From Living in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity to Equitable Outcomes in Education: An Introduction

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Abstract This chapter provides an overview of the contributions in this book, which brings together a group of scholars interested to shed light on the educational experiences of different ethnic minority groups in multilingual contexts in Asia. It draws together studies and perspectives that link ethnolinguistic practices, racialized experiences, and institutional policies and processes on how ethnic minorities in the region are situated in their historical and contemporary moments. Through the insights arising from these contributions, it is argued that debates on how equitable outcomes in education might be achieved can be moved forward by paying attention to and making the case for recognizing and valuing cultural and linguistic diversity in Asian societies.

1 Introduction

Global mandates advocating for minority human rights have pointed to the importance of education for equity, diversity, and social cohesion in multilingual and multicultural contexts (UNESCO Bangkok 2005). In such contexts, included are, but not limited to, underserved, underrepresented, and at-risk minority students in Asia (Gao 2017). Their educational experiences are often the material effects of racialized ideologies and discourses of their receiving context, accompanied by dilemmas in enacting multilingual and multicultural policies (Gao 2011). These scenarios represent important concerns to advance teacher training quality in response to cultural and linguistic diversity (United Nations 2013). Moreover, increased dislocation, segregationism, and global flows of refugees and migrants on a hitherto unprecedented scale have triggered a resurgence of nationalistic nativism around the globe, thus creating new social, economic, political, and intercultural conditions and challenges for education (Gao and Lai 2017). Images of such

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cultural disjuncture mark the timeliness and importance of locating new cultural diversity narratives in Asian societies. As has been said, "If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity" (John F. Kennedy). Akin to this attestation is the urge to balance the support for equity and diversity and to maintain a cohesive and integrated society reflected in contemporary language and education practices.

This book explores the topics of language, ethnicity, and equity in Asia's culturally diverse education contexts, including their links with one another. It taps into deep-seated issues regarding how power is constructed, legitimized, and reproduced through educational policy and language practices embedded within its social and political arenas concerning ethnic minorities in the region. Focusing on education for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and other Asian societies, this book captures the progressive steps and impediments toward equity and diversity through an array of cultural and language scenarios. Hong Kong, an international financial hub in East Asia and a former British colony, has attracted an increasing scholarly interest in its provision of educational opportunities for ethnic minorities. Beneath the city's "multicultural" stature lies issues of racism, societal and educational inequalities, and cross-generational poverty. How the postcolonial city tackles these issues and how its strategies and approaches differ from those taking place in other Asian jurisdictions are questions for academic dialogues that this book seeks to engage with. That is, how could and should we learn to live with "difference" that is constantly being redefined (Cantle 2016)?

In this book, ethnic minorities are defined as people who are different from the majority in ethnocultural background. The usage and connotation of the umbrella term "ethnic minorities" vary from context to context. For example, in Hong Kong, ethnic minority is a term widely used to refer to all non-Chinese people and particularly to those more visible South and Southeast Asian population. In Mainland China, ethnic minorities include non-Han people from the 55 officially recognized ethnic groups. In Cambodia, the term is specifically related to indigenous peoples as well as those ethnic groups: Khmer, Khmer Loeu, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tai, and Cham. Such variations, as elaborated in each chapter of this book, remind us that any simple representation or categorization will face its restrictions (as suggested by Fleming, see chapter "Who is "Diverse"?: (In)Tolerance, Education, and Race in Hong Kong"). While these categorizations are politically laden with deep cultural roots, a larger task that does more justice to the quest of a new diversity narrative is to rethink the role of education for ethnic minorities' rights in Asia.

Central to the recognition of minority rights are considerations of power relations and demographic changes in societies. New integrationist and harmony-driven approaches to questions of ethnicity characterize power relations at and structural conditions of institutions in Asian jurisdictions (Postglione 2017). Power manifests itself in terms of relations, a duel between the acts of imposition (of something over another person) and resistance (toward the imposer), which imply how one is positioned within a community, institution, or society and how this position is negotiated and contested (Foucault 1982). The sociopolitical underpinnings of institutions, mandates, and public discourses define what counts as culturally appropriate or not

(Gube 2015), which create intended and unintended effects on school education for ethnic minorities. The dialectics of such sociopolitical contexts and material effects contribute to the practices of inclusion, exclusion, subjugation of certain minority groups in various aspects of social life, and education. This book recognizes the different dynamics of power relations (Gube 2017), where educators seek to empower ethnic minorities who take advantage of certain linguistic, cultural, and social capitals to reconstruct ethnicity and identity in ways that allow them to navigate the education system and career paths. Also residing at the intellectual pursuit of this book is the drive to moving forward scholarship in ethnicity and education, which has traditionally focused on Western, Anglophone, and immigrant-receiving countries. In featuring research in ethnolinguistic practices, cultural identities, and educational provisions in selected culturally and linguistically diverse Asian societies, we pose three fundamental questions:

1. What linguistic practices do Asian ethnic minorities engage in and develop? How are their linguistic practices positioned within the language landscape of the Asian societies?
2. What identity dynamics do ethnic minorities develop, negotiate, and construct? How are these dynamics relevant to the ethnic and racial fabric of the Asian societies?
3. How do the educational policies and practices toward ethnic minorities reflect power and political frameworks in the Asian societies?

2 Book Overview

The edited book consists of 15 chapters. The intent of this book is not to examine the modus operandi of cultural diversity models, although this is often a point of departure in the scholarship of ethnicity and education. Rather, we argue that the dynamics among education, ethnicity, and equity take form in day-to-day cultural and linguistic practices of ethnic minorities, interactions with people who support them (or might have fallen short of so), institutional setup of school communities, and sociohistorical contexts of Asian education systems. In other words, cultural difference is constructed through the languages one chooses and uses, how one makes sense of himself or herself and others as ethnic person, how one embodies such linguistic and cultural practices, and how all these are enabled in diverse institutional contexts. A starting point of this argument is our observation as scholars based in Hong Kong that different forms of inequities, which have constantly gone under the guise of the city's international image in education, have only attracted academic and educational attention recently despite the history of settlement of minority population. Even though the chapter authors have different geographical, theoretical, empirical, and population foci, they all identify how education systems have played a part in reshaping how students, teachers, schools, and policymakers conceive and enact ethnicity and equity. The authors come from a variety of

scholarly backgrounds who present nuanced accounts of issues in minority education, altogether representing a combination of Western, Asian, and ethnic minority perspectives. Their chapters are presented in accordance with the questions above: Part I, Language Policies and Practices; Part II, Racialized Discourses, Diversities, and Identities; and Part III, Educational Equity and Equality: Provisions and Interventions.

2.1 Part I: Language Policies and Practices

Contributions that highlight ethnolinguistic practices of minorities begin in chapter "Ethnicity and Equity: The Development of Linguistic Capital for a Subgroup of South Asian Individuals in Hong Kong", where Byrom, Wong, and Boulton focus on the experiences of a group of South Asian individuals and explore how their language learning was interlaced with structural inequities in Hong Kong. This study reports how South Asian students are emplaced to learn the Chinese language (Cantonese) in isolation from local Chinese students, a situation that prevents them from acquiring desirable communication opportunities and later a proficient level of the language. The authors argue that a lack of immersion in the wider Chinese-speaking context implies a class-based difference in school choice and admission.

In an effort to describe the distinct cultural experience of a South Asian group, Thapa describes in chapter "Identity and Investment in Learning English and Chinese: An Ethnographic Inquiry of Two Nepali Students in Hong Kong" the trajectories of language learning among two Nepalese students in Hong Kong in relation to their identity construction. This chapter offers a nuanced description of how these two minority students were caught in a dilemma between family's and school's expectations. The findings indicate that the students negotiated the conflicting language practices arising from the instructional preference in English and Chinese learning and familial demands to acquire the heritage language—Nepali. Such dilemma has certain implications for individuals' language practices and identity formation. These two chapters complement each other in important ways as they both provide a glimpse into South Asian as a panethnic minority group and Nepalese as specific minority group, which encourage researchers to treat intragroup dynamics carefully and ethnic categorization within subgroups (Okamoto and Mora 2014), such as when panethnic terms "South Asian" and "ethnic minorities" are applied.

In chapter "Linguistic Landscape and Social Equality in an Ethnic Tourism Village in Guizhou, China", Shan, Adamson, and Liu pay attention to an ethnic minority village in Guizhou, China, where tourism is promoted and developed in relation to language status and practice. The authors examine how Mandarin, English, and Miao languages are manifested in public discourses, as displayed in billboards, signage, and government sites, which form the linguistic landscape of the region, characterized by unequal statuses and visibility among the three languages. The authors shed light on the importance of introducing a multilingual education model to allow minority people to capitalize on their ethnic language and

culture. Given the reality that ethnolinguistic practices are an important component of ethnic minorities' schooling experiences and how an equitable practice of such languages might be taught, the chapters speak to the unequal language status and ensuing policy and practice that give shape to imbalances in power relations.

However, similar questions could be pointed to enacting systemic changes on making language policies work for minority population. Concerted effort among stakeholders at different levels, which is crucial for sustaining equitable access to multilingual education, is shown in chapter "Language as Gatekeeper for Equitable Education: Multilingual Education in Cambodia". Here, Wong and Benson provide an optimistic look at the status of various languages in Cambodia and its implications for multilingual education practices, specifically in indigenous communities: Kreung and Khmer. The authors argue that incorporating multilingual aspects into language-in-education policy provides an important means to overcome inequity among indigenous people and contributes to an increased access to high-quality education. They highlight that a vital element of such a success rests on the strong collaboration among multiple stakeholders, who work together to ensure that effective policies and support fall into place for a sustainable policy development.

2.2 Part II: Racialized Discourses, Diversities, and Identities

Sociolinguists have little disagreement on how language impacts upon identity and cultural experiences (or vice versa) and importantly their implications for the formation of cultural diversity narratives in education. On this view, Fleming discusses in chapter "Who is "Diverse"?: (In)Tolerance, Education, and Race in Hong Kong" the notion of diversity by drawing on data from an ethnographic study with South Asian secondary students in Hong Kong. Her study focuses on daily interactions in particular on school's multicultural day as well as in Social Studies course in which issues of diversity are raised and discussed. This study shows how these activities, while aimed to promote cross-ethnic communication among students from different ethnic backgrounds, cause unintended and even counterproductive results. These unintended results seem to portray South Asian students as being unable to adjust (assimilate in reality) into the majority Hong Kong culture. The author, therefore, calls for a deeper scrutiny of the multilingual and multicultural measures in a view to achieving a genuine representation for ethnic minorities through culturally inclusive practices.

In chapter "Unresolved Tensions in Hong Kong's Racialized Discourse: Rethinking Differences in Educating about Ethnic Minorities", Gube and Burkholder explicate how ethnic minorities are racialized in Hong Kong. They draw attention to public and educational discourses that construct social meanings of race and examine how forms of racialization are manifested by different levels of invisibility and racial normativity. They maintain that discourses on cultural and linguistic diversity and ethnic minorities are not yet deeply entrenched; expectations on them to conform to local and Hong Kong-centric linguistic and cultural

practices still prevail. These expectations, according to the authors, are different from those for more privileged communities, such as expatriates and Caucasian non-Chinese residents, and thus signify a distinctive set of cultural divisions and societal hierarchy in the city.

In chapter "Citizenship Status and Identities of Ethnic Minorities: Cases of Hong Kong Filipino Youth", Ng and Kennedy explore the citizenship identity of a group of Filipino youth in Hong Kong. Attention is drawn to the intricacy of citizenship status among ethnic minorities and exposes how Filipino young people negotiate identities in relation to Hong Kong, Mainland China, and the Philippines. The study points to the distinction between legal citizenship (e.g., being naturalized as a Chinese citizen) and citizenship identity (i.e., how individuals construct social meanings in relation to the structures and contexts they live in). This study finds that Filipino youth in Hong Kong construct their citizenship identity in a way that reflects a desire for possessing permanent residency in Hong Kong and facing varying degrees of racial discrimination in the city.

The complexity of minority identity formation cannot be reduced to present day-to-day schooling experience, especially when minority population settlement is brought to light. In chapter "A Forgotten Diaspora: Russian-Koreans Negotiating Life, Education, and Social Mobility", Chang offers a historical account of Russian-Koreans, particularly in terms of their mobility and settlement within the Soviet Union and Central Asia. His study highlights how Koreans in that region employ their transnational background for their integration, orientated to a desired occupational status through agriculture and communicative practices. This chapter also discusses the demographic changes of the Korean population and the development of Korean education institutions in the region and illustrates how occupational success in agriculture and the maintenance of cultural traditions contribute to the formation of diasporic identity among Koreans in Russia.

The authors in this part have thus far shown how diversity, identity, and citizenship are defined in the societal contexts and are interpreted, challenged, and reconstructed by ethnic minorities in their daily educational and lived experiences. These identity tensions are often an outcome of discrimination. In chapter "The Analysis on Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants in Korea and Its Implications for Multicultural Human Rights Education Policies", Seong analyzes the discrimination experiences of immigrants in South Korea. Seong observes the influx of immigrants mainly from China, Vietnam, and the Philippines due to work and marriage and problematizes the inadequacy of multicultural education programs in South Korea. The survey findings show that most of the immigrants view the Korean society as discriminating due to cultural and socioeconomic factors. Discrimination takes place in work settings, such as immigrants being coerced to work overtime and perform additional tasks. Seong argues that multicultural programs should focus not only on facilitating these immigrants' integration into the Korean society but also on protecting migrants' human rights and promoting social recognition and inclusion.

2.3 *Part III: Educational Equity and Equality—Provisions and Interventions*

Identity experiences, exclusionary and discriminatory measures, and practices inherent in education systems often invite a pressing question that confronts many educators and commentators: "what can be or has been done" to cater for cultural diversity in schools. Clarifying and acknowledging the sources of inequity are often the first step. In chapter "Ethnic Minority Young People's Education in Hong Kong: Factors Influencing School Failure", Bhowmik scrutinizes the factors that contribute to ethnic minorities' dropping out of school in Hong Kong. The case study provides detailed accounts about how minority students, school teachers, and other stakeholders talk about unsatisfactory academic outcomes, being overage, Chinese language issues, low socioeconomic background, and racism, among others. Bhowmik argues for the importance of abandoning the deficit views of ethnic minorities being "left behind" in the education system and rather concentrating on institutional interventions and remedies.

The attention to policy and institutional contexts of education for ethnic minorities is important for developing a nuanced understanding of how minorities are pushed out in the schooling system. Even though institutional change is not often immediate, interventions in pedagogy can be done in ways that counter the reproduction of social, racial, and class hierarchy. In chapter "Critical Pedagogy and Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong: Possibilities for Empowerment", Soto reflects on his use of critical pedagogy in two ethnically diverse secondary schools in Hong Kong. By employing critical ethnography, Soto's teaching journey aims to reenvision the teacher-student relationship in a manner that promotes the student awareness of social justice in teaching and learning processes. Soto engaged students with culturally relevant movies and poems, and positioned them to express themselves in nonthreatening ways. This action research concludes with a call for a stronger commitment to minority students' communities and cultures through empowering pedagogies and class practices.

Policy intervention, beyond pedagogies, for positive minority parents' involvement in education is important. In chapter "Parental Involvement and University Aspirations of Ethnic Korean Students in China", Gao and Tsang examine social capital-embedded parental involvement and ethnic Korean students' aspirations for university education in China. Statistical data analysis reveals that social capital is positively associated with students' educational aspirations and also confirms the value of economic and cultural capital in affecting the operation of social capital-embedded parental involvement, as manifested by the hypothesized intersecting relationship between social capital and other types of capital. The preliminary analyses provide significant contribution to the prevalence of the interacting patterns among different types of capital. Not only does this finding warrant future work but also bears implications for university outreach programs toward ethnic minorities.

Turning to the role of curriculum, Muhammad and Brett in chapter "Addressing Social Justice and Cultural Identity in Pakistani Education: A Qualitative Content

Analysis of Curriculum Policy" look at how social justice and cultural diversity are addressed in Pakistan's education policies. Their analysis draws on curricular policy documents for an understanding of how policy objectives and recommendations are related to national identity, cultural, and global perspectives. The content analysis shows that cultural diversity has been acknowledged such as in terms of portraying Pakistan as multiethnic and multireligious and making Islamic perspectives apparent in the cultivation of national identity.

Beyond curriculum, the complex relationship between policy and educational system has implications for ethnic minorities. In chapter "Power Relations and Education of the Korean Minority in the Japanese Karafuto and Soviet/Russian Sakhalin", Park and Balitskaya document the education experiences of diasporic Koreans in the Russian Island of Sakhalin. Under the political condition, reported in this chapter, the Sakhalin Koreans were not positioned to retain their ethnic language and culture. This is tied to an assimilatory policy practice in education. Their discussion shows the different institutional efforts in the region that contribute to the deprival and revival of the Korean language in its education system. This chapter especially contributes to the discussion on how undocumented minorities are complexly juxtaposed in the power of institutional forces.

In the concluding chapter "Challenges for Interethnic Relations, Language and Educational Equity in Asia", Halse synthesizes the contribution of all chapters by highlighting the overarching themes of and links among ethnic minorities, language, and educational equity. With reference to international scenarios of ethnic divisions and racial sentiments, Halse's discussion makes visible the dilemmas concerning the boundaries and categorization that exist around the social world of different cultural groups. In closing, the chapter provides directions for scholarship and practice on how rootedness and belonging can be framed more productively in Asian societies.

2.4 Confronting Social and Educational Inequality and Promoting Multiculturalism/Multilingualism

While this book draws upon empirical accounts with different theoretical lenses, the thread that links such perspectives is how the intersection of power, equity, and diversity is tacitly realized and manifested in education in light of historical remnants and recent demographic changes in Asia. Home to Asia are a sizeable number of Confucian societies that respond differently to equity and diversity when compared to their Western counterparts. Underlying this response is the Confucian conception of social justice that shapes the condition of education resources made available to ethnic minorities (Kennedy 2011). Such conception and attention reinforce and invite new challenges on striking a balance among supporting the ethnic identities, languages, and cultures of minority groups and maintaining the integrated and harmonious nature of society (Feng and Adamson 2017; Romaine 2011). In

other words, the rights of minorities should ideally be safeguarded in ways that avoid social separation and ethnic conflicts. Rather than subscribing to Western multicultural models uncritically or deliberately bypassing issues of ethnicity, diversity, and equity, the chapters together clarify how certain Asian sociopolitical and cultural conditions underlie the existence of past and current policies and linguistic practices in education for ethnic minorities. Indeed, the contexts described in the chapters display an array of conflicting educational expectations, practices, and cultural and ethnolinguistic identities, especially when multiculturalism suffers from its own shortcoming and backlash against it (He and Kymlicka 2005; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010) and when inequities in education are not always laid bare. All the chapters in this book help us rethink multicultural and multilingual education theories and practices, particularly in understanding how power operates differently in the Asian context (Kymlicka 2015; Phillion et al. 2011). These perspectives together provide us directions to move away from "centrisms" in education systems (Gundara 2017, p. 70).

Centrism in educational intervention reflects the proclivity toward integrationist approaches to cultural diversity. The outcome can be producing sameness—for ethnic minorities to become like their majority counterpart, especially in monocultural societies. As Nasir et al. (2006, p. 499) explained, however, "Equity is not about offering or producing sameness, but about enabling youth to appropriate the repertoires they need in order to live the richest life possible and reach their full academic potential." This view echoes the appeal to global justice that opposes the effects of assimilation, which implies that different ethnocultural groups can coexist (He 2003). Putting this perspective into practice, an imperative for stakeholders would be to confront one's own traditional ideologies and reconstruct political discourses and educational mandates that embrace harmony, equity, and diversity. Meanwhile, Asian societies enjoy an advantage: culturally inclusive and linguistically diverse environments are traditionally tolerated and recognized at different levels across polities (He 2003; Lee 2004). This tolerance and recognition form the basis to reenvision multiculturalism and multilingualism in ways that attend to social equity. Within such relatively inclusive learning and societal environments, therefore, policies should be designed to reflect greater efforts on "providing *enabling environment* to facilitate access to other cultures" (UNESCO 2009, p. 237), which value language and cultural rights of minorities to achieve equity for all. Yet, a crucible consideration for educators and policymakers is whether tolerance and recognition alone are desirable responses to the shifting sociocultural demographics of Asian societies. Here, the word "desirable" (instead of "sufficient" or "effective") emphasizes the political nature of conflicting and competing discourses on what different cultural groups, stakeholders, and governments might perceive as an equitable response to diversity—what looks like equitable to one may appear to be unfair to others. This is often the case when societies have their own conceptions of tolerance and justice that dictate how cultural diversity is conceived (He 2003; He and Kymlicka 2005).

To cultivate an "enabling" multicultural and multilingual learning environment, beyond delving into the cultural and sociopolitical makeup of Asian societies in

relation to different levels of educational interventions, one needs a disposition that permits a proactive engagement with various forms of racism, discrimination, and prejudices that exist in interethnic relations and interactions (Gao 2012). The need to adopt this disposition speaks to the reality that each jurisdiction has its own historical and cultural specificities by which generalization cannot be made for the entire region how cultural and linguistic diversity is treated. Nevertheless, the disposition suggested here is not about devising curriculum and community interventions per se, but more about having a critical eye toward how disparity emerges in and through power within the social fabric and mundane practices in everyday life of different cultural groups (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997). Educational solutions to this end rest not only on effective support measures (Connelly et al. 2013), but also on how researchers and practitioners position themselves in their respective contexts to promote equity and diversity in culturally and linguistically diverse landscapes.

An overarching theme of this book is the intricacy of how ethnolinguistic, identity, and institutional processes intercross with one another in the treatment toward cultural and linguistic diversity embedded within power and equity rhetoric. The book responds to the sociopolitical changes in Asia (Miller 2011) and attends to the manifestations of power within the Asian diversity narratives (or lack thereof) and voices of ethnic minorities. Implicit within such responses and attention is a challenge: the way we imagine and build a sense of rootedness in cultural and linguistic terms goes beyond lobbying for systemic efforts for young people where their educational rights are protected and cultural backgrounds and linguistic heritages are respected (Gao 2016). The task to address inequities in education takes on significance, not only because of the developing and conflicting discourses on ethnicity and equity in Asian contexts, where ethnic conflicts and silences on engagement with cultural and linguistic diversity persist, but also because how these issues can be subjected to interpretation via the oft-debated paradigms—or fashioned under the guise—of multiculturalism or interculturalism (see Antonsich 2016; Halse, chapter "Challenges for Interethnic Relations, Language and Educational Equity in Asia"; Modood 2017). Fully unpacking the distinction of these two paradigms and examining their applicability in Asian education contexts are beyond the scope of this book. Though, this intellectual task must be continued if we scrutinize further the power that plays into the relations of different cultural groups, rather than resorting to such paradigms uncritically when devising strategies at the levels of policy and pedagogy.

Beyond the ethnic conflicts and violence in other jurisdictions that receive much media and academic attention, many questions remain unanswered. What would influence one's orientation toward diversity in societies that privilege harmonious relations? How do we translate all kinds of diversity rhetoric meaningfully into educational initiatives that balance the principles of social justice and cultural cohesiveness, in addition to the neoliberal priorities that privilege computable academic outcomes? The words "from" and "to" in this chapter's title denote the quest and journey of what one might conceive as equitable outcomes in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts of Asia and, more broadly, within highly globalized world

we live in (Connelly and Gube 2013). In so doing, we are better positioned at moving toward a civic reality characterized by a stronger commitment to maintaining a cohesive society, where everyone has a firm ground to stand on when engaging with diversity, thus feeling connected to the societies that one lives in and to the educational landscapes that are culturally and linguistically evolving.

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