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**Language Attitudes of the First Post-colonial Generation
in Hong Kong Secondary Schools: Issues in Gender,
Medium of instruction, Social class and Cultural identity**

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fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctorate in Education**



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Abstract

Discussion of language attitudes has a long history, but the seemingly old topic has never failed to catch the attention of scholars over the past decades. Language attitudes are ever changing with time and socio-political environment, and it is this fluid nature of language attitudes that gives new significance to the topic when Hong Kong enters a new post-colonial era. Since the change of sovereignty in 1997 from Britain to China, Hong Kong has undergone great political, socio-economic and educational changes. The new post-colonial context might have great impacts on students, including their attitudes towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua, which are the three main spoken varieties advocated by the new government in its 'Biliterate and Trilingual' policy declared shortly after the political handover.

Among all students, a unique group was that who began their secondary education in 1998 since they were brought up amidst all the changes that had taken place after the change of sovereignty. Apart from an overview of the language attitudes of this group of students, this study also attempts to discriminate different attitudes according to Gender, Medium of instruction, Social class, Cultural identity, and to reveal the relationship between these four variables and language attitudes. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for this research. 1048 F.3 students from 28 secondary schools participated in a questionnaire survey and a sample of 40 students in focus-group interviews. The results showed that the first post-colonial secondary-school generation feel the most affectively inclined to vernacular Cantonese and perceive English as the language of the highest instrumental values and social status while Putonghua is rated the lowest both in the affective and cognitive perspectives. Among the four variables, Cultural identity is the one which relates the most closely with the variation of students' language attitudes while the others induce divergence only on the affective inclination towards English.

Unlike what has been predicted by scholars, Putonghua has not yet taken the place of English as the language of power at the time of this research. However, signs were found showing a subtle transition towards a more accommodating attitude towards Chinese identity and Putonghua, mainly engineered through a growing demand of the language for economic purposes. Hong Kong may have completed its political transition, yet its cultural and linguistic transitions are still underway.

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List of Abbreviations

CMI	Chinese Medium Instruction
EMI	English Medium Instruction
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HK	Hong Kong
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
MGT	Matched-guise Test
MOI	Medium of Instruction
PRC	People's Republic of China
PTH	Putonghua

Language Attitudes of the First Post-colonial Generation in Hong Kong secondary schools: Issues in Gender, Medium of instruction, Social class and Cultural identity

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Scope of the Study

Issues of language attitudes have been widely explored in the world (e.g. Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985; Edwards, 1985 & 1994; Baker 1988 & 1992). In Hong Kong, many related studies have also been conducted from the 1970s to the present (e.g. Fu , 1975; Pierson et al, 1980; Pennington et al, 1994; Lau, 1997). Discussion of language attitudes has a long history, but the seemingly old topic has never failed to catch the attention of scholars over the past decades. In fact, language attitudes are ever changing and interact dynamically with the change of time and socio-political environment. It is this fluid nature of the topic that enables it to stay fresh and to take on new significance in different times and context.

Having been a colony of the British for almost a century, Hong Kong was returned to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1997, marking an official beginning of a new post-colonial era. The commonsense meaning of the term 'post-colonial' may simply refer to the period coming upon the end of colonialism. However, the term has been problematic since colonialism may not necessarily exist in the form of political occupation but penetration of culture, ideology and economic systems. Hence, colonialism can function without territorial boundaries and the influence of the colonizers may continue even after their departure (Childs & Williams, 1997; Loomba, 1998). Although the meaning of 'post-colonial' might not be clear cut, the term will be used literally in this thesis, which refers to the time after the political handover of Hong Kong from Britain to the PRC, which took place on July 1st, 1997.

With Hong Kong entering a new era, issues of language attitudes take on new significance. In the following, I will first highlight the key changes in post-colonial Hong Kong that lay out the new socio-political background in which changes in

language attitudes take place. Later in this chapter, the purpose and significance of this research in this new context will be described.

1.2 The New Post-colonial Context of Hong Kong After 1997

1.2.1 The political change

Since 1997, Hong Kong was returned to the sovereignty of the PRC, marking an end to the 100 year-long reign of the British. Upon the hand-over, Hong Kong was no longer a British colony, but a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC. Under the principle of 'one country, two systems', the socialist system and policies will not be practised in Hong Kong. The capitalist system and way of life in Hong Kong shall remain unchanged for 50 years. Hong Kong will be governed by local Hong Kong people without interference from the PRC (Basic Law , Article 5). Before the hand-over, Hong Kong people expressed their anxiety and fear of this political change through large-scale emigration. No matter how resistant they were towards the new Communist regime, since 1997, it has become an indisputable fact that Hong Kong is politically part of China (Lau, 1997). Whether one likes it or not, the nationality of Hong Kong citizens (except the minority ethnic groups e.g. the Indians) must change from British to Chinese.

1.2.2 The impact of national identity

During the colonial days, Hong Kong people had little sense of national identity. Most people identified themselves as Hongkongers instead of Chinese. Due to the resistance towards the Communist China, such a strong sense of local identity did not change much even after the Sino-British joint-declaration was signed in 1984. As reported in Lau (1997), the series of studies that he had conducted from 1985 to 1995 showed that more respondents held a stronger identity as 'Hongkongers' than 'Chinese'. Although there was no strong indication in the findings to suggest a change in the trend, Lau found a long-term though slow increase of the proportion of people claiming both identities (p.5). He expected this trend to become stronger after Hong Kong had become part of China after 1997. Lau also suggested several factors that might help to strengthen identification with the Chinese nation among Hong Kong people namely 1) the fact that Hong Kong is politically part of China; 2) the growing

military power and international status of China; 3) increasing economic interdependency between Hong Kong and China; 4) the modernization of China; 5) the propagation of nationalist values in Hong Kong; and 6) the strengthening of social and cultural ties between the people in both places.

In fact, the above conditions mentioned by Lau (1997) have started to materialise in the years after the change of Hong Kong's sovereignty. Following the active participation of the PRC in international affairs, China has gained higher political influence and prestige in the world (e.g. joining the World Trade Organization; having won 28 gold medals in the 2000 Olympic Games; having the second largest foreign currency reserve in Asia after Japan; having won the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games etc.). In addition, the social, cultural and economic exchange between Mainland China and Hong Kong has become extremely busy after the political hand-over. Passenger traffic in and out of Hong Kong grew by 11.7% in 1999 as compared to 1998 and the growth was mainly attributable to the heavy cross-boundary traffic between Hong Kong and the PRC after the reunification (HKSAR Government, 1999a). As a result of the above developments, a stronger national identity may develop among Hong Kong people towards China, which in the end would help to foster a positive attitude towards Putonghua, the national language of the PRC.

1.2.3 The socio-economic changes after 1997

Shortly after the change of sovereignty in 1997, Hong Kong experienced the most disastrous economic downturn in its history. Just within months, both the stock market and the property market, which accounted for the majority of Hong Kong people's investment, slumped. The stock market index dropped drastically from 17,000 points in September 1997 to 6000 in August 1998 and the value of real estates decreased by 30% in the first year after the change of sovereignty as compared to that of the peak time in mid-1997, and has then continued to fall by 60% up to Year 2002, yet showed little sign for recovery. Following the economic slump were bankruptcies, closing down of companies, cutting down expenses in all sectors. Unemployment rates soared from 2.1% in 1997 before the change of sovereignty to 7.7% in 2002 (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 7/2002a), and it continued to spread from the working class to the middle class (MingPao, 29/8/2001). When the bubble-economy of

Hong Kong burst, the city woke up from its dream of speculation and started to realise its lack of solid economic foundation and declining competitiveness to Mainland China and other Asian countries.

A lot of Hong Kong university graduates, being not able to find desirable jobs in the shrinking local labour market, have to take up employment in the Mainland. In addition, competition for jobs in Hong Kong has become keener and keener as the local labour market is further opened up for the Mainland elite through the introduction of Talents Scheme and Mainland Professional Scheme. In addition to this, exchange students from Mainland China are also permitted to stay in Hong Kong for employment after graduation (Hong Kong Immigration Department, 2001). However, bad economy, coupled with keen competition in the local labour market may help to develop students' positive attitudes towards English and Putonghua since the possession of 'Linguistic Capital' (Morrison and Lui, 2000) may mean a great asset for students if they ever want to survive the competition in the future.

1.2.4 Socio-linguistic changes after 1997 - The rising status of Putonghua

Before the hand-over in 1997, English (the coloniser's language) and Cantonese (a language variety of southern China) formed a diglossic situation (Fishman, 1967) when both languages were used in different domains and for different functions. English was a prestigious language for the formal institutions of government, law court, education and business while Cantonese was used by the vast majority of the Hong Kong population as a usual variety in families and for informal daily-life purposes (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 7/2002c). English was a language for higher and wider communication (So, 1992), and Cantonese was a language for solidarity among ethnic Chinese (Pierson, 1994a). However, after the signing of the Sino-British joint-declaration in 1984, Hong Kong started to prepare for a transition from diglossia to triglossia when it was commonly believed that the importance of Putonghua (also known as Mandarin)¹, the national language of the PRC, would increase tremendously after the change of sovereignty (Lord, 1987; Kwo, 1994; Pierson, 1994a). Such a prediction was confirmed after the hand-over when the Chief

¹ Mandarin is the official language of the PRC and Taiwan. In the PRC, the language is called Putonghua, meaning the common language.

Executive of the first Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government spelt out the 'Biliterate and Trilingual Policy' in his first policy address in October 1997, under which, Hong Kong people of this generation will have to be proficient in written Chinese² and English and speak fluent Cantonese, Putonghua and English (HKSAR Government, 1997). The 'Biliterate and Trilingual Policy' not only makes Putonghua a compulsory subject in schools, but also signifies a declaration of government support to make Putonghua widely spoken and accepted in Hong Kong society. In the past decades, Putonghua was used only within a minority group of people in Hong Kong (Pierson, 1994b). According to the 1991 government census, only 1.1% of the population spoke Putonghua as their usual variety (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 1996). Unlike English, it was seldom used in public occasions, nor was it taught as a core subject in schools. However, as the return of Hong Kong to the PRC approached, Putonghua gradually gained popularity during the transition period. As Adamson and Auyeung-Lai (1997:88) have observed, 'there are increased job advertisements specifying competence in Putonghua, more radio and television programmes teaching Putonghua, and an increase of Hong Kong pop stars producing albums in Putonghua as a supplement to their Cantonese production.' Apart from that, announcements made on trains and some buses are not only in Cantonese and English, but also Putonghua. In addition, the percentage of population who were able to speak Putonghua had increased from 18.1% in 1991 to 25.3% in 1996 (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 1996).

Although the growth of popularity in Putonghua is largely due to the political change in Hong Kong, it is also a response to the huge economic market value that Mainland China implies and the frequent social and cultural exchange between the two places. Pierson (1998) predicts that Hong Kong will reach a triglossic situation of two high languages and one low language in a single community. Putonghua will become the language of politics and administration; English the language of technology, commerce, and finance; and Cantonese the language of the family and intimacy. Pennington (1998b) also suggests that Putonghua will pick up greater ethnolinguistic

² All Chinese, except the minority tribes in the border regions (e.g. Mongolia, Tibet) write Standard Modern Chinese. Putonghua is the official language and the common variety that people speak while different provinces maintain their own vernacular variety which usually does not have a written form. In the case of Hong Kong, Cantonese is the vernacular variety spoken which has no formal written form.

vitality (Giles et al, 1977) and become the centre of change in the next language shift in the Hong Kong community.

1.2.5 The change in language education – implementation of the Mother Tongue Education Policy

As a gesture of decolonization, the new HKSAR Government announced also the mandatory Mother Tongue Education Policy two months after the handover in July 1997 for foundation education from Primary 1 to Secondary 3³. Despite the fact that schools and parents had expressed strong objection to the policy, it was made compulsory to all schools unless they could produce strong evidence to show that their teaching staff was capable of delivering effective lessons through English, and their students could benefit from a full-immersion programme in English (Lai, 1999). Before the change of sovereignty, 90.5% of 421 secondary schools were English medium, as a result of the mandatory Mother Tongue Education Policy, only 114 secondary schools retained the status of EMI (English medium instruction) schools while the rest had to adopt Chinese as their medium of instruction (CMI) (Tsui et al, 1999). Starting in the academic year of 1998, CMI schools were to use Cantonese (the local variety) and Standard Modern Chinese (the standard written form of Chinese that is used throughout China) as their media of instruction. Since then, English was reduced to the status of a core subject in the majority of secondary schools but was still used across the curriculum as the medium of instruction in EMI schools. However, Mother Tongue Education Policy was made compulsory to the majority of the secondary schools only up to F.3, and restrictions were then relaxed for levels of F.4 or above. In other words, all schools would be given the freedom to resume the function of English as the medium of instruction for senior secondary levels.

Apart from the change in the medium of instruction, the importance of Putonghua has also been significantly increased in schools. In 1992, before the change of sovereignty, only 17% of the primary schools offered Putonghua in the formal curriculum while 50% of them offered it as an extracurricular activity. At secondary level, 27% of the schools offered the language in the formal curriculum while 42% of them offered it as an extracurricular activity (Education Department Report cited in

³ The formal school education system in Hong Kong comprises of 6 primary years, 5 secondary years and 2 preparatory years for university entrance. Foundation education in Hong Kong, which is universal and compulsory, refers to the six years in Primary and the first three years in Secondary.

Pierson, 1994a:189). By 1998, as part of the consequence of the Mother Tongue Education Policy, Putonghua became a core subject in all Primary and Secondary schools and an elective subject for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (GCSE equivalent) beginning in the year 2000. Although both Putonghua and English are taught in schools as core subjects, it is noteworthy that Putonghua takes up an average of only about 1.3 hours' lesson time per week and the subject is no longer a core one for F.4 upward and schools may choose not to offer it for senior secondary levels. On the contrary, students will usually have 5.3 hours or more for English language in a week and the subject remains a core one up to the end of senior secondary education. Despite the increased popularity of Putonghua, the amount of attention it receives in schools is still incomparable to that of English.

1.3 Impacts of the New Post-colonial Context on Students

Since major changes have taken place in politics, society, economy and education, the new post-colonial context may have significant impacts on students. Among all students, the most unique group is the one who started secondary-school education in the year 1998 when Hong Kong was returned to the sovereignty of the PRC for a year, the effects of the economic slump had become wide-spread and distinct, and the new Biliterate and Trilingual Policy and Mother Tongue Education Policy just embarked. This group of students was at the end of their F.3 and the beginning of their F.4 studies at the time of research and they were the first generation brought up amidst the above changes after the hand-over in Hong Kong secondary schools. The impacts of the new post-colonial context on students could be many, which include their attitudes towards Cantonese (the vernacular), English (the ex-coloniser's and international language), and Putonghua (the new ruler's language).

1.4 Purpose of this Study

1.4.1 New significance of language attitudes studies in the post-colonial context

With Hong Kong entering the period of 'decolonisation without independence' (Pierson, 1994b) or 'China's new colony' as described in Vines (1998), issues of language attitudes take on new significance. Li (2000) argues that Hong Kong people are not passive victims of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) but active agents of pragmatism in their choice of languages. In the new socio-political context after the hand-over, attitudes of Hong Kong people towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English may have undergone subtle but interesting development while these active pragmatists are trying to reposition themselves in the new scenario of power and make the wisest language choice to their best interest.

Attitude research is for predicting respondents' behaviour (Edwards, 1985; Baker, 1992); and language attitudes, in particular, are often studied to predict language achievement (Gardner, 1985). However, the success of attitude studies for prediction has never been demonstrated very strongly. In fact, many scholars have already pointed out the incongruence between attitude and actual behaviour e.g. Henderson et al, 1987; Baker, 1988; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993 and Foddy, 1993. A lot of studies have also been done in Hong Kong on the relationship between language attitudes, effort and achievement (e.g. Lin et al, 1998; Richards, 1998; Lai, 2000), yet no definite causal relationship between the three elements can ever be concluded. As Baker (1992) has pointed out, attitude is only one of the many determinants of behaviour and achievement. In addition to this, scholars have expressed scepticism about the reliability of attitude studies, for example, Warner and DeFluer (cited in Foddy, 1993) warn researchers that individuals will often take social pressures into account when expressing their attitudes in public while they may think and act differently in private. Baker (1992) echoes on the same view and says that people may give socially desired responses and their answers 'may be affected by the researcher and the perceived purpose of the research' (p.19). In spite of these limitations, Baker (1992) still sees attitude surveys as a useful means to provide an indicator of current community thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires. He also suggests that studying language attitudes is a most easily and commonly used method to measure the status, value and

importance of a language in society. Such attitudes, which can be measured with an individual, a group or a community, may 'aid understanding the social processes and is one of the key concepts of modern social psychology' (p.10).

The aim of the present study of language attitudes, therefore, is not to predict the intensity of effort that Hong Kong students are willing to expend in language learning or their related achievement in school. Instead, this study is to find out how students of the post-colonial generation perceive the status, value and importance of the three spoken varieties (i.e. Cantonese, Putonghua and English) in the new socio-political context of Hong Kong. Responses thus elicited will reflect significantly on how this group of active pragmatists (Li, 2000) interprets the post-colonial scenario and reacts accordingly to their best interests. In addition, this study is also useful in providing policy makers with important information about the direction for future language policies in Hong Kong. As Lewis (1981:262) has pointed out:

Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of the three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of disagreement.

There is however no cause to believe that there are homogenous attitudes in the population in general or among young people subject to the new policies in particular, and this study will attempt to discriminate different attitudes according to a number of variables stated in the following paragraph.

1.4.2 Different groupings of students

Among the first post-colonial secondary-school generation are different groups of youngsters with different traits, and these will probably lead to different attitudes to languages. Many scholars have discussed the significance of different factors in relation to language attitudes (e.g. Baker, 1992; Edwards, 1994; Coulmas, 1998). The most common ones are: Age (Baker, 1988; Hoare, 2000), Gender (Clark & Trafford, 1995; Lau, 1997), Socio-economic status (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Schumann, 1986), and Cultural identity which interacts with language attitudes both as

a dependent and an independent variable (Hoare, 2000; Boshier, 1997; Gardner, 1990; Oliver & Purdie, 1998). Apart from the above variables which are considered universal, the medium of instruction (MOI) factor specific to the post-colonial Hong Kong context may also be significantly related to language attitudes since students are streamed into either EMI or CMI schools, thus receiving different intensity of exposure to Chinese and English (MingPao, 20/2/2001a & b). However, not all of the above traits are applicable to this study. 'Age' will have to be eliminated from the list since all target subjects (i.e. the first post-colonial generation in secondary school) fall within the same age range (i.e. 14-16). Informants of this study will therefore be grouped according to their gender, socio-economic status, medium of instruction and cultural identity.

1.4.3 Summary

In brief, this study will explore the perceptions of the following groups of the cohort of F.3 students (i.e. the first post-colonial secondary school generation): 1) male vs. female; 2) working-class vs. intermediate class vs. middle-class backgrounds; 3) CMI vs. EMI programmes; and 4) Hongkong identity vs. Hongkong-Chinese vs. Chinese identity. The purpose of this study is to find out: 1) the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools; 2) the significant differences between different groups of students; and 3) the relationship between gender, social class, medium of instruction, cultural identity and students' attitudes towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English.

Although this study starts at a micro-level that investigates how people perceive a language in specific social contexts, and how language attitudes correlate with social attributes such as gender, medium of instruction, social class and cultural identity, it is hoped that information thus collected will ultimately help to throw light on macro issues like language shift and development of multilingualism in a society (Coulmas, 1998). As Edwards (1994:209) has said, 'in order to explore multilingualism further, we need more information from 'ordinary' people about language and the way in which it is woven into the larger social fabric'.

In search of the best research framework and methods to answer the research questions of the present study, I shall review the theories in language attitudes studies and the related empirical research conducted in Hong Kong from the 1970s to 1990s in Chapter Two. Through the review of previous studies in the area, the development of language attitudes of Hong Kong people in the last two decades will also be revealed. In Chapter Three of this thesis, the methodology chosen for this study will be described, beginning with broader issues such as research design, validity and reliability and research ethics, then to specific procedures of data collection and data analysis. In Chapter Four, the statistical results of the quantitative part of this study will be described and analyzed to provide answers to the research questions. This is then complemented by an analysis of qualitative data in Chapters Five and Six to give greater depth to the research answers. The thesis then ends with Chapter Seven where the significance of the findings, implications for education and limitations of this study will be discussed.

Chapter Two: Review and Critical Analysis of Related Literature

2.1 Theory of Language Attitude

In many discussions of attitude in social psychology, the concept of attitude is defined as a tendency to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects and such reactions may sometimes be regarded as biases (e.g. Edwards, 1994; Foddy 1993). Attitude is a latent process that is internal to a person and therefore cannot be directly measured but inferred through observable responses elicited by stimuli (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Attitude is often studied in terms of three components, namely Cognition, Affect and Behaviour. Literally, 'Cognition' refers to what one thinks or believes about an object; 'Affect' relates to one's subjective feelings and emotion to an object, and 'Behaviour' refers to what one will do according to their thinking and feelings. However, these three components of attitude do not always go in harmony (Baker, 1992; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Edwards, 1994). To illustrate the incongruence between the three components, Baker (1992:13) cited Irish and Irish education as an example: 'a person who expresses a favourable attitude to Irish language education may possess negative feelings about Irish education, and a person who likes Irish may send their children to a bilingual school'. Similarly, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) point out that although there is a long tradition of attitudinal study based largely on the division of evaluative responses into three categories, people do not always respond to attitude objects by cognitive, affective and behavioural reactions. A person may hold beliefs about some attitude objects without engaging in overt behaviours or have emotional reactions. Therefore, responses within each of the three components of attitude can be studied independently without necessarily relating to those in the other two categories. However, Edwards (1985 & 1994) warns against the confusion between belief and attitude. He argues that most responses tapped through questionnaires and interviews are beliefs. Although attitude includes beliefs, in order to explore attitude fully, one has to probe into the respondent's feelings about his/her expressed beliefs.

Applying the above model of the three components onto the related studies conducted in Hong Kong, one will find that the research scopes mostly fall within the first two categories i.e. 'Cognition' and 'Affect'. While the early studies conducted in

the 1970s and 1980s seemed to manifest a strong interest in exploring the affective feelings towards English and Cantonese through indirect measures, the focus of study shifted to direct measures of ‘Affect’ and ‘Cognition’ in the 1990s through questionnaires. In the following sections, the major empirical research on language attitudes in Hong Kong over the past decades will be reviewed both in terms of their findings and methodology, and their strengths and weaknesses will be discussed to throw light on the present study.

2.2 Review of the Empirical Studies on Language Attitudes in Hong Kong

2.2.1 Studies before the 1990s

Research on language attitudes in Hong Kong has lasted for several decades. Examples of studies, which have shown interests both in the cognitive and affective perspectives of language attitudes, are Fu (1975) and Pierson et al (1980). To elicit the respondents’ beliefs about English, Fu reported on a questionnaire study administered to 561 students in five different secondary schools. The majority of the students were affirmative about the instrumental value of English and they would like their spouses and offspring to be competent in English. Although they believed in the positive value and status of English, they expressed negative feelings in using English for intra-group communication within or outside the classroom, and when respondents were asked to describe westerners by completing a given statement: “Most English-speaking Westerners are _____”, a substantial number of them evaluated Western culture and English-speaking people negatively by using adjectives like proud, scornful, racist, cold, unfriendly and hypocritical.

Showing similar interests in ‘Cognition’ and ‘Affect’ of language attitudes, Pierson et al (1980) surveyed 466 Hong Kong secondary students’ attitudes to English and Chinese by direct and indirect methods. The direct method was to ask students to rate 23 statements in a five-point Likert Scale ranging from ‘absolutely agree’ to ‘absolutely disagree’. The indirect measure was to ask the students to rate the degree to which a number of stereotypes fit themselves, their ideal self, native speakers of

Cantonese in Hong Kong, and native speakers of English in Hong Kong. Similar to those of Fu (1975), the results suggested that the subjects clearly realised the pragmatic functions of English in Hong Kong while they demonstrated strong in-group loyalty to Chinese cultural identity. Many of the subjects claimed that they felt unpatriotic when using English. As for the indirect measure, this study found that the Chinese are usually rated high for traits related to in-group qualities like friendliness, trustworthiness, sincerity and gentleness while the English were rated high for attractiveness, affability, and clear thinking. In this study of Pierson et al (1980), subjects were chosen from eight English-medium schools and three Chinese-medium secondary schools. Although medium of instruction was used as a sampling criterion, little attention was paid to its significance in relation to language attitudes. Nevertheless, Pierson's study had significant influence in the field since it attracted later replications and it drew attention to the discussion of ethnolinguistic identity, which however, will be discussed in greater details in later sections.

Although feelings towards language stereotypes were explored both in Fu (1975) and Pierson et al (1980), responses were elicited through questionnaires. Beginning with Lyczak et al (1976), the Matched-guise Technique (MGT), which was first introduced by Lambert and his associates in Canada in the 1960s (Lambert et al, 1960), became popular in Hong Kong. Attempting to measure language attitudes in relation to ethnicity, Lyczak et al (1976) conducted the test with 210 university students. Instead of answering direct questions on questionnaires, the subjects listened to ten voices speaking in both English and Cantonese and were asked to evaluate the two spoken language varieties on 13 traits. The results showed that the Chinese language guises were rated significantly higher on traits of inter-personal relationship (i.e. kindness, trustworthiness, honesty, tactfulness, earnestness, humility, and friendliness) while the English guises were rated higher on the traits of power (i.e. attractiveness, intelligence, wealth, and competence). Subsequently, the MGT was used widely in later studies. Pierson and Bond (1982) conducted another Matched-guise study with 64 Chinese female undergraduates. Similar to the previous studies, it was found that both Chinese and Western interviewers were judged more negatively when using English than when using Chinese. However, both were perceived to be more respectable when speaking English than when speaking Chinese. Gibbons (1987)

extended the language target to a mixed-code of Cantonese and English. The MGT was conducted with 99 undergraduates of a Hong Kong university and hostility was found towards the use of mixed-code. When a speaker uses English or mixed Cantonese-English, he/she was described as aggressive and proud. When speakers use Cantonese or mixed Cantonese-English, they were judged as lacking in knowledge, good looks, and idealism as compared to those speaking English. Gibbons then summarized his findings by pointing out that English is the language of status and westernisation while Cantonese suggests humility and solidarity.

Summing up from the above, one may find two distinct characteristics of the early studies of language attitudes in Hong Kong. First, among all the studies, English was the focus of research. Although Chinese was granted the status of an official language in 1974, English was still the dominant language in the government, education and law courts during the colonial period while Cantonese played a significant role only for daily life communication and Putonghua the role of a minority language among the immigrants from Northern China. It is therefore not surprising to see Cantonese and Putonghua playing an insignificant role in the early studies of language attitudes. However, with Hong Kong entering its post-colonial era, any study will be considered inadequate without proper emphasis on the other two language varieties. Second, from the studies reviewed above, it was obvious that scholars had paid much attention to exploring the perceptions of stereotypes associated with languages, and the MGT had been used quite widely for this purpose. However, as shown in the next section, the technique seemed to lose its popularity in the 1990s.

2.2.2 Studies in the 1990s

In the 1990s, the indirect approach to language attitudes studies seemed to have lost its strength, beginning with Pennington & Yue (1993), most of the research done in the field adopted a direct approach with the use of questionnaires. Although Pierson (1994a) had tried the indirect method of content analysis, its validity was criticized and the method had little influence on later studies.

Pennington & Yue (1993) replicated the attitudinal study of Pierson, Fu & Lee (1980) towards English and Chinese and compared the findings with those of the original study. The replication was done only on the direct measure while the indirect measure was abandoned because it was considered too abstract for secondary students. A four-point Likert Scale was used instead of a five-point one to avoid the central tendency. In the study of Pennington & Yue (1993), 285 Hong Kong students from F.1 to F.6 (aged 11-18) of eight different schools were asked to answer a questionnaire that consisted of the same items as the original study. Similar to the findings of Pierson et al (1980), Pennington & Yue (1993) found that the subjects were positive about English. Most of them expressed a wish to speak fluent and accurate English. They would take English even if it were not a compulsory subject; English was seen as a symbol of high status, and they agreed that the command of English was very helpful in understanding foreigners and their culture. However, as regards ethnolinguistic identity, there was a clear difference between the two studies: while the subjects of Pierson et al (1980) agreed that using English would make them feel less Chinese and not patriotic, those of Pennington & Yue (1993) did not agree that using English would bring negative effects on their identity. Pennington & Yue therefore concluded that the old antagonism of Chinese vs. English in the early 1980s had become outdated.

In 1993, Axler, Yang and Stevens conducted another replication of Pierson et al (1980) and the report was published in 1998. In Axler et al (1998), Pennington & Yue's findings were reaffirmed. Hong Kong young people were found to perceive themselves as a pragmatic bilingual group who would not feel 'un-Chinese' when using English. English no longer carried the connotation of a colonizer, but an international language for wider communication. In this research, 250 students of English from three different schools were chosen to answer a questionnaire identical to that of Pierson et al (1980). Out of all the respondents, 150 were from middle-class families while 100 were mainly from working-class backgrounds. Although the researchers did describe the subjects in terms of social class, no analysis was done from this perspective, and the element of social class was not built into the study.

Since the studies of Pierson et al and the two replications asked mostly identical questions, little new dimension has been added to the study of language

attitudes in Hong Kong except the identification of change over time. When the paper of Pierson et al was published in 1980, Cantonese and English were the only two major languages used in Hong Kong, it therefore seems understandable why Putonghua did not catch much attention of the scholars. However, in the neo-colonial period when the two replications were done, the studies were obviously inadequate for having not included Putonghua into the construct since Hong Kong society had started to prepare for a transition from the English-speaking British to the Putonghua-speaking PRC.

Similar to the approach of Pennington & Yue (1993), Hyland (1997) administered a direct measure of language attitudes through the use of questionnaires. Nine hundred undergraduates of a Hong Kong university participated in the study not long before the political hand-over in 1997. Again, subjects were asked to respond to 25 statements adapted from Pierson, Fu & Lee's (1980) through a four-point Likert scale. Compared with the studies reviewed in the above, Hyland gave more consideration to the impacts of the political change on language attitudes, and questions about Cantonese and Putonghua were asked. In spite of this, the study still carried a strong focus on the English language. Out of the 25 statements, 19 were directly about English. Even for those in which Cantonese and Putonghua were mentioned, they were indirect questions aiming to elicit attitudes towards English, for example 'After I graduate, I believe my professional career will depend more on good Putonghua than good English.'

In Hyland's study, respondents were all university students distributed fairly between the two sexes and four academic disciplines. Hyland argued that university students were more desirable subjects than school children since they were mature and well-educated enough to show sensitivity on sophisticated issues of language, politics and ethnicity. However, subjects participated in Hyland's study were from one single university and that had biased the source of samples. In addition, university students in the colonial education system were normally high-achievers who had gained success in the English-dominant curriculum. Upon graduation, it was almost certain that they were able to gain access to high-ranking jobs that required frequent use of English. With successful English learning experience in the past and clear needs for

the language in the future, it was almost certain that Hyland's subjects would show exceptionally positive attitudes towards English. Such a positive attitude towards English therefore could hardly be seen as a finding that emerged from the research but an element prescribed into the study through a biased choice of samples. In addition, the discussion of ethnolinguistic identity in Hyland's study had focussed on the dichotomy of 'Chinese' and 'non-Chinese'. This however had little significance in the neo-colonial period as the socio-political situation in Hong Kong had undergone great changes over the previous decades. As Lau (1997) has pointed out, the focus of attention about identity over the last decade has been about the relationship between local identity and national identity, and Hongkonger and Chinese are the two major identities which the Hong Kong Chinese themselves will consider meaningful.

Seeing the over-emphasis that previous research had put on students and the English language, Evans et al (1998) extended their survey scope from students to working adults. In addition to English, Cantonese and Putonghua were also included as the focus of research. The study was conducted in 1994 with a total of 102 people from four social groups viz. students, teachers, parents and working people ranging from clerical workers to managerial professionals. Unlike other studies reviewed in the 1990s, Evans et al did not use only questionnaire as a research instrument, but also focus-group interviews with 4 representatives from each of the social groups. Although qualitative data can hardly assist in establishing patterns of language attitudes, it helps to substantiate and elaborate the quantitative output of a survey.

In brief, studies of the early 1990s showed that Hong Kong students had recognised the pragmatic value of English, and that learning and using it would not undermine their ethnolinguistic identity as Chinese. Towards the end of the colonial period, discussions of language attitudes shifted from educational institutions to working adults, and from a general dichotomy of English and Chinese to the notion of trilingualism: English, Cantonese and Putonghua. It was found in these studies that Hong Kong people generally believed that Putonghua would play a significant role in society after the change of sovereignty even though English would continue to be the most important and useful language. In addition, a direct measure of language attitudes through questionnaires seemed to have gained great popularity in the 1990s while

interviews were used only occasionally, and the Matched-guise technique, which was quite frequently employed for language attitudes studies in the 1980s, seemed to have lost its strength in the 1990s.

2.2.3 Summary of the limitations of the above studies on language attitudes

When discussing the inadequacies of some Hong Kong research on language attitudes, Giles (1998) points out that too much statistical attention has been given to the middle-class elite students at the expense of other important elements like gender, age and social class. His criticism about an over-emphasis on middle-class elite seems to be supported since Lyczak et al (1976) and Hyland (1997) chose to study only the university students while the subjects of Axler et al (1998) were either from the middle-class or high-achievers in local schools. In addition, most of the studies reviewed above seem to be concerned more about the subjects' responses as the research outcomes without paying much attention to the possible factors that contribute to the different responses such as age, socio-economic background, education level etc. In Pierson et al (1980), although subjects were intentionally chosen from both Chinese medium schools and English medium schools, no attention was paid to the issue of medium of instruction when the analysis was done. Similarly, although Axler et al (1998) did describe the subjects in terms of their social class, analysis was done again in general without much regard to the differences between the middle-class and the working-class group. Apart from these, too much emphasis had been put on the English language in the previous studies while Cantonese and Putonghua were undervalued even though they were seen to have gained much greater vitality in the past decade (Lord, 1987; Kwo, 1994; Pierson, 1994a and Pennington, 1998). As Giles (1998:428) has warned:

....there has been an imbalance of attention to English at the expense of Cantonese language attitudes, let alone Putonghua Moreover, assessing language attitudes towards English in isolation from the other languages of the community may be very different than when having two, three, or four languages in the socially comparative frame.

2.2.4 Studies after the change of sovereignty

In order to address some of the limitations mentioned in the above section, and to find out the language attitudes of students in the post-colonial era, I conducted another questionnaire study on a total of 134 senior secondary students in the year 1999 (Lai, 2001). Instead of paying an imbalanced attention to English and an overview of language attitude patterns, I attempted to examine students' language attitudes towards all of the three major language varieties in Hong Kong (i.e. Cantonese, Putonghua and English) in relation to social class. A sample of 64 middle-class elite from two prestigious schools and 70 working-class students from two low-achieving schools were invited to answer a questionnaire. Although no significant differences were found on language attitudes between the two groups, the middle-class elite was found showing more favourable attitudes towards using English while the working-class low-achievers were more positively inclined to the vernacular Cantonese.

Different from other studies, I started the research with an aim in exploring the correlation between Social class and language attitudes. However, the aim was not totally fulfilled due to two main reasons: 1) the sample size was too small and the sample unrepresentative since the subjects were chosen only from a total of four schools; 2) the significance of Social class was seriously interfered with General academic achievement as the two groups of subjects carried both of the traits with one being the middle-class elite and the other one the working-class low-achievers. As a result, this study could provide only a descriptive comparison of the two groups of subjects without being able to single out the correlation between Social class and language attitudes.

2.3 Effects of the Previous Research on the Present Study

Upon the review of the previous empirical studies on language attitudes in Hong Kong, the following inadequacies are identified: 1) there was an over-emphasis on English while Cantonese and Putonghua were under-valued; 2) the use of research instruments was biased towards the Matched-guise technique in the 1970s and 1980s, and then shifted to the use of questionnaires in the 1990s while interviews were used only occasionally in language attitudes research; 3) ethnolinguistic identities were

discussed only briefly in the previous studies through a dichotomy of ‘Chinese’ and ‘non-Chinese’, which however has become outdated in the post-colonial context; 4) most of the studies have targeted at an overall pattern of language attitudes while little attention has been paid to the contributing factors. Although my study, Lai (2001), has attempted to examine the significance of Social class on the variation of language attitudes, it was not totally successful due to biased samples and interference of General academic achievement.

Taking on the framework of the previous research, this study will continue the exploration of language attitudes in the domains of ‘Affect’ and ‘Cognition’. In order to address the above inadequacies, this research will firstly attend to a balanced focus on all of the three significant language varieties (i.e. Cantonese, Putonghua and English) used in Hong Kong. Secondly, apart from the direct measure of language attitudes through questionnaires, this study will also use the Matched-guise technique to explore the feelings of students towards different language varieties. Since the technique has seldom been used since the 1990s, it is both interesting and meaningful to find out the new stereotypes associated with the three target language varieties in the post-colonial context. More importantly, it serves as a useful means of triangulation which helps to enhance the validity of the study. Apart from these, qualitative data will also be collected through focus-group interviews that help to complement the quantitative output of the survey. Thirdly, it will explore not only the overall patterns of language attitudes of the informants, but also its relationship with gender, socio-economic status, medium of instruction and cultural identity as mentioned in the first chapter.

However, while this study starts off with an ambition to explore the relationship between language attitudes and the four target factors (i.e. Gender, MOI, Social class and Cultural identity), one has to be cautious about the interferences/interactions among them since none of the variables can be completely singled out without overlapping with the others. However, exploring four independent variables at one time will inevitably break the total sample into very small statistical cells that contain a rather small number of subjects, and that, as a result, will lower the validity of the results. Lastly, one must be aware that this study can only help to find

out the association between language attitudes and the four independent variables. As regards what causes language attitudes, one may have to resort to further in-depth studies.

2.4 Factors Related to Language Attitudes

As stated in Chapter One, this study seeks to describe the language attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary school generation in Hong Kong. However, a researcher can hardly be satisfied with a factual description of overall patterns without being tempted to tease out the relationship between different factors and language attitudes. How are Gender, Medium of Instruction (MOI), Social class and Cultural identity related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary school generation? While the answer can be quite straightforward for Gender, Social class and Cultural identity, the issue is more complicated for MOI, which however, will be discussed at the end of this section. Meanwhile, the rationales for choosing the above variables are discussed and hypotheses will then be derived for this research.

2.4.1 Gender and language attitudes

The significance of Gender has long been established in studies of language achievement, language use and language attitudes. To differentiate gender from sex, Giddens (1989) defines the former as the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females whereas the latter refers to the 'biological' differences between men and women (Cited in Wodak & Benke 1998:128). Biologists explain that girls' greater verbal ability is attributed to biological factors such as brain development and hormone system, and boys tend to be stronger in spatial ability and problem-solving skills while girls generally perform better than boys on verbal reasoning because females' brains are less 'lateralized' (Vaid and Hall, 1991; Swann, 1992: 6-8). However, gender is a more complex issue than simple biological differences. Adding new dimensions to the understanding of the relationship between gender and language, sociolinguists suggest that there are more social factors to take into consideration. As cited in many later discussions (e.g. Edwards, 1976; Hoare, 2000), Labov (1966) first suggests that females show a more favourable inclination towards the prestigious language varieties. Trudgill (1975) points out that in most societies, females have a stronger sense of insecurity, therefore they tend to be more 'status conscious' and they

understand the social meaning of language variations. Females, therefore, compared with males, are more positively inclined to use a standard variety or a higher variety. In Milroy & Milroy's words (1998: 55), females tend to 'favour prestige norms while males vernacular norms'. Hoare (2000), in her study about language attitudes and regional identity in Brittany, attributes girls' stronger French identity to their aspiration for a prestigious language.

In discussing factors affecting attitudes towards foreign language and culture, Byram et al (1991:166) affirm that 'gender is one of the variables most frequently associated with the variance in attitudinal scores.' Continuous evidence is found in recent research that further reveals the positive correlation between gender and attitudes to foreign languages, for example, Zammit (1993), through a test of 32,000 students in Australia and New Zealand, finds out that females have a significantly more positive attitudes to foreign languages than males. Wright (1999), in investigating factors influencing the attitudes of British GCSE students towards French, also found that girls are distinctly more positive to foreign languages. Findings of both of the studies in fact echo what was suggested earlier by Dale (1974), in which, boys are believed to be indifferent to learning foreign languages because they usually consider them the girls' subjects (cited in Clark & Trafford, 1995).

Since previous research has established the significance of gender in studies of language attitudes, and not much attention has been paid to this factor in previous Hong Kong studies of language attitudes, it will be meaningful to investigate the significance of gender on Hong Kong students' attitudes towards English, Cantonese and Putonghua. Based on the findings of the above research, it is therefore hypothesized that female informants of this study will also show a more positive attitude towards the foreign and prestigious language (i.e. English) while the males will incline more favourably to the vernacular variety (i.e. Cantonese). Regarding Putonghua, since Lau (1997) found that Hong Kong males reveal a stronger sense of Chinese identity than females, males are therefore expected to show a more positive attitude towards Putonghua, the Chinese national language.

2.4.2 Medium of instruction and language attitudes

As mentioned in Chapter One, secondary schools in Hong Kong are divided into two main streams viz. CMI (Chinese Medium Instruction) and EMI (English Medium Instruction) under the mandatory Mother Tongue Education Policy implemented in 1998. Under this policy, about three hundred used-to-be EMI schools before the hand-over switched to CMI while only 114 schools retained their EMI status. Since this segregation policy was introduced shortly after the hand-over, Medium of instruction (MOI) is considered a special factor of post-colonial Hong Kong that may bear significant relationships with students' language attitudes.

In my work about the tensions created by the Mother Tongue Education Policy (Lai, 1999), I argue that the policy is more a socio-political issue than an educational one. Despite the fact that the HKSAR Government has denied the political implication of the Mother Tongue Education Policy, it is dubious whether it was a pure coincidence that the policy was made compulsory only two months after the British had handed the sovereignty of Hong Kong back to China in 1997, since the socio-economic environment of Hong Kong remained basically unchanged, and parental biases, so claimed to be the main obstacle of the Mother Tongue Education Policy, persisted.

Hoffmann (1991) describes language as a tangible, immediately noticeable indicator of group identity and it may contribute to shaping and maintaining feelings of national identity and solidarity. Apart from the educational purposes that the HKSAR Government claims that the Mother tongue Education Policy is aiming at, the policy also plays a cultural and political role in erasing Hong Kong's colonial identity. The HKSAR Government may not have imposed the Chinese national identity onto its people forcibly, yet the ideology behind the compulsory Mother Tongue Education Policy as a decolonization symbol is obvious. Like Malaysia, another ex-British colony, which changed the MOI from English to Malay upon their independence (Tsui et al, 1999), Hong Kong is attempting to induce stronger national identity among Hong Kong students through the Mother Tongue Education Policy. Since language is such an important tool for nation building, my hypothesis set in this regard is that CMI students will show a stronger sense of Chinese identity than the EMI students.

In fact, there have been few studies about the significance of MOI in relation to language attitudes, yet interviews with two secondary school principals in the press did reveal some negative effects of the CMI programme on students' attitudes towards English, in which the CMI students are found resistant to English due to little exposure to the language. As observed by the principals, students fear English and do not feel interested in learning it (MingPao, 20/2, 2001a & b). Based on this observation, I therefore assume that CMI informants of this study will show a less favourable attitude towards English than the EMI students.

Baker (1992) has included 'Types of schools' as a determinant of language attitudes. He explains that students' attitudes can be affected in schools where Welsh is treasured and valued because such schools will usually contain a strong and united sense of commitment amongst teachers for the Welsh language and its culture. He said, 'Through the formal or hidden curriculum and through extra-curricula activities, a school may produce more or less favourable attitudes and change attitudes' (p.43). To infer from Baker's logic, CMI schools are more likely to foster positive attitudes towards Cantonese and Putonghua through a complete Chinese programme while EMI students will show higher favour for English since all subjects are taught in English, and both formal and informal communication in school is carried out in English. However, the significance of MOI as a factor affecting students' language attitudes is not really straightforward since the divisive nature of the government policy has inevitably complicated the issue and made it difficult for any research to single out the MOI factor without involving another variable – General academic achievement.

As pointed out in my paper, Lai (1999), English retains its hegemonic status as a language for upward and outward mobility after 1997 under the notion of 'one country, two systems'. Despite the enhanced status of Chinese after the change of sovereignty, it is considered prestigious to study in EMI schools, and children who attend English medium schools are believed to be at an advantage of acquiring proficient English which will enable them to open up a bright future (Johnson, 1998). By reducing the number of EMI schools from more than 400 to only 114, the Government further confirms the elite status of the EMI schools. As a result, all capable students with desirable language proficiency and general academic achievement will

choose to study in EMI schools while the less capable ones are channelled to the CMI schools. This phenomenon is in fact evident in this research since all EMI sample schools fall within Bands 1-2 while all CMI schools belong to Bands 3-5⁴.

Since MOI and Achievement are so closely related, it is quite impossible to attribute any differences between CMI and EMI students to the MOI factor only. Elimination of the Achievement factor is difficult as there are few low-banding EMI schools or high-banding CMI schools in reality due to the segregation effect of the policy. This study can therefore only describe the differences between the two groups (CMI & EMI), bearing in mind that both MOI and Achievement might have taken effect on students' language attitudes.

2.4.3 Social class and language attitudes

2.4.3.1 Advantaged middle-class in the English-dominant curriculum

As discussed in my paper, Lai (2001), there are many factors leading to success in second language acquisition e.g. aptitude, intelligence, learning strategies etc. (Cook, 1996; Peregoy, 2000). In addition to this, Schumann (1976) puts special emphasis on the effect of social distance and he argues that if two language groups have positive attitudes towards each other and both desire assimilation, then a good second language learning situation will exist. Applying Schumann's model into the Hong Kong context, Gibbons (1984) suggests that children of the middle-class elite schools attain better English (L2) proficiency because they are socially closer to the English-speaking group. Based on similar arguments, Siu (1988) points out that students of the lower socio-economic class in Hong Kong are less likely to excel in bilingual programmes that adopt English as the MOI for all subjects. Since 90% of the Hong Kong Secondary schools offered English programmes where English was used as a MOI, the standard of English automatically became a determining factor for entering the universities. Siu then illustrates the relationship between social class, language proficiency and achievement through a survey of the first-year students of the two prestigious universities of Hong Kong in 1986. The results showed that the education

⁴ All secondary schools in Hong Kong are divided into different bands according to students' general academic achievement upon their entrance. At the time of research, there were 5 bands altogether with Band 1 schools being the elite schools and Band 5 schools the bottom 10% of the school population. The 5 bands were collapsed into 3 in Year 2001.

level of their parents and their household income were higher than the average population. Siu's findings were in line with government statistics which showed that a total of 68% of the university students in Hong Kong were from the upper-middle and the richest quarter of the society. Although the related percentage has continued to drop since then to 61% by Year 2001, students from more affluent families still make up the majority of the university population in Hong Kong (cited in Post, 2002).

Tsang (1993:57) affirms the considerable impact that family background has on an individual's educational achievement. He said:

Family backgrounds impose considerable constraints upon educational attainment. That is, young men and women whose parents are more educated and whose fathers command higher socio-economic statuses are more likely to be able to attain a higher educational level than their contemporaries.

Lee (1998:171) reiterates the discussion about the relationship between social class, language proficiency and educational achievement. Although he hesitates to draw a causal relationship between the three elements, he summarises their relationship in the Hong Kong context as follows:

It seems that in Hong Kong, children of lower classes are still disadvantaged in their acquisition of English proficiency, in terms of their social distance from native English speakers and their attitudes towards the language. It is in this sense that they are deprived in English proficiency, and thus are in a relatively disadvantaged position in competing with their upper-middle-class counterparts on the educational path.

Apart from discussions in the Hong Kong context, Clark and Trafford (1996:49) reiterate a similar connection between socio-economic status and attitudes towards learning French (a foreign language) in their study conducted in the UK:

There is considerable divergence in attitudes towards modern languages from pupils of different social backgrounds; it appears that those pupils from lower socio-economic classes are less convinced of the value of learning a foreign language. The notion of

a family holiday to France or the potential need for a foreign language in a future career may appear somewhat implausible to them...

Going through the above discussions, one is led to believe that Hong Kong children of lower socio-economic status are more likely to hold apathetic, if not antipathetic, attitudes towards English due to social distance. As a result, their attainment in English will be limited. As the English-dominant curriculum forms barriers to their studies, they are then the group channelled to low-achieving schools. Such a social-stratification phenomenon within the school system was made even more distinct through the banding system which divides secondary schools into five bands according to students' general academic achievement, ranging from the elite schools (Band 1) to schools for the bottom students (Band 5), which however, were collapsed into three Bands starting in the academic year 2001-2002.

2.4.3.2 New opportunity for the working-class children after the change of sovereignty

As revealed in the literature reviewed above, since the middle-class Chinese elite in Hong Kong usually has more contact with English-speaking people (both native and non-native speakers) and they have higher expectations of their future studies and careers, therefore they are more ready to pursue English for its socio-economic value and identify themselves with the elite bilingual group. On the other hand, since the English-speaking world is usually remote from the lower class children, both in terms of culture, language use and social status, they may hold negative attitudes towards the English speakers, thus reducing the possibility of succeeding in English. However, similar to the factor of Cultural identity (see below), Social class holds special significance in the post-colonial scenario of Hong Kong. The rising status of Putonghua after the change of sovereignty may provide lower-class children with an alternative opportunity to succeed. With the influx of people from Mainland China, many working-class students are brought into close contact with Putonghua-speakers who newly arrived either as their neighbours or schoolmates. According to government statistics, more than 55,000 Mainland Chinese reside in the HKSAR yearly under the One-way Permit Scheme (HKSAR Government, 1999b), and the number of children

from Mainland China admitted into secondary schools has increased from 1186 in the year 1995 to 3030 in 2000 (Hong Kong Education Department, 7/2001) and new arrivals from Mainland China are mostly engaged in low-ranking jobs (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 1/1998). Although the new arrivals may not be native speakers of Putonghua, most of them are able to speak the language since it is the lingua franca of the PRC.

This social closeness to the newly arrived group from the Mainland, therefore, may help local children of lower socio-economic status to acquire the national language (i.e. Putonghua). If Putonghua, as predicted by scholars mentioned in earlier paragraphs (e.g. Pierson 1994a & 1998; Kwo, 1994), is going to become a high language of Hong Kong, children of lower socio-economic status will then have the advantage of acquiring this important asset for social mobility. This study, therefore, is launched to test the hypothesis that the middle-class students will show a positive attitude towards English while those in the lower social hierarchy will have stronger favour for Putonghua.

2.4.4 Cultural identity and language attitudes

As mentioned in Chapter One, one of the major changes in Hong Kong in the post-colonial era is the change of nationality. No matter how unchanged the social and economic systems are in Hong Kong under the principle of ‘one country, two systems’, it is an undeniable fact that Hong Kong has now merged with China to become one single country. However, the change of citizenship from British to Chinese does not necessarily induce a stronger sense of Chinese identity. Contrarily, in the series of research that Lau has pursued from 1985 to 1995, it was found that the percentage of respondents claiming strong Hong Kong identity stand at a constantly high level (Lau, 1997). Lau’s findings are further affirmed by Wong (1999) and he added that identification towards Hong Kong and China is not mutually exclusive. Although Hong Kong people have strong in-group identity, and they always place the interest of Hong Kong before China when there is a conflict, yet they pride themselves upon the history and culture of China. They value Chinese history education, cultural education and national language education, however they resist identifying with China as a political entity. Despite the convergence of the Chinese and Hong Kong identity in

the area of classical culture, scholars maintain that Hong Kong people see themselves as a very different group from other Chinese in the Mainland (Johnson, 1994; Postiglione, 1994 & Lai 1999). Lau (1997: 3) points out that the local language variety used in Hong Kong and Hong Kong's contemporary culture have helped in crystallizing the Hong Kong identity:

Since 1949, Hongkong Chinese have become secluded from the social and cultural changes in China. The dominance of vernacular Cantonese among the Hongkong Chinese and the gradual emergence of a distinctive popular culture based on that dialect played a significant role in moulding the Hongkongese identity.

One year after the change of sovereignty in 1998, more youths were found identifying themselves as Hongkongers. However, what is noteworthy is that their sense of superiority over China is seen to be decreasing despite their strong Hong Kong identity (Wong, 1999). Similar to Gender, the significance of Cultural identity as a factor associated with the development of language attitudes has long been established. Both Gardner & Lambert's (1972) model of integrative motivation and Schumman's (1986) acculturation theory suggest that a positive inclination towards the culture of a group is significant in formulating favourable attitudes towards the language of the target group. A similar point is reiterated in Le Page (1998:29) that 'individuals tend to create their linguistic systems so as to resemble those of the group they wish to be identified with, or so as to distinguish themselves from those they wish to distance themselves from.' In a study about the attitude towards the Welsh language, Lyon and Ellis (1991) found favourable attitudes towards the language in all groups of informants and the main reason for this support is related to Welsh identity. Oliver and Purdie (1998), who studied the attitudes of 58 Australian immigrant children, also found 'place of birth', and 'length of residence in the immigrated country', which constitute cultural identity, the significant factors relating to language attitudes. In Boshier's (1997) study about Hmong students in the USA, the relationship between language proficiency and cultural identity is also found close, and that an orientation towards American culture contributes to English proficiency while that to Hmong culture contributes to Hmong language proficiency. Although Boshier did not discuss language attitudes in particular, it is almost certain that a gain of proficiency in the target language will require a positive attitude towards the target language although Gardner (1985) insists that the reverse is not necessarily true. Similarly, surveys done in Hong Kong also reflect a

positive association between cultural identity and language attitudes, for example, Lau (1997) found that people who were born in Hong Kong tend to see themselves more as Hongkongers and those who identify themselves as Chinese are more willing to replace Cantonese with Putonghua as the official language of Hong Kong.

Since the relationship between cultural identity and language attitudes has been widely proved, this study will also investigate its significance on Hong Kong students' attitudes towards English, Cantonese and Putonghua in the post-colonial context. Based on the literature reviewed above, this study thus formulates the hypotheses that Chinese identity will associate with a favourable attitude towards Putonghua and Hong Kong identity to vernacular Cantonese. Apart from Cantonese and Putonghua, English, a foreign language however, has also played a role in the construction of Hong Kong identity. As argued in my earlier paper, Lai (1999), Hong Kong people are proud of their international links through their extended families, educational opportunities and commercial links in the overseas, and this sentiment embedded in the Hong Kong identity cannot be easily fulfilled without an association with English - the international language. Cantonese is therefore not the only element that constitutes the local identity. The increasing acceptance of a mix of Cantonese and English as a characteristic of the Hong Kong discourse also contributes to part of Hong Kong identity (Lai, 2001; O'Halloran, 2000). The hypothesis set regarding Hong Kong identity and language attitudes is therefore about a positive inclination not only to Cantonese but also English.

2.4.5 Hypotheses of the Study

Apart from describing the overall attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary school generation towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English, this study will aim at finding out the significant differences between groups and to test the following hypotheses:

- 1) Girls will incline more favourably to English while boys are more positive to Cantonese and Putonghua;

- 2) CMI students will be more positive to Cantonese and Putonghua while EMI students will show a favourable attitude towards English;
- 3) students of higher social economic status will be more positive to English while those of lower social economic status will be more positively inclined to Putonghua;
- 4) those who identify themselves as Chinese will show a more favourable attitude towards Putonghua while those with strong Hong Kong identity will feel more positively inclined towards Cantonese and English.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

As described in the previous chapters, the purposes of this study are three-fold:

- 1) to provide an overview of the attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary-school generation in Hong Kong towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English;
- 2) to reveal the significant differences in language attitudes between different groups of students under four target variables viz. Gender, Medium of Instruction (MOI), Social class and Cultural identity;
- 3) to find out the relationship between the above variables and language attitudes.

When translated into research questions, they are:

- 1) What are the attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua?
- 2) What are the significant differences in language attitudes between different groups of students under Gender, MOI, Social class and Cultural identity?
- 3) How are the four chosen variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools?

In order to provide rich and valid answers to these questions, careful considerations were given to the design of the research and its methodology. This chapter, therefore, is to describe what the best methods are for this study. In the first part, broader issues on research design will be discussed, which include research instruments, validity and reliability of the study and research ethics. In the second part of the chapter,

details of the research procedures regarding data collection, processing and analysis will be explained.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts the approach of survey research that elicits responses from a sample of population at one particular time. It is cross-sectional and descriptive in nature which aims at finding out the overall language attitude patterns of the first post-colonial secondary school generation. This study also explores the relationship between four chosen variables (i.e. Gender, MOI, Social class and Cultural identity) and language attitudes. Although survey research may not be adequate to establish causal relationships between the independent and dependent variables, it helps to reveal the associations or correlates among them (Mok , 2000a). In order to provide valid and reliable answers to the research questions set in the above, different instruments are used in this study, including questionnaires, a Matched-guise test and focus group interviews, which will be described in greater details in the following section.

3.2.1 Research instruments

As shown in Chapter Two, questionnaire was the most popular instrument used in the 1990s while the Matched-guise test (MGT) was used less widely in Hong Kong as regards language attitude research. Although a direct method using questionnaires can address students' 'Cognition' (i.e. what one believes in) as well as 'Affect' (i.e. How one feels) towards a language (Baker, 1988), as mentioned in Chapter One, informants will often take social pressures into account and will therefore give socially desired responses instead of the true ones. Through indirect measures (i.e. the MGT in this case), it is believed that the informants' true feelings towards the three language varieties can be better tapped. As shown in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, few Matched-guise studies of language varieties were conducted in the 1990s. As Hong Kong moves into its post-colonial era after 1997, it is both meaningful and interesting to find out the feelings associated with Cantonese, Putonghua and English among the new generation.

Both the questionnaire survey and the MGT are quantitative methods which may enable the researcher to collect a large amount of data that support generalisability. However, these methods are unable to explore the details of the subjects' perceptions behind their responses (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). In attitudinal research studies, although quantitative methods can help to depict an outline of the subjects' inclination, they can hardly address the beliefs and judgement that contribute to their responses. Hence, qualitative methods are necessary to fill the gap so that students are able to express their views and elaborate on their feelings towards a language variety. Given the complementary advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study adopted a combination of both.

Quantitative and qualitative methods are mutually complementary. Dey (1993) explains that the former deals more with numbers while the latter deals with words and meanings. As cited in Miles & Huberman (1994:41), Rossman and Wilson (1984,1991) suggest three broad reasons to combine the two types of methods:

- a) to enable confirmation or corroboration of each other via triangulation;
- b) to elaborate or develop analysis, providing richer detail; and
- c) to initiate new lines of thinking through attention to surprises or paradoxes, turning ideas around, providing fresh insight.

It was for the above advantages of a mixed approach that this study adopted a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. As pointed out in literature (e.g. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Mertens, 1998), there are many kinds of qualitative research methods, for example participant observation, case study and interview. Among these, interview seems to be the most appropriate instrument for the present study since this survey research is cross-sectional and descriptive in nature. In addition, it is the students' perceptions rather than behaviour which are under investigation. Interviews can be conducted individually or in a group. For this study, focus group interviews were used, which as described by Mertens (1998:321), is a semi-structured 'guided' discussion. Focus group interview was used for the present study mainly for three

advantages: 1) it is an efficient data collection means for it allows the researcher to meet up with several respondents at one time; 2) students will feel less intimidated in a group since they are not alone; 3) interaction among participants can help to generate more in-depth discussion on issues.

Another benefit of a mixed approach is that the quantitative and qualitative methods can help sequentially, so that results of the first method inform the second's sampling and instrumentation etc (Greene et al, 1989 cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). The same advantage materialized in the present study since interviews were planned upon the results of the questionnaire survey.

In brief, this study used a combination of questionnaires, Matched-guise test and focus group interviews as research instruments. In so doing, it helps to provide data at different levels: 1) from quantitative data through questionnaires to qualitative data through interviews; 2) from direct methods through questionnaires and interviews to indirect method through the Matched-guise test; 3) from highly-structured questionnaires to semi-structured interviews. Data thus collected from different sources through multiple methods are mutually complementary and the reliability and validity of the study can be enhanced through triangulation.

By emphasizing the advantages of the above instruments, I do not intend to claim originality of these instruments for language attitude studies. As Edwards (1985:146) has pointed out, these instruments are in fact long-established and commonly used for the study of language attitudes:

Useful reviews of the language attitude research can be found in Agheyisi and Fishman (1970), Cooper and Fishman (1974) and Giles and Powesland (1975); these writers also discuss the methods used to elicit and assess language attitudes – questionnaires, interviews, scaling techniques and various indirect approaches (of which the 'matched-guise' format is perhaps the best known and most used).

Nevertheless, few related studies in Hong Kong were conducted with a combination of all of these three instruments (refer to Chapter Two). In this regard, this study is going to be the most comprehensive investigation of language attitudes of Hong Kong people in the past decade.

3.2.2 Validity & reliability

Validity of a research refers to the trustworthiness of the study which includes two main facets namely external and internal. According to Mertens (1998), external validity is defined in terms of the generalizability of the results to a broader population, thus a high external validity depends a lot on the quality of sampling procedures and the resulted samples. There are a number of threats to external validity (Mok, 2000a), among which, inaccessibility to schools and subjects is the major concern of the present study. External validity will be weakened if any major group of students is not represented in the survey.

Internal validity refers to ‘the extent to which the researcher is confident that the research conditions controlled by the researcher are accountable for the study outcomes, and it includes measurement validity, construct validity and conclusion validity’ (Mok, 2000a:20). In other words, validity concerns whether a study is measuring what it intends to measure and the conclusion is justified in the evidence available. Validity is not an issue that concerns only particular steps, but that underpins the whole study. As Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:105) have pointed out, ‘validity has to do with instruments, techniques, data, findings and explanations’. In this study, validity is therefore carefully addressed throughout all stages, from selection of samples and research instruments to data collection, data processing and analysis; details of which will be revisited in later sections when the research procedures are described. Meanwhile, as regards choice of research instruments as discussed in the last section, this study used questionnaires, the Matched-guise test and interviews, which were well-established instruments widely used in the past decades in the field of language attitude studies. Triangulation through the use of a diversity of methods can thus help to facilitate validity checks and enhance the internal validity of the study. As Berg (1989:4) states:

Each method thus reveals a slightly different facet of the same symbolic reality.By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretic concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements. The use of multiple lines of sight is frequently called triangulation.

Denzin (1987:28) presents similar arguments regarding the ‘logic of triangulation’:

..... no single method will ever meet the requirements of interaction

theory....Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observations must be employed. This is termed triangulation.

By using a combination of research methods, data collected through different means can be used for cross-validation, and initial thoughts or hypotheses of the researcher may be confronted from different angles (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995), thus helping to strengthen the validity of the study.

Apart from validity, reliability is another important issue in survey research. As Oppenheim (1992) points out, reliability is hardly separable from validity, and Mok (2000a:20) states that 'reliability is an indirect way to ascertain measurement validity'. While it is commonly known that reliability is about the replicability and consistency of a measure, Mok accounts for the concept of reliability in terms of stability and equivalence:

Reliability refers to stability and equivalence. Stability refers to the extent to which a set of measurement responses can be replicated across time, participants or settings. Equivalence refers to the extent to which the measurement is similar by using different measurement scales.

In this study, reliability between groups is addressed through the use of standardized questionnaires and procedures for administration (see the next section). As regards interviews, a list of standard questions was prepared to guide each group discussion even though participants were encouraged to contribute freely to the interviews. In addition, equivalence was also taken care of both at the question level and the construct level. At the question level, sets of questions phrased in different wording were asked to check if students' responses were consistent. Responses thus elicited were more highly valid and reliable than those single-question ones (Oppenheim, 1992). At the construct level, a triangulation of data also helped in strengthening the reliability of a study. In the present study, data collected through the MGT were used to cross-check how much of the students' attitudes elicited through direct questionnaire would recur in

an indirect measure; and to what extent their responses collected through quantitative methods were reiterated in the interviews.

Similar to validity, there are also threats to reliability. Although the present study is a cross-sectional survey research, yet it takes a period of time before all data can be collected especially the quantitative part and the qualitative part of this study bear a sequential relationship in which the results of the former may inform the latter regarding matters like sampling and question devising (Greene et al 1989, cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). Maturation, therefore, is a potential threat to the reliability of this study especially when attitude is susceptible to changes of mood and experience (Oppenheim, 1992). For this study, caution was therefore taken to ensure that the time gap between each data collection stage would not be too long.

As mentioned earlier in this section, since the question of validity and reliability underpins the whole study, related issues will be revisited in the second part of this chapter when details of the research procedures are accounted for.

3.2.3 Research ethics

Mok (2000a) suggests some main ethical considerations which are particularly pertinent to survey research, two of which are ‘voluntary participation’, ‘anonymity and confidentiality’. Addressing similar concerns, Hitchcock & Hughes (1995:51) put forward the ethical rules for school-based research, of which, the following ones are the most relevant to this study: a) explain as clearly as possible the aims, objectives, and methods of the research to all of the parties involved; b) the research must allow subjects the right to refuse to take part in the research; and c) the researcher must demonstrate how confidentiality is to be built into the research.

In order to attain a high ethical standard, the above rules were strictly followed throughout the whole study and special caution was taken to protect the interests of the subjects. Due to the non-sensitive nature of the topic and the fact that data were collected through one-off occasions (i.e. 20’ for questionnaire & 40’ for interview), participants of this study were all very willing and cooperative in expressing their views

and thus induced no opportunities for the researcher to fall into any traps of unethical practice. In all stages, all parties were informed of the general purpose of this study and that their participation should totally be voluntary. Since the researcher was not related to the informants directly, nor could she meet with individuals one by one, no power abuse was possible to take place. Approval from teachers and school principals were sought through personal contact and formal letters. Upon requests, letters would also be sent to parents. However, since both the school authorities and the informants themselves did not think it was necessary, no parents' letters were ever required.

Anonymity and confidentiality were built into this study without much difficulty. For both the questionnaire survey and focus group interviews, no students' names were ever asked or recorded. Although students were asked to indicate their classes and class numbers on the questionnaires which might become a potential threat to anonymity, their identity was protected by their schools and class teachers. During the interviews, students' names were kept away from the researcher. With the consent of the interviewees, each of them was assigned an arbitrary number and they were referred to during the interviews and later in the transcription by these numbers.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

After the discussion of some broader research issues, in this second half of the chapter, details of the research procedures which include sampling strategies, steps for data collection, data processing and data analysis will be described. The results thus found will throw light on the attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary-school generation towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English. In the following, the research procedures will be described in details firstly for the quantitative methods and then the qualitative method.

3.3.1 The quantitative methods: questionnaire survey and the Matched-guise test

3.3.1.1 Design of the questionnaire

In this study, a questionnaire was devised to collect responses from a large sample of students of the first post-colonial secondary-school generation. This questionnaire contains items modified from the previous studies (i.e. Pennington et al, 1993; Hyland, 1997 and Lai, 2001) and some original questions devised by the researcher. Following the framework set forth for this study (refer to Chapter Two), questions were devised under the two main domains of language attitudes namely 'Affect' and 'Cognition'. Question items of the same domain, however, did not appear in a cluster; contrarily, they were sequenced randomly on the questionnaire since the informants' responses would possibly be affected if the purpose of the researcher was identified (Baker, 1992).

The questionnaire was originally written in English by the researcher and translated into Chinese (the informants' first language) with the help of a Chinese language expert and only the Chinese version was presented to the informants. To facilitate easy completion of the questionnaire for junior secondary students, only closed questions were asked. Wording and question formats used in the questionnaire were maintained as simple and consistent as possible so as to avoid misunderstanding and confusion (a bilingual version of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix 1). As at this initial stage of questionnaire design, measures were taken to ensure the validity of the study ranging from the sequencing of question items to wording and formatting.

The questionnaire is composed of 3 main parts:

a) **Part I: Personal Information**

The first part of the questionnaire is to collect background information about the informants such as sex, place of birth, parents' occupations and education level, and their perceptions of their own cultural identity. While information required for grouping under Gender (male vs. female); Medium of instruction (CMI vs. EMI) and Cultural identity (Hongkonger vs. Chinese vs. Hongkong-Chinese) is comparatively more straightforward and can be easily obtained from this part, Social class has to be defined through parents' occupations and education levels.

Social class divisions

Sociologists subscribing to the Weberian tradition often believe that differences in income, education, and occupation tend to produce differences in lifestyle, attitudes, and orientations, and therefore the three indicators should be used as the main criteria for the demarcation of social classes (Leung, 1996). Well-known examples of language research that adopt the Weberian concepts of social class in the study of language differences are Bernstein (1974), Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1975).

In Hong Kong, there is no authoritative definition of social classes. As pointed out in my paper, Lai (2001), the division of social classes in Hong Kong is perceived differently in different discussions, which however base mainly on occupations e.g. Yu and Bain (1985); Tsang (1992) and Wong & Lui (1992 & 2000). In accounting for the significance of occupation in the demarcation of social classes, Wong & Lui (1992:23) explain:

Our class map is constructed on the assumption that occupation, in its ability to distribute benefits and generate identity, is ...pivotal axis in our society. Occupation, with its twin components of market situation and work situation, thus forms the cornerstone of our structural

understanding of Hong Kong society.

Deriving from Goldthorpe's (1987) class schema⁵, Wong and Lui (1992) thus divide social classes of Hong Kong into seven categories according to the occupation of 1000 male heads-of-household:

Class 1: Higher-grade professionals, administrators, and officials; managers in large establishments; large proprietors.

Class 2: Lower-grade professionals, administrators, and officials; higher-grade technicians; managers in small establishments; supervisors of non-manual employees.

Class 3: Routine non-manual employees in administration and commerce (e.g. clerks); personal service workers often in menial work.

Class 4: Petite bourgeoisie; small proprietors or artisans with or without employees.

Class 5: Technicians, supervisors of manual workers.

Class 6: Skilled manual workers.

Class 7: Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers.

Wong and Lui (1992) then combined Classes 1 & 2 as the Service class; Classes 3-5 as the Intermediate class and Classes 6 & 7 as the Working class. Given the comprehensiveness of this model, this study adopted similar divisions as regards occupation. Yet, the term 'Middle class' was used instead of 'Service class' to represent Classes 1 & 2 so that the hierarchy between the three social classes could be better reflected.

⁵ In UK, Goldthorpe and other scholars derived a 7-category class schema based on the Classification of Occupations 1970 released by the Office of Population Census and Survey.

In demarcating families into different social classes, Wong & Lui (1992) count only the occupation of the male heads-of-household. Although this was a common practice in some classical studies of socio-economic status e.g. Duncan (1961) and Nam & Powers (1983) as cited in Tsang (1992:35), such a biased approach has become outdated in the 21st century as modern women play an increasingly important socio-economic role in society. According to government statistics in 2001, the overall employment rate of Hong Kong women has increased by 2.1% from 1991 to 2001 whereas that of males has decreased by 6.8% (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 7/2002). In addition, the percentage share of female students enrolled in tertiary educational institutions has increased from 32.9% in 1986 to 54.6% in 2000 (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 8/2001a). Despite the fact that the total employment rate of males in the year 1999 still exceeds that of women by 20.3%, there is no reason to ignore the influence that women may bring to their children's lifestyle, attitudes, and social orientations. The enhanced status of women both in society and family is described by Leung (1995:26):

Increased participation in the labour force presumably enhances financial independence and contribution to the family income, and hence women's status within the family. The dropping fertility rate should reduce their burden in childcare, and their higher educational attainment ought to lift them to higher occupational positions and incomes. One would therefore expect a greater parity between women and men in modern industrial Hong Kong.

To address the latest development in women's status and economical influence, this study therefore demarcated informants into different social classes according to the higher occupation of either of their parents regardless of gender.

As mentioned above, apart from occupation, sociologists subscribed to

Weberian convention have also identified education level as an indicator of social classes. Although Wong & Lui (1992) did not use education level as a class division criterion, it is important for this study to include a second criterion for the demarcation of social classes. Since the respondents are youngsters who may not know their parents' occupations and ranking accurately, adopting a second criterion about parents' education levels will therefore help to triangulate the information provided by the students. While describing the traits of their incumbents in different social classes, Wong & Lui (1992) found that a large majority of Class 1 respondents attained upper-secondary and above qualifications, and an average of 72% of the Working class has a level up to lower secondary only. With reference to Wong and Lui's findings, the division of social classes for this study is therefore as follows:

Middle class: The higher occupation of either father or mother falls within Classes 1 & 2 of Wong & Lui's model. The parent reported to be of this occupation category has senior secondary education level or above.

Intermediate class: The higher occupation of either father or mother belongs to Classes 3 - 5 of Wong & Lui's model. The parent claimed to be of this occupation category has senior secondary education level or below.

Working class: The higher occupation of either father or mother belongs to Classes 6 & 7. The parent of this occupation category has an education level of junior secondary or below.

Incongruent and unclassifiable groups: Cases were considered incongruent if information provided on parents' occupation and education level was contradictory e.g. low occupation but high education; or high occupation but low education level. Cases were unclassifiable if the informants did not provide information about their parents' jobs or education level, or in some cases, parents were retired, deceased or unemployed.

Both incongruent and unclassifiable groups were excluded in the analysis of the significance of socio-economic status in relation to language attitudes.

As regards income, since this is a sensitive question to ask in Hong Kong, and most children would not have knowledge about their parents' salary, this indicator was abandoned for this study due to impracticability. Yet, the income of different social classes can be deduced through occupations. As revealed in the government statistics, the median monthly earning of those undertaking occupations classified as Service class in Wong & Lui's model (e.g. managers, administrators, professionals) is HK\$30,000 (i.e. £2500); that of the Intermediate class (e.g. clerks, services workers, shop sales etc.) is HK\$9,200 (i.e. £ 766); and the Working class (e.g. machine operators and elementary occupations) is earning an average monthly salary of about HK\$7,000 (i.e. £583) (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 8/2001b). From this, one can therefore expect the parents of the informants of this study to fall within a similar income range.

Using the data collected in Part I, informants could then be grouped under each of the four independent variables. However, while the total number of valid cases for Gender, Medium of instruction and Cultural identity was quite consistent, that of Social class was smaller since the incongruent and unclassifiable cases were excluded from the analysis.

b) Parts II and III: Attitudes towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English

Parts II and III of the questionnaire consisted of statements and questions devised to elicit informants' attitudes towards Cantonese, Putonghua and English in the domains of 'Affect' and 'Cognition'.

Part II of the questionnaire is composed of 18 statements devised in a 4-point Likert scale ranges from 4=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree. As Pennington et al (1993) suggest, the middle point was omitted in order to avoid the central tendency. In Part III, 6 questions were asked and the informants were asked to rate English, Cantonese and Putonghua on a four-point scale. Similar to the Likert Scale of Part II, the options were sequenced in a descending order from the highly positive ones on the left to the most negative ones on the right, for example:

3.4 How much do you like the following language varieties?

Language variety	Very much	Quite	Not much	Not at all
English				
Cantonese				
Putonghua				

Although no numbers were shown in the boxes, informants' responses could easily be coded into 4,3,2,1 with 4 representing the most positive option and 1 the most negative one. Such conversion of Part III into a numerical scale would make it easily compatible to the Likert scale statements in Part II so that data collected in these two parts could be processed together. Despite the fact that similar 'Rating' technique has not been previously used in related empirical studies in Hong Kong, it is not uncommon for survey research (Oppenheim, 1992:235).

c) Part IV: The Matched-guise test

The Matched-guise test appeared in the same questionnaire as Part IV. As pointed out in other literature (e.g. Gibbons, 1987; Giles & Coupland, 1991 and Edwards, 1994), MGT was first introduced by Lambert and his associates in Canada in the 1960s in order to elicit true reactions to the language variety. According to Giles and

Coupland (1991:22), 'the procedure (of the MGT) is built on the assumption that speech style can trigger certain social categorizations which will lead to a set of group-related trait inferences'.

Following the procedures of the MGT, subjects of this study were asked to evaluate a tape-recorded speaker's traits after hearing her read the same passage in Cantonese, Putonghua and English. The fact that the speaker was, for all guises, the same person was not revealed to the students. On the contrary, subjects were led to believe that the speakers were different persons as they were referred to as Speakers 1, 2 and 3. In order to avoid the interference of the passage content, special care has been taken to choose a topic which is least value-laden (refer to appendix 2). Paralinguistic features such as pitch, rhythm, tone and quality of voice were uniform during recording, therefore any difference in the ratings of the traits of the guises would result from attitudes to the language variety.

Subjects of this study were asked to listen to three voices speaking in Cantonese, Putonghua and English and judge them on 14 different traits. To align with Parts II and III, rating for Part IV was based also a 4-point scale with 4 = very much, 3 = moderate, 2 = not quite and 1 = not at all. The 14 traits were derived from the research reviewed in Chapter Two e.g. Lyczak et al (1976) and Pierson and Bond (1982). Positive traits were: friendly, intelligent, educated, competent, hard-working, sincere, approachable, considerate, reliable, responsible, wealthy and modern; negative traits were: arrogant and aggressive. Although there were more positive traits than negative ones on the list, it was believed that this would not lead to biased research results since the respondents could easily express their negative feelings towards any language

varieties by rating low on a positive trait. As other parts, means and standard deviations of responses on each trait were calculated and compared on the Matched-guise study.

3.3.1.2 Sampling approach

Since this study was conducted shortly before and after the year break in schools, the target population was at the end of F.3 and the beginning of their F.4 studies. The questionnaire survey was administered before the qualitative methods were used because the latter had to be informed by the former (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is due to this time gap, the target informants were in F.3 when the questionnaire was answered and they were at the beginning of their F.4 studies when they were approached again for the qualitative interviews.

In order to attain a high external validity, sampling strategies are important. The more representative the informants are, the higher the generalizability is the research result (Mertens, 1998). Since there are 421 secondary schools in Hong Kong and each school has an average of four F.3 classes of 40 students, sampling is a must to make the survey of language attitudes valid and at the same time manageable within the researcher's means. A total of 49 secondary-school teachers from 35 schools were available for administering the questionnaire survey. All of them were participants of the same in-service teacher-training course and were in the same tutorial group.

In order to ensure a sufficient supply of subjects for each of the four independent variables (Gender, MOI, Cultural identity & Social class), the researcher needed prior information about the background of the target sample subjects. With help from the teachers, a rough number of boys and girls, CMI and EMI students was

estimated. However, as it was not possible to gain prior access to the target subjects' personal information on cultural identity and socio-economic status, it was difficult to ensure a sufficient number of sample subjects on these categories before the questionnaire was administered. Attempts had been made to approach the very prestigious schools which would better secure a sufficient supply of students of higher socio-economic status, yet access was denied due to principals' disapproval. Since stratified sampling was not feasible, the researcher then resorted to all of the 35 secondary schools available. It was hoped that a large sample size would increase the possibility of obtaining a sufficient number of informants in all categories. In the end, all teachers were invited to administer the questionnaire with forty of their F.3 students. They were given a week's time to decline the researcher's invitation if they were unwilling to participate in the study. To further enhance external validity, teachers were requested to administer the questionnaire to a total of 40 students with 10 students randomly selected from 4 different F.3 classes so as to include a wider representation of students within the same school. However, due to time-tabling constraints, teachers expressed difficulties in finding extra-curricular time to gather students of different classes. To compromise, teachers and the researcher agreed that the questionnaire could be administered to 40 students of the same class if the original arrangement was not possible. The class was selected through convenience sampling; teachers would administer the questionnaire to any F.3 class that they would teach during the one-week return to their own schools for Practicum. If they did not have F.3 lessons, they could borrow time from their colleagues.

3.3.1.3 Data collection procedures and ethics

49 teachers were invited to administer the questionnaire to their F.3 students upon their one-week return to their own schools in the middle of their full-time refresher training course. Teachers were given a week to decline the researcher's request, and on the due day, four teachers had expressed their unwillingness to participate in the study. As only one representative teacher from each school was needed, altogether 31 teachers from 31 different schools were left viable for this study.

In order to reduce discrepancies between different questionnaire administrators, standard instructions for students were recorded on audio-cassette tapes in Cantonese (students' mother tongue) which were played to the subjects while they were answering the questionnaire. Subjects were informed right at the beginning of the recorded instructions about the academic purpose of this study and it was totally voluntary for them to participate.

Before the materials were given to the teachers, the questionnaire was piloted two times, firstly with a group of undergraduates in the researcher's institute, secondly with the participating teachers. With their suggestions, minor changes were made on the wording of the questions and the layout of the options.

The Matched-guise passage was recorded in the same cassette tape. Students would listen to the three guises in Cantonese, Putonghua and English and rate the voices on 14 traits after they had completed Parts I to III. Although the questionnaire consisted of a total of 48 questions, items were carefully designed in a simple way to facilitate easy and quick responses, and it required only about 15 minutes for the respondents to finish circling and ticking the answers.

A few days before the teachers' Practicum week started, a package of materials was given to them which contained the researcher's letter to their school

principals seeking approval to conduct the questionnaire study; 40 copies of the revised questionnaire; one cassette tape of instructions; one instruction sheet for teachers which described the procedures of the administration. The principal's letter and the instruction sheet are attached in Appendices 3a & b.

Ethical issues were considered during the data collection process. All parties involved (i.e. principals, teachers and students) were informed very clearly that participation in this study was voluntary. School names and students' names were kept anonymous. Although the participating teachers were related to the researcher as students, they were mature in-service teachers who were under no threat to administer the questionnaire. In fact, several non-embarrassing ways had been suggested to them to decline the researcher's request e.g. sending e-mail messages, dropping short notes into the researcher's letter box etc. As regards the students, although class and class numbers were collected, their credentials were protected by the school since no outside parties could have access to the class lists. Further consent was sought from the schools and students for the interviews when students had to unavoidably reveal their identity.

3.3.1.4 Data processing

Due to principals' disapproval, three teachers withdrew in the last stage. Successful return of questionnaires was obtained from 28 schools out of 31. The sample schools spread evenly over the Hong Kong territory; 13 of them are EMI schools and 15 are CMI schools; 22 of the schools are co-educational, 6 are single-sex, of which, 3 are girls' and 3 are boys' schools. Taking the first step to ensure measurement validity, initial data cleaning was carried out by the researcher, and 72 problem questionnaires were

excluded because credibility of the responses was in doubt⁶. In the end, a total of 1048 questionnaires were used for data analysis. In order to ensure that a sufficient number of responses in each of the main independent variables were available for statistical analysis, the number of cases in all different groupings was immediately computed and the results are shown as follows:

Independent Variable	Groups	Number of Valid Cases
Gender	Boys	555
	Girls	490
Medium of Instruction	CMI	563
	EMI	482
Social class	Middle class	182
	Intermediate class	319
	Working class	322
Cultural identity	Hongkonger	609
	Chinese	134
	Hong Kong-Chinese	201

3.3.1.5 Data analysis

Help from experts in statistics and quantitative research was solicited for the analysis of the questionnaire data. With their advice, SPSS programmes were used for the necessary statistical analysis. Means, standard deviations, *t*-test significance values were calculated to reveal the respondents' inclinations and the significant differences between groups. However, before the questionnaire data were analysed, data

⁶ Some students gave unusual answers e.g. claiming that they were born in the street; and some students circle the same number for all questions in the questionnaire.

reduction procedures had to be carried out first to enable efficient analysis and comparison at a later stage.

a) The questionnaire study : Parts II & III

i. Factor analysis

While the informants' tendency on each question item could be easily found through calculation of mean values for each question item, analysis would become complicated and lengthy if every item in the questionnaire was accounted for. To facilitate a focused discussion, factor analysis was used to reduce data into different matrices.

Exploratory Factor analysis (EFA) was first conducted to suggest a pattern of factors. However, as pointed out in literature (e.g. Gorsuch, 1983; Comrey & Lee, 1992), matrices produced through EFA did not always make sense and therefore could only be used as a reference while meaningful factors had to be devised according to the purpose of this study. Since the aim of this study is to find out the informants' affective and cognitive inclinations towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua, question items were grouped into 6 factors accordingly and the construct validity of which was put to test of Confirmatory Factor Analysis through LISREL. The six factors devised were:

Factor 1: Affective orientation towards Cantonese

- As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak fluent Cantonese.
- I like Cantonese because it is my mother tongue.
- Cantonese is the language which best represents Hong Kong.
- Cantonese should be replaced by Putonghua since it is only a dialect with little value.
- I like Cantonese.
- I like Cantonese speakers.

Factor 2: Affective orientation towards English

- As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak English.
- I would like to speak fluent English because it makes me feel modern and westernized.
- A person who speaks fluent English is usually educated, intelligent and well-off.
- A person who speaks fluent English is usually arrogant, snobbish and show-off.
- I like English.
- I like English speakers.

Factor 3: Affective orientation towards Putonghua

- As a Chinese, I should be able to speak fluent Putonghua.
- Putonghua should be more widely used in Hong Kong so that Hong Kong will quickly assimilate with the PRC.
- A person who speaks fluent Putonghua is usually educated, intelligent and well-off.
- I'm afraid that if I speak fluent Putonghua , others will think I am a new immigrant from the Mainland.
- I like Putonghua.
- I like Putonghua speakers.

Factor 4: Evaluation of the instrumental value and status of Cantonese

- Cantonese is a very important language for my further studies
- Cantonese is the most helpful language for my career development in the 21st century.
- Cantonese is highly regarded in Hong Kong society.
- I wish to master a high proficiency of Cantonese.

Factor 5: Evaluation of the instrumental value and status of English

- English is less important in Hong Kong after the change of sovereignty.
- The use of English is one of the most crucial factors which has contributed to the success of Hong Kong's prosperity and development today.
- To increase the competitiveness of Hong Kong, the English standard of Hong Kong people must be enhanced.
- English is very important for my further studies.
- English is the most helpful language for my career development in the 21st century.
- English is highly regarded in Hong Kong.
- I wish to master a high proficiency of English.

Factor 6: Evaluation of the instrumental value and status of Putonghua

- If Putonghua is widely used in Hong Kong, Hong Kong will become more prosperous.
- Putonghua is NOT an important language in Hong Kong.
- The importance and status of Putonghua will soon be higher than that of English in Hong Kong.
- Putonghua is a very important language for my further studies.
- Putonghua is the most helpful language for my career development in the 21st century.
- Putonghua is highly regarded in Hong Kong society.
- I wish to master a high proficiency of Putonghua.

Result of the goodness-of-fit test was then used to inform the researcher as to how well the fixed parameters (the six factors in this case) have specified the model

(Stapleton, 2001). Although the result matched only moderately well with the optimal values of the goodness-of-fit indices, composition of the above factors was supported with RMSEA = 0.09, GFI=0.91 and NFI=0.90⁷. To further ensure the internal reliability of the factors, Cronbach's reliability test was used; any alpha values (α) greater than 0.7 will indicate a high internal reliability within the factor (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987).

After the factors were confirmed, composite mean scores were calculated for each factor, and thereafter, analysis and comparison could be carried out more efficiently in terms of the six factors. However, in order to align the negatively-worded statements (e.g. A person who speaks fluent English is usually arrogant, snobbish and show-off) with the positive ones within the same factor, scores on the negatively-worded statements were reversed before the composite means were calculated. Otherwise the small mean values showing disagreement to these statements would wrongly undermine the overall positive contribution to the factor while in fact they manifested the same positive tendency.

ii. Comparison between groups

After the composite mean scores were computed for each factor, comparisons were conducted between groups through Independent-Sample *t*-test (for groups of two) and One-way ANOVA (for groups of three). Following the statistical convention, any differences between groups were considered significant if $p < 0.05$. However, since the sample size has an influence on statistical significance: that if the

⁷ The optimal value for RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) is 0 – 0.05; GFI (Goodness-of-fit Index) and NFI (Normed Fit Index) are 0.9 – 1 (Comrey & Lee, 1992; Mok, 2000b).

sample size is large, statistical significance at 0.05 level will be easily produced even with a small difference in the mean values (Mertens, 1998). In order to ensure validity on the findings, effect sizes were calculated to reveal how large the differences really were given the present sample size of 1048. Any effect size values smaller than 0.2 will indicate a very small and insignificant difference between groups; that of 0.5 will mean a moderate difference and that larger than 0.8 will mean a large difference (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987).

iii. Interaction among independent variables

Although the significance of each independent variable could be found in relation to language attitudes, the interaction among them had to be considered since language attitudes may not vary with only one single independent variable but a combination of them. For example, a male student may also belong to the EMI, Middle-class group who identifies himself as a Hongkonger; and in this case, it is difficult to tell if these traits have not had combined significance on his language attitudes. In order to look for an interaction between the four target independent variables, a two-way ANOVA test was then carried out. Since analysis conducted simultaneously with four independent variables would inevitably result in very small cell frequencies, therefore, the test was carried out with all possible combinations of two among the four independent variables viz. Sex * Social class; Sex*Medium of instruction; Sex*Cultural identity; Social class*Medium of instruction; Social class*Cultural identity; Medium of instruction*Cultural identity. Although this method may not be able to reveal the combined significance of three or four independent variables, it is a better compromise for higher validity.

b) Data analysis of the Matched-guise study

Analysis of the Matched-guise study was comparatively simpler. Since the whole study was about rating different voices on 14 traits, no factor analysis was needed to assist in testing the validity of the construct. To facilitate efficient analysis and comparison, a gross mean score was calculated on all traits. Similarly, to align with the positive traits, the ratings on the negative traits were reversed. Paired-sample *t*-test was then used to find out the significant differences between the mean scores of each informant on Cantonese, Putonghua and English. Results of this indirect measure through MGT would be compared to those elicited from the direct measure in Parts II and III. Similarly, effect size was calculated to reveal how large the differences were. With reference to previous studies (e.g. Lyczak et al, 1976; Pierson et al, 1980), the 14 traits were further divided into four categories namely Solidarity, Competence, Personal Charisma and Aggressiveness. In so doing, the research could be better informed of the details of students' feelings towards each language stereotype. The same statistical procedures were carried out and students' responses were compared through means, paired-samples *t*-test significance and effect size values.

3.3.2 The qualitative method: focus group interviews

As cited in Miles & Huberman (1994), Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) suggest that a mixed research approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods, has a sequential advantage, that the results of the first method provide a framework for the second. This characteristic of a mixed approach also marks the present study in that the questionnaire analysis informs the interviews in two main aspects: 1) who to interview, and 2) what to ask. Details of the focus group interview,

which include sampling procedures and data collection strategies will be described in the following sections.

3.3.2.1 Sampling strategies

As mentioned earlier (see Section 3.2.1.2), the informants were promoted from F.3 to F.4 when they were approached again for the qualitative research. Based on the statistical results of the questionnaire survey, representative subjects were selected to attend focus group interviews. Since all of the four independent variables that this study has set out to examine (i.e. Gender, MOI, Social class & Cultural identity) were found statistically related to the variation of language attitudes to a certain extent (see the next chapter), the composition of each interview group should require a balanced representation of all categories. Two separate groups for Social class and Cultural identity were formed in each participating school; each group should then consist of 6 students with 2 representing each Social class and Cultural identity group respectively. To address representation for Gender, the 2 students in each category should consist of one boy and one girl. These two groups of interviewees were then formed in 2 EMI and 2 CMI schools through convenience sampling to solicit an equal representation also for the factor of MOI. In brief, there were altogether 8 interview groups from four schools, and in each school, one group was formed on the traits of social class and the other for cultural identity. Within each group, there should be three boys and three girls. However, in reality, due to dropouts of students, the number of interviewees this study had was not as neat as what was originally planned (see Chapter Six).

Help of teachers was solicited through personal contact, and formal approval was sought from school principals through letters. Consent of students was also important and it was made known to them that participation was voluntary, and in this case, some students did express explicit objection and some fulfill the same purpose by dropping out without prior notice.

3.3.2.2 Data collection and analysis

Results of the questionnaire survey informed the interview not only of 'who to interview', but also 'what to discuss'. With reference to the survey results, the interviews were conducted with a focus around the significant features of students' language attitudes as revealed in the statistical analysis. The main aim of the quantitative

methods was to find out students' attitudes towards the three target language varieties, and that of the interviews was to understand what contributed to their attitudes. While questionnaire survey is best used for identifying the significant patterns of attitudes, interviews are best in exploring the beliefs and judgement behind the informants' responses. As Firestone (1987) suggests, quantitative studies 'persuade' the reader through objective procedures and generalizable results whereas qualitative research persuades through rich depiction and elaboration of thoughts, thereby giving meanings to the abstract numbers generated through quantitative methods.

During the interviews, both direct and indirect questions were asked to elicit students' responses, and data thus collected through different means could be used for cross-validation. The questions set for discussion were used as a guide only (see Appendix 4), and interviewees were allowed to initiate topics which they felt concerned. To ensure high reliability of the interviews, all group interviews were conducted by the same researcher. With consent of the interviewees, the discussions were audio-taped and transcribed for later analysis.

All discussions were conducted in Cantonese (students' mother tongue) and were transcribed and translated into English by the researcher. As mentioned in literature (e.g. Shaw, 1999), the best way to ensure validity of interview data is to let the interviewees read the transcription themselves, however, this did not seem to be feasible for this study since there were altogether 40 interview participants and all of them had a junior secondary standard of English only that would not enable them to understand or comment constructively on the English translation. Instead, an advanced user of both Cantonese and English was invited to comment on the accuracy of the translation by listening to the tapes and reading samples of the transcription.

In the next chapters, results of the questionnaire survey, the Matched-guise test and focus group interviews will be described and discussed.

Chapter Four: Statistical Findings

4.1 Profiles of the Informants

As described in the previous chapters, there are three main research questions for this study: 1) What are the attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua? 2) What are the significant differences in language attitudes between different groups of students under Gender, Medium of Instruction (MOI), Social class and Cultural identity? 3) How are the four chosen variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools?

In this chapter, findings gathered through the quantitative methods will be described to help answer the above research questions. Before that, it is important to gain some knowledge of the informants' personal profiles.

4.1.1 Composition of groups

A total of 1048 F.3 students (aged 14-16) from 28 secondary schools have contributed to the result of the survey. When tallied under the four independent variables that this study has set out to investigate, the composition of each group is as follows:

Table 1: Number of informants in groups

Independent Variable	Groups	No. of valid cases	Percentage
Gender	Boys	555	53%
	Girls	490	47%

Medium of Instruction	CMI	563	53.8%
	EMI	482	46.2%
Social class	Middle class	182	18.4%
	Intermediate class	319	30.5%
	Working class	322	30.8%
	Incongruent and missing cases	212	20.2%
Cultural identity	Hongkonger	609	58.3%
	Chinese	134	12.8%
	Hong Kong-Chinese	201	19.2%
	Others & Missing cases	102	9.7%

As shown in the table above, there are more boys than girls among the informants, yet the difference between the two groups is not great since the large majority of the participating schools are co-educational and the number of single-sex schools is equal. As expected, there are more CMI students than EMI students since English-medium schools were comparatively less accessible due to principals' objection. As for Social class, the smallest group is the Middle class. This is however a natural result since all of the participating schools are the main-stream local ones which are usually not among the top choices of the better-off middle-class families who would prefer to send their children either to the very prestigious local schools or the international schools (SCMP, 9/5/01). Regarding Cultural identity, the biggest group is Hongkongers and the smallest group is Chinese, this result aligns with that found in many other related studies (e.g. Lau, 1997; Wong & Shum, 1996 & 1998 ; MingPao, 1/10/01).

4.1.2 Birthplace and home language

Apart from the four independent variables, background information about the informants' birthplace and home language is also important as it may bear some relationship to the formation of groups and their language attitudes as a result, which however, will be accounted for later in the findings. As shown in Table 2 below, the large majority of the informants were born in Hong Kong (81.1%) and only 16.8% of them were born in Mainland China. 92.3% of the informants speak Cantonese as their home language, only a very small minority speak other Chinese dialects (3%) and an even smaller minority speak Putonghua (1.2%) or English at home (0.5%). For the large majority, including many who were born in Mainland China, both English and Putonghua are languages learnt in schools but not used as a home language (95.3%).

Table 2: Birthplace and home language of the informants

Birthplace	HK	China	Others		Missing cases
Frequency	850	176	11		11
Percentage	81.1%	16.8%	1%		1%
Homelanguage	Cantonese	Putonghua	English	Other Chin. dialects	Missing cases
Frequency	967	13	5	31	5
Percentage	92.3%	1.2%	0.5%	3%	0.5%

As illustrated in Table 3 below, even for the 176 informants who were born in China, only 2.3% of them speak Putonghua at home while more than 12.5% of them speak other Chinese dialects, and the large majority of them (78.4%) speak also Cantonese as their home language.

Table 3: Home languages of the informants born in Mainland China

Homelanguage	Cantonese	Putonghua	Other Chinese dialects	Missing cases
Frequency	138	4	22	12
Percentage	78.4%	2.3%	12.5%	6.8%

In brief, all of the informants are ethnic Chinese in mainstream secondary schools. The large majority of them were born in Hong Kong and Cantonese is the home language for the vast majority of the informants while English and Putonghua are learnt in school as second languages.

4.2 Findings of the Questionnaire Survey

In this section, findings will be described to answer the three research questions. As explained in Chapter Three (see Section 3.3.1.5), findings will be described mostly in terms of six factors in order to facilitate precise description and efficient comparison. The six factors are devised in the two domains of language attitudes that this study has set out to explore (i.e. Affect & Cognition) and the construct validity of which has been supported through Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Factors 1, 2 and 3 relate to the informants' affective inclinations towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua; Factors 4,5 and 6 are about their cognitive perceptions of the three target language varieties. In the following sections, the mean for each statement and the composite mean of each factor will be shown to reveal the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools. Any mean values (\bar{X}) greater than 2.5 will indicate a positive inclination and those less will indicate a negative tendency. As for standard deviation (SD), a higher score will suggest greater divergence in perceptions among the informants while a lower SD (s) score will mean a higher degree of unanimity. As an indicator of internal reliability, alpha values (α) are shown

for each factor in brackets. As shown in the next section, the internal reliability of Factors 1, 3, 4 & 6 is high with alpha values being very close to or greater than 0.7⁸. Regarding Factors 2 & 5, they are moderately reliable with $\alpha \geq 0.6$, and none of them are low in reliability (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987).

4.2.1 An Overview of language attitudes

There are 1048 valid cases for statistical analysis in this study, and as mentioned in the previous section, this study explores language attitudes in the domains of 'Affect' and 'Cognition'. In this section, significant findings in each of the above domains will be highlighted to help answer the first research question: What are the attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary school towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua? In the following, findings will be described according to the statistical results which include means, standard deviations, paired-samples *t*-test significance values and effect size indices.

4.2.1.1 Affective orientation towards the three language varieties

In this section, students' attitudes towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua in the affective domain will be explored through the statistical results of the questionnaire survey. Before attitudes towards the three target language varieties are compared, it is necessary to examine the content of each factor in order to understand the meaning of 'affective orientation' in this study.

⁸ Any alpha values greater than 0.7 indicate a high internal reliability.

a) Affective orientation towards Cantonese

As revealed in the high composite mean value for Factor 1 below, students seemed to show a highly positive inclination towards Cantonese, the vernacular language, in the affective aspects. Despite the disparity in views as shown by the standard deviation values, the informants seemed to agree quite strongly that they liked Cantonese because it is their mother tongue and a characteristic of Hong Kong. As a Hongkonger, the respondents agreed that they should be able to speak fluent Cantonese. Although Cantonese is only a Chinese dialect with little international status, they tended to disagree rather strongly to replace it with Putonghua.

Factor 1: Affective orientation towards Cantonese ($\alpha=0.67$)

No.	Statements	Mean	SD
2.1	As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak fluent Cantonese.	3.18	.71
2.2	I like Cantonese because it is my mother tongue.	3.31	.72
2.5	Cantonese is the language which best represents Hong Kong.	3.45	.64
2.13	Cantonese should be replaced by Putonghua since it is only a dialect with little value.	1.57	.69
3.1b	I like Cantonese.	3.63	.53
3.6b	I like Cantonese speakers.	3.59	.54
Composite mean of Factor 1		3.43	.40

b) Affective orientation towards English

As shown in Factor 2, means are clearly greater than 2.5 for all positively worded statements and less than 2.5 for the negatively worded one. This revealed the generally positive attitude of the respondents towards English, the international and ex-colonizer's language. Although the standard deviation values have warned about the

disparity in the respondents' attitudes, on the whole, they tended to agree rather strongly that they liked English and its speakers, and the language is a symbol of being modern and westernized. Though less strongly, students tended to agree that English suggests positive attributes like education, intelligence and wealth. Unlike the findings of Pierson et al (1980), respondents of this study did not find speaking English unpatriotic. Contrarily, English has become part of Hong Kong identity and the informants agreed that they should be able to speak English as a Hongkonger. Apart from this, negative associations which used to adhere with English (e.g. Fu, 1975; Pierson & Bond, 1982) seemed to grow outdated since the respondents tended to disagree quite strongly that people who speak fluent English are usually arrogant, snobbish and show-off. This may be due to the effects of the compulsory education policy implemented since 1978, under which, all children have to attend schools for nine years. As a result, more people learn English and are able to speak the language (Hong Kong Education Commission, 1995). Since English does not belong exclusively to the Westerners or the Chinese middlemen as it did in the 1960s, the old sentiment against the language as a marker of the colonizer has also become outdated.

Factor 2: Affective orientation towards English ($\alpha=0.62$)

No.	Statements	Mean	SD
2.6	As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak English.	2.90	.75
2.7	I would like to speak fluent English because it makes me feel modern and westernized.	3.11	.81
2.8	A person who speaks fluent English is usually educated, intelligent and well-off.	2.71	.90
2.10	A person who speaks fluent English is usually arrogant, snobbish and show-off.	1.88	.70
3.1a	I like English.	3.18	.70
3.6a	I like English speakers.	3.31	.63
Composite mean of Factor 2		3.05	.45

c) **Affective orientation towards Putonghua**

As shown by the means in the table below, the affective orientation of the respondents towards Putonghua was a little negatively skewed. In fact, means of all statements within Factor 3 revealed a negative tendency towards the language except for statement 3.6c. Respondents of this study tended to deny Putonghua as a marker of Chinese identity, many of them did not feel obliged to speak fluent Putonghua because of their Chinese ethnicity. They also tended to disagree to using Putonghua as a means to quicken assimilation between the PRC and Hong Kong. Nevertheless, respondents seemed to be quite positive about Putonghua speakers and they tended to disagree that speaking Putonghua would bring them negative images of the Mainlanders. Although they did not seem to show resistance to Putonghua speakers, they showed little affection for the language since it does not suggest education, intelligence or wealth. However, while the mean values are used as important indicators of the respondents' attitudinal inclinations, one must be cautioned about the diversity in views as shown by the standard deviation values since it is unrealistic to expect unanimous attitudes among a sample size of 1048. Such a disparity of opinions will be further investigated in the focus group interviews when individual respondents are given the chance to elaborate on their personal beliefs and feelings in details.

Factor 3: Affective orientation towards Putonghua ($\alpha=0.75$)

No.	Statements	Mean	SD
2.3	As a Chinese, I should be able to speak fluent Putonghua.	2.46	.83
2.4	P should be more widely used in Hong Kong so that Hong Kong will quickly assimilate with the PRC.	2.32	.87
2.9	A person who speaks fluent Putonghua is usually educated, intelligent and well-off.	2.14	.70
2.11	I'm afraid that if I speak fluent Putonghua , others will think I am a new immigrant from the Mainland.	2.19	.83

3.1c	I like Putonghua.	2.40	.89
3.6c	I like Putonghua speakers.	2.69	.84
Composite mean of Factor 3		2.47	.55

d) Comparison of the three language varieties in affective orientation

As shown in the composite means of the three factors, the informants tended to show positive affective orientation to both Cantonese and English, yet their attitude to Putonghua was slightly negative in this regard. Among them, the most positive affective inclination was found towards vernacular Cantonese and its speakers ($\bar{X}=3.43$); the second strongest affective inclination was shown towards English and its speakers ($\bar{X}=3.05$) while that for Putonghua tended to be negative with a mean value of only 2.47, indicating that the informants had the least affection towards the national language of China and its speakers. Such a difference in affective feelings towards the three target varieties was proved highly significant through paired-samples *t*-test with $p<0.005$ and large effect size values greater than 0.8 (see Appendix 5a). As regards variation in attitudes, the respondents seemed to show the most divided attitudes towards Putonghua while their perceptions and feelings for Cantonese was the closest. Diversity in this regard was revealed clearly through the SD values shown for each statement and factor.

While it seems totally understandable why students like Cantonese most since it is their mother tongue, it is quite surprising to find students express greater affection towards English than Putonghua since the former is a foreign language while the latter is the national language of China. In fact, similar attitudes were also expressed in the interviews, which however will be discussed in greater details in the next chapter. Another issue yet to be further explored in later chapters is the respondents' perception of 'Hongkongers' and 'Chinese' (see Chapter Six). Until then, one is cautioned against the

ambiguity of three question items in the three affective factors: viz. 2.1 As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak fluent Cantonese; 2.3 As a Chinese, I should be able to speak fluent Putonghua; and 2.6 As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak English. In these statements, the meaning of ‘Hongkongers’ and ‘Chinese’ was open for the respondents’ interpretation, which might then be understood in terms of citizenship, ethnicity or cultural identity. However, as shown in the discussion of Chapter Six, these elements are inter-related and cannot be easily separable.

Table 4: Means of the six factors

Factors	Mean	SD
1: Affective orientation towards Cantonese and its speakers (CanAff)	3.43	.40
2: Affective orientation towards English and its speakers (EngAff)	3.05	.45
3: Affective orientation towards Putonghua and its speakers (PthAff)	2.47	.55
4: Evaluation of the Instrumental value and status of Cantonese (CanIn)	3.19	.48
5: Evaluation of the Instrumental value and status of English (EngIn)	3.51	.34
6: Evaluation of the Instrumental value and status of Putonghua (PthIn)	2.66	.58

4.2.1.2 Cognitive perceptions of the three language varieties

After affective orientation, students’ attitudes towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua will be examined from the cognitive perspective in this section. Similarly to the previous section, the content of the three related factors in this domain will be accounted for before students’ overall attitudes are compared. In this domain, some common questions were asked across the three language varieties: a) How important are the languages for your further studies; b) How helpful are the language varieties for your

career development in the 21st century; c) How highly regarded do you think the language varieties are in Hong Kong; d) How much do you wish to master the language varieties? Apart from these, some specific questions were asked in each factor. Despite the existence of divided opinions, the general attitudes of the respondents can be interpreted as follows:

a) Evaluation of the instrumental value and status of Cantonese

As revealed from the statistical results in Factor 4, the respondents tended to agree rather clearly that Cantonese is a highly regarded language in Hong Kong. It is useful both for their future studies and career development and they seemed to wish quite strongly to master a high proficiency of the variety.

Factor 4: Instrumental value and status of Cantonese ($\alpha = 0.69$)

No.	Statements	Mean	SD
3.2b	Cantonese is a very important language for my further studies	2.99	.71
3.3b	Cantonese is the most helpful language for my career development in the 21 st century.	3.04	.71
3.4b	Cantonese is highly regarded in Hong Kong society.	3.08	.67
3.5b	I wish to master a high proficiency of Cantonese.	3.67	.59
Composite mean of Factor 4		3.19	.48

b) Evaluation of the instrumental value and status of English

The high mean scores revealed in this factor seemed to show students' high perceptions of English for its instrumental values and status. As shown in the statistical results below, the respondents agreed that English is a very highly regarded language in Hong Kong, and it is a very important language for their future studies and career development. Apart from this, students' perceptions in this regard seemed to be quite

unanimous as revealed by small SD values not greater than 0.4.

Though less strongly, students also showed a clear tendency in agreeing that English is a key to social prosperity; if Hong Kong has to increase its competitiveness, the English standard of Hong Kong people must be enhanced. Although many scholars predicted that the status of English would decline after the change of sovereignty, respondents of this study tended to disagree with it. For all these reasons, students wished quite strongly to master a high proficiency of English.

Factor 5: Instrumental value and status of English ($\alpha = 0.6$)

No.	Statements	Mean	SD
2.12	English is less important in Hong Kong after the change of sovereignty.	1.99	.84
2.14	Using English widely is a reason for Hong Kong's prosperity.	3.03	.74
2.15	To increase the competitiveness of Hong Kong, the English standard of Hong Kong people must be enhanced.	3.35	.71
3.2a	English is very important for my further studies.	3.88	.40
3.3a	English is the most helpful language for my career development in the 21 st century.	3.88	.39
3.4a	English is highly regarded in HK.	3.85	.40
3.5a	I wish to master a high proficiency of English.	3.58	.64
Composite mean of Factor 5		3.51	.34

c) Evaluation of the instrumental value and status of Putonghua

Although the composite mean of Factor 6 is marginal ($\bar{X} = 2.66$), it is positively skewed suggesting students' positive perceptions of Putonghua in the cognitive aspects. However, clear indicators seem to be missing in many statements as the mean values are mostly marginal being very close to the central point (i.e. 2.5). This

is perhaps understandable since Putonghua is new to the sociolinguistic scene of Hong Kong, and its role as a second language, which was introduced only after the change of sovereignty, is still developing. Nevertheless, respondents' attitude seemed positive as regards the four common statements shared across the three factors in this domain. As shown in Table 6 below, students tended to agree quite strongly that Putonghua is a very important language for their career development. Such a response is perhaps unsurprising since it is commonly believed that more job opportunities will be available in the PRC after its joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. What is more, being able to obtain a job in the PRC becomes even more important for Hong Kong people as a result of the economic downturn and the shrinking manpower demand since 1997. Though much less strongly, students tended also to agree that Putonghua is a highly regarded language in Hong Kong that is important for their further studies, and they wished to master a high proficiency of it. Although students tended to agree that Putonghua is an important language, its status is incomparable to that of English. In fact, the correlation between Putonghua and social prosperity turns out to be far weaker than that of English since the mean value of Statement 2.16 (i.e. If Putonghua is used widely in Hong Kong, Hong Kong will become more prosperous) is only marginal ($\bar{X}=2.51$) whereas that of a comparable statement for English (i.e. The use of English is one of the most crucial factors which has contributed to the success of Hong Kong's prosperity and development today) is 3.03. Apart from this, the comparatively larger SD values found in all the Putonghua-related factors also revealed greater disagreement among the respondents in their attitude towards Putonghua as compared to Cantonese and English. This again reflects the immature development of Putonghua in the sociolinguistic scene of Hong Kong. Perceptions amongst respondents were more divided when roles and functions of the language were not yet established.

Factor 6: Instrumental value and status of Putonghua ($\alpha=0.83$)

No.	Statements	Mean	SD
2.16	If Putonghua is widely used in Hong Kong, Hong Kong will become more prosperous.	2.51	.82
2.17	Putonghua is NOT an important language in Hong Kong.	2.45	.79
2.18	The importance and status of Putonghua will soon be higher than that of English in Hong Kong.	2.03	.71
3.2c	Putonghua is a very important language for my further studies.	2.74	.90
3.3c	Putonghua is the most helpful language for my career development in the 21 st century.	3.16	.91
3.4c	Putonghua is highly regarded in Hong Kong society.	2.69	.84
3.5c	I wish to master a high proficiency of Putonghua.	2.93	.86
Composite mean of Factor 6		2.66	.58

d) Comparison of the three language varieties in cognitive perspectives

In the domain of 'Cognition', as shown in Factors 3-6, the informants' evaluation of the instrumental values and status of all of the three language varieties tended to be positive. English was perceived as the language of the highest instrumental value and status ($\bar{X}=3.51$); Cantonese the second ($\bar{X}=3.19$) while Putonghua the last among the three language varieties ($\bar{X}=2.66$). Similarly to the 'affective orientation', the informants' perceptions of the three target varieties in the 'cognition' domain were significantly different in statistics with $p<0.005$ and large effect size values greater than 0.8 (see Appendix 5b). As regards standard deviation, the lowest value ($s=0.34$) was found with English, showing a high level of unanimity in the perceptions of the informants; Cantonese had the second lowest ($s=0.48$) while that of Putonghua was again the highest ($s=0.58$), indicating the highest level of disagreement among the respondents.

Such a high evaluation of English for its instrumental value is unsurprising since it is widely believed in Hong Kong that English is the most important language for both upward and outward mobility (So, 1992). As revealed in the results of this survey, the hegemonic position of English does not seem to have changed in the post-colonial era. However, the fact that students have ranked Putonghua lower than Cantonese as regards instrumental values and status is quite unexpected since it is commonly believed that Putonghua has gained much greater importance in Hong Kong society after the change of sovereignty (e.g. Bauer, 2000; Boyle, 2000) and its instrumental value has also increased tremendously as a result of the economic boom in the PRC (see also Section 1.2.3). Details of students' perceptions and thoughts expressed through interviews will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.2.1.3 Summary

As shown in Table 4, attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools are obviously positive towards Cantonese and English on the whole. In the affective domain, they revealed the most positive inclination towards Cantonese, the vernacular language variety, whereas their rating on English was the highest for its instrumental values. As for Putonghua, the overall attitude of the students was marginal. Although the informants tended to rate the instrumental values and status of Putonghua positively, their affective tendency towards the language was slightly negative. The mean values on all factors related to Putonghua were lower than those of Cantonese and English, and it was ranked the lowest both in the domains of 'Affect' and 'Cognition'. All these differences found in the informants' attitudes towards the three target language varieties were proved statistically and educationally significant.

4.2.2 Significant differences between groups of students

Informants of this study were divided into different groups under four main independent variables viz. Gender, Medium of instruction, Social class and Cultural identity. In this section, findings will be described to address the second research question: What are the significant differences in language attitudes between different groups of students? In addition, this section will also examine if related hypotheses set in Chapter Two (see Section 2.4.5) are supported. The different groups are: 1) boys and girls; 2) Chinese medium students and English medium students; 3) students of the middle class, intermediate class and working class, and 4) Hongkongers, Chinese and Hong Kong-Chinese. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each grouping, independent-sample *t*-test was used to find out the significant differences between groups for Gender and Medium of instruction where only two groups were compared. Following the statistical convention, differences were considered significant if $p \leq 0.05$. As for Social class and Cultural identity which involved more than two groups, One-way ANOVA test was used. In addition to this, effect size values were also calculated to indicate how large the differences were given the present sample size of over 1000. Any difference with $\hat{\Delta} \leq 0.2$ is small; that around 0.5 is medium and that greater than 0.8 is large (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987).

4.2.2.1 Gender

There are altogether 1048 valid cases under Gender, of which, 555 are boys and 493 are girls. Aligned with what was depicted in the overview (refer to Section 4.2.1), both boys and girls showed the strongest affective inclination towards Cantonese (their mother tongue) while they rated English the highest for its instrumental values and status in Hong Kong. Among the three target language varieties, Putonghua was rated last by

the two groups both for affective orientation and cognitive perceptions. Of the two domains of language attitude, statistically significant differences at 0.05 level were found between boys and girls in all factors within the ‘Affect’ and ‘Cognition’ domain. However, as indicated by the effect size values ≤ 0.5 , all of these differences were actually quite small. The comparatively greatest difference was found only in Factor 2: ‘Affective inclination towards English’ with $\hat{\Delta}=0.4$. Despite this, both boys and girls demonstrated a consistent tendency across the two domains. For both affective inclination and cognitive perceptions, boys tended to show consistently more positive attitude towards vernacular Cantonese than girls while girls’ attitudes towards English and Putonghua in both domains were generally more positive than the boys. Such a contrastive pattern between the sexes was illustrated in Table 5 below by the arrows.

Table 5: Language Attitudes of Boys and Girls

Sex	Boys			Girls			Sig.	Effect Size
	Mean	Standard deviation	Number of cases	Mean	Standard deviation	Number of cases		
1. CanAff	↑ 3.46	.41	555	↓ 3.4	.38	493	.03	.13
2. EngAff	↓ 2.97	.47	555	↑ 3.14	.40	493	.00	.40*
3. PthAff	↓ 2.43	.56	555	↑ 2.51	.53	493	.02	.14
4. CanIn	↑ 3.23	.49	555	↓ 3.16	.47	493	.02	.15
5. EngIn	↓ 3.46	.40	555	↑ 3.56	.26	493	.00	.30
6. PthIn	↓ 2.59	.62	555	↑ 2.74	.53	493	.00	.26

↑ : group with the highest mean; ↓: group with the lowest mean

* The greatest difference found between groups.

In nearly all factors, both boys and girls showed positive attitudes towards the three target language varieties. However, as revealed by a mean value less than 2.5 (see Factor 3 in Table 5), negative inclination was detected with the boys regarding their

affective inclination towards Putonghua ($\bar{X}=2.43$). Although the mean value of the same factor for girls was slightly above the central point ($\bar{X}=2.51$), it was a marginal figure which could not serve as a strong indicator for the girls' affective attitude towards Putonghua. Nevertheless, as revealed by the SD values, the attitude of both gender groups diverged the most on Putonghua.

The hypotheses set out in Chapter 2 were: *girls will incline more favourably to English while boys will be more positive to Cantonese and Putonghua*. Although all differences between the two sexes described above were actually rather small given the present sample size, the hypotheses about boys' positive inclination towards vernacular Cantonese and girls' positive attitude towards English seemed to be supported in this study. However, as regards Putonghua, the hypothesis was unsupported since boys' attitude was found not more positive than the girls'.

4.2.2.2 Medium of instruction

There are a total of 1048 valid cases under Medium of instruction; 564 of them are Chinese Medium (CMI) students and 484 of them are English Medium (EMI) students. Among the 176 informants who were born in China, 126 of them were studying in CMI schools while only 50 of them were in EMI schools. As shown in Table 6 below, both CMI and EMI students showed inclinations aligned with those found in the overview: both groups favoured Cantonese most but Putonghua least; and they rated English the highest but Putonghua least for their instrumental values. Yet, when compared, the attitudes of both the CMI and EMI groups were found significantly different in all factors except Factor 3 with $p < 0.05$. However, as revealed from the small effect size values less than 0.5, the seemingly significant differences in most of the

factors were in fact quite small given the present sample size. In spite of this, the following patterns are worthy of some attention:

Table 6: Language Attitudes of EMI and CMI students

Medium Instruction	EMI			CMI			t-test Sig.	Effect Size
	Mean	Standard deviation	Number of cases	Mean	Standard deviation	Number of cases	p	$\hat{\Delta}$
1. CanAff	↑ 3.47	.38	484	↓ 3.40	.42	564	.01	.15
2. EngAff	↑ 3.17	.39	484	↓ 2.95	.46	564	.00	.52*
3. PthAff	↑ 2.48	.54	484	↓ 2.46	.57	564	.33	.05
4. CanIn	↓ 3.13	.49	484	↑ 3.25	.47	564	.00	.25
5. EngIn	↑ 3.58	.28	484	↓ 3.44	.37	564	.00	.43
6. PthIn	↑ 2.70	.55	484	↓ 2.62	.61	564	.03	.14

↑ : group with the highest mean; ↓: group with the lowest mean

* The greatest difference found between groups.

a) EMI students more affectively inclined to all language varieties

In the domain of ‘Affect’, EMI students have shown consistently stronger affective orientation than the CMI group towards all of the three target language varieties. Although more of the informants from CMI schools were born in Mainland China, they did not seem to show stronger affection for Putonghua. This is perhaps understandable since only 2 of them out of a total of 126 were speaking Putonghua as their home language while the majority of them spoke also Cantonese.

b) CMI students perceive higher instrumental value in vernacular Cantonese

In the domain of ‘Cognition’, although both groups have evaluated English the most highly and Putonghua the least, in comparison, the CMI group tended to be more

positive than the EMI group when the instrumental value and status of vernacular Cantonese (Factor 4) was evaluated. As for the other two non-native varieties, the inclination of the CMI students were less positive than that of the EMI group.

In brief, EMI students are more positively inclined than the CMI group in their affective orientation towards all of the three language varieties and their perception of the instrumental value and status of English and Putonghua was higher than that of the CMI group. Whereas, the CMI group was found more positive than the EMI only with regard to the instrumental value and status of Cantonese. As mentioned in Section 2.4.2, Medium of instruction and Achievement are very closely related. Due to the segregation effect of the Mother Tongue Education Policy, students with higher academic achievements are channelled to EMI schools while those who achieve relatively lower are streamed to CMI schools. Since students in EMI schools are usually successful learners in the education system, it is unsurprising to find them more positively inclined to all languages learnt and used in schools. For the same reason, they would value English and Putonghua more than the CMI students as a linguistic asset since they may have stronger ambitions for the future. Apart from this, as there are more mainland-born (N=126) children in CMI schools and a quarter of them (25.4%) do not speak Cantonese as their home language, this may be another reason that explains the relatively weaker affective inclination of the CMI group towards Cantonese.

Among all the differences, the greatest one was found on Factor 2, and this suggests that EMI students have much stronger affective orientation towards English than the CMI group. This result is however unsurprising since EMI students are exposed to English every day in school and have prided themselves upon being able to use the prestigious language for studies. Difference between the two groups in this regard will be

discussed in greater details in Chapter Six. Similar to Gender, the attitudes of the two MOI groups diverged the most widely on Putonghua.

The hypotheses set out in Chapter Two regarding Medium of instruction and language attitudes were: *CMI students will be more positive to Cantonese and Putonghua while EMI students will show a stronger and more favourable attitude towards English.* While the present findings do match with the second hypothesis, the first one about CMI students having more positive attitudes towards Cantonese and Putonghua was true only in the sense that CMI students have evaluated the instrumental value and status of Cantonese more highly than the EMI group. Different from what was hypothesized, CMI students did not show a significantly more positive attitude towards Putonghua. Reasons that contribute to the discrepancy between the present findings and the hypotheses will be further explored in the focus group interviews.

4.2.2.3 Social class

There are altogether 836 valid cases for the analysis under Social class, of which, 193 are students of Middle class; 320 belong to the Intermediate class and 323 the Working class. The spread of mainland-born students among the three social classes is: 9 are Middle class; 40 are Intermediate and 84 are in the Working class group. As explained in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3.1.1a), the number of analyzable cases is less for Social class because the incongruent and unclassifiable cases were excluded from the analysis. Similarly to Gender and Medium of instruction, the three social classes have demonstrated an attitude consistent with the overview viz. all groups tended to like Cantonese most and evaluate English the most highly for instrumental value and status. Hence, the main findings in regard to social classes are as follows:

a) Negative inclination of middle and intermediate classes towards Putonghua

Although responses of the informants in all domains are largely positive, negative inclinations of the Middle and Intermediate class were noted in Factor 3 (Affective orientation towards Putonghua). As revealed by the low mean values, the affective orientation of the Middle class ($\bar{X}=2.44$) and Intermediate class ($\bar{X}=2.45$) towards Putonghua were found negatively skewed, showing some resistance to the new ruler's language.

b) Contrastive attitudes between the middle class and working class

As illustrated by the arrows in Table 7 below, a consistent pattern was found among the three social classes across all factors. When results of the three groups were compared and rank-ordered, the Middle class and the Working class groups were always in extreme positions while the Intermediate class was in the middle. Although the contrast between the Middle class and Working class is not always statistically significant, such a consistent pattern is important in indicating a valid correlation between Social class and language attitudes. As shown in Table 7, the Middle class showed consistently more positive attitudes towards Cantonese and English than the Working class in both domains. On the other hand, the Working class seemed to reveal the strongest affection for Putonghua among the three social groups whereas the Middle class was the one among the three who tended to like the language least. As regards instrumental value and status of the three target varieties, the Middle class was again the one among the three groups who inclined to rate Cantonese and English the most highly while Putonghua the lowest. On the contrary, among the three groups of respondents, the Working class was the one who evaluated Putonghua the most positively for its

instrumental value and status.

Although unanimity of opinion within big groups is impossible, we can conclude by drawing up two trends: 1) the higher the students' social class was, the more positive their attitudes tended to be towards Cantonese and English; 2) the lower the students' social class was, the more positive their attitudes were inclined towards Putonghua.

Table 7: Language attitudes of different social classes

Medium Instruction	of Middle			Intermediate			Working		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Number of cases	Mean	Std. Deviation	Number of cases	Mean	Std. Deviation	Number of cases
1. CanAff	↑ 3.46	.42	193	3.45	.39	320	↓ 3.39	.39	323
2. EngAff	↑ 3.24	.38	193	3.08	.41	320	↓ 2.96	.47	323
3. PthAff	↓ 2.44	.58	193	2.45	.51	320	↑ 2.53	.56	323
4. CanIn	↑ 3.25	.49	193	3.17	.48	320	↓ 3.16	.47	323
5. EngIn	↑ 3.59	.26	193	3.56	.30	320	↓ 3.46	.36	323
6. PthIn	↓ 2.63	.62	193	2.67	.56	320	↑ 2.68	.57	323

↑ : group with the highest mean; ↓: group with the lowest mean

c) Significant differences found in English-related factors

Despite the consistent pattern described above, statistically significant differences were found between the social classes only in factors related to the English language, they are Factor 2 'Affective orientation towards English' and Factor 5: 'Evaluation of the instrumental value and status of English'. With reference to Table 8, the Middle class was found to be the group who showed the strongest affection towards English and their evaluation of its instrumental value and status was also the highest among the three groups. However, as indicated by the small effect size values, the difference regarding students' perceptions of the instrumental values and status of English was in fact quite small given the present sample size of 836 students. Only a medium difference with $\hat{\Delta} = 0.61$ was found between the Middle-class and

Working-class group in Factor 2: Affective orientation towards English.

In brief, the Middle-class group has shown significantly stronger affective orientation towards English than the Working class. In addition, a consistent pattern was observed showing signs of a valid relationship between social classes and language attitudes viz. the higher the students' social class is, the more positive their attitudes tended to be towards Cantonese and English; and the lower one's social class is, the more positively inclined one is toward Putonghua.

Table 8: Significant differences between social classes

Factor Number	Dependent Variable	Compared Classes		Sig.	Effect Size
		CLASS	CLASS	p	$\hat{\Delta}$
2	EngAff	Middle	Intermediate	.00	.37
		Middle	Working	.00	.61*
		Intermediate	Working	.00	.26
5	Engin	Middle	Intermediate	1.0	.04
		Middle	Working	.00	.37
		Intermediate	Working	.00	.34

* The greatest difference found between groups

The hypotheses we set out regarding Social class and language attitudes in Chapter Two were as follows: *Students of higher social economic status would be more positive to English while those of lower social economic status would be more inclined to Putonghua.* Hence, the hypotheses seemed to be supported by the present findings, in which, students of higher social economic status were found more positively inclined to English while those of lower social economic status were more positively oriented towards Putonghua. In addition, students of higher social economic status were also showing a more positive attitude towards vernacular Cantonese. One possible reason for this is related to the composition of the groups. For the Middle-class group, the large

majority of them were born in Hong Kong and identify themselves as Hongkongers, and since Cantonese and English were considered markers of a Hongkonger (refer to Factors 1 & 2), it is natural to find more positive attitudes of the Middle-class group towards these two language varieties. Similarly, since the Working-class group consists of a higher proportion of mainland-born students who identified themselves as Chinese, it seems understandable to find their attitudes more positive towards Putonghua (see Appendix 6). Despite this, the positive attitude of the Working class towards Putonghua was not as significant as expected (see Section 2.4.3.2), which however, would require further investigation through the focus-group interviews.

4.2.2.4 Cultural identity

There are 946 valid cases for the analysis under Cultural identity, of which, the large majority of them (N=611) have claimed themselves as Hongkongers; 134 identified themselves as Chinese, and 201 have claimed a double identity as Hongkong-Chinese. For the 176 informants who were born in mainland China, 26 identified themselves also as Hongkongers, 67 maintained their Chinese identity while 52 of them claimed a double-identity of both.

As found in the other three independent variables, the attitudes of the three identity groups were found aligned with the overview in the domains of ‘Affect’ and ‘Cognition’.

a) Negative attitude of Hongkongers towards Putonghua

As indicated in Table 9, the Hongkongers tended to show negative affective inclination towards Putonghua ($\bar{X} = 2.36$). Yet, their perceptions of the instrumental value and status of Putonghua was positive though its mean score was only slightly

greater than the central value ($\bar{X}=2.57$). This shows that Hongkongers, in fact the large majority of the informants, did not seem to favour Putonghua much and Putonghua was valued only for its instrumental use and rising status in society largely for career development as shown in Factor 6. Similarly, the Hongkong-Chinese also showed marginal affective orientation towards Putonghua which was however negatively-skewed ($\bar{X}=2.48$).

Table 9: Language attitudes of different cultural identities

Cultural Identity	Hongkongers			Chinese			Hongkong-Chinese		
	Compos-ite Mean	Std. Devia-tion	Number of cases	Compos-ite Mean	Std. Devia-tion	Number of cases	Compos-ite Mean	Std. Devia-tion	Number of cases
1. CanAff	↑ 3.49	.38	611	↓ 3.27	.40	134	3.41	.37	201
2. EngAff	↑ 3.13	.43	611	↓ 2.90	.46	134	3.01	.44	201
3. PthAff	↓ 2.36	.54	611	↑ 2.85	.48	134	2.48	.55	201
4. CanIn	↑ 3.22	.47	611	↓ 3.13	.51	134	3.20	.47	201
5. EngIn	↑ 3.56	.29	611	↓ 3.43	.38	134	3.53	.32	201
6. PthIn	↓ 2.57	.57	611	↑ 2.98	.45	134	2.80	.54	201

↑ : group with the highest mean; ↓: group with the lowest mean

b) Contrastive attitudes between Hongkongers and Chinese

Similar to the consistent pattern found with Social class, Hongkongers and Chinese showed similar contrastive positions in all factors whereas Hongkong-Chinese was always the middle group which showed moderately positive attitude towards all target language varieties (see Table 9). In the domain of 'Affect', Hongkongers was the group among the three which showed the most positive affective inclination towards Cantonese and English while they tended to feel negative about Putonghua. Yet, the position of the Chinese group in related factors was just the opposite. As for the domain of 'Cognition', Hongkongers was the group who evaluated Cantonese and English the most highly and Putonghua the least for its instrumental value and status. Again, the position of the Chinese group was opposite. In other words, they were the group among

the three who tended to rate the instrumental values and status of English the least highly while that of Putonghua the most highly. Similarly to what was mentioned in the previous sections, the relatively more positive attitudes of the Chinese group towards Putonghua may be due to the fact that more than half (50.4%) of this group were born in Mainland China.

In brief, the consistent pattern found among the three groups seemed to support a correlation between Cultural identity and language attitudes. Hong Kong identity seemed to be positively correlated to the attitudes towards Cantonese and English whereas it played a negative role in relation to Putonghua. Similarly, the stronger one's Chinese identity was, the more positive one's attitude would be towards Putonghua. However, I must emphasize that such a conclusion was drawn only through comparisons of the three groups within each individual factor. When results were examined across factors, the three cultural groups manifested the same pattern as the overview, that all of them were affectively more inclined to vernacular Cantonese while they rated English the most highly for its instrumental value and status. Putonghua was rated the least by all groups among the three target varieties in all domains.

c) Significant differences in language attitudes among the three identities

As shown in Table 10 below, statistically significant differences with $p \leq 0.05$ were found in all factors except Factor 4: Evaluation of the instrumental values and status of Cantonese. However, given the present sample size, only one medium difference with $\hat{\Delta} > 0.5$ was found among the Hongkongers and Chinese as regards the affective orientation towards Cantonese and English. In addition, rather large differences

with effect size values being very close to 0.8 were found with the two Putonghua-related factors in both the affective and cognitive domain.

Hence, the result of comparison among the three groups seemed to be pointing to the same conclusion described in the above section: the stronger one's Hong Kong identity was, the more affectively and cognitively inclined one would be to Cantonese and English. On the contrary, the stronger one's Chinese identity was, the more positively inclined one was towards Putonghua both in affective and instrumental terms. This, however, matched perfectly well with the hypotheses set out in Chapter Two regarding Cultural identity and language attitudes: *Those who identify themselves as Chinese would show a more favourable attitude towards Putonghua while those with strong Hong Kong identity would feel more inclined towards Cantonese and English.*

Table 10: Significant differences among identity groups

Factor Number	Dependent Variable	Contrasting identity groups		Sig.	Effect Size
		1	2	p	$\hat{\Delta}$
1	CanAff	Hongkongers	Chinese	.00	.53
		Chinese	HK-Chinese	.00	.39
2	EngAff	Hongkongers	Chinese	.00	.53
		Hongkongers	HK-Chinese	.01	.25
		Chinese	HK-Chinese	.04	.26
3	PthAff	Hongkongers	Chinese	.00	.76
		Hongkongers	HK-Chinese	.00	.41
		Chinese	HK-Chinese	.00	.40
5	EngIn	Hongkongers	Chinese	.00	.35
		Chinese	HK-Chinese	.03	.22
6	PthIn	Hongkongers	Chinese	.00	.76
		Hongkongers	HK-Chinese	.00	.42
		Chinese	HK-Chinese	.01	.36

Medium differences between groups are printed in bold

4.2.2.5 Summary of the significant differences between groups

This section is to provide a summary of the significant differences found in the comparison of different groupings. In so doing, this provides a quick answer to Research Question 2: What are the significant differences in language attitudes between different groups of students?

When responses of groups were compared through independent-samples *t*-test and One-way ANOVA test, significant differences were found under all groupings in a great number of factors, for example, all of the six factors for Gender; 5 out of 6 factors for Medium of instruction etc. However, such a high significance of difference may not be valid given the large sample size of this study, therefore, in addition to *t*-test significance, effect size values were also calculated to reveal more accurately on how large these differences were. As a result, only the following differences were proved educationally significant:

- 1) Girls were more affectively inclined to English than boys;
- 2) the EMI students were more affectively inclined to English than the CMI group;
- 3) the Middle class students showed stronger affection towards English than the Working class;
- 4) Hongkongers had a stronger affective inclination towards English and Cantonese while the Chinese group were more positive to Putonghua in both affective and cognitive domains.

In brief, students' attitudes seemed to differ most as regards 'Affective orientation towards English' (i.e. Factor 2) while those regarding Cantonese and Putonghua were more in harmony. Out of the four independent variables, a largest

number of medium differences were found under Cultural identity, which will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

4.2.3 Interaction between independent variables

In the above section, comparisons were done vertically within each of the four independent variables, however it was also necessary to examine across Gender, MOI, Social class and Cultural identity since informants carried multiple traits at the same time and their language attitudes might not vary with only one independent variable but a combination of them. As explained in Chapter Three, in order to find out the combined significance of the independent variables on language attitudes, a two-way ANOVA test was conducted with different combinations of two among the four independent variables viz. Gender * Social class; Gender*Medium of instruction; Gender*Cultural identity; Social class*Medium of instruction; Social class*Cultural identity; Medium of instruction*Cultural identity (see Section 3.5.6 a iii). As a result, significant interaction was found only between Gender*Social class and MOI*Social class in Factor 2 with $p=0.02$ and 0.01 respectively. In other words, girls of higher socio-economic status and EMI students of higher socio-economic status had demonstrated a higher tendency to show stronger affection towards English.

As for other combinations of independent variables, no significant interactions were detected in all factors. This shows that the separate analysis done in the above sections on each independent variable was highly justified.

4.2.4 Significance of variables relating to language attitudes

This section is to answer Research Question 3: How are the four variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong

secondary schools? To examine the significance of the independent variables on language attitudes, we have to look at the number of significant differences each variable has generated between groups. Hence, the more significant differences there were between groups, the closer the relationship was between that variable and language attitudes. In this case, Gender was found the least significant variable since the perceptions of the two sexes did not differ much in all of the six factors. Similarly, not much significance was found with Medium of instruction and Social class. As for these two factors, only medium differences were found on students' affective orientation towards English whereas those on other factors were rather small. Out of the four independent variables examined, Cultural identity seems to be the one which correlates the most highly with language attitudes. Hence, Cultural identity is significant in the variation of students' affective attitudes towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua (i.e. Factors 1,2,3) and the instrumental evaluation of Putonghua (i.e. Factor 6).

Among the four independent variables, grouping under Gender and MOI was straightforward and self-evident, and that of Social class was defined according to established sociological constructs (see also Section 3.3.1.1a). Since students were grouped under these three variables according to objective criteria and the informants had no control of their group membership, categorization under these variables was 'other-ascribed'. Contrarily, since the informants chose their own identity labels (either Hongkonger, Chinese or Hongkong-Chinese) and had total control over whichever group they wished to claim membership, grouping under Cultural identity was therefore 'self-ascribed'. While proclaiming their cultural identities, students were at the same time revealing, to a certain extent, their cultural orientation, their language preference, and their perceptions of in-group and out-group relationship. This is perhaps why

Cultural identity was found the most closely related to the variation in students' language attitudes since the groups were in fact formed by virtue of these elements. If one had not had positive orientation towards Putonghua, one would not have proclaimed oneself a Chinese. Similarly, if one had had great resistance to the PRC and Putonghua, one would not have identified him/herself a member of the Chinese group.

For the same reason, other independent variables were found less strongly correlated with language attitudes because grouping under them was 'other-ascribed'. Like Student 686 of Group A2, despite the fact that she possessed a strong integrative inclination towards English like those in the EMI stream (refer to section 6.3.1), she was put into the CMI group because she was studying in a CMI school. The CMI label was imposed on her regardless of her language preference and cultural orientation. Similarly, Student 37 of Group C2 expressed a strongly positive inclination towards the Chinese identity and Putonghua even though he was in the EMI group (refer to Section 6.2.2.2a). The existence of cases such as these which deviates from the expected stereotypes often dilutes the contrast between the CMI and EMI group, resulting in small differences in all domains.

However, it must be emphasized that the discussion here about the significance of the independent variables does not suggest any causal relationships. The only conclusion can be drawn here is that Cultural identity is the variable which relates the most closely to language attitudes. Yet, what it informs us about is the intensity of attitudes of different groups in comparative terms only, for example, one might expect a student with Chinese identity to like Putonghua more than a Hongkonger, but it is incorrect to expect a student of Chinese identity to like Putonghua more than Cantonese or think that Putonghua is more useful than English, because all groupings examined in

this study manifest the same overall attitude inclinations shown in Section 4.2.1. that all of the groups demonstrated the strongest affection towards vernacular Cantonese; and they evaluated English the most highly for instrumental use and status. The significance of the independent variables serves only as a predictor of attitude intensity between groups within the same factor. Last but not least, the statistics also showed that a combination of Gender and Social class or MOI and Social class varied significantly with students' affective orientation towards English.

4.3 Findings of the Matched-guise Test

The Matched-guise test (MGT) appeared in Part IV of the questionnaire, and as mentioned in Chapter Three (see Section 3.3.1.1c), informants of this study were asked to listen to three voices speaking in Cantonese, Putonghua and English, which were then rated on 14 different traits in a four-point scale with 4=very much, 3=average, 2=not quite and 1= not at all. The positive traits were: friendly, intelligent, educated, competent, industrious, sincere, approachable, considerate, trustworthy, responsible, wealthy and modern; the negative traits were: arrogant and aggressive. The main aim of the test was to explore the affective feelings of the informants towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua. In Factors 1,2,3, the informants' affective inclination towards the three target language varieties and their speakers were revealed through direct questions. However, the meaning of such affection remained unclear; in what way did they like the language variety? What stereotype did they associate the variety with? In this study, the MGT served two main functions: first to enhance the validity of the study. If the informants show similar attitudes towards the three target language varieties through both direct (questionnaire) and indirect (MGT) measures, , this helps to prove, to a certain extent, that the instruments used in this study are valid. Second, the result

obtained from the MGT can also help to provide details about the content of students' affective attitude towards the three target language varieties, which is complementary to the responses solicited through direct questions.

Similarly to the direct questionnaire survey, no special attention was paid to each individual trait, instead a gross mean score of the 14 traits was computed for each language variety, and analysis and comparisons were done with related results. Any composite mean score greater than 2.5 will indicate a positive affective inclination towards the language while that less will suggest a negative tendency. Paired-samples *t*-test was used to find out if the students' attitudes towards the three target language varieties were significantly different; any significance value (*p*) less than 0.05 will indicate a difference which is significant. However, given the large sample size of the present study, effect size values were also calculated to verify the significance of the differences; any effect size values between 0.5 –0.8 will indicate medium differences while those greater than or equal to 0.8 are considered large.

4.3.1 The overall rating

As shown in Table 11, students' overall rating on the three language varieties was not high. All of the composite mean values found were only a little higher than the central value (2.5), indicating only slightly positive association between the language varieties and the suggested traits. However, the results showed that the informants had rated the traits significantly higher for Cantonese ($\bar{X}=2.74$) and English ($\bar{X}=2.72$) than Putonghua ($\bar{X}=2.55$). Similar to the survey results, the informants rated Cantonese the highest, English second and Putonghua the lowest in the MGT, and the rating on Putonghua was significantly lower than that of Cantonese and English with

$p < 0.005$. Although the ranking of the three language varieties was found the same in both the questionnaire survey and the MGT, students' affective attitude towards the three target language varieties revealed in the MGT was not significantly different as that shown in the direct questionnaire survey (see the effect size values in Table 11). Despite this, reliability of the results was not violated since the results found in the MGT did not contradict with those found from the direct questionnaire survey.

Table 11: Paired-samples *t*-test on Cantonese, Putonghua and English

Pair	Language varieties compared	Composite Mean	SD	p	Effect size
1	Cantonese	2.74	.44	0.00#	0.41
	Putonghua	2.55	.48		
2	Cantonese	2.74	.44	0.75	0.00
	English	2.72	.52		
3	English	2.72	.52	0.00#	0.38
	Putonghua	2.55	.48		

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

4.3.2 Ratings in four categories

After reading the students' responses elicited in the MGT as a whole, the results were re-examined by dividing the 14 traits into 4 main categories viz. Solidarity, Competence, Personal charisma and Aggressiveness. As shown in Table 12a below, Cantonese was rated the most highly on traits of Solidarity while English was favoured most for Competence and Personal charisma. As illustrated by mean scores less than 2.5, all guises were rated low for Aggressiveness, showing little negative feelings against the three target language varieties. However, Putonghua was rated the least favourably in all categories, being last for Solidarity, Competence, Personal charisma and the second highest for Aggressiveness.

Table 12a: Results of the Matched-guise Test

Category	Traits	Cantonese		Putonghua		English	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1. Solidarity	4.1 Friendly	2.81 ↑	.56	2.59 ↓	.61	2.67	.64
	4.7 Sincere						
	4.9 Approachable						
	4.10 Considerate						
	4.11 Trustworthy						
2. Competence	4.2 Intelligent	2.64	.59	2.47 ↓	.61	2.74 ↑	.65
	4.5 Competent						
	4.6 Industrious						
	4.12 Responsible						
3. Personal Charisma	4.3 Educated	2.27	.53	2.14 ↓	.55	2.55 ↑	.69
	4.13 Wealthy						
	4.14 Modern						
4. Aggressiveness	4.4 Arrogant	1.54 ↓	.66	1.79	.78	1.81 ↑	.75
	4.8 Aggressive						

↑: group with the highest mean; ↓ group with the lowest mean

Nevertheless, as illustrated through the effect size values (see Table 12b below), the differences between the informants' feelings towards the three language varieties were in fact rather small, the greatest difference found was only a medium one in Personal charisma, of which, English was considered the language which suggests moderately stronger personal charisma than Cantonese and Putonghua.

Table 12b: Paired-samples *t*-test on four categories of traits

Category	Pair 1 Cantonese * Putonghua		Pair 2 Cantonese * English		Pair 3 English * Putonghua	
	p	$\hat{\Delta}$	p	$\hat{\Delta}$	p	$\hat{\Delta}$
1. Solidarity	.00	.34	.00	.23	.01	.13
2. Competence	.00	.27	.00	.16	.00	.43

3. Personal Charisma	.00	.22	.00	.45	.00	.66
4. Aggressiveness	.00	.33	.00	.37	.43	.03

Medium differences between language varieties are printed in bold

As mentioned in Chapter Two, almost all of the Matched-guise tests conducted in the 1970s and 80s were devised on a dichotomy of Chinese and English. However, since ‘trilingualism’ becomes an important issue in post-colonial Hong Kong, the broad notion of ‘Chinese’ has to be further divided into Cantonese and Putonghua. In Lyczak et al (1976), the Chinese language guises were rated significantly higher on traits of inter-personal relationship (i.e. kindness, trustworthiness, honesty, tactfulness, earnestness, humility, and friendliness) while the English guises were rated higher on the traits of power (i.e. attractiveness, intelligence, wealth, and competence). Similar results have been found in the present study with the Cantonese and English guises; the former was rated the highest for the in-group qualities of solidarity (friendly, considerate, trustworthy etc.) while the latter was valued most for qualities of power (e.g. intelligent, well-educated, competent, wealthy, modern etc). Nevertheless, Putonghua was rated the lowest on traits in all categories, showing that the students felt the least attached to the language for both in-group solidarity and aspiration of power. Similar to the overall comparison described in the previous section, such a result is largely consistent with that obtained from the questionnaire survey where Cantonese was the language variety which students felt most affectively inclined to while English was rated the most highly for its instrumental values and status. In fact, despite the small statistical differences found between varieties, the results of the MGT seemed especially valid since the speaker was actually a professional Putonghua teacher, who was most proficient in Putonghua but least articulate in English, and yet she was rated the lowest in all categories on her Putonghua voice and the highest for that of English on traits of power.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The statistical analysis in this chapter has provided preliminary answers to the three research questions, which can be summed up as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary-school generation towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua

Among the three target language varieties, the informants were the most affectively inclined to vernacular Cantonese (the mother tongue) while they evaluated English (the international language) the highest for its instrumental values and status. As regards Putonghua, although it was rated positively for its instrumental values, it ranked last both in the domains of ‘Affect’ and ‘Cognition’. Such findings gathered from the questionnaire survey were supported by similar responses elicited through the Matched-guise test where Cantonese was rated the highest on traits suggesting solidarity while English was rated the highest on traits of power. Similarly, Putonghua was rated the lowest in all categories in the MGT.

2. What are the significant differences in language attitudes between groups under Gender, MOI, Social class and Cultural identity?

Given the sample size of the present study, only medium differences were found. Under Gender, MOI and Social class, the greatest difference was found with students’ affective inclination towards English. As for Cultural identity, medium differences were found with all language varieties in the ‘Affect’ domain and that with Putonghua in the ‘Cognition’ domain. Among them, the differences related to the Putonghua factors were comparatively the largest. In brief, only the following differences were found significant from the statistical analysis:

- a. Girls were more affectively inclined to English than boys;
- b. the EMI students were more affectively inclined to English than the CMI group;

- c. the Middle class students showed stronger affection for English than the Working class;
- d. Hongkongers had stronger affective inclination towards English and Cantonese while the Chinese group were more positive to Putonghua in both affective and cognitive domains.

3. How are the four variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in secondary schools?

As found in the statistical analysis, Gender, MOI and Social class were only moderately significant in the variation of students' affective inclination towards English since medium differences were found only in this factor. As for Cultural identity, its correlation with students' language attitudes seemed to be the highest since medium differences were found in four out of a total of six factors. Apart from these, a combination of Gender and Social class; MOI and Social class were also found significant in the variation of students' affective inclination towards English.

In this chapter, quantitative data were analyzed to provide straightforward but preliminary answers to the three research questions. In the next two chapters, qualitative data collected through interviews will be further explored to give meanings to the numbers described in this chapter and to reveal the complexity of students' language attitudes.

Chapter Five: A Qualitative Overview of Students' Attitudes towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua

5.1 Background

As stated in previous chapters, three research questions were formulated for this study:

- 1) What are the attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary-school generation towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua ?
- 2) What are the significant differences in language attitudes between different groups of students under Gender, Medium of instruction (MOI), Social class and Cultural identity?
- 3) How are the four chosen variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools?

While the previous chapter has provided quantitative answers to the above questions, this chapter aims at providing a qualitative answer to Question 1 while the answers for Questions 2 and 3 will be further investigated in Chapter Six through an analysis of the qualitative data.

In the last chapter, statistical findings from 1048 questionnaires were presented. Although the quantitative approach is effective in dealing with a large sample size and drawing up patterns of students' language attitudes, it does not allow respondents to express their feelings and beliefs behind their responses. Unlike the questionnaire survey, focus group interviews used in this study do not aim at quantifying responses or drawing up generalizable patterns of attitude. Instead they serve complementary purposes which help to give meanings to the numbers generated from statistics. As Firestone (1987) suggests, quantitative studies persuade the reader through de-emphasizing individual judgement and through offering generalizable results whereas qualitative research persuades through rich depiction of responses that overcome the 'abstraction inherent in quantitative studies' (cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994:41). Miles & Huberman (1994) also point out that qualitative data are rich, holistic and have strong potential for revealing complexity. In addition, by using a

different instrument within the same study, validity can be further enhanced through a process of triangulation. Lastly, possible reasons that contribute to students' attitudes towards the three target language varieties can also be explored through semi-structured interviews which 'allow depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the respondents' responses' (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:157).

As described in Chapter Three (see Section 3.3.2), interviews were conducted in four different schools through purposive sampling. The interviews were conducted in the students' mother tongue (i.e. Cantonese). A total of 48 students in eight equal groups were invited to participate in the interviews in the form of focus group discussions. However, due to unexpected dropout of interviewees, only 40 students were interviewed in the end. The total number of groups remained unchanged while the group sizes varied from 3 to 6, and there were two groups in each sample school.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, this research was conducted shortly before and after the school year break. The questionnaire survey was conducted at the end of the informants' F.3 studies while the interviews were held at the beginning of the informants' 4th year in the school. Since the government's medium of instruction policy relaxed at senior secondary levels, about 2/3 of the CMI schools reverted whole or part of their F.4 & 5 (GCSE equivalent) curricular to EMI (MingPao, 22/5/2001). For those schools which had reverted part of their curriculum into EMI, some subjects were taught in English while others were taught in Cantonese. As a result, a third status was created among the interviewees as regards medium of instruction: CMI students who had newly reverted to EMI (in various degrees), which however, did not exist during the questionnaire survey when the informants were still in junior secondary and the mother tongue education policy was mandatory. This change, however, did not diminish the reliability of the present study since related informants had already known well about this change for senior secondary levels when they answered the questionnaire.

To answer the first research question of this study, this chapter attempts to provide a qualitative overview of the informants' perceptions towards the three target

language varieties. In the next chapter, discussions will focus on the relationship between each of the four target variables (i.e. Gender, MOI, Social class and Cultural identity) and students' language attitudes.

In the following, findings gathered through focus group interviews will be illustrated through related extracts, in which, 'I' stands for the Interviewer while students are named with the numbers arbitrarily assigned to them according to the sequence of their questionnaires. The eight groups of interviews are named A1, A2, B1, B2 etc, of which, the letters represent the participating schools. Schools A & B are CMI and Schools C & D are EMI. Following the framework that this study has adopted, interviewees' responses will be analyzed in the domains of 'Affect' and 'Cognition'.

5.2 Affective Attitudes Towards Cantonese, English & Putonghua (PTH)

Similar to what was revealed in the statistical results, the majority of the interviewees ranked Cantonese first as the language they liked most, English second, and Putonghua the third. While students' strong affection for their mother tongue seems totally understandable, it is quite surprising to find students express greater affection for a foreign language (English) than their national language (Putonghua). In this section, students' affective orientation towards the three target varieties will be explored, and more importantly, what contributes to their attitudes in this regard.

5.2.1 Affection for Cantonese

The large majority of the interviewees claimed that Cantonese was the language they liked most. Although they admitted that it was a dialect used only in Southern China, few of them would wish to abolish it. Reiterating statements suggested in the questionnaire, students expressed their strong favour for Cantonese because it is an outstanding characteristic of Hong Kong and the local culture. Even though Cantonese is spoken also in other Chinese territories, the special Hong Kong accent makes Hongkongers a group different from other Cantonese-speakers in the PRC (Bolton and Kwok, 1990). The interviewees had shown strong ownership of Cantonese and the main reasons they offered seemed to relate closely to their Hong Kong identity,

that however, will be further elaborated in the next chapter when the relationship between Cultural identity and language attitudes is discussed (see Section 6.2). Nevertheless, students' preference for Cantonese was not always an identity reaction; sometimes, their concerns were practical. In the following citations, students claimed that they liked Cantonese most simply because it was a familiar language that they could master without pain. Student 329 of Group C1 said that he liked Cantonese most since it was his mother tongue. His choice was made not because of any special feelings to his birthplace but mainly because it was an easy language for him that he could acquire without much effort:

I: If you had a choice, would you choose to be a Cantonese, PTH or English-speaker?

S329: Cantonese is good. Of course, I judge with my present state of mind. Now, I'm used to speaking Cantonese, it's easy for me, so I would like to be a Cantonese-speaker again.

A similar view was expressed by Student 76 of Group C1, she claimed stronger affection for Cantonese because it is a language she had already mastered and that she did not need to take pains to learn:

I: Why do you like Cantonese most?

S76: It is good because we're used to speaking it.

I: But it's not useful outside Hong Kong.

S76: You don't want to change if you are used to speaking a particular language. No matter what, one has to take pains to learn English. It has past tense, present tense, future tense, very complicated. Cantonese is easier.

5.2.2 Affection for English

In the statistical analysis, the mean value for the factor 'Affective orientation for English' was found significantly higher than that of Putonghua. However, the related difference between the two target language varieties found through the interviews was not as clear-cut as that shown in the statistics since qualitative data were usually more diversified and complex. Hence, both positive and

negative affective inclinations towards English and Putonghua will be explored in this section to reveal the mainstream attitude and at the same time the undercurrent beneath.

5.2.2.1 Stronger affection for English than Putonghua

Although the contrast was less conspicuous in the interviews, many students considered English their second most favourite language after Cantonese. Expressed in a rather self-assured manner, interviewees of this group justified their stronger affection for English than Putonghua by saying that English had a longer history in the school curriculum and was part of their life.

Giles et al (1977) suggest three main factors in assessing the ethnolinguistic vitality of different groups viz. Status, Demographic strength and Institutional Support. The Status variable is about the prestige of the target linguistic group. The Demographic variables are related to the number of members in a linguistic group and their distribution in the territory. Lastly, Institutional Support refers to the degree a language is used in various institutions e.g. the government, church, schools, media etc. Without being aware of it, informants of this study seemed to judge the vitality of the two languages in accord with Giles's notion of 'Institutional support'. Details of students' perceptions in this regard, however, will be further explored in the next chapter (see Section 6.2.1.3). Meanwhile, two more reasons were gathered from the interviews which could further explain students' affective inclination towards English:

a) English an easier medium of instruction

Although a foreign language, English was considered by students as an easier learning medium than their mother tongue (i.e. Cantonese) especially for science subjects like Chemistry and Biology. In the following citation, Student 798 of Group B2, who had just reverted from CMI to EMI at F.4, claimed that English was an easier language for science subjects because the special terms represented by English acronyms were simpler than those in Chinese:

Student 798: For Science subjects, I think English is easier. If you use Chinese for the chemistry terms, it will be very troublesome, for example, CO₂ takes only 2 letters and 1 number, it's easy.

Student 76 of Group C1 also expressed resistance to the Chinese translation for Chemistry terms.

I: Do you like using English?

S76: Yes. For subjects like Chemistry, Physics, it's easier to learn through English. It would be very difficult to remember if those terms were learnt in Chinese....like "Bunsen Burner", what do we call it in Chinese? Oh, It's odd!

b) English as a prestigious language

Apart from 'Institutional support', Giles et al (1977) also suggests 'Social status' of the target language group as a determining factor of the vitality of a language. Hence, the prestige of a language also determines how much students would like it. For Student 686 of Group A2 cited below, English was certainly her favourite choice because it was a prestigious language that could enhance her self-esteem whereas Putonghua could not. In other words, Putonghua would remain the third choice for the majority of the students unless its social status could rise to the level of English:

I: Which of the three languages do you like most?

Student 686: I like English most because speaking fluent English makes people look very intelligent and cool...

I: Does speaking fluent PTH make people look intelligent and cool?

S686: No, new immigrants from the Mainland speak fluent PTH too, but they are not intelligent or cool!

5.2.2.2 Negative affective inclination towards English

Despite the many reasons that justified students' strong affective inclination towards English, some students, especially those in CMI schools (see also Section 6.4), showed contrary feelings in the interviews. The main reason they offered for their dislike of the language was that English was difficult to learn. In the discussion of Group B1 (i.e. a CMI school), some students expressed dislike of the language because of their unsatisfactory learning results:

I: Which of the three varieties do you like SECOND most?

S888: Second is PTHThe worst is English, my result is always bad, so I don't really like English.

S799: Second is PTH and the worst is English.

I: Your result is no good, so you don't like it?

S799: True, there're too many changes in grammar, it's very different from Cantonese. I hate English because it's very difficult.

In Group B2, similar feelings were expressed. For Student 891, English was hard to master because it was totally different from her mother tongue. As for Student 512, all major reasons like identity, institutional support or social status turned out to be insignificant, the only factor that mattered to her was whether a language was easy to learn. Similar to what was found in one of my earlier papers (Lai, 2000), 'Achievement' seems to be an important factor here in this study that induces positive attitudes towards a language.

I: Which of the three varieties do you like second most?

S891: Second is PTH, then English. PTH seems easier because it sounds quite similar to Cantonese. English is difficult to learn, grammar and many others. English is completely different.

S512: PTH second because it is easier than English, but regarding importance, then English is more important.

I: Is it because you're Chinese, so you like PTH more?

S512: Not related to identity, it's about whether the language is easy to learn. English is difficult. If you're talking about affection, I don't have special preference for either one of the languages, it's more or less the same. It depends on whether it's easy to learn.

5.2.3 Affection for Putonghua

While many students claimed greater affection for English than Putonghua, some felt the opposite. In the interviews, some students expressed greater preference to

Putonghua than English for two main reasons:

5.2.3.1 Putonghua as marker of secondary group membership

In the discussion of Group A2, students maintained that they had stronger emotional attachment to Putonghua than English because Putonghua was their national language. Although Student 686 did say earlier in the interview that she disliked Mainland Chinese people and she favoured English and the western culture more, yet she felt closer to Putonghua than English. Contradictory though it sounds, it reveals the unnecessary link between affection for a language and group identity. In the case of Group A2, students judged whether a language was close to them in terms of in-group membership. Cantonese, therefore, was ranked first since it was the language of their primary group (i.e. Hongkonger); Putonghua second because it was the marker of their secondary group membership (i.e. Chinese); English last because no matter how one liked it, it did not grant one membership of the English group. Hence, the case of Student 686 further illustrates that affection for a language can be independent of group identity, in which, a person may appreciate or admire one language yet feeling emotionally detached from its group.

I: Which language do you feel closest to?

S541 & 686: Cantonese first; PTH second?

S541: Because PTH is the language of our country.

I: But didn't you say you like westerners more, 686?

S686: Although I like English and English-speakers, but if you are in a western country and somebody can speak to you in PTH, you'll feel more at home!

5.2.3.2 Putonghua an easier language

Some interviewees claimed greater affection for Putonghua than English because the former was easier to learn. In Group C1, Student 270 disagreed with her classmates and claimed greater affection for Putonghua. For her, Putonghua was easier to master since it sounded similar to Cantonese. Although Putonghua might not have high social status like English, she insisted that it was a popular language in Hong Kong:

I: Which of the three languages do you like most?

All: Cantonese; second is English.

S270: No, second is PTH. It requires much effort to learn English, but PTH is very similar to Cantonese. You only need to twist the tone a little to speak PTH. We have much exposure to PTH, through songs and movies, so I like it second most.

5.2.3.3 Resistance to Putonghua

Contrary to those students cited in the above, some interviewees showed resistance to Putonghua, interestingly with the opposite of the same arguments:

a) Putonghua a difficult language

Contrary to Student 270 of Group C1, Students in Group D2 considered Putonghua a difficult language to learn and they disagreed that it was similar to Cantonese. However, their higher preference for English did not mean that learning the language was any easier than Putonghua. According to Student 331, English was only more worthy of the pain for its high instrumental value:

*S331: I don't want to speak PTH... because it's so difficult....
speaking Cantonese is good.*

I: How about English, isn't learning English even more difficult?

S331: English is difficult but at least it's an international language.

*All: PTH is not just a twist in Cantonese tone... it's very difficult
to learn!*

*S79: I find learning PTH very difficult...I can't master it well
no matter how...*

*S177: PTH is very different in grammar...it's like learning
another new language.*

b) Putonghua not a national marker

While Students of Group A2, who were cited in the last section, felt affectively inclined to Putonghua as a marker of the Chinese group, Student 35 of Group C1 did not agree. He tended to draw a distinction between an official language and a national language, and he argued that Putonghua was only a Chinese dialect like Cantonese being made an official language. To him, Putonghua therefore carried no special meaning as a symbol of the Chinese race:

I: If you had a choice, would you choose to be Cantonese, PTH or English-speakers?

S35: I wish to be a bilingual of Cantonese and English because Cantonese is my mother tongue and English is an international language... I don't really like PTH because it's itself only a dialect but being made into an official language by the government. If I made Cantonese the official language in 1949, Cantonese could now be the language of the PRC. PTH is a Beijing dialect and I don't like it!

Similarly, Student 537 of Group B2 disagreed that Putonghua was a more distinct marker for Chinese than Cantonese. He argued that knowing the dialect of one's clan was more representative because it symbolized not only one's country, but actually one's exact origin. Therefore, knowing Cantonese was even more meaningful since it informed people that one was specifically from Canton of China.

I: As a Chinese, do we need to know PTH?

S537: The best thing is to know the dialect of your own clan. For example, I'm a Cantonese and it's good enough for me to speak Cantonese. It represents my origin. Cantonese is even more specific, it doesn't only mean that I am Chinese, I am from Canton of China.

5.2.4 Summary – Affective inclinations towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua

In this study, the vast majority of the interviewees have shown the greatest affection for Cantonese. This is attributed to the fact that Cantonese is their mother tongue, a familiar language, and a characteristic of the Hong Kong culture. The language variety that most informants like second most is English, which they consider also a familiar language, part of their life, an easier learning medium and a prestigious language though it does not necessarily suggest identification with the English-speaking people. The majority of the interviewees feel detached from Putonghua since the language has come into the sociolinguistic scene of Hong Kong just for a short time and it is not a prestigious language that can give them a sense of superiority. Apart from comparing the three language varieties in terms of ‘Institutional support’ and ‘Social status’ (Giles et al, 1977), the interviewees also suggest ‘Achievement’ as a deciding factor for their affective inclination towards the three language varieties. They like Cantonese most because it is their mother tongue that they can speak fluently without great effort. Although English is both popular and prestigious in Hong Kong, students seldom use the language outside the school, and Cantonese is the only variety that they use for all intra-group communication for daily-life purposes (SCMP, 26/11/01). In addition, the fact that the English language system is totally different from the students’ mother tongue also brings great difficulty in learning. As regards Putonghua, despite its low institutional support and social status, some students favour it more than English because it is easier to learn.

5.3 Cognitive Perceptions of Cantonese, English and Putonghua

In this section, students’ attitudes towards the three target language varieties will be explored in the ‘Cognition’ domain. Similar to the statistical findings, interviewees agreed very strongly that English was the most important language in Hong Kong. While there was little dispute over the instrumental value and status of English, students had different views about the ranking of Cantonese and Putonghua. In

the following, findings on students' perceptions of the three target language varieties will be described.

5.3.1 Instrumental values and status of English

Interviewees agreed that English is the most important language in Hong Kong mainly because English is a symbol of power (Phillipson, 1992), a gate-keeper for higher education and job opportunities (Pennycook, 1995), and a language for upward and outward mobility (So, 1992). Before the change of sovereignty, a lot of scholars believed that the status of Putonghua would rise tremendously after the political hand-over, and it would enjoy an equally high status as English (e.g. Kwo, 1994; Pierson, 1994a; Evans et al, 1998). Yet, judging from the interviews of this study, such a prediction has hardly materialized as far as students' attitude is concerned. In the post-colonial era, even after the implementation of the mandatory Mother Tongue Education Policy, the hegemonic position of English seems to remain unshaken. In the following, while students were accounting for the high instrumental values and status of English, they were at the same time depicting the power of the language.

5.3.1.1 English as a language of power

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, English is a language of outward and upward mobility. In this study, interviewees generally perceived English as an international language, the lingua franca of the world that could allow them to communicate with the majority of the people of the world. An example of this perception can be found in Group D2

I: Which language do you want to be best in?

All: English

S43: English. Because it's very useful, for communicating with people in the world.

S386: Yes, it's an international language after all.

Students of Group D2 continued to account for the importance of English for jobs and studies. If students wished to climb up the social ladder, English was a gate that they must get through:

I: Which language do you want to be best in?

S331: English, because a lot of jobs, especially high-ranking jobs...universities require a good proficiency of English. It's a tool for study!

When discussing one's ambition for higher education, Student 798 of Group B2 expressed worries about his poor English standard. Without good results in the language, his chance of entering the university would become minimal. This, however, is also a concern of many Hong Kong students. Through what the student said, the role of English as a gate-keeper for higher educational opportunities was clearly revealed:

I: What education level do you think you can reach?

S798: Of course I hope I can enter university, but (sigh) the chance is slim. I'm afraid my poor English standard would not allow me to get through F.5. If I could, I would be able to make my way to university.

Whether it is outward or upward movement, English plays an important role of a gatekeeper; if English could be mastered, the gate which leads to better life chances would be opened.

5.3.1.2 A superior language

English was also perceived as a prestigious language that gave the students a sense of superiority. An example can be found in Group C1 where English was considered a language of power because its native-speakers were powerful, and therefore all those who aspired to power should also be able to speak English.

I: Which language makes you feel superior?

3 students: English

I: Why?

S76: Because western countries use English...A lot of strong countries are using English too...Even in China, a lot of people can speak English, so I think English is better.

Student 329 of the same group perceived power in terms of knowledge and that English was the means to access advanced knowledge for westernization and modernization:

I: Why is English superior?

S329: English is a common language of the world. A lot of advanced knowledge originated from English-speakers and is written in English. So, in order to understand their ideas, knowing English is a must.

From the above citations, one can tell that the hegemonic position of English as a language of power remains deep-rooted in students' minds. In fact, this highly conforms with what Pennycook (1995) has described: English language education is used as a means of reproducing social, economic and political inequality, while being disguised as a neutral and useful language for modernization and outward communication.

While this was true during the colonial times, the situation does not seem to have changed much in Hong Kong after the change of sovereignty.

5.3.2 Cognitive Evaluation of Cantonese and Putonghua

5.3.2.1 Higher instrumental value of Cantonese than Putonghua

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the statistical results showed that students have ranked Putonghua lower than Cantonese as regards instrumental value and status. This was contrary to what scholars had predicted since it was commonly believed that Putonghua would become a high variety in Hong Kong (HK) (e.g. Bauer, 2000; Boyle, 2000) after the change of sovereignty and its instrumental value would also increase tremendously as a result of the economic boom in the PRC (see Section 1.2.4).

The following citation from Group C1 is representative of those who rated the instrumental value of Cantonese higher than Putonghua. For them, the world was dichotomized into the inside and outside world and therefore they needed only two languages: Cantonese for home and English for the outside, including China.

I: Why do you rate PTH the least useful?

S383: It is not worth making effort to learn PTH. It's not used world-wide. It's not as useful as the other two languages....

I: In that case, Shouldn't Cantonese be the least useful?

S383: No, aren't we talking in Cantonese now? We don't talk in PTH, do we?

I: But you can't go out of HK with Cantonese only.

S383: I seldom leave HK!

S329: When going out of HK, then use English. After all it's an international language. It's good enough for me to know English and Cantonese...you can speak English even when you go to Mainland China...

Similarly, Student 688 of Group A1 rated Putonghua the lowest in status on the grounds that it was not used much in Hong Kong. In accord with the ethnolinguistic vitality theory of Giles et al (1972), Student 688 made her judgement by evaluating the degree of 'Institutional support' that a language had received in society. In addition, her locally oriented perceptions seemed to direct her attention only to her imminent world and therefore she found Cantonese more useful than Putonghua.

I: Which language has the highest and the second highest status?

All: English

S688: Second is Cantonese because PTH is not often used (in HK).

I: So, what if you go out to the world, have you thought about this?

S688: (Firmly) No. I don't worry about the world outside. PTH is dispensable, not used in HK anyway.

5.3.2.2 Higher instrumental value of Putonghua than Cantonese

As for those students who rated Putonghua higher than Cantonese, they mainly evaluated the languages with the number of people that it could access. Among them, many claimed stronger favour for Cantonese, yet they considered Putonghua more useful because it was spoken by millions of Chinese people in the world. Instead of a simple dichotomy of the inside and outside world, this group of students seemed to adopt a 'trichotomized' view of the world which included their imminent home (i.e.HK), Greater China and the foreign world. A representative response can be found in Group A1 below:

I: Which language has the highest and second highest status?

All: English the highest.

815: Second is PTH.

I: Why? Didn't you say you liked Cantonese more and you said it's better for the Mainlanders to learn Cantonese?

S815: I ranked the three languages in terms of how widely it's used in the world. English is the language used by most of the people in the world and PTH by all Chinese in the Mainland, Taiwan and the overseas, but Cantonese is used only by those people in Canton. I weigh their importance in terms of this.

S813: Foreigners learnt PTH too.

Apart from popularity of the language, Student 37 of Group C2 suggested that acculturation was taking place between Hong Kong and the PRC, and the two places would finally merge to form one entity, Putonghua was therefore more important than Cantonese for his future:

I: Why do you think PTH is important?

S37: It can help me in my future development...now Hong Kong is getting more and more 'Mainlandized'.

Whatever the consideration was for their higher instrumental evaluation of Putonghua, this group of interviewees, who adopted a 'trichotomized' view of the world, were either more aware of the PRC influence or more sensitive to the changing

socio-economic situation in post-colonial Hong Kong. However, as shown through both the quantitative and qualitative methods, views of this group were still far from being dominant.

5.3.2.3 Putonghua wanted for instrumental values

Despite the fact that Putonghua was ranked last both in the domains of 'Affect' and 'Cognition', given the interviewees a free choice, few of them agreed to abandon it altogether mainly because of practical considerations. This in fact highly aligned with the high mean value ($\bar{X} = 3.16$) scored from the questionnaire survey on the statement 'Putonghua is the most helpful language for my career development in the 21st century'. Such a positive instrumental orientation towards Putonghua was mainly attributed to economic reasons. As mentioned in Chapter One, the economy of Hong Kong has suffered from a drastic downturn after 1997 whereas the PRC has had its greatest achievement in history both in economy and international influence. Recognizing the fast economic growth in the PRC, Student 43 of Group D2 suggested a possible change of status regarding Cantonese and Putonghua in the future:

I: Whose status is higher, Cantonese or PTH?

S43: Now, Cantonese because PTH is not used very often in Hong Kong, but 10 years later, PTH will be much more useful than it is now because I guess PRC will become economically very strong 10 years later.

Recognizing the growing instrumental use of Putonghua, students of the same group expressed an urge to learn it even though they might not like it:

I: If you had a choice, would you give up learning PTH?

All: No

S43: I don't like it and it's difficult...but if one has to do business with China, then knowing PTH is important because you just can't talk to them all the time in English.

S79: I will learn it even though I don't like it because it's getting more popular...foreigners also learn PTH. I think it's getting more highly regarded and it's important.

5.3.3 Summary – Cognitive perceptions of Cantonese, English and Putonghua

As the students of this study have perceived, the hegemonic position of English remains deep-rooted in post-colonial Hong Kong. It is not only a symbol of the western power, but also a language of real power in the local context for both upward and outward mobility. As in the colonial days, English maintains the role of the gatekeeper for higher education and career opportunities in Hong Kong, and is believed to be the language to access advanced technological knowledge. Scholars anticipated a challenge to its superior role and status by Putonghua after the change of sovereignty, yet judging by the responses of the informants in this study, the challenge is still far from being substantial. Despite the political change in Hong Kong from an English-speaking to a Putonghua-speaking regime and the fast economic development in the PRC, Putonghua is ranked last after English and Cantonese for its instrumental value and status. The majority of the informants seem to remain unmoved by the changes that have taken place after the political handover, and their locally oriented mindset leads them to a higher evaluation of Cantonese than Putonghua for its instrumental values because it is used more widely within the Hong Kong territory. Those who are aware of the international status of Putonghua have ranked it higher than Cantonese for its instrumental value though they might not like the language. Edwards (1985) drew a distinction between ‘positive’ and ‘favourable’ attitude to a language. Hence, the attitude of students of this group can only be described as ‘positive’ but not ‘favourable’. However, such instrumental orientation might also play a part in language shift; as Edwards suggests, ‘necessity may sometimes overpower affection’ (p.146).

5.4 Chapter Summary

As revealed in this chapter, the four main factors that have contributed to students’ affective attitudes towards languages are ‘Sense of ownership of the language’; ‘Institutional support’; ‘Social status’ and ‘Achievement in the language’. As for attitude in the cognitive aspects, the languages were mainly evaluated in terms of their power as a means for upward and outward mobility. Under this criterion, English and Putonghua are rated more highly than Cantonese. However, the

informants' strong local identity adds complexity to the formulation of cognitive attitudes. Their locally oriented mindset leads them to the perception of a dichotomized world that requires knowledge of only a home language (i.e. Cantonese) and a second language for the outside world (i.e. English). For this reason, the instrumental value of Putonghua is rated the lowest since it does not fit into the matrix. As revealed from students' attitudes, the vitality of vernacular Cantonese is very high and the hegemonic position of English remains unchanged in post-colonial Hong Kong. Despite the enhanced status of Putonghua after the political handover, its vitality is substantially lower than the other two varieties at present. Nevertheless, there are signs to show that students are beginning to recognize the increasing instrumental importance of Putonghua for their future and there is a tendency towards a more accommodating attitude towards the language.

Chapter Six: Language Attitudes and Four Variables – A Qualitative Account

6.1 Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter, the purpose of this chapter is to provide qualitative answers to Research Question 2: What are the significant differences in language attitudes between different groups of students under Gender, MOI, Social class and Cultural identity; and Question 3: How are the four chosen variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools?

In Chapter Four, related patterns and significant differences between different groups were identified through the statistical analysis of 1048 questionnaires. While the quantitative part of this study answers the questions in terms of numbers and establishes whether or not the hypotheses (described in Section 2.4.5) are supported, the aim of this chapter is to provide more in-depth and holistic answers to the same questions by investigating into the qualitative data collected through interviews. Since the quantitative and qualitative parts of this study bear a sequential relationship, the focus of the group discussions was mainly set on the significant findings revealed in the statistical analysis. Nevertheless, room was allowed for new issues to arise during the interviews. In addition to these, this chapter also explores the extent to which the rationales behind the established hypotheses (refer to Section 2.4) are valid for this study.

As mentioned in the last chapter, a total of 40 students in eight different groups were interviewed and the spread of participants in each grouping is as follows:

Category	Gender		Medium of Instruction		Social class			Cultural Identity			
	Boys	Girls	EMI	CMI	Middle	Intermediate	Working	HK	C	HC	Others
No. of interviewees	19	21	23	17	11	15	13	17	7	15	1

Similarly to the previous chapter, findings described in this chapter will be illustrated through related extracts, in which, students are named with the numbers arbitrarily assigned to them according to the sequence of their questionnaires, and the eight groups of interviews are named A1, A2, B1, B2 etc, of which, the letters represent the participating schools. Schools A & B are CMI and Schools C & D are EMI.

As mentioned in Section 4.2.4, grouping under Gender and MOI is ‘other-ascribed’ and that under Cultural identity is ‘self-ascribed’. While the meaning of Gender and MOI are self-evident, and that for Social class is defined through established sociological constructs (see Section 3.3.1.1a), students’ perceptions of identities have yet to be explored. Owing to the different nature of Cultural identity as a ‘self-ascribed’ variable, this chapter will first address issues related to it, and those about Gender, MOI and Social class in later parts.

6.2 Cultural identity and Language Attitudes

As revealed in the questionnaire survey, the majority of the informants (58.3%) identified themselves as Hongkongers; 19.2% claimed a double identity of Hongkong-Chinese for themselves; and only a minority of them (12.8%) claimed that they were Chinese. While the quantitative survey can easily put informants into one of these categories, a qualitative investigation into the students’ perceptions of identity reveals much complexity beneath the issue. In this section, I will first explore students’ perceptions of Hong Kong (HK) identity and its linkage to language attitudes, and then those regarding Chinese identity and its relationship with Putonghua (PTH) in the second part. For easy references, the former is termed ‘Hong Kong Linguistic identity’ and the latter ‘Chinese Linguistic identity’.

6.2.1 Hong Kong linguistic identity

6.2.1.1 Students’ perceptions of Hong Kong identity

The fact that the large majority of the informants (609 out of 1048) claimed themselves Hongkongers in the questionnaire survey has shown students’ strong inclination towards the Hong Kong identity. Similarly, the same inclination was detected in the interviews. In fact, such a finding is not new; in studies conducted

before the change of sovereignty (e.g. Lau, 1997; Wong & Shum 1996), the majority of the young people were found identifying themselves rather strongly as Hongkongers, and this study seems to show that the post-colonial context after 1997 (described in Chapter One) has not changed the younger generation much in this regard.

Over the eight groups of interviews, students tended to express a strong sense of Hong Kong identity. Even those who claimed Chinese identity or a double identity of Hongkong-Chinese for themselves did not seem to show less favour for Hong Kong, and among them, some accepted the Chinese identity only passively as a result of the change of sovereignty. As Parmenter et al (1998) point out, many Hong Kong people identify themselves as Hong Kong-Chinese who live in Hong Kong, Chinese in blood, yet being different from the Mainland Chinese in terms of behaviours and mentality as a result of cultural differences. Before investigating the complexity of other identities, this section will first focus on 'Hong Kong identity' which bears significant relationship with language attitudes.

What does Hong Kong identity actually mean? While the questionnaire survey of this study revealed students' strong inclination towards Hong Kong identity, the essence of it remained obscure. Interviews were therefore necessary in exploring students' concept of Hong Kong identity, and more importantly, what contributed to these concepts. To begin with, students were asked directly how they would describe their identities. A representative response was given by Student 813 of Group A1 who rejected the identity of Chinese and insisted that he was a Hongkonger. During the discussion, although he was unable to justify his denial of the Chinese identity at the cognitive level, yet he rejected it rather strongly at the emotional level.

I: How would you describe your identity?

S813: I am a Hongkonger.

I: And you 815?

S815: I'm Chinese because my blood is Chinese. No matter how I deny it, a fact is fact, one just can't change it!

I: 813, do you agree with your friend? Since you can't change the fact, why don't you admit that you're Chinese right away?

S813: Well.... "Chinese"? (after a while) This name is unpleasant!

I: So while you're travelling, what will you say if people ask you what you are?

S813: A Hongkonger, of course!

On the discussion of collective identities, Jenkins (1996:80) points out that 'similarities cannot be recognized without delineating differences' and one of the things that a group has in common is their difference from others. Hence, in order to explore what students' concept of Hongkongers is, they were asked to describe the differences between Hongkongers and the Mainland Chinese. In the interviews, students tended to emphasize that Hong Kong was more westernized and modern in terms of thinking, life-style, technology and culture whereas Mainland China was perceived as backward in all these aspects. Yet, it is noteworthy that students' judgement was made mainly with reference to western standards and values that they had internalized during the British occupation, and anything that deviated from that was considered backward. In the following, representative citations were taken from the interviews to illustrate students' perceptions of Hong Kong identity:

a) Thinking and life-style

Student 813 of Group A1 brought out a contrast in thinking and life-style between Hongkongers and the Mainland Chinese. The latter was then considered "conservative", which implies being undemocratic, outdated and old-fashioned:

I: Can you describe the main differences between a Hongkonger and a Mainland Chinese?

S813: Hongkongers are more westernized in their life style and thinking...Mainland Chinese are more conservative and old-fashioned... you can tell the differences even from their outlooks...

A similar point was reiterated in the discussion of Group B2 where 'open-mindedness' of Hongkongers was again interpreted in terms of western values. Substantiating the difference in 'life-style', Student 891 cited 'language spoken' as a marker of group identity (Barth, 1969).

S891: We're different in many ways e.g. languages, policy, thinking. They are more conservative, we're more open.

S537: For example, we have religious freedom, but the PRC is restrictive in this regard.

S891: They value males more. They prefer to have boys because boys carry the family name.

I: Isn't it the same in HK?

S891: Not strong. Many HK people don't care about this any more.

b) Technological advancement

In the following, Student 79 of Group D2 interestingly expanded her answer from a neutral description of differences to an expression of superiority over China. The most striking difference for her was that in technological advancement. If there should be any changes to take place, according to her, it should be the PRC to catch up with the Hong Kong standard:

I: Do you want HK and the Mainland to get closer, in culture?

S79: I think they (China) should follow us, not the other way round...to be open-minded like us... Now, HK is technologically more advanced than the PRC. It's better for them to follow us.

S386: I agree that they should follow us. I think Mainland Chinese are old-fashioned and backward.

c) Sense of law and order

To highlight the differences between Hong Kong and the PRC, Student 177 of Group D2 cited 'sense of law and order' as an example in support of the contrast between modernization and backwardness. For him, a sense of law and order was an essential element of civilization. In addition, he emphasized on the differences between ancient China and modern China (i.e. PRC) and it was the latter that he thought had lagged behind the world standard.

I: What are the differences between Hongkongers and Chinese?

S177: Culture.

I: Can you explain?

S177: Although China has such a long history of civilization, it's buried.

Now, personally I think HK is more civilized than China.

I: what do you mean by that?

S177: ...I think HK is more advanced, more modernized.

I: In what way?

S177: We have a better sense of law and order. Better discipline, for example.

d) Personal attributes

Barth (1969) points out that boundaries between groups persist despite continuous contact, mobility and information flow. Such a characteristic marks also the boundary between Hongkongers and the Mainland Chinese. Due to geographical closeness between the two places, nearly all the interviewees have been to the Mainland either near the border or to other inland cities. In fact, most of them have first-hand experience of the PRC and its people, yet it is on this foundation of interaction, as Barth says, where group boundary is built.

In the discussion of Group A2, students generally thought that the Mainlanders had worse personal qualities; they were rude, unfriendly, aggressive and had low moral standard:

I: So, you have been to Beijing, what's your impression of Beijing?

S541: It was winter, it was snowing at that time and the snow was very dirty!

I: How about your impression of the people?

S541: Selfish... impolite... they are aggressive and unfriendly... they litter and spit.

I: So people are aggressive!

S541: Yes, especially taxi drivers, they always scold people....

S686: The Mainlanders have low moral standard. They stole things... my sister's wallet was stolen last time when we were there!

When the discussion moved to whether the Mainlanders were arrogant, Student 686 suggested the importance of being affluent in the formation of one's pride.

I: Are they arrogant?

S541: Yes, quite!

S686: No, not quite!, How can they be arrogant? Most of them are not rich!

Similarly, Student 630 expressed his disgust of the Mainlanders. Although his criticism might sound provocative and biased, it was representative of many students' views:

I: What do you think about the PTH speakers?

S630: They can be described as low and despicable!

I: Why?

S630: Nine out of ten of them are smokers; they speak foul words in PTH that we don't understand; they spit in the street; they are rude and uneducated.

e) Superiority of Hong Kong

Through comparison of the two places, students have depicted Hong Kong as a westernized, modern, technologically advanced, clean and affluent society where people are disciplined, polite and educated. Whatever features there are, they are phenomena to mark the boundaries between groups (Barth, 1969). Hong Kong identity was built upon students' negative impressions of the Mainland Chinese and a strong sense of superiority over the PRC. Such a sense of superiority, as Tajfel (1981) suggests, is produced by the need of individuals for self-esteem and to feel that the group they belong to is better than the others. In the following citations, students explicitly spelt out their wish to be different from Mainland China. In the discussion of Group D2 below, students added 'prosperity' and 'international status' into the content of their 'Hong Kong Pride':

I: Do you think HK is superior to Mainland China?

All: Yes, HK is superior.

S278: It seems that HK is more advanced and prosperous.

S35: Mainland China is dirty and backward. Foreigners usually think HK is different and they will respect Hongkongers more.

However, such pride of the Hong Kong group is not without threat. In fact, this threat has become prominent in the post-colonial era due to the economic downturn:

I: And you, 43? Do you feel a sense of superiority over the PRC?

S43: Moderately superior only! Originally, our economic achievement is much higher than that of the PRC, but in these few years, the economy of HK is going down, down, down while that of China is going up, up and up.....so the distance is closer.

Interestingly, recognition of such a potential threat did not lead to stronger support for assimilation. Contrarily, students expressed wishes to widen the difference between Hong Kong and the PRC so as to preserve their 'insecure' Hong Kong pride (Tajfel, 1981:278).

I: Are you happy to see the closer distance?

S331: No. I wish HK could be further ahead of them...to be superior.

S177: Yeah...further ahead is better. Ever since the days when HK was ruled by the British, we have been better than the PRC in terms of economic achievement and law and order...I wish this to continue.

Similar to Lau (1997) and Wong & Shum (1998), students were found showing resistance towards the PRC as a political entity. However, no explicit comments were made in regard to the Communist regime and the gap between the two places was perceived mainly in cultural and socio-economical terms. Such a gap, however, induced wishes to remain separate from the Mainland, and also insistence on using a different language variety (i.e. Cantonese) that suggests Hong Kong as a different place and political system.

6.2.1.2 Link between Hong Kong identity and Cantonese

To gauge how strongly students felt attached to Hong Kong identity and Cantonese, the interviewees were asked if they would choose to be Cantonese-speakers; Putonghua-speakers or English-speakers if they were given a free choice. Although interviewees generally admitted the low instrumental value of Cantonese outside Hong Kong, the majority of them expressed preference for it as a marker of their in-group identity. From their responses, three main reasons for their choice of Cantonese were gathered in relation to Hong Kong identity:

a) Cantonese as the mother tongue

Student 331 of Group D2 expressed strong emotional attachment to Hong Kong as his birthplace and Cantonese his mother tongue. For this reason, his choice of Cantonese was obvious:

I: If you had a choice, would you choose to be Cantonese, PTH or English-speakers?

S331: I want to be a Cantonese-speaker. I was born here and I would like to be a Hongkonger. Although Cantonese is used only in HK, it's the language I use to talk to my Mom...

b) Favour for Hong Kong

Another reason offered by Group D2 for their preference for Cantonese was because they were satisfied with their present lives in Hong Kong since it was a safe and prosperous place for residence. Their preference for Hong Kong, however, was a result not only of comparison with Mainland China, but also their knowledge of the negative side of the western world:

I: Would you like to be English-speakers e.g. a British or an American?

S278: No. It's dangerous! Terrorists will attack!

I: So, where do you want to live?

S43: Any place that is modern and safe.

I: Is HK the place?

S43: Yes, quite!

I: How about you, 386?

S386: I'll choose to be a Hongkonger because this is a place of few catastrophes and this is a prosperous city!

c) Cantonese as a marker of in-group identity

Students' affective attachment to Cantonese was largely related to their Hong Kong identity. The discussion of Group D2 cited below illustrated the importance of Cantonese for the students as a characteristic of Hong Kong:

I: Cantonese is less useful than English and PTH, why do you insist on keeping it?

S331: But it's the language we use to speak to our Mom!

S43: Cantonese is a characteristic of this place.....

I: But Cantonese has little international status.

S43: After all, a language represents a place. People in Beijing will speak PTH with Beijing accent. Then Cantonese is also a characteristic of HK.

I: Is this characteristic important?

All: Yes, important! Very important!

Student 541 of Group A2 made the same choice for Cantonese. Although he could not justify his rejection of being an English-speaking westerner, his subconscious in-group identity of Hong Kong was revealed:

S541: If I had a choice, I would like to be a Cantonese-speaker of Hong Kong because I am satisfied with my present life here.

I: Why don't you want to be a westerner, didn't you say just now that they are friendly and kind?

S541: No, I don't want to be a westerner even though I think they are nice!

I: But why?

S541: No, I just don't want to be them...no reason!

The association between Hong Kong identity and Cantonese was further revealed when students of Group C2 agreed almost unanimously that being unable to speak Cantonese was unacceptable for a Hongkonger:

I: Is it strange that a Hongkonger cannot speak Cantonese?

Group C2: Yes. strange.

S37: As a Hongkonger, how can somebody not know Cantonese!

Another student of Group D1 perceived Cantonese as an important marker of Hong Kong identity, and one would not be qualified the role of Hongkonger without being able to speak its vernacular variety even though one might have lived in Hong Kong for a long time:

I: If a Hongkonger cannot speak Cantonese, do you think it is strange?

S44: Of course, it's strange. Impossible!

I: But many ordinary people interviewed on TV cannot speak accurate Cantonese.

S44: Those are exceptions...they are from the Mainland. If someone learns a language when one has grown up, it will be more difficult. Like my father who has been in Hong Kong for more than 10 years, he still can't speak Cantonese.

I: So, is your father a Hongkonger?

S44: He's a Shanghaiese!

Another student of Group D1 expressed similar views. For her, being able to speak fluent Cantonese was a prerequisite for the role of Hongkonger. Apart from this, English and Putonghua also played a part in the construction of Hong Kong identity though not as essential as Cantonese:

S280: I think Hongkongers must be able to speak Cantonese and have to be fluent in it.. then some English ... then a little bit of Putonghua.

6.2.1.3 Link between Hong Kong identity and English and Putonghua

Citation of Student 280 in the last section seems to suggest a linkage not only between Hong Kong identity and Cantonese, but also the two ‘non-native’ language varieties. In the interviews, although English was perceived as part of Hong Kong identity, it was found a less significant contributor than Cantonese in the construction of Hong Kong linguistic identity. When asked if it was strange that a Hongkonger did not know English, students expressed more divided opinions than those for Cantonese. Over the discussions, interviewees measured also the role and status of Putonghua, but they tended to suggest that it did not relate much to the Hong Kong identity.

a) Arguments for the linkage between Hong Kong identity and English

In accord with Giles’s (1977) notion of ‘Institutional support’, students of Group C2 judged the strength of the linkage between Hong Kong identity and the two ‘non-native’ language varieties with two main criteria: 1) How long the language has been taught in school and 2) How widely the variety is used in society. Having evaluated the amount of ‘Institutional support’ that the two language varieties received in Hong Kong, students then concluded that English was a more distinctive marker of Hong Kong identity than Putonghua.

i) Longer history of English in the school curriculum

According to the Hong Kong Education Commission Report 6 (1995), the percentage of Hong Kong people claiming to know English rose from 41% in 1983 to 61% in 1993. This increase in percentage was mainly a result of the mass education policy implemented since 1976. Although interviewees of this study may not be well-informed about this increase, being a member of the Hong Kong society, it is clear that they have sensed the growth of popularity of English over the past years. In the discussion of Group C2 cited below, students tended to suggest that knowing English was a feature of Hongkongers since it had been taught as a core subject in all schools for decades. On the other hand, they disagreed unanimously that Putonghua was part of Hong Kong identity because its history in school was short and its role insignificant.

I: Is it strange that a Hongkonger does not know PTH?

Group C2: No!

S37: No, not strange. A lot of HK people do not know PTH!

I: How about English?

S77: Yes. Very strange. As early as kindergarten, one is taught the 26 English letters. PTH has been taught in HK just for about 10 years... and it's taught only from Primary to F.3, so it's not strange that Hongkongers do not know PTH!

Another student of the same group expressed similar views and she added that English was essential for surviving in Hong Kong:

S385: Agreed! One learns English from kindergarten to secondary or to an even older age. A lot of school subjects are taught in English, but PTH is taught (as one subject) only from Primary to F.3. It's hard to get a job if someone doesn't know English.

ii) English as part of life

As a result of high institutional support, students agreed that English was part of their life while Putonghua was only a new comer playing an insignificant role in Hong Kong. In the discussion of Group D1, students agreed almost unanimously that they had more contact with English than Putonghua in their daily life:

I: Do you have more contact with English or PTH in your daily life?

All: English. Because teachers speak English. Computer is English, ICQ is English, and we have English TV and radio channels as well.

Student 329 of Group C1 attempted to explain the close relationship between Hong Kong people and English with the example of code-switching and mixing. Hence, he maintained that English was part of the life of Hong Kong people since they often mixed or switched to English in their everyday conversation whereas this would not happen in Putonghua:

I: Why do you like English more than PTH?

S329: We use English more often ...sometimes in everyday life, you will find yourself using some English words very naturally and subconsciously, but you won't switch or mix in PTH unless you do it for fun.

Moving the attention from schools to society, Student of 275 of Group C2 argued further for English as a feature of Hong Kong since it could be seen in every corner whereas Putonghua was not used in everyday life:

S275: Yes, it's strange that a Hongkonger doesn't know English...English is everywhere: signboards, notices, bills etc. but we seldom have contacts with PTH, so it's strange that a Hongkonger doesn't know English.

From the above, the link between Hong Kong identity and English was revealed. Having taken root in Hong Kong society for a long history, English was considered a familiar language and part of Hong Kong life. Based on the same principle, one can believe that stronger affection for Putonghua could in fact be fostered if the language was given sufficient 'Institutional support'.

b) Arguments against the linkage between Hong Kong identity and English

Despite the above support for the linkage between Hong Kong identity and English, other students in Group C2 disagreed. For them, knowing English or not was not an identity issue but rather that of generation. Although a lot of young people might have learnt English through school education, many of the elderly did not have the chance to do so, yet this does not deprive them of the role of Hongkongers.

I: Is it strange that Hongkongers do not know English?

S37: No, some people don't know English, it's not strange. Not knowing Cantonese is more strange.

S269: No, I don't think not knowing English is strange. A lot of people, especially the older generation does not know English..

To sum up, Student 44 of Group D1 suggested that English was an instrumental language while Cantonese was an essential in-group marker, without that, one would become an outcast of the Hong Kong group:

I: What if Hongkongers cannot speak English?

S44: Then, it's difficult for them to do business with foreigners.

I: what if I'm not doing business. I'm just an ordinary Hongkonger.

S44: Well...for an ordinary Hongkonger, of course, there is no problem.

I: So, what do you think a Hongkonger must know?

S44: One has to speak Cantonese, then PTH....not being able to speak Cantonese will be discriminated in HK.

I: How about Putonghua?

S44: No!

I: And English?

S44: No, not knowing English will not be discriminated. Knowing Cantonese is the most important in HK.

6.2.1.4 Summary – Hong Kong Linguistic identity

Comparing the three target language varieties, it is obvious that Cantonese is playing the most significant role in the construction of Hong Kong identity while English is second. In fact, an interesting development of Hong Kong students' attitudes towards English can be traced through related studies in the last two decades: in the study of Pierson et al (1980), English was considered a threat to Chinese identity and students felt unpatriotic when using English. Thirteen years later, in the replication of Pennington and Yue (1993), it was concluded that the old antagonism between English and Chinese had become outdated, and English was well received as a helpful means to understand foreigners and their culture. A similar result was found in Axler et al (1998) that English was no longer learnt as a language of the colonizer, but an international language for wider communication (refer to Chapter Two). Up till the present study, the importance of English is found further developed from that of an international language into part of Hong Kong people's life. From an alien foreign language that threatened students' cultural identity to an element of Hong Kong identity, English has undergone

interesting development in its relationship with Hong Kong students and their linguistic identity over the past two decades. The linkage between English and Hong Kong identity has not in any way become weakened as a result of the change of sovereignty. Quite the contrary, its significance as a marker of Hong Kong identity has become even stronger in the post-colonial era.

Regarding Putonghua, its linkage to Hong Kong identity is still remote since it is considered a language of an out-group and a new-comer into the sociolinguistic scene of Hong Kong without substantial 'Institutional support'. Nevertheless, the importance of Putonghua lies elsewhere, being more closely related to Chinese identity which will be discussed in the following section.

6.2.2 Chinese linguistic Identity

6.2.2.1 Students' perceptions of Chinese identity

As shown in the questionnaire survey, only 134 informants out of a total of 1048 identified themselves as Chinese, and 201 claimed for themselves a double identity as Hong Kong-Chinese. Among them, their motives behind the Chinese identity can be further classified as 'passive' and 'active'. In the following, the passive motives of the interviewees will be discussed first, then the active ones:

a) The passive Chinese identity

Among the informants, some accepted the Chinese identity only passively because of the ethnic tie. The following citation from Student 815 of Group A1 is perhaps representative of such sentiments:

I: Do you consider yourself a Hongkonger, Chinese or Hongkong-Chinese?

S815: Chinese. Because I was born in China and my blood is Chinese.

I: But you agree that the Mainland is not as open and modern as Hong Kong, so why do you identify yourself as Chinese?

815: I am what I am. It's not a question of whether you like it or not. For example, your father is a prisoner, but he's still your father, you just can't deny this!

Based also on ethnic ties, Student 541 of Group A2 claimed himself a double identity of Hongkong-Chinese although he had just complained about the bad behaviours of the Mainlanders:

I: How would you describe your identity?

S541: Both Hongkonger and Chinese.

I: But you just said the Mainlanders are selfish and impolite.

S541: No matter how, people of the Chinese race will have a sense of belonging to China...

Similarly, by drawing equivalence between identity and citizenship, other students expressed their passive acceptance of the Chinese identity, which, however, was induced by the change of sovereignty and citizenship as a result. An example could be found in Group A2.

I: How would you describe your identity?

S686: I think I am HK-Chinese...because HK belongs to China...even though I don't really like Mainland China, my nationality is Chinese after all. This is a fact that I cannot deny! I don't have strong patriotic feelings for China...if I had a choice, I would not want to be a Chinese!.

Another student in Group A2 also drew equivalence between identity and citizenship, and as a result, she added 'Chinese' on top of her Hong Kong identity:

S688: I'm a HK-Chinese. I am both because Hong Kong was returned to China.

I: Are you influenced by your family?

S688: No, my parents never talk about this! My double identity was mainly induced by the fact that HK has returned to China.

I: And before that?

S688: Before that, I was a Hongkonger!

b) The active Chinese identity

Apart from being a passive choice, students accepted the Chinese identity also actively as a result of their admiration for ancient Chinese culture and history. Yet, this did not seem to have helped much in eliminating their negative feelings against Modern China, and students' negative impressions of the PRC often undermined the strength of their admiration towards ancient Chinese culture. In fact, these two conflicting attitudes did not exist exclusively in two opposing groups. Very often, they coexisted within the same persons. A representative citation can be found in the discussion of Group C1 where a student expressed his conflicting attitudes towards ancient and modern China:

S329: I'm proud of the China a few hundred years ago because it had so many inventions. It was leading the world at that time. But Chinese people had become lazy for a period of time. It has wasted a lot of time, it didn't advance. Since we are born in this generation, we have the impression that China is not very good. I can't say it's closed, but it seems backward.

In addition to ancient Chinese culture and history, students of Group A2 expressed admiration also for the geographical beauty and food of China, that however, were elements independent of Modern China as a backward and disorderly society. In the following citation, Student 686 expressed her affection for China even though she had claimed earlier in the interview that she would wish to be a westerner if she had a choice.

S541: we learn about China through Chinese history lessons...

I: Do you like Chinese History?

S541: Yes. I find it quite interesting.

I: And you, 686? Will you be more interested in western history since you said you would like to be a westerner if you had a choice?

S686: No, I like Chinese history more than western history. I can learn more about China. It's interesting! I like the country, its history, the places, food etc. but not the people...

S541: Me too, what I don't like is not the country but the people now (of the PRC) because they don't have good conduct.

Although the informants' different perceptions of ancient and modern China may appear contradictory, such complexity of Chinese sentiments can be accounted for through an understanding of the history of Hong Kong. Before the PRC was established in 1949, traffic between Hong Kong and China was free. Until 1950, a barrier was set up at the border to stop refugees, who were unwilling to live under a Communist regime, flocking into Hong Kong (Li, 2000). Since then, people in Hong Kong were secluded from the social and cultural changes in the PRC and the two places started to take on different path of development – with Hong Kong pursuing capitalism under the British regime and China practising socialism under the leadership of Mao Ze-dong. Due to the economic success of Hong Kong in the past decades, a contemptuous attitude has been developed against the Mainlanders (Lau, 1997), evidence of which can be easily found in the mass media where the Mainlanders are always portrayed as uneducated, greedy and lazy people who are to blame for causing many social problems in Hong Kong.

As for students, although the Chinese History curriculum in secondary schools enables them to gain knowledge of the historical development of China from the ancient times to the modern period (i.e. 5000 B.C. to 1973 A.D.), students are impressed only with the glorious achievements of their ancestors in the ancient times while they feel ashamed of all the political chaos and poverty that modern China has undergone since late Qing Dynasty (i.e. 1900 A.D.). It is under such a background that a split attitude is developed towards Ancient and Modern China. This explains why the informants show admiration to China for things that are detachable from the PRC (e.g. traditional culture, custom, geographical beauty) and yet resist it as a poor and backward society.

6.2.2.2 Link between Chinese identity and Putonghua

During the discussions about Chinese identity and Putonghua, three main issues were brought up regarding language and identity viz. 1) In what way is Chinese

identity related to Putonghua? 2) Can language education help to foster identity? 3) Are different linguistic identities mutually exclusive? In the following, the key findings in this regard will be discussed.

a) Relationship between Chinese Identity and positive attitude towards Putonghua

Regarding the first issue, the relationship between Chinese identity and attitude towards Putonghua seemed to be positive. Interviewees who proclaimed Chinese identity generally demonstrated positive attitudes towards Putonghua. For them, being able to speak Putonghua was a necessary marker of the Chinese identity. A representative example can be found in the discussion of Group C2 where Student 37 gave an affirmative and definite answer when “Chinese identity” was suggested to him as a reason for his choice of Putonghua. As illustrated below, his perception of Putonghua as a marker of the Chinese group was revealed:

I: Which subject do you like most?

S37: I like Chinese lit. and Chinese history.

I: Will you like PTH more because of this?

S37: PTH? It's a language we use for communication, it's not related to literature and history.

I: Do you think yourself a Chinese?

S37: Yes. I am a Chinese.

I: Do you think you must be good at PTH as a Chinese?

S37: Definitely.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Cultural identity is a ‘self-ascribed’ variable, therefore it is perhaps understandable to find students who proclaimed Chinese identity to show positive attitudes towards Putonghua. However, relationship in the reversed direction is not always true. In the discussion of group D2, despite the fact that students expressed positive attitudes towards Putonghua, their Chinese identity did not in any way grow stronger since their choice for Putonghua was made mainly on instrumental grounds which bore little relationship with national identity:

I: As a Chinese, must we know PTH?

S287: I think we need to learn PTH because more and more Mainlanders are coming to HK.

S177: Yes, we need to learn PTH because we need to use it. But I don't think we should learn it because we are Chinese.

S79: Agreed. Not because we are Chinese so we're obliged to learn it. We need to learn it because it's a trend that we have to go to the Mainland for further development. PTH is good for our future development, not because we're Chinese and we're returned to China, then we have to learn the language. It's not related!

b) Effect of language education on perceptions of identity

Byram (1992) points out that while language is often considered a boundary marker, the relationship between language and identity is not always a necessary one. For example, he says, 'not all people who speak German are Germans...and not all who say they are German and have German nationality can speak German'. Hence, he concludes that 'self-ascription' is a more crucial element in one's identity. In the interviews, students of this study seemed to echo the same point about the importance of determination rather than language education in the formulation of group identity. In the following, Student 76 of Group C1 maintained that language learning and perception of her own identity were two separate issues and that the former would not easily change the latter. Language learning seemed to have little effect on students' views of their own identity and in Byram's (1992:11) words, they 'remained firmly anchored in their own original values and culture'.

I: Do you think strengthening national education and PTH education will help to enhance students' national identity in HK?

S76: That will increase their knowledge about the language and the place only...it doesn't make us like the Mainland more...if we don't identify ourselves with the PRC, this will not help!

Student 815 of the same group, who claimed himself Chinese, emphasized that education was important in enhancing national identity, yet he disagreed that language teaching would alter views of one's own identity since languages were taught mainly for instrumental purposes in Hong Kong schools. This was true not only to Putonghua, but also English:

S815: I think education is important in enhancing one's national identity, but I don't think teaching PTH will help. A language is a language. If you have more PTH lessons, you will know the language better but you won't identify stronger with China. Same to English, learning English will not make you like Britain more. It's totally not related!

c) Relationship between Hong Kong and Chinese linguistic identities

Interestingly, not only those who proclaimed Chinese identity were found positive to Putonghua, the other students also recognized Putonghua as a marker of the Chinese group. Although they might have strong Hong Kong identity, it did not mean that they would have to exclude the Chinese identity and Putonghua. In fact, Chinese and Hong Kong linguistic identities may not be mutually exclusive. A representative example can be found in Group D2 where even students who did not claim Chinese identity for themselves agreed that being a Chinese, one should be able to speak Putonghua.

I: As a Chinese, should we learn PTH?

S386: Yes. Although I am a Hongkonger, I still think we should learn PTH. After all, our motherland is China!

Similarly, in Group C2 and D1, participants expressed positive inclination towards Chinese linguistic identity despite the fact that they had claimed themselves "Hongkongers". They did not need a high standard of Putonghua, however, knowing only a little was sufficient to give them a touch of Chinese identity that could coexist modestly together with their Hong Kong ego.

C2

I: As a Chinese, must we know PTH?

S77: Yes. PTH is a Chinese language, and it's a common language among Chinese people.

I: Do we have to be fluent in it?

S77: Preferably yes, but for the time being, it's a bit difficult in HK.

D1

I: As a Chinese, must we know PTH?

S42, 80 & 280: Yes, we should know a little, but need not be much.

However, while Hong Kong and Chinese linguistic identities could coexist harmoniously in some cases, they were also mutually exclusive in the other. In the following example cited from Group D2, students who possessed very strong Hong Kong identity insisted that Putonghua was not needed for Hongkongers:

I: As a Chinese, should we learn PTH?

S43: No, I haven't got a sense of belonging to China yet because we're returned to the PRC just for a few years.

I: Then what are you now?

S43: I'm a Hongkonger.

I: And you, 331?

S331: I don't think it's necessary for me to learn PTH. I am a Hongkonger. Hongkongers should be speaking Cantonese. It's good enough for me to know Cantonese, not necessarily PTH.

In fact, the above extracts have well illustrated transitions in cultural identity and language attitudes. Although the political transition from Britain to the PRC was completed in July 1997, the transition in terms of cultural identity and language attitudes is ongoing in Hong Kong. Students at different points of transition may therefore have different perceptions of their own identity and preference for language varieties. For those who are less resistant to the new PRC regime are apt to adopt the Chinese identity and Putonghua; and for those who have strong resistance will hold

firm onto their Hong Kong identity and Cantonese and English. Nevertheless, linguistic identity is not at all a fixed trait, its fluid nature allows it to change with the social context. Revisiting the citation of Student 43 above, it is obvious that he has hinted a potential change to stronger Chinese identity and thus more positive acceptance of Putonghua given a longer time.

6.2.2.3 Summary - Chinese linguistic identity

To sum up, informants of this study are proud of China as regards its ancient Chinese history, culture and the natural beauty of the country. However, their inclination towards Chinese identity is often undermined by their negative impressions of Modern China as a backward and disorderly society. As a result, many students claimed for themselves Chinese identity only passively because of the change of sovereignty. Regarding the relationship between Chinese identity and Putonghua, although a close relationship was found between the two variables, yet students tend to suggest that language education will not help to foster identity towards the country since languages are mostly taught in Hong Kong for instrumental purposes only. Both Hong Kong and Chinese linguistic identities can be mutually inclusive or exclusive, and more importantly, they are not fixed traits of students and are subject to changes with social developments.

6.2.3 Relationship between cultural identity and language attitudes

As found in the statistical analysis, Cultural identity is the variable which correlates the most highly with students' language attitudes. Totally fitting the hypothesis, the Hongkong group did show more positive attitudes towards Cantonese and English whereas the Chinese group was more positively inclined to Putonghua. Since Cultural identity is a self-ascribed variable and the groups are formed by virtue of the informants' cultural and linguistic orientations, this result is perhaps understandable. For those who proclaimed themselves Chinese, although some of them showed only passive Chinese linguistic identity (refer to Section 6.2.2.1a), their attitude towards the PRC and Putonghua was still positive in general.

For the Hong Kong group, the post-colonial changes did not seem to have strong impact on them. Despite the quick advancement of China and the serious economic downturn of Hong Kong, the large majority of the informants rejected associating themselves with the PRC. With resistance feelings towards the PRC, it is perhaps unsurprising to find the Hong Kong group less positively inclined to Putonghua. However, one must not take Hong Kong identity as an obstacle to the development of positive attitudes towards Chinese identity and Putonghua. As shown in previous sections, the two identities and three language varieties may not be mutually exclusive and possibilities should be explored to accommodate the two identities and three languages harmoniously in the same persons.

6.3 Gender and Language Attitudes

As revealed from the statistical analysis, the differences between the two genders in all domains were statistically rather small, showing little significant divergence in language attitudes between boys and girls. Even for the greatest difference found on ‘Affective orientation towards English’, it was only a medium one. Nevertheless, in the interviews, girls did show a noticeable integrative inclination⁹ towards English while boys tended to perceive their language choice from a more practical point of view.

6.3.1 Integrative inclination of girls towards English

Where there was evidence of admiration for the life-style of the English-speaking countries, the kinds of reason given were focused on a range of factors. First there were those who explained this in terms of environment and study atmosphere:

C2

I: Would you like to be an English-speaker, Cantonese-speaker or Putonghua-speaker if you were given a free choice?

⁹ The term ‘integrative’ is used here in Gardner & Lambert’s (1972) definition, which refers to someone’s favourable attitude to a language because of his/her admiration of the culture of its country or/and its people.

S77: English-speaker because I admire the kind of life in western countries...the environment and study atmosphere in the overseas seem to be better.

Three other girls of the group: Agreed.

Then there were those who referred to English speakers being more friendly and competent. In the following citations, girls from two different groups attempted to account for their affection for the English-speakers in this regard:

A1

I: Which language gives you the strongest feeling of closeness?

S688: English because Gweilos (English speaking Caucasians) are very friendly. They always hug and kiss each other.

Student 686 of Group A2 thought that westerners were more competent. However, it is noteworthy that her impression of westerners refers mainly to the USA:

I: Who are more competent? Gweilos or Hongkongers?

S686: Gweilos. For example, HK film-makers all wish to work in Hollywood. Why? Because they are more advanced and prestigious...things in western countries seem to be better and of higher standard.

While girls expressed an integrative inclination towards English, boys' consideration tended to be more pragmatic. Revisiting the reasons that boys offered for their preference for English, few integrative reasons were given. Instead, the main reason they offered was instrumental. The following citation from Group B2 is a representative example which shows the different orientations of boys and girls. Student 891 (girl) expressed her subjective affection for native English-speakers because they appeared good-looking, friendly and educated. Despite the fact that Student 537's (boy) choice was in fact the same, his ultimate aim was a practical one:

I: Do you like Cantonese-speakers, English speakers or PTH-speakers?

S891: English-speakers. I think they are more beautiful.

I: You mean their appearance?

S891: Yes. Aren't their features more beautiful? They are very kind too, friendly and have good conduct.

I: What do the boys think?

S537: Whether a person is good does not depend on what language one speaks, it depends on one's own conduct. There's a wrong perception that English-speakers have higher education and they are more gentle....

I: So who would you like to make friends with?

S537: For me, I like acquainting with English-speakers because I can learn better English, this is more realistic and practical....

6.3.2 Hypotheses unsupported

As cited in Chapter Two, Labov (1966) suggests that females are usually more 'status conscious' in their language choice due to their inferior social status. However, as inconclusive as many other discussions about females' preference for prestigious language varieties (James, 1996), no sufficient evidence was found in this study to prove that girls' integrative inclination towards English was in fact a consideration of 'status' and an effect of inferiority complex. Further investigation is therefore needed to explore what contributes to the differences between boys and girls in this regard.

Another hypothesis regarding Gender and language attitudes is originated from Dale (1974), in which, boys are believed to be indifferent to learning foreign languages because they usually consider them the girls' subjects (cited in Clark & Trafford, 1996). In order to explore whether this perception has an effect on language attitudes, the interviewees were asked to name the subject they wished to be best in. Like the girls, many boys claimed also English as their first choice. A typical example was found in the discussion of Group D2 where all the boys claimed that they would like to be best in English because it was the foundation for all other subjects. However, as mentioned in the last section, their choice for English in this case was also a pragmatic consideration. For them,

English was essential as a basic tool for learning while their interests lay on other subject areas:

I: Which subject do you want to be best in?

S43, 177 & 331 (boys): English.

I: Don't boys want to be best in Science and Mathematics?

S177: But if one's English is not good, one will not be able to understand the subject matter...English is the basic. When one has a strong foundation in the basic, then one may choose to study what one is interested in, that's Science in my case.

Hence, Dale's hypothesis does not seem to apply to the present study since English is not taught as an optional foreign language but a compulsory subject and a medium of instruction in Hong Kong schools, which is equally important for both boys and girls as a gatekeeper to higher and wider opportunities. Although boys did show less strong affection for English than girls in this study, Dale's assumption does not seem to be a viable explanation for it.

6.4 Medium of Instruction and Language Attitudes

As the title has suggested, the only difference between CMI and EMI schools is that English is the major language used for teaching and learning in the EMI schools while CMI schools are using Chinese (i.e. spoken Cantonese and written Standard Modern Chinese) as the medium of instruction for all subjects. However, this applies only to junior secondary levels while such a dichotomy of EMI and CMI has become blurred for senior levels. Since September 2000, 2/3 of the CMI schools in Hong Kong have reverted part of their curriculum from Chinese (spoken Cantonese and written Standard Modern Chinese) to English for Forms 4 & 5 (GCSE equivalent) and all subjects for Forms 6 & 7 (A-level equivalent) (MingPao, 22/5/2001). This however reinstates the importance of English in CMI schools that leads to a small difference in students' attitudes towards English in the 'Cognition' domain. A representative example of such views is cited below where Student 813 of Group A1 recognized the crucial role of English as the gatekeeper for higher education:

I: Which language has the highest status?

S813: Surely, it's English.

I: Why? Aren't you studying in a CMI school?

S813: Actually, I'm disappointed that the MOI for my class now is not English.... We are now doing most of the subjects in Chinese. This makes promoting to F.6 difficult since the MOI for F.6 is English. Even if we are lucky enough to get up to F.6, all we learn today will be useless since the MOI for F.6 is English.

Despite the small difference in the 'Cognition' domain, the EMI group was found more positively inclined to English than the CMI group in the 'Affect' domain and the difference between the two groups is medium. In the following, we shall look at the possible explanations for such a divergence in language attitudes.

6.4.1 Factors contributing to the difference between CMI and EMI students

6.4.1.1 Significance of exposure

The main difference between CMI and EMI groups falls on their affective inclination towards English. As cited in Chapter Two, principals of two CMI schools pointed out that their students fear English and did not feel interested in learning it due to little exposure to the language (MingPao, 20/2/2001a & b). Hence, it is believed that exposure to English is essential in building one's confidence in the language, and consequently a positive attitude towards it. For this reason, EMI students were expected to show a more positive attitude towards English than the CMI group. Indeed, in the present study, not only this hypothesis is supported, but also the rationale behind it. It is due to the high exposure to English that students feel more strongly that English is a familiar language and part of their life. In the following discussion of Group D1 (EMI), students tended to believe that EMI training had helped in building up their confidence in the language.

I: Are you afraid of English?

176: No, I'm not ... I can speak to foreigners if they don't mind my accent.

I: Does EMI help in building up your confidence in the language?

80: Yes. It helps. You read more, listen more and talk more, then you are used to it and you won't be afraid of it...

As for CMI students, they expressed less favourable attitude towards English in the interviews mainly because it was difficult to learn, and their frustration in English language learning consequently turned into a feeling of dislike to the language. Examples of this have already been cited in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.2.2) that will not be repeated here. In addition to that, the following citations from Group B2 further reveal that the lack of confidence and successful experience in mastering the language also undermined CMI students' confidence in English and thus their affective attitude towards the language:

I: Are you confident in English?

S887: No.

S799: Totally not.

I: Is it because you are in a CMI school?

S799: No, I don't think so. We have English lessons too. But it's true that we don't have as much exposure to English as those in EMI schools.

S887: I couldn't understand English well since I was very young. I didn't know what the teachers were talking about, so I lost interest in the language. But I'm now less resistant. I'll try to listen even though I don't always understand.

I: So, do you like English?

S779: No, I hate it because it's difficult!

Although many CMI students did express frustration and dislike of English, yet no causal relationship can be concluded between MOI and students' affective attitudes towards English since there is no evidence to prove that it is the use of Chinese as the MOI which negatively affects students' affective attitude towards English.

6.4.1.2 The EMI pride

Apart from having greater confidence in English, 'EMI' was also treasured by students as a symbol of the elite since only the top 30% of the students were able to enter EMI schools under the new Mother Tongue Education Policy (see Section 1.2.5). Since English was such an important component of the pride of EMI students, it was natural to find that EMI students were more positive to English. In the discussion of Group C2 (EMI) below, students explicitly spelt out their sense of superiority as an EMI student.

I: Do you feel proud to study in an EMI school?

S385: Yes, I'm proud of being in an EMI school because society has sent us the message that EMI schools are higher class.

S275 & others: Agreed

S37: Other people will think our social status is higher...we seem to be superior.

S77: Since English is a second language, so studying in EMI schools will be better recognized and it's an advantage for our future career and study.

6.4.2 Medium of instruction and linguistic identity

As stated in Chapter Two, language is an important tool for nation building, and as Baker (1992) suggests, students' language attitudes can be fostered by the school if a certain language and its culture are valued. It was on this logic that CMI students were believed to have stronger Chinese linguistic identity and positive attitudes towards Putonghua through a complete Chinese programme whereas EMI students would be more inclined to Hong Kong linguistic identity and the English language since all subjects were taught in English. However, no strong evidence was found through either quantitative or qualitative methods to support this hypothesis. In reality, there was little difference between CMI and EMI programmes in terms of curriculum and national education. For both CMI and EMI schools, there was only one Putonghua lesson per week for junior secondary classes and the language was totally abandoned from F.4 upwards. National education in both streams was equally minimal.

According to Student 813 of Group A1 (CMI) cited below, only occasional ceremonies like hoisting the national flag on the national day would remind them of their role as Chinese. However, he insisted that learning Putonghua would not help in enhancing their Chinese identity since it was taught only as a communication tool unrelated to patriotism:

I: Are there any activities, functions in your school that helps develop your national identity?

All: Hoisting the national flag on Oct.1 (the national day). No, not every day, only in some special occasions. Other than this, no more. We don't even have to sing the national song.

I: Do you think CMI schools will help to develop stronger Chinese identity?

S813: No, it's not related. Even if the MOI is Chinese, it doesn't change our impression about the PRC. It's only a learning language, only a tool to learn other subjects.

I: Will learning PTH help then?

S813: No, we don't have PTH lessons any more this year, even if there were, PTH lesson is about reading texts aloud or conversation only, nothing about nation or national identity is mentioned. We have no civic education lessons either.

A similar situation was reported by interviewees in another CMI school where the only difference from an EMI school was the instruction language while ethos and culture of the school was like any other ordinary schools in Hong Kong. Neither the Chinese culture nor Putonghua was more valued in CMI schools. Contrarily, English was highly valued in CMI schools since its status as MOI would be restored at senior secondary levels. Ironical though, as pointed out by Student 799 of Group B1 below, his school (CMI) ran an English day every year to encourage students to learn better English whereas no special activities were organized for Putonghua:

I: Does the school help in developing your patriotism?

631: No, the school is an unpatriotic place. It cares about studying only.

I: Are there any activities that enhance your national feelings?

799: No.

I: Will CMI schools make you more interested in PTH?

All: No, it's not related. We don't have any more PTH lessons.

891: This is a Chinese medium school, not PTH medium school!

799: Instead, we have an English-speaking day. On that day, we have to speak English for the whole day. But there's no activity for PTH...

6.4.3 Summary

In the affective perspectives, the EMI students were generally found more positively inclined to English due to higher exposure to the language, stronger confidence in mastering it and more importantly, the significance of English being a marker of their elite status. As expected, CMI students did show relatively weaker affection for English even though they valued it as highly as their EMI counterparts since the language was retained in CMI schools as the medium of instruction for senior levels. However, the hypotheses regarding Putonghua were not supported, CMI students did not show stronger favour for the language since it was not more important in their curriculum than that in the EMI stream. Nor did CMI students reveal stronger sense of patriotism or Chinese identity since national education in their schools was not in any way more prominent than their EMI counterparts. Although the correlation between MOI and language attitudes is affirmed, no causal relationship can be concluded since no sufficient evidence is available in this study to prove that CMI is the factor which significantly diminishes students' affection for English.

6.5 Social Class and Language Attitudes

In Chapter Two, the hypothesis about the relationship between Social class and language attitudes was mainly formulated upon Schumann's (1976) social distance theory: if two language groups have positive attitudes towards each other and both desire assimilation, then a good second language learning situation will exist. Hence, the Middle-class group was expected to show a stronger inclination towards English

while the Working class to Putonghua due to social closeness between the former and the English-speaking people; and the latter with the Putonghua-speaking people (see Section 2.4.3).

6.5.1 Social distance between the middle-class group and English speakers

Although the difference in language attitudes between different social classes was not really salient, the social distance between the Middle-class group and English speakers did appear closer. From the interviews, 3 main advantages of the Middle-class were gathered:

6.5.1.1 Stronger parental influence and support

Since all Middle-class parents in this study possessed senior secondary education or above, nearly all of them could speak English. For example, the father of Student 35 of group C1 was an English teacher and he helped him a lot in English learning when he was young.

I: Do your parents help you learn English or Putonghua at home?

S35: Yes, very helpful for English because my father is an English teacher, he helped me a lot when I was in junior forms but now I can manage it myself and I don't need his help so often...

I: How about Puotonghua?

S35: No.

Of course, not all parents are language teachers and they do not assist their children in language learning explicitly as the father of Student 35. However, modeling effect functions somehow and the Middle-class children are more ready to aspire to the English language after their parents. Even if parents are not able to help in person, Middle-class families are able to hire private teachers to help their children in developing their proficiency in English. In the following case, Student 77 of Group C2 found English enjoyable because she had crossed over the threshold level with the help of a private tutor for English:

I: I realize that you don't have PTH anymore since F.4, is it good?

S77: Yes. I'm glad that we have no more PTH lessons now, because I can't speak PTH, it's difficult!

I: Isn't English even more difficult?

S77: No, No.....I have taken extra English oral lessons with a private teacher ...so I can speak better English and am more confident in talking, therefore I like English more.

I: Do your parents help?

S77: They can speak English but they don't have time!

6.5.1.2 More use of English for daily life purposes

Apart from private tutors, many of the Middle-class families can afford to hire a Filipino maid at home, and thus create realistic opportunities for children to use English for daily life purposes, which, as a result, reinforces the role of English as part of their life. In the following, Student 524 of group B2 explained that she liked English more because it was a familiar language that she used every day and that English was easier than Chinese in writing:

I: Do you like English?

S524: Of course, I like English. English is easier than Chinese. It's quicker to write English than Chinese.

I: Your English standard must be better than your Chinese.

S524: Oh, a lot.

I: You've been comparing the two languages on writing, how about the spoken form, Cantonese and PTH?

S524: I like Cantonese most, because I use this language since I was very young. Next is English because I use it nearly every day.

I: Do you speak English at home as well?

S524: Yes, to the Filipino maid. I don't have much contact with PTH, so I don't really know what it is.

6.5.1.3 Higher self-perception & better life-opportunities

According to Schumann's social distance model (1976), if the political, cultural and economic status of two groups of speakers were equal, such a situation would facilitate inter-group contact and thus promote the acquisition of the target language by the second language learners. In this case, the Middle-class group was closer to the English speakers in Hong Kong since both groups shared similar status. In the following example of Student 35, his perception of the English speakers was quite close to that of his own, and he did not find the English-speaking group beyond reach. He thought that English-speaking people were doing similar professional work in Hong Kong. He himself would also desire to pursue a career of similar status in future which would require a high proficiency of English:

I: What do you think native English-speakers usually do in Hong Kong?

S35: Europeans and Americans are usually doing educational work at British council, executive officers of international companies or sometimes bar tenders.

I: What job do you like to do in the future?

S35: A psychiatrist, maybe.

Apart from self-perception, interviewees of the Middle-class seemed to have wider exposure to the outside world where English was used. As in the case of Student 35, he had extensive traveling experience which exposed him to native English-speaking countries. By his choice, he could pursue his study in any of these countries he liked, and financial problem would never be a hurdle to his future development. The English-speaking world therefore was very close to him:

I: What countries have you traveled to?

S35: China, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea...

I: What languages do you use for traveling in these countries?

S35: English can help me to go around all these countries. I don't need others.

I: Will you have chance to study abroad?

S35: Yes, after my secondary education, the decision is entirely with me.

I: Do you wish to go?

S35: It depends on what faculty and which country I'm going to.

6.5.1.4 Life chances of the working-class

For the Working-class interviewees, although they might aspire to English as much as their Middle-class counterparts did for its high instrumental values, yet they did not have close social distance with the English speakers due to a lack of environmental support. Their parental influence and support were minimal since their parents reached an educational level of not higher than junior secondary, nor did they need to use English to communicate with a Filipino maid at home. Despite this, some interviewees of the Working-class aspired high too for their future, yet not many of them had first-person experience of the native English-speaking countries and people. In Schumann's words, they lived in a rather 'enclosed' circle where little English was needed for inter-group communication. As for studying abroad, what Student 329 of Group C1 said was perhaps the best illustration of the disadvantage of a low-income working-class student. For him, getting better chance for the future was a matter of money:

I: Do you have chance to study abroad?

S329: Oh, unless I've won the Mark Six Lottery Jackpot!

6.5.2 Nature of social distance in Hong Kong context

Schumann's (1976) social distance theory was formulated to explain second language acquisition in multi-racial settings, yet the present study is about the attitudes of a homogenous group towards two non-native language varieties. Although it is true that different linguistic groups do exist in Hong Kong since no society is totally homogenous, yet interaction between groups is minimal. Fishman (1967) described Hong Kong as a place of 'diglossia without bilingualism', which means two large monolingual population groups co-existed in the same society with very little interaction with each other. Over almost three decades, even though the number of bilinguals has substantially increased in Hong Kong due to the implementation of mass education (Hong Kong Education Commission, 1995), the relationship between

different ethnolinguistic groups still resembles that in the 1960s when they co-exist in the same society without much inter-group interaction. The kind of social closeness described in this section between the Middle-class group and the English speakers, therefore, was not literal but cultural. Indeed, all interviewees, regardless of their social classes, admitted that they had very little contact with either native English-speakers or Putonghua-speakers in their everyday life. Occasionally, interviewees reported knowing some English-speakers, yet they were mostly their classmates who returned from the overseas. Despite this, I must emphasize that this conclusion applies only to the Middle-class group of this study who are students from the local mainstream schools. As for those upper-middle class students who study in costly International schools with native English-speaking classmates and teachers, the social distance between the two groups is realistically minimal. This, however, reveals a limitation of this study and explains the mostly insignificant differences found between the Middle-class and Working-class group since students from the highly affluent families who usually attend International schools or the prestigious local schools are not included in this study. The present informants actually belong to a rather narrow socio-economic range whose median monthly income differs only by about HK\$23,000 (i.e. £1916), and that does not induce great differences in students' life chances, self-perceptions and, most importantly, their language orientation.

6.5.3 Social distance between the working class group and Putonghua speakers

As mentioned in Chapter Two, it is believed that the Working-class group will show significantly more positive attitude towards Putonghua since their social distance with the Mainland Chinese is closer than that of the Middle-class group. However the statistical result did not turn out to be significant enough to support this hypothesis (see Section 4.2.2.3c). The possible reasons were explored through the focus group interviews and the findings are as follows:

6.5.3.1 Group assimilation and attitude towards Putonghua

Schumann (1976) suggests that social distance between two groups is measured in terms of political, cultural and economic status. If the status of the second language learning group is higher than that of the target language group, social distance will prevail and the former will have little intention to learn a lower language. As mentioned in earlier discussions (see Section 6.2.1), students of this study mostly perceived themselves superior to the Mainland Chinese. Hence, the social distance between the second language group (i.e. the Hongkong Cantonese-speakers) and the target language group (i.e. the Putonghua-speakers) is wide since Hongkongers generally believe that they are a higher group. This explains why students' attitude towards Putonghua were not very positive even though scholars commonly believed that the status and instrumental value of Putonghua would rise tremendously after the change of sovereignty when the political power changed from English-speaking to Putonghua-speaking. In brief, social distance between all social classes and Putonghua speakers was great due to two main reasons:

a) Putonghua speakers as a lower group

As mentioned earlier in this chapter (see Section 6.2.1), students had negative impressions of the PRC and its people as dirty and backward. Similar biases were reiterated when students were explicitly asked if they would welcome quick assimilation between Hong Kong and the PRC. As a higher group, the majority of the interviewees, regardless of their socio-economic status, tended to reject assimilating 'down' the status line. Such resistance towards the target language group, as a result, hindered the development of positive attitudes towards Putonghua. This applied not only to the Middle-class group, but also students of the other social classes. In the following, representative citations were taken from interviewees of different social classes to reveal the universality of such resistance. The interviewees' social-class grouping was indicated next to their numbers with M = Middle class, I = Intermediate class and W = Working class.

C1

I: Is it good for the two places to merge quickly?

S35/M: I'll let the merging process take place naturally and gradually. Now, Hongkongers still have a sense of superiority and don't want outsiders to come in. Although we are both Chinese, the Mainland is separated from us for a few decades and we are very different in many ways.

I: And you, 270?

S270/I: Now, even before the merge takes place, the Mainlanders have already flocked to HK. It's terrible!

I: But you can move back to the Mainland in return!

S270/I: No, who cares? Things are so ugly and dirty up there! If they could come at their free will, all of them would come, thinking that they can easily get rich in HK. If the two places are merged, HK will sink.

A1

I: Is it good that China and HK quickly assimilate together?

S813/W: Then it will be chaotic. I don't want this to happen. If the two places become one, then all those people in the PRC will come to HK... Those people inside (the Mainlanders) may have different habits. If they litter all round or pee in the street, then we'll have big trouble!

b) Putonghua speakers as competitors

In the above citations, while students expressed disgust towards the Mainlanders for being dirty and ugly, they were at the same time showing worries about their coming in as competitors for social resources. As pointed out in a survey conducted by Hong Kong Polytechnic University, people of lower socio-economic status were found showing stronger prejudices against the newly-arrived Mainlanders because they were seen as competitors for jobs and social welfare (cited from MingPao, 27/11/2000). Apart from this, a Middle-class student of Group B2 cautioned against the

PRC as competitor for international businesses and its people probably for higher job opportunities:

I: Is it good to have quick assimilation between HK and China?

S537: No. It's harmful to the economy of HK. We can't compete with the PRC, their production cost, like labour, land, materials, is cheaper than that in HK.

I: How about its people? Will they be competitors?

S537: Many of them are not educated, but many of them are brilliant, for example, students at Beijing or Qing Hua University. Those people are really very intelligent, they are much better than the Hongkongers!

The reaction of Student 537 is in fact a representative sentiment in post-colonial Hong Kong when society is generally worried about their diminishing competitiveness in the region and the Government's policy in importing elite from the PRC (see Section 1.2.3). Whatever it is, emotions of rejection against the Mainlanders as competitors were noted in all social classes. While the Middle-class felt concerned about the competition with the elite from the Mainland for higher jobs and international businesses, the Intermediate and Working class rejected the Mainlanders as competitors for internal social resources. Since there was little desire for assimilation with the PRC, attitude towards Putonghua was therefore far from being highly positive. The overwhelming response of Group D2 and that of a Working-class student were perhaps a most straightforward summary of the effect of social distance on students' attitude towards Putonghua:

I: Is it good for the Hong Kong and the PRC to merge together?

All: No!

S331: No, I don't want to speak Putonghua!

Different from the hypotheses, no evidence was collected to prove that the social distance between the Working-class and the Putonghua speakers was in any way closer. Neither did the Working-class group show significantly stronger favour for Putonghua nor did they see it as an alternative means for social mobility as

hypothesized. On the contrary, like other social class groups, the Working-class interviewees rejected Putonghua as the language of a lower group and a competitor for internal resources.

6.6 Chapter Summary

From the group interviews, it was gathered that girls were showing stronger integrative orientation towards English. However, further investigation is needed to account for this tendency since no clear evidence is available to throw light on the reasons behind. As for Medium of instruction and Social class, English was found playing a rather significant role as a group marker for these two variables. The EMI group favoured English more strongly because it was a symbol of their elitist status; and so did the Middle-class group because English was a familiar language for them, and thus became also a marker of their socio-economic status. Unlike what was hypothesized, the CMI group did not seem to show any stronger favour for Putonghua since it did not play a more important role in CMI schools than the EMI ones. Also different from what was expected, the Working-class group did not show a distinctly more positive attitude towards Putonghua than their Middle-class counterparts as an alternative means for social mobility. Similar to other groups, the Working-class students showed resistance towards the Putonghua-speakers as a lower group and competitors for social resources.

The discussion about Cultural identity and language attitudes in this chapter seemed to reveal different attitudes in a continuum, of which, students who had less resistance towards the PRC regime were more positively inclined to Chinese identity and Putonghua whereas those who were highly resistant to the political change still anchored firmly onto their Hong Kong identity and the use of Cantonese and English as a marker of the local identity. Lau (1997) points out in his research that there is a trend, though long-term and slow, for a greater inclination towards the Chinese identity. Although such a movement is still far from being obvious in this study, there are signs showing a potential transition towards a more accommodating attitude towards Chinese identity and Putonghua.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Implications

7.1 Introduction

Studies of language attitudes in Hong Kong over the last few decades have focused on a dichotomy of Chinese and English with little attention paid on Putonghua. Among these studies, the majority of them targeted only an overview of language attitudes without exploring the variables related to them. As Hong Kong enters upon a new post-colonial era, issues of language attitudes take on new significance. Since the change of sovereignty in 1997, Hong Kong has undergone great political, socio-economic and educational changes, and the new post-colonial context might have great impacts on students, including their attitudes towards Cantonese (the vernacular language), English (the international language) and Putonghua (the national language of China). Among all students, the most unique group was that who began their secondary school education in Year 1998 since they were brought up amidst all the changes that took place in the post-colonial era of Hong Kong. In order to find out the attitudes of this group of students towards the three major spoken language varieties used in the new post-colonial context of Hong Kong and the significance of the four chosen variables (i.e. Gender, Medium of Instruction, Social class, Cultural identity), this study was devised in search of answers to 3 research questions:

1. What are the overall attitudes of the first post-colonial Hong Kong secondary-school generation towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua?
2. What are the significant differences in language attitudes between groups of students under Gender, Medium of Instruction, Social class and Cultural identity?
3. How are the four target variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary-school generation?

7.2 Summary of Findings

In the previous chapters, language attitudes of the first post-colonial secondary-school generation in Hong Kong have been investigated through a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings gathered through the questionnaire survey, Matched-guise test and focus-group interviews triangulate and complement each other, and the answers to the 3 research questions can be summarized as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of the first post-colonial Hong Kong secondary-school generation towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua?

In general, the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools of this study showed rather positive attitudes towards the three target spoken language varieties both in terms of affective and cognitive orientations. The former means the informants' affective feelings towards the varieties while the latter refers to their perceptions of the instrumental values and status of the three varieties. Although the informants' attitudes towards the three varieties generally fell within the same positive range, the intensity of such a positive attitude was substantially different on each language variety.

As far as their affective feelings are concerned, the findings showed that the informants liked Cantonese most, English second and Putonghua least. They liked Cantonese most because it was their mother tongue, a characteristic of Hong Kong and a familiar language that they could speak without difficulty. Although their attitudes towards English were positive, as revealed from the statistical analysis of the questionnaires, they liked it significantly less than Cantonese yet a lot more than

Putonghua. While it seems totally understandable why students like Cantonese most, it is surprising to find students express greater affection for English than Putonghua, the national language of China. According to the students who participated in the focus group interviews, they liked English more than Putonghua because it was their second most familiar language that they had learnt since Kindergarten. The language was also part of their life since it was widely used in society and for the Internet. In addition, it was a marker of intelligent and educated people. In accord with the ethnolinguistic vitality theory of Giles et al (1977), English was more highly valued because of stronger 'Institutional support' and higher 'Social status'. However, the most prominent factor which reduced the students' affection for English was that it was difficult to learn since its system was totally different from that of Cantonese.

Students' affective attitude towards Putonghua was a little negatively skewed with a mean value being slightly below the central point. This revealed greater resistance to the language as compared to Cantonese and English. For those who liked Putonghua, the language was easy to learn since it was similar to Cantonese and it was the national language of China which marked their group membership as a Chinese. However, those who had negative feelings for Putonghua felt just the opposite. They disliked the language because it was difficult to learn and it carried no special meaning to them as a national language. Such a wide distribution of opinions, however, was not found with Cantonese and English either in the group interviews or the questionnaire survey. In fact, such a disparity in attitudes towards Putonghua was also revealed in the statistical analysis, of which, the standard deviation values related to Putonghua were comparatively larger than those of the other two language varieties (see Table 4 in Chapter Four).

As regards students' cognitive perceptions, the informants' evaluation of the instrumental value and status of the three target spoken language varieties was generally positive. However, the intensity of their positive attitude varied significantly toward each variety. Among the three language varieties, English was perceived to be of the highest instrumental value since it maintained its role as the gatekeeper for upward and outward social mobility. Even in the post-colonial context of Hong Kong, the hegemonic position of English as a language of power remained unshaken. Cantonese ranked second mainly because it was the language used the most widely within Hong Kong. Despite the economic boom in the PRC and the enhanced status of Putonghua in Hong Kong after the change of sovereignty, Putonghua ranked last because it was not used widely in Hong Kong. For students whose minds were locally oriented, they did not find Putonghua useful since they needed only Cantonese and English for communication within and outside home.

Similar findings were gathered in the Matched-guise test, through which, English speakers were rated the highest on traits which suggested competence (e.g. intelligent, competent, industrious) and charisma (e.g. educated, wealthy, modern) while Cantonese was rated the highest for solidarity (e.g. friendly, sincere, considerate). This result aligns with those found in previous research conducted in 1970s and 80s (see Chapter Two). Having gone through 3 decades' time, language attitude in this regard does not seem to have changed much; Cantonese is still perceived as a language for solidarity and English for competence and power. In the Matched-guised test, Putonghua was rated the lowest among the three language varieties in all categories. As a new-comer in the Hong Kong sociolinguistic scene, the role of Putonghua is still blurred and its position not well-defined as perceived by the first post-colonial generation in

Hong Kong secondary schools.

Upon entering the post-colonial era, Cantonese, the vernacular language, maintains its role as the lingua franca used for all intra-group communication. It is the most popular language variety among people and is highly valued for its function as a marker of Hong Kong identity. Such function, however, has become even more prominent since the neo-colonial days as people are eager to uphold a conspicuous marker that distinguishes them from the Mainlanders.

As found in this study, English's hegemonic position remains unchanged. In fact, from previous research (see Chapter Two) to the present study, the attitude of Hong Kong people to English has undergone interesting development. In early 1980s, using English was considered unpatriotic; in the 1990s, English was perceived as an international language instead of a colonial language which would not reduce national feelings; up till the present study, English is even considered an indispensable part of Hong Kong people's life. After Cantonese, English is the second language that Hong Kong people cling on to to consolidate their Hong Kong identity. This function of English as a second identity marker has become even more important in post-colonial times as people are eager to differentiate themselves from the Mainlanders. Being representative of such common psychology of Hong Kong, Mrs. Anson Chan, the retired chief secretary for administration of the first HKSAR Government, restates the importance of maintaining the difference of Hong Kong from the PRC in her article written in Financial Times:

Hong Kong has thrived on its ability to blend the best tradition of East and West. Although it is necessary to smooth the flow of people, goods and capital between Hong Kong and the mainland, we must be careful not to blur the dividing line between two systems. For example, a proposal to

jointly fund infrastructure projects with Guangdong might create a wrong international perception... (cited from SCMP, 1/7/02).

Before the change of sovereignty, scholars anticipated that Putonghua would become a superior language in Hong Kong after the political handover. Yet, judging from the findings of this study, the challenge of Putonghua to both Cantonese and English was still minimal. Although its status and popularity has increased largely after the handover, its significance could be hardly comparable to the other two language varieties as perceived by the first post-colonial generation.

2. What are the significant differences in language attitudes between groups of students under Gender, Medium of instruction, Social class and Cultural identity?

As stated in Chapter 3, different groupings under the four target variables were compared on six factors. The first three factors were about students' affective orientation towards Cantonese, English, Putonghua, and the next three factors were about students' perceptions on the instrumental values and status of the three target language varieties. As revealed in the quantitative analysis, no educationally large differences were found among all groups under the four variables. Despite this, it is interesting to note that the greatest difference among groups under Gender (males vs. females), Medium of Instruction (EMI vs. CMI) and Social class (Middle class vs. Working class) all converged on the same factor i.e. the affective inclination towards English. Although the difference was only a medium one, it showed that the attitude of the groups was comparatively the most divided on their affective orientation towards English, and that the three variables correlated the most closely with students' attitudes only in this regard.

As for Cultural identity, medium differences were found in 4 out of 6 factors between Hongkongers and Chinese while those who claimed a double identity of Hongkong-Chinese were always the modest group who contributed not much to any contrasts. Among the three language varieties, Putonghua was the most controversial issue that contributed to the greatest differences between the Hong Kong and Chinese group. The fact that more differences were found under Cultural identity showed that it was the variable among the four which correlated the most highly with the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation.

3. How are the four target variables related to the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools?

Girls in the focus group interviews were found more integratively inclined to English, showing stronger admiration to the language, the English-speaking countries and the people. In accord with other literature (e.g. Trudgill, 1995; James, 1996), females in this study did seem to show a stronger preference for the prestigious language variety than males. However, no sufficient evidence is available to prove that girls' integrative inclination towards English was a result of being 'status-conscious' as other literature has suggested. Further investigation is therefore needed to explore what contributes to the differences between males and females in this regard.

Under Social class, the largest contrast was found between the Middle-class group and the Working-class group also on their affective orientation towards English. The former was more positively inclined to English since they had stronger parental influence and support for the learning of the language. In addition, they had closer contact with other English users through traveling or hiring a Filipino maid at home. Their better life chances and higher self-perception also led them to aspire to

professional careers that usually required a high proficiency of English. However, the meaning of social closeness between the middle class and the English-speakers is not literal in Hong Kong as in the case of other highly multi-racial societies (e.g. USA, Europe) where Schumann (1976) devises his theory of social distance. The stronger favour of the Middle-class group toward the English language can be better explained with Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital which, when interpreted in the educational context, refers to the possession of a positive attitude to learning, parental support and high culture. Students who grow up in favourable cultural background would feel easy and comfortable with a prestigious language (Morrison and Lui, 2000). The social closeness between the Middle-class and the English-speaking group as discussed in earlier chapters is therefore cultural but not literal in Hong Kong.

In this study, it was hypothesized that the increased status and popularity of Putonghua would provide the Working-class group an alternative social mobility means and therefore they would show a more positive attitude towards the language. However, such a hypothesis was not quite supported in this study. Although the survey results did reveal that the Working-class group was more positive to Putonghua, the differences between groups as regards the affective and cognitive inclinations towards Putonghua was far from being statistically significant. No sufficient evidence was collected to prove that the social distance (Schumann, 1976) between the Working-class group and the Putonghua speakers, either literal or cultural, was in any way closer. On the contrary, like other groups, the Working-class interviewees tended to reject the Putonghua-speaking Mainlanders as a lower group and competitors for internal resources.

As for Medium of instruction, EMI students were found showing a more

positive affective inclination towards English because they had stronger confidence in the language due to higher exposure and relatively more successful learning experience in English. In addition, English served also as a marker of their 'EMI' status which they felt proud of as a symbol of the elite. Unexpectedly, CMI students did not show a more positive attitude towards Putonghua. They stressed that their medium of instruction was Cantonese but not Putonghua, and that the language accounted for only 1 to 2 lessons a week and was therefore considered unimportant. Similarly to EMI schools, the importance of English in CMI schools was high since the language would be restored as an MOI for senior secondary levels, and its role as a gatekeeper to higher education is pertinent also for CMI students. Hence, it is evident that schools are also playing the role of agents of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1976), where students' positive attitude towards the prestigious language is further nourished and actualized through an English-rich environment provided in EMI schools. Although students in the CMI stream are as well-aware of the instrumental values of English as their EMI counterparts, they are culturally more deprived as far as English is concerned. This may explain why students in CMI schools are equally positive to English in the cognitive perspectives and yet feeling less affectively inclined to the language. In addition, since both families and schools are agents of cultural capital, a combination of Social class and MOI was found highly correlated to the variance in the affective orientation towards English, as revealed in the statistical analysis (refer to Section 4.2.3)

As mentioned in the last section, Cultural identity is the variable which accounts for the most differences between groups. Hong Kong identity was constructed mainly on the sense of superiority of Hongkongers over the Mainland Chinese. As a result, Cantonese and English were highly valued as markers of their in-group identity

and symbols of their Hong Kong pride since both varieties were considered part of Hongkongers' life because of their prominent 'Social status' and long periods of high 'Institutional support' (Giles et al, 1977). The strong local identity of the Hong Kong group also led the informants to a dichotomized perception of the inside and outside world. There, according to them, were no necessary communication functions that had to be fulfilled by Putonghua which could not be accomplished through Cantonese and English. Since Putonghua was considered a marker of a lower group, the Hong Kong group in this study seemed to show resistance to it. On the contrary, the Chinese group did value Putonghua a lot more highly than their Hong Kong counterparts as a marker of their Chinese identity. Apart from this, Putonghua was also perceived as a useful language that would enable them to communicate with people in Mainland China.

As evident in this study, Hong Kong linguistic identity and Chinese linguistic identity may not be mutually exclusive. In some cases, both exist harmoniously in the same persons. Although Chinese linguistic identity is much less dominant than that of Hong Kong at the moment, signs have been shown in this study that a transition from the former to the latter is likely to happen given a longer time and more importantly a higher degree of assimilation between Hong Kong and the PRC. Despite the fact that the results seem to show that cultural identity is closely associated with one's affective inclination towards the related language, yet positive attitudes towards a language may not necessarily suggest identification with the related country. As revealed in this study, students denied the use of learning Putonghua in formulating stronger Chinese identity and fostering their patriotic feelings towards China since Putonghua was learnt only for instrumental purposes. As Byram (1992) points out, 'self-ascription' may be more important in determining one's identity than what language one speaks. Thus, the correlation found between Cultural identity and language attitudes cannot be interpreted

as a causal relationship and there is no evidence to prove that changing one's cultural identity may lead to a positive attitude towards its language.

Examining the significant differences under all of the four variables again, one can easily find that the differences actually converge on one factor, i.e. 'the Affective orientation towards English'. Hence, the significance of English as a prestigious language is confirmed. Apart from Gender, the significance of which in this regard requires further investigation, it seems clear that English is playing the role of a prominent marker of higher social identities as EMI elite, middle-class and Hongkongers.

With findings summarized in the above, the significance of the present study will be discussed in the following sections, firstly on the social level, then the implications for education.

7.3 Sociolinguistic Significance of the Findings

When discussing the strong insistence of Hong Kong people in making English the medium of instruction for secondary schools, Li (2000) argues that Hong Kong people are not passive victims of linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 1992), but active agents of pragmatism in their choice of languages. This study therefore set out to explore the attitudes of these active pragmatists towards Cantonese, English and Putonghua while they were repositioning themselves in the new scenario of power in post-colonial Hong Kong. Baker (1992) suggests that studying language attitude is a most easily and commonly used method to measure the status, value and importance of a language in society. Such attitudes, which can be measured with an individual, a group or

a community, may 'aid understanding the social processes and is one of the key concepts of modern social psychology' (p.10). Hence, both Li and Baker seem to suggest a close connection between language attitudes and social psychology, and that language attitude is not something idiosyncratic produced in isolation but a result of dynamic interaction between individuals and society. In the following sections, significance of the present findings in the sociolinguistic perspective will be discussed.

7.3.1 Post-coloniality and language attitudes

This study set out to examine students' language attitudes in the post-colonial context of Hong Kong. However, as pointed out by Loomba (1998) and discussed in Chapter One (see Section 1.1), 'post-colonial' is a problematic term. If 'colonialism' is defined as political sovereignty, Hong Kong has undoubtedly entered its post-colonial era after its return to the PRC. Yet if 'colonialism' is understood as domination of western ideologies and penetration of economic systems, then Hong Kong may still be at its colonial state. With reference to Mazrui's (2002) description of the language scenario in African countries, Hong Kong largely resembles some ex-British colonies in Africa (e.g. South Africa, Kenya) in the way that English remains the most highly valued language even after the period of colonization. This was especially true for the educated and middle-class since English was used as a gatekeeper in the colonial days, and only those who spoke and behaved in the image of the colonizer would be rewarded with better education and social opportunities (Memmi, 1968). Upon entering the post-colonial era, the same ideology persists and the old colonizer's language continues to be valued as a higher variety.

Like many ex-British colonies in Africa, the HKSAR Government has attempted to replace English medium instruction with compulsory vernacular education in Cantonese to bring about decolonization immediately after the change of sovereignty, and yet it was met with great resistance from parents since the role of English as a gatekeeper remains unchanged (Lai, 1999; Tsui et al, 1999). For people of Hong Kong, English is still a prestigious language for upward and outward mobility and therefore becomes indispensable even after the change of sovereignty.

The hegemonic position of English is, however, not merely an effect of colonization in the political sense, which, in some cases, is proved to be unessential in sustaining the influence of a language. As in the case of Vietnam, the colonial period under France did not leave 'a reserve of French language skills in Vietnam' (Wright 2002:231). Similarly, people in Macau, an ex-Portugual colony in South China, were never too keen to learn Portuguese even during the colonial period because it was not considered a useful language (Adamson & Li, 1999). The fact that English is rated so highly for its instrumental values in this study is largely due to the coincidence that English is also the language that dominates the world. Together with economic imperialism, linguistic imperialism is spread. For this reason, many ex-British colonies, for example Malaysia, Singapore, India and South Africa, find it hard to do without the colonial language (i.e. English) even after independence, and Hong Kong is of no exception. Unless Hong Kong can reduce its dependency on its connection with the western countries, otherwise it is hard to play down the importance of English even after the change of sovereignty. However, this does not seem likely to happen as long as Hong Kong wishes to maintain its role as an international financial and business centre.

The positive attitude towards English is not only a result of its high instrumental values, but also the informants' resistance to repatriation to the PRC. In

Hong Kong, what follows the departure of the British government is not independence or decolonisation, but recolonization by another political power (Law, 1997). As found in the present study, sentiments of resistance towards the new ruler are clearly expressed since it has been perceived negatively as undemocratic, backward and disorderly. It is driven by such resistance towards the PRC that Hong Kong people cling on to English as a second marker (after Cantonese) of their Hong Kong identity, which however was less important during the colonial days when English was considered a language of the colonizer and the out-group. This is perhaps why English was found more internalised by Hong Kong people over the past decades, from a language that suggested unpatriotism in the colonial days to a useful international language during the neo-colonial stage and ultimately as part of Hong Kong people's life in the post-colonial era.

With negative sentiments against the PRC, any drastic move to impose Putonghua, the new ruler's language, will be met with tremendous resistance. In a delicate situation like this in post-colonial Hong Kong, language attitudes, or consequently language shift, can only be engineered through socio and economic influence rather than political imposition. To avoid starting another round of linguistic imperialism with Putonghua being the centre, the language can only be infiltrated into Hong Kong society gradually through the instrumental domain. Any rash move that offends the local identity of Hong Kong people at the moment will be strongly resisted. However, the future for Putonghua is not at all pessimistic. As evident in this study, transition is taking place in terms of cultural identity and language attitudes though at a very slow pace. Four years after the change of sovereignty, some informants have already shown signs of a more accommodating attitude towards the Chinese identity and Putonghua even though some still feel strongly resistant. Given a longer time, it is hopeful that students' attitude will grow more positive in this regard.

7.3.2 Cultural transition through linguistic economy

The political transition in Hong Kong may have completed, yet cultural and linguistic transitions have just begun. During the process, economy would be a better vehicle than political intervention to facilitate peaceful transition.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Li (2000) argues that Hong Kong people are not passive victims of linguistic imperialism but active language pragmatists. Hence, the market value of a language is the most important factor which determines its popularity and status. Hong Kong people's strong attachment to English is not at all due to their loyalty to the colonizer, but their eagerness to gain asset for their future. Similarly, if Putonghua can prove itself a linguistic capital for its learners, then its status and popularity will be greatly enhanced. In fact, such a change is taking place in Hong Kong when more and more people are engaged in China Trade and the PRC is providing more business and job opportunities to Hong Kong people than anywhere else in the world. Li (2000) says that Hong Kong people's enthusiasm towards English is a consequence of supply and demand, the same economic theory can also apply to Putonghua. If the demand for Putonghua grows high, the public will welcome plans and policies to increase the supply of the language. Such a force of market demand will be stronger than any kind of political imposition in changing language attitudes and thus inducing language shift in the end.

Hong Kong people may be active pragmatists for English, yet their attitude towards Putonghua is still rather reactive. Meanwhile, when Putonghua is not yet a linguistic capital comparable to English, most of the informants of this study hold only a neutral attitude towards the language. Unless Putonghua can further prove its market values, Hong Kong students, even those who are disadvantaged in the English education

system, would hesitate to abandon English, the old ladder to success, and reposition themselves in favour of Putonghua even though the new political ruler is now Putonghua-speaking.

7.3.3 Linguistic vitality of the three language varieties in post-colonial Hong Kong

Giles et al (1977:309) suggest three main factors in assessing the vitality of different ethnolinguistic groups viz. Status, Demographic strength and Institutional Support. The Status variable is about the prestige of the target linguistic group. The Demographic variables are related to the number of members in a linguistic group and their distribution in the territory. Lastly, Institutional Support refers to the degree a language is used in various institutions e.g. the government, church, schools, media etc. Though being unaware of it, the informants of this study have accounted for their language attitudes on similar grounds. Giles's theory was originally devised to examine the inter-relationship of different ethnolinguistic groups in a multi-racial society, however, the same criteria can also be applied to the present study for a homogenous group who share the same ethnicity and linguistic background. As gathered from the data collected in this study, the vitality of Cantonese is very high since it receives high institutional support as the most widely used language variety in the media, government, schools and the lingua franca of Hong Kong; the vitality of English is also quite high being a language of the higher institutions such as the law courts, government, universities and international business, yet its usage is confined only to the working place and schools. As regards Putonghua, although it has received much more social attention than before, its vitality is still low at the moment since institutional support given to it is not strong; the social status of its speakers is low because the Mainlanders are considered

a lower group; and its demographic strength is weak since only 0.9% of the total population speak Putonghua as a usual language (Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department, 7/2002c).

Hence, two issues arise from the discussion of language vitality: 1) Given the high vitality of Cantonese, what effects will it have on the other two varieties; 2) How likely will Hong Kong reach a high level of biliteracy and trilingualism, the declared policy aim of the government, in the present sociolinguistic situation?

Unlike any other colonies, the indigenous language in Hong Kong has never been suppressed during the colonial period (Li, 2000). On the contrary, it has been used widely in society as the lingua franca of Hong Kong. Over the many decades, despite the thousands of people immigrated into Hong Kong from different parts of China, Cantonese remains the dominant language that helps to acculturate speakers of different dialects. The rise of vitality of Cantonese owes much also to the development of 'Hong Kong identity' which started to grow in the 1950s when Hong Kong was cut off from the influence of China under the Communist regime. The vitality of Cantonese rose rapidly with Hong Kong local culture since the 1970s when popular songs were written in Cantonese, local movies and TV dramas were produced in Cantonese and exported to other neighbouring countries.

Hong Kong people take pride in their achievements and consequently their identity and vernacular language. Despite its popularity, Cantonese was only used as a low language for entertainment and everyday communication in the early decades. Upon entering the neo-colonial days in the 1990s, the rise of vitality in Cantonese made the language more widely used in Hong Kong than before, replacing some of the 'high' functions that English used to perform e.g. as the medium of instruction in schools and

the most commonly used language in the Legislative Council (Pennington, 1998a). The economic success of Hong Kong has greatly enhanced the status of Cantonese and the effects are even carried into the PRC. In Mainland China, the strong vitality of Cantonese has turned it into 'a powerful dialect' which seriously hinders the spread of Putonghua especially in the Cantonese -speaking regions (Bauer, 2000; Yip, 2001).

As revealed from the informants' highly positive attitudes towards vernacular Cantonese, it is obvious that the vitality of Cantonese is still very high in the post-colonial era. This is especially true when the language plays the important role as a marker of Hong Kong identity that people generally cling tightly to in the post-colonial era as an icon of 'two systems' under the same regime. As suggested by Pennington (1998a), Cantonese is the most politically correct language variety which symbolizes decolonization without arousing sentiments of recolonization. Hence, unlike other post-colonial countries, the preservation or restoration of the vernacular language after the departure of the colonizer is not an issue in the case of Hong Kong. Contrarily, attention has to be paid to the effects of such an overwhelming vernacular on second language learning. In fact, complaints have been heard from students and teachers about the lack of a second language environment in Hong Kong since students need to use only Cantonese outside their language classrooms (SCMP, 26/11/01), and it is commonly believed that the English standard of Hong Kong graduates has declined seriously (e.g. MingPao, 27/10/2000). If vitality of Cantonese is to rise continuously, room for the growth of the other two language varieties will be seriously reduced and consequently Hong Kong will become a monolingual society where citizens are monolinguals who cannot communicate with any other linguistic groups. Although the status and instrumental value of Putonghua have increased much in the new political and economic

situation in the post-colonial context, as revealed from the findings of this study, students are never enthusiastic about it. Without proper social engineering, it is not very likely that Hong Kong will reach a high level of biliteracy and trilingualism.

7.4 Educational Implications of this Study

After the discussion from the macro sociolinguistic perspectives in the above, this section will explore the insights that this study has brought to education.

7.4.1 Gap between attitude and achievement in English

As revealed in the present study, the informants' attitudes towards English is highly positive both in the affective and cognitive perspectives. In Gardner & Lambert's (1972) terms, students seem to possess both integrative and instrumental motivation for learning English that would greatly help to produce desirable second language learning outcomes. However, despite their positive attitude, the English standard of Hong Kong students is still far from being satisfactory. Although there is no concrete evidence to prove the decline in standard, observations of teachers, employers and foreign investors have shown that the situation is alarming (e.g. MingPao, 27/10/00 & 1/12/01).

As pointed out at the beginning of this thesis, attitude may not necessarily correlate with behaviour (Baker, 1992), and similarly positive language attitudes may not necessarily be translated into actions necessary for desirable language learning outcomes. The rhetorical nature of language attitudes is well illustrated in Walters and Balla's (1998) survey of 1237 tertiary Hong Kong students, in which, although students' general attitude towards English was found positive and their demand for ESL courses high, they were reluctant to engage in active learning behaviours typical of motivated learners.

As shown in the present study, despite the fact that English is considered part

of Hong Kong people's life and a language with the highest instrumental values, students find it a difficult language to learn because its linguistic system is totally different from that of their mother tongue. Li (2000) describes this attitude as the Love-hate complex, and it is this hatred for English that widens the gap between language attitudes and learning achievement. In one of my earlier studies on motivation, Lai (2000), it is found that students' dislike of English is mainly attributed to their unsuccessful learning experience of the language. In order to bridge the gap between positive language attitudes and satisfactory achievement, the hate elements have to be eliminated, and this would mean the need to explore appropriate classroom practices to enhance learning effectiveness. Although the socio-cultural models of language learning motivation (e.g. Gardner & Lambert's model of motivation, 1972 and Schumann's social distance model, 1976) have helped to identify the favourable social conditions for second language acquisition, yet the same conditions can hardly be replicated in a homogenous society like Hong Kong where 95% of its people are ethnic Chinese and 89.2% of them speak Cantonese as their usual language (Hong Kong Census & Statistics department, 7/2002d). Realizing the limited practical relevance of studies from a macro perspective, researchers are more eager to explore means to enhance learning motivation in the classroom context. Such a shift in motivation research is clearly described in Dornyei (2001:2):

...by placing the emphasis on the socio-cultural dimension of L2 motivation, Gardner's approach offered a macro-perspective that allowed researchers to characterize and compare the motivational pattern of whole learning communities and then to draw inferences about intercultural communication and affiliation....However, the 1990s brought about a general dissatisfaction with the scope of Gardner's theory....the general message coming from various parts of the world was that 'There is more to motivation!'. There was an increasing shift towards a 'situated approach' – thereby adopting a micro-perspective examining how motivation effects concrete learning processes within a classroom context. For this reason, this transformation is often referred to as the 'educational shift'.

In order to transform students' possible language attitudes into desirable achievement, more attention has to be paid to what happens in the classrooms. However, caution must be taken to avoid transplanting foreign experiences into Hong Kong schools without consideration of the uniqueness of the local culture (Carless, 2000). Hence, further research is needed to find out appropriate classroom practices to facilitate more effective teaching and learning of the English language with sensitivity to the Hong Kong cultural context.

7.4.2 Promotion of Putonghua education

As shown in the present study, students are far from being enthusiastic towards Putonghua. This shows that the language has to be further promoted if the policy of 'biliteracy and trilingualism' has to be successful. Informed by the findings of this study, promotion strategies for the language can be devised in accord with Giles's vitality formula viz. Institutional support, Social status and Demographic strength. However, while it is possible to improve on the first two areas, demographic strength is hard to address since it is both impractical and unrealistic to import a large number of Putonghua-speakers into Hong Kong.

As cautioned in the previous sections, any drastic move to impose Putonghua will result in great resistance given students' strong local identity and their negative sentiments against the Mainlanders at the moment. Although I have suggested earlier in this chapter that any promotion of the language be best engineered through economic demands, it does not mean that schools should be ruled out as an agent of change. Being reactive to Putonghua, students would need suitably stronger signals in their immediate environment to induce higher motivation in Putonghua learning. Possible ways may include adopting Putonghua as an official language in schools;

extending the language into the senior secondary curriculum as a core subject and an elective subject for HKCE (GCSE equivalent); and sending explicit messages to students about the importance of Putonghua as a linguistic capital etc. Apart from schools, the government or business chambers can promote Putonghua education by organizing activities similar to those for the Functional English Campaign. In addition, celebrities can be used as examples of good Putonghua-speakers so as to detach the language from the image of a lower social group. Although Putonghua is found being resisted as the language of a lower group at the moment, yet taking account of the dramatic development of English from a colonial language to a marker of Hong Kong identity, it is hopeful that the same history will repeat for Putonghua.

7.5 Limitations of the Study

No study is perfect and so it is with the present one. In this section, the limitations of this study will be discussed in two main areas namely the research methods and the findings. It is hoped that what is learnt in this research can help to perfect studies in the future.

7.5.1 Research methods

As regards the research methods, the main criticism lies on the narrow range of sampling on social class. As mentioned in Chapter Six, the subjects of this study belong to a rather narrow social range whose median monthly income differs only by HK\$23,000 (i.e. £1916). Since the affluent upper-middle class is missing from the sample, contrasts between social classes are found small since the majority of the informants are average students in main-stream schools who possess similar cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1976). In addition, there are two main problems concerning

classification of social classes through occupation. Firstly, many students did not have ideas of what their parents' occupations were, thus resulting in a large number of unusable questionnaires for the comparison of social classes. Secondly, what matters in the classification of social classes is not only what one's occupation is but what rank someone is in. This is what makes the difference between a police constable and a police commander though both are known as policemen. In the present questionnaire, although ranking has been suggested for some occupations, the list is far from being comprehensive. For similar needs in later research, it is better to ask the informants to provide information not only about their parents' occupations but also their ranks.

Another improvement could be made on the construct of the Matched-guise test. At present, only one speaker is involved in the guises of the three target language varieties, if more voices could be introduced into the test, the reliability of the results could be further enhanced when respondents rated the same language variety consistently with different voices.

In the present study, the qualitative interviews were largely informed by the quantitative results. Yet, over the interviews, new thoughts were provoked through the interaction between informants and this could in return throw light on the questionnaire design. For example the issue of language learning difficulties raised by students in the interviews could have taken greater coverage in the questionnaire survey. However, since it is impossible to turn around the research instruments endlessly, insights gathered from the interviews can only serve to inform later research.

7.5.2 Findings

As stated in Chapter One, this study set out to explore how the first post-colonial generation in secondary schools perceive Cantonese, English and Putonghua amidst all changes in the post-colonial context. Although the aim is fulfilled and social psychology in this regard is reflected, the findings do not inform much about teaching and learning. Since responses elicited in the present study are mostly about the image, social status and instrumental value of languages, little information is available to show students' perceptions of the three target language varieties in the school setting. Further investigation is therefore needed to find out what their main problems are on L2 learning, what language policy they would welcome for schools and how classroom practices can be improved.

Apart from the inadequacy on teaching and learning, this study is also limited in the way that it informs readers only of how and how much the target variables correlate with language attitudes. Although attempts have been made during the interviews to explore the causes that formulate language attitudes, the result was not always successful. For example, while girls are found affectively more positive to English than boys, the reasons remain uncertain and thus no concrete suggestions could be made as to how boys' attitude could be improved. The main function of the present study is therefore to provide a general overview of students' attitudes and to help identify the variables which are worth deeper investigation. As regards the causes that determine language attitudes and effective ways to eliminate negative feelings and change undesirable perceptions, more in-depth research and experiments are needed.

In my last paper, Lai (2001), which compares the language attitudes between

the middle class elite and the working class low-achievers, no significant differences were found between groups and my hypothesis about the working-class group being more favourably inclined to Putonghua as an alternative social mobility means was unsupported. Such a result was then criticized by one of the journal reviewers as 'unexciting' and my research attempt being 'pre-mature':

..... a number of reasons can be given to account for this lack of support, the most important one being that 3 years (after the change of sovereignty) is simply not long enough for a non-native language like Putonghua to have strong enough impact on peoples' attitude in Hong Kong. For this reason, the researcher's pre-mature attempt has my greatest sympathy.

The present study was done four years after the change of sovereignty, similarly to my last paper, no dramatic impact of Putonghua was found on the informants' attitude. In this regard, the present study could be criticized again as unexciting and pre-mature. However, since attitude change takes on a gradual and long process, exciting results should not be expected from any single research but a series of it over a long period of time. Taking the development of English as an example, exciting shift in its role can only be found after a series of studies over decades. Each research conducted at different times is valuable in revealing the path of development of a subject, this study is therefore significant in marking the process of development of language attitudes in Hong Kong students amidst all the changes in the post-colonial era. In fact, similar studies can be replicated at equal time intervals in the future to reveal the development of students' language attitudes and the linguistic vitality of the three language varieties in Hong Kong.

7.6 Conclusion

Upon entering the post-colonial era, Hong Kong's first generation in secondary schools is found much emotionally attached to Cantonese, the vernacular language while they rely highly on English as a social ladder. Despite the political and economic changes after the hand-over, students still show great indifference towards Putonghua because the social status of its speakers is low, institutional support given to the language is inadequate and students' resistance towards the PRC is strong. To upkeep the role of Hong Kong as a bilingual city and to enable students to reach a high level of biliteracy and trilingualism, room has to be given for the development of all of the three language varieties in society. For this reason, this study cautions policy-makers against the continuous rise in the vitality of Cantonese, which if gone unchecked, will suffocate the development of the other two varieties. As suggested in earlier sections, the standard of English has to be enhanced through a review of classroom practices, and Putonghua can be promoted through stronger institutional support, publicity and more importantly, the powerful force of market demand.

Pennington (1998b) predicts that Putonghua will acquire the same vitality as that of Cantonese and English after the change of sovereignty and the next language shift in Hong Kong will take place with Putonghua being the center of change. However, given the unenthusiastic attitude found towards Putonghua in this study, there are no signs yet to show that triglossia will soon take place in Hong Kong, nor will students become highly trilingual in the near future. Michael Halliday (1999) describes the present situation in Hong Kong as 'One country, two cultures and three languages'. Although no substantial language shift has taken place yet, no one can rule out such a possibility since sociolinguistic ecology will never stop. Hong Kong may have

completed its political transition, and yet its cultural and linguistic transitions are still underway.

END

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Appendix 1

The Questionnaire

問卷

Please listen to the tape and answer the following questions as instructed.

請聆聽錄音帶的指示，如實作答以下問題。所得資料只作學術研究之用。

Part I: Personal Information

第一部分：個人資料

1.1 School name: _____
學校名稱:

1.2 Class: _____ Class No. _____
班別: 班號:

1.3 Sex : _____
性別:

1.4 Place of birth : _____
出生地點:

1.5 Length of residence in Hong Kong if you were not born in HK: _____ years
如不在香港出生，請註明居港年期: _____年

1.6 Type of residence: Please circle the correct letter

住所種類：請圈出適當的答案

a) large private development 大型私人屋苑; b) small-scale private buildings 小型私人樓宇;

c) home ownership housing 居屋; d) public housing estates 公共屋 ; e) old-style housing

舊式唐樓; Others 其他: _____

1.7 Parents' occupation: Please put a tick in the right box

父母職業：請在適當的空格內加上 '✓' 號

Occupation 職業	Father 父	Mother 母
<p>a) Professional; high-ranking officers 專業人士；主任級職系</p> <p>e.g. Manager; accountant; lawyer; doctor; university lecturer; school-teachers; high-ranking civil servants; executive officer; businessman of international trade; IT professional; registered nurse; engineer 例如：經理；會計師；律師；醫生；大學講師；教師；高級公務員；公司行政人員；大公司東主；資訊科技專才；工程師；註冊護士.....</p>		
<p>b) Rank & file white-collar / skilful blue-collar 一般白領人員 / 技術藍領</p> <p>e.g. clerk; secretary; rank and file civil servant; technician; owner of small business; clinic nurse; kindergarten teachers; shop-keeper; salesman; cook 例如：文員；秘書，普通職系公務員；技工；小公司東主；私人診所護士；幼稚園教師；店員；推銷員；廚師.....</p>		
<p>c) Manual labour 勞工</p> <p>e.g. hawker; cleaner; construction worker; fisherman; farmer; driver; factory worker; courier 例如：小販；清潔工人；地盤工人；漁夫；農夫；司機；工廠工人；信差.....</p>		
<p>d) Unemployed 失業</p>		
<p>e) Housewife 家庭主婦</p>		
<p>f) Deceased 已去世</p>		
<p>g) Do not know 不知道</p>		
<p>h) Others- please specify 其他：請註明</p>		

1.8 Parents' education level: Please put a tick in the right box

父母的教育程度：請在適當的空格內加上‘✓’號

Education Level 教育程度	Father 父	Mother 母
a) no schooling 從未接受教育		
b) primary 小學		
c) junior secondary 初中		
d) senior secondary 高中		
e) tertiary / university or above 大專 / 大學以上		
f) Do not know 不知道		
g) Deceased 已去世		

Please answer the following questions by circling the correct letter

以下問題，請圈出適當的答案：

1.9 What is the language / dialect you speak most often at home?

你在家中最常使用哪種語言？

- a) Cantonese b) Putonghua c) English d) Other Chinese dialects e.g. Chiuchow, hakka
廣東話 普通話 英語 其他中國方言，如潮州、客家

Others: _____

其他：

1.10 How will you describe your cultural identity?

你會怎樣形容自己的身份？

- a) a Hongkonger b) a Chinese c) a Hongkong-Chinese d) No opinion e) Others:

香港人 中國人 在香港居任的中國人 無意見

其他： _____

Part II: Please circle the number which best indicates what you think about the following statements

第二部分：你是否同意以下的句子？請圈出適當的數字。

Statements 句子	Agree / Disagree 同意 / 不同意
E.g. Andy Lau is my favourite singer. 例：劉德華是我最喜愛的歌星。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.1 As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak fluent Cantonese. 作為香港人，我應該能說流利的廣東話。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.2 I like Cantonese because it is my mother tongue. 我喜歡廣東話，因為它是我的母語。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.3 As a Chinese, I should be able to speak fluent Putonghua. 作為中國人，我應該能說流利的普通話。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.4 Putonghua should be more widely used in Hong Kong so that Hong Kong will quickly assimilate with the PRC. 香港應該廣泛使用普通話，那麼香港和中國大陸便能更快融成一體。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.5 Cantonese is the language which best represents Hong Kong. 廣東話是最能代表香港的語言。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意

<p>2.6 As a Hongkonger, I should be able to speak fluent English. 作為香港人，我應該能說流利的英語。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>
<p>2.7 I would like to speak fluent English because it makes me feel modern and westernized. 我望能說流利的英語，因為那使我感到自己是個追上時代和西化的人。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>
<p>2.8 A person who speaks fluent English is usually educated, intelligent and well-off. 一個能說流利英語的人通常是個教育程度高、聰明和富裕的人。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>
<p>2.9 A person who speaks fluent Putonghua is usually educated, intelligent and well-off. 一個能說流利普通話的人通常是個教育程度高、聰明和富裕的人。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>
<p>2.10 A person who speaks fluent English is usually arrogant, snobbish and show-off. 一個能說流利英語的人通常是個高傲、勢利和不友善的人。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>
<p>2.11 I'm afraid that if I speak fluent Putonghua , others will think I am a new immigrant from the Mainland. 如果我的普通話說得流利，我怕人家會以為我是大陸來的新移民。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>
<p>2.12 English is less important in Hong Kong after the change of sovereignty. 在回歸後，英語在香港的重要性已經減低。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>
<p>2.13 Cantonese should be replaced by Putonghua since it is only a dialect with little value. 香港應以普通話取代廣東話，因為廣東話只不過是一種沒價值的方言。</p>	<p>4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意</p>

2.14 The use of English is one of the most crucial factors which has contributed to the success of Hong Kong's prosperity and development today. 英語在香港通行是香港繁榮的主要原因之一。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.15 To increase the competitiveness of Hong Kong, the English standard of Hong Kong people must be enhanced. 要提高香港的競爭力，香港人便要學好英語。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.16 If Putonghua is widely used in Hong Kong, Hong Kong will become more prosperous. 如果香港能廣泛使用普通話，香港將會比現在更繁榮。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.17 Putonghua is NOT an important language in Hong Kong. 在香港，普通話並不是一種重要的語言。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意
2.18 The importance and status of Putonghua will soon be higher than that of English in Hong Kong. 在香港，普通話的重要性和地位將很快超越英語。	4=strongly agree 十分同意 3=agree 同意 2=disagree 不同意 1=strongly disagree 十分不同意

Part III: Put a tick in the correct box

第三部分：請在適當的空格內加上‘✓’號

3.1) How much do you like the following three languages?

你對以下幾種語言的喜歡程度：

Language 語言	Much 十分喜歡	Average 一般	Not much 不太喜歡	Not at all 絕不喜歡
a) English 英語				
b) Cantonese 廣東話				
c) Putonghua 普通話				

3.2) How much do you think the following languages will help you in getting better opportunities for further studies?

你認為以下語言對你升學有多大幫助?

Language 語言	Much 很大幫助	average 一般	Not much 幫助不大	Not at all 絕無幫助
a) English 英語				
b) Cantonese 廣東話				
c) Putonghua 普通話				

3.3) How much do you think the following languages will help you in getting better opportunities for careers in the 21st Century?

你認為以下語言能對你在二十一世紀發展事業有多大幫助?

Language 語言	Much 很大幫助	average 一般	Not much 幫助不大	Not at all 絕無幫助
a) English 英語				
b) Cantonese 廣東話				
c) Putonghua 普通話				

3.4) How highly regarded are the following languages in Hong Kong society?

你認為下列語言在香港社會被受尊重的程度有多高?

Language 語言	Very highly 很高	Fair 一般	Not highly 不高	Low 低
a) English 英語				
b) Cantonese 廣東話				
c) Putonghua 普通話				

3.5) How much do you wish to master English, Cantonese and Putonghua?
 你希望能對以下語言掌握多少?

Language 語言	Much 很多	Adequate 能應付一般情況	Little 少許	None at all 完全不需要
a) English 英語				
b) Cantonese 廣東話				
c) Putonghua 普通話				

3.6) How much do you like the speakers of the following languages?
 你喜歡說以下三種語言的人士嗎?

Language 語言	Much 很喜歡	average 一般	Little 不太喜歡	None at all 絕不喜歡
a) English 英語				
b) Cantonese 廣東話				
c) Putonghua 普通話				

Part IV: Listen to the tape and rate how strongly do the three speakers give you the following feelings:

第四部分：請聆聽錄音帶三把聲音，並說出你對三個講者的感覺。

Circle the number: 4=very much so

3=averagely so

2=not quite 1=not at all

請圈出適當的數字：4=非常

3=一般

2=並不 1=絕對不是

Traits 形容詞	Cantonese 廣東話				Putonghua 普通話				English 英語			
	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
e.g. kind 例：慈祥	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.1 Friendly 友善	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.2 Intelligent 聰明	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.3 Educated 有教養	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.4 Arrogant 自大	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.5 Competent 能幹	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.6 Industrious 勤力	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.7 Sincere 誠懇	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.8 Aggressive 霸道	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.9 Approachable 親切	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.10 Considerate 為人設想	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.11 Trustworthy 可靠	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.12 Responsible 盡責	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.13 Wealthy 富有	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
4.14 Modern 追上時代	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1

END 問卷完

Thanks very much for your help!

多謝合作

Appendix 2

Reading passage for the Matched-guise Test

Jīn Shuǐxiān

10 浸水仙

Yòu dào jīn shuǐxiān de shíhòu le, rúguǒ tiānqì
又到浸水仙的時候了，如果天氣
nuǎnhuo, nàme èrshí duō tiān lǐtòu jiù kěyǐ yǒu huā
暖和，那麼二十多天裏頭就可以有花
xīnshǎng le. Yǒu jīngyàn de rén, hái kěyǐ zìjǐ diāo
欣賞了。有經驗的人，還可以自己雕
shuǐxiān, àn nǐde gòuxiǎng, diāochū yī pēn biézhīde
水仙，按你的構想，雕出一盆別緻的
xièzhǎo, huòshì qítā de huāyàng(r) lai.
蟹爪，或是其他的花樣來。

Jīn shuǐxiān yào shuǐzhī jiéjīng, yángguāng chōngzú.
浸水仙要水質潔淨、陽光充足。
Zhèiyàng jiù yǒu xīwàng dédào yī pēn yè lǜ huā
這樣就有希望得到一盆葉綠花
duō de shuǐxiān le.
多的水仙了。

文章取自三聯書店(香港) 1996年出版之新編普通話教程

English Translation

It is time again for planting narcissus. If the weather is warm enough, it will only take about 20 days to blossom. If you are experienced and skillful enough, you can try shaping the narcissus according to the pattern you want. It can be in crab shape or other patterns. The most essential things for narcissus are clean water and sufficient sunshine. If these two requirements are fulfilled, then it is highly possible that you will have a pot of healthy and beautiful narcissus.

Appendix 3a

Letter to Principals for approval of the questionnaire survey

May 14, 2001.

Dear Principal,

Data collection for academic purposes

I'm a lecturer of the English Department of Hong Kong Institute of Education. I'm now engaged in a large-scale research project which aims at finding out the language attitudes of the first post-colonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools. To ensure high external validity of the study, I need a large sample of schools, and your generous help will therefore be very important to make this study successful. With your approval, 10 students from each of your F.3 classes will be invited to answer a questionnaire (enclosed for your reference). The study will be carried out on a voluntary basis and no students will be forced to participate if they ever refuse to do so. Your teacher, _____ has kindly agreed to administer the questionnaire study on my behalf that will take about 20 minutes. Data collected will be used purely for academic purposes, all names will remain anonymous, and personal data be kept strictly confidential.

Kindly let _____ know about your decision. Lastly, I would like to emphasize once again that your help is crucial for this study, for a better understanding of our students and more importantly, the impacts of language policy changes on them.

I am looking forward to obtaining your kind approval. If necessary, I can be contacted at Tel.: 29487231 or e-mail: mllai@ied.edu.hk

Yours faithfully,

Lai Mee Ling
Lecturer, English Department,
HKIED

Appendix 3b

Instruction to questionnaire administrators

Instructions to Teachers

What is in this package?

- 1) This instruction sheet
- 2) One Principal's letter
- 3) One Principal's copy (Questionnaire)
- 4) One Teacher's copy (Questionnaire)
- 5) 40 copies of questionnaire for students
- 6) One cassette tape

Who are the subjects?

Any 10 students from each F.3 class. 40 students altogether. Equal number of boys and girls from each class. If it is impossible for you to gather students from different classes at lunch time, you can administer this questionnaire to one whole class of forty F.3 students (with similar number of boys and girls in coeducational schools).

What to do?

- 1) Fill your name (or your colleague's name) in the blanks on the principal's letter.
- 2) Seek approval from your school principal (with the Principal's questionnaire)
- 3) Arrange questionnaire time as early as possible. Allow yourself time to cope with unexpected situations. Try your best to administer the questionnaire during your Practicum week when you're in school. If you think some other time is better, please tell me.
- 4) Administer the questionnaire by yourself. If you have to seek help from your colleague, make sure that he/she knows what to do.
- 5) Check the cassette tape before hand. My voice is on side A. Tapes have already been rewound to the top.
- 6) Play my cassette tape to students for instructions. If you think it is easier for them, you can let students listen and do one section after another. It's not absolutely necessary for them to listen to all instructions first before filling in the questionnaire. No fix time limit for students. This is not a test. Teachers can alter the procedures! pace at your discretion.

- 7) Monitor whether students have answered all questions correctly. Their personal information is the most important, otherwise the whole questionnaire will be useless.
- 8) Collect all the questionnaires when completed.
- 9) Return the completed questionnaires to Mee Ling after your practicum week. I'll put a collection box outside my office at B4/1/26.
- 10) If you encounter any difficulties in the middle, please contact me whenever is needed. My phone number is 29487231 and e-mail address: mllai@ied.edu.hk

Appendix 4

Guiding questions for focus group interviews

Interview questions:

1) Overall

- a. Do you think 1-1K should use English and PTH more widely?
- b. Is it good for HK to return to China and should we use more PTH to hasten the unity of the two places?
- c. Do you agree that English / PTH is part of your life?
- d. Must a Chinese know PTH?
- e. Do you think using PTH more will make HK people feel more Chinese and love China more?
- f. In what way is a Hongkonger different from a Chinese?
- g. How much English do you think a Hongkonger should know?
- h. Given a second choice, would you choose to be a Hongkonger/Chinese/British etc.?

2) Gender

- a. What subjects do you think boys should be good at?
- b. What subjects do you think girls should be good at?
- c. Do you think languages are girls' subjects?
- d. What subject do you like best?
- e. Which subject do you wish to be best in?
- f. Which language gives you the greatest sense of superiority?
- g. Do you think males and females are equal in HK?
- h. How important good language standard is in gaining success?
- i. How will you describe your achievement in English and PTH?

3) Medium of instruction

- a. Do you think the EMI programme can help you to master English more confidently?
- b. Do you think you are an elite?
- c. What languages do you think an elite should know?
- d. Do you learn anything in school that helps you to enhance the sense of national identity?
- e. If you have children or little brothers and sisters, would you like to send them to EMI or CMI schools?
- f. Do you think PTH should take up more lessons or used as medium of instruction for some subjects?

4) Social Class

- a. How many English and Putonghua speakers do you know in daily life?
- b. Do your parents offer you help in learning the languages?

- c. Do you speak English/PTH at home?
- d. Which language(s) do your parents think is/are the most important?
- e. Do you have chance to travel overseas?
- j. What's your ideal career?
- k. What occupation do you think you will take up in the future?
- l. To what level of education do you think you are able to pursue?

5) Cultural Identity:

- a. As a Chinese, do you think you should be able to speak fluent PTH?
- b. What do you think if a Hongkonger cannot speak Cantonese/PTH/English?
- c. If you can only know one language out of the three, which one will you choose?
- d. Why do you label yourself as a Hongkonger, Chinese, Hongkong-Chinese etc.?
- e. Whose effect is the greatest for fostering national identity in you?

Appendix 5a

Paired-Samples Test Results in the comparison of affective inclinations

	Factors	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size
Pair 1	CANAFF - PTHAFF	.000	2.00
Pair 2	ENGAFF - CANAFF	.000	0.9
Pair 3	ENGAFF - PTHAFF	.000	1.32

Appendix 5b

Paired-Samples Test Results in the comparison of cognitive perceptions

	Factors	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size
Pair 1	CANIN – ENGIN	.000	0.76
Pair 2	CANIN – PTHIN	.000	1.02
Pair 3	ENGIN – PTHIN	.000	1.85

Appendix 6

Crosstabulation between Birth Place, Cultural identity and Social class

CLASS	BIRTHPLACE	ID	ID			Total
			Hongkonger	Chinese	HK-Chinese	
Middle	BIRTHPLACE	HK	128	12	30	170
		China	2	3	3	8
		Others	2		1	3
	Total		132	15	34	181
Intermediate	BIRTHPLACE	HK	181	22	55	258
		China	7	13	13	33
		Others	2		2	4
	Total		190	35	70	295
Working	BIRTHPLACE	HK	164	15	32	211
		China	11	36	25	72
		Others			1	1
	Total		175	51	58	284

