living in Hong Kong. However, Chinese nationality is a prerequisite to obtain a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport...[however, after some outcry] the disposition of Chinese authorities softened and allowed minorities in Hong Kong to apply for Chinese nationality... In other words, the Nationality Law of China has never actually provided [automatic] nationalization to ethnic minorities born in Hong Kong" (p. 125).

If nationalization itself is potentially in question for ethnic minorities born in Hong Kong, the challenges facing secondary-aged Non-Chinese Speaking ethnic minorities, including those who are Hong Kong-born and those who are immigrants, are numerous. Ultimately, Hong Kong is caught up in its status as a Semi-Autonomous Region of China. Hong Kong has existing (and separate) immigration laws and policies from Mainland China, and a protected, national border, but it is not quite fully-autonomous (Loper, 2008). As Law and Lee (2012) have pointed out, this sovereignty-murkiness can have a deleterious effect on its citizens who are not categorized as *ethnically* Chinese.

Colonialism and Language: English in Hong Kong Pre- and Post 1997

Until 1997, Hong Kong was a colony of the United Kingdom. During British rule, English was the language with the most linguistic capital, as it was the only language accepted in government (executive, judicial and legislative

divisions) until 1974 (Fang, 2011). In 1974, Cantonese became a “co-official” language, but English persisted as the dominant language as it remained the medium of instruction in most secondary schools until 1997 when Hong Kong was repatriated to China (p. 253). After 1997 the “mother-tongue” language policies were brought into effect, and resultantly, Cantonese became the medium of instruction (MOI) in most government subsidized schools.

Learning a language (either Cantonese or English), and learning *in* either Cantonese or English as the medium of instruction became even more politically charged after Hong Kong gained its independence from Britain. Access to either language as the MOI requires a negotiation of English and Cantonese, which highlights citizens’ access to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is a factor to consider in the use of English in schools, and is an important place to note the role of agency and the development of ‘the self’ for NCS students who are instructed in English. Bourdieu suggested that cultural capital exists for society in three forms: the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalized state. Bourdieu outlined the embodied state of cultural capital as having a personal cost or an implied self-improvement in reproducing the tastes and desires of the dominant group, and here the concept of English as a ‘prestige’ language begins to complicate matters. As Lee (2006) notes:

Language is a tool to carry meaning. It also represents our identity. It binds us in distinctive groups and at the same time separates us from the others. Because of that, our language choice directly reflects our attitudes towards our identity...multilinguals themselves also show distinctive linguistic characteristics compared to monolinguals; in other words, they tend to choose to

speak different languages in different situations for different purposes, (p. 30).

In post-colonial Hong Kong, English (the language of globalization) is still highly valued and assigned cultural capital, as it was under British rule. Contemporarily, English has become a marker of prestige for Hong Kong citizens as global citizens, but also because a high degree of knowledge of English provides a marked difference for Chinese-speaking Hong Kong citizens from Chinese-speaking citizens of the People's Republic of China (Chan, 2002, p. 272). Therefore, "linguistic capital is gauged based on linguistic competency, that is, the ability to use a language that is likely to have attention paid to it and is recognized as acceptable." (Fang, 2011, p. 252). This idea suggests that those who do not possess sufficient language skills will be "sidelined when it comes to social stratification" (p. 252). Fang continues by suggesting that Hong Kong's language policies must be viewed in their political and historical contexts: language and power, as well as the prestige of English, and educational policy cannot be disentangled in contemporary Hong Kong.

The Racial Discrimination Ordinance (2008): Hong Kong and Multiculturalism

 Law and Lee (2012) have argued that Hong Kong has been described as a "harmonious multicultural society," as many people from a variety of cultures and ethnicities live in close proximity to one another without "serious conflicts" both during and after British rule (p. 117). However, they also note that these

groups live separately, that “Hong Kong Chinese socially exclude” many NCS ethnic minorities, and that in the case of Hong Kong, the concept of multiculturalism “merely describes the presence of various ethnic groups,” rather than the inclusion of multiple points of view, a mutual appreciation for and exchange of culture, experience, language and identities (p. 117). From this particular type of multiculturalism, the Racial Discrimination Ordinance (2008) was developed and brought into Hong Kong law to address the rights and needs of the NCS ethnic minority population. However, in defining multiculturalism in the Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) exclusively through ethnicity creates complications, and is inherently problematic as it excludes Mainland Chinese immigrants from its provisions (Kennedy, Hui & Tsui, 2008, p. 3). Before the Ordinance was signed into law, it received a lot of negative attention from legal scholars. Chan (2005) argued that:

Whilst the government's move to enhance and reinforce equality rights in Hong Kong is laudable, the race anti-discrimination consultation paper...is defective in certain material respects. It being now a rule and not an exception, the government is manifestly particularly keen on excluding [Mainland Chinese immigrants] from a particular piece of proposed anti-discrimination legislation... such selective exclusion is the antithesis to the principle of equality perforce inherent in a piece of anti-discrimination legislation. (p. 601)

The Racial Discrimination Ordinance has also had an impact on the education of NCS ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. One of the goals of the Bill was to provide new educational language policies that would directly affect NCS groups (Fang, 2011, p. 251). Loper (2004) argues that while this language provision may appear to make the playing field more equal for all ethnicities and races, in actuality “these policies limit access to education for certain ethnic

groups who may be less likely to speak or read Chinese” (p. 27). These policies outlined that NCS students could be admitted to government funded, Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (MOI) schools, but problematically, these schools were not “required to do anything once students entered the school to support their particular learning needs” (Kennedy, Hui & Tsui, 2008, p. 3). Students could now be admitted to Chinese as the MOI, or ‘local’ schools (regardless of their pre-existing Chinese Language Skills), but were not necessarily provided specific tools to scaffold their language learning. This policy shift will be elaborated in the section describing Hong Kong’s Medium of Instruction debate.

The ‘National Education’ Question

Hong Kong’s government has recently come under pressure from its citizens and the international community as it attempted to alter the local curriculum to include a mandatory class on *Chinese Moral and National Education* (South China Morning Post, 2012). This suggested curriculum change brought weeks of protests to the streets, ultimately resulting in the government forgoing the idea for the time being. Generally, when a municipal education department works out a curriculum change, the international community does not really take notice. Hong Kong is different. As a Semi-Autonomous Region (SAR) of China, Ip (2012, November 11th) suggests that Hong Kong is grappling with the question of “who am I” in regards to its postcolonial history and in the face of the growing (Mainland) Chinese presence? As Walshaw (2007) has noted, “identity is a social construct, produced at the interface of sometimes conflicting discourses,” (p. 93). In the case of Hong

Kong, this identity crisis has worked its way into policy through the proposed curriculum amendment. As Kennedy (2012, October 2nd) noted in her opinion piece in the South China Morning Post:

Consulting the community and understanding its concerns is a key expectation of government. The current [Hong Kong] government can be forgiven for thinking that the consultation on national education had been completed when it came to office. What was missing from this consultation was the now infamous "China model" handbook for schools extolling the Chinese Community Party as "progressive, altruistic and united".

Its educational policy makers are struggling to come to terms with Hong Kong's identity in regards its relationship to China, to its multiethnic population and how to educate its citizens to reflect this mounting identity confusion. As it stands, the pro-Beijing *Chinese Moral and National Education* class has been shelved indefinitely, but the larger questions of Hong Kong's identity and citizenship education will have to be revisited by policy makers in the future (Kennedy, 2012). These questions of identity remain for all Hong Kong residents, both Chinese and Non-Chinese Speaking. What does it mean to be a citizen in Hong Kong? What does it mean to be an ethnic minority and a citizen in Hong Kong? These questions remain, and although they are not the main aim of this project, they are worth delving into in future research projects.

Hong Kong's Educational Model

Educating Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong

Since 1978, Hong Kong has provided subsidized public education to all children between the ages of 6 and 15 who are the holders of a Hong Kong ID card (Education Bureau, 2010). Loper (2011) articulates the

myriad challenges faced by socioeconomically disadvantaged ethnic minority families as they make decisions about education in contemporary Hong Kong: restricted access to schools based on a lack of understanding of the school system, few opportunities to study spoken and written Cantonese which affects future job/post-secondary opportunities, “relatively low quality of available educational institutions,” limited access to information about schooling and the way that students are placed in schools, and a “lack of interaction with Chinese students,” (p. 12). Fang (2011) discovered that only 86% of ethnic minorities (primarily South Asian NCS students in her research project) enrolled in local kindergarten programs, compared with 94.7% of the general CS Hong Kong population, and that when NCS children attend kindergarten programs, they mainly enrol in those where English is the Medium of Instruction (p. 255). During British rule, as previously noted, English was the primary language of instruction in government schools. However, a change to language policy in 1998 affected Hong Kong’s NCS ethnic minority population. Heung (2006) has noted that:

Because of the change to mother tongue [Cantonese] teaching policy in 1998, there was a switch from English to Chinese in 307 [government-funded] secondary schools, and only 114 schools were allowed to continue to use English, resulting in a reduction in the number of secondary schools that ethnic minority students could attend. Evidence suggests that most ethnic minority students are relegated to a handful of “band three” (the lowest band) secondary schools that offer Hindi and Urdu language classes in Hong Kong (p. 31).

Heung (2006) also discovered that ethnic minorities have markedly lower attendance rates across the board than the general Hong Kong population noting

that, “School attendance rates for the ethnic minorities in the age groups 3–5, 17–18, and 19–24 years were 86.0%, 54.7%, and 3.7%, respectively; those for the whole population were 94.7%, 71.0%, and 26.4%” (p. 30). What is missing from this research is a discussion of why these rates are so different. Why would NCS ethnic minority students be less present in schools than their Chinese-speaking counterparts? The general exclusion of NCS ethnic minority students from extra language support at government funded “local” Chinese as the MOI schools may point to one of the reasons.

In 2005, the EDB created a policy directed at ethnic minority children in an effect to promote inclusion into government schools. Before this time, the government restricted NCS students to 10 Non-Chinese Speaking schools, and this policy change has been made to attempt to equalize the playing field between NCS and CS students (Heung, 2006), however, as other authors have noted (Fang, 2011; Loper, 2011; Law & Lee, 2012), additional measures to support Chinese as a Second Language learning do not yet exist in these now-available schools. Fang suggests that NCS ethnic minority families are less likely to enrol their children in Chinese as the Medium of Instruction programs because:

under the central Chinese curriculum framework there is no special support provided for South Asian students. As a result, in the 2004–2005 school year, there were 520 South Asian students enrolled in [CMI] primary schools; of whom, only about 70 entered mainstream primary schools, and the figure dropped to less than 40 in the following year (Hong Kong Unison, 2006, p. 1). (p. 255)

The 2005 policy allows for NCS students to attend government schools, but their

language learning may or may not be supported. Despite these challenges, the number of NCS ethnic minorities in Hong Kong's secondary schools [mainly EMI schools] has risen sharply in the past few years. Hue (2010) reports that in 2011, there were 11,204 ethnic minority students enrolled in government schools, in 2006 there were 13,427 students registered, and by 2007, there were 28,722 ethnic minority students enrolled in government schools in Hong Kong (p. 358). This growing population suggests that school is becoming more available to NCS students, however, the quality of institutions that these students have access to remains questionable (Heung, 2006).

To assist the growing NCS population, the EDB has created a number of support programs to support newly arrived ethnic minority students in their transition into government schools. In 1995, the government created a 60-hour *Induction Program*, which was originally created to target school-aged immigrant children from Mainland China, and teaches Cantonese and English skills, as well as giving information about local schools and social culture. In 2000, this program was expanded to support ethnic minority newcomers as well (Heung, 2006). Another program targeting newcomers is the *Initiation Program*, and it is a 6-month program targeting NCS children with similar, though prolonged goals as the 60-hour *Induction Program*. Upon successful completion of the *Initiation Program*, the EDB will assist students in finding a local school (p. 36). The EDB also provides *Special Education Services*, which include, “psychological, audiology, and speech assessment; speech therapy treatment; speech and auditory training for hearing-impaired children; and referral to

medical specialists,” but does not include assistance for students with learning disabilities or intellectual challenges (ex. ADHD or language processing challenges) (p. 37). Schools accepting NCS students are also supported by the EDB through a *School-Based Support Scheme Grant (SBSS)* where schools are given a “block grant” for every NCS student enrolled at the school, and this grant can be used at the school’s discretion (p. 37).

Despite these measures, the existing educational needs of NCS ethnic minorities go beyond the programs that are offered. From a legal perspective, Loper (2004) noted that additional challenges are present for NCS ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, including: limited access to schools based on language support, few opportunities to learn Chinese, difficulty in understanding and accessing the educational system, and few opportunities to interact and engage with Chinese students. Hue (2010) looked at the needs of ethnic minority NCS students from the perspectives of school guidance counsellors, and learned that the majority of NCS students interviewed remarked that they “enjoyed studying,” but they also “experienced cultural differences and struggled with differences in school systems and academic programmes” (p. 360). Hue’s findings suggested that teachers should work to develop cultural sensitivity, further the needs of NCS ethnic minority students and work closely with parents to help NCS students to transition into the workplace or postsecondary institutions, and foster their inclusion and success.

Language, Ethnicity and Identity: Becoming Non-Chinese

The discourse of ‘Chinese Speaking’ versus ‘Non-Chinese Speaking’ is

further complicated by the understanding that ‘Chinese Speaking’ in the case of Hong Kong refers to Cantonese, not Mandarin (the official language of Mainland China). Using the word ‘Chinese’ to signify the language ‘Cantonese’ must be understood in relation to the politics of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China, and as a potential form of resistance to the language and politics of Beijing. In Hong Kong, the word “‘Chinese’ is used to confer common ‘ethnicity’ on the local population...distinctions are made by local Chinese people between historic and recent migrants from the mainland...” (Knowles & Harper, 2009, p. 15). Hong Kong’s Education Bureau has the stated goal of schooling all students in the public realm into “bi-literate and tri-lingual” citizens, referring to the reading/writing of traditional Chinese and English and the listening/speaking of Chinese [Cantonese], Putonghua [Mandarin] and English, (Education Bureau, 2010, p. 2). In this, language and politics are inextricably linked in Hong Kong.

After 1997, Hong Kong’s schools changed their policy toward English as the language of instruction. The 1998 language policy change has been described as being politically and economically motivated, and Fang (2011) attests that this:

has created socio-economic costs for South Asians. The local working place has been segmented by the requirements for the use of the three languages. Fluent English, Cantonese, and Putonghua are all required for people in the civil service. Due to their deficiency in Cantonese and Putonghua, second- and third-generation South Asians under China’s sovereignty have now lost access to civil service jobs that their predecessors had (p. 254).

Tsung, Zhang and Cruickshank (2010) second this suggestion, and state that as a

result of this change in language policy, NCS ethnic minorities of a South Asian background in particular are “overrepresented in unskilled and semiskilled occupations” (p. 18). If students are schooled in EMI institutions, and are not learning adequate levels of Chinese to access diverse options, their language abilities dictate their social mobility. NCS citizens existing multiliteracy practices are marginalized if these literacy practices neglect to include Chinese.

Medium of Instruction Debate- English vs. Cantonese

Before 1997, the medium of instruction in the bulk of Hong Kong’s government schools was English. With the rise of globalization, the knowledge economy and the linguistic capital bestowed upon English (a dominant language of both colonialism and neo-colonialism), the number of “secondary schools adopting English as the medium of instruction rose from 57.9% in 1960 to 91.7% in 1990... [however] this may [seem] peculiar in a society in which 97% of the population are Chinese,” (Chan, 2002, p. 273). After 1997, the EDB now has the stated goal of having students become trilingual (referring to the speaking of English, Cantonese and Mandarin) and bi-literate (referring to the writing of English and traditional Chinese). Therefore, the EDB’s discourse of ‘choice’ shifted its previous policy on MOI at the secondary level because it:

... removed schools’ right to choose their own medium. Among the 404 public and “aided” secondary schools in Hong Kong, the government allowed only 100 to use English as the medium for teaching and required the remaining 304 to use the native language, Chinese [Cantonese]...results show that the 1997 policy reform shifted parental preferences from public to private [international] education and increased the marginal bid for proximity to private [international] English schools by 2 percent.

Following the reform, homeowners were willing to pay, on average, HK \$8,400 for each additional 100 metres closer to a private English school (Mok & Lee, 2010, p. 556).

The 1998 mother-tongue teaching policy has been described as indirectly discriminatory as it is a challenge for NCS groups who many not speak or read Chinese at a high enough level to attend a Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (CMI) school, especially for those students who arrive in Hong Kong at secondary-age (Loper, 2004). The EDB's 2005 policy change directed at ethnic minority students opened up these CMI schools hypothetically to students, but as previously mentioned (Fang, 2011), these policy changes did not really open up the schools to NCS students, as there were not enough extra supports once students began studying at the CMI schools. Loper (2004) has suggested that the EDB should have considered (and should still consider) providing Chinese as a Second Language courses within CMI schools, which would help NCS students, as it promotes inclusion, and allows NCS students to access future opportunities (work and school) (pp. 30-31).

Teachers' beliefs about NCS students' motivation to learn Chinese have been previously described in a study by Tsung, Zhang and Cruickshank (2010). The authors describe that the teachers they interviewed differed in their views as to why students may resist learning Chinese in government schools. Some teachers promoted a deficit model related to students' perceived low motivation (p. 24). Other teachers suggested that they were not prepared or trained to create a curriculum that fit the diverse needs of their multilingual students who had varying degrees of access and practice with Chinese before attending their

classes (p. 24). Problematically, other teachers noted that in some cases, the curriculum that was being delivered to the NCS students was inappropriate since “students were being taught and treated as if they were native speakers of Chinese” (p. 24). One thing that was common in the teachers’ responses was a feeling that NCS students were not being prepared to become fluent speakers of Cantonese.

According to its 2012 online publication, *Schools Admitting Greater Number of Non-Chinese Speaking Children*, the EDB has identified four types of schools that secondary aged Non-Chinese Speaking students can be admitted to: government, aided, Direct Subsidy Scheme, and international (Education Bureau, 2012). Secondary school aged NCS students have explicit access to an online resource entitled, *Schools Admitting Greater Number of Non-Chinese Speaking Children*, which appears first in a list of web-publications that advise parents of NCS students about schooling in Hong Kong, and it specifically points to where large numbers of Non-Chinese students attend school. The discourse of Hong Kong’s EDB proves to be problematic in this publication, as it essentially separates ethnic minority students from schools that offer Chinese as the Medium of Instruction, and therefore, from Chinese students.

In the case of Hong Kong’s NCS secondary students, coming to Hong Kong as a teenager proves to highlight the concept of choice (and lack of choice) when it comes to accessing secondary schools. Fitting into a discussion of choice, is the medium of instruction debate that has problematized post-colonial Hong Kong, especially with regards to the schooling of its ethnic minority population

(Mansoor, 2004). Neo-liberal discourses permeate the literature of Hong Kong's Education Bureau (EDB), and these discourses call upon most NCS students to integrate into schools through English as the MOI. The relationship between English language teaching, neo-colonialism, and imperialism is another important focus in an examination of the policies toward the language of instruction debate for Hong Kong's NCS students (Adamson & Auyeung, 1997; Bray & Koo, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Chan, 2002; Luk, 2001; Yuen, 2002; Yuen 2010). English is used because it has "prestige," "international value," and supports the "target-oriented curriculum" which the EDB brought about to address the needs of the changing workforce, one that is "ready to function effectively in the changing world of work with a strong foundation for life-long learning," (Adamson & Auyeung, 1997, p. 237).

The EDB (2011) notes that there are more than 100 government secondary schools in Hong Kong with English as the MOI. Aside from government schools, the EDB states that some government-subsidized schools and all international schools use English for instruction. Non-Chinese Speaking children are more likely to be accepted to a school with English as the medium of instruction, as the EDB admits that, "most of the schools in Hong Kong are Chinese-medium schools. Therefore, admission of non-Chinese speaking children will be made on a case-by-case basis. At present there are over 10 local schools admitting comparatively more non-Chinese speaking children," (EDB, 2011). What the EDB is not explicitly stating is that although the 2005 policy change allowed for the inclusion of NCS students at CMI schools, extra language

learning support has not been provided at CMI schools. Why school NCS students in English? If NCS students are accepted into CMI on a “case-by-case” basis, what are the criteria by which they are selected or rejected, and what happens when they arrive at the school? If the law states that they are legally permitted to study at CMI schools, why not provide support for NCS students to learn Chinese alongside ‘local’ Chinese Speaking students?

To combat the perceived deficit of Chinese skills in the NCS ethnic minority population, the EDB has granted extra funding to 19 government-funded schools to provide students with more opportunities to practice Chinese. As Tsung, Zhang and Cruickshank (2010) note, NCS citizens find “it difficult to gain employment and participate in the wider society without Chinese fluency,” (p. 18). Tsung et al are not speaking about ethnic minorities with linguistic and economic capital. In this vein, Ho (2001) suggests that, “ethnic minority students hardly adapt themselves to the Chinese dominated culture in school and therefore the dropout rate is extremely high. Thus, many primary schools reject the enrolment of ethnic minority students because of the language barrier,” (p. 70). Again, these numbers are referring to NCS ethnic minority students in the public system, but Lee’s (2006) discussion of the challenges that NCS students face contradicts Ho’s argument. Lee argues that socio-economically disadvantaged NCS students are essentially “deprived of the right to learn Chinese, which stops them from moving onto further education after Form 5 as many local [government funded] schools refuse to accept them, simply because they do not know [enough of] the Chinese language,” (p. 78). Without the

requisite Chinese skills, economically marginalized NCS students have fewer opportunities for primary, secondary, and postsecondary school, not to mention access to certain types of jobs. Loper (2001) takes this assumption to task as she views the education as a basis for social advancement within a society, thus she argues that Hong Kong's public education system "has perpetuated a cycle of poverty among ethnic minority groups who cannot afford to send their children to more expensive international schools" (p. 17). Language, power, and socioeconomic status are obviously linked in the case of Hong Kong's NCS ethnic minority population, and exacerbated by their experiences with the educational system: especially their lack of access to Chinese MOI schools, and inadequate language learning supports which serve to block their access to a wide variety of employment options after graduation.

Post-structuralist Considerations: Language, Culture, Identity and Becoming NCS

Situating the policies of Hong Kong's Education Bureau in post-structuralist analysis calls for an understanding of the impact of discourse on citizens and on development and educational practices (Coupland, Nussbaum and Grossman, 1993; Robinson-Pant, 2001). The understanding of post-structuralism that grounds this research project has been articulated by Petersen, Barns, Dudley, and Harris (2005) as a collection of theories and ideas that:

focus on the inextricable and diffuse linkages between power and knowledge, and on how individuals are constituted as subjects and given unified identities or subject positions. That is, they focus on micro politics and on subjectivity, difference and everyday life. (p. 3)

Post-structuralism works to show that instead of a singular experience of power,

within institutions, languages and cultures, multiple ways of knowing, of understandings of power relations occur, and sometimes work in opposition to each other (Newman, 2005, p. 5). This conception of multiple ways of knowing and multiple ways of experiencing power relations works to ground this research project as it acknowledges that students' and teachers' experiences are varied and heterogeneous.

Existing discourses about Non-Chinese Speaking students' access to schools, language of instruction, belonging and educational opportunities leads into another major concept: imagined communities, and the alignment of what students believe they have access to the communities that they have real access to (Anderson, 1991; Chavez, 1991; Kanno, 2003; Kanno & Norton, 2003). For the purpose of this project, I would like to employ Robinson-Pant's (2001) understanding and description of discourse as "much more than speaking or writing, but [] around rules and characteristics, appropriate [and] legitimate ways of acting," (pp. 314-315). Walshaw (2007) discusses the way in which the discourse of policy text views the learner as a subject, and that these policy discourses are:

mostly unofficial. Whatever their stand, they all compete for the learner's attention in a way that we can't fully imagine. That leads us to think of the learner as a product of discursive practice. This idea is tremendously important because it signals a fluid, rather than fixed subjectivity, as a result of the operation of strands of power" (pp. 66-67).

As Petersen, Barns, Dudley, and Harris (2005) articulated, post-structuralist theory is concerned with the importance of power and control, and how these concepts affect people, education and language (Bell & Russell, 2000; Foucault,

1980; Jacob & Holisinger, 2009; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Ninnes & Burnett, 2003). The post-structuralist understanding of power from the perspective of the school, is linked to language, economic, social and cultural capital, as well as the hidden curriculum in schools (Bourdieu, 1986, 1989, 1991; Giroux & Penna, 1983; Knight, Smith, & Sachs, 1990). Gee (2011) writes that “different identities and activities are enacted in and through language, the study of language is integrally connected to matters of equity and justice,” (p. 30). Walshaw (2007) suggests that post-structuralists construct language as the creator of social experiences rather than a reflection of an existing materiality.

As such, an examination of the discourse of the Education Bureau (EDB) will be employed to illuminate two questions that are central to discourse analysis (Baker, 2005): how do powerful social actors dominate public discourse, and how does this discourse internalize within less powerful social actors and lead to social and cultural inequality? (van Dijk, 2001, p. 355). This idea that discourses shape the development of identity is particularly relevant to this project. The EDB’s documents directed at NCS students contribute to the development of their own ideas about what it means to be a person who lives and studies in Hong Kong without understanding Chinese. Language and power are inextricably linked, and therefore, this study looks to the language produced by the Education Bureau and directed at NCS students and parents.

(Re)Considering Post-structuralism

The relationship between language ability and otherness in a multicultural, multiliterate, multilingual Non-Chinese Speaking classroom can be

examined through a poststructuralist lens (Amin, 1997; Canagarajah, 1999; Gao & Tsung 2011; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Ku, Chan & Sandhu, 2005; Shum).

But Gee (2011) warns that:

When we watch language-in-action in a culture quite different from our own, even simple interactions can be inexplicable, thanks to the fact that we do not know many of the figured worlds at play. This means that even if we can figure out the situated meanings of some words, we cannot see any sense to why these situated meanings have arisen. (p. 82)

Gee's warning has provided a guide throughout this project, both directed at the development of educational policy directed at NCS ethnic minority groups, and in my own interpretation of the themes that have arisen from the discourses produced by the EDB, my former students and their teachers. Some of the discourses provided by the EDB work against my own conception of inclusion, or of 'best practices' when working with a marginalized population. However, my interpretation of these discourses is grounded in my own situated meaning. While I can examine the discourse, I cannot know ultimately the "figured worlds at play" (p. 82). Petersen, Barns, Dudley and Harris (2005) also warn about touting the perfection of post-structuralism as they note that:

To the extent that social life is characterised by multiple and incommensurable sites and subject positions, it becomes difficult to talk of collective goals, of the public good or of any universal notion of social justice. It is at this point that post-structural analysis runs into serious difficulty. In the eyes of some critics at least, post-structuralism not only fails to oppose the atomisations of neo-liberal policies but actually reproduces its individualistic assumptions. (p. 10).

Foucault (1980) also warned about the pre-existing assumptions and attachments that we have when we work towards the betterment of society. There is no true, or best way, says Foucault. Instead, Foucault suggested that we should attempt

to understand, contextualize and pay attention to those who are the “object of...undesirable practice...and support how and why they are resisting the practice” (Jardine, 2005, p. 34). This call to understand how the “object[s] of undesirable practice” understand and resist practices is one of the main goals of this study. How do NCS students understand and resist their categorization and experience of school? Post-structuralism works as a theory to ground and contextualize these experiences.

Ethnic Minority Education and ‘Border Crossings’

Rather than focusing on homogenous narratives, a post-structuralist discussion of language learning, culture and identity construction allows for the analysis of the Non-Chinese Speaking ethnic minority students’ schooling to be contextualized (Fairbrother, 2003; Feng, 2010; Gao, 2010; Kennedy & Hue, 2011; Kiesling, 2006; Knowles & Harper, 2009; Kramsch, 1998; Lord, 1987; Mok & Li, 2010). The conceptual, linguistic, cultural and social border crossings made by NCS students from home to school, and an understanding of the politics of education in creating cultural workers must be illuminated to understand the future opportunities that exist for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong (Giroux, 1992). The borders that are crossed by the students in terms of language and culture will be highlighted through their accounts (Rampton, 1995). One effect of globalization is that many actors (and certainly this is the case for NCS ethnic minorities in Hong Kong) identify themselves as having “multiple identities, of being part of and between many different worlds where they navigate a sea of

texts where each attempts to position and define them as they construct their identities” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 108).

Problematizing ‘Literacy’: The New Literacy Studies

In this post-structuralist analysis, an emphasis on diverse literacy practices, defined as multiliteracies by the New Literacy Studies will be employed to understand the social, linguistic and cultural borders crossed by students from the home to school and back again (Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2006; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Street, 2001a, 2001b). The access that students have to discourses, cultural, linguistic and social practices will be examined within the lens of agency, and their development as multiliterate and multilingual citizens will be explored (Annamalai, 1995). As Gee (2005) suggests, institutions, like schools themselves, “render certain sorts of activities and identities meaningful; certain sorts of activities and identities constitute the nature and existence of specific social groups and institutions” (p. 2). Schools decide which languages belong within the school, and who has to access these languages. In this, students’ local language practices are effectively marginalized. How does learning (or not learning) Cantonese factor into NCS ethnic minority students’ identities as multilingual individuals, or as citizens of Hong Kong? Non-Chinese Speaking ethnic minority students’ motivations for learning Chinese are varied (Bradley, 2002; Kosonen, 2009), and the barriers to language learning that they face has been articulated through government policies, including the Non-Discrimination Ordinance (2008) and Language Policies (1998; 2005) (Shum,

Gao, Tsung & Ki, 2011; Tse et al., 2012; Tsung et al., 2010)? As Brian Street (2003) attests, the New Literacy Studies:

takes nothing for granted with respect to literacy and the social practices with which it becomes associated, problematizing what counts as literacy at any time and place and asking “whose literacies” are dominant and whose are marginalized or resistant (p. 77).

In employing a post-structuralist lens when looking at the literacy practices of NCS ethnic minority students, the sociocultural context of their literacy practices is highlighted (Burck, 2005; Purcell-Gates, 2004). The theoretical considerations provided by the New Literacy Studies focuses an analysis on the effect of local literacy practices on “othered” communities (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, 2001; Dyer & Choksi, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 2007). This view of literacy as multiple, rather than autonomous suggests that literacies are oral, visual, multimodal and written- as is the view of ‘text’. As shown through government policies, NCS students’ literacy practices can be accessed, valued and devalued in the larger discussion of their access to Chinese or English as the Medium of Instruction in Hong Kong’s secondary schools. As Tsung, Zhang and Cruickshank (2010) have acknowledged in their study, the teachers of NCS ethnic minorities referred to students’ Chinese language capabilities through a deficit model, through the autonomous (out of context) model of understanding language and literacy (p. 24). In an effort to understand the relationship between literacy practices, discourses, and social practices, the use of ‘literacy’ as a tool of domination and a way of emphasizing ‘otherness,’ is exemplified in the schooling experiences of NCS ethnic minority students (Gee, 1996, 2001; Lam & Wang, 2008; Lin &

Man, 2011; Luke, 2003; Robinson-Pant, 2004). To contextualize NCS students' literacy practices, linguistic, social and cultural border crossings, the theoretical framework of the New Literacy Studies will be accessed to understand the role of multiliteracies, linguistic capital, othering and hegemony (Street, 2001a, 2001b). The New Literacy Studies' theory about language and literacy as multiple, rather than singular and autonomous, have not been subscribed to by Hong Kong's EDB. With this in mind, my project looks to see how students access and employ languages and literacies in their English as the Medium of Instruction schools. How do students develop understandings of what it means to be a part of Hong Kong as they navigate multiple languages, and are provided linguistic capital based on their Chinese and English ability in Hong Kong's educational system (Lee, 2006)?

Chapter Three:

Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, the research design is provided, the methodology employed is explained, and the data analyzing techniques exercised to respond to the specific research questions outlined in Chapter One, and situated in the broader literature that was explored in Chapter Two are described. The chapter begins with an exploration of the broader politics of schooling NCS students in Hong Kong. Then, I follow by situating myself in the research project as a researcher as well as a former-teacher and former-colleague. Next, a description of the way in which participants were recruited for the study is provided, as well as a short biography for each student-participant and teacher-participant. Then, the use of the Education Bureau's web-based publications, web-published speeches and online government documents to determine the discourses present about NCS students is discussed. The chapter ends with the justification provided for the methods employed in the study, and the coding and data analysis procedures is illuminated in detail. In this, the themes elucidated in Chapter Four will be explained through a discussion of the coding and data analysis procedures.

Schooling NCS Students in Hong Kong

As reflected in Chapter Two, schooling NCS students in Hong Kong since its independence from Britain in 1997 has been a complicated affair. Changing educational policies and government ordinances have been put into place to

address concerns from the ethnic minority NCS population. The student-participants in this study have been recruited from one government-subsidized school that has changed its ethnic and language make-up since I worked there as a teacher in 2010. In September 2006, the school accepted NCS students for the first time, having one class of Form 1 students (grade 7 in the Canadian Context). The rest of the school was made up of Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (MOI) classes. NCS classes were conducted in English as the MOI. What this means is that in one school, two separate curricula were being taught in two different languages to two separate student populations.

When I arrived as a new teacher at the school in 2008, the NCS population had grown to encompass: one Form 1 class, one Form 2 class and one Form 3 class (grade 7-grade 9, in the Canadian context). When I left in July 2010, the NCS population had grown to include two Form 1 classes, two Form 2 classes, one Form 3 class, one Form 4 class and one Form 5 class (grade 7- grade 11). Since September 2010, the school has decided to shift its focus, and MOI to promote increased numbers of NCS students. The school has decided to stop recruiting students who desire Chinese as the MOI, and now, in 2013, the Chinese as the MOI streams include only Form 3-Form 6 (grade 9 – grade 12). There are no new Form 1 or Form 2 students as the Chinese MOI stream is being phased out. When the current Form 3 class finishes Form 6 (2016), the school will no longer use Chinese as the Medium of Instruction in any of its classes. The cultural and ethnic shift in the school has created new challenges for inclusion, and this discussion will be elaborated on in the findings section.

My Position as a Researcher AND Former Teacher and Colleague

In this research project, I had a previous professional and trusting relationship with both the student and teacher participants. With the students, I was their former homeroom, English and French teacher, as well as their mentor and friend. Beyond regular teaching hours, the teacher team (including myself and the other Native English Teachers (NET)) would plan extra-curricular activities in the school, and around the city, including hiking, day-trips, picnics and cultural events (celebrating diverse religious holidays and cultural traditions throughout the school year). This previous relationship to both student and teacher participants allowed me to recruit my participants quite easily, and gave the interviews a relaxed and informal feel.

My position as former-teacher and former-colleague allowed me to have a previously established level of trust and comfort with my student and teacher participants. There was a marked difference in the level of comfort and trust in my interviews with my former students and colleagues, in contrast to my meeting with a policy official at the Education Bureau in Hong Kong's governmental buildings. For one, I did not have to hand over my passport, be accompanied by a security agent, or enter a series of password-protected elevators and doors with my student or teacher participants.

However, my position as both a former-teacher and former-colleague had its limitations as well. Before meeting with the participants, I had previously held notions about what good and inclusive teaching should look like. In this, I felt that each student should be given an equal opportunity to learn Chinese,

access extra-curricular activities, and become a part of the school without being marginalized for their perceived lack of the ‘desired’ linguistic and cultural capital. Upon reflection, I realized that these assumptions could cloud the way that I incorporated and reflected upon the data collected. I hypothesized that the school would not have changed much since my departure, and I learned quickly, that my assumptions were based in my previous understanding of the school. After the two years I learned that, in fact, while much had changed, much remained the same.

The Student-Participants¹

In compliance with my university’s ethical guidelines for research with humans, I e-mailed thirty-five of my former students privately and individually. Twenty students responded that they would like to participate in the project. Since teaching the students, I have been in periodic touch with them, and our relationship has shifted from teacher-student to former-teacher, mentor and friend. In these e-mails, I requested that students be available to answer a subsequent e-mail questionnaire, and upon reaching Hong Kong, meet with me privately and individually for a semi-structured interview. The interviews focused on a range of topics, but focused particularly on

- how they view their experience as NCS individuals in school;
- language usage in school and at home;
- their perception of linguistic, social, and cultural border crossings; and,
- assessment.

¹ See Appendix A for a complete list of students’ first languages and countries of origin.

Many of the student-participants were members of my former class, and three student-participants were recruited from an extra-curricular activity that I used to supervise. Each of the student participants is introduced with a short biographical note in the following section.

S1²: Amber. Amber is 17 years old and was born in Sri Lanka. She has had a bilingual upbringing where she speaks English with her father in his home, and Tamil with her mother at her home. Even though she moved to Hong Kong at age 3, Amber says that she can't speak Chinese except to "order food." Amber learned Tagalog from her friends and sometimes uses it at school. She wants to pursue an acting, modeling and/or singing career when she is finished secondary school.

S2: Amrit. Amrit is 18 years old and was born in India. He came to Hong Kong in 2007, and speaks Punjabi at home. At school, Amrit speaks "English, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi," and will speak Chinese "sometimes." He found school intimidating when he first came to Hong Kong as he remembers, "I didn't talk with anyone. I was so quiet. I would just sit in the classroom, and didn't talk to anybody." Now, he enjoys his tightknit group of friends, and hopes to study to become a teacher at university in the future.

S3: Khan. Khan is an avid cricket player who is actually 20 years old, though his Hong Kong ID card states that he is 18. He was born in Pakistan, and came to Hong Kong in 2009. He speaks Kashmiri at home with his family, and speaks English with his brother when they want to discuss something without

² Only pseudonyms are used.

their parents' understanding what they are saying. At school, he mainly speaks English, and he speaks Punjabi with his friends at school during lunch and recess (and actually, also during class, though he admits that he is not supposed to).

S4: Yuna. Yuna is 19 years old, and she was born in Nepal. She came to Hong Kong when she was 16 years old. She speaks Nepali at home, and sometimes also English. Her father works in Singapore, and her mother works in Hong Kong, and she and her mother visit Singapore as often as possible. At school, Yuna speaks "English, Chinese and Hindi." Yuna can read English, Nepali and Hindi, and can only read a "little bit" of Chinese, although her father is fluent in spoken and written Chinese.

S5: Dilraj. Dilraj is 18 years old, and was born in Hong Kong. He mostly speaks Punjabi at home, but sometimes speaks English with his mother, and Chinese with his father. At school, when he is with people "with my same nationality, we speak Punjabi... but....with Chinese people or with Philippines' people we speak English." His father went to school in Hong Kong in a government school with Cantonese as the Medium of Instruction, but Dilraj is schooled in English as a Non-Chinese Speaking person [even though he can speak Chinese].

S6: Aman. Aman is 17 years old, and came to Hong Kong in 2007. He was born in India. At home, he mostly speaks Punjabi, but sometimes speaks English with his brothers. At school, Aman speaks mainly English and "Punjabi or Hindi." Aman also speaks Chinese "during Chinese lessons and with Chinese friends," and often uses Chinese to access services in his neighbourhood.

S7: Ann. Ann is 19 years old, and she was born in Hong Kong. At home, she speaks Chinese with her family, and sometimes English and Tagalog. At school, she speaks English, and Chinese, but speaks Tagalog with friends. Her older sister attended the same school in Cantonese as the Medium of Instruction, but left school after Form 3 (grade 9 in the Canadian context).

S8: Mai Chan. Mai Chan is 18 years old. She was born in Bangkok, and came to Hong Kong with her family in March 2010. At home, she speaks Cantonese “because [her] family is Chinese.” She is a fluent speaker of Thai, and Cantonese, though her Cantonese literacy skills are lower than expected at a Chinese as the Medium of Instruction school. Therefore, she decided to attend a school with English as the Medium of Instruction. At school, she speaks English and Cantonese. Outside, with friends, she speaks Thai.

S9: Shawn. Shawn is 17 years old, and he was born in Hong Kong. His first language is Hinko, which is a dialect from Pakistan. He also speaks Chinese with his mom at home when “she jokes around.” He speaks English at school, or Urdu, and says that “when it’s Chinese lesson, I do speak Chinese, because I don’t want to feel guilty or whatever.”

S10: Sukhroop. Sukhroop is 20 years old. He came to HK in 2007, and he was born in the Indian province of Punjab. At home, he speaks Punjabi. At school he speaks, Punjabi, Hindi and English, and only “sometimes” speaks Chinese. Although he received a “B” on his GCSE Chinese exam, he admits that he doesn’t really speak Chinese- he studied really hard, and memorized the information for the exam, but is not comfortable communicating in Chinese.

S11: Singh. Singh is 18 years old, and he came to Hong Kong in 2007 from India, where he was born. At home he “speaks a little bit of Chinese, and [his] home language of Punjabi”. At schools he speaks “only four” languages: Chinese, English, Punjabi and Hindi.

S12: Shasad. Shasad is 18 years old, and he arrived in Hong Kong in 2007. Shasad was born in Pakistan, and he has become interested in activism in Hong Kong for the language and educational rights for NCS ethnic minority students. At home he speaks English with his stepmother, and Punjabi with his father. His father studied for part of his life in Pakistan where he learned in Punjabi and Urdu, and when he moved to Hong Kong as a teenager, he spoke English and Chinese at school.

S13: Katherina. Katherina is 16, and she was born in Hong Kong. She speaks “either English or Tagalog” at home. At school she speaks English because “that’s the only language I know how to speak.” Even during Chinese lessons, Katherina says that she “still speak[s] English because...[she] do[esn’t] know how to speak in Chinese.”

S14: Daniel. Daniel is 17 years old, and like Katherina, he was also born in Hong Kong. Daniel speaks Tagalog at home, and sometimes speaks English, or Chinese. Daniel admits that when he speaks Chinese with his family they mostly “make fun of” each other’s Cantonese language skills. At school, he speaks Chinese (in Chinese class), but otherwise he mainly speaks English so that he may communicate with more of his classmates. However, he states that when he is with his friends, he “mainly speaks in Tagalog.”

S15: Jim. Jim is 18 years old, and he was born in Venezuela. His parents are originally from Hong Kong, and moved the family back in 2008. At home, he “speaks Chinese the most,” as well as some Spanish and English with “the maid, the helper...[because] she is from the Philippines.” At school, Jim mainly speaks English, but also Spanish and Cantonese. Since 2011, he has attended a new, international school where the students are a mix of Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Mexican and Colombian. He “feels better” at his new school than the school where I taught because at “this school, the students take it more seriously.”

S16: Kamu. Kamu is 19, and she was born in Nepal. Kamu came to Hong Kong in 2007, and did not find a school placement until 2008 when she began at the school that she is studying at. She speaks Nepali at home with her family. At school, she speaks “English, Hindi, Nepali, plus sometimes Chinese, oh, and also Punjabi.”

S17: Mel. Mel is 19 years old and she was born in Nepal. She came to Hong Kong when she was 17 years old, and she speaks Nepali at home. At home, she also speaks Hindi and English, but only sometimes. At school, Mel speaks English, Hindi, and “sometimes” Chinese, and notes that she finds Cantonese to be challenging.

S18: Veronica. Veronica is 19 years old, and she came to Hong Kong in 2003 from Bangladesh. At home, she speaks Bengali and “sometimes” Hindi, and at school she “usually” speaks in English and Hindi. She uses Chinese in her

“daily life” at the market, or in shops, and in Chinese class, but admits that she’s “not that good at Chinese.”

S19: Avatar. Avatar is 18 years old, and he was born in India. He came to Hong Kong in 2005, and he speaks Punjabi and English at home. At school he speaks English, Punjabi and Chinese. He is more confident in his Chinese skills than many of his classmates.

S20: Rocky. Rocky is 17 years old, and was born in India, though he came to Hong Kong when he was a baby. At home he speaks Punjabi and Chinese [sometimes]. With friends, he speaks Hindi and Urdu, or English, and at school he speaks, Chinese, English and Punjabi.

The Teacher-Participants³

Again in compliance with the university’s ethical guidelines, I e-mailed 5 of my former colleagues privately and individually. Three former-colleagues wrote that they would be interested in participating in my study. In these e-mails, I requested that teachers be available to answer a subsequent e-mail questionnaire, and upon reaching Hong Kong, meet with me privately and individually for a semi-structured interview. Each respondent stated that it would be fine to meet with me individually for an interview, but a questionnaire would be too time consuming. As such, I dropped the questionnaire, and incorporated these pre-prepared questions into the subsequent semi-structured interview. Their interviews focused on a range of topics, but focused particularly on

³ See Appendix B for a complete list of teachers’ first languages and countries of origin.

- their experiences with NCS students;
- their ideas about multiculturalism and multiliteracies;
- their perception of students' linguistic, social, and cultural border crossings; and,
- students' access to courses and response to summative assessments (ie: the public examinations and the GCSE (Chinese) exam).

Since working with these three teachers, I have remained in periodic touch with them. Our relationship as colleagues and friends, allowed the interviews to feel informal and friendly, even though our teaching philosophies and pedagogical practices differ dramatically (in each case). Our differences in what we thought good teaching looked like, or how inclusion could be enacted in schools differed when we worked together, and differs today. However, because we have developed feelings of mutual respect, the responses generated by teacher-respondents did not seem to be held back. Each of the teacher participants is introduced below with a short biographical note.

T14: Nancy: Grade 8-12 Math Teacher. Nancy is a mathematics and computer science teacher in her late-twenties. She grew up in Hong Kong, and speaks Cantonese as her first language. In school, she learned English and Mandarin, and teaches all of her classes with English as the Medium of Instruction. She studied mathematics and teacher's education in her bachelor degree (in Chinese), and is currently studying for her Master's degree in Mathematics Education (in English as the MOI). At work, she speaks Cantonese

⁴ Only pseudonyms are used.

with colleagues, as all staff meetings are conducted (despite having a multilingual staff, many of whom do not understand Chinese).

T2: Julian: Grade 9-12 English Teacher. Julian is an English teacher in his mid-twenties. He was born in Hong Kong, and speaks Cantonese as his first language, and studied his Bachelor and Master's degree in English as the MOI overseas. He teaches all of his classes in English, but uses Cantonese with NCS and CS students in informal situations, as well as with his colleagues.

T3: Jeremy: Grade 7-12 Science/Math Teacher. Jeremy is a science and mathematics teacher in his mid-thirties. He was born in Nepal, and came to Hong Kong in 2009 to work as a teacher. He studied his B.Sc. in Nepal, and his M.Sc. in England, and is a trained biologist. At home, Jeremy speaks Nepali and some English with his family. At work, Jeremy teaches in English, but often speaks Nepali, Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi with the students. He is learning Cantonese, and finds it difficult at work without being able to communicate more fluently with some of his colleagues in Chinese.

Education Bureau Participant

In addition to the foregoing, I e-mailed Hong Kong's Education Bureau's Services for Non-Chinese Speaking Students. From this encounter, I was put in touch with a member of the Services for Non-Chinese Speaking Students who agreed to schedule a time to meet with me at the EDB's government office when I arrived in Hong Kong. Upon reaching Hong Kong, I met with this policy maker, and conducted a semi-structured interview privately and individually. Our encounter was mediated by my insider-outsider status, as a previous Native

English Teacher of NCS students, and ultimately as a foreign person. The responses generated by the EDB participant must be mediated through this knowledge. The interview worked through a variety of topics, but focused particularly on

- the EDB's policies directed at NCS ethnic minority students;
- the EDB's ideas about multiculturalism and multiliteracies;
- their perception of students' linguistic, social, and cultural border crossings; and,
- summative assessments for NCS students (ie: GCSE (Chinese)).

Data Gathering Procedures

This qualitative inquiry sought to understand the alignment of students' beliefs about schools with the policies in place for them by Hong Kong's Education Bureau. Teachers of NCS students provided a middle ground between policy and practice, and served to illuminate the place in between the EDB's discourse and the students' experiences.

For this qualitative inquiry, data collection included three particular approaches, including 1) e-mail questionnaires; 2) open-ended, semi-structured interviews; and, 3) analyzing online publications by the EDB. Data-gathering began with an e-mail questionnaire sent to 20 former students, 6 weeks before my arrival in Hong Kong. Upon arrival, the data collection shifted to include 24 private and individual semi-structured interviews throughout a 3-week period in September-October 2012. The semi-structured, and open-ended interviews were

audio-recorded. Data were also collected from an analysis of the EDB website and online publications directed at NCS families.

E-mail Questionnaire

Before arriving in Hong Kong, I sent an English e-mail questionnaire to each student-participant. In doing so, I wanted students to begin thinking about the questions that I would be asking them in their semi-structured interviews, and to give them a forum to ask questions about vocabulary that I might be using in the interview. Their responses were short and informal, and I stressed that there were no correct answers in this project. Instead, I wanted to hear their opinions, as that was the focus of my project. I did so in an attempt to limit bias, so that students would tell me what they believed, rather than what they thought that I wanted to hear. The e-mail questionnaire included ten questions that focused on

- the process of being accepted into a school
- extra-curricular activities and school courses;
- sense of belonging in the school;
- ideas about post-secondary education and future opportunities; and,
- their individual definition of “Non-Chinese Speaking”.

Student Semi-structured Interviews

Between September and October 2012, twenty Non-Chinese Speaking secondary-school-aged students were interviewed privately and individually. Before meeting with the students individually, I had an idea about their beliefs about being categorized as ‘NCS’ when they were younger, but I was unsure

about the development, change, or solidification of these ideas. I had no idea if their feelings had changed, or stayed the same. As their former-teacher, I tried not to show my bias towards my beliefs about the way things were. However, two years had passed, and I was genuinely surprised about what I saw, and what students said to me. Students were told that the project was about their opinions, rather than a 'correct' answer, and that the more real their responses, the more correct my work would be. Each interview was conducted in English, as all participants used English in their school lives, and it was the language that we have used in our previous interactions. The interviews varied between twenty and forty-five minutes (though I had originally assumed the interview would last sixty to ninety minutes). Each interview discussed a number of concepts, including:

- how their language practices were negotiated at home, in public, and at school;
- understanding their ideas about Chinese as the Medium of Instruction and English as the Medium of Instruction;
- how Non-Chinese Speaking was defined in the context of their school;
- how they imagined their future opportunities (post-secondary education, etc.)
- summative assessments (public exams, GCSE (Chinese)); and;
- where they felt that they fit at school and in society.

Teacher Semi-structured Interviews

In October 2012, three teachers of Non-Chinese Speaking high-school-aged students were interviewed privately and individually. These interviews were conducted in English, as it was the language that I spoke with all of my former-colleagues in our previous professional interactions. Before meeting with the teachers individually, I had an idea about their beliefs about teaching NCS students when I was at the school, but I was interested in learning about how their ideas had shifted, negotiated, or solidified. As their former-colleague, my biases toward the schooling of NCS students had been made clear at every staff meeting we attended. However, the school has changed in the two years that I have been away, and while we had some differing opinions in our teaching philosophies, we always engaged with each other in an open-and respectful dialogue. As such, the teacher-participants had an idea of what my ideas had been, but felt comfortable to give their own opinions. Each interview was conducted in English and varied in time between forty-five and sixty minutes (though I had originally assumed the interview would last sixty to ninety minutes). Each individual interview focused on a discussion of a variety of topics, including:

- how NCS students' language practices were negotiated at school;
- understanding their ideas about Chinese as the Medium of Instruction and English as the Medium of Instruction;
- how Non-Chinese Speaking was defined in the context of their school;
- how they felt the EDB was designing policies towards NCS students;

- summative assessments (public exams, GCSE (Chinese)); and;
- how they experienced NCS students in their roles as teachers/mentors.

Education Bureau Semi-structured Interview

In October 2012, I met with a member of the Education Bureau from the Services for Non-Chinese Speaking Students Office, who asked to be referred to as the “Education Bureau (EDB) Participant.” This interview was conducted privately in English at the EDB’s government offices in Hong Kong. Before meeting with the EDB participant individually, I had an idea about the EDB’s policies from engaging with the publications for NCS families on their website. The interview was conducted in English and lasted sixty minutes. The interview focused on:

- the EDB’s policies directed at NCS students;
- understanding their ideas about Chinese as the Medium of Instruction and English as the Medium of Instruction;
- how Non-Chinese Speaking was defined in the context of policy discourse;
- how language policies affected NCS students;
- summative assessments (public exams, GCSE (Chinese)); and;
- the challenges involved in developing policy for an increasingly diverse student population.

For this project, triangulation of data will be achieved through this interview with a member of Hong Kong’s Education Bureau, as it works to illuminate the

findings from the analysis of printed documents and policies directed towards Non-Chinese Speaking students in Hong Kong, which is detailed below.

Education Bureau Online Publications

The online publications provided on the EDB's website, *Education services for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students* (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/ncs>) was consulted to contextualize the responses from the EDB participant, who described and acknowledged these online documents in several instances in the interview. I accessed 27 online documents, in English, though 3 of the 27 documents are also available in Cantonese, Bahasa, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai and Urdu. I have used these online materials to illuminate the EDB's policies directed at NCS families. Hong Kong's Education Bureau policy documents, published on the Internet, will be situated in discourse analysis, and in the theoretical lens provided by post-structuralism (as discussed in Chapter Two).

Data Analysis

Upon reaching Hong Kong, I completed the semi-structured and open-ended interviews with all of the participants within a three-week period in September-October 2012. After audio-recording the student, teacher and EDB policy official's interviews, I subsequently transcribed all twenty-four interviews. After the data collection period finished, all of the collected data was coded for emerging themes.

I also collected 27 online documents from the EDB's website (www.edb.gov.hk/ncs) for NCS students and families. I used these online materials to illuminate the EDB's policies directed at NCS families. The data

was first coded through the qualitative analysis software system, HyperRESEARCH to illuminate general themes. The themes that arose from the coding process became the basis for the discourse analysis that was completed on certain terms that repeated themselves. This discourse analysis, was influenced by Baker (2006), and examined all online documents that were directed at secondary school students. While online materials that catered exclusively to primary students and their families were excluded, the materials that were directed at both primary and secondary students were included in the analysis. From the general themes that were noted in the analysis, particular words and phrases repeated themselves, including: support, Non-Chinese Speaking, GCSE and integrate. These four words and phrases were input into HyperRESEARCH, which contains a search function that looks for collocations as it allowed me to examine five words before and five words after the chosen word. Omitting articles [the/an/a etc.], the words that occurred most frequently in collocation with the target terms were used to create a visual depiction of these collocational networks. These collocational networks will be displayed and the discourses that were targeted will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four:

Findings

This chapter is a summation of the key findings from this research project. I begin the chapter by complicating the definition of ‘Non-Chinese Speaking’ through the responses of the three groups of participants: Education Bureau member, teachers and students. Next, an analysis of discourse of Hong Kong’s Education Bureau is presented, from their online publications as well as the result of the interview conducted with a member of the EDB. The differences between discourses are displayed by employing collocational networks as they are a visual tool that clearly depict the discourse of the EDB about schooling NCS students in Hong Kong. Next, I argue that the discourse of the EDB is complicated by the lived experience of twenty NCS secondary school students, and three of their teachers. I end the chapter by detailing the 20 NCS students’ perceptions of access to scholastic, vocational opportunities, language practices and sense of belonging in their secondary school.

Preamble

As Hong Kong has endeavoured to include its Non-Chinese Speaking resident population into its schools, challenges have arisen in the implementation of programming. The discourses that emanate from Hong Kong’s Education Bureau encourage NCS students to “integrate” and to do so “as early as possible” (EDB, 2004 January; 2004; 2012). As Baker (2005) has noted, minority groups rarely have an opportunity to actively control the way that they are discussed and

politicized in the media and in government policy, and suggests that these political discourses can be contextualized by examining the collocational networks between particular terms to give insight into the ways in which these groups are imagined and portrayed (p. 74). Through an in-depth examination of the EDB's discourse, I looked at the collocations between particular terms like "integrate," "support," "Non-Chinese Speaking," and "GCSE," to understand the discourses that surround NCS students. From this analysis, I looked to the interviews provided by 20 NCS student-participants and 3 of their teachers, and it became clear that the discourses set out by the EDB do not align with the practice of schooling NCS students. Through carefully selected quotations from students, teachers and the EDB member, I will illuminate the lack of alignment between the students' perceptions of access, what the teachers' believe, and what the EDB has suggested. In effect, this project to integrate NCS students into society is failing, and the student and teacher responses point to the tensions that continue to prevent students from "integrat[ing] in the local education system and community" (EDB, 2013b).

An additional related challenge lies with the conception of the term Non-Chinese Speaking. Through carefully selected data from the discourse of the EDB's online materials, and the responses of the EDB participant, as well as NCS students and their teachers, the definition of Non-Chinese Speaking will be carefully examined. The Education Bureau (EDB) defined Non-Chinese Speaking clearly, but students' and teachers' responses pointed to NCS as meaning more than just not being able to speak Chinese. Instead, teachers and students also

included nationality, race and ethnicity in conjunction with language ability. I will discuss the implications of these findings in the following chapter.

Findings

Upon coding all data, and examining the data for themes, five particular themes emerged, which have been investigated and will be elaborated upon in the section below.

1. The competing definitions of “Non-Chinese Speaking”
2. Hong Kong’s Education Bureau’s discourses point to the integration of NCS students into schools and the community as a priority
3. Chinese Language skills are necessary to access postsecondary education, to have diverse employment options, and become a part of Hong Kong
4. Students’ experiences at school suggest a lack of alignment with the EDB’s policy goals
5. Teachers’ position in-between the government’s integration policy and the students’ experiences of school

Defining Non-Chinese Speaking

One of the most interesting discussions that results from the data are the competing definitions of the term ‘Non-Chinese Speaking,’ which is a socially constructed category with complex implications. The Education Bureau clearly defines

NCS students [as] those whose spoken language at home is not Chinese. In other words, students whose ethnicity is Chinese but who are non-Chinese speaking based on the spoken language at home are also classified as NCS students. (EDB, 2013h).

For the EDB, the definition of NCS is clear. It refers exclusively to language ability. Specifically, NCS does not refer to ethnicity. The EDB suggests that

students who are ethnically Chinese but do not speak Chinese are included within the category. For the EDB, the term NCS denotes language only. This definition was echoed in my interview with the participant from the EDB who stated that when the EDB defines “[NCS], we usually refer those to students having their spoken language at home NC” (EDB Participant, October 11, 2012).

Therefore, according to the EDB, to be NCS, your spoken language at home must not be Chinese. However, there is some difference in the responses from both teachers and students. Teachers are the enforcers of this categorization. They teach the students who have been placed in this social category. Within the teacher-participants, there is some fluctuation about the definition of NCS. For Julian, his definition aligns clearly with the EDB as he defines NCS students as “those who can’t speak fluent Chinese to communicate, so usually they will have to rely on English as their “lingua Franca.”” Nancy points to a few more complexities, and begins to waver from the definition that has been provided by the EDB as she notes that NCS students are those who do not speak Chinese and also include those students who were

not born in Hong Kong. Or, their nationality is not Chinese. Maybe they [were] not in Hong Kong when they [were] young. Or, they have the foreign education. Then, they have more Western style, maybe. Or, not usually speak Cantonese.

Jeremy offers another insight, himself identifying as a NCS person. He suggests that

I, myself [am] categorized as NC...So, for me, as a teacher, [Non-Chinese Speaking] means those students who do not have, not the first language as Chinese are considered as Non-Chinese students... Maybe from different countries. Not necessarily it has to be from only one country...So, NC represents a group of people from different countries.

To Nancy and Jeremy, NCS points to students who come from other countries, or who have been schooled outside of Hong Kong. It is many people from many countries. But, as we have seen from the student-respondents, NCS also includes students who were born in Hong Kong, and students who speak Chinese well enough to communicate. Who benefits from these social categorizations? Who loses out? If being NCS necessarily means that one cannot speak Chinese, the students provide the nuances that are attached with the term.

Aman suggests that NCS describes students who do not speak Chinese, “or not of Chinese blood.” The conception of “blood” and race continue to arise in students’ depictions. Dilraj agrees and suggests that NCS also refers to people who are, “different from other, different from Chinese people. Like skin colour, or that which doesn’t belong to China, not born, not like China, Hong Kong people. Just like different nationalities.” All students suggested that to be categorized as NCS, one must not be able to speak Chinese. They went on to describe the other shades that exist in connection with the category. Mel believes that, “NC means the ethnic minorities who doesn't know how to speak Chinese and then who doesn't belong to China,” and Avatar, who was born in India suggests that

Because like, I’m living in their country, but I’m not Chinese. So, maybe I’m called Non-Chinese. Like, if they come to India, they will be called Non-Indian. [laughs]. Yeah, because like his nationality. [Being categorized as NC] it’s also based on nationality.

Veronica believes that the category of NCS points to students who haven’t yet adapted to life in Hong Kong as she suggests that NCS means, “not knowing

Chinese culture plus not knowing the Chinese [language].” Amber points to the fact that the concept of NCS has different meanings and implications, both inside and outside of school. She defines NCS according to those distinctions:

In school, it's any ethnicity that doesn't speak Chinese, basically you can't talk, you can't talk at the same standard [level] as Chinese. So they're put in a completely different class. Outside of school, it also goes for like, any other nationality, even if you look mixed, or anything. But usually in school, it's just in terms of speaking.

Jim has a complex relationship with the term NC. As he speaks Chinese at home, and his parents were born in Hong Kong, he has a different reaction to the concept. Still, he points to the concept as being something more than language skills. Jim suggests that

NC, I think it means, for us, someone who's from outside, not from here, non-local, and doesn't have the Chinese eyes and they are...someone who also doesn't speak Chinese. I think I'm still Chinese because of my name. I have Chinese name and I can speak it and my parents are from Hong Kong. So, the guys from my school, they will say that I'm Chinese.

Shawn, who was born in Hong Kong thinks differently than many of his classmates, and more in line with the EDB, as he defines NCS as, “a person [who] can't speak Chinese. You know? Face value.” Mai Chan has another perspective based on her own experience. Her father is Chinese and her mother is Thai, and she grew up for the first 16 years of her life in Thailand, and always speaking Chinese at home. She notes that many NCS people are born in Hong Kong,

but they are different. For example, some of my classmates, some are Filipino or they are Indian, they're born here. They can speak, and they can write, and so they can read. I know we are supposed to call them NC people, but they are different. Maybe their outlook. They aren't White. Yeah, maybe the skin color and sometime the language or the way people look at them. Yeah, confusing. I don't know how to describe about them. I don't understand what it means. I will ask the government. [laughter].

Mai Chan has summed up this confusion well. The government decides who counts in the category of NCS, and the students' experiences within the category of NCS refers to much more than just not speaking Chinese.

In this, the meaning of Non-Chinese Speaking depends on who is doing the naming and who is being named by the term. Experiencing the category of NCS is different than giving the category of NCS to another person or group. Therefore, being included in this category absolutely has an impact on the schooling of students. The EDB has suggested that one of their major goals for NCS students is to become a part of Hong Kong and to do so as quickly as possible by learning the Chinese language, and for NCS students' to learn the culture of the school and society. Students have responded that the category of NCS itself works to exclude them from consideration from the local population. They are from other countries. They are multilingual. They have different races, skin colours, ethnicities, religions, and cultures. What is missing from the discourse is a discussion of inclusion of these divergent identities. Is language enough to make a group of diverse individuals feel as though they are a part of Hong Kong? Are the implications of naming and categorizing students as 'NCS' served to marginalize them from the local? Truly, in the competing definitions and experiences of the category of NCS, the true distance between the discourse of the EDB and the students' experience is worth noticing.

The Discourses Present in Hong Kong's Education Bureau's Online Materials

In this discourse analysis, informed by Baker (2006), I analyzed 27 online documents on the Education Bureau's website (www.edb.gov.hk/ncs) that are directed at secondary school-aged NCS students and parents. I did not include documents that were directed exclusively at primary school students and their parents in this analysis. However, I analyzed all documents that applied to both secondary and primary-aged students. In each of the discourses analyses that follow, I combined all 27 documents into a single text file, which I analysed in the program HyperRESEARCH. First, I coded the document for general themes. The general themes that arose included: supports and resources in place for NCS students, the refinement of Medium of Instruction policies and curriculum for NCS students, formal summative assessments, and the inclusion of NCS students within government funded CMI schools. In this coding process, I noticed the repetition of particular concepts and words. This repetition of these discourses became the basis for my analysis. As such, I have chosen four particular words or phrases to analyze here: "Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS)," "support," "General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)" and "integrate."

The Discourse of "Non-Chinese Speaking"

HyperRESEARCH contains a function where it is possible to search for particular words or phrases within a document. The total size of the corpus of the Education Bureau's online printed materials used in this search was 41,373 words. From this corpus, I began by searching for the phrase "Non-Chinese

Speaking”. Included in this search was the acronym “NCS,” which is used more frequently to describe Non-Chinese Speaking students. I coded NCS and Non-Chinese Speaking using ranked frequencies (Baker, 2006, p. 100). The rank by frequency shows how many times a word occurs within 5 words of the search term “Non-Chinese Speaking” or “NCS” in the 303 instances that occurred in the 41,373 words from the 27 online documents provided by the EDB at www.edb.gov.hk/ncs. I used HyperRESEARCH to isolate the terminology, and then I examined the 5 words before and 5 words after (omitting all articles) to build a collocational network, which I have displayed below. The words and phrases that appeared most are represented in the collocational network by font size.

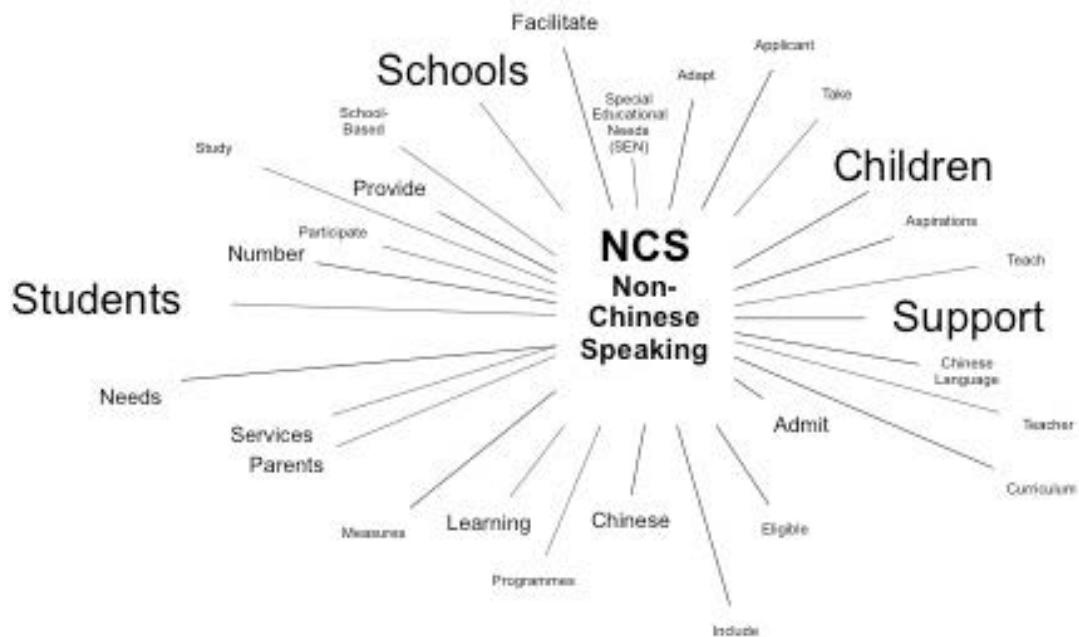


Figure 1. Collocational Network of “NCS” in EDB Online Documents

The term Non-Chinese Speaking, and more frequently “NCS,” permeates the discourse of the EDB. As such, it is first important to acknowledge the EDB’s

definition of what counts as Non-Chinese Speaking. The EDB defines NCS students as:

those whose spoken language at home is not Chinese. In other words, students whose ethnicity is Chinese but who are non-Chinese speaking based on the spoken language at home are also classified as NCS students. (EDB, 2013h)

In this definition, NCS refers exclusively to language usage, and does not refer to Chinese as an ethnicity. To the EDB, NCS refers to language practices only.

This distinction is relevant as students' and teachers' responses to what NCS refers to will be presented in the final section of this chapter.

In its online materials, the EDB uses NCS most often in conjunction with the terms “school,” “students,” “children,” and “support.” Throughout the discourse of their online materials, the EDB repeatedly refers to examination subsidies and to assistance in the learning of the Chinese language as primary supports that are required by NCS students. An emphasis on examinations and the benefits of summative assessment in the lives of NCS students reverberates throughout the EDB's discourse:

Language examinations to obtain internationally recognised qualifications that reflect more closely their proficiency, encouraging NCS students to set higher targets in the learning of the Chinese Language and facilitating their academic and career advancement. (EDB, 2012 December 12)

Does the further development of standardized assessments help NCS students become a part of Hong Kong? Could these measures actually serve to isolate students, or prevent students from accessing postsecondary school, thus preventing students from “career advancement?” The EDB promotes the development of standards-based assessments for students with the requisite Chinese skills, but they note that achievement of high levels of Chinese language

proficiency is not usually the case for NCS students. The EDB notes that,

NCS children are generally poor in Chinese. To enhance their Chinese Proficiency, EDB encourages schools to adapt their curriculum, pedagogy & evaluation with a view to catering for differences in students, teaching according to students' aptitude, and promoting students' learning motivation. (EDB, 2013d)

In this description, the discourse surrounding “NCS” is rooted in a deficit model.

NCS students are “generally poor” and “different.” Their existing multiliterate and multilingual practices are not valued in the discourse, but their lack of Chinese skills are described as rooted in a motivational problem (EDB, 2012b).

In this, their existing literacy practices are marginalized in favour of a discussion of what they are lacking. Their “poor” Chinese skills make it difficult for NCS students to integrate in the community. Further, the EDB’s discourses suggest that NCS students should integrate as quickly as possible, to learn Chinese to gain access to postsecondary education and access to careers in Hong Kong.

Problematically, this integration project is complicated by the “pooling” of NCS students in a group of designated schools, which could prevent them from integrating in the local curriculum. The EDB notes that they provide extra, recurring financial support to these schools, which admit “a critical mass of NCS students” to “enhance the learning and teaching of NCS students” (EDB, 2013h). If schools admitting a “critical mass” of NCS students receive recurring grants, what is the benefit to these schools to integrate these NCS students with less-subsidized local students? The greater the number of NCS students studying in a school, the greater the amount of funding the school receives. This complication

directly challenges the EDB's stated goal of "integration." If the more NCS students studying in a school, the more funding the school receives, then schools will have lower motivation to combine NCS and CS students. Separating these populations to increase funding is a complication that directly challenges the EDB's stated goal of 'integration.'

The conception of Non-Chinese Speaking as a description of students' language abilities has been previously established in the EDB's written discourses. However, some of the EDB's discourse surrounding "NCS" mingles with ideas about nationality, ability and ethnicity. The EDB notes that:

some NCS children are born in Hong Kong. Their learning ability may not be poorer than that of local pupils. Teachers of NCS children find that NCS children are active in learning. They are lively and cheerful. Positive impact can be brought about either on facilitating learning or ethnic integration when they are in the same class with local pupils. (EDB, 2013d)

Learning deficits are discussed here as being nationality-based. Students who come to Hong Kong later in their school lives are at a clear disadvantage, but some NCS students who have attended school in Hong Kong from an early age may not have a "poorer" ability to learn than "local" students. Nationality is constructed as the primary deficit here. The discourse suggests that to be "local," you must be born in Hong Kong and Chinese speaking. This is inherently problematic, especially in a document that is explicitly discussing integration. NCS and CS students should be integrating if NCS students are a minority, that is, unless a "critical mass" of NCS students are being admitted. The complications in this statement are myriad. Integration is acceptable, and even desirable, unless

a “critical mass” of NCS students is accepted into a school. This language, and its implications is inherently contradictory. What is the real goal in employing this contradictory policy to ‘promote’ integration?

The Discourse Surrounding “Support”

As I examined the themes that emerged from the 27 documents, I noted the repeated usage of the term “support” directed at NCS students from the perspective of the EDB. Included in this search was “support,” “supports,” “supported,” and “supporting,” which I coded using ranked frequencies (Baker, 2006, p. 100). I have organized this information visually below, omitting all articles, and words that occurred fewer than three times.

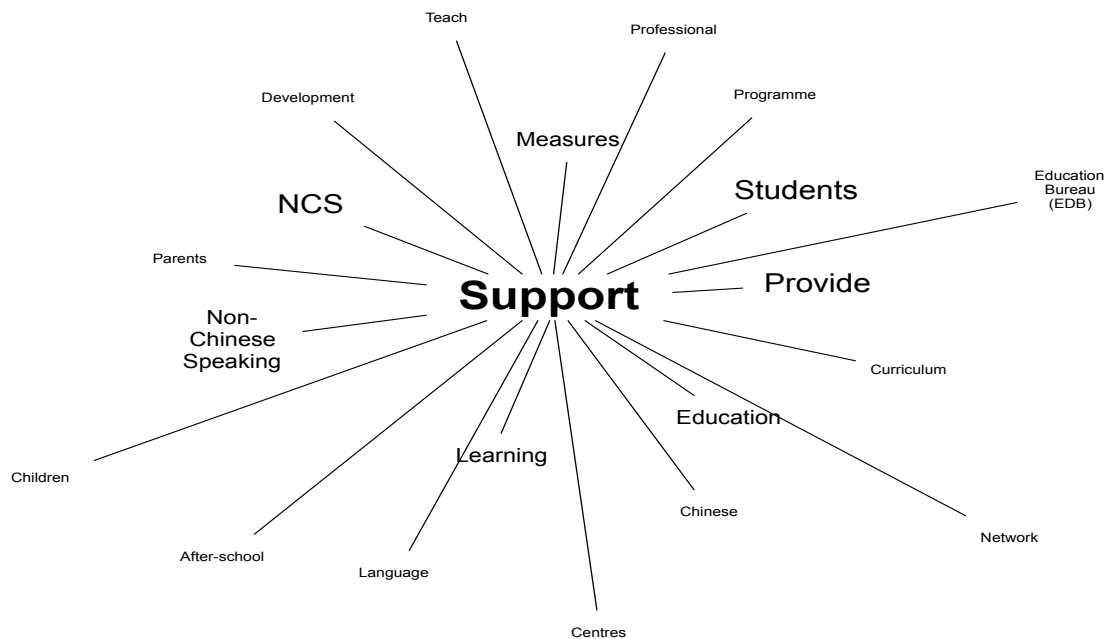


Figure 2. Collocational Network of “Support” in EDB Online Documents

The words and phrases that appeared most are represented in the collocational network by font size. The term “NCS” was used in 46 separate instances,

“provide” was used 41 times, and “students” occurred in 71 instances. Some of the supports that are directed towards NCS students and their families are included as a list on the Services for NCS students website, in an effort to help NCS students ‘adapt’ into the local education system. The EDB has set out a series of supports including the development of a “mutual Support network” where NCS students’ teachers and stakeholders work together to discuss “commonly interested topics” and create “e-sharing platforms” and “learning communities” (EDB, 2010 April). No further details are given as to how or when these support networks are created, developed or sustained. The EDB notes that it has also provided a few “designated” schools with support to tailor and adapt the Chinese curriculum to suit the needs of NCS students, and organized “briefing sessions” to help to

deepen teachers' understanding of their cultural background and customs and enable them to absorb the experience of teaching Chinese and inclusion from other schools admitting NCS children over the years, to broaden the parents' knowledge of various support services and channels on how to instruct their children's learning. (2010 April)

Support in this instance is directed at both teachers and parents. In these discourses, teachers are depicted as not understanding cultural differences, and parents are also depicted as having a lack of understanding about the culture of schooling in Hong Kong. Thinking back to Robinson-Pant’s (2001) definition of discourse as legitimizing certain ways of acting, both parents and teachers are constructed in this discourse as being deficient and without the right kind of knowledge (p. 315). In this vein, support for NCS students is also tied to more

than understanding and learning Chinese, but also is about understanding cultural differences, and against discrimination also. The EDB has noted that in order to

further enhance schools' understanding of the EDB's measures to support NCS students in learning, the requirement under the Race Discrimination Ordinance for schools to create an environment for accommodating ethnic diversity in school, respect cultural and religious differences and communicate with parents as well as the details of the Project and use of funding, two identical briefing sessions will be held. (2010a)

The EDB has set out further support to work with NGOs to assist schools, parents and children to help “nurture multi-cultural harmony,” as by their own admission, teachers and parents are unsure and unaware of cultural practices and differences (2010 April). The EDB has also promised to prepare its circulars for parents in English and Chinese, and give some Information leaflets in English and “in a few ethnic minority languages,” as most NCS families lack the requisite Chinese and English literacy skills to access and understand the information being sent out (EDB, 2013d). What does this mean? The EDB has set out these twenty-seven documents in English for parents of secondary students, and translated only two⁵ of them into “ethnic minority languages” including: Bahasa, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai and Urdu. The two documents that have been made available in “ethnic minority languages” include the *Brief on Education Support Measures for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students (as at December 2012)* and *Leaflet on Fine Tuning of Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools*. For parents without the requisite English literacy skills, these are the only two documents that they would be able to access. This is a serious point worth acknowledging when

⁵ Three documents in total are printed in “ethnic minority languages” on the website, but one of these three is aimed exclusively at NCS parents of primary NCS students.

discussing the supports provided by the EDB. Support for whom? Without Chinese or English literacy skills, many of these supports are not readily available to parents.

The online materials analyzed target NCS students and their families: their audience is not other policy makers, government officials, or “local” Hong Kong residents. As such, these discourses are telling, as the government continues to connect the idea of “support” as a global idea: of subsidies and general resources. An example of this discourse occurs in *The Education Bureau Circular No. 19*, which states that

The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting early integration of NCS students into the community, including facilitating their adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese Language. As one of the support measures for NCS students, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been providing examination subsidy to NCS. (2012)

Here support is tied to both financial subsidies, and also to the larger goal of integrating NCS students into Hong Kong. As we shall see from the students’ experience, a subsidized examination does not mean that students have “become a part of Hong Kong,” nor have had the opportunity to really learn Chinese in a meaningful way that allows them access to the larger community. These discourses from the *Education services for NCS students* website were reiterated in my interview with a member of the EDB. In the participant’s discussion of resources directed at NCS students, and in particular school-based supports, the participant noted that these supports mainly

cater for the newly arrived children, including those NCS students...they may come in the middle of the school year, or they may come at S2 [Secondary 2- grade 8] or S3 [Secondary 3- grade 9], and then we provide

a subsidy, several thousand [HK dollars], to the school, so that the school can roll out some adaptation program to cater for their specific needs. So these are for school based support measures. For example, [if], he or she knows very little Chinese. Then, how to help him or her... To put it in very simple terms is for adaptation to the local curriculum and integration into the, um, local community. The problem is, "How?" and the answer is the whole series of measures, and as far as curriculum is concerned, we have developed what we call the "supplementary guide." (October 11, 2012).

Support is tied to the learning of Chinese, to the financial support that the EDB gives to schools, and in examination subsidies. The EDB suggests that this support is meant to help NCS students adapt to Hong Kong life and into Hong Kong schools as quickly as possible. As the member of the EDB notes, "we hope that, our support measures are bearing fruits and we can identify more and more successful cases" (EDB Participant, October 11, 2012).

The Discourse Surrounding the General Certificate of Secondary Education

In understanding the EDB's discourses surrounding the term 'support,' I noticed that much of this material for NCS students pointed to financial support and subsidies for public examinations, including the GCSE (Chinese) examination, which is a mandatory examination for NCS students' acceptance into postsecondary institutions. "Local" students do not take the GCSE (Chinese) exam, as it is an "easier" public assessment, and only available to newcomers who have studied Chinese for less than 6 years (EDB, 2012). Using the qualitative analysis tool, HyperRESEARCH, I searched for collocates for the words "GCSE" and "General Certificate of Secondary Education," which I coded using ranked frequencies (Baker, 2006), and organized graphically. The words and phrases that

appeared most frequently are represented in the collocational network by font size.

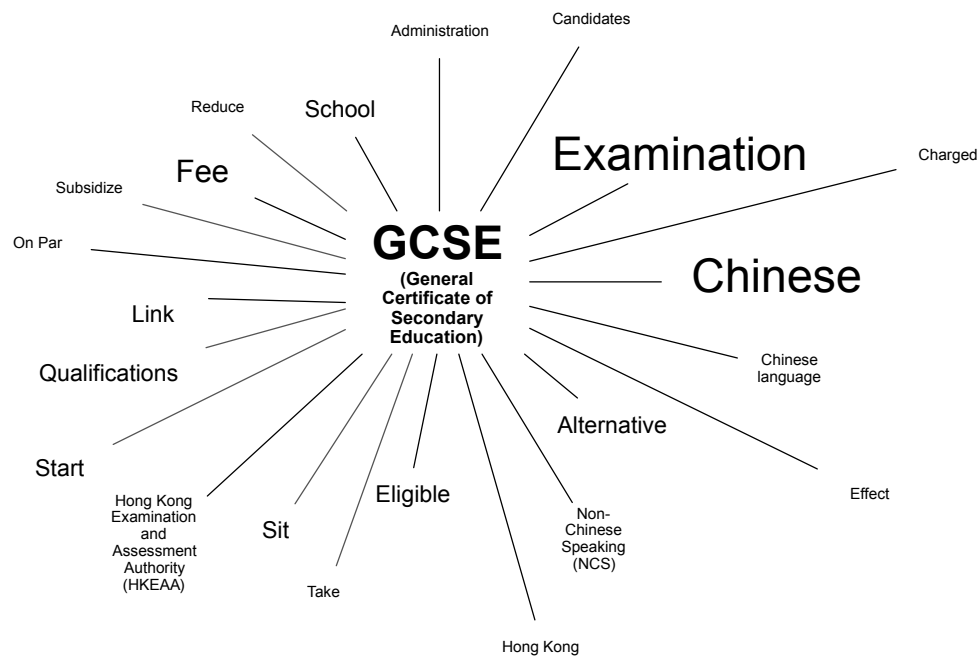


Figure 3. Collocational Network of “GCSE” in EDB Online Documents

The discourses produced by the EDB surrounding the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Chinese) exam are worth noting, as it is the alternative public examination that NCS students must take if they do not have the requisite Chinese skills to sit for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) (Chinese Language) public examination. Passing the HKDSE or the GCSE (Chinese) examination is necessary for students if they would like to study at university. The successful completion of these exams is necessary if students are applying through the Joint University Programmes Admissions Systems (JUPAS), which is a government-subsidized university allocation program. As such, JUPAS supports students who do not have the financial means to attend

university without this sponsorship. The EDB has repeatedly stated that its goal for students is to adapt to Hong Kong, and have targeted Chinese language skills as a way for students to become a part of Hong Kong. The GCSE allows NCS students who have studied in Hong Kong for fewer than 6 years, and do not speak Chinese (Cantonese) in the home to take these alternative qualifications. The financial cost of the GCSE (Chinese) is subsidized by the government for NCS students who have studied in Hong Kong for fewer than 6 years, and are charged the same fee as if they were writing the HKDSE (Chinese Language) examination (EDB, 2012 September). The EDB (2012, December 12) notes that

since the 2011/12 school year, the Examination Fee Remission Scheme has also been extended to enable eligible needy NCS students to be granted full or half fee remission of the “subsidised examination fee” for taking the GCSE (Chinese) Examination if they pass the means test of the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA).

The EDB has offered the GCSE (Chinese) to stand in the place of the alternative HKDSE (Chinese Language) exam as Hong Kong universities that subscribe to the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) since 2008. In my interview with the participant from the EDB, the participant suggested that it is common that the

GCSE [qualifications are accepted] in university admission. In fact, it is quite clearly stated...the acceptance of GCSE for application and the specified circumstances. What do we mean by specified circumstances? There are two conditions. Either one will do. One is those who have learned Chinese for less than six years...And then or he or she has learned Chinese for six years or more, but he or she has been learning through a better curriculum, which is not commonly used in our local mainstream schools...So, fulfillment of either of the circumstances would be fine enough for them to use GCSE in something that JUPAS application. In other words, if I am NCS but I don't fulfill those two requirement, then I still cannot use GCSE. (EDB Participant, personal communication, October 11, 2012)

The EDB also makes the note that the GCSE can be used by NCS students whose “ethnicity is Chinese,” and who do not speak Chinese in their household (EDB, 2010a). Further, the EDB suggests that being successful in the GCSE exam will not necessarily mean that NCS students are adequately prepared to function socially or professionally in Chinese

Some NCS students consider the GCSE (Chinese) Examination not challenging enough given their proficiency in Chinese and aspirations, as well as the need for further education and employment (EDB, 2012, September 17)

Although the EDB has worded this statement to suggest that NCS students are looking to be more challenged with regards to the public assessment of their Chinese skills, it also means that NCS students are being prepared for an exam (GCSE) that will not effectively prepare them to participate in Hong Kong: socially, academically or professionally.

The Discourse Surrounding “Integrate”

It is at this point that it is necessary to turn to the EDB’s statements? discourses surrounding the concept of integration. As such, in my discourse analysis, I searched for collocates of “integrate,” “integrated,” “integrates,” and “integration” using ranked frequencies in HyperRESEARCH (Baker, 2006). The words and phrases that appeared most frequently are represented in the collocational network by font size.

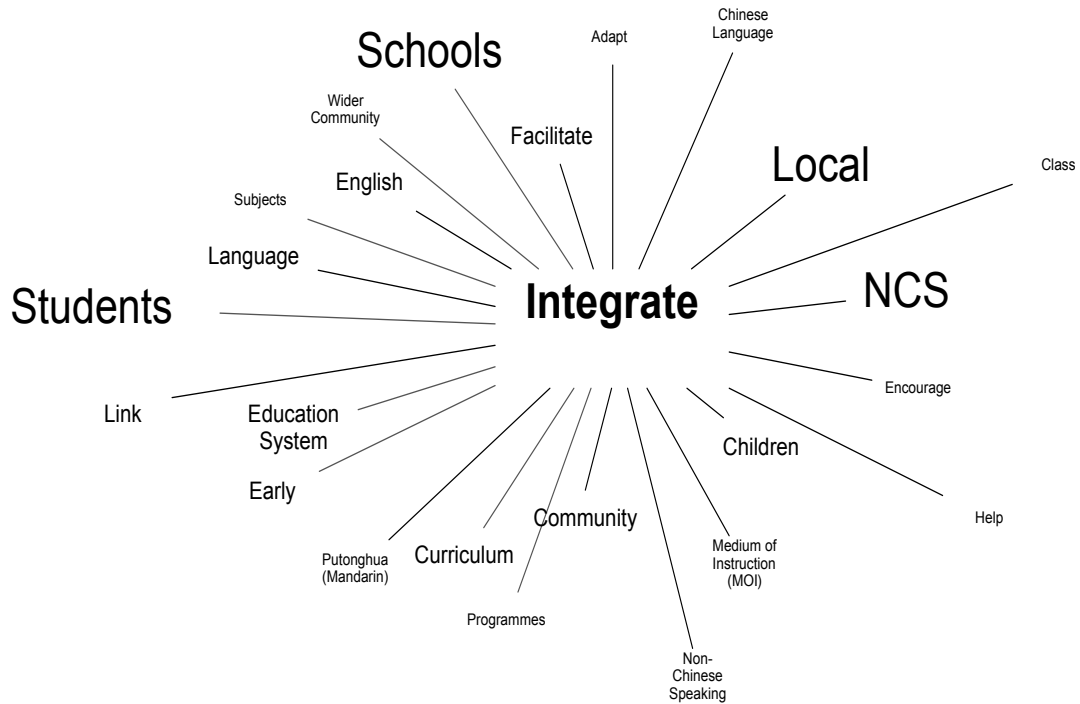


Figure 4. Collocational Network of “Integrate” in EDB Online Documents

The EDB has suggested that integrating is a primary concern for the NCS students that are schooled in Hong Kong. Since 2004, the EDB has targeted 13 secondary schools for extra support for schools with a “critical mass” NCS population (EDB, 2004 January). Because these schools admitted larger numbers of NCS students, they helped form a Support Network for NCS students to

promote the mutual support among the schools through experience sharing and enhance the interest and ability of non-Chinese speaking students in learning Chinese Language. A more effective learning environment will be created as a result and these students will adapt to and integrate into our community more quickly....sharing sessions on topics of common interest (e.g. how to develop school-based curriculum for Chinese Language education) are conducted so that teachers can share their experience and draw reference from the experience of experts and fellow teachers. (EDB, 2004 January)

The EDB has suggested that they must “enhance the interest and ability” of NCS students to learn Chinese in order to result in “these students adapt[ing] to and

integrat[ing] into our community more quickly” (EDB, 2004 January). This discourse suggests that if students were only more interested, or if they only had the ability to speak Chinese, they would easily integrate into the community. The EDB has clearly pointed to language as being the ticket for NCS students to integrate into Hong Kong’s schools and communities. Again, and again, the idea of integrating “as quickly as possible” came up in the literature. The EDB wrote that it,

encourages non-Chinese speaking students to integrate into the local education system and community as early as possible and has also strengthened Chinese language teaching and learning support for them....As non-Chinese speaking students’ families tend to have different expectations and have spent less time living in Hong Kong than local people, the EDB gives them the option of enrolling in “designated schools”. As a result, it is far from true to say that such students may only study in Chinese. (EDB, 2010 April)

Again, the EDB promotes a deficit model in their discussion of NCS students and families. NCS people have “different expectations,” so they are given the opportunity to study in “designated schools” (EDB, 2010 April). Of these schools that NCS students have direct access to, the EDB has targeted these specific schools in informational and sharing sessions. These designated schools that have been accepting larger numbers of NCS students use English as the Medium of Instruction (MOI), rather than integrating NCS students into schools with “local students” using Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (MOI). This particular choice puzzles me. The EDB documents suggest that its vision is to integrate NCS students, but its policy is to direct NCS families towards designated schools with English as the MOI. If Chinese is the key to helping NCS students integrate,

I wonder why families with students at the secondary age are directed towards these designated schools. In contradiction to this practice, the EDB has noted that in the future, integrating NCS students with CS students is not totally undesirable. In fact, moving forward, the EDB has promoted the mixing of NCS students with “local” students, as they note that

schools which admit a small number of NCS children will arrange these children in the same class with local pupils. In fact, there are also great differences in learning among local children. Therefore, strategies in handling learning differences also apply to local children...positive impact can be brought about either on facilitating learning or ethnic integration when they are in the same class with local pupils. (EDB, 2013d)

The EDB is therefore advocating the integration of non-local and local students, and that, in fact NCS students’ prior knowledge might not be “poorer” than local Hong Kong students (EDB, 2013d). These discourses speak to the marginalization of the local language and cultural practices employed by NCS students, and serve to legitimize “local” conceptions of what counts as appropriate knowledge and appropriate language practices.

In my interview with the participant from the Education Bureau, I asked about the EDB’s vision in schooling NCS students, and creating supports for them within schools. What, was the EDB’s vision in regards to policies towards NCS students? The participant from the Education Bureau replied that its vision for NCS is

integration. In fact, many of the NCS students are only in Hong Kong. They claim to stay in Hong Kong for good. They are part of our community and, in fact, we are together. So, what we are going to do and what we really wish is just, they have nothing different, just like everybody. Just another classmate, just another teammate in the

workplace...Not for any in the community in the society. That is what we really wish. (EDB Participant, October 11, 2012)

If integration is the vision, the way in which the participant is describing ‘integration’ might fit better with the word ‘assimilation’. The goal is for NCS students to become a part of Hong Kong, to be together with local people. NCS students, and NCS citizens are “nothing different,” they are “just like everybody,” and ultimately, those are the goals in schooling NCS people. The discourses present in the online materials are reverberated by the EDB participant. The goal is for NCS students to become a part of Hong Kong. How does the EDB support NCS students to become a part of Hong Kong?

As I discussed the schooling of NCS students with the participant from the EDB, the participant noted that to promote integration, they provide

advice to schools on respecting cultural differences, accommodating diversity and reminding schools of the need to communicate with NC parents, to have parents understand about the school, about the children and also, um, schools have the responsibility to promote a culturally harmonious environment in the school. We have issued circular [printed materials] to school and conducted briefings for school...also we remind schools during our visits and remind schools to observe the law, don't break the law. And also in our curriculum, in some subjects, there are elements are cultural, mutual respect, ideas like, what we called those, equality. (EDB Participant, October 11, 2012)

Again, the discourses here point to NCS students as possessing a lack of understanding about Hong Kong, and about schooling in Hong Kong. This is why the EDB targets informational sessions, and reminds NCS students to learn Chinese and “not break the law.” Here, the EDB official is really discussing the cultivation of citizenship values in NCS students who are schooled in Hong Kong.

Although Hong Kong's police force does not publish crime data based on ethnicity in English, the belief that ethnic minorities commit crimes is present in the mass media (See: Simpson Cheung's June 18, 2012 article, *Police enlist minorities to counter rise in crimes*). The EDB suggests that one way to help students integrate and develop ideas about what it means to be a Hong Kong citizen is through the teaching and learning of the Chinese language. Another way is through a variety of supports, sharing sessions, informational leaflets and professional development for teachers. If integration is the goal, the EDB believes that Chinese language skills are the key for students to access community and truly become a part of Hong Kong.

Experiencing School as an NCS Student

School Placements: Choosing and Not Choosing

The twenty students interviewed all had different histories, different language abilities, and different responses to the schooling of NCS students in Hong Kong. In fact, a number of the NCS students interviewed had high abilities in Chinese language skills, and two identified as ethnically Chinese. All students arrived at the school in question in different ways, either through an allocation system, interviews, or through the recommendation of family or friends, however all twenty noted that the school was not their first choice, and that they were accepted quickly into the school. When I was a teacher at the school, the NCS population were the minority, and were instructed in English. The majority of the school was populated with Chinese speaking students who were instructed in

Chinese as the MOI. However, the school has now changed demographically, and the NCS students have become the majority. This shift in demographics has not been lost on the students. Amrit noted that “before, when I was in Form 1, I felt not comfortable when I came [to school], but now I do.” Shasad noted that when he first arrived at the school (when the school catered to the majority Chinese Speaking population), he was terrified. He did not speak English or Chinese, and this made him anxious. He recalled that the,

first time I came to school, I was very scared. I thought, how am I gonna meet so many standards? Because, [at first] I don't have any friends. I [had] just come to Hong Kong in 2007. And after just 2-3 weeks [of being in the city], I just go to school. And it was [a] new thing for me.

Four years later, Shasad is fluent in English, and although he does not understand Chinese, he was able to pass the GCSE (Chinese) examination assessing his Chinese skills. This is a long way to come in four years.

In the two years since I left, the school has changed markedly. Yuna pointed to the changing demographic in the school over the past few years:

I think, it's like now, now Chinese and NC are equal now. Same amount of students now, so [the] school are trying to give us some more things for NC students so. Now they are also focusing on NC students more.

Yuna suggests that support has increased for NCS students with the increase in their physical representation in school. Instead of integrating the NCS and CS sections together to enhance NCS students' Chinese skills and increase CS students' English skills, the situation has merely reversed. What did not exist for NCS students when I was a teacher at the school, now does not exist for CS students. The situation has reversed, which does not work to help NCS students

become “local” or to become an integrated part of Hong Kong. Another student, Dilraj, noted that presently, “we have more, more, activities than the Chinese students. So just like, we can play, we can do every activity.” When I originally conceived of this thesis topic, I wanted to explore the way in which NCS students were systematically excluded from access to all of the activities in the school, particularly the extra-curricular activities, and physical spaces in the school, including the lunch room, the basketball courts and the computer room. I was therefore surprised when I returned to the school to learn that the situation has reversed, but differential access to power and space remained.

Mai Chan, who identifies as “half-Chinese,” noted that with the increase in the intake of NCS students within the school, the ethnic makeup of the classroom has also diversified, which is something that she values about the school:

Actually, I have close friends. They are nice, but we are different nationalities. But we still can be very good friends. About friendship with classmates, it's also good but maybe it's just some part of the language problem because I'm the only one [who speaks] Thai in the classroom but it still no problem. We are still close, I think.

Mai Chan does not marginalize the language skills of her classmates, but values the difference. While Amrit, Yuna and Mai Chan suggest that the school has become a more inclusive and better place over time, Amber disagrees. Amber suggests that the school has worsened in the past two years. She states that the school has changed,

and in a really bad way. It used to be, I felt, when I first came to [the school] I felt so happy. Because like, it felt like an actual school. I felt

like I had actual good teachers, and actual good friends. The teachers weren't so strict with like appearance, and everything, and yet, like they pushed you to study. And they, like helped you with all that stuff, but then, ever since now, they care more about your appearance, or like all of your conduct. Academics don't seem to amount to much to them. And a lot of the teachers, it seems that they don't know how to work with Non-Chinese students. Especially in Chinese [language learning].

The students' perceptions about the shift in power interested me in particular because when I was at the school, I had perceived that the NCS minority students were not given equal access to classes, curriculum, and their pre-existing language and literacy skills were devalued. Khan noted that in his classroom, he was explicitly told not to speak Punjabi with his friends, although, he admitted that he often did so anyway. I wondered why more students who grew up in Hong Kong went to schools with English as the MOI rather than Chinese as the MOI. Ann, who is quite advanced in her Chinese skills, used to study in a school with Chinese as the MOI. She clarifies that

Actually, before I studied in a Chinese school, but I actually feel really hard to catch up. Because I feel like I'm not in their level. It's like that school doesn't suit me because I had to learn really long big words of Chinese. Especially their history, I had to remember all and then I had like difficulties in learning.

Ann's experiences at her CMI school reflect Loper's (2004) assessment of the state of schools for NCS students. Although NCS students are able to attend these schools, sufficient support is not yet provided in these schools to facilitate students' success at secondary school. Another student who was born in Hong Kong, Daniel, explained that he had been raised in the Philippines for the first part of primary school. As such, when he returned to Hong Kong in 2007, he didn't feel that he could attend a school with Chinese as the MOI:

I only started [learning] Chinese in grade six. So I don't know much of Chinese. When I went to secondary school, I didn't want to [go to] any Chinese school. Because it's going to be hard for me.

This discussion of language of instruction, or the difference about learning Chinese and learning in Chinese, is necessary to understand the EDB's call for NCS students to become local and to integrate. As integration is a main goal that is repeated in the discourse of the EDB, it is necessary to see the way integration plays out in school. Some students even resist the acquisition of Chinese. Daniel notes that each day the school makes the students watch the news in Chinese without explaining what is being said, "it's actually mostly Chinese, not in English. So, I don't really understand the news..." While CS students are instructed with Chinese as the MOI at the school in question, NCS students are instructed with English as the MOI. If CS and NCS students cannot integrate within their in-class interactions in school, it is important to note how and where CS and NCS students interact with one another.

Interactions Between CS and NCS Students in the School

Some of the NCS student-participants interviewed were born in Hong Kong, and some came to Hong Kong later in their teenage years. Within her classroom, Mai Chan noted that some students find it easier to integrate into the local than others. For example, when discussing an NCS classmate, Mai Chan notes that her classmate "is real Chinese. Her mom and dad are Chinese, but for me, my mom is Thai and my dad is Chinese. For her, it's easier to adapt than me." To me, this is an interesting distinction as they have equal footing in terms of language skills (they both speak Chinese, but study in English), but Mai Chan

thinks that her classmate has it easier in terms of integration, perhaps because she self-identifies as “half-Chinese”. Another student who was born in Hong Kong, Rocky, stated that he was discriminated based on his skin colour by other NCS students “because [his skin colour] is not white”, but because of his high level of Chinese skills, “Chinese people are friendly” to him. Discrimination based on skin colour, ethnicity and race between the students in the NCS stream was not apparent to me when I was a teacher at the school, but in my interviews with students, I learned that this kind of discrimination is prevalent within their school. Another NCS student, Shawn, who was born in Hong Kong, but is of Pakistani heritage suggests that “a lot of people in my class are, like, Pakistani. So, it’s really fun talking to them too. Yeah. I’m not saying that I don’t enjoy, you know, people of other race[s], but that’s, it’s just, more close...in a way. If that makes sense.” In separating ethnic minority NCS students from their Chinese Speaking “local” schoolmates, that these “us” and “them” distinctions seem to have solidified as students make their way through school. In this, the EDB’s call for integration into the local seems to be failing.

In my interviews with student-participants, I was looking to see where the student-participants noted that they interacted with CS students within the school. One student, Amber noted that their classroom had been moved to the third floor this year. As such, Amber explained that their classroom is

with all of the other Chinese students. It’s the only Non-Chinese class [on that floor]... It’s not really uncomfortable, but I’m not really used to being on a floor with so many Chinese people. So it’s like, before, walking to class, all of the faces of the people I saw walking to class, I knew. And now, it’s like, only one or two of the Chinese students, I know. So, that’s

a bit, like, awkward because I can't speak their language.

This idea that it is “awkward” to integrate with the CS students is worth examining. These two populations exist and attend school simultaneously. They are in contact in all of the periods of leisure time during the school day, but there is very little integration between the CS and NCS students, unless the NCS students have well-established Chinese skills. All of the CS students learn English as a core subject, and all of the NCS students learn Chinese as a core subject. However, there are few friendships between students in the NCS stream and the CS stream. Most of these students have the basic skills to communicate, at minimum. Is something visible or invisible within the school preventing CS and NCS students from integrating? Avatar suggests that it is possible, and that these friendships can exist, as long as communication skills are present. Avatar notes that his class has changed since he began attending the school, “there’s like, different people from different countries. And they’ve become my best friends. And you can be best friends with someone from another country, it doesn’t have to be India. Just [have similar] communication skills, that’s all.” Like, Avatar, Singh believes that the key to friendships is communication as he describes his school situation,

We were not learning with Chinese [people]...Because we only have [had] Non-Chinese students. Most people were Asians. So, we know each other’s language. We didn’t have any difficulty, like, communicating. So I think, I came here, I did a good job because I can like communicate in Chinese now. I can also speak English.

Although Singh remains in the socially constructed category of NCS, and he is instructed in English, he prides himself more on his Chinese skills. What type of

impact do these socially created categories have on relationships and on the development of ideas about belonging (and not belonging)?

One of the interesting discourses that emanates from the EDB and that is repeated in the discussions with the students is the idea of equal opportunities.

Aman repeats this idea, and complicates the notion of equality as he notes that

according to the Hong Kong government, everyone is equal here. Everyone's got the same chance. People say that it's true. But the reality's not the same. Sometimes we do get discriminated [against] by Chinese. We don't got all the same jobs as the Chinese got. Because not everyone can speak fluently Chinese or read and write Chinese.

For Aman, the ticket to belonging and adapting is speaking Chinese. Shasad echoes this sentiment of equal access, as he suggests that in the four years that he has been in Hong Kong, and attended school, "what [the] Chinese [students] got, we got. And in the, from the government, what [the] Chinese [people] got, we got. Same." Daniel disagrees with this idea, as he suggests that things are not so equal within his school between the NCS and CS students. In Daniel's opinion, NCS students are clearly at a disadvantage,

they [Chinese speaking students] have more opportunities than us. I think it's...I don't know. Because we sometimes see these pictures in our school, they're mostly Chinese. They're not NCS, so they have more activities than us. Sometimes I see these pictures and they're on the third [floor]. They're so happy. I don't know. We don't get a chance to do that.

While in a global sense, most of the students believe that things are pretty equal, when it comes down to specific instances in school, including access to curricula and to employment and social services without the requisite Chinese language abilities, they feel that things aren't quite equal.

Students Reflect on the NCS Curriculum and GCSE (Chinese)

As the school's demographics shift, the course selection has also shifted. Katherina is in Form 5, but notes that the NCS students who arrived at the school the following year (and in the years since) have been given more opportunities.

The Chinese students have more opportunities than we do [in terms of course selection], but you know [a student in Form 4], right? Her batch, they now have physics and the Chinese [stream] doesn't. But it's more for balance right now. They're trying to balance it because of the money as well.

This idea is also supported by Amber who suggests that students in the higher forms have not had the same opportunities as the NCS students who arrived in Form 1 at the school after 2009. Yuna also points to a nursing/first-aid course that is offered as an option for Chinese Speaking students, and notes that, "Non-Chinese are not allowed to attend those classes." One thing that is repeated in the discourse of the NCS student-participants is the idea of 'we' meaning NCS students and 'they' referring to CS students. In discussing the change between the way the curriculum used to exist for NCS students, and the way it currently exists for CS students, Dilraj noted that "we have physics, but they don't." This us versus them discourse is problematic for the government's goal to integrate NCS students into the local, as it emphasizes their otherness, and works also to marginalize CS students in the imagined communities of the NCS population.

Beyond the courses that are offered for NCS and CS students, one of the main concerns that continued to reappear in the interviews with students were the upcoming public examinations. Amrit noted that only NCS students were offered an after-school course in Chinese language skills specifically tailored to passing

the GCSE exam. In particular, many students pointed to the GCSE (Chinese) exam as problematic, either as something inaccessible and too difficult, or too easy, and not reflective of the Chinese skills required to get a job or become a part of the community. Veronica noted that:

we have the GCSE exam for NC. It's like simple Chinese, other than complicated Chinese, so that's, that's why we have different classes. The teacher said it's easier than HKL level.... So [I am] preparing really hard.

One of the challenges that was consistently discussed by the student-participants was that passing the GCSE (Chinese) exam did not necessarily mean that you could speak or understand Chinese. One student, Shasad, explained the test to me. Last year, he passed the test with a grade of B, but noted that he was nervous about the exam, as he does not understand Chinese.

I was very confused for my GCSE public exam. It's for Chinese. First, I have two exams in my school. So, my teacher has guide[d] me very well. And I had just studied again and again what they have [taught] me. And after that I have a listening exam in school. I [had] to speak for 3 to 4 minutes in Chinese about myself. So, I had just read and read and read and read and just put in my mind...for 3 to 4 sentence[s].

Shasad was able to memorize enough phrases and words to pass the examination, but he does not identify as able to speak Chinese. What is the goal in providing an examination for students rather than teaching them socially relevant language skills? Khan suggested that, despite being able to pass the GCSE (Chinese), he was nervous about his future because, "I cannot speak Chinese. I can understand, but I cannot speak Chinese. I know what people are saying, but I don't know how to answer them. This is the problem, and these are some barriers." Many students explained that they were able to pass the GCSE, while not actually being able to

understand Chinese. After only living in Hong Kong for 2 years, Mel was able to pass the GCSE (Chinese) exam, because she notes that, “actually, written Chinese is not that hard as spoken Chinese.” Mel went on to suggest that the GCSE is the most important examination for NCS students because,

if you want to study in Hong Kong, you must know Chinese, and you must know how to write in Chinese. So, you should work really hard if you want to pay off the study you are studying, because even if you study, if you are really good at other subjects, and if you are not good in Chinese, you cannot be accepted in universities. So, that's the really bad thing for the student.

The GCSE (Chinese) exam is perceived locally as easy. Moreover, there is fear in the NCS community that the government will change the exam to fit the same HKDSE exam that local Chinese Speaking students take. This fear has led to rumours, although, the government has promised that they have no desire to change the GCSE at the present moment. Shasad discussed his perceptions of the GCSE and its implications on language learning, and access to postsecondary school:

[the] GCSE is very easy. So, for our brother[s] and sisters, in [the] future, it will be very hard for them to pass Chinese [if the government changes the test]. So, we just want, um, Education Bureau to stop [the change] that [they have planned]... If there is no GCSE, how can we pass the DSE [HKDSE exam]? So, think about it.

Shasad's fears should not be ignored even though officially there are no present plans to change the curriculum. The general feeling of distrust and a lack of understanding were common to the students' responses. As detailed in Chapter One, with the discussion of the Chinese Civics course that was almost implemented, the will of the government can dictate educational policy as it

wishes. It is up to an informed public to understand and discuss any of these potential changes. However, access to linguistic capital works against the NCS citizens. Further, as Singh notes, the public exams are extremely important for NCS students because, “if we don’t do well in these exams, so we won’t get into the university.” Singh also suggests that his Form, NCS students at his particular school are in a better position than the NCS students at the school in the previous year. He suggests that, “last year, it was hard for them because it was the first year for the new syllabus, and the new system of the HKDSE. So, this is the second year, and I think that we will do good on the exams.”

Students’ Perceptions of Opportunities

Because most of the student-participants will be writing their public examinations this year, these examinations dominated most of the discussions. Most students had the goal to attend postsecondary institutions, but their acceptance largely depends on their results in the GCSE, and in their other public examinations. Katherina is still in Form 5 (Grade 11), so she does not have to worry this year, but she remains concerned, “most of the students in Hong Kong are going to do that exam, so including the Chinese schools, so there's a lot of competition in order to get really good seats. And the seats here are so limited.” There will be a number of secondary-school graduates each year, and not nearly enough seats to support all graduates in university. This is by no means surprising, as this is a common refrain across graduating students, but in Hong Kong, this is a real fear for NCS students as Aman notes that, “if I’m going to [get into] university then Chinese [language] is in my way [as a barrier].” As I

listened to students' responses, I began to wonder what counted as 'enough' Chinese? How much Chinese knowledge will count as enough? Like Aman, Yuna has a similar feeling about her chances of getting into university without knowing enough Chinese,

Yes, my Chinese [language skills are an obstacle] because uh, if we can speak Chinese, then I think there is like 50/50 percent chances [of getting into university], but if you can't speak Chinese at all, if we only can write, we can't speak, then I think they won't accept that then.

Avatar perceives his barrier to success as being more than just language, "Chinese [people are] is more trusted for some people, like for policemen. In many cases, they trust Chinese [people] more." Ann stated that "I think that, like, that I have a higher chance because the fact I know how to speak Chinese. I was born here," and doesn't perceive her language skills as a barrier to her success, "unless people are, like, still racist, then maybe, yeah." The general sentiments of distrust, and of 'otherness' are in direct opposition to the stated integration goals of the EDB, which call on NCS citizens to become "local" as "quickly as possible".

However, Rocky, who has lived in Hong Kong since he was a baby, does not perceive language skills or ethnicity as a barrier to his success. Rather, he stated that financial means are the main barrier to his success, in that he has to attend a government-funded public school, unlike his cousin, "my cousin studies in an international school in Hong Kong. He can go to another country if he wants to [for university]." Amber echoes this sentiment. She also feels that she would receive a "better" education at a for-profit institution

I don't think the courses that are offered at [the school] really fit what I want to do in my future. And like, international students who are in Hong

Kong, they have so many opportunities that let them prepare, from a young age, for what they want to do when they finish uni[versity].

This goal to get into university is repeated by the student-participants and supported by their parents, many of whom moved their families to Hong Kong for work and studying opportunities. Singh explained,

My parents want me to go to university. Because they didn't study much for their lives. So, they don't want me to suffer, like they suffer, for them to work now. Because they can't speak English or Chinese. So, they want me to study more, like at university so I can work more, so I can work simply. And it's easier for me to work, maybe I can get an office job.

Not every student interviewed had the goal to go to university, but many of them repeated the refrain that their Chinese language skills are a barrier for their future success: in school and in work. Daniel told me that it was his dream to become a flight attendant because he has always wanted to travel, "I want to be a flight attendant...But then I know it's going to be hard for me to be a flight attendant. Because I have to speak Chinese." Amrit points to something more nefarious, that language ability and ethnicity will work against him when he looks to find a job after school:

I [will] have to find a job. Even if I'm good in all subjects, maths, English, all subjects, I can't find a job because like, if there is a job, and there is someone who is Chinese, he will get 10,000 or more than 10,000 [HKD per month] for the same job. I will only get 7,000 [HKD per month] or 8,000 [HKD per month]. You know the ones who know Chinese, they don't really study in school. Because, yeah, they know English, they know Chinese, so they can get a job easily.

Amrit believes that the inequality that exists in school will continue on into his future as a citizen, and as a worker in Hong Kong. He suggests that he has to study very hard, and try to get into university, otherwise he will not find it easy to have success, which he equates with wage-earnings. Amrit believes that

inequality and difference are present in adult life in Hong Kong working culture. Despite the discourse of the EDB promoting support, and adaptation to the local community, Amrit's lasting impression of inequality points to a lack of alignment in his perception with the EDB's discourse.

Veronica noted that some of her friends who are going through school in India, are also struggling in their studies, but they do not have the same support as she perceives students to receive in Hong Kong.

Because some of my friends in India, they are still struggling with their studies over there, and they are not getting the support I am having right now here. So it's really different, their lifestyle and my lifestyle is a little different. So, I feel sad for them.

Kamu echoes Veronica's positive feelings about the support provided for students who come from lower-SES backgrounds. Kamu suggests that

I do have the opportunity. Because I also have everything I want. I am getting the education as the government provides the free subsidy for education. I do get that one...because in such places like where we need to spend money by ourselves, might not be one to pay the fees which might not be good. Because of that, people might not get more education.

Khan suggested that these extra supports for NCS students have come at a cost. Because of the increased financial support for the school from the EDB, the government is making its presence within the school. Khan remarked that

And nowadays, we have to have like this teacher that come[s] from the EDB, and they're sitting in your class and see what is going on. And they follow their students, what they do everyday, so it is really uncomfortable.

As such, students feel pressure to perform for the EDB. The school requires students to act a certain way during these visits. What does this mean for what the EDB sees within schools? If the government visits the school to see the situation, but the students have been coached to behave a certain way, to not

complain, this will necessarily affect the types of supports that will be implemented by the EDB. If students are told to sit quietly, and to behave as quiet and ‘good’ students, how will the government understand what is necessary to supplement and support?

Students’ Insights on Integrating

One of the main questions that this thesis looks to address is understanding how students experience school, and how this aligns with and potentially contrasts with the discourse of the Education Bureau. As such, I asked students to think about belonging and about integration, and explain their ideas about the current state of their school. Beyond the school, students offered insights on what it means to belong in the larger community. Amber suggested that her main barrier to integrating in Hong Kong is:

the fact that I don’t speak any Chinese. It will be really hard to get a job here. The way people look at you, or something. Because we’re obviously not Chinese. It’s a barrier.

Khan echoes this sentiment about belonging being linked both to language, but also to ethnicity, as he states, “I cannot speak Chinese and I’m not part of them.” Veronica noted that the ticket to belonging is not just language ability, but also understanding the culture that exists in Hong Kong, and after some time, “I change myself so I tried to adapt their culture, slowly, slowly. So now I’m really good at it.”

However, Shawn, who was born in Hong Kong believes that he has the ticket to belonging. He states that he feels like a part of Hong Kong:

because I'm a permanent resident here. So, you know, I'm equivalent to everyone else here. If you're not a permanent resident, then it may be quite difficult, I think, but, if you're new in town and you're not really sure what to do.

Rocky arrived in Hong Kong when he was a baby, and highlights a similar sentiment,

I think I'm Chinese. Because I'm like living here for 17 years. Already. I didn't think I'm Non-Chinese. I just think we are same. Just the school make us Non-Chinese. When I come [came] to the [school], I was thinking this is a Chinese school, so I should join [it]. But, after a few years, they was changing it from a Chinese school, so I was really bored.

This is an insight worth delving into. Rocky states that the school makes 'us' Non-Chinese. The school, and by extension the EDB, creates the category of NCS. It is socially constructed. This much is clear. The more interesting question remains: why segregate students into categories of NCS and CS? If Rocky thinks of himself as a Chinese person, and can speak Chinese, why would the school tell him that he was NCS? What is the benefit in separating CS and NCS students if the overall stated goal is to integrate students? Here, there is a clear lack of fit between the discourse of the EDB and the experience of the students.

Teachers' Understanding of Educating NCS Students

The Changed Dynamics of the School

The changing nature of the school featured prominently in the three teachers' discussion of school, particularly in regards to the demographic shift where the previous minority NCS stream is now the majority. However, what is not under dispute is the way that these three teachers consistently put their

students' well-being first. The teachers are negotiating the EDB's and the school's policies, act as agents of the government, and see disconnections between the discourse and the practices of schooling NCS students. In regards to the shifting nature of the demography of the school, Julian, the English teacher, suggests that schools are opening themselves up to NCS students in order to stay open. Julian notes that, "there is not enough student intake to [otherwise] stay as a school. If they don't then they will be killed [ie: the school will die out], and they will be forced to close down. And that's why they don't have the experience, they don't have the resources, they don't have the teacher training to actually admit those students." Julian goes on to give the example of the secondary school that he worked at before working with me at the school. His previous school taught with Chinese as the MOI, which was problematic for the minority group of students that were NCS. Julian remarks that,

for my old secondary school, they admitted some Indian students, but then, of course, traditional Chinese is too difficult for them. But because they don't have NC-Chinese, they don't have GCSE Chinese, so they are forced to be in the same classroom [as CS students]...But still, they will have to pass Chinese [HKDSE] and they have a really hard time doing it.

In this, Julian points to supports required by the government to assist the integration of NCS students into schools with Chinese as the MOI. He points to the structured examinations as potential barriers to the success of these NCS students. It is important to note that Julian states that these students were not able to take the GCSE (Chinese) examination, which is in line with the policy of the EDB. If the EDB's discourse suggests that integration is a key policy goal, Julian clearly shows that this can be complicated, since NCS students are 'forced' to be

in the same classroom as CS students. These underlying beliefs about NCS students' abilities are telling- Julian suggests that mixing and integrating NCS and CS students is more problematic than his previous school (and by extension the EDB) understood.

CS and NCS Students Interacting in School

Of the three teachers interviewed, Jeremy, the science and mathematics teacher, is a Non-Chinese Speaking person, as I was also categorized when I taught in Hong Kong. The way in which the teachers view the interactions of the students might be perceived as being mitigated through their own lenses of inclusion and exclusion. Jeremy remarks that

you can see the Chinese students, most of the Chinese students would like to stay in a group of Chinese students and maybe they will be playing with the phones, or with their gadgets. And hardly, few students will go and play activities like the basketball. But now, since the number of the NC students has increased in our school, so that you can see mostly the NC students playing in the basketball court. You cannot find many of the Chinese students in the basketball court [anymore]. Mostly, they just sit in their classroom. Just chitchatting. I don't see any of the Chinese students in our class, in our school, mostly playing outside. Hardly during the lunch time or during recess.

In this, Jeremy suggests that there are few instances where NCS and CS students mix during leisure times. He also points to the shifting power dynamics within the school- now that the CS stream is the minority population, they are no longer populating public areas like the lunch room or the basketball court. Rather, the CS students stay in their classrooms. This is the opposite of the situation when I was a teacher at the school. However, Julian has a different perspective. Julian suggests that CS and NCS students interact, but mostly

those who are NCS who can speak Chinese, or for the Chinese students who can speak better English. And they will try to interact, maybe along the hallway. They will chat, or sometimes they will eat together... Oh, I think they will just stay in their own classrooms. They don't go to each others' classrooms. Or, for example NCS students will just go to other NCS classrooms. Chinese students will just go to Chinese classrooms.

Nancy, the mathematics and computer teacher, has a similar experience in noticing CS and NCS students interacting. In regards to extra-curricular activities, she notes that the reason that the CS and NCS students join different activities, is because they have inherently different interests, that the school, "cannot let Chinese students to not participate. But, you know some activities like cricket, is maybe not popular for Chinese [students]. So, that's why we can see every year the participants [are] mainly NCS." Jeremy suggests that the reason why the students do not join the same activities is the language barrier that exists between the two groups. While Nancy suggests that the students have different interests, Jeremy suggests that the students have trouble communicating, while Julian believes that the students will interact, except in particular places like classrooms. The teachers' responses suggest that classrooms act as borders that NCS and CS students will not cross, but they will integrate within common spaces like the hallway, and in some activities.

Teachers Reflect Upon the NCS Curriculum and GCSE

In a discussion about the differences between the NCS curriculum and the CS 'local' curriculum, Nancy pointed out that one major difference exists where "Chinese History for Chinese [speaking students] but... History for NCS students. So, they will learn Western History, but not Chinese History." If NCS students are

learning Western History, rather than Chinese History, they will have a different understanding of who they are as citizens of Hong Kong. What came before 1997 in Hong Kong? How can they understand Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China? How can students work on integrating into a culture and into the ‘local’ without learning about its history, or what the ‘local’ is?

Nancy also discussed the difference between the Chinese curriculum for Chinese Speakers and for Non-Chinese Speakers. As previously established, these two groups study different levels of Chinese, and are assessed differently. The Chinese as the MOI stream will be assessed in the HKDSE while the English as the MOI stream will be assessed in the GCSE. Nancy explains,

So, you know how everyone has to learn Chinese? But, for NCS students, maybe the level of [] Chinese is a bit lower. Yeah, and not the main stream of the Chinese subject in Hong Kong...Because really, some of them don't know any Chinese when they come to our school. So, they need to learn from the beginning. Maybe the kindergarten level. Start from the beginning. The basics. So it is quite good for them... Because really, um, the Chinese word[s] [are] hard to remember. For them...but some of them are really good in Chinese. Because they [were] born in Hong Kong.

Here is another complexity. Some of the NCS students were born in Hong Kong. Some of them are really “good in Chinese.” Why are they categorized as NCS students in this case? This complexity in the categorization of NCS will be elaborated on at the end of this chapter. Julian points to another challenge in the GCSE (Chinese) exam. He suggests that the school teaches students Chinese so that they can pass this examination, but that students are not necessarily prepared to integrate into the community. Julian discusses the way that the GCSE (Chinese) examination is administered, which is made up of four papers: reading, writing, listening and speaking:

actually, for the writing, and also for the speaking examination, they will do it in [their] school. In our school... And they have time to prepare for it. And that's why, usually, they get high marks for those papers. And it is actually not very easy for them to pass. But you will find some students who have got, let's say, a C or a B in the GCSE Chinese exam, but they cannot actually speak Chinese.

Jeremy agrees with this assessment, and problematizes it further. Ultimately, Jeremy asks, what is the reason for teaching the students such a low level of Chinese? Teaching to the test may prepare students to pass the examination if they are good at memorization, but it will not prepare them for integration into the community. Jeremy suggests that:

Because these GCSE, or whatever they're doing, is just the language used to communicate. Like, just [learning to] say, "Hi, hello." Yeah? But you cannot, like when you really do something, like [an] official job, all the documents will be in, probably, Chinese. And [if] you cannot read it, you cannot even understand it, you cannot even speak it... Language is the major barrier for NC.

Jeremy's and Julian's assessments of the status quo is mirrored in many of the student-participants' responses, which are elaborated on in the following section.

Jeremy also pointed to the fact that the population growth in the NCS stream at the school has led to a change in the way that school is experienced by students in terms of course selection. Jeremy clarifies,

two years ago, the number of NC was less. And, because of that, they didn't have more choices for subjects. Like, before they wanted to study "combined science", but we didn't have that. Instead, we had "integrated science". But after this, in these two years, now the number has increased... So the school is giving more choices to the students to take more [diverse] subjects. Still, there are some subjects like mathematics, for the students who want to study science and technology [in university], they have to study Mathematics I and Mathematics II. And still, those subjects are not being offered to the NC students. Still. Not being offered.

If the EDB's discourse suggests that it supports students, and wants to accommodate for NCS students aspirations to study at post-secondary institutions, the course selection that is available in schools should reflect this policy decision. However, the numbers of NCS students actually dictates what is available for them.

Teachers' Reflect on Students' Future Opportunities

Where the three teachers differed the most in was in their ideas about the existing access that NCS students have to post-secondary education. Nancy firmly believes that NCS students have a clear advantage over "local" students as she affirms that

they have higher opportunities to join the university courses. Because if they can handle Chinese, it is easy for them to pass the GCSE. [Then] they have a higher chance to get into the university. But for local students, it is quite hard for them to pass the Chinese subject (HKDSE). Yeah. So, I think nowadays they have similar opportunities.

Nancy perceives a shift from the EDB's policies towards assisting NCS students with their aspirations to study at university. She believes that because many NCS students are able to pass the GCSE exam, they have access to universities. She believes that NCS students have an easier time than local students who have to pass a more difficult examination. Julian agrees with Nancy as he notes that "last year, three of NCS students [from the school] entered university," and he believes that their successes were due to "the strategies that helped them." Julian believes that if students "are really willing to try" then "they will get a place at university." This meritocracy myth is present throughout the EDB's discourse. If students would only try to learn Chinese, they will integrate. If students would only try to

study, they will go to university. However, Jeremy complicates this meritocracy myth as he states that NCS students have few opportunities to study at university because,

The first thing is [their family's] resources. Then Chinese language requirement. And morale as well... So these three, these three things are the most important that's not letting them to go to university.

For Jeremy, students are facing barriers in their access to higher education because they believe that they are not able to access it. However, three NCS students (out of 38) from the school were able to attend university from the graduating class last year. Jeremy's concern about financial barriers for NCS students who attend government schools is another point worth considering.

Teachers Call for Support and Resources

One place where the discourse of the teachers aligned with the EDB's was in regards to support for students and for integration. Julian suggested that to ameliorate educational conditions

for NCS students we have to provide them with more resources. And actually, the government gives us funds to do that, but then I think, for NCS students, they need actually, more support to actually integrate into our society.

Beyond this nebulous idea about 'resources' and 'support' Julian points to one problem that exists in the school where he is teaching: other teachers. If given the opportunity to change anything about the school, Julian states that he would change the other teachers. Julian elaborates,

teachers [at the school] are actually quite unwelcoming. Probably because of their language proficiency, or their prejudices toward NCS students...At least, they have to be open-minded and they should actually try to get to understand [the NCS students]. And if they can feel that

actually, everyone in the school would like to include them [the NCS students], at least it's a good starting point. Because I think we can start from the school and then slowly into the society. So that they will feel included, and then they will be more willing to actually learn Chinese. Because, if they make an effort, and they get a response, then I think that it will be good for them to actually live here for the long term.

What must be clarified here is the concept of integration. The government has not made it clear exactly what they mean when they make the call for integration.

Surely, they speak to the development of tolerance, and increased language skills.

Nancy suggests that the teachers should "learn more about their culture" so that

"we can understand more about their thinking." Jeremy suggests that the EDB

should give the school more financial resources,

in the school, resources are limited. So you can imagine...if you go and find a job in Hong Kong, and you check all the websites, everywhere you go, there is one requirement: fluency in Chinese. They have to be fluent. That is the most important requirement... Still, there will be a language barrier.

As such, the teachers disagree on what should be done, but they all point to the

idea that resources and supports should be increased to better support NCS

students in school. Teachers push the idea that students should try to integrate

into the community, not to separate themselves away from the larger Hong Kong

culture. However, the idea of integration itself needs to be elaborated on. What

does the government mean when they call on NCS students to integrate as quickly

as possible? Integrate how? To what extent?

Teachers Discuss Integration

In regards to the changing culture of the school where they are teaching, Jeremy reflects upon the way that the students have negotiated a place of discomfort to comfort. Jeremy notes that

before the number of the Chinese students [at the school] was more. At that time, maybe the basketball court, if you wanted to go there, maybe you would feel uncomfortable... Maybe in the computer room when they go to use the internet. Maybe at that time, they feel uncomfortable. But now, it's opposite. It has just the opposite effect... And you can see the same impact on the Chinese as well... Power. It has shifted.

In increasing the number of NCS students at the school, Jeremy notes that the NCS students have taken on the power roles in the school. As their numbers have increased, they are now oppressing the CS students in the exact same way that they used to be oppressed within the school. What does this mean for the integration goal?

Julian discusses the role of students' attitude and desire to learn the Chinese in the integration project, thus aligning further with the discourse of the EDB:

ultimately, if they are going to live here, if they want to integrate, then they still have to learn Chinese. But I think, the thing is, they come to Hong Kong late, later in their life, like in Secondary School, and then it is very difficult [to learn Chinese]. And that [difficulty] will make them less willing [to learn Chinese] because they start late. And some NC students speak very fluent Chinese already because they started early. But then, they don't see the point because then they will not be as good as the rest. I think it's about the attitude. Like, if they want to be here, if they're going to build a life here, then they will have to integrate. And I think that they will, sooner or later, realize that. In order to be a part of our society.

Again, the word integrate is not really defined here. Integration is put together with language skills. It is also put together with the word 'society.'

Jeremy has another insight, and uses himself as an example. As an NCS person, Jeremy believes that in time he could consider himself to be a Hong Kong person, which blurs the lines between NCS as a cultural modifier and NCS as a category that denotes language ability. He notes that he will integrate into society, but

it totally depends upon if I learn Chinese...so, I have this... friend, he said, he was quite good in Chinese, he can speak Chinese very well. He used to say, "I am Chinese. Don't [tell] me I am Pakistani, I am Chinese." But for me, I cannot say this. Because I, I don't know Chinese. But if I know Chinese, and I can communicate with each and every one... Naturally, I can say that I am Chinese.

Jeremy's suggestion for the education of NCS students is to put NCS and CS students together. He suggests that if the government wants to integrate its ethnic minorities, especially those who are born in Hong Kong, the government has to do something real to promote this integration project

if they [the government] really want, really want them to integrate... in the society or not. Not alienate them from the society. They [the government] have to put them together, with the same curriculum, otherwise, they have [an] excuse. "I studied in a different school." Yeah? "I studied in a different school! I am NC! I am not CS!" So, they are building this [attitude] from the very beginning. So they, um, alienate themselves from the rest of the people. So, they are already branding them, "Oh, you are NC and CS." But, if you do it together, and put resources...they can learn. Faster than the adults, you know... You can program them from the very beginning. Easy to program. Compared to an adult. But, when we talk about the school, they have to do it... to [integrate].

Jeremy points to the school's policy of separating CS students from NCS students in their in-class learning as a primary reason why the students are not able to fully integrate. The categorization of 'NCS' actually serves to marginalize the students. These designations of, "I am NC" "I am not CS" are reiterated in the discourse of the students. Here the discourse of the EDB becomes problematized

in the students' experience of this categorization. If integration really is the goal, the separation of CS and NCS students, and the categorization of "NC" and "CS" serve to keep NCS students apart from society. Nancy suggests that if NCS students make friends with CS people, it will help them to want to learn Chinese, if students have the desire to learn, Nancy asserts that "our [Chinese] language is not a boundary." Finally, Jeremy returns to the discourse of the EDB as he clearly states the message that the EDB has repeated in its discourse, "So, at the end, if you are planning to stay in Hong Kong...you have to learn in Chinese."

Chapter Five:

Discussion

In this thesis, I have examined the way in which secondary-aged Non-Chinese Speaking students' experiences of school align with the discourses employed by Hong Kong's Education Bureau. I have highlighted the Education Bureau's (EDB) conceptions of 'support' and 'integration' and Chinese language learning as main goals in working with NCS students. I have also brought to the fore the experience of the categorization of 'Non-Chinese Speaking' as more than students' and citizens' language abilities. Through a discourse analysis of twenty-seven online materials published by the EDB and in-depth interviews with a participant from the EDB, as well as in-depth interviews with twenty former students and three former colleagues, I have analyzed these diverging perspectives on schooling NCS secondary students.

This project examined the twenty-seven Education Bureau's documents that point to the policy goal of integrating NCS students into the community while simultaneously separating NCS students from 'local' students. Although the government is now allowing NCS students the ability to enrol in any of its schools, existing resources are not enough to support students' needs. Clearly, opening up mainstream, government schools is a step in the right direction, but much more must be done to support language learning and inclusion for NCS students in government schools.

Finally, this thesis looked also to the development of different and competing meanings of Non-Chinese Speaking: the EDB defines NCS as a term

exclusively denoting language ability, while teachers and students point also to notions of race, ethnicity, and nationality. These competing definitions are further reflected by the development of tensions about language, integration and support, which are present in all three participant populations.

Further, the EDB wrote twenty-five of its twenty-seven documents targeting NCS secondary-students in a high level of English. In the case of the student participants' in this study, this level of English would not be accessible to their parents, and students themselves would have to serve as the arbiter of the discourses. The use of informational leaflets in English is a noteworthy choice by the EDB. For whom are these discourses produced? Again, the use of English in these documents points to the types of belonging that NCS people can access. Without requisite Chinese or English skills, it becomes difficult to navigate the EDB's policies. Who is meant to read these documents then? And what do these documents say about becoming a part of Hong Kong and integrating?

The teachers of NCS students act as agents for the government as they try to enforce ideas about integration without integrating Non-Chinese Speaking populations in the school with Chinese Speaking populations. Students are instructed in English, and requested to check their home languages and literacy practices at the door. Access to a sense of belonging and integration into the community is mediated through Chinese, however students have developed different conceptions of what it means to belong. The competing discourses of 'equal access' and 'unfairness' are present in the students' responses. These

ideas about ‘equality’ and ‘integration’ have been stressed in the EDB’s documents, taught to the students by their teachers, and when their experiences don’t add up to the ideas, students may feel as though they are not a part of Hong Kong. While the goal may be to get students to integrate through the development of Chinese language skills, students’ who do not speak Chinese may experience a sense of exclusion. If you won’t learn Chinese, you can’t belong. To me, the school should be trying to promote the development of socially relevant language skills through events that foster friendships between students in the NCS and CS streams. If the school, as an institution, refrains from integrating these two groups, these patterns of separation will surely continue when students leave school and enter the community.

This thesis suggests that students’ experiences of school do not align with the discourse of the Education Bureau, and that teachers serve a position in-between the government’s integration policy and the students’ experiences of school. The EDB suggests that learning Chinese is the requirement for the integration of NCS people into the local. This is confusing when students are instructed primarily in schools with English as the Medium of Instruction. As the EDB notes, “in Hong Kong, Chinese is the first language” (EDB, 2013d). Therefore, the local is something that is accessed through the development of Chinese language skills, as students who were born in Hong Kong, but do not speak Chinese, do not qualify for this ‘local’ status. Access to the local has huge consequences on NCS students’ development of ideas about what it means to be a citizen in Hong Kong. This complexity is worth delving into in a future

project: how does the designation of ‘non’ affect the development of NCS citizens’ ideas about belonging in Hong Kong? However, in this project, my intention was to show that the discourses produced by the EDB and directed at NCS students and their families do not align with students’ experiences of school. Rather, the EDB’s policies are acted out and complicated by the practices of their teachers, which affects NCS students’ ideas about how they should (and if they can) become a part of Hong Kong.

Limitations and Implications

A considerable limitation to this study is the size of the data sample. I was only able to speak with one member of the Education Bureau, and access the documents online that were published in English due to my deficit of Chinese literacy skills. These documents are directed at parents of NCS students, and in only examining the documents, and comparing these documents with one interview with a single participant, I may not have been able to fully grasp the complexity of the wording. In my interview with the EDB participant, I became aware that the EDB participant was concerned with the goals of my research as the participant often stated, “I think what you are really asking is...” The EDB participant’s concern about my potential biases could also be seen as a limitation to this study, as they may not have felt completely comfortable with diverging from the policy. Further, I spoke to twenty NCS students and three of their teachers. Their responses may potentially not align with experiences of all NCS students in Hong Kong or the teachers of NCS students in Hong Kong. However, these experiences support and are in accordance with the previous

work that has been completed by Kelly Loper (2004; 2011), who has done research about with NCS students from the perspective of their legal right to education.

Additionally, the interviews were conducted in English, and each participant spoke English as a foreign language. Although I have examined all responses carefully, there is the possibility that some linguistic nuances could have been missed, or participants may not have been able to fully communicate all of the shades of meaning that they meant to. However, I am confident in the overall tone of all of the responses, as nothing was noted that seemed confusing. During the (fully-transcribed) interviews, any confusion that I might have had with the participants' responses, were immediately addressed to ensure that I understood their meaning as accurately as possible.

Moreover, my previous relationship with student-participants and teacher-participants, as former-teacher and former-colleague could be perceived as a limitation to this study. As such, students may have felt pressured to become a part of the study because of my relationship with them as their former-teacher. My pre-existing relationship with the students was based on an already established trust, and students and colleagues could have potentially tailored their responses to fit what they thought that I wanted to hear. It is of note that only half of those students and teachers approached to participate in this study agreed to do so, indicating that many individuals felt free to say they did not want to participate, and further, that those who agreed to participate did so out of interest rather than the notion of pressure. I was not and am not in a position to

affect their academic progress or their future opportunities. Finally, the responses that emanated from my interview with the participant from the EDB could have been limited by my role as an outsider-insider: a former teacher of NCS students, but ultimately a foreigner approaching the discourse with pre-conceived notions of what multiculturalism should look like. As such, the respondent most likely felt most comfortable to follow the official line of the EDB, which could have limited the nuances of their responses.

Conclusion

In the context of post-colonial Hong Kong, according to the EDB, the languages that are “legitimate” or “dominant” are Chinese and English. Knowing (or not knowing) and producing (or not producing) these languages provide linguistic capital to its NCS populations (Chan, 2002, p. 272). Moreover, to become a part of Hong Kong, NCS citizens are required to access these languages, particularly Chinese. Hong Kong’s Education Bureau has the stated goal of making all students bi-literate (English/Traditional Chinese), and trilingual (Cantonese, English, Mandarin), and its discourse suggests that Chinese language skills are necessary for its NCS citizens to integrate. The EDB notes that one of their primary goals is to promote the integration of NCS students, for which they have created language-learning supports. Teachers of NCS students, and NCS students themselves have noted that Chinese language skills are necessary to access postsecondary education, to cultivate diverse employment options, and to become a part of Hong Kong. Therefore, not knowing these discourses removes opportunity for students to attend

postsecondary education, find employment after finishing school, and become a part of the community. How does a Non-Chinese Speaking person become a part of the category of Chinese Speaking? Students and teachers' responses point to the definition of NCS as being more than learning Chinese, but also linked to ethnicity, race and nationality. A number of student-participants who were all born in Hong Kong, and speak Chinese, still consider themselves Non-Chinese. This complexity is worth delving into when we think about the EDB's policy goals: to change NCS students into CS students. If integrating, and becoming local speaks to more than just language, the supports provided by the EDB must also shift to address this competing idea about integration. To integrate, one must become local. To become local, one must speak Chinese, but there is an additional, unwritten requirement that I have yet to fully understand. The findings of this thesis suggest that the stated goal of the integration of NCS students is not being supported by the practice of schooling NCS students in Hong Kong's secondary schools. The experiences of NCS secondary students do not align with the discourse of the EDB, and the citizenship implications about what it means to grow-up as a Non-Chinese Speaking person in Hong Kong is a question worth delving into. If becoming local is more than learning language, how do NCS students develop an idea of what it means to become local, and to become a citizen? The evidence from this study suggest that the category of 'local' is not yet penetrable to ethnic minority NCS students in Hong Kong.

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Appendix A

Students' First Languages and Countries of Origin

2012 Data

<i>First Languages</i>	<i>Countries of Origin</i>
Tamil, English	Bangladesh
Punjabi	India
Urdu	Pakistan
Nepali	Nepal
Punjabi	Hong Kong
Punjabi	India
Punjabi	India
Tagalog, English	The Philippines
Thai	Thailand
Hinko	Hong Kong
Punjabi	India
Punjabi	India
Kashmiri	Pakistan
Tagalog, English	Hong Kong
Tagalog	The Philippines
Spanish, Cantonese	Venezuela
Hindi, Nepali	Nepal
Nepali	Nepal
Bangla	Bangladesh

Teachers' First Languages and Countries of Origin

2012 Data

<i>First Languages</i>	<i>Countries of Origin</i>
Cantonese	Hong Kong
Cantonese	Hong Kong
Nepali	Nepal

Appendix B

List of Education Bureau Online Documents Analyzed in Discourse Analysis

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Appendix C

Student E-mail Questionnaire

Introduction/Housekeeping

What name do you want to be referred to as in my research? (Choose a fake name).

What are the best days of the week/time for me to interview you (after school or on weekends)? (Between September 24th and October 11th).

School Placement

What was the process that you went through to be accepted into your school?

How long (in weeks, months or years) did you wait until you could find a school placement?

Do you have any brothers or sisters at home who could not find a school placement? If so, tell me more.

Exploring the Secondary School Experience

What activities are there for you during school hours (before school, recess, lunchtime, after school)?

Are there any in-school or after-school activities that you are not able to participate in?

Are there areas of the school where you feel that you belong? Tell me more. Where are they?

Are there areas of the school where you feel that you do not belong? Where are they? Tell me more.

Language and Opportunity

What does “Non-Chinese speaking” mean to you?

Do you think that you have the same opportunities as other students who are your age living in Hong Kong? Why or why not?

Appendix D

Student Interview Questions

Part One: Basic Information

Name:

Age:

Country of Birth (the country where you were born):

What language(s) do you speak at home?

What language(s) do you speak at school?

Part Two: Questions about family

What does your mother do for work?

What does your father do for work?

Where did your mother go to school?

How many years did your mother attend school?

What language(s) did your mother's teachers speak at school? If more than one language, tell me which language was spoken in which context. (Ex. Her English teacher spoke _____, but her mathematics teacher spoke _____.)

What language(s) did your mother speak at school? Did she use the same language in all grade levels? If not, which languages were spoken during which grade levels?

What language(s) does (did) your mother speak at home?

Where did your father go to school?

How many years did your father attend school?

What language(s) did your father's teachers speak at school? If more than one language, tell me which language was spoken in which context. (Ex. His History teacher spoke _____, but his physical education teacher spoke _____.)

What language(s) did your father speak at school? Did he use the same language in all grade levels? If not, which languages were spoken during which grade levels?

What language(s) does (did) your father speak at home?

Part Three: Questions about school

What was the process that you went through to be accepted into your school?

How long (in weeks, months or years) did you wait until you could find a school placement?

Do you have any brothers or sisters at home who could not find a school placement? If so, tell me more.

What happens when you come in to school? What is the procedure of entering school?

Tell me about your classroom: How is it organized? (Ex. There are desks in rows with a seat for every student, or do you sit in tables with multiple students?)

How many students are in your classroom?

Tell me about your classmates:

What activities are there for you during school hours (before school, recess, lunchtime, after school)?

Are there any in-school or after-school activities that you are not able to participate in?

Are there areas of the school where you feel that you belong? Tell me more. Where are they?

Are there areas of the school where you feel that you do not belong? Where are they? Tell me more.

What classes do you take?

Are there any classes that are offered at school to Chinese speaking students that Non-Chinese speaking students cannot take? Which classes?

Are there any classes that are offered at school to Non-Chinese speaking students that Chinese-speaking students cannot take? Which classes?

If you could change the school, what would you change?

What does “Non-Chinese speaking” mean to you?

Do you think that “Non-Chinese speaking” students have a different experience at your school than “Chinese” students do? How so?

Part Four: Questions about your future

Tell me about the HKDSE exam that you have to take when you finish Form 6.

How does the HKDSE exam affect or change your ability to study after Form 6?

When you are finished Form 6, what do you think you will do? What would you LIKE to do?

What do you think your parents want you to do when you finish school? Do you have the same goals, or different goals?

Do you think you will continue in higher education (at a college, university or trade school)?

Do you think that you have the same opportunities as other students who are your age living in Hong Kong? Why or why not?

Appendix E

Teacher Interview Questions

Part One: Basic Information

Name:

Age group (20-29), (30-39), (40-49), (50-59), (60-69):

What language(s) do you speak at home (or in your personal life)?

What language(s) do you speak at work?

Part Two: Questions about working with Non-Chinese Speaking students

Where do you interact with NCS students in school?

What languages do you speak with NCS students?

What language(s) do you use when you are teaching?

How many NCS classes do you teach?

Tell me about your classroom. What does it look like? How are the students organized in the classroom? Why? Example: Are they always in rows or do they sometimes group together?

What does Non-Chinese Speaking mean?

Who is included in the category of Non-Chinese Speaking?

Where do the NCS students spend their leisure time during school (recess/lunch)?

Where do the Chinese Speaking students spend their leisure time during school (before school/recess/lunch/after school)?

Do you think that there are any places in the school where the NCS students feel that they don't belong? Why/why not?

Do you think that there are any places in the school where the Chinese Speaking students feel that they don't belong? Why/why not?

Are there any classes that the NCS students take that are different than the Chinese students at the school? If so, what are they?

Are there any classes that the Chinese students take that are different than the NCS students at the school? If so, what are they?

Are there any extracurricular activities that the NCS students participate in that are not offered for the Chinese students at the school? If so, what are they?

Are there any extracurricular activities that the Chinese students participate in that are not offered for the NCS students at the school? If so, what are they?

Do you think that the NCS students have the opportunity to study at university? Why/why not?

Can you explain the GSCE (Chinese) exam that NCS students have to pass? What is it?

What does passing or failing the GCSE (Chinese) exam mean for NCS students' futures?

What do you think about the vocational training courses (VTC) that are offered as part of the new curriculum for NCS students? Example: tourism/hospitality.

Of the NCS students, are there certain types of students who are targeted for VTC programs? If so, which types of students are targeted? Why?

Do you think that NCS students (at DSS schools) have the same opportunities as other students in Hong Kong? Why/why not?

What would you change about the school (if you could change anything)?

Appendix F

Student Consent Form to Participate in Research

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN The educational experiences of Non-Chinese Speaking secondary students in Hong Kong

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Casey Burkholder of the Department of *Education* of Concordia University 514-951-8135; casey.burkholder@gmail.com.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

- To understand the schooling of Non-Chinese Speaking secondary students in Hong Kong
- To understand the experiences of Non-Chinese Speaking students at school

B. PROCEDURES

- I understand that the researcher will ask me about my experiences privately and individually.
 - I understand that the researcher will send me 3 e-mail questionnaires that I will respond to in writing.
 - I understand that the researcher will meet with me at my convenience at a mutually agreed upon place and time.
 - The in-person interview will not exceed two hours of time.
 - I understand that the researcher will change my name in the research to protect my identity.
 - I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and I would like to choose to be referred in the researcher's thesis as:
-

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

- I understand that my comments, words and writings will be analyzed in the researcher's work.
- I understand that my answers are my own, and that the researcher will make sure that there is an agreement between what I say, and what the researcher understands me to say.
- I understand that my experiences will be considered to help improve the secondary school experience of Non-Chinese Speaking students in Hong Kong.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences by contacting either the researcher or her advisor, Prof. Ailie Cleghorn (contact details below).
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator, Ailie Cleghorn, Professor of Education, 514-848-2424 ex. 2041, ailie@education.concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 ethics@alcor.concordia.ca

Appendix G

Teacher Consent Form to Participate in Research

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN The educational experiences of Non-Chinese Speaking secondary students in Hong Kong

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Casey Burkholder of the Department of Education of Concordia University, 514-951-8135; casey.burkholder@gmail.com.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

- To understand the schooling of Non-Chinese Speaking secondary students in Hong Kong
- To understand the experiences of teachers of secondary Non-Chinese Speaking students at school

B. PROCEDURES

- I understand that the researcher will ask me about my experiences privately and individually.
 - I understand that the researcher will send me 1 e-mail questionnaire.
 - I understand that the researcher will meet with me at my convenience at a mutually agreed upon place and time.
 - The in-person interview will not exceed two hours of time.
 - I understand that the researcher will not refer to my name, school, subject-area, or gender in the research to protect my identity.
 - I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and I would like to choose to be referred in the researcher's thesis as:
-

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

- I understand that my comments, words and writings will be analyzed in the researcher's work.
- I understand that my answers are my own, and that the researcher will make sure that there is an agreement between what I say, and what the researcher understands me to say.
- I understand that my name/gender/school/subject area will be confidential, and undisclosed in the writing of the thesis.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences by contacting either the researcher or her advisor, Ailie Cleghorn (contact details below).
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator, Ailie Cleghorn, Professor of Education, 514-848-2424 ex. 2041, ailie@education.concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 ethics@alcor.concordia.ca

Appendix H

Education Bureau Consent Form to Participate in Research

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN The educational experiences of Non-Chinese Speaking secondary students in Hong Kong

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Casey Burkholder of the Department of Education of Concordia University 514-951-8135; casey.burkholder@gmail.com.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

- To understand the schooling of Non-Chinese Speaking secondary students in Hong Kong
- To understand the vision of educating Non-Chinese Speaking secondary students from the perspective of Education Bureau in Hong Kong

B. PROCEDURES

- I understand that the researcher will ask me about the vision of the EDB HK, privately and individually.
 - I understand that the researcher will meet with me once at a pre-determined, mutually agreed upon place and time (between sixty minutes and two hours).
 - I understand that the researcher will change my name in the research to protect my identity.
 - I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and I would like to choose to be referred in the researcher's thesis as:
-

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

- I understand that my comments, words and writings will be analyzed in the researcher's work.
- I understand that my answers are my own, and that the researcher will make sure that there is an agreement between what I say, and what the researcher understands me to say.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences by contacting either the researcher or her advisor, Ailie Cleghorn (contact details below).

- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator, Ailie Cleghorn, Professor of Education, 514-848-2424 ex. 2041, ailie@education.concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 ethics@alcor.concordia.ca

Appendix I

Concordia Research Project Ethical Clearance



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Casey Burkholder

Department: Education

Agency: NA «Agency»

Title of Project: Exploring the educational experiences of non-Chinese speaking secondary students in Hong Kong

Certification Number: 30000733«SPF»

Valid From: Jan 11, 2013 «CertifDate» to: Jan 11, 2014

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Pfaus'.

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee