Abstract

The situation of an English-knowing bilingualism in the mainly Chinese-populated Singapore is not without controversies. The Chinese language has been playing second fiddle to the English language for many years and the effects of such an arrangement have been noted, especially in the language attitudes of young Chinese Singaporean students of this generation. It is a well-established fact that most of them have attitudes towards the Chinese language which are less favourable than what they have towards the English language. Despite being a much researched topic, there is yet a single research which focuses on the group of them with presumably superior command of the Chinese Language.

This essay aims to bring to light the language attitudes of a small and specific group of Chinese Singaporean students, namely the ones who are still pursuing their studies of the language at the Junior College level despite having earned the option of exemption from the Chinese language course. How exactly do these students feel towards the Chinese and English languages? To what extent do their language attitudes reflect those of the society at large and in what way are their language attitudes different from their contemporaries?

Based on the survey and questionnaire findings of these students, the essay will then explore the various factors that shape language attitudes and offer a few suggestions as to how the negativity felt by many Chinese Singaporean students towards the Chinese language could be alleviated.