

## A Study of Attitudes towards the Speak Mandarin Campaign in Singapore

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**Abstract:** In 1979 the Singapore Government launched the Speak Mandarin Campaign with a specific objective to persuade all dialect-speakers to discard the habit of speaking Chinese dialects and switch to speaking Mandarin as a language of use and preference. The paper examines the attitudes of individual dialect speakers towards the Speak Mandarin Campaign. About 126 dialect speakers within a dialect speaking community participated in the study. Data collection for the study consisted of a self-administered survey designed to elicit dialect speakers' views' on the use of Mandarin in different domains and their opinions on the status and functions of Mandarin. A semi-structured interview was also conducted amongst 19 individual dialect speakers to examine their views on the continuation of the Speak Mandarin Campaign. The results of the study showed that although dialect speakers have switched to using Mandarin and agreed to the continuation of the Speak Mandarin campaign, they perceived Mandarin as having less status and importance than English. As English becomes a dominant language in Singapore's linguistic landscape, there is a need for official language planners to nurture a healthy environment that will sustain the use of Mandarin within the dialect speaking Chinese community.

**Keywords:** Dialect speakers, attitudes, Mandarin, Singapore

### 1. Introduction

Research has shown that the status and value of a language are often based on the attitudes of individuals towards its features, uses and cultural associations with the language. Two components of language attitude have been identified in sociolinguistic research: instrumental and integrated orientation. An integrated attitude towards a language is social and interpersonal in orientation. Such an attitude arises from a need for affiliation (Baker, 1976). On the other hand, an instrumental attitude to a language is mostly self-oriented, individualistic, and has a conceptual overlap with the need for achievement (McClelland, 1961). Language attitude changes over time, although the process may be slow or gradual. According to Katz (1960), there are various factors affecting language attitude change. Language attitude may change when there is a reward such as gaining employment opportunities. Being a peripheral member of a group may lead to language attitude change. A change in language attitude may arise when an individual regards a language to be congruent with personal values or self concept. Language attitude change may occur when there is an increase in knowledge of the minority or majority culture, social organization, politics or education. Language policy implementation may also lead to a change in language attitude. The objective of this study is to examine whether

there is a change of attitude amongst individual dialect speakers towards the Speak Mandarin Campaign in Singapore.

In 1979, the Singapore Government implemented the Speak Mandarin Campaign (henceforth SMC) with the specific objective of making all Chinese Singaporeans discard the habit of speaking Chinese dialects and adopt Mandarin as a language of use and preference. Although the Chinese in Singapore form a large demographic majority of the population, they are far from being culturally or linguistically homogenous. The local Chinese community is itself made up of a heterogeneous mix of peoples whose forefathers came from different parts of China and spoke a multiplicity of Chinese dialects, such as Hokkiens, Teochews, Cantonese, Hakkas, Hainanese, Foochows, Henghua, Shanghainese and Hockchia.

However, governmental leaders in Singapore have fervently argued that linguistic diversity is incompatible with nation-building (Kuo & Jernudd, 1994). From the perceptions of the government, having too many Chinese dialect groups within the Chinese community would hinder communication among the Chinese. A common language was needed and Mandarin was ascribed the mother tongue of all Chinese dialect speakers to strengthen the bond between different dialect groups in Singapore. In the official opening ceremony of the SMC on 7 September 1979, the then Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew, explained the purpose of the SMC:

Chinese Singaporeans face a dilemma. The Chinese we speak is divided up among more than twelve dialects. Children at home speak dialect; in school they learn English and Mandarin. After 20 years of bilingual schooling, we know that very few children can cope with two languages plus one dialect, certainly not much more than the 12% that make it to junior colleges. The majority have ended up speaking English and dialect (Lee, 1979).

Since its implementation in 1979, the Speak Mandarin campaign has been held annually in Singapore to raise the consciousness of Chinese Singaporeans on the need to discard Chinese dialects and assimilate Mandarin as a language of use and preference. Some novel strategies were used to celebrate the SMC's 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of existence and promoting the continued use of Mandarin, especially among the younger generation of Singaporeans. One such example is the set of advertisements being aired on the national TV network and other forums, featuring Caucasian pre-school goers speaking Mandarin in their family and home environment, suggesting the increasing popularity of Mandarin even among the non-Chinese races (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: The Speak Mandarin Campaign Poster: Be Heard in Chinese

As the year 2014 marks the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SMC since it was first launched, it would be timely to examine whether the campaign has resulted in any change in dialect speakers' attitudes towards Mandarin. This paper is organised as follows: It first explains the contextual background of the SMC in Singapore. Next it explains the research design and data collection. It then reports the findings of the self-administered survey and the semi-structured interview. A discussion on the challenges of maintaining Mandarin within the dialect speaking community will then be provided. The conclusion will focus on the dominance of English in Singapore's society and its effect on dialect speakers' attitudes towards the SMC.

## **2. Literature Review: The Speak Mandarin Campaign in Singapore**

The SMC is a deliberate language-planning policy initiated by the Singapore Government. Its avowed intention was to change a deeply entrenched sociolinguistic habit of Chinese Singaporeans who were long used to speaking Chinese dialects (Pakir, 1994). The Singapore Government proposed three official arguments for the implementation of the campaign: the educational, communicative and cultural arguments (Bokhorst-Heng, 1998). In regards to the educational argument, it was believed that the continual use of dialects in the homes would hinder the learning of Mandarin in schools. The communicative argument was provided as another reason for the implementation of the SMC. It was observed that more than eighty percent of Chinese Singaporeans spoke a variety of more than twelve dialects and thus there was a need to foster the use of Mandarin as a medium of inter-dialect communication within the Chinese community. A cultural argument was also cited for the rationale of the SMC as it was perceived that the promotion of Mandarin would act as a cultural ballast to counterbalance the negative effects of Westernisation and the dominance of English. In 1985, to further establish the merits of the SMC, efforts were made to promote Mandarin as a language for economic ties with China.

The efforts to homogenize the Chinese community were framed in the context of Singapore's official language planning policy. Since independence, a policy of multilingualism was developed resulting in the Republic of Singapore Independence Act of 1965 which decreed that Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English would be the four official languages in Singapore. As a result, the entire population was officially constituted into four units of equal status: Chinese, Malays, Indians and 'Others' (Eurasians, etc.). Thus intra-group differences among the Chinese, Malay and Indians were radically reduced by the installation of a single language; each for the 'Chinese', the 'Malays,' and the 'Indians' (Clammer, 1985). The "Speak Mandarin campaign" was not merely conceived as a "Chinese phenomena" but part of a broader movement parallel to the promotion of Tamil among the Indians (which comprised Gujaratis, Punjabis, Malayalees, Singhalese, etc.) and Malay among the Malays (which comprised Boyanese, Madurese, Bugis, etc.). English was designated the official working and administrative language in Singapore. However, over time, the Singaporean government began to perceive the dominance of English as problematic. Chinese Singaporeans were perceived as vulnerable to undesirable Western influences such as drug abuse and moral decay as a result of the prevalence of English in the Singapore society. Mandarin was needed as a cultural ballast and a carrier of Asian values to countervail the negative effects of English (Bokhorst-Heng, 1998).

Previous formal study on the SMC was conducted in 1985 (Kuo, 1985). However the study merely focused on the use of Mandarin in public places such as in restaurants and coffee shops (Kuo, 1985). To assess whether the SMC is effective in sustaining interest in speaking Mandarin, it is important to investigate the prevailing attitudes of dialect speakers towards the campaign. Given that language-planning efforts are located in a localized context, a micro-evaluation of the SMC can help to uncover the current subjective responses of individual dialect-speakers within the researched community. The present study also seeks to gather more empirical evidence as proof that the campaign has managed to convince dialect speakers to switch to speaking Mandarin in other domains such as in the family, in the workplace, hawker centres and in shopping centres.

### 3. The Study

The present study aims to examine the effectiveness of the SMC in changing the language use and attitudes of a community of dialect speakers towards Mandarin. The research questions for this study are:

- (i) Has the SMC effected a change of attitude towards the use of Mandarin amongst individual dialect-speakers in a dialect community?
- (ii) What are dialect speakers' views on the continuation of the Speak Mandarin Campaign?

This study adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The self-administered survey (henceforth SAS) was the main instrument for quantitative data collection for this study. Through personal networking, the SAS were first distributed to individual dialect speakers in the community, who then helped to re-distribute them to other members in his/her family as well as friends and peers. The completed survey forms were collected by hand.

The SAS seeks to elicit respondents' views' on:

- (i) Language use in five important domains of language use—parents, close friends, colleagues/classmates, hawker centres and shopping centres. Participants were asked which language (English, Mandarin, Chinese dialects, Others, etc.) they frequently use when communicating with their parents, close friends, colleagues/classmates and sales personnel at a shopping centre.
- (ii) Attitude towards the speaking of Mandarin, and attitude towards the status and functions of Mandarin. Using a Likert scale, respondents were asked whether they agree with the following statements:  
 'I like speaking Mandarin'  
 'My children should speak Mandarin'  
 'Mandarin will benefit Singaporeans' business dealings with China'  
 'Mandarin is the mother tongue of Chinese Singaporeans'  
 'Mandarin will have a superior status in Singapore in the future'

- (iii) A comparison of dialect speakers' attitudes towards English and Mandarin. Using a Likert scale, respondents were asked whether they agree with the following statement:  
 'In Singapore, English is more important than Mandarin'

Besides the questionnaire survey, a semi-structured interview was also used to evaluate respondents' response to the SMC. The semi-structured interview (henceforth SSI) has a structured overall framework and allows flexibility in changing the order of questions to facilitate an extensive follow-up of responses (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). At the same time, the SSI is able to achieve depth of information as it provides opportunity for the interviewer to probe and expand on the informants' responses (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989). For this study, the SSI is used as a tool to examine the reasons, if any, for the change in attitude towards the continuation of the SMC.

The first part of the SSI seeks to elicit information pertaining to the goals of the campaign. Respondents were asked the following questions:

- (a) *Have you seen any Speak Mandarin Campaign advertisement before?*
- (b) *Do you think the SMC should be continued?*

A total of 19 dialect speakers participated in the SSI. The age of the respondents ranged from 12 to 70. The sample for the semi-structured interview included dialect-speakers from different socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds. The interviews were conducted in the respondents' house. An interpreter was employed to help conduct the interview. The conversation was audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English for reporting purposes. Data analysis underwent three levels of data transformation as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994): (i) editing, segmenting and summarizing of data (ii) organizing and assembling of data (iii) coding and memoing.

#### *Profile of the survey respondents*

126 individual dialect speakers in the sampled community participated in the study. To ensure that the sample is not biased towards a certain age group or socio-economic background, purposive sampling was adopted for the selection of informants. The SAS was administered to individual dialect speakers who speak either one or a combination of the various dialects such as Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hainanese. The demographic distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Distribution of Respondents

	Percentage( %)
Sex	
Male	65%
Female	35%
Age	
12-20	18.9%
21-30	6.3%
31-60	51.2%
61-70	23.6%
<b>Language Medium of Education</b>	
English	47%
Chinese	53%

#### 4. Results

Findings on the reported language use of dialect speakers are presented in Table 2, which shows the percentage of use of the various languages when speaking to different interlocutors in different domains.

Table 2. Reported Language Use in Different Domains

Question: What language do you frequently use when communicating with your parents, close friends, colleagues/classmates, at hawker centres and shopping centres?

	Mandarin	Chinese Dialects	Others (English, Malay etc)
Parents	29%	58%	13%
Close friends	62%	3%	35%
Colleagues/classmates	40%	3%	57%
At hawker centres	75%	11%	14%
At shopping centres	34%	5%	61%

The table above shows that Mandarin is used in all domains. A great majority of respondents (75%) use Mandarin instead of Chinese dialects in the hawker centers. Before the launch of the SMC in 1979, dialects were used mainly in the more informal public settings such as in the hawker centers and wet markets and in the HDB estates (Gopinathan, 1998). In its earlier years, the goal of the SMC was to encourage dialect speakers to switch to speaking Mandarin in the informal public places. The results also show that except for communicating with parents, the dialect-speakers within the sample community use less dialect as compared to Mandarin in public places such as at hawker centres (11%) and at shopping centres (5%). Thus, there is a positive attitude towards the use of Mandarin within the sample community.

Table 3. Reported Language Attitudes towards Speaking Mandarin

Statement:	I like speaking Mandarin	My children should speak Mandarin
Strongly Disagree	2%	2%
Disagree	2%	3%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	14%
Agree	52%	52%
Strongly Agree	31%	29%

About 83% of respondents stated they like speaking Mandarin and 81% want their children to speak Mandarin. On the whole, respondents reported positive attitudes towards Mandarin. The positive attitudes of dialect-speakers toward Mandarin can possibly be due to the practical use of Mandarin within the community. Mandarin is used in most domains of language use within the sampled community. In addition, Mandarin also serves other useful purposes within the wider Chinese community as it is an essential language for business dealings with China and other Chinese countries such as Taiwan. The positive attitudes displayed by respondents show that Mandarin is being accepted in the linguistic habits of dialect-speakers.

Table 4. Reported Attitudes towards the Importance of Mandarin in Business Dealings with China

Statement:	Mandarin will benefit Singaporeans' business dealings with China
Strongly Disagree	0%
Disagree	1%
Neither agree nor disagree	3%
Agree	35%
Strongly Agree	61%

A great majority of respondents, 96%, reported that Mandarin will benefit Singaporeans' business dealings with China. The promotion of Mandarin as a language for economic ties with China was a strategy adopted in the 1985 SMC. This shows that dialect-speakers within the sample community are convinced of the economic value of Mandarin.

Table 5. Reported Attitudes towards Status of Mandarin as the Mother Tongue of Chinese Singaporeans

Statement:	Mandarin is the mother tongue of the Chinese Singaporean
Strongly Disagree	2%
Disagree	7%
Neither agree nor disagree	4%
Agree	59%
Strongly Agree	28%

In its early days, a major issue of contention in the SMC revolved around the ascription of Mandarin as the official mother tongue of local Chinese. The Singapore Government believed that the promotion of Mandarin as the mother tongue of the Chinese would encourage dialect speakers to discard the use of dialects and switch to speaking Mandarin. Initially, there were protests by dialect speakers that Mandarin does not correspond to the language of socialization of local Chinese (Gupta, 1998). However the results of the SAS show that 87% of respondent agreed that Mandarin is the mother tongue of Chinese Singaporeans. This sends a strong signal that most dialect speakers support the educational argument for promoting the SMC.

Table 6. Reported Attitudes towards the Status of Mandarin in Singapore

Statement:	Mandarin will have a superior status in Singapore in the future
Strongly Disagree	2%
Disagree	25%
Neither agree nor disagree	25%
Agree	40%
Strongly Agree	8%

The SMC is a deliberate language planning policy designed to raise the status of Mandarin within the Chinese community. Thus, a major aim of the SAS is to investigate dialect speakers'



perceptions on the status of Mandarin. Their perceptions towards the status of Mandarin will have a bearing on the effectiveness of the SMC. As mentioned by Ho and Alsagoff (1998), Singaporeans being pragmatic people will embrace a language that accords them greater economic opportunity and career advancement. However, the results show that only 48% of respondents agreed that Mandarin will have a superior status in Singapore in the future. This confirms Gupta's (1994) observation that while Mandarin may be replacing dialects, its social status among Chinese Singaporeans is low, with few regarding Mandarin as a language with a superior status in society.

## 5. Comparison of Attitudes toward English and Mandarin

In Singapore, both English and Mandarin are the two major languages in the linguistic ecology of the Chinese community. A main objective of the SAS is to compare respondents' attitudes towards English and Mandarin. The attitudes towards English and Mandarin are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Comparison of Attitudes towards English and Mandarin

Statement:	In Singapore, English is more important than Mandarin
Strongly Disagree	2%
Disagree	7%
Neither agree nor disagree	4%
Agree	59%
Strongly Agree	28%

87% of respondents stated that English is more important than Mandarin in Singapore. This is not surprising as English is the first school language for the majority of the young generation among the respondents. The bilingual educational policy has raised the status of English more than any other languages. As a result, more time is spent in the learning of English than any other subject in schools. In addition, gatekeepers at institutions of higher learning place a high premium on English proficiency for admission. At the moment, students gaining admission to Nanyang Technological University and National University of Singapore must attain a certain level of English proficiency, failing which they must sit for an English Proficiency exam.

## 6. Respondents' Views on the Continuation of the Campaign and the Reasons Given

In addition to the SAS, respondents were also asked whether they agree with the continuation of the SMC. The results show that 17 out of 19 respondents agreed with the continuation of the SMC. The following section shows the reasons why respondents supported the continuation of the SMC.

### *The campaign serves to remind the Chinese in Singapore to speak Mandarin*

Some respondents stated that the campaign should be continued as many Chinese in Singapore are speaking too much English. They feel it is necessary for the government to launch the



campaign annually to remind the Chinese community in Singapore to speak Mandarin instead of English:

IM4: We are in Singapore and we should speak Chinese. If we emphasize the campaign, then the people will know that Mandarin is important to us and they will speak the language.

IM10: The young people in Singapore now speak English and because of this, the SMC organizers want to encourage them to speak Mandarin.

*The campaign is necessary as Mandarin is necessary for conducting business dealings with China*

A majority of respondents believe that the campaign is still necessary as they perceive knowledge of Mandarin as an asset for economic ties with China.

IM15: Given the current economic situation, where China is a rising economic power, and also in Singapore where Mandarin is a major language, if we Chinese Singaporeans only know one language without knowing Mandarin, we are destroying ourselves. If we know Mandarin, it's to our advantage.

IM17: In future, China seems to be an important country so Singaporeans may set up business there. If we want to earn more money, we must communicate in Mandarin with the people there.

*The campaign serves to promote Mandarin and to preserve Chinese culture and identity*

Several informants also agree that the campaign is useful as they perceive that Singapore is becoming too Westernised and there is a fear that the local Chinese will lose their Chinese cultural heritage and identity if the campaign is discontinued:

IM8: Chinese must speak Mandarin. It reminds us of our Chinese roots and traditions. We Chinese need to speak Mandarin as our mother tongue.

IM13: The campaign is necessary as more English-educated Chinese have less exposure to Mandarin and therefore we need the campaign to remind them that they are Chinese.

*The campaign aims to maintain the use of the Chinese language in Singapore*

Several informants also believe that the campaign is necessary as it will reinforce the use of Mandarin in society as well as emphasize the importance of speaking standard Mandarin:

IM9: We should have it every year to drive further the message the usefulness of Mandarin and also the correct usage of speaking standard Mandarin.

IM10: The campaign should continue as more and more people in Singapore now speak English instead of Mandarin.

IM19: There should be a campaign like this or else there will be nobody to motivate us to speak Mandarin.

*The campaign helps to create bonding amongst Chinese in Singapore*

Some informants agree with the communicative argument for the use of Mandarin. They believe that Mandarin is necessary for different dialect groups to communicate and will ensure

greater unity within the Chinese community.

IM2: I suppose we Chinese should speak to each other in our mother tongue so that we have the same ethnic feeling. We Chinese can have bonding with each other.

However two respondents disagreed that the SMC should be continued.

IM19: The campaign should be stopped as it has been running for more than ten years. It has done its job. People are now using Mandarin and not dialects.

IM20: The message should be drummed in by now; perhaps the campaign should stop for a while.

On the whole, the results of the SAS and SSI show that SMC has been effective in causing dialect-speakers to discard dialects and switch to Mandarin amongst dialect speakers within the researched community. However, the promotion of the SMC has led to the sacrifice of the various Chinese dialects considered as 'precious assets' by the early immigrant Chinese (Ng, 2011).

## **7. Discussion: Maintenance of Mandarin within the Chinese Community**

A significant finding of this study is that a majority of dialect speakers have expressed a concern about the dominance and spread of English in the Chinese community. Although respondents reported a positive attitude towards Mandarin and the SMC, only 48% of respondents agreed that Mandarin would have a superior status in Singapore in the future. A majority of dialect speakers (87%) also perceived that English is more important than Mandarin in Singapore. While the SMC has been effective in persuading dialect speakers to switch to speaking Mandarin, the main issue now is whether it can nurture a healthy environment that will sustain the use of Mandarin, with English commanding more diverse social functions and acquiring more users (Bainco, 2007). As younger Singaporeans grow up using English in their socialization experiences, many will increasingly claim ownership of English, with the language being core to their identity. With the extended social and educational legitimacy of English in Singapore, there is a fear that more dialect speakers will discard the Mandarin language and switch to speaking English. It will be true to say that younger generations of Chinese Singaporeans prefer to align themselves with English because of the higher status accorded to the English language in Singapore (Ng, 2014). English will allow local Singaporeans to plug into the larger, wider English-speaking world linked by education, literature and the media. In Singapore, a command of English is a decisive factor for the career path and promotion prospects of all Singaporeans. On the other hand, to opt to identify with Mandarin will mean belonging to a smaller community, with less power economically, politically and socially.

The promotion of English-medium education has also led to a 'seismic shift' in Singapore's linguistic landscape as an increasing number of school children come from homes where English is the main language. According to the Chinese Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee (2004), the number of Primary One children from English-speaking homes has risen from 36% in 1994 to 50% in 2004. In particular, parents with higher education are more likely to use English at home with their children. A sociolinguistic survey of Singapore conducted by the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) in 2006 showed

that 41.7% of young Chinese Singaporeans speak English, 31.8% speak the mother tongue language, 15.9% speak a mixture of English and the mother tongue while the rest speak other languages (Vaish et al. 2010). The survey has a sample size of 716 school children aged 10 to 11 from different races and socio-economic status. According to Fishman's (1991) 8-point Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GDIS) for threatened languages, Mandarin is located at Stage 7 where the child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it with their elders but are choosing not to transmit it to their children. Some English-educated parents who perceived the learning of Mandarin as an extra burden for their children will resist speaking Mandarin. This will affect the attitude of their children in the learning of Mandarin. This is a worrying trend as English has become the lingua franca of vast swathes of Singapore life. As the use of Mandarin diminishes significantly in the home, its intergenerational transmission will be compromised. Thus for Mandarin to survive in the dialect-speaking communities in Singapore, it has to be a natural mode of communication for the younger generation of Chinese at home. There has been increasing concern that the next language shift in Singapore would be from Mandarin to English (Goh, 2000).

To sustain the linguistic vitality of Mandarin, there is a need to ensure that the standard of Mandarin spoken is acceptable within the dialect-speaking communities. At the moment, a majority of dialect-speakers can merely speak sufficient Mandarin for ordering food in the hawker centres and in the coffee shops. However, most are unable to speak Mandarin on formal occasions or use Mandarin to write Chinese essays. High levels of Mandarin can only be attained if there is an environment for naturalistic interactions in Mandarin. A shallow usage of Mandarin may further erode the Chinese cultural identity. While there may be sufficient fluent speakers of Mandarin amongst dialect speakers in Singapore, it is unsure whether in the future, there will be sufficient number of fluent speakers of Mandarin to sustain the use of Mandarin in the local Chinese linguistic community. At the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the launch of the SMC in 2014, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong urged parents to start teaching Mandarin to their children when they are young, and highlighted the need for teachers to adopt creative ways of teaching Mandarin to motivate children's interest in the language (Lee, 2014). The challenge for the government is to ensure that the linguistic ecology for the use of Mandarin is maintained beyond the superficial level.

## 8. Conclusion

This study seeks to examine whether there is a change of attitudes towards the SMC within a dialect speaking community in Singapore. The results showed that a majority of dialect speakers had discarded the use of Chinese dialects and switched to speaking Mandarin in public domains such as hawkers centres and the shopping centres. A majority of dialect speakers also supported the continuation of the SMC. However, although the deliberate state intervention in language planning through the SMC may have achieved its outcome, the status and relevance of Mandarin in Singapore is not firmly entrenched nor accepted among all Chinese (Bianco, 2007).

Despite repeated official discourse emphasizing the importance of Mandarin as a viable economic language in business dealings with China, English is still the master language in

the Singapore linguistic landscape. In addition, English is also a language of cohesion, social identity, and a constituent part of the common modernized spaces that Singaporeans share. Although the Ministry of Education in Singapore continues to affirm the importance of Mandarin in society as an anchor to Singapore's Asian cultures and values, younger generations of dialect speakers are inclined to believe that Mandarin has less economic value than English in Singapore. For many young dialect speakers, Mandarin is best described as an examination subject and except for communication with hawkers at food courts, there is little motivation to speak the language. On the other hand, English is highly esteemed amongst the educated and the elites of Singapore society. It will be interesting to see whether there is any change in language attitude of dialect speakers towards Mandarin in the near future.

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