

### **Abstract**

#### **Sociolinguistic Dynamics of Yulinese: Usage, Attitudes, and Influencing Factors – A Comprehensive Statistical and Thematic Analysis**

Yulinese, a sub-dialect of Cantonese, is spoken mainly in the Yuzhou and Fumian districts of Yulin City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. As Putonghua is heavily promoted in China, a question arises whether it will influence the use of Yulinese. Two further research questions follow: the first one concerns the attitudes of Yulin residents towards it, and the second – the factors that influence their attitudes.

To investigate these issues, a survey was conducted with 393 respondents. The research results were presented in the form of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation). They were analyzed using statistical methods such as Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and cluster analysis, and the results were presented in the form of tables and graphs. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 24 Yulinese-speaking people of different ages. The main findings are as follows:

Respondents over the age of 40 show higher proficiency in Yulinese due to its regular use in school and family communication. In contrast, due to the predominance of Putonghua in schools, those under the age of 39 have lower levels of proficiency in Yulinese, which limits their opportunities to learn this language variety. Family language policies also influence the transmission of Yulinese, with parents more likely to use Putonghua at home, and thus younger respondents having fewer opportunities to use Yulinese. In addition, respondents show preference for using Putonghua in formal settings, while Yulinese is mainly used in informal, social contexts. This reflects the fact that respondents perceive Putonghua as a high variety and Yulinese as a low variety.

The respondents' attitudes towards Yulinese can be divided into four types: Yulinese enthusiasts, Functionalists, Externally influenced users, and Yulinese detractors. Yulinese enthusiasts value Yulinese both emotionally and practically, feel comfortable using it, and receive encouragement from their social circles. Functionalists recognise only the practical value of Yulinese, feel nervous about using it, and lack encouragement from peers. Externally influenced users see minimal practical value in Yulinese, feel nervous about using it, but

receive encouragement from friends and family. Yulinese detractors have feel no emotional attachment to Yulinese and don't consider it as useful, feel anxious about using Yulinese, and have no encouragement from others to use it.

The respondents' attitudes towards Yulinese are influenced by factors such as gender, age, childhood language and place of birth. Men are more likely to be Yulinese enthusiasts and women are more likely to be Yulinese detractors; respondents aged over 40 are mainly Yulinese enthusiasts, while respondents aged 30-39 have mixed attitudes, those aged 20-29 are mainly detractors, and those aged 19 and below are mainly functionalists; Respondents who learned Yulinese in childhood generally have positive attitudes towards Yulinese, but my research also shows that learning Putonghua in childhood does not affect the respondents' attitudes towards Yulinese; finally, respondents from Yulinese speaking areas tend to be enthusiasts, while those from non-Yulinese speaking areas tend to be detractors.