

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS16/H15/19 _____ (please insert ref. above)
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**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

<p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within <u>six</u> months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within <u>12</u> months of the approved project completion date.
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

Perception and Production of the Putonghua Tone of Non-Chinese Speaking

South Asian Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong

2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Dr Cindy LAM Man Fong/ Assistant Professor	School of Education and Languages/ Hong Kong Metropolitan University
Co-Investigator(s)	Dr Emily GE Hao Yan/ Assistant Professor Dr HONG Ying/ Lecturer I	School of Education and Languages/ Hong Kong Metropolitan University The School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED)
Others		

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	01/01/2020	N/A	
Project Completion Date	31/12/2021	31/12/2022	19/4/2022
Duration (in month)	24 months	36 months	19/4/2022
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31/12/2022	31/12/2023	19/4/2022

- 4.4 Please attach photo(s) of acknowledgement of RGC-funded facilities / equipment.

Part B: The Final Report

5. Project Objectives

5.1 Objectives as per original application

- 1. To explore the experience of Putonghua learning of South Asian students in Hong Kong.*
- 2. To investigate how Putonghua tones are produced and perceived by South Asian students.*
- 3. To identify the linguistic factors affecting South Asians students' tone performance.*

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: _____

Reasons for the change: _____

- 1.
- 2.
3.

5.3 Realisation of the objectives

(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

Regarding the experience of Putonghua learning among South Asian students in Hong Kong (Objective 1), a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews for targeted participants was conducted. The findings from this study have successfully addressed the first objective.

To further delve into the Putonghua tone production abilities of South Asian students (Objective 2) and investigate the linguistic factors that influence their performance in tone production (Objective 3), a production experiment for targeted participants was conducted was carried out. The results obtained from this experiment have effectively addressed both the second and third objectives.

Additionally, a separate production experiment for targeted participants was conducted was conducted to examine the Putonghua tone perception skills of South Asian students (Objective 2) and explore the linguistic factors that impact their tone production performance (Objective 3). The findings derived from this experiment have also contributed to addressing the first objective of the project.

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i>	Addressed <i>(please tick)</i>	Percentage Achieved <i>(please estimate)</i>
1. To explore the experience of Putonghua learning of South Asian students in Hong Kong.	√	100%
2. To investigate how Putonghua tones are produced and perceived by South Asian students.	√	100%
3. To identify the linguistic factors affecting South Asians students' tone performance.	√	100%
4.		

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

The findings of the study regarding the Putonghua learning experience of South Asian students in Hong Kong revealed that most students in Hong Kong begin learning Putonghua along with their Cantonese-speaking peers after they have already acquired proficiency in Cantonese. While South Asian students demonstrate low Putonghua proficiency and encounter many difficulties Putonghua in learning.

The study's findings regarding the Putonghua tone production by South Asian students and the linguistic factors influencing their performance revealed that the tone production performance of learners of Punjabi is different from that of learners of Urdu, attributed to their linguistic experience.

The findings of the study regarding the Putonghua tone perception by South Asian students and the linguistic factors influencing their performance showed that significant interactions of tone pair and language background were found for the perception of Cantonese and Mandarin tones, suggesting the use of F0 in the 1st language modulates lexical tone perception in the second and the third languages.

The research outcomes have been disseminated through the presentation of several conference papers at relevant conferences, and they are expected to be further shared through the publication of at least two peer-reviewed journals, ensuring wide dissemination of the research findings.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action
(Maximum half a page)

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the Putonghua learning of South Asian students in Hong Kong is developing compared to Cantonese. Further investigation is warranted to explore their oral proficiency, with particular emphasis on the influence of their first language (L1) and Cantonese in the process of learning Putonghua.

7. Layman's Summary

(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

Since the handover in 1997, Hong Kong's language policy has focused on biliteracy and trilingualism. However, non-Chinese-speaking students in Hong Kong face challenges when learning Chinese as a foreign language, hindering their integration into the local community. Despite efforts to enhance their written Chinese and oral Cantonese skills, insufficient attention has been given to their spoken Mandarin or Putonghua proficiency. This is particularly significant as Putonghua has become the medium of instruction for the Chinese Language subject in a considerable number of mainstream schools following the change in language policy. Proficiency in spoken Mandarin or Putonghua is crucial for Chinese as a second language education. This pioneering study examines the perception and production of Putonghua tones among South Asian students in Hong Kong, specifically Indian, Nepalese, and Pakistani sub-groups. Tonal languages pose difficulties for learners from non-tonal language backgrounds. By addressing this research gap, the study will contribute to Putonghua teaching, enhance teaching quality, and shed light on the challenges faced by South Asian students in learning Putonghua tones.

Part C: Research Output**8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
		√		Man Fong Lam*, Hong Ying	"Not knowing how to speak, it was a big deal for us": Uncovering Putonghua proficiency and learning challenges among Hong Kong Non-Chinese Speaking/ <i>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development</i>	No	Yes [Attachment 1 & 2]	Yes	Yes
			√	Man Fong Lam*	Tone Production in Mandarin Chinese by Urdu- and Punjabi speakers/ <i>Chinese as a Second Language Research</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes
			√	Man Fong Lam, Yuyu Zeng*	Cue-transfer of F0 starts from L1, even when L1 is not fully tonal: A cross-linguistic study of lexical tone perception in 2nd & 3rd languages/	No	Yes [Attachment 3]	Yes	Yes

					<i>Journal of Phonetics</i>				
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9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC <i>(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)</i>	Attached to this Report <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Acknowledged the Support of RGC <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Accessible from the Institutional Repository <i>(Yes or No)</i>
December/ 2023/ The Ohio State University (Virtual)	Interlanguage Pragmatic Features in Hong Kong Non-Chinese Speaking Students' Spoken Cantonese	The 27th International Conference on Yue Dialects	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i> <i>[Attachment 4]</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
December/ 2020/ The Education University of Hong Kong (Virtual)	Putonghua Learning: Challenges for Ethnic Non-Chinese Students in Hong Kong	International Conference on Learning and Teaching	<i>2020</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
July -August/ 2021/ The George Washington University, Washington D.C., USA (Virtual)	Attitude and Motivation of South Asian Secondary Students Learning Putonghua as a Foreign Language in Hong Kong	The 6th International Conference on Chinese as a Second Language Research	<i>2022</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
December/ 2021/ The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Virtual)	Hong Kong South Asians' Perception of Cantonese Tones: Effect of L1 Background	The 25th International Conference on Yue Dialects	<i>2022</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

Regarding the transfer of research experience, the proposed project benefited the project team and research assistants. This project provided new insights into the linguistic factors affecting the Putonghua acquisition, which may eventually be the starting point for further research projects in Putonghua education for ethnic minority students. Members of the research team has developed advanced skills in sociolinguist methods (such as surveys) and psycholinguistic methods (such as timed phonetic classification and discrimination tasks for perception) and built a solid publication record for the PI and Co-I by disseminating research findings in academic journals. The project will also provide researchers with new research leadership skills and experience by employing research assistants to work on the project.

Regarding the new knowledge transfer, the research findings are disseminated by presenting papers at influential conferences and submitted peer-reviewed articles to SSCI-indexed academic journals. The presentation of papers and the exchange of ideas at international conferences, as well as the publication of papers in international journals, will increase the visibility of the results of this project.

The project also benefits students in Hong Kong. First, the project provided research experience for undergraduate students by inviting them to be helpers for a maximum period of 10 months. Students acquired valuable research experience from their involvement in the research project. They had been trained to prepare preliminary literature reviews, conduct rigorous empirical studies, and analyze the findings from these studies. Second, the dissemination of the proposed research provided teaching materials and methodologies for undergraduate courses. For example, the research experience and the dissemination of research findings were introduced in undergraduate and postgraduate-level courses at Hong Kong Metropolitan University, namely ‘Project on the Chinese Language’ (CHIN E430CF), “CHIN 8304ECF Research Methods in Second Language Education”. Students are equipped with knowledge of the theoretical issues of phonetics and applied linguistics.

11. Student(s) Trained

(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
N/A			

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12. Other Impact

(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

N/A

13. Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project	3	4			Type	No.

14. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons