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## GENDER, NEOLIBERALISM AND DISTINCTION THROUGH LINGUISTIC CAPITAL

### Taiwanese Narratives of Struggle and Strategy

Mark Fifer Seilhamer

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*Learning global languages compels learners to thrive in today's neoliberal society. It also brings emotional struggles, desires, and ambitions, forming an integral part of learner identity and life trajectory. Mark Seilhamer achieves distinction by vividly narrating the life stories of four young women at a prestigious junior college in Taiwan.*

Ryuko Kubota, University of British Columbia, Canada

*Four affectionate portraits of young Taiwanese women lie at the heart of this warm-hearted yet incisive ethnography of identity, distinction, and language learning. The intimately narrated dreams, struggles, and accomplishments of these women as they travel towards adulthood in globalizing Taiwan offer a much-needed human face to the theory of language as symbolic capital.*

Joseph Sung-Yul Park, National University of Singapore, Singapore

*Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of distinction, Seilhamer masterfully takes his readers through the distinction-making processes of four young Taiwanese women situated at the intersection of gender and social class. Their narratives of strategy and struggle in pursuit of linguistic resources are an apt reminder of how language indexes power and stratifies individuals in a neoliberal world.*

Peter De Costa, Michigan State University, USA



## Gender, Neoliberalism and Distinction through Linguistic Capital

Taiwanese Narratives of  
Struggle and Strategy

Mark Fifer Seilhamer

This book presents the narratives of four Taiwanese young women, all proficient in English, set against the background of the dynamics of multilingualism in Taiwan. It chronicles their strategies and struggles when utilizing cultural goods – in this case their linguistic resources – to differentiate themselves within Taiwanese society.

- Ch 1. Introducing Distinction
- Ch 2. Processes Involved in Achieving Distinction
- Ch 3. Neoliberalism and English in Taiwan
- Ch 4. Narrative and its Use in this Study
- Ch 5. The Intellectual – Gigi's Story
- Ch 6. The Social Butterfly – Audrey's Story
- Ch 7. The Ideal Neoliberal Subject – Rachel's Story
- Ch 8. The Competitor – Shannon's Story
- Ch 9. Cross-Participant Analysis and Conclusions
- Ch 10. Postscript: Where are they now?
- References

Mark Fifer Seilhamer is a Lecturer in the English Language and Literature Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research interests include language and identity, language attitudes and ideologies, and language planning and policy.

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