



China Says 85% of Citizens Will Use Mandarin by 2025

Discussion > Advanced 8



Exercise 1 – Vocabulary

dialect	A form of a language that people from a particular region or group speak.
[noun]	<i>Ex: People in this village speak a dialect of German.</i>

conform	To act according to standards, rules, or laws.
[verb]	<i>Ex: Since it was built in the 1970s, the house does not conform to new insulation standards.</i>

unity	The state of being together or joined as a whole.
[noun]	<i>Ex: Their team has a strong sense of unity.</i>

status	The official legal position of a person or thing that determines their rights and responsibilities.
[noun]	<i>Ex: They have finally been granted refugee status.</i>

controversial	Causing a lot of conflict, controversy, or public disagreement.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: The referee's call at the end of the game was very controversial.</i>



Exercise 2 – Reading

Read the text aloud with your tutor and discuss the key points.

China Says 85% of Citizens Will Use Mandarin by 2025

China is starting an aggressive campaign to promote Mandarin, saying 85% of its citizens will use the national language by 2025.

This may put even more pressure on threatened Chinese regional dialects such as Cantonese and Hokkien, as well as minority languages such as Tibetan, Mongolian and Uyghur.

The State Council, part of the country's government, said that the use of Mandarin remains "unbalanced and inadequate" and needs to be improved to meet the demands of the modern economy.

Along with the 2025 goal, the government aims to make Mandarin used by almost everyone in the country by 2035, including in rural areas and by ethnic minorities.



The promotion of Mandarin over other languages has caused occasional protests, however. Critics have said that changes to the education system and employment requirements have reduced the role of minority languages, and are a campaign to destroy cultures that don't conform with the dominant Han ethnic group.

China's Communist Party says that speaking the same language is necessary for the economy and national unity.

A document released on December 1 said that the national common spoken and written language should be used as "the official language of government agencies and used as the basic language of schools, news and publications, radio, film and television, public services and other fields."

It also asks officials to increase the status and influence of Chinese in academia, international organizations and at global gatherings.

Government attempts to promote Mandarin through its worldwide network of Confucius Institutes have been controversial, with critics saying they are an attempt to promote the party's agenda and stop any discussion of topics such as its human rights record.

It's thought that 302 languages are spoken in China, and about 70% of the population can speak Mandarin.



Exercise 3 – Discussion

Discuss the following questions with your tutor.

1. What are your thoughts on China's campaign to promote Mandarin?
2. How many languages do you imagine are spoken in your country?
3. Is your country home to any threatened or endangered languages?
4. How many non-native speakers do you imagine your language has?
5. In your opinion, what are the most useful languages to know? Why do you think so?
6. What do you think the world would be like if we all spoke the same language?
7. Do you think English will ever be replaced as the global language?
8. “Losing a language is losing a whole culture.” What are your thoughts on this statement?