Singapore's speak Mandarin Campaign

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Abstract. The Speak Mandarin Campaign aims to persuade the ethnic Chinese of Singapore to use Mandarin as their *lingua franca* in place of Chinese dialects. The three main arguments are: educational (dialects interfere with the effective learning of Mandarin in schools), cultural (Mandarin, it is claimed, represents a core value of Chinese culture), practical (Mandarin is preferable to a multitude of mutually unintelligible dialects). Some difficulties with these arguments are discussed. Some other aspects of the campaign, such as the paraphernalia, changes in the university's entrance policy and changes in the media, are also reviewed.

Introduction

Since the late 1970s[1] the Singapore Government has sponsored a Speak Mandarin Campaign which aims to persuade the ethnic Chinese (comprising approximately 77% of the total population) to use Mandarin in place of Chinese dialects. While government-sponsored campaigns are a common feature of Singapore society, this campaign has involved much more argumentation and justification by the government than any of the other campaigns (such as the Courtesy Campaign and the anti-litter drive). Clearly the success of the campaign depends to some extent on convincing the target audience of the need to change and so the arguments in support of the campaign play a critical role in the act of persuasion. After all, it is not just the public use of language which is the concern of the campaign, but all language use between ethnic Chinese including, and in particular, use within a family. If language use in such private domains as the family and between friends is to be altered, then obviously the target population must be acting out of a conviction that the campaign is sound and necessary and not just out of a drive to make one's publicly *visible* behaviour acceptable. A system of fines, for example, which may work in the case of an anti-litter campaign, cannot possibly work in the case of attempts to change behavioural patterns

in the private domains of interaction. Considering the importance of the argumentation in the campaign, then, it is appropriate to examine the arguments for the campaign in some detail.

In an overview of language policies in southeast Asia, Noss (1984:25) distinguishes three official arguments which have been appealed to in support of the campaign. These are educational (if there were no dialects, the bilingual policy of teaching Mandarin and English to the ethnic Chinese would be more successful), cultural (Mandarin is a symbol and vehicle of the Chinese cultural heritage), and practical (Mandarin can function as a *lingua franca* amongst the Chinese). I shall proceed to discuss each of these arguments in turn, basing my discussion on the speech given by the Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, on 21 February 1978 (repeated on 4 March 1978) entitled 'Mandarin: *lingua franca* for Chinese Singaporeans' in the official collection of government speeches (Speeches Vol. 1, No. 10). I shall then discuss some of the other supporting activities which are designed to further the aims of the campaign.

It should be mentioned that other arguments in support of the campaign are sometimes advanced. One additional argument relates to increasing trade with China (see, for example, Platt, 1985: 22,23). While a 'commercial' argument along these lines might be expected to have an immediate appeal to Singapore Chinese, it has not figured nearly as prominently in ministerial speeches or newspaper editorials as the three main arguments mentioned above, which relate more to 'home affairs'. (There is no mention of trade with China in the speech singled out for discussion here.) One occasion when it is used, albeit with an interesting twist, is in a comment attributed to the Prime Minister in *Asiaweek* (14 November 1980), where competence in Mandarin is seen as an advantage in learning Japanese: 'We use Mandarin, which makes the Japanese language easier to learn. The Japanese will need people who can work out the software for the computers they can sell to the world, including China.' In the same *Asiaweek* article, Singapore officials are reported as saying that business with China is no more than a secondary benefit of the campaign. It has also been claimed that the campaign will raise productivity at the worksite, as argued in the speech of Mr Ong Teng Cheong, Minister for Communications and Minister for Labour, of 8 October 1982 and reported in Speeches Vol. 5, No. 5.

The Educational Argument

The educational argument is both the most commonly appealed to, as well as the most extensively argued defence of the campaign. Before turning to the argument itself, some recent history of Singapore can help put this argument in perspective.[2]

Following self-government in 1959, the People's Action Party (PAP) Government took steps to ensure equal treatment for all four language streams provided for in the education system, namely, English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. In

so doing, the PAP was acting in a way typical of the emergent new nations in the post-World War II era. Such nations characteristically took steps to raise the status of their so-called 'mother tongues' which had not been given sufficient recognition by colonial governments. In the case of Mandarin, events in Mainland China in the 1950s would have given further encouragement to the promotion of Mandarin in Singapore. Such events included: the campaign to promote Putonghua announced in October 1955 by the Education Minister, Putonghua becoming the basic instructional medium in all schools in 1956; the plan for simplification of characters promulgated by the State Council in January 1956; and the adoption of Hanyu Pinyin as the official romanisation in February 1958. All these events gave greater credibility to Chinese (in particular Mandarin) as a viable medium of education within the Singapore context. Apart from these developments external to Singapore, there was a more immediate local cause for positive action in the promotion of Chinese (i.e. Mandarin-medium) education and that was the political and social unrest amongst the Chinese-educated community on account of various issues. The issues included denial of citizenship in some cases and the refusal to do National Service by students in Chinese High Schools. These local, Singaporean developments together with developments in Mainland China and elsewhere made it inescapable that Mandarin would have to have a more respected place in Singapore's education system with the advent of self-government and eventual independence.

While these events provide the backdrop to the development of language policy in the era of independence, they do not by themselves explain why a campaign promoting the cause of the Chinese language should have been started in the late 1970s, more than a decade after Singapore became independent. To understand this, one must look more closely at the fate of Chinese-stream education during this period. Beginning even before independence and continuing unabated after independence, the percentage of pupils enrolled in the Chinese stream in schools gradually dropped, while the percentage of pupils enrolled in the English stream increased accordingly. This (voluntary) transfer from the Chinese stream to the English stream caused concern in the government. A highly influential Report on the Ministry of Education in 1978, the so-called Goh Report, begins on page 1 of Chapter 1 with the statistical data on numbers of primary pupils registered in the two streams, beginning with 45.9% registered in the Chinese stream in 1959 and ending with 11.2% in 1978. The report, implicitly equating language and culture, goes on to say: '. . . the drift to the English-stream schools had made it necessary for the government to pay special attention to bilingual education. It is clearly undesirable that Singaporeans should lose all connections with their cultural roots, whether their ancestors come from China, India or the Malay world' (pp. 1–2). A comparable inclination towards English-stream education could be seen at higher levels of education. Nanyang University, established in 1956 as a Chinese-medium university, was attracting fewer high-quality students, as more and more of the best

Chinese-stream high school students were being admitted to the English-medium University of Singapore. In 1978, Nanyang University announced that it would be preparing undergraduates for English language examinations, using English as the medium of instruction. (Eventually, Nanyang University became part of the new National University of Singapore.) It is this drift away from Chinese-medium education and the concern that this caused, clearly expressed in the Goh Report, which are the more immediate reasons for the promotion of Chinese at this time (cf. the discussion by Noss, 1984: 51, who sees the Speak Mandarin Campaign, in part at least, as a 'compensation' for the loss of Nanyang).

As long as one was opposing the language imposed by the colonial government (here English), it was convenient to advocate in its place the alternative of 'the mother tongue', without worrying too much about the diversity of dialects and language varieties. The reality of Singapore, however, is that the ethnic Chinese speak a number of Chinese dialects (mainly Hokkien) while Mandarin has not traditionally been a language of common use in Singapore. In the 1957 census, only 0.1% of the Chinese claimed Mandarin as their 'mother tongue' (defined in this context as the 'language or dialect principally spoken in the person's home during the person's early childhood'). While the cause of Chinese education was being promoted in the 1950s, the linguistic diversity amongst the Chinese was very much placed in the background. In the All-Party Report on Chinese Education (1956), for example, dialects enter into the discussion only in a peripheral way. To the extent that they are discussed, they are seen as exerting a positive influence on the learning of Mandarin (p. 41):

> We are also reliably informed that there would be no trouble at all for the pupils in Chinese Schools in which the pupils predominately speak one dialect to learn Mandarin. . . We are also informed that versions in *literary as opposed to colloquial Chinese*, whether in Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Hockchia, Hockchiu, Shanghainese, etc. dialects, have very close affinities to the Mandarin version, and these no doubt help the Chinese child to adopt Mandarin as the common medium of communication in schools and outside them.

It was not until the Goh Report that the use of dialects was seen as exerting a negative influence on the learning of Mandarin: 'When they (i.e. the pupils) are at home, they speak dialects. As a result, most of what they have learned in school is not reinforced' (p. 4.4).

The thinking about dialects *vis-à-vis* Mandarin in the Goh Report underlies the educational argument appealed to as part of the campaign. Basically, the argument runs as follows: the bilingual policy (i.e. learning English and Mandarin) is essential; the learning of Mandarin is hampered by the use of dialect outside the classroom; therefore, in order for the bilingual policy to be successful, the use of dialect outside the classroom must be replaced by the use of Mandarin.

One feature of this line of argumentation is the assumed subservience of the society at large to the demands of the education system. A conflict is claimed to exist between an established pattern of behaviour in society (the use of dialect) and the education policy. The solution being advanced is not to tailor the education policy to suit society, but to transform society so that the education policy can be made more effective. While this may strike some observers as unusual, it may find easier acceptance amongst the Singapore Chinese, given the traditional Chinese respect for education and the traditional parental dedication to ensuring children's future prosperity through education. The opening remarks of the speech make a direct appeal to this tradition: 'One great strength in our society is the strong support for education. It springs from the conviction of our people that our children's future depends on education.'

Just as the All-Party Report on Chinese Education had overlooked the negative role of dialect in the learning of Mandarin, so the Goh Report and the Prime Minister's speech ignore the positive role of dialect in the learning of Mandarin. To take just one example of how one can make use of a knowledge of dialect, consider the task of learning the tone class of words in Mandarin. One must learn for each word not only the string of segmental phonemes, but also the tone (there being four distinct tones). If one knows a dialect and can recognise a cognate relationship between a word in the dialect and a word in Mandarin (i.e. recognise them as different pronunciations of the same character), then one can make a very good guess about the tone in Mandarin. In a study looking at such correspondences between Hokkien and Mandarin (Newman, 1982), I showed that a good Hokkien speaker would be able to predict Mandarin tones correctly more than 90% of the time. A good Hokkien speaker therefore has an enormous advantage over learners of Mandarin who have no Chinese dialect background at all.

There is no reference in the speech under discussion to the attitudinal dimension of language learning, although we know that a learner's attitude towards a language can affect, positively or negatively, the learning of that language. For example, there is no acknowledgement that Singapore Chinese may sometimes use dialect because they have a fondness for the dialect or because dialect makes them feel more relaxed. Nor is there any acknowledgement that Singapore Chinese may not feel particularly drawn to Mandarin, based as it is on a dialect of Northern China, whereas Singapore Chinese speak dialects from Southern China. If one genuinely wants to learn Mandarin, knowledge of a Chinese dialect will not be an obstacle.

The Cultural Argument

One example of the cultural argument occurs in the last paragraph of the speech referred to above:

We must keep the core of our value systems in social mores. To do that, we must have our children literate in Chinese and English. To be literate, they must be Mandarin-speaking, able to read the books,the proverbs, the parables, and the stories of heroes and villains, so that they know what a good upright man should do and be. Hence the Mandarin part of our bilingual policy must succeed.

It is questionable whether one must be literate in Chinese in order to preserve Chinese value systems and social mores. Possibly a true appreciation of Chinese 'high culture' (Beijing opera, etc.) may only come about if one is literate in Modern Chinese. A full appreciation of Chinese high culture would probably also require familiarity with Classical Chinese texts as well. But this surely does not apply to the 'low culture' of everyday life. One does not need to be literate in Chinese in order to understand and practise filial piety, habits of thrift, respect for authority, or in order to appreciate Chinese cuisine. Also there are many features of daily life in Singapore which are seen as traditional and worth continuing, but which have no basis at all in the culture of China: Indian curry, *nasi lemak*, *batik* etc. Being literate in Mandarin could not possibly make Singapore Chinese appreciate such things more.[3]

My second comment on the cultural argument concerns the claim that one must be able to speak Mandarin in order to be literate in Chinese. It is well known that one can be literate in a language without being able to speak the language. One does not have to speak the way Chaucer did in order to read Middle English. There are many scientists who are able to read English-language journals in their field without being able to hold a conversation in English. Similarly, many people can read Chinese quite well without being able to speak Mandarin in an equally proficient way. This is especially so with Chinese as a result of the largely logographic nature of the Chinese writing system, as well as the traditional method of teaching Chinese in schools where the emphasis was on reading and writing rather than on conversation.

A further cultural argument which is sometimes advanced takes the following form: Westerners expect Chinese to be able to speak Mandarin and you will therefore feel ashamed if you cannot speak Mandarin. This must be one of the rare instances where the Singapore Government relies on Western reaction to decide whether Singapore's social policy is right or not. A linguistically naive Westerner whose knowledge of Chinese culture and languages is circumscribed is hardly an appropriate judge of what is truly Chinese.[4]

Despite the objections which may be raised to the cultural argument as presented in the speech, Mandarin obviously can function for many Chinese as a clear and well-defined symbol of Chinese culture. Mandarin, unlike the dialects, carries with it the prestige associated with learning and education in Chinese society. There is, furthermore, a widespread perception amongst

Chinese that dialects are in some sense inferior to Mandarin. If one wishes to counter the influence of the English language in all its domains of usage, then Mandarin would be the most effective counterweight. The Speak Mandarin Campaign can therefore act as an outlet for the expression of non-Western identity. As such it is a far more controllable outlet than, say, Islamic fundamentalism.

The Practical Argument

The practical argument proposes Mandarin as a *lingua franca* amongst Singapore Chinese as a way of rationalising inter-Chinese communication, in preference to the multiplicity of dialects. The use of mutually unintelligible dialects is seen as hindering effective communication and creating barriers to the development of a harmonious and more uniform society. In the following excerpt from the Prime Minister's speech, 'fracturing' of society is seen as a direct consequence of the continued use of dialects:

> The choice for Singapore is simple — continue with dialects, and we will end up using only dialects and English. We will continue to have a fractured multilingual society.

It would be wrong to assume, in the Singapore context, that people who speak different dialects are unable to communicate effectively with each other. One must take cognisance of the fact that many, probably most, Singapore Chinese who claim the ability to speak a dialect would also have some competence in another dialect or language. In fact, one could say that familiarity with, though not necessarily proficiency in, a number of Chinese dialects and Mandarin is a hallmark of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia (excluding the peranankan Chinese). The polyglossic situation of Singapore has been well described by Platt (1980) who characterises the typical verbal repertoire of a Singapore Chinese as follows:

It usually includes:	*It may include:*
(1) The native Chinese dialect	(5) English
(2) The dominant Chinese dialect (Hokkien)	(6) Mandarin
	(7) Baba Malay
(3) One or more additional Chinese dialects	(8) Malay
(4) Bazaar Malay	

Few Chinese, if any, would be equally proficient in all these different codes. Rather, a Singapore Chinese will have the degree of competence in each code which will be appropriate for his needs. With a repertoire like that shown above, it would be somewhat unusual for two Singapore Chinese not to be able to find some common means of communication, even though

they might have as their first languages different and mutually unintelligible dialects.

Even if the aim of a common Chinese *lingua franca* were achieved, this does not automatically guarantee social harmony. We know that identification with a linguistic or ethnic group can persist well after a person has lost the linguistic ability which may have characterised that group. In Singapore, clan feelings of solidarity may persist even when the dialect of the clan has been lost.

There is an additional type of practical argument based on the undesirability or impracticality of an individual having to know more than two languages. Relevant excerpts from the speech in question are:

> The average student finds it difficult to master three languages — dialect, Mandarin and English. It is not easy to master even two languages.

> But let me reassure all parents: your child has a brain bigger than the biggest computer man has ever built. Whilst the world's biggest computer cannot handle two languages, most human beings can, especially if they are taught when young.

While one could hardly deny that learning foreign languages is an enormously demanding task, the learning of Mandarin by a dialect speaker is not the same as learning a foreign language. As discussed above, competence in a Chinese dialect means that a person will have many correct intuitions about the pronunciations, vocabulary and syntax of Mandarin. Attacks on individual multilingualism (as opposed to bilingualism) typically invoke images from computer technology, as in the excerpt above. Platt (1985: 22) quotes from an article by the Foreign Editor of *The Straits Times* (7 November 1979) which also argues in support of the campaign by way of an analogy with computers:

> 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.

Given the paucity of our understanding of the actual psycholinguistic processes involved when a Chinese dialect speaker learns Mandarin, it is clear that linguists are still a long way from constructing actual computer simulations of such processes. In any case, it is unlikely that a realistic computer model of such processes will be as simple as suggested in the campaign rhetoric.

Miscellaneous Supporting Activities

In addition to these arguments, which represent the philosophical underpinnings of the campaign, there are numerous events and measures designed to give further support to the campaign.

1. In 1981, the National University of Singapore (NUS) announced that English-stream students would henceforth have to meet a second-language requirement for entry into the university. In the 1982/83 academic year, the minimum requirement for Chinese as a second language at the 'A' Level Examination was a grade of E8, raised to D7 in the 1983/84 academic year. This was supposed to have been raised to C6 in the academic year beginning July 1985. The level has, however, been maintained at the 1983/84 level because (a) too many bright students were being excluded from university and (b) more female students than male students were being admitted. In addition, students have been admitted to NUS since 1985 without the required second-language qualification on the basis that they would have to pass a University Examination in the second language before they could graduate. The introduction of the second-language requirement by NUS automatically lent an importance to Mandarin as a serious school subject and this requirement alone, subsequent relaxations notwithstanding, has given Mandarin increased status and a higher profile within the Chinese community. In fact, in so far as the second-language requirement may be fulfilled by attaining the required level in any of the official languages, it has meant that all second-language teaching, not just the teaching of Mandarin, has taken on increased importance.

2. Dialect is no longer permissible on government-operated radio and television. Already in 1977 it was announced that dialects would not be allowed in Chinese-language commercials over Radio and Television Singapore (reported in the *New Nation*, 26 January 1977). The last dialect (Cantonese) programme shown on SBC television was the final episode of the Hong Kong series, *The Brothers*, shown on 24 January 1982. This occurred, despite the publication of a *Straits Times*' survey just a few months before (28 September 1981) which found 67% of Chinese aged twelve years and over felt that dialect programmes over radio and television should not be dropped completely. Even the privately owned and operated broadcasting service, Rediffusion, switched entirely to Mandarin for its Chinese programmes (in place of Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese) in early 1983. The changeover resulted in large numbers of subscribers cancelling their subscriptions. Throughout 1983, an average of 1,228 subscribers per month were opting out of the service (*The Straits Times*, 12 March 1984). In the same article the managing director was reported as saying that these subscribers were mainly 'elderly people who can't understand and enjoy our Mandarin programmes'.

3. The use of Hanyu Pinyin romanisation has been promoted throughout the society. So, for example, Chinese parents have been encouraged to register the names of their children in Pinyin; certain localities are now referred to by their Pinyin forms (without tone marks), such as Yishun (Nee Soon); the government encourages hawkers to use Pinyin for the names of their stalls. Since Hanyu Pinyin is a romanisation of Mandarin, the promotion of Pinyin is clearly also a promotion of Mandarin. Usually, Pinyin

is presented in the press as merely a convenient way of recording pronunciation, like a phonetic alphabet, but this ignores the fact that it is being used as a phonetic alphabet of the Mandarin forms of language. An example of this line of defence of Hanyu Pinyin would be the remarks attributed to the director of the Chinese Language and Research Centre at NUS (quoted in *The Straits Times*, 11 February 1985): 'Pinyin is nothing in itself. It is only a tool for transcribing standard Chinese sounds.' Here, 'standard Chinese sounds' must be understood as 'the sounds of the Mandarin equivalent'.

4. Although no large-scale punitive measures have been adopted, various isolated attempts have been made to coerce people into speaking Mandarin, involving incentives or disincentives. Altehenger-Smith (p. 6) refers to one school where penalties were imposed on students who continued to speak dialects. Taxi-drivers' licences in 1980 could be approved only after the drivers passed an oral Mandarin test (Ng, 1980/81: 41). The Hokkien platoon of the Singapore Armed Forces, originally established for the benefit of illiterate Chinese youths, was disbanded and any soldier unable to communicate in any of the four official languages would receive only basic pay with all allowances deducted (Ng, 1980/81: 41).

5. Accompanying paraphernalia include booklets, stickers, posters, badges, etc. which have all the hallmarks of a well co-ordinated campaign designed to appeal to Chinese. The Chinese character 讲 'to speak' (as in 'Speak Mandarin') has been adopted as a very bold and striking symbol, written in black against a red background. The usual visual motif to represent the campaign is the picture of two faces, facing each other with open mouths with one face shaded and the other clear, bearing a faint resemblance to the Chinese yin-yang symbol:
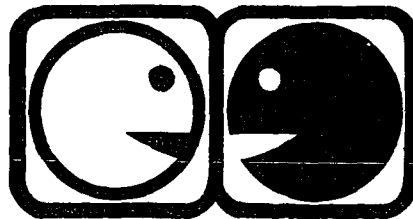
the campaign symbol
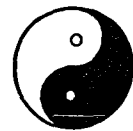
yin-yang symbol

Slogans which have been used on the posters appear in Mandarin and English and include: 'Don't hesitate, speak Mandarin'; 'Speak Mandarin while at work'; 'Let's speak Mandarin'. The slogans are generally more effective in their Mandarin version than in their English version. So, for example, the Mandarin version of 'Don't hesitate, speak Mandarin' is a rhyming trisyllabic couplet *jiǎng huà yǔ, bié yóu yù* (literally 'Speak Mandarin, don't hesitate').

Conclusion

Is the campaign successful or not? The answer to this question depends very much on the set of criteria used to define success. If one measures success by the amount of Mandarin used in the official or semi-official domains (media, public speeches, on public transport, etc.), then the answer is surely that it has been a success. The range of measures taken by the government in support of the campaign, such as those briefly reviewed in the preceding section, would almost certainly ensure the increased use of Mandarin, regardless of whether the target audience has been persuaded by the verbal arguments which have been advanced. The vagueness inherent in a phrase such as 'to speak more Mandarin' also allows a person to easily claim, quite honestly, that he/she is now 'speaking more Mandarin' than, say, five years ago. This may just mean that the person has learnt three or four phrases in Mandarin, or it may mean that the person is able to hold a fluent conversation in Mandarin. (This kind of vagueness is no different from the vagueness of claims such as 'I can speak six Chinese dialects'. Probably such a person speaks and understands one dialect very well, but does not speak and understand the other five dialects equally well.)

The Singapore Government's objective, however, goes beyond promoting the official use of Mandarin to making Mandarin the *lingua franca* of all the ethnic Chinese for all inter-Chinese communicative needs. All the (*Straits Times*) surveys indicate that this result has not been achieved yet. It may be achieved in the future, but no one pretends that this will happen very quickly. The chairman of the Promote the Use of Mandarin Campaign, speaking in 1986, has said that the campaign will continue for at least ten more years (reported in *The Straits Times*, 4 October 1986). If the ethnic Chinese can accept one or more of the three main arguments supporting the campaign, then this will no doubt expedite the conversion to Mandarin. A linguist may find some of the claims or assumptions of the arguments unacceptable or at least debatable, but this does not mean that the non-linguist Chinese would have the same reaction. Like most publicly argued government policies, the argumentation of this campaign is directed at the public at large, not at linguists, and certainly not at linguists outside of Singapore. What counts, in other words, is whether or not the Singapore Chinese find the rhetoric convincing. For the rhetoric to be convincing, it may be enough for some people to be impressed by some idea mentioned in the argumentation. So, for example, the idea that Westerners, who might be completely uninformed about Chinese dialects, expect a Singaporean Chinese to speak Mandarin is often brought up along with the idea that Singaporean Chinese will feel ashamed if they have to admit to the Westerner that they cannot speak Mandarin. I know Singaporean Chinese who do feel this way and are swayed by arguments which appeal to this idea. Ideas like this make an immediate emotional impact with some Singaporean Chinese and may contribute much more to winning acceptance for the campaign than the use of carefully constructed and linguistically defensible arguments.

Notes

An earlier version of this paper was read at the Seventh New Zealand Asian Studies Conference, University of Auckland, 15 May to 18 May, 1987.

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1. It is hard to fix the exact date of the start of the campaign. The event which attracted most publicity was the opening of a campaign called 'Promote the Use of Mandarin' by the Prime Minister on 7 September 1979. But already in May 1978 Mr Rajaratnam, Minister for Foreign Affairs, alluded to an already existing campaign to promote the use of Mandarin, beginning possibly with the February 1978 speech of the Prime Minister discussed here. Also, Chinese dialect commercials on radio and television were stopped in 1977.
2. The educational argument is discussed at greater length in Newman (1986), which also includes a more detailed account of the historical background to the campaign.
3. There is also the 'high culture' in dialect, such as Cantonese opera, which is officially supported. Traditional story-telling, in dialect, however, is not allowed on government radio/television. A Cantonese story-teller, Lee Dai Soh, who had been telling stories in Cantonese over Singapore radio for 40 years, was taken off the air in 1982 because of the Speak Mandarin Campaign. Ironically, Singaporeans could listen to Lee Dai Soh's Cantonese stories by tuning into Radio Australia which broadcast his stories weekly throughout Southeast Asia (*The Straits Times*, 28 and 30 January, 1983).
4. When the context is the Speak Mandarin Campaign, Mandarin is portrayed as being part of the core of Chinese culture. When the context, however, is the new 'national education scheme', whereby English is the first school language of all Singapore pupils, then the significance of language in the preservation of Chinese culture is minimised. Thus, in a speech reported in *The Straits Times*, 19 February 1984, the Prime Minister emphasised the importance of the family in the transmission of cultural values: 'Language is related to, but not synonymous with, culture.' This speech, in support of the national English-language stream, is the most eloquent and persuasive argument *against* the Speak Mandarin Campaign that I have encountered.

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