



**TITLE: The Discursive Construction of The 'Asian Selective School Student': A critical discourse analysis of sixteen articles from four Victorian & NSW newspapers from 2010-2015**

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Selective government schools hold a strong place in the Australian school market, both in terms of demand and the reverence in which they are held. They are most prominent in NSW where there are seventeen fully selective high schools, followed by Victoria, where the number of government selective high schools recently increased to four. Overall, when compared to comprehensive government schools and non-government schools, selective schools enrol a higher percentage of

LBOTE\* (language background other than English) students, the majority from Asian backgrounds (Ho, 2011). This has led to a public discussion over the issue of perceived excessive tutoring used by Asian students to gain entry into selective schools. In part, this discussion is sustained and influenced by the articles in the four newspapers analysed in this study, which give expression to the growing dissatisfaction and anxieties amongst 'non-Asian' parents about the 'Asianisation' of selective schools. In doing so, these newspapers represent the Asian selective school student through certain discourses. For this thesis I conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA), to critically examine the newspaper articles not as individual linguistic texts, but as part of the discursive formation to which they contributed to and belong (Foucault, 1980).

My analysis revealed five salient discourses; The Ability Discourse, The Tiger Mother Discourse,

The Childhood Discourse, The Conflated Asian Discourse and The ‘Over-Representation’ Discourse. Each discourse contributes to the discursive formation of the stereotyped Asian student as somehow inherently deficient, or less deserving, when compared to their non-Asian counterpart.

*\*LBOTE is used in place of other terms, such as EAL/D (English as an additional language/dialect), only because this is the term used on the myschool website, from which the statistics for this claim were obtained.*

<sup>i</sup> Australian Research Council Discovery Project *A sociological analysis of ethnicity and compulsory schooling in NSW* <sup>ii</sup> R. W. Connell, S. Kessler, G. W. Dowsett, and D. Ashenden, *Making the difference: Schools, families and social division* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 42. <sup>iii</sup> P. Nilan, “Youth sociology must cross cultures,” *Youth Studies Australia* 30, no. 3 (2011): 22.