

BILINGUAL POLICIES IN A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY:
REFLECTIONS OF THE SINGAPORE MANDARIN CAMPAIGN
IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS

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Singapore is a multilingual society. Of its population of 2,413,945 (1980 Census) 76.9% are Chinese, 14.6% Malays and 6.4% Indians. However, the Chinese are of various 'dialect' groups, the main ones being (in descending order): Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hainanese and Hakka. These are not all mutually intelligible but Hokkien had become the lingua franca among the Chinese well before independence. The Tamils are the main Indian group but there are also Malayalis, Punjabis and other smaller groups. A pidginised form of Malay, Bazaar Malay, was the common inter-ethnic lingua franca but its use is dying out and many younger people have little or no competence in it. English is a compulsory school subject, either as first language, that is as medium of instruction, or as a second language. The policy for over 20 years has been that education could be through the medium of English with Chinese (Mandarin), Malay or Tamil as second language or through the medium of Mandarin, Malay or Tamil with English as second language. In practice, there has been a steady increase in English-medium education, with recent enrolments of children entering primary school being around 90% in English-medium schools. The fact that more and more younger Singaporeans have been taught or are being taught English has meant not only that English has been supplanting Bazaar Malay as an inter-ethnic lingua franca but also that it is increasing as a lingua franca among the Chinese. Unlike Bazaar Malay, of course, English, at least in its standard form, is a language of high status, and competence in it is one of the prerequisites for most higher paid occupations. Since 1975, it has been the sole language of tertiary education, except, of course, for other language studies. Various aspects of the Singapore language situation are discussed in more detail in Afendras and Kuo (1980), Platt (1976, 1977a,b, 1978, 1980) and Platt and Weber (1980).

On the other hand, although according to the 1980 Census 63.8% of the Chinese population were literate in Chinese alone or in Chinese and English and although Chinese (Mandarin) has been the medium of instruction or second language at school for virtually all younger Chinese Singaporeans, the use of Mandarin in interpersonal communication among the Chinese has not increased very much. A survey of language use on Singapore buses carried out in March 1979, showed that 75% of Chinese passengers used Hokkien with Chinese conductors while only 3.5% used Mandarin. A similar survey of language use at hawker centres (areas set aside for hawkers' stalls selling food and drinks) showed that 89% of customers and hawkers at Chinese stalls used dialects and only 1.2% Mandarin. (*The Mirror*, vol.15, No.39, 1979.)

David Bradley, ed. *Papers in South-East Asian linguistics* No.9:
Language policy, language planning and sociolinguistics in South-East Asia, 15-30. *Pacific Linguistics*, A-67, 1985.

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| Language/ Dialect | Chinese passengers speaking to | | | Distribution of dialect groups in Singapore |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| | Chinese conductors | Malay conductors | Indian conductors | |
| Hokkien | 75.0% | 30.6% | 26.8% | 42.2% |
| Teochew | 7.0% | 1.7% | 0.8% | 22.3% |
| Cantonese | 5.2% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 17.0% |
| Other dialects | 1.0% | 0.5% | - | 18.5% |
| Sub-total: Dialects | 88.2% | 33.8% | 28.4% | 100.0% |
| Mandarin | 3.7% | 1.0% | 0.8% | NA |
| English | 7.0% | 34.2% | 36.2% | NA |
| Malay | 1.2% | 31.1% | 34.6% | NA |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| NA = not applicable Notes: 1. Data on language/dialect use were from a Singapore Bus Service survey in March 1979 on 116 bus trips. 2. Of 8,914 passengers observed, 5,637 or 63.2% did not speak to the conductors during the survey because they were pass holders, had extra fares, or used hand signals. (<i>The Mirror</i> , vol.15, No.39, September 24, 1979.) | | | | |

Table 1: Languages/dialects used by Chinese bus passengers

| Language/ Dialect | Distribution of hawkers surveyed | Hawkers speaking to customers | Customers speaking to hawkers | Distribution of dialect groups in Singapore |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Hokkien | 37.6% | 53.2% | 55.5% | 42.2% |
| Teochew | 39.0% | 20.9% | 17.3% | 22.3% |
| Cantonese | 10.5% | 14.3% | 15.2% | 17.0% |
| Other dialects | 12.9% | 1.0% | 1.1% | 18.5% |
| Sub-total: Dialects | 100.0% | 89.4% | 89.1% | 100.0% |
| Mandarin | NA | 1.2% | 1.2% | NA |
| English | NA | 2.7% | 3.0% | NA |
| Malay | NA | 6.7% | 6.7% | NA |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| NA = not applicable Notes: 1. Data on language/dialect use were from a Ministry of the Environment survey in April 1979 covering 295 hawkers in nine markets/food centres. 2. 13,746 customers spoke to the hawkers surveyed; the hawkers replied in 13,517 instances. 3. In 86.3% of the conversations, hawkers responded in the language/dialect spoken by the customers. 4. Customers who spoke English were mostly tourists and non-Chinese. Customers who spoke Mandarin were mostly young persons. | | | | |

Table 2: Languages/dialects used at Chinese stalls in hawker centres

On 7 September 1979, the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew launched a 'Promote the use of Mandarin' campaign. In his speech he announced, among other things, that "all government officers, including those in hospitals and clinics, and especially those manning counters, will be instructed to speak Mandarin except to the old, those over sixty. All Chinese taxidivers, bus conductors, and hawkers, can and will be required to pass an oral Mandarin test, or to attend Mandarin classes to make them adequate and competent to understand and speak Mandarin to their customers".

Hokkien, the speech variety of the numerically dominant group among the Singapore Chinese, has been the intra-ethnic lingua franca from early in Singapore's history as a British colony and remains so today when at least one of the participants in verbal communication has little or no formal education. Singapore Hokkien has been influenced by Malay and by other Chinese dialects and has also assimilated some English lexical items. The attitude of some Singaporeans, including government ministers, is that it has become a pidgin, a creole or a patois. At the conclusion of the speech previously referred to, Mr Lee stated that "because it is Mandarin, not dialect, we teach in schools, the dialect spoken will be a limited pidgin-type patois".

Kuo (1980a) refers to Stewart's (1968) classification of language planning policies in new states into two types of strategies:

- (1) the eventual elimination, by education or decree, of all but one language, which is to remain as the national language,
- (2) the recognition and preservation of important languages within the national territory, supplemented by the adoption of one or more languages for official purposes and for communication across language boundaries within the nation.

Kuo suggests that "the second approach is clearly the policy being adopted in Singapore today". Certainly, the policy of promoting English as an inter-ethnic and international language along with the three other official languages fits into the second approach, but the Mandarin campaign is obviously related to the first approach. Hokkien is, after all, an "important language within the national territory". However, the policy is one of elimination of the non-Mandarin *sub-varieties* of Chinese but it does not seek to eliminate the languages which are symbolic for each of the main ethnic groups. The common use of the term 'mother tongue' in Singapore for Mandarin, Malay and Tamil is in line with the concept of a language for each main ethnic group: Chinese, Malay and Indian.

In regard to Chinese, the Singapore policy is more similar to that of Taiwan than to that of the People's Republic of China where, according to Cheng (1979) "the regional dialect is used in schools, homes, communities, courts, and local government". Such a policy is feasible in a region such as Guangdong (Kwantung), where one dialect is overwhelmingly predominant but in Singapore, where no dialect group constitutes even 60% of the total Chinese population, it could be argued that this would not be appropriate.

The current Singapore language policy is summarised in Table 3.

| Language | Place in Educational System | Value | Policy | Implementation |
|------------------|---|--|--|---|
| ENGLISH | Main language of education | International, science and technology, inter-ethnic lingua franca | Increased competence, elimination of local 'nativised' characteristics | Importation of 'native speaker' teachers, new teaching materials, in-service courses for teachers and civil service, required for university entrance |
| MANDARIN | Second language of education for most Chinese | Counter to excessive westernisation, intra-Chinese communication, 'cultural roots' | Increased use among Chinese to replace dialects | Exhortations, some incentives, some new teaching materials, increase in the media |
| MALAY and TAMIL | Mainly second languages of education for Malays and Indians | Counter to excessive westernisation, 'cultural roots' | Continuing as official languages | Continued availability as school subjects and in the media |
| CHINESE DIALECTS | None | None | Elimination within 10 years | Decreasing availability in the media, exhortations not to use |

Table 3: Singapore language policies

During two separate periods - November/December 1979 and mid-November 1980 to late February 1981 - I was in Singapore and collected all articles, editorials and letters from readers relating to language matters in the daily, English-language morning newspaper *The Straits Times*. During both periods, articles and letters relating to the Mandarin campaign and/or to bilingualism were by far the most common, as may be seen from Table 4.

| MAIN LANGUAGE TOPIC | Articles | | Letters | | Editorials | | Total | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Period 1 No. Daily Av. | Period 2 No. Daily Av. | Period 1 No. Daily Av. | Period 2 No. Daily Av. | Period 1 No. Daily Av. | Period 2 No. Daily Av. | Period 1 No. Daily Av. | Period 2 No. Daily Av. |
| ENGLISH | 18 .34 | 19 .19 | 16 .30 | 0 0. | 0 0. | 1 .01 | 34 .64 | 20 .20 |
| MANDARIN AND DIALECTS, BI-/ MULTILINGUALISM, LANGUAGE SITU- ATION IN SINGAPORE | 92 1.74 | 82 .84 | 33 .62 | 16 .16 | 1 .02 | 0 0. | 126 2.38 | 98 1.0 |
| MALAY | 12 .23 | 5 .05 | 0 0. | 2 .02 | 0 0. | 1 .01 | 12 .23 | 8 .08 |
| TAMIL | 2 .04 | 1 .01 | 12 .23 | 0 0. | 0 0. | 0 0. | 14 .26 | 1 .01 |
| OTHER LANGUAGES, e.g. JAPANESE, FRENCH, GERMAN | 10 .19 | 6 .06 | 0 0. | 0 0. | 0 0. | 0 0. | 10 .19 | 6 .06 |
| TOTAL | 134 2.53 | 113 1.15 | 61 1.15 | 18 .18 | 1 .02 | 1 .01 | 196 3.70 | 132 1.35 |
| Period 1: 5 November 1979 to 27 December 1979; Period 2: 18 November 1980 to 25 February 1981. | | | | | | | | |

Table 4: Articles, letters and editorials in The Straits Times, Singapore, related to language matters

Bilingualism, as commonly used in Singapore, means bilingualism in English and one of the other three official languages and overwhelmingly refers to bilingualism in English and Mandarin. For most Chinese children, the 'bilingual' education policy has meant, as pointed out by Gopinathan (1980), "that they are tackling two foreign languages at primary level" (namely English and Mandarin). Overwhelmingly, the articles on language issues are reports of speeches and statements by government ministers, including the Prime Minister. Letters from readers relating to Mandarin and bilingualism are almost entirely initiated by these ministerial statements. This has been pointed out by Afendras (1980) when commenting on the number of speeches by the Prime Minister and other ministers during the period from early 1978 to mid-1979. He comments that the central theme of these speeches "seems to have been the desired type of bilingualism for the Singapore citizen - bilingualism that embraces English and Mandarin, or the other official languages for the respective ethnic groups. Educational measures taken to ensure development of this particular type of bilingualism constitute the main subsidiary theme".

In what follows, I shall give examples of the content of various speeches and newspaper reader responses. It will be seen that various arguments were put forward in favour of replacing the Chinese dialects by Mandarin and readers have expressed various reactions to the speeches.

On 5 November 1979, an editorial headed 'NOT TO BE DISMISSED' discussed the government's intention to have television programs in Chinese dialects (mostly these would be in Cantonese) dubbed in Mandarin. It appears that many letters had expressed disapproval of this and Dr Ow the Parliamentary Secretary (Culture) had claimed that the letters were "not representative of public opinion. The writers were mainly English-educated". The view of the editorial was that most Chinese Singaporeans were "against having their favourite programs dubbed. But they really should give the dubbed programs a chance. The dialogue may be less witty or colourful, but it is a small price to pay if it helps the Mandarin campaign of which most have indicated they approve".

From this it is obvious that as part of the Mandarin campaign it was planned that Chinese Singaporeans should be exposed to hearing Mandarin to the greatest extent possible. The medium of television is obviously a highly effective one for this purpose in a small nation where, in 1978, there were 151 television licences per 1,000 population (Kuo 1980b). However, it is also obvious from this editorial that some Singaporeans, although apparently agreeing with the aims of the Mandarin campaign, were not altogether happy about actually having to listen to Mandarin instead of dialects whilst being entertained. The comment of the editorial writer that the dialogue "may be less witty or colourful" reflects a view expressed in some letters (and also frequently heard) that Mandarin is a heavier, more serious variety and not as witty as Cantonese.

On the same day, an article of 37 column centimetres length under the heading 'Phase 2 of Speak Mandarin drive starts' covered various aspects of the campaign. All Chinese government officers in contact with the public were to wear 'I Can Speak Mandarin' badges whilst for officers still not proficient in Mandarin, classes had been planned. "Members of Parliament and community leaders will be visiting residents, hawkers and taxi drivers in their constituencies and to distribute literature about the campaign." The article also mentioned Mandarin classes at community centres and oratorical contests and debates. Dr Ow, speaking at one of these oratorical contests, stated that the main groups the campaign wanted to reach were "the English-educated and the less educated". The older Chinese with little or no formal education would, of course, have had little exposure to Mandarin. On the other hand, many of the English-medium educated

would feel little practical need for using it. Many are far more oriented to Western culture and values and are aware that proficiency in English is necessary for attaining higher status, higher paid employment. Their competence in Chinese dialects such as Hokkien is adequate for communication in restaurants and small shops and of considerable practical value when on holiday in Malaysia for similar communication. In Malaysia, although Chinese (Mandarin)-medium primary school education is available, the dominant Chinese dialect of the particular region is the main intra-ethnic lingua franca within the Chinese communities. Thus, a knowledge of Hokkien is very useful in such places as Johore Bahru, immediately across the causeway, in Malacca and Penang, while a knowledge of Cantonese is useful in Kuala Lumpur and the hill resort of Cameron Highlands.

The following day, a sizable article (128 column centimetres plus 2 maps and 2 pictures) by *The Straits Times* Foreign Editor discussed the language problems of Luxembourg and Mauritius. The purpose of this article was to stress that multilingualism, as in these two countries, had led to most inhabitants having imperfect ability in any language. The obvious lesson for Chinese Singaporeans to learn was that a switch to Mandarin would lessen the linguistic burden of using several Chinese dialects according to situation and interlocutor.

An article on 7 November by the Foreign Editor of *The Straits Times* under the heading 'Reasons for phasing out dialects are compelling' put forward and then refuted various arguments in favour of retaining the Chinese dialects. One of these arguments is that the ability to speak various dialects is very useful in communicating with Chinese elsewhere, e.g. Cantonese in Hong Kong and Macao, Teochew in Bangkok, Hokkien in Taipeh (Taiwan). However, the writer argued that these three dialects are different from "the pure dialects originally used" and have "been developed into a crude Singaporean-originated cross between the original dialects and Malay and English, and often among the dialects themselves". Thus, one of the arguments against the dialects and in favour of Mandarin is the crudity of the dialects.

An interesting argument in this article is that the human mind can be over filled and that it is better to store worthwhile information: "the human mind is capable of storing a limited amount of knowledge for immediate usage if needed. Filled to capacity it tends to reject other items you try to push in. Computer programmers know this well." The writer states that "the most cogent argument for snuffing out our dialects" is that "if Singapore Chinese speak only Mandarin, I - and others like me - can utilise our minds for far more useful things". This reflects similar views expressed by the Prime Minister.

On 12 September, under the heading 'Mandarin: Call to review the campaign', there was a report of remarks to reporters by the Home Affairs Minister, Mr Chua Sian Chin. He mentioned that the campaign was confined to ethnic Chinese only and its emphasis was to get the younger generation to speak the language. There had been a certain amount of concern among other ethnic groups that they too were expected to speak Mandarin. The minister was also reported as giving a further reason for learning Mandarin, namely that it would help in trading activities with China.

On the same day another article, extracts from a feature in the Chinese language newspaper *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, referred to Trudgill's (1974) discussion of multilingualism and diglossia, in particular the situations in Luxembourg and Switzerland. Interestingly, although Trudgill suggests that the learning of Standard German and French "obviously places children in Luxembourg under considerable strain" he does not state, as claimed in the article, that they are

placed "under great pressure" or that they "were unable to master so many languages and dialects".

An article on 19 November included the information that the June 1980 population census would include questions to find what languages were used in Singapore homes. The same questions would be asked again in the 1990 census "to monitor the success of the current Speak More Mandarin, Less Dialects campaign".

Concern about the effects of the campaign were expressed in some letters. For example, on 23 November a writer expressed concern that Chinese classical operas with lyrics in such Chinese varieties as Teochew might be staged with commentaries in Mandarin.

On 23 November, a television program was shown in which Mr Lee Kuan Yew appeared in a discussion with three journalists. This was fully reported on 24 November on pages 1, 10, 11, 12, 13 and back, a total of 435 column inches (1105 column centimetres) according to Harrison (1980). In this discussion, Mr Lee set two targets: "five years for all young Chinese Singaporeans to drop dialects and use Mandarin and 10 years for Mandarin to be established as the language of the coffee-shops, hawker centres and shops". In this discussion, too, he reassured the non-Chinese by stating that "no non-Chinese need have to learn Mandarin or be at a disadvantage". This reassurance was referred to in an article next day under the heading 'Assurance brings relief to the Malays'.

On the 26th, there were several articles on the campaign, including one under the heading 'Call for use of Hanyu Pinyin in birth certificates'. Apparently, the use of Pinyin spelling of names was already being encouraged - and consequently pronunciation of names in Mandarin rather than in their various dialect versions. However, on the 27th, an article reported that many Chinese Singaporeans felt that it was too early to implement the spelling of names in Hanyu Pinyin in birth certificates.

On the 29th, the paper reported a speech by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Rajaratnam, in which he "stressed the need for each race to speak its own language as it is the language of culture, while English is only the language of progress and science. Western culture is not all good, and there is the need for our own culture where there is respect for the sick, elderly and the young."

The practical value of Mandarin for trade with China was mentioned again in a speech by a university professor reported on 2 December. In a further speech reported on 6 December, Mr Rajaratnam pointed out that Mandarin is the language of more than 900 million people in China and that "if China succeeds in its modernisation program, then there will be new expressions, terminology and idioms to learn By studying Mandarin, you are exposed to a modernising language."

Some letters expressed reservations about certain aspects of the campaign. For example, on 10 December, a letter by 'Down To Earth' started by agreeing with the Prime Minister "that Mandarin should replace dialects so that we do not develop a Creole-type patois in our community. But what I do not see is the need to pressure our students to achieve second language proficiency." By 'second language proficiency', the writer meant the standard required for passes in a second language at the 'O' and 'A' level examinations for matriculation to the university.

Other letter writers seemed to be confused about certain aspects of the campaign such as the move to have Chinese names translated into their Mandarin equivalent and spelt in Hanyu Pinyin. One writer (14 December) felt that "we should not use Hanyu Pinyin at all as it conflicts with English and Malay spelling"

and asked "Isn't it easier to identify Payching or Payjing (as in paying) instead of Beijing?" Obviously, the widespread use of Pinyin elsewhere as a standardised Roman letter orthography did not seem as important to the writer as familiarity with English orthography. Another writer, John Citizen (23 December) writing against the spelling of names in Hanyu Pinyin ended his letter "Whoever is responsible for Hanyu Pinyin should respect English phonetics as it is pronounced, unless romanisation is not aimed at the English speaking world."

Concern by non-Chinese Singaporeans about the campaign led to various statements from the government. An article on 21 December quoted extracts from the Ministry of Culture's fortnightly bulletin *The Mirror* which stressed "that the 'Speak More Mandarin' campaign is confined to ethnic Chinese Singaporeans and is aimed particularly at the English-medium educated and less educated". *The Mirror* article pointed out that 837,000 Chinese Singaporeans above 15 watched two popular Cantonese Kung Fu dramas on television every week and that this figure would be much higher if children under that age were included. Obviously, if Chinese television drama is in Mandarin this will help spread competence in it. According to *The Straits Times* report, *The Mirror* article also stressed the importance of parents using Mandarin with their children and also pointed out that "spoken Mandarin is consistent with the Chinese written language through which cultural values of the Chinese civilisation are best transmitted".

As may be seen from Table 4, the rate of occurrence of articles and letters was considerably lower during the November 1981-February 1982 period. However, the Mandarin campaign continued. On 14 November 1981, an article under the heading 'Getting the message across to dialect speaking families' announced that the Prime Minister would appear on television on Sunday evening in an hour-long discussion with four Chinese journalists on 'Languages spoken in the home and their learning'. The discussion was to be in Hokkien and as the article commented, "all previous efforts to promote Mandarin have yet to reach those who understand only the Chinese dialects" and "although the campaign to encourage the wider use of Mandarin is more than a year old, dialects still dominate Chinese homes". The article stated that a pilot survey "of some 1,014 Singaporean homes" revealed that only 0.2 per cent of the bilingual homes (meaning bilingual in a variety of Chinese and English) used Mandarin and English. A short item on 18 November was headed "PAP will use dialects in the general election campaign". It explained that the ruling People's Action Party would be using Chinese dialects in the general election campaign and quoted the Parliamentary Secretary (Culture), Dr Ow Chin Hock as saying "we have found that many people do not know Mandarin, especially middle-aged housewives and the elderly".

Following the earlier discussion on the use of Hanyu Pinyin for names, the front page headlines on 20 November announced 'PINYIN NAMES NEXT YEAR'. The accompanying article explained that Chinese pupils in pre-primary and Primary One classes would be known by their Hanyu Pinyin names from the beginning of the 1981 school year. The Director of Education was quoted as saying that this "will also have the effect of standardising Chinese names so that it will be impossible to tell which dialect group a pupil belongs to by simply looking at his name". On 21 November, the paper reported that reactions to the policy "was noticeably polarised - the English-educated vehemently opposed and the Chinese-educated passively supported it. As is their manner, the dialect speakers (meaning here those with little or no formal education) were unfailingly agreeable to the ruling". On 26 November, an article 'Switch to Pinyin names in textbooks' announced that "Chinese names in English textbooks will in future be spelt in Hanyu Pinyin and not in dialect". All new textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education would be required to use Pinyin spelling for names of Chinese persons in textbooks.

A short article on 1 December accompanied a picture of a Minister visiting a market where he was distributing "Hanyu Pinyin booklets on Mandarin names for food items" and another article next day mentioned that the Education Ministry had prepared guides for teachers. "One guide is a list of about 400 common surnames with their Pinyin translations and the other is a booklet suggesting ways for teachers to master the Pinyin phonetic sounds."

A letter on 5 December suggested that there should be a 'Speak-Mandarin-To-Your-Child' campaign with television programs to help parents "to teach their children to talk in Mandarin, starting with two-year-olds." On 17 December, the president of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry was reported as having suggested the compilation of a list of technical terms in Mandarin as many dialect terms were used in various trades.

With the general election taking place on 23 December, there were only minor items relating to language policy in the preceding week. However, on 28 December, an item 'Rediffusion ahead of guidelines for switch to Mandarin' indicated that Rediffusion, the private cable radio service, was ahead of the target for the end of December: 66 per cent of Chinese programs to be in Mandarin. On the last day of the year, an item announced that the Culture Ministry expected to conduct its first oral Mandarin test some time in May for about 2,400 civil servants. The test was voluntary but a spokesman stated that "those who pass will be awarded a proficiency certificate which the Public Service Commission will take into consideration for their promotion and appointment. But there would be no salary increments."

Letters early in January took up the issues of Pinyin spelling of names (some in favour and some against) and 'Speak-Mandarin-to-your-child'. Several news items also reported on the Hanyu Pinyin name policy. As an example of the irregular spelling of Chinese names, a Mr Low was reported as saying "my father's surname is spelt Loh, my sister Loo and my brother Lu. But from my son's generation onwards, we shall all be known as Lu."

Concern at the weighting system for the PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination) was expressed by a number of letter writers. The marks for 1st and 2nd languages are weighted double as compared with marks in the other two subjects. Particular concern was expressed because children who did not do well in Chinese as a 2nd language were being 'streamed' into less prestigious schools although doing well in other subjects. An article on 1 January by C.C. Leong, a management consultant, former lecturer in the University of Singapore's Psychology Department and author of the book *Youth in the Army* also criticised the 'weighting' policy. A rejoinder by the Permanent Secretary (Education) was published on the 13th. On 11 February, a long letter from C.C. Leong was published in which he answered the criticisms.

An item on 15 January announced that a 40-minute television program in Hokkien 'Dialects and the Learning of Languages' would be shown the following Sunday evening. The item concluded with the paragraph: "The need to campaign for Mandarin in Hokkien - the most common Chinese dialect here - also suggests that many dialect-speaking parents have yet to respond positively to the campaign which has been on for more than a year."

The following day, a short article announced that all Chinese students up to pre-university classes were to be known in school by their Hanyu Pinyin names from 1982.

The Sunday television program was reported on the following day, commencing "An Education Ministry official called on teachers yesterday to encourage their

pupils to be 'little teachers' of Mandarin at home. They can teach their parents and grandparents the language."

An item on 22 January reported that a Standard Chinese Language Committee was to be established to standardise Chinese terminology used by the mass media. On 30 January, a front page article 'The one parent, one language way' stated that a senior lecturer in the English Department of the National University of Singapore had prepared a report to the First Deputy Prime Minister. A long article by the lecturer, Dr Tay, was carried on an inside page. This reported on various experiments in other countries in which one parent spoke in one language to the child and the other parent in another.

There were few items on Mandarin or bilingualism in February 1981, but a full half-page article 'Bilingualism and children: Some common myths' appeared on 25 February. This discussed the importance of the home environment in "nurturing a child in bilingualism" and exemplified from two families.

Main emphases of the campaign

As may be seen from the examples quoted, the main emphases of the campaign as reported in *The Straits Times* were:

1. The superiority of Mandarin over the dialects because it is a 'modernising language' whereas the dialects are 'creole-type patois'.
2. The practical value of Mandarin for trade with the People's Republic of China.
3. The excessive burden of trying to be competent in too many languages. As English is 'the language of progress and science', it is a necessary language but Mandarin should be the main other one for most Chinese Singaporeans.
4. The written form of Chinese in books, newspapers and magazines available in Singapore reflects Mandarin structure. Therefore competence in Mandarin means the ability to read a range of Chinese literature.
5. The ability to read Chinese and to speak Mandarin opens up Chinese culture which is a counter to the less desirable features of Western culture.

Implementation measures

The measures implemented to increase the use of Mandarin, as reported in *The Straits Times*, include:

1. The requirement for Chinese taxidriviers, bus conductors and hawkers to attain competence in Mandarin so that they may use it with the public.
2. The requirement that civil servants use Mandarin with the public.
3. The incentive for civil servants to learn Mandarin, namely that it may help towards promotion.
4. The switch to Mandarin in Chinese radio and television programs and in the cinema.
5. Visits by politicians to housing estates and hawker centres to promote the campaign, to address members of the public and distribute campaign literature.
6. Various contests to encourage proficiency in Mandarin.

7. The use of Mandarin personal names spelt in Hanyu Pinyin for school children.
8. Encouragement of parents to use Mandarin with their children.
9. Encouragement of children to use Mandarin with parents and grandparents.
10. The continuing incentive for Chinese school children to do well in Mandarin because of the weighting system.

Public reaction

Public reaction was expressed directly in letters and indirectly in articles which commented on public reaction. Although apparently most members of the public were in favour of the campaign, there were reservations about certain aspects of it and concern in some quarters:

1. Disappointment on the part of some Chinese that they would have to listen to Mandarin rather than dialect in television programs, cinema films and on the radio.
2. Concern by the non-Chinese that they, too, needed to learn Mandarin. It is noticeable that numbers of Malay and Indian parents have enrolled their children for Mandarin as the Second Language as they feel it will be of advantage.
3. Concern that students would be streamed to less prestigious secondary schools if their results in Mandarin as a Second Language were too low. This concern also extended to language requirements for entry to the university.
4. Dislike of learning Hanyu Pinyin orthography for names if it conflicted with the familiar English-based spelling of Chinese names.
5. Related to this, the feeling that children's surnames and given names should not be changed, often radically, at school from the names used at home.

The future of bilingualism in Singapore

It will be clear from the examples of newspaper coverage that the Mandarin campaign has been carried out with the vigour and determination typical of Singapore leadership. As Afendras (1980) puts it:

What may be striking to a student of language planning is not only the extent of involvement of the Prime Minister himself (at least six major speeches on language policy in a period of sixteen months) but also the number of ministers (from almost every ministry) who have, in the same period, made pronouncements on the same topic.

A comparison with newspaper articles and letters on English, Malay and Tamil would show striking differences in the main themes. A full discussion of these is beyond the scope of this paper but the following table indicates the main differences.

| Language | Main theme |
|-----------------|--|
| Mandarin | Replacing the Chinese dialects by Mandarin |
| English | Improving competence; standards of correctness |
| Malay and Tamil | Concern about availability at schools and about decreasing use |

Table 5: Main themes of newspaper coverage of language issues

The Mandarin campaign does seem to have had some side effects for Malay and Tamil and articles with such headings as 'Important role of Malay papers' (3.12.1979) and 'Tamil to be taught in more schools' (29.11.1979) appeared along with some letters about the teaching of Tamil.

How successful the Mandarin campaign will be in the long term is difficult to predict. The short term benefits are possibly not apparent to many Singaporeans. There are no strong financial incentives to *maintain* competence in it although there are the obvious incentives for school age children to attain adequate competence for examination purposes. The strongest immediate practical value for Chinese Singaporeans is the ability to understand films in Mandarin on television and in the cinema. However, increased communication with the People's Republic of China may also enhance the attractiveness of competence in Mandarin.

In the foreseeable future, the use of English will increase because it is the main language of education and modernisation. This is in line with Ferguson and Anwar Dil's (1979) hypotheses 2, 3, 5 and 7:

Hypothesis 2 The development process tends toward the dominance of a single language of development in a nation.

Hypothesis 3 The development process tends toward making available a single language of national communication.

Hypothesis 5 The language which is the principal vehicle of technical innovation and managerial decision-making tends to become the dominant language of development.

Hypothesis 7 The dominant language at the centre of development tends to become the dominant official language of national communication.

English is quite clearly the language which fits in with these hypotheses.

Whether the Chinese dialects will be replaced by Mandarin or English for intra-group communication among the Chinese will depend mainly on the extent of incentives to use Mandarin (and disincentives to use the dialects), the degree to which Singapore Chinese will consider themselves as distinctively Chinese rather than Singaporean and how much practical value they can see in developing and maintaining competence in Mandarin.

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