Abstract

Singapore Hokkien is an important aspect in the local language landscape. Although it shares similarities with the other variants of the Hokkien dialect from Fujian province and Taiwan, cultural and geographical factors in Singapore have influenced the language, resulting in a local Hokkien variety unique to Singapore. Currently, certain Hokkien terms continue to be used in all rungs of the society, ranging from conversations between family members to interactions between the different races. As a result, even though Hokkien is not as widely used as the four official languages in Singapore, young Singaporeans who have supposedly lost the ability to speak fluently in Chinese dialects after the implementation of “Speak Mandarin Campaign” in 1979 are still able to manage a sparse knowledge of this local dialect. Henceforth, through the lens of Hokkien vulgarities, this paper seeks to discover the influence of Hokkien on young Singaporeans.

This paper is broadly divided into nine sections: The first two sections give a brief introduction to this paper’s motive and hypotheses. The third section provides background for Singapore Hokkien and discusses the current literature on vulgarity use. The fourth section tells the research methodology of this paper, before explaining the Singapore Hokkien vulgarities in the fifth section. The sixth section writes about the usage of Hokkien vulgarities in Singapore. The two sections that follow attempt to find out whether language abilities and attitudes affect vulgarity use. This paper then wraps up in the last section with a conclusion and suggestions for future research.