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MANDARINISING SINGAPORE
A critical analysis of slogans in Singapore's 'Speak Mandarin' campaign

This paper spotlights one of Singapore's most enduring, well-known, and controversial campaigns, the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign. It traces the campaign's history and evolution from the time it was first launched in 1979 to 2004, with a view to critically examine the ideologies embedded within the discursive structures of the slogans used. Broadly adhering to the principles and orientations of critical linguistics and using Halliday's systemic-functional grammar as a framework of analysis, this study uncovers ideologies pointing to an asymmetrical power structure between the government and the people of Singapore, possible traces of linguistic chauvinism, and a political leadership that is generally distant and aloof, imposing the burden of speaking Mandarin unilaterally on the people instead of constructing it as a shared responsibility. The paper concludes with a critical appraisal of the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign, focusing on its social, political, and cultural ramifications.

Keywords 'Speak Mandarin'; national campaigns; slogans; Mandarin; Singapore; critical linguistics

Introduction

For over three decades, the tiny island-state of Singapore has been inundated with a flood of campaigns, including campaigns that promote civic consciousness (National Courtesy Campaign, Kindness Movement), a healthy lifestyle (Healthy Lifestyle Campaign), a clean and green environment (Keep Singapore Clean Campaign, Clean and Green Week), economic productivity (Productivity Movement), and even a happy family (National Family Week). Little wonder then that Singapore has been referred to as a 'campaign country' (Lazar, 2000, p. 374), where the national campaign has become 'the most common genre of government-to-people communication' (Bokhurst-Heng, 1999, p. 243). This paper casts the spotlight on one of the longest-running, best-known, and, perhaps, most controversial campaigns (Newman, 1986) ever mounted in Singapore – the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign (henceforth SMC) – in an attempt to examine critically the socio-cultural and socio-economic ideologies imbricated within the discursive structures of the slogans used from 1979 to 2004. As secondary sources of data, the proliferation of SMC

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discourses, including speeches given by government officials during the campaign launches, excerpts of which are published on the official SMC website (http://www.mandarin.org.sg/smc/home.html) and the local newspaper (*The Straits Times*), and other official print material on the SMC, are used to provide a glimpse into the rhetorical structures that underpin the construction and projection of the SMC to the public.

In the context of Singapore, a campaign can be defined as a government initiated and inspired movement which has an organised and formal course of action, taken with the intent of arousing public awareness and influencing public behaviour (Tham, 1986). The number and variety of campaigns and the vigour with which they have been promulgated in Singapore since the late 1950s reflect the Singapore government's commitment towards building a society with the values and ideals espoused by these campaigns – values and ideals that every Singaporean is expected to embody and uphold (Teo, 2002). It is therefore interesting to examine Singapore's campaigns as a form of social practice, unique in the way it has permeated into every crevice of life in Singapore, and to probe into the processes whereby Singaporean society is constructed in and through these campaigns. As a highly salient and symbolic instantiation of campaign discourse, slogans encapsulate the ideologies embedded within them through the particular ways in which they have been constructed by the government and construed by the people. Through a close textual analysis of all the slogans used in the SMC from 1979 to 2004, this paper aims to deconstruct the discursive processes by which various ideologies surrounding Mandarin and the speaking of Mandarin are created and perpetuated in and through these slogans (see the Appendix for a list of the slogans).

This paper is organised into four sections. The first provides the background to the campaign, tracing its evolutionary history and outlining the socio-political circumstances that gave birth to it. The second discusses the theoretical framework of critical linguistics within which this study is undertaken and briefly explains the choice of analytic framework used to unpack the slogans. The third and main section presents an analysis of the lexicogrammar of the slogans using Halliday's framework as a point of departure. The final section presents a critique of the campaign in terms of the socio-political and socio-cultural ramifications that may have arisen out of the Singapore government's highly visible and sustained efforts in the 'Mandarinising' of Singapore.

Background

Singapore's population of over four million is a multiracial, multilingual mix of people who are mainly descendents of immigrants from other countries like China, India, and Malaysia. The dominant Chinese community, which comprises more than 70% of the total population, is itself made up of a heterogeneous mix of people whose forebears came from different parts of China and spoke a multiplicity of Chinese dialects, including Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, and Hakka, many of which are mutually unintelligible. While this pluralistic composition makes for a culturally rich and diverse society, it is also fraught with many potentially divisive lines. A need therefore was perceived by the government of Singapore to unify the various Chinese dialect-speaking groups via a common language – Mandarin – which can cut across dialectal barriers to make for easier communication. Although Hokkien was the most widely spoken dialect among Chinese Singaporeans at that time, Mandarin

was chosen because of its privileged status as the official national language of mainland China, also known as *pu tong hua*, meaning 'common language' (Teo & Lim, 2002).

On September 7, 1979, the SMC was officially launched and, since then, the month of September has been designated 'Speak Mandarin Month'. According to an official SMC publication (Lee, 1989), the objective of the campaign is 'to encourage the Chinese community to speak Mandarin instead of dialects, and not to substitute for English or the languages of other communities' (p. 9). As is typical of the government in Singapore, clearly delineated goals and targets were set for the SMC and these are perhaps best captured in the words of the campaign's chief advocate and Singapore's then Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew:

> We should try within five years to make all the young [Chinese], those in school, in university and who have finished school or university to drop the use of dialect.... In ten years, we should be able to get Mandarin established as the language of the coffee shop, of the hawker centre, of the shops.
>
> (*The Straits Times*, November 24, 1979)

The desire to promote Mandarin as a kind of social glue to unite the Chinese community was only one of the reasons that prompted the government to launch the SMC. Another was the government's perception that Mandarin, with its rich cultural and literary heritage, was the natural choice with which to transmit cultural values and traditions to the ethnic Chinese and to guard against the onslaught of western values purveyed by the mass media and popular culture. To put it in the words of Lee Kuan Yew:

> It [Mandarin] reminds us that we are part of an ancient civilization with an unbroken history of over 5000 years. This is a deep and strong psychic force, one that gives confidence to a people to face up to and overcome great changes and challenges. To be able to speak Mandarin and read the Chinese script, is reassuring. To look at Chinese characters, to see them as mysterious hieroglyphics, is to be emotionally disadvantaged. A little effort and the magic of the characters will reveal itself.... Parents want ... their children to retain traditional Chinese values in filial piety, loyalty, benevolence, and love. Through Mandarin, their children can emotionally identify themselves as part of an ancient civilization whose continuity was because it was founded on a tried and tested value system.
>
> (Lee, 1984, p. 3)

Thus, the official rhetoric was premised on Mandarin as a conduit for the transmission of traditional cultural values as well as a cultural ballast against the negative effects of westernisation. Echoing a similar sentiment several years later, Mr Goh Chok Tong, the then Prime Minister, speaking at the SMC launch in 1991, said:

> Mandarin is more than a language. Mandarin not only allows the Chinese to communicate easier with one another but also opens up many chests of treasures – Chinese literature, music, operas, paintings, calligraphy, ceramics and so on. When we can appreciate them, we will feel proud to be part of that rich history which is Chinese.
>
> (Goh, 1991, p. 6)

A few years later, at the 1994 SMC launch, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's then Deputy Prime Minister and present Prime Minister, expressed the hope that 'through the use of Mandarin, Chinese Singaporeans can preserve and transmit values, culture and a sense of identity' (Singapore Government Press Release No. 10, September 1994). Official voices like these construct Mandarin not only as a preferred but an inevitable choice for Chinese Singaporeans to embrace as the language with which they can identify themselves as Chinese, and without which, it seems, they would not only be socially fragmented but also emotionally disadvantaged and psychologically disconnected from a sense of history and heritage.

The launch of the SMC was also timed to coincide with the implementation of the bilingual educational policy in 1979. This is a policy which makes it mandatory for all students in Singapore to study English as a 'first language' and ethnic Chinese students to study Mandarin (their supposed mother tongue) as a second language. In linguistics, the term 'first language' refers to the native language or mother tongue acquired by a child through contact and interaction with other members of the same language group (Hartman & Stork, 1972). In Singapore, however, these terms are used in a rather unique way. The government uses the term 'first language' to refer to the first school language, while 'mother tongue' refers to the ethnic language of the various races. Hence, under the bilingual educational policy, all students study English as their first language with a compulsory second language or mother tongue education, a situation which Pakir (1993, p. 73) describes as an 'English-knowing bilingualism', where English is claimed as a cornerstone of bilingual achievement. For the Malays, this designated second language is Malay, for most Indians it is Tamil, and for the Chinese it is Mandarin. The bilingual policy has been premised on what Pendley (1983) calls the 'functional polarisation' of language, in which English is constructed as the language needed for instrumental and pragmatic purposes while the mother tongues are positioned as the languages of identity, ethnicity, and culture. In the words of the then Minister for Education, Dr Tony Tan:

> Our policy on bilingualism ... [is] a fundamental feature of our educational system. Children must learn English so that they will have a window to the knowledge, technology and expertise of the modern world. They must know their mother-tongue to enable them to understand what makes us what we are today.
> (*The Straits Times*, March 2, 1986)

This push for Chinese Singaporeans to learn and use Mandarin as part of the bilingual policy was devised despite the fact that many Chinese Singaporeans at that time did not speak Mandarin at all and it was therefore not a true mother tongue for them. According to official statistics, only 10.3% of Singaporean Chinese used Mandarin as their main household language in 1980 (Khoo, 1981). More significantly, a study commissioned by the Ministry of Education (Low, 1979) reported that Chinese primary school pupils who spoke only dialects at home fared poorly in their second language examinations, while those who spoke either Mandarin or English fared much better. Thus, it was felt that dialects were the culprits hampering pupils' language learning in school and, on this basis, Mr Lee Kuan Yew declared that 'without making Mandarin the mother-tongue in place of the dialects, our policy of bilingualism will not succeed' (*The Straits Times*, September 26, 1981). Hence, a

panel was formed to make Mandarin a living and functional language among the Chinese both at home and in the community rather than merely an examination subject to be learnt and forgotten, a move which gave birth to the nation-wide 'Speak Mandarin' campaign (Ang, 1998).

Although the original impetus of the SMC might have grown out of largely socio-political circumstances, its continued growth and flourishing over the years has been fanned by other factors. Since the 1980s, China has started to adopt an open-door economic policy aimed at attracting foreign investments and this, together with the enormous market potential of China's massive population, attracted the attention of entrepreneurs all over the world. The Singapore government was quick to recognise the huge economic potential in the Chinese market and, as early as 1985, started pointing to the economic value of learning Mandarin:

> The Chinese [in Singapore] learn and speak Mandarin not only because it is the common spoken language of the Chinese community, representing our roots, but also because the economic value of Mandarin is increasing, particularly after China has started its economic transformation and adopted the open-door policy.
>
> (Ong, 1985, p. 33)

More recently, this same message was reinforced by the then Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, at the launch of the 1993 SMC, when he observed:

> [The] economic value of knowing Mandarin has increased with China's opening up of her economy.... Hundreds of village enterprises are eager to upgrade themselves. They are looking for foreign partners, to gain additional capital and technical know-how.... The ability to speak Mandarin with Chinese businessmen and officials is a tremendous advantage.

Thus, after the first phase of the SMC (1979–1989) aimed at promoting social cohesion by getting the Chinese in Singapore to switch from dialects to Mandarin, the campaign rhetoric took a dramatic turn by emphasising the economic and utilitarian value of Mandarin as a language of trade and business in China. Indeed, between 1990 and 1997, the SMC's emphasis was not only on the ability to speak the language to access the general cultural heritage that Mandarin supposedly embodies but also on the particular cultural knowledge and understanding that would pave the way towards establishing *guan xi* (connections) for business dealings in China (Teo & Lim, 2002). The third phase (1998–2004) saw the SMC engine in an even higher gear, propelling it into the new millennium by promoting Mandarin as a 'high language' for Chinese Singaporeans on par with English, with a call for Chinese Singaporeans not only to be bilingual but bicultural: people who are not only fluent in English and Chinese, but who also understand the culture and world-view of the Chinese today. In Lee Kuan Yew's own words: 'Bilingualism gets us through the front door, but it is only through biculturalism that we can reach deep inside China and work with them' (*The Straits Times*, June 24, 2004). Thus beneath the cultural rhetoric is, once again, an entrepreneurial pragmatism.

In this broad sweep of 25 years of Mandarin campaigning, we have seen the construction of Mandarin as a social unifier, a conduit for transmitting culture and values, and a passport to business opportunities. Let us now look at the campaign discourse more closely by examining the various slogans to see how they reflect, reinforce, and reproduce the socio-cultural and economic ideologies that lie at the heart of the SMC in Singapore. But before that, a brief discussion of the theoretical orientation that frames the analysis and interpretation of the discourse is in order.

Theoretical framework

This paper draws its inspiration from research in the relatively new but expanding field of critical linguistics or critical discourse analysis. Broadly construed, critical linguistics is a branch of discourse analysis adopting a critical posture in its investigations, which go beyond the description of discourse to an explanation of how and why particular discourses are produced. The term 'critical linguistics' was first used by Fowler, Hodge, Trew, and Kress (1979) and Kress and Hodge (1979), who believe that discourse does not merely reflect social processes and structures, but affirms, consolidates, and, in this way, reproduces existing social structures. Linguistic interpretation then becomes 'the process of recovering the social meanings expressed in discourse by analyzing the linguistic structures in the light of their interactional and wider social contexts' (Fowler et al., 1979, p. 196). Language analysis therefore opens up a way of understanding society. Tapping into the semiotic model of language developed by Halliday (1978), critical linguistics is a grammatically grounded analysis of ideology at work beneath discourse. Grammatical functions like 'actor' and 'patient' and constructions involving passivisations which obscure agentivity are highlighted and systematically linked to ideological positions adopted by the writer *vis-à-vis* the reader. Thus, if the indigenous people of a third world nation consistently appear as goals or beneficiaries rather than as active agents in newspaper reports, for instance, this may contribute towards the portrayal (and hence perception) of third world people as helpless victims of circumstances beyond their control, rather than as agents actively engaged in struggle, for instance.

This critical approach to discourse analysis typically concentrates on data like news reporting, political interviews, and doctor–patient interactions that describe unequal encounters or embody manipulative strategies that seem neutral or natural to most people. For instance, Trew in Fowler et al. (1979) showed how two British newspapers portrayed the same event in vastly contrasting ways that reflected their differing ideological standpoints. Similarly, Lee (1992) analysed the reporting of certain events in Zimbabwe by two British newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Times*, to show how lexical choices (including metaphor and metonymy) and grammatical choices (such as thematic selection and nominalisation) can and do mediate different perspectives, reflecting the different ideological positions adopted by these two newspapers. And through a close textual analysis of a series of reports on the Vietnamese 5T Gang in two Australian newspapers, Teo (2000) uncovered evidence of a systematic 'othering' and stereotyping of the ethnic community by the white majority, as well as evidence of a racist ideology manifest in an asymmetrical power discourse between the (ethnic) law-breakers and the (white)

law-enforcers. Manipulative strategies were also uncovered in Fairclough's (1989) analysis of an interview with Margaret Thatcher, in which he described and explained how the discourse which combined authority with popular solidarity was able to create an 'authoritarian populism', which effectively persuaded her audience over to her vision by making it their vision.

What these researchers working within the critical linguistic paradigm share is a common vision of the centrality of language as a means of sustaining and reproducing power structures in society. One fundamental theoretical idea that informs critical linguistics is the belief that social relations of power are discursively enacted and reproduced (Foucault, 1972), and therefore by analysing discursive structures, social processes and structures can be uncovered and elucidated to reveal the ideologies that may be at work beneath language. Ideology, in this context, can be defined as 'particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation' (Wodak, 1996, p. 18).

In viewing discourse as part of social practice and social practice as (partly) discoursally constituted, a dialectical relationship is implied between a particular discursive practice and the social structures within which the activity is framed. Put simply, this means that discourse is both socially constituted and socially constitutive. The focus of critical linguistics is not upon language or the uses of language in and of themselves, but upon the partially linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures in modern societies. It follows then that as societies undergo transformations, the nature of the relationship between discursive practices and social practices also takes on a different texture and demeanour.

According to Fairclough (1992), early critical linguists generally failed to 'historicise' their data by focusing on how wider changes in socio-cultural practices are constituted in discourse practices, thereby locating the data within the flux of change that society is constantly embroiled in. Thus, apart from unravelling the ideological imbrications within the discursive structure of campaign slogans, this study also attempts to locate the slogans within this flux of change by comparing their discursive structures across the 25-year history of the SMC so far, focusing on the social, economic, and political changes in and around Singapore that might impinge on the ways in which the slogans are constructed and construed.

The primary analytic mode adopted in this paper adheres to the framework described and explicated in Halliday's (1994) systemic functional grammar (SFG), which is favoured by many analysts working within the critical linguistic paradigm. The choice of SFG is predicated upon its capacity to support a multifunctional representation of social reality. It provides a useful model aimed at probing into the textual representations of realities, relationships, and identities because it sees language as multidimensional: texts simultaneously representing experience, enacting social relations, and reflecting textual processes. Halliday's model is also preferred because it allows the critical analyst to interrogate not only what is in the text (i.e., how meaning is actually realised), but also what is not in it (i.e., what other possible meaning realisations there are which were not selected). Textual analysis in the traditional sense is often exclusively concerned with what is in the text and has little to say about what is excluded. Halliday's systemic approach to textual analysis, in contrast, emphasises choice from a range of possible meaning realisations and thus affords a richer analysis that takes into account why certain

options are chosen over others. What is interesting and relevant to critical linguistics about Halliday's theory of language is that it focuses not only on what is present or explicitly realised on the surface level of language, but also on what is absent but implied at a deeper but recoverable level of meaning. This sort of analysis, which is oriented towards the explication of implicit meanings, can provide valuable insights into what might otherwise be opaque or taken for granted simply because it is not explicit. For critical linguistic analysis, it is important to focus on these implicit meanings as the nature of ideologies is such that they tend to hide under implicit assumptions.

Ending this brief discussion of the general background of the theoretical and analytic frameworks that inform and underpin this research, let us now turn to the analysis of the slogans proper.

Analysis

The notion of 'Theme' as prioritising certain kinds of meaning (Berry, 1996) is an analytic component belonging with the textual metafunction in Halliday's SFG, looking at the organisation of information within a clause. It is a key analytic construct in SFG and can be defined as the point of departure of the message or, to use Halliday's words, 'the starting-point for the message ... the ground from which the clause is taking off' (Halliday, 1994, p. 38). The theoretical force behind this notion of 'Theme' lies in the argument that the positioning of a piece of information in a clause is indicative of the kind of prominence or foregrounding the writer wishes to attribute to it. A constituent that is thematised or fronted is one to which the writer/speaker wishes to attribute greater prominence or emphasis over the other constituents in the clause.

In table 1, we can observe a preponderance of themes among the slogans relating to verbs like 'speak', 'say', or, more generally, 'make' (a statement). Examples of these slogans include: ***Speak*** *More Mandarin and Less Dialect* (1979), ***Speak*** *Mandarin While At Work* (1982), and ***Start*** *With Mandarin, Speak It More Often* (1987). This predominance of verbs which emphasise speaking can be rationalised on the grounds that the primary aim of the campaign is to get Chinese Singaporeans to speak more Mandarin instead of Chinese dialects, thereby promoting Mandarin as a lingua franca to unite the Chinese community. After all, the campaign is a *Speak* Mandarin campaign rather than a *Use* or *Learn* Mandarin campaign. However, while this focus on speaking certainly converges with the aim of promoting Mandarin as a form of (verbal) communication for social interaction among Chinese Singaporeans, it does not quite reflect the aim of promoting Mandarin as a means of cultural transmission. I take the word 'culture' to refer to the sum total of the ideas, customs, artistic achievements, etc., of a given people in a given period. Williams (1993, p. xvi), for instance, refers to culture as 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual'. Culture is thus seen to incorporate all the shared knowledge, beliefs, and practices of a group, of which language is merely a small part. If language is to be used for cultural transmission, it would clearly entail more than the ability to speak the language related to the culture. A whole spectrum of literacy skills and processes including reading and writing, which provides a basis for literary appreciation and

TABLE 1 Thematic analysis of SMC slogans

year	*slogan*
1979	**Speak** More Mandarin and Less Dialect
1981	**Learn** Mandarin, **Speak** Mandarin
1982	**Speak** Mandarin While At Work
1983	**Mandarin**'s In. **Dialect**'s Out
1984	**Speak** Mandarin. **Your Children's Future** Depends on Your Effort Today
1985	**Mandarin** is Chinese
1986	**Start** With Mandarin, not Dialect
1987	**Start** With Mandarin, **Speak** It More Often
1988	(**It** is) Better With More Mandarin, Less Dialect
1989	**More Mandarin**, Less Dialect. **Make** It a Way of Life
1990	If **You**'re a Chinese, **Make** a Statement – in Mandarin
1991	**Mandarin** for Chinese Singaporeans: More Than a Language
1992	**Say** it in Mandarin
1993	**Speak** Mandarin. **It** helps
1994	**Mandarin**. **Use** It or **Lose** It
1995	**Mandarin**. **Use** It or **Lose** It
1996	**Speak** Mandarin, **Explore** New Horizons
1997	**Speak** Mandarin, **Explore** New Horizons
1998	**Speak** Mandarin, **It**'s An Asset
1999	**Speak** Mandarin, **It**'s An Asset
2000	**Speak** Mandarin, **It**'s An Asset
2001	**Mandarin**: Window to Chinese Culture
2002	**Mandarin**: Window to Chinese Culture
2003	**Mandarin. Use** It. **Don't Lose** It.
2004	华语 Cool. **Use** It, **Don't Lose** It

understanding, would be necessary for one to gain access to the history and literary heritage of that culture. But as we can see, there are only a handful of verbs used in the slogans which imply more than the ability to speak Mandarin: **Learn** Mandarin (1981), **Make** It a Way of Life (1989), and **Use** Mandarin (1994–1995, 2003).

Apart from emphasising the process (speaking), the product (Mandarin) is also given thematic prominence. A number of slogans, such as ***Mandarin**'s In. **Dialect's** Out* (1983), ***More Mandarin**, Less Dialect* (1989), and ***Mandarin**. **Use** It or **Lose** It* (1994–1995), foreground Mandarin by locating it in the thematic position. This foregrounding of Mandarin is made even more salient in a number of slogans where the pronoun 'it' is used to refer back to the antecedent in slogans like *Speak Mandarin. It Helps* (1993), *Speak Mandarin. It's an Asset* (1998–2000), and *Mandarin. Use It. Don't Lose It* (2003), to re-accentuate the idea of Mandarin or speaking Mandarin. When seen in the light of slogans as highly compressed and parsimonious discursive acts that serve to enhance the slogans' memorability (Dyer, 1982), this apparent redundancy and 'diseconomy' become significant. Instead of formulating

the slogan in a more straightforward and economical way (by using fewer words) like *Speaking Mandarin Helps*, *Speaking Mandarin is an Asset*, and *Use Mandarin. Don't Lose It*, we get a more complex structure. The motivation behind this is, arguably, to increase the visibility of Mandarin so that it becomes almost like a brand name in advertising that sticks in the consciousness of the people through sheer repetition. This deliberate foregrounding is opaque to most people and only becomes apparent when we realise that the same message in the slogans can be expressed using different forms, albeit with subtle changes in meaning and emphasis. This recalls the Hallidayan view of language as a system of choice, from which users can select different lexicogrammatical forms to realise different meanings and intentions.

While the textual metafunction expresses organisational meaning within a message, the ideational metafunction construes representational meaning in our world of experience. 'Transitivity' is a key analytic component of the ideational metafunction, which provides us with the potential for categorising the infinite variety of occurrences or 'goings on' in our world of experience into a finite set of process types: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural, and existential (Halliday, 1994). Relational processes, for instance, function primarily to help us relate one aspect of our experience to another in various ways, such as to classify and identify, in order to make sense of 'reality' around us. Probing into the way language represents reality in terms of how experiences are related, how the primary participants are constructed, what they do or say to whom, within what circumstances, and with what consequences, transitivity theory has much to offer.

Turning now to the slogans to see how ideas are related, we see quite clearly the government's attempt to present a particular view of reality that is congruent with its goals. Consider, for instance, the slogan *Speak Mandarin. Your Children's Future Depends on Your Effort Today* (1984). The verb 'depends' creates a direct causal relationship between 'your effort today' and 'Your children's future'. Although the basis of this relationship is not made explicit, there is, presumably, a tacit recognition of the role of the family in engineering language shift and that Mandarin-speaking parents would have a direct influence over their children's mastery of the language. The slogan plays on the anxiety of Chinese parents in Singapore about their children performing well enough in Mandarin (their mother tongue designate) to succeed in the intensely competitive education system in Singapore,[1] in order to get them to brush up their Mandarin skills so as to provide a conducive home environment for their children's own language learning. Thus, the 'logic' inscribed within the slogan is that children's future hinges on the parents' efforts to learn and use Mandarin at home. Another slogan that stands out in the way it relates ideas is *Mandarin is Chinese* (1985). This slogan is interesting because it represents an overt attempt by the government to smuggle ideology into the language of campaigns. Using an identifying relational process (Halliday, 1994) to make an overt link between the language (Mandarin) and the ethnicity (Chinese) in a reversible clause ('Mandarin is Chinese' is reversible into 'Chinese is Mandarin'), the slogan attempts to perpetuate the ideology that speaking Mandarin, among other things, identifies a person as being Chinese and that being a Chinese entails, among other things, the ability to speak Mandarin. Both statements are clearly falsifiable generalisations, which the government hopes to use as a means to persuade Chinese Singaporeans to speak Mandarin by alluding to the supposedly intrinsic

connection between Chinese (culture) and Mandarin (language). A similar ideology was purveyed in the 1990 slogan *If You're a Chinese, Make a Statement — in Mandarin*, which interestingly uses the same Mandarin Slogans as the one used in 1985 (refer to Appendix for the slogans in Mandarin).

The third and final dimension of Halliday's SFG is the interpersonal metafunction, which probes into the social relations that obtain between the writer and the reader, in terms of the speech roles that the writer adopts in relation to the reader in an exchange. These speech roles are signalled primarily through the grammatical mood structure (declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamative) and the modality choices that are made within a clause. The grammatical mood of a clause correlates with the particular role that a speaker is performing *vis-à-vis* the hearer through the clause (asking a question, giving a command, etc.) and hence sheds light on the particular relationship between the speaker and hearer constructed by the speaker.

If we examine the mood structure of the SMC slogans, we will notice that a vast number are constructed as imperatives. In fact, more than half of them (27 out of 41 clauses) have an imperative structure, the rest being declaratives. For instance, slogans like *Speak More Mandarin and Less Dialect* (1979), *Learn Mandarin, Speak Mandarin* (1981), *If You're a Chinese, Make a Statement — in Mandarin* (1990), and *Speak Mandarin, Explore New Horizons* (1996) are all constructed as imperatives. This suggests that the Singapore government is adopting a rather top-down, authoritarian stance, issuing injunctions for the people to follow. Also, by wording the slogans as imperatives, with an implicit 'you' as the subject, such as *Speak Mandarin, It's An Asset* (1998–2000), the impression created is that the SMC slogans are being imposed on the people in a top-down, unilateral manner. This places the burden of speaking Mandarin squarely on the shoulders of the people of Singapore instead of constructing it as a shared responsibility between the government and the people.

The difference becomes more obvious when we re-write some of the other slogans to inscribe grammatically a sense of collective effort and responsibility into the slogans: **Let**'s Speak Mandarin While at Work (1982); **Let**'s Start With Mandarin, Not Dialect (1986); More Mandarin, Less Dialect. Make It **Our** Way of Life (1989); and **Let**'s Speak Mandarin. *It Helps* (1993). Reformulating the slogans by using *let's* repositions them as an invitation rather than a command and considerably attenuates the injunctive sense of the slogans. Thus reformulated, the slogans immediately lose their sense of top-down prescriptivism and take on the more polite tenor of a request for collaboration and shared responsibility. Of course, I am not claiming that merely changing the way in which the slogans are formulated changes in any substantive way the attitudinal stance that the government is adopting in the SMC; I am merely drawing attention to the relationship between the discursive structure of the slogans (and its alternative formulations) and the tenor of the government as implied through the SMC slogans. That not a single slogan is formulated using a *let's* construction implies that the task of speaking Mandarin is to be construed as the sole responsibility of the people rather than one shared between the government and the people.

This construction of unilateral responsibility is further reinforced by the use of the second person pronoun in two instances: *Speak Mandarin. Your Children's Future Depends on Your Effort Today* (1984) and *If You're a Chinese, Make a Statement — in Mandarin* (1990). Thus, it would appear that the onus of learning and speaking Mandarin

is the responsibility of the (Chinese) people of Singapore alone. The total exclusion of the government from the grammar of the slogans constructs the political leadership as being rather distant and uninvolved in a large-scale and long-term socio-political process that surely must include and involve the government.

Finally, I would like to highlight an interesting lexicogrammatical feature of the SMC slogans. Table 2 below shows a list of slogans with a distinct lexicogrammatical pattern, consisting of two discrete parts which are virtual mirror images of each other, both lexically and structurally. This is epitomised by the slogans *Mandarin's In. Dialect's Out* (1983) and *More Mandarin, Less Dialect* (1989). The two parts are constructed in an antithetical way so as to reflect simultaneously a congruence in structure and an opposition in meaning.[2] For instance, in *Mandarin's In. Dialect's Out*, the antonymous relationship between 'In' and 'Out' is extrapolated to create an opposition between 'Mandarin' and 'Dialect'. While the opposition between 'In' and 'Out' is based on the opposite meaning of the prepositions and can thus be considered to be semantically predicated, the idea that 'Mandarin' and 'Dialect' are mutually exclusive and that Mandarin is preferred because it is somehow more fashionable ('in') whereas dialects are out of fashion and hence dispreferred is more ideologically motivated.

These and other similar slogans like *Start With Mandarin, Not Dialect* (1986) and *Better With More Mandarin, Less Dialect* (1988) appear to be driven by the government's conviction and commitment towards the promotion of Mandarin at the expense of dialects. This conviction was so strong that Lee Kuan Yew himself publicly proclaimed that 'no Singaporean Chinese should speak dialect' (*The Straits Times*, October 20, 1981). However, the idea that a 'language' like Mandarin and 'dialects' like Hokkien, Cantonese, and Teochew are inherently dichotomous is a simplistic and misleading one, as it understates the complexities involved in the terms. Owing to the blurred and often arbitrary boundaries between dialect and language, sociolinguists like Hudson (1980) have long rejected the distinction between them, except in terms of prestige, which is a socio-political construct rather than a linguistic one. Thus, the suggestion that Mandarin is somehow in opposition to and perhaps more in vogue than the Chinese dialects spoken in Singapore is an ideology borne out of the government's desire to promote Mandarin at the expense of dialects. Thus, by juxtaposing Mandarin and dialects in a structurally antithetical manner in not one or two but several slogans throughout the 1980s, the government was clearly attempting to create a perception that Mandarin and dialects are necessarily and

TABLE 2 Lexicogrammatical parallelism in slogans

year	*slogans*
1979	Speak More Mandarin and Less Dialect
1981	Learn Mandarin, Speak Mandarin
1983	Mandarin's In. Dialect's Out
1986	Start with Mandarin, not Dialect
1988	Better with More Mandarin, Less Dialect
1989	More Mandarin, Less Dialect. Make It a Way of Life
1994-5	Mandarin. Use It or Lose It

diametrically opposed to each other and mutually exclusive in the sense that one can only flourish at the expense of the other. This reductive polarisation of complex issues or relationships as seen here is not uncommon in slogans, as it is one means by which slogans express their persuasive function, according to Stewart et al. (1995).

Another way of looking at this parallelism in several of the SMC slogans is that it may be an attempt to mimic the Chinese couplet form, which is commonly used in China with expressions like 'one country, two systems' (一国, 两制). The couplet form is common in the Chinese language, especially classical Chinese, where the ability to write or speak in antithetical yet elegantly counter-balanced terms is a much admired skill, which was (and still is) a mark of high learning and wit. The Chinese philosophy of language is such that words, aside from their referential functions, are treated as an art form (as in Chinese calligraphy) and a sign of wisdom (Chang, 2003). One possible explanation for the dichotomous syntactic patterning evident in some of the SMC slogans is that it is simply the result of a direct translation of the slogans from Chinese. However, from a comparison of the official English and Mandarin versions of the slogans, this does not appear to be the case. While the structural and semantic parallel between the Mandarin and English versions is certainly apparent in some slogans, like *Learn Mandarin, Speak Mandarin* (**学华语, 讲华语**) or *Mandarin is Chinese* (**华人. 华语**), the majority of the slogans in English do not appear to be translations from the Mandarin version. In fact, some of them do not even bear much resemblance, either in meaning or structure, to their Mandarin counterpart. An example would be the slogan *Mandarin's In. Dialect's Out*, whose Mandarin version (**华人, 合情又合理**) roughly translates into 'It's only natural and logical for a Chinese to speak Mandarin' (see Appendix). In light of these observations, one possible interpretation is that while the English and Mandarin versions of the SMC slogans appear to be independently constructed, there is perhaps some attempt by the government to appropriate the typically antithetical structure of the Chinese couplet to give the English version of the slogans a distinctively Chinese 'flavour', to enhance its appeal and hence impact on the Chinese population of Singapore.

In summary, this analysis of the SMC slogans has uncovered a number of interesting features of the structural and lexical patterning of the slogans and also, more significantly, the sort of ideological meanings, assumptions, and implications that have been embedded within the discursive structure of the slogans. To review, we observed a preponderance of slogans which construct the government as being rather autocratic, issuing commands for the people to learn and speak Mandarin rather than dialects, as indicated by the high incidence of the imperative mood. Moreover, the total exclusion of the government from the grammar of the slogans creates an impression that the government has categorically relinquished its responsibility and role in the campaign and projects an identity of the political leadership as being rather distant and aloof. It therefore reflects an asymmetrical power structure assumed by the government in relation to the people of Singapore. The use of verbs referring to speaking suggests that the main interest of the government is to promote Mandarin as a spoken language – as a means of oral communication – thereby subjugating the other (cultural) aspects of the language. This stands in contradiction to the overt justificatory move made by government officials to promote Mandarin not only as a lingua franca among the Chinese community in Singapore but also as a conduit

for cultural transmission. Finally, ideologies that suggest an inherent primacy or privilege of Mandarin over dialects, and the indirect promotion of the status of Mandarin through the appropriation of discursive features associated with classical Chinese, have been shown in the antithetical parallelism evident in a number of the slogans.

Discussion

If we compare the SMC slogans diachronically, a perceptible shift in the thrust of the slogans is observable, a shift which parallels the way the campaign itself has evolved and re-invented itself over the years. While the emphasis in the 1980s was on the promotion of Mandarin as a lingua franca among the Chinese and as a conduit for cultural transmission, with slogans like *Speak More Mandarin and Less Dialect* (1979), *Mandarin is Chinese* (1985), and *Start with Mandarin, not Dialect* (1986), the accent in the 1990s shifted to the more general benefits of using Mandarin. This shift away from the value of Mandarin as a 'social glue' to unify the heterogeneous, dialect-speaking Chinese community to the more pragmatic and utilitarian values that Mandarin can offer is captured in slogans like *Mandarin for Chinese Singaporeans: More Than a Language* (1991), *Speak Mandarin. It Helps* (1993), *Speak Mandarin, Explore New Horizons* (1996–1997), *Speak Mandarin, It's An Asset* (1998–2000), and *Mandarin: Window to Chinese Culture* (2001–2002). In varying degrees of specificity, these slogans hint at the pragmatic value of speaking Mandarin as a key that opens doors to education, culture, business, and other opportunities. The slogan *Speak Mandarin, Explore New Horizons*, for instance, can be read as simultaneously referring to cultural horizons and the expanding business opportunities in the huge Chinese hinterland, thereby appealing to the entrepreneurial spirit of businessmen to master Mandarin as a means to penetrate the lucrative China market. It is therefore not surprising that a study by Chan (1996) found that Singaporeans were more attracted by the economic and practical benefits of Mandarin than by its cultural value. In this light, even as the cultural rhetoric of the 1980s appears to re-surface in recent slogans like *Mandarin: Window to Chinese Culture* (2001–2002), one wonders if 'culture' here is but a stepping-stone to greater business opportunities. In the 2004 slogan (*华语 Cool. Use It, Don't Lose It)*, we see an attempt to 'update' the image of Mandarin to make it more trendy and 'cool' while still clinging on to its association with a rich cultural heritage. In explaining how the 2004 campaign attempts to connect with and engage the post-65ers in Singapore with the '华语 Cool' theme, Professor Wee Chow Hou, Chairman of the Promote Mandarin Council, has this to say:

> Mandarin is 'cool' in more ways than one. It is 'cool' in the way the English word is used in pop culture to describe something that is hip and trendy. With Chinese culture becoming an increasingly important influence on global culture, Mandarin is definitely 'in', or '酷' (ku), as the Chinese call it. In Mandarin, there is another word 库 (ku) which is often used to connote 'a store of treasure'. Indeed, Mandarin is an emotive, succinct and visual language, and it is truly a store of linguistic and cultural treasure waiting to be explored and mastered.
>
> (http://www.mandarin.org.sg/home/html, accessed April 2005)

Thus, we see the campaign's attempt to shake off the dowdy image that Mandarin seems to have acquired (ironically, through the official discourses of roots, tradition, and heritage etched into the people's consciousness throughout the 1980s), by appropriating the (English) language of youth, vibrance, and modernity. And for the first time in the SMC's 25-year history, we see a slogan code-mixing English and Mandarin, signifying in an overt manner the embrace of eastern ('cultural treasure trove') and western (globalisation) values and the propagation of a new ideology that Mandarin embodies both popular and traditional cultural values. After using Mandarin to guard against the onslaught of western values purveyed by the mass media and popular culture in the early 1980s, the SMC is now using Mandarin to embrace them. The underlying message of these more recent SMC developments seems then to underscore the multifarious (cultural, economic, and social) and shifting benefits that accrue from speaking Mandarin, and through the slogans that are used we see the Singapore government ceaselessly and relentlessly (re)constructing and (re)inventing Mandarin, dressing it up as a chameleon that not only adapts to but thrives in an ever-changing cultural landscape, in order to justify its continued value and relevance in a fast-changing, modern society like Singapore.

However, this new projecting and promoting of Mandarin as a valuable (in an economic as well as cultural sense) and hip language to learn and use has wider ramifications on multiracial and multilingual Singapore. As Bokhurst-Heng (1999, p. 245) has observed, 'the genre of a *national* campaign for the promotion of Mandarin within the Chinese community has created a blurring of the lines marking what is for ethnic community and what is for nation' (my emphasis). As the chairman of the 1994 SMC organising committee, Ho Kwon Ping, said in an interview with *The Straits Times*: 'Overall, we wanted to say that people should not be put on a guilt-trip if they didn't know Mandarin, although they should recognise that if they did, more doors would be open to them' (*The Straits Times*, October 21, 1995, p. 33). Such a guarded response betrays an awareness that the intensity and relentlessness with which Mandarin has been promoted for the past two decades may have caused some consternation among the non-Chinese ethnic minorities in Singapore. In response to the question of the possibility of the campaign ruffling ethnic sensibilities, Ho had this to say:

> If there is irritation on the part of the minorities, it is probably because come every September, the Speak Mandarin Campaign month, they are all made aware of their non-Chineseness.[3] There may still be some irritation, but I truly do not believe the campaign is a Trojan horse used to sinicise all Singaporeans and to sinicise and assimilate the minorities.
>
> (*The Straits Times*, 21 October, 1995, p. 33)

Trojan horse or not, the SMC would certainly cause more than 'irritation' to the non-Chinese ethnic minorities, especially when the ability to speak Mandarin is increasingly associated with social and economic rewards like those implied by the more recent campaign slogans. With the active promotion of trading ties between Singapore and China and the push for overseas trading ventures, businessmen and entrepreneurs are beginning to see the value of speaking Mandarin in terms of dollars and cents more than the 'social glue' or 'cultural ballast' that it was originally

supposed to provide. Inevitably, then, the non-Chinese would feel disadvantaged and marginalised and, over the long term, this might even have the effect of tearing at the multi-ethnic and multicultural fabric that is an integral part of Singapore's heritage.

Already, dissenting voices have been heard (see Tan, 1999; Zaidah, 1998): Why has there not been a 'Speak Malay' or 'Speak Tamil' campaign in the same vein as the SMC or simply a 'Speak Your Mother Tongue' campaign? Suggestions have also been made to restrict the promotion of Mandarin to the Chinese media or to give equal treatment to the promotion of the languages of all the ethnic groups in Singapore, so that if one language is promoted at the national level all the others should also be given a similar platform. Most recently, there have also been calls for a review of Malay and Tamil language learning in Singapore, soon after a highly-publicised revamp of the teaching of Mandarin was announced by a high-level review committee. Advocates argued that with close to 60% of Malay families with at least one graduate parent already speaking mainly English rather than Malay at home, there is a real danger of the erosion of Malay as a home language and mother tongue among Malay Singaporeans. Similarly, just as there has been a notable rise in interest in bicultural studies in schools, where 'biculture' refers specifically to the English and Chinese cultures, the question of whether Malay and Tamil students will have their own bicultural studies programme has also been raised (*The Straits Times*, November 26, 2004). These are but ripples of disgruntlement and discontent that belie an undercurrent of social and political tension that needs to be carefully managed lest the situation spirals out of control.

In a recent commentary published in *The Straits Times* (November 26, 2004), the writer raised the question of how non-Mandarin-speaking Singaporeans (including Chinese who are illiterate in Mandarin) will respond to a visibly more widespread use of Mandarin in Singapore: will they accept it as a practical response to a global phenomenon (like the rise of Japanese in the 1980s) or will they feel threatened by regressive development making Singapore more Chinese and less multiracial? As much as the writer, a Chinese, believes that the rise of China as a global power will continue and that Singapore is well positioned to ride on this Chinese wave, he cautions that 'domestic and political considerations are important ... [and] until and unless a multiracial consensus is reached, Singapore cannot harness its ... Chinese assets effectively to prepare young Singaporeans for a future world that will no longer be monopolar and monolingual' (p. 44).

Quite apart from fanning minority discontent, the SMC has also stirred up some ill-will among the Chinese majority itself. When the campaign was first introduced, it created a tension between Mandarin as the officially sanctioned means of cultural transmission and the dialects with which most Chinese had emotional affiliations. This is simply because the true mother tongue for the majority of Chinese was (and, albeit to a lesser extent, still is) dialects, not Mandarin. In fact, although the use of dialects among Chinese households has been shown by statistics to be steadily declining, dialects are still widely used among the older generation of Chinese. According to the 2000 census data, Chinese dialects were still the most frequently spoken language for nearly 72% of Chinese aged 55 and over in 2000 (Singapore Census of Population, 2000). One repercussion of this is manifest in a 'generation gap' split along linguistic lines, in which the dialect-speaking older generation cannot communicate with the largely English and Mandarin-speaking younger

generation, a phenomenon already documented by Gupta and Siew (1995). If the government's push for Mandarin results in a widening of the communication gap across generations, then how can any transmission of culture or values take place, especially when much of this transmission typically takes the form of an oral transfer of values from one generation to the next? In fact, the traditional values that most Chinese in Singapore are familiar with, as noted by one newspaper writer, are still very much encoded in the customs and practices that are dialect-based:

> At the end of the day, it is still one's affiliation with the dialect group that will give a sense of what one is. There are birth rites, wedding and funeral customs and the arts which are peculiar to certain dialect groups only and which best find expression in the dialect. Lose the dialect, and you lose the very access to that bit of your roots.
> (*The Straits Times Weekly*, September 9, 1995)

Thus, the government's justification of promoting Mandarin in order to strengthen traditional Chinese values is at best miscalculated and at worst questionable to begin with. Instead of strengthening the people's cultural ties and sense of ethnic identity, the government's efforts to promote the use of Mandarin may in fact backfire.

A recent survey found young Chinese Singaporeans scoring the lowest in terms of ethnic pride compared to Malays and Indians. It found that only 78% of Chinese would keep their ethnicity as compared to 92% of Malays and 82% of Indians. What is perhaps even more alarming is that the survey also found that a significant 12% of Chinese would rather be a Caucasian (*The Straits Times*, December 14 and 15, 1999). Looking at these preliminary survey findings, which point to a trend but do not probe into the cause or motivation behind it, a causal relationship between the SMC and this apparent weakening of ethnic pride among young Chinese Singaporeans is difficult to establish. However, it does appear that young Chinese Singaporeans have become more enamoured with western or, more specifically, Caucasian values and ideals than before. This is not simply a reflection of them putting nationality before ethnicity in identifying themselves more as a (pan-)Singaporean and less as a Chinese (viz. Malay, Indian, etc.), but the incipient signs of possible deculturalisation. Hence, the government's belief that learning Mandarin makes Chinese Singaporeans more Chinese (*Mandarin is Chinese*) and that 'someone who knows that he [sic] belongs to a rich and ancient culture will not easily be seduced by plausible but unsound ideas derived from superficial understanding of another culture' (excerpt of speech by the Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the 1994 SMC launch) appears to be a misplaced one. As pointed out by educator S. Gopinathan, the identification of English with the values of a technological, modernising culture and of the various mother tongues (Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil) with more enduring moral and social values which are seen as uniquely eastern is simplistic; this neat compartmentalisation of western and eastern values as seen to be transmitted through those languages does not quite square with reality, for cultural identification and practice are much more complex than suggested by a listing of supposedly characteristic values. Gopinathan contends:

> Such cultural formulae ignore the obvious fact that truly human values exist in every major culture. Further, talk about the superficialities of western culture

> seems to have blinded us to the quite evident triviality and pseudo-moralising of much of what passes for Asian culture. . . . [As such] one needs to talk about cultural values with a great deal more caution.
>
> (Gopinathan, 1979, pp. 292–293)

While this discussion of the SMC does not raise particularly new issues (for discussions of similar issues see Bokhurst-Heng, 1999; Kuo & Jernudd, 1994), it is the perpetuation and amplification of these issues in and through the campaign slogans, as a discursive instantiation and symbolic representation of the SMC, that is of interest in this paper. Through these slogans, we see a microcosmic enactment and reproduction of the larger socio-political and economic forces at play in society, where the campaign discourse is seen actively to reproduce and perpetuate the government's socio-political and economic ideologies. In this respect, it is not only the insertion of society in discourse but the insertion of discourse in society that is of significance.

Conclusion

The SMC stands today as a hallmark of the government's success in engineering language shift in Singapore. Within a relatively short span of 20 years, it has succeeded in getting a large proportion of the dialect-speaking Chinese to switch to Mandarin instead. Official statistics indicate that the percentage of Chinese households with Mandarin as the predominant language has been steadily rising from 13% in 1980 to 30% in 1990 and 45% in 2000, and the corresponding figure for Chinese dialects fell from 76% in 1980 to 48% in 1990 and still further to 30% in 2000.[4] According to the 1990 census report, this greater usage of Mandarin instead of Chinese dialects reflected the success of the SMC and the bilingual education policy (Lau, 1993). It appears, then, that the Singapore government has achieved resounding success in engineering a large-scale language shift among the Chinese community in Singapore.

While this may be true, it is clear from the discussion above that this success is a tainted one owing to its ramifications, politically in terms of fanning minority discontent and culturally in terms of language (or dialect) and possibly even culture loss. The 'Mandarinising of Singapore' will doubtless continue with the government's unrelenting promotion of Mandarin, and there will come a time when the dialects and the culture they embody will be irretrievably lost. The 'generation gap' problem will eventually pass when the present generation of bilingual students grow into adulthood and become parents and grandparents themselves. They will then no longer face the awkward communication rift that their parents and grandparents encountered. But neither would they have known the rich ethnic and cultural heritage that was part of their forebears' culture. And neither would they be as proud to be a Chinese.

Notes

1 Until recently, a pass in mother tongue was a pre-requisite for entry into university in Singapore.

2 Antithesis has been defined as the 'deliberate arrangement of contrasting words or ideas in balanced structural forms to achieve force and emphasis' (Xu, 1997, p. 62).
3 Since its 20th anniversary in 1998, the SMC is now a year-long affair rather than a month-long event in September.
4 These figures are taken from two sources: 1990 and 2000 census reports (Lau, 1993; Leow, 2001).

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Appendix

Speak Mandarin campaign slogans (in English) 1979–2004

year	*slogan*
1979	Speak More Mandarin and Less Dialect
1980	Nil
1981	Learn Mandarin, Speak Mandarin
1982	Speak Mandarin While at Work
1983	Mandarin's In. Dialect's Out
1984	Speak Mandarin. Your Children's Future Depends on Your Effort Today
1985	Mandarin is Chinese
1986	Start with Mandarin, not Dialect
1987	Start with Mandarin, Speak It More Often
1988	Better With More Mandarin, Less Dialect
1989	More Mandarin, Less Dialect. Make It a Way of Life
1990	If You're a Chinese, Make a Statement – in Mandarin
1991	Mandarin for Chinese Singaporeans: More Than a Language
1992	Say it in Mandarin
1993	Speak Mandarin. It Helps
1994	Mandarin. Use It or Lose It
1995	Mandarin. Use It or Lose It
1996	Speak Mandarin, Explore New Horizons
1997	Speak Mandarin, Explore New Horizons
1998	Speak Mandarin, It's An Asset
1999	Speak Mandarin, It's An Asset
2000	Speak Mandarin, It's An Asset
2001	Mandarin: Window to Chinese Culture
2002	Mandarin: Window to Chinese Culture
2003	Mandarin. Use It. Don't Lose It
2004	华语 Cool. Use It, Don't Lose It

Speak Mandarin campaign slogans (in Mandarin) 1979–2004

year	*slogan*	*English translation*
1979		Speak more Mandarin, less dialect
1980	Nil	Nil
1981		Learn Mandarin, speak Mandarin
1982		Speak Mandarin at your workplace
1983		It's only natural and logical for Chinese people to speak Mandarin

(*Table continued*)

Appendix Continued

year	*slogan*	*English translation*
1984		Please speak Mandarin. Your children's future is in your hands
1985		Chinese. Mandarin
1986		Start with Mandarin. Everybody will be happy
1987		Start with Mandarin, speak it more often
1988		Speak more Mandarin. It promotes solidarity and it is convenient
1989		Speaking Mandarin often makes you sound more natural and fluent
1990		Chinese. Mandarin
1991		Learn Mandarin to access culture
1992		Use Mandarin to express yourself
1993		Speaking Mandarin benefits you in many ways
1994	华语多讲流利	The more Mandarin you speak, the more fluent you'll become
1995	华语多讲流利	The more Mandarin you speak, the more fluent you'll become
1996	讲华语开创新天地	Speak Mandarin. Explore new horizons
1997	讲华语开创新天地	Speak Mandarin. Explore new horizons
1998	讲华语，好处多	Speak Mandarin. It has many benefits
1999	讲华语，好处多	Speak Mandarin. It has many benefits
2000	讲华语，好处多	Speak Mandarin. It has many benefits
2001	华人。华语。华文	Chinese (People. Language. Culture)
2002	华人。华语。华文	Chinese (People. Language. Culture)
2003	能用华语是福气，别失去	Being able to use Mandarin is a blessing. Don't lose it
2004	华语 Cool	Mandarin is cool

Note: Publicity material, such as leaflets, posters, and banners, typically carry both the English and Mandarin versions of the slogans.