ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to examine the main determinants of code selection in Mandarin and dialects in Singapore. This study also includes their status and social function. Investigation of factors that determine code choice in various domains reveals that socio-situational factors dominate social-relationship and rhetorical effects. Locale, participants (and audience) and individual speech repertoire are ranked as top priorities in the survey. Furthermore, it shows that in this polyglossic society, English is viewed as the High form (H) and dialects and mixed-codes as the Low form (L) across all age groups. However, Mandarin has a "special" status, functioning as a (H) for the older generation and regarded as a (L) by the younger generation. This suggests that polyglossia in Singapore is not homogeneous due to disparity in factors such as language competence, language attitude and social network of the different generations. Hence, generational differences, in addition to socio-situational factors, social-relationship and rhetorical effects play an important role in code selection, resulting in a particular code being much more associated with certain domains than others.