

Linguistic capital: Continuity and change in educational language policies for ethnic Koreans in China and South Asians in Hong Kong



Gao Fang
Chair: Gerard Postiglione

Immigrants' participation in every aspect of the receiving societies requires knowledge of relevant local languages. Non-Chinese ethnic groups in China and Hong Kong face challenges in reaching adequate Chinese-language proficiency.

This presentation looks at pre- and post-market economy language policies in education in China, and colonial and post-colonial language policies in education in Hong Kong. It sheds light on continuity and change of linguistic capital for groups of ethnic Koreans and South Asians.

Noting elements of complexity, contextuality, complicity, complementarity and continuity, the presentation highlights the formation of an ambiguous bilingual education among ethnic Koreans alongside the emergence of an instrumentally functional language – Korean – in cross-border commerce. It also notes the shift of language policy in postcolonial Hong Kong from diglossic bilingualism to 'bi-literacy and trilingualism'. This policy shift has inadvertently impacted on South Asians, whose heritage cultures and languages are not prominently endorsed, and whose limited mastery of Chinese obstructs academic advancement and upward social mobility.

Gao Fang is a Post-doctoral Fellow in the HKU Faculty of Education. She holds degrees of MA (distinction) from the University of Amsterdam and PhD from HKU. Her research interests include multicultural education, bilingual education, language policy and planning, critical discourse analysis, Chinese as a second language, and comparative education.

12:45-14:00
21 FEB 2012 (TUE)

203 RUNME SHAW BLDG
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Co-hosted by Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) and
Wah Ching Centre of Research on Education in China (CREC)
in the Faculty of Education



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