

ATTITUDE OF THE MALAY TOWARDS THE CHINESE LANGUAGE:
A CASE STUDY OF SJK (C) KAMPUNG SERI SIKAMAT

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A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE B.A. (HONS) IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

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AUGUST 2011

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the phenomenon of the increased number of Malay parents sending their children to Chinese primary school. The Malays as the Bumiputera (Prince of Land) are the dominant community in Malaysia whose language, Bahasa Malaysia, is given the prestige and legal protection. The decision to enrol the children in Chinese school is said to be affected by the network of contact, the underlying beliefs or the perception towards the language or the community. This paper sets out to investigate and explore a group of Malay parents who send their children to SJK (C) Kampung Seri Sikamat. Using Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV), Individual Network of Linguistic Contacts (INLC) and beliefs, the factors and reasons are analyzed and discussed. The respondents did not show any similarities in terms of age, gender, social class and level of education. However, they share the same belief that sending their children to Chinese school allows the children to learn Mandarin, get better results in Mathematics and Science, and also adopt the good values from the environment. Besides that, the parents also think that by learning Mandarin, the children will have a better change of getting a better job in the future.

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