

Education and Gender-inclusive Language Practice in English: Evidence from Singapore¹

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In this case study we examine the gender-inclusive language practices among Singaporean education professionals and tertiary students. Drawing upon corpus data, survey results, and interviews, we explore questions of usage and awareness of gender-inclusive language. In particular we focus on the use of gender-inclusive epicene pronouns (e.g., he or she and singular they). The results are mixed with corpus data indicating an absence of gender-inclusive pronoun use whilst the survey data reveals feminisation (he or she) as the emerging strategy for participants. We also investigate the role of education as an initiating trajectory for change through awareness and first contact with the issue and attitudes towards policy and practice in reversing linguistic discrimination in Singapore. Survey participants resoundingly support institutional domains as sites that need to take up and promote gender-inclusive language. Localised resistance and degrees of lack of commitment figure prominently in the dominant finding for classroom settings, but personal practices are largely gender-inclusive.