

Singapore's Speak Mandarin Campaign: A Historiographical Review

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ABSTRACT— Language policy functions as a critical instrument in Singapore's nation building since its independence in the 1960s. This paper intends to examine some major literature in the past fifty years concerning Singapore's well-known Speak Mandarin Campaign, in order to reveal the chronological development in scholarship. The content of the literature foregrounds paradigm shifts from viewing Mandarin as an identity marker to valuing it as linguistic capital, and from treating identity as a bounded concept to acknowledging its fluidity in the context of globalisation. The evident historical changes in the writing of the studies also reflect shifts in terms of the scholars' gaze in research, the core subject under investigation, the meaning of critical notions such as national identity and Mandarin, as well as research methods adopted and sources analysed. These findings could reinforce understanding of the scholarly developments concerning Singapore's language policy and inform the direction for investigating recent progress of the Speak Mandarin Campaign and Singapore's national identity formation.

Keywords : Speak Mandarin Campaign, nation building, identity, linguistic capital, language shift, globalisation

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Introduction

Singapore is a nation-state characterized by a tradition of plurality. As a former British colony, the city was originally established as a trading port with its people residing in different ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown, Geylang as a Malay area and Serangoon as an Indian area. Each ethnic quarter developed an education system with their own language as the medium of instruction, which reinforced institutionalised separatism (Ginsberg 1955; Gopinathan 1979). Around Singapore's full independence in 1965, the government launched the policy of integrated schooling in hope of overcoming the ethnic segregation, and bilingual education was advocated and implemented in schools (Gopinathan 1979). All pupils in schools were required to learn English plus another official language of the nation, i.e. Chinese, Malay and Indian. It was believed that English as a non-native language could facilitate inter-ethnic communication and the students' mother tongue could help retain their ethnic identity and cultural heritage (Gopinathan 1979; Kuo, 1985; Silver 2005).

With emphasis on the socio-economic value of using English as a major language of instruction, the number of Singaporean students registering for Chinese-medium schools declined considerably from 1959 to 1977 (Gopinathan 1979). Since the local Chinese is an ethnic majority in Singapore and constituted 76.2% of its population in 1977, the government, led by the People's Action Party (PAP) considered the Chinese-medium schools important for the transmission of Asian and Chinese values. Against this backdrop, the government, chaired by the Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, launched the Speak Mandarin Campaign (hereafter referred to as SMC) in 1979 with the intention of countering the influence of the English language and uniting the Chinese ethnic groups divided by their use of various Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Cantonese and Teochew (Chan 1999; Gopinathan 1979; Teo 2005). This paper aims to review the literature exploring the SMC from the time it was launched to today, with the hope of revealing the trends of development in academic writing with regard to this well-known language policy.

The selection of the literature is based on the researcher's professional expertise, the publisher, the impact factor of the literature, the field of research of the literature, as well as the subject matter of the studies.

Table 1
Criteria for the Selection of Literature (Part 1)

Criteria	Category	Number of Author (n)	Percentage (%)
Authors field of expertise mentioned in the literature	Anthropology	1	4.3
	Art and design	1	4.3
	Education	6	26.1
	Language, linguistics and literature	8	34.8
	Political science	3	13.0
	Psychology	1	4.3
	Sociology	1	4.3
	Others	2	8.7
Authors affiliation mentioned in the literature	National University of Singapore	6	26.1
	Nanyang Technological University	7	30.4
	Ministry of Education of Singapore	1	4.3
	University College, Cardiff	1	4.3
	University of Newcastle upon Tyne	1	4.3
	University of New South Wales	1	4.3
	University of Niigata Prefecture	1	4.3
	University of California, San Diego	1	4.3
	University of California, Los Angeles	1	4.3
	Massey University	1	4.3
	Hungarian Academy of Sciences	1	4.3
	Others	1	4.3

Note. N = 23.

As Table 1 shows, the majority of the authors were affiliated with well-regarded academic institutions or government department, with 56.5% of them from the two most distinguished universities in Singapore. Also, 34.8% of them held expertise in language, linguistics and literature, with the rest specialising in other relevant fields of liberal arts and social sciences.

Table 2
Criteria for the Selection of Literature (Part 2)

Criteria	Category	Number of Studies (n)	Percentage (%)
Publisher	Academic Press (Elsevier)	1	5.3
	Brill	1	5.3
	Elsevier	1	5.3
	Oxford University Press	1	5.3
	Routledge (Taylor & Francis)	10	52.5
	Springer	2	10.5
	The Philippine Sociology Society	1	5.3
	Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore	2	10.5
Impact	7.27	1	5.3
factor of	2.814 (2020)	5	26.3
the	2.582 (2020)	1	5.3
literature	2.491 (2020)	1	5.3
as of	2.3 (2020) CiteScore	1	5.3
December	1.765	1	5.3
2021	1.523 (2020)	3	15.8
	N/A	6	31.4
Field of	Applied linguistics	7	36.7
research of	Art and design	1	5.3
the	Communication studies	2	10.5
literature	Psychology	1	5.3
	Regional (Southeast Asia) studies	3	15.8
	Sociolinguistics	4	21.1
	Sociology	1	5.3

Subject matter of the studies	Graphic or slogan design	2	10.5
	Identity	5	26.3
	Language shift	2	10.5
	Language attitude	1	5.3
	Linguistic capital	2	10.5
	Mass media	2	10.5
	Nation building	1	5.3
	Policy (language or education)	4	21.1

Table 2 further strengthens the reliability of the literature in that 84.2% of the studies were published by leading international academic publishers such as Routledge, Springer and Elsevier, and 68.6% of the studies were published in journals with an impact factor of at least 1.5. Moreover, the literature is considered useful because the studies discussed a range of subject matter with direct relation to the SMC, and the literature is in highly relevant fields such as applied linguistics (36.7%), sociolinguistics (21.1%) and regional studies (15.8%). Next, the literature is discussed in a chronological order and categorised under themes such as language planning as nation building, identity loss occasioned by the SMC, linguistic capital and language shift, the decline of multiculturalism, as well as the global turn for the SMC.

1970-1979: Language Planning as Nation Building

The principal task facing the PAP government after Singapore's independence was nation-building. Scholars in the 1970s seemed to be interested in exploring how the PAP government was addressing institutionalised ethnic segregation and nurturing a unified national identity. Poh-Seng (1976), Quah (1977) and Gopinathan (1979), for example, provided analysis of Singapore's domestic and regional social environment to reveal the political, economic and cultural factors that propelled its government to build an integrated nation, and they also rendered a discussion of the official policies enacted for achieving this purpose. They pointed out that Singapore's multilingual population,

separate educational streams resulted in unequal socio-economic development among the ethnic groups, and its prominent feature of Chineseness were obstacles to the country's domestic and regional integration. Informed by government publications such as reports, laws and policies, these scholars reviewed Singapore's strategies for tackling the challenges, especially the implementation of the education policy of bilingualism. They considered that this policy would not only allow Singaporeans to learn necessary skills through English, the "neutral" language of technology and commerce, for facilitating inter-ethnic communication and constructing an industrialised nation, but also enable them to retain ethnic values and norms through their mother tongues to maintain Singapore's identity as an Asian nation.

Poh-Seng (1976, 76) deemed the policy of bilingual education supportive for the maxim of "unity in diversity" in Singapore, but Gopinathan (1979) noted that the ascending popularity of English and English-medium schools, owing to the measure of bilingualism, had occasioned a drastic talent drain of Chinese-medium schools, and the situation prompted the Singaporean government to launch the Speak Mandarin Campaign to prevent ethnic value shift, unite the Chinese dialect communities, and maintain increasing trade communications with China. Unlike Poh-Seng (1976) and Quah (1977), who did not evaluate the effectiveness of the language policies, Gopinathan (1979) also criticised the government's oversimplified treatment of Western society as decadent and English as a language lacking common moral values, and he seemed not to agree with the elimination of Chinese dialects and the promotion of ethnocentrism through the SMC. He suggested that such measures would be counterproductive for developing Singapore into an international city, major communications centre and popular tourist destination, and would also thwart Singapore's efforts on cultural integration and nation-building. With these issues raised, it can be found that studies in the 1970s situate the SMC in the framework of Singapore's nation-building where language policies play a vital role from the very outset and cast a strong influence on Singapore's national identity formation.

1980-1989: The Promotion of the SMC and Identity Loss

Scholars examining the SMC in this decade concentrated on the Singaporean government's mobilisation of mass media for the promotion of the campaign. Harrison (1980) again reminded that the trend of students drifting away from Chinese-medium schools to English-medium schools in Singapore was unabated. He expounded how the Ministry of Culture in Singapore was directed by the PAP government to promote the SMC through television and radio programmes, printing presses, etc. Adopting a quantitative approach, Harrison compared not only the transmission time of the television and radio programmes that feature the Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew promoting bilingual education and the SMC in 1978 and 1979 but also the amount of coverage of the programmes in the local English-medium press, *The Straits Times*. The comparison revealed the Singaporean government's determination over the campaign and the increasing role of mass media in presenting the language policies.

Similarly, Kuo (1984) conducted a case study to examine how the Singaporean government employed mass media for boosting the SMC. He first used Lee Kuan Yew's public statements in 1979, which advocate the campaign and encourage extensive use of Mandarin among the youths, to explicate that the status planning of Mandarin was achieved through government authorities. Statistical data, survey reports and legal acts released by the government such as the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Culture, together with leading local press (e.g. *The Straits Times* and *Nanyang Siang Pao*), were then employed to discuss the development of mass media as powerful agents of communication in the country, illustrate the structural regulation of these media by the government, and provide a more detailed description of the government's mobilisation of the media to promote, evaluate and teach in the SMC as compared with Harrison (1980). Also, Kuo (1984) explained more lucidly why the mass media "did not question the legitimacy and objectives of the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign" (30) within Singapore's political context, and reported some critical comments regarding some measures

of the campaign rendered by the English-medium press, such as using “the Romanised phonetic system (Hanyu Pinyin) to spell and document the names of school students” (31), which seemed to have incurred a change of individual identity.

Given the massive promotion of Mandarin, and changes in Singapore's linguistic landscape, Kuo (1985) further directed attention to the relationship between language and group identification. He drew on his own observation of language use in Singapore and statistics from the Ministry of Education of Singapore and the press (e.g. *The Straits Times*) to demonstrate that the policy of bilingualism was cultivating a trend of increasing use of English and Mandarin because of institutional support from education and mass media, and this trend further induced language and identity shift in the Chinese dialect groups in Singapore. When the group identity was disappearing, Kuo (1985) argued that a large portion of Chinese cultural traditions and values associated with the dialects would be at stake, and the awareness of ethnic distinctiveness among Chinese Singaporeans reinforced by the SMC would as well hinder the formation of a national identity that was associated with the increasing use of the inter-ethnic language, English. Kuo (1985) did not offer sufficient concrete evidence for supporting such conjectures, but he seemed to resonate with Harrison (1980), suggesting that Mandarin and English are in strong competitive positions within the framework of Singapore's nation-building.

Like Harrison (1980) and Kuo (1984), Newman (1988) also described miscellaneous promotion measures for the SMC based on reports of the press (e.g. *The Straits Times* and *New Nation*) and his observations, such as dropping dialect programs on government-operated radio and television, adopting Hanyu Pinyin for the names of children and localities, and using various promotional instruments (e.g. posters, stickers). Newman, unlike Singapore's regulated mass media (Kuo 1984), also attempted to challenge the legitimacy of the SMC by refuting the main arguments in support of the campaign as reflected in one of Lee Kuan Yew's speeches in 1978. Through analysis of the speech and

reports of the government (e.g. Goh Report), he first pointed out that the SMC was influenced by the education reforms in China in the 1950s and the decline of Chinese-medium schools in Singapore, and he then criticised the educational, cultural and practical arguments underlying the SMC, claiming that dialects could positively support the learning of Mandarin that they are cognate with, people do not need to “speak” Mandarin to understand and practise traditional values such as filial piety, habits of thrift and respect for authority, and Chinese Singaporeans do not necessarily need a lingua franca for effective communication between each other because they often possess a repertoire of multiple languages or dialects. Newman (1988) also believed that the success of the SMC was not necessarily grounded on people being persuaded by the arguments but more on the emotional impact of the arguments on them.

As the literature above reveals, the rapid and smooth development of the SMC was explored by scholars with reference to Singaporean government’s regulation over mass media. Moreover, the implementation of the campaign was tied by the scholars to identity loss, which prompted further research towards the language and identity shift of the dialect communities in Singapore.

1990-1999: Mandarin as Linguistic Capital and Language Shift

Studies of this decade have demonstrated a growing interest in the expansion of trade opportunities with the rising mainland China after its Open Door Policy in 1978 and its impact on local identity and language shift in Southeast Asia. Drawing on a wide range of press releases such as the Bangkok Post, Nanyang Weekly and The Straits Times from Southeast Asia, China Daily and Renmin Ribao from China and The Economist the West, Nyíri (1997) presented a thorough discussion of the re-orientation of policies of Southeast Asian countries towards mainland China, which he believed was occasioned by China’s re-emergence as an economic and military power and the pan-Chinese nationalism that China seemed to employ to engage overseas Chinese. Nyíri sought to reveal how economic interest associated with

the re-opening of the broad Chinese market had contributed to the consolidation of political cooperation and cultural identity between overseas Chinese communities and mainland China. This mounting cross-boarder nationalism, which echoed the initiatives of mainland China in Southeast Asia, was deemed by Nyíri a disservice to Singapore's nation-building endeavors and a phenomenon that may increase tension in Singapore's foreign relations in the Malay sea.

Besides, Chan (1999) adopted the method of iconography to analyse the poster designs of the SMC from 1979 to 1996 and discuss how texts and images were utilised to create a graphic identity under the campaign. Through examining the themes and the presentation of people and objects (symbols) in the posters, Chan discovered that Mandarin was effectively constructed as an identity marker closely connected with culture, heritage and tradition of the Chinese community as well as an instrument for understanding mainland China and gaining access to the potential economic opportunities lying ahead. Thus, this study also sheds light on how China's economic expansion in Asia has occasioned Singapore to realign its national ideology through visual communication with its people.

In line with the studies exploring identity shift in Singapore, Li, Saravanan and Ng (1997) also reported that young Singaporeans of Teochew descent had abandoned their Teochew identity and considered themselves Singaporean Chinese. Unlike common research on language shift that investigates minority community, Li, Saravanan and Ng examined, through observations and interviews, language change in families of Singapore's second largest Chinese subgroup, the Teochew Chinese community. They found that the shifting of the Teochew language to Mandarin and English was mostly attributed to the Singaporean government's promotion of the socio-economic value of the national languages and the language attitudes of the Teochew community shaped by the language policies. Likewise, Gupta and Siew (1995) adopted an ethnographic approach to study language change within a multi-generation family in Singapore. Through observation and

interviews, the researchers discovered that Cantonese as the home language was shifting to English and Mandarin, which resulted in communication barriers between grandparents and grandchildren. Informed by the grandchildren's language attitude that the "dialects" are linked to their old and undereducated grandparents and are of little use or value to them, Gupta and Siew (1995) predicted that Cantonese would continue to suffer language loss.

These studies reveal that the formation of Singapore's national identity was gradually discussed with transnational consideration of a wider Asian context, in particular, the ascent of China's economy. The scholars also diverted closer attention to the issue of rapid language shift in Singaporean families through ethnographic case studies.

2000-2009: Linguistic Capital and the Waning of Singapore's Multicultural Identity

A striking feature of studies regarding Singapore's language policy in this decade is the focus on linguistic capital and instrumentalism. The studies further reveal the intricate relationship between language and identity. For example, analysing the content of speeches and comments made by Singapore's government leaders concerning the country's language policies, mainly from *The Straits Times*, Wee (2003) pointed out that the rising instrumental value of Mandarin in Singapore's participation in international trade with China could not only weaken local Chinese identity due to its dependence on exonormative standards for Mandarin learning and use but also instigate the competition amongst the mother tongues locally, and further impair Singapore's multiracial national identity.

Teo (2005) adhered to the approach of critical linguistics and used Halliday's systematic-functional grammar to conduct critical discourse analysis of all the SMC slogans from 1979 to 2004 in terms of themes, mood structure, lexicogrammatical features and interpersonal metafunction. Through examining a variety of sources of data concerning the SMC such as government officials' speeches, excerpts published on the official SMC website,

local press releases (e.g. *The Straits Times*) and other official print materials on the SMC, Teo revealed how the discourse of these slogans had reproduced and reinforced the government's political and economic ideologies. In line with Wee (2003), Teo also believed that the emphasis of the economic value of Mandarin in relation to China's large market potential would irritate the non-Chinese ethnic minorities and make them feel disadvantaged and marginalised, which might further split the nation's multicultural fabric. Based on census reports from the Department of Statistics of Singapore, Teo also indicated the fall of dialects in the country and stressed that a lot of Singaporean culture is dialect-based, and with the loss of the language connecting the generations and transmitting traditional culture and values, young Chinese Singaporeans would become more enchanted with Western values and ideals carried by English, so a trend of more significant culture and identity loss would be underway.

Adopting Bourdieu's concepts of capital and field, Silver (2005) examined the connection of Singapore's education system with its language and economic policies. Through analyzing government policy documents, government officials' public speeches, press releases, Silver showed that the education system and policies of Singapore reinforced the role of English and Mandarin as economic capital for increasing the country's opportunities in international trade. More importantly, Silver discovered that English started to expand its traditional roles as economic and social capital (facilitator of interethnic communication) and assume new roles as cultural and symbolic capitals (i.e. identity marker) when an increasing number of Singaporean families made English their home language in order to provide their children a head start in school; the government also encouraged highly proficient bilinguals to become bicultural. As English fulfilled the new roles originally intended for the mother tongues, Silver (2005) argued that "it has begun to dominate the linguistic field and reduce the need for bilingualism in contrast to stated policies" (61) and could further influence Singapore's extant multilingualism. This seems to echo Teo's (2005) concern that English may occasion further cultural shift in the local linguistic landscape of Singapore.

Following the trend of probing the relationship between language and identity, Bokhorst-Heng and Wee (2007) explored the achievements of the SMC and the failure of the Pinyinisation of Singaporeans' names. Grounded on the notions of pragmatism and communitarianism (e.g. the spirit of community) that the government adopted in rationalising its language policies, Bokhorst-Heng and Wee analysed the naming practice of Chinese Singaporeans with reference to the government officials' public speeches, press releases (mainly *The Straits Times*) and census reports from the Department of Statistics of Singapore. They found that the implementation of the SMC was successful because the Singaporeans were convinced of the pragmatic value of Mandarin, which would give them an edge when they compete with others to take advantage of China's growing economy, yet the government's urge to change dialect names to Pinyinised names had been sternly rejected by Chinese Singaporeans because they found no pragmatic grounds for such change and it breaks a person's connection with his or her ancestry and group identity and contravenes the spirit of Confucianism.

To sum up, the literature above employed different approaches and concepts to discuss the economic value of Mandarin and English in Singapore within the context of China's booming economy. Through analysis of government discourse and news releases, the literature alerted the government to the gradual loss of Singapore's multiculturalism due to its economic pursuits via language policies but also demonstrated a rising scholarly trend that focuses on local Singaporeans' defense against ethnic identity loss.

2010-2021: The Global Turn and an Uncertain Future

As technological advances have facilitated greater global movement of people across territories, greater diversity and new challenges have appeared in societies like Singapore. Drawing on sources such as government policy documents on education, speeches delivered by government officials, news reports (e.g. *The Straits Times*), census and statistical data released by government, Chua (2010) revealed Singapore's changing population landscape

on account of its new immigrant intakes and discussed how this movement of skilled talents together with China's rising economic status had pushed the SMC and the bilingual policy to take on a diversified approach and move towards multilingualism and multiculturalism as the norm of language education in order to prepare Singaporeans for an increasingly multilingual world. However, Chua doubted the effectiveness of this new approach because she believed that it is impossible for language learners to master multiple languages at the same level.

Unlike Chua (2010), who believed the Singaporean government had adopted a prestige planning approach to promote the learning of Mandarin and English for their economic prestige, Curdt-Christiansen (2014) conducted critical discourse analysis of the textual features of media sources, TV advertisements, campaign slogans and government officials' speeches regarding the SMC and found conflicting ideologies behind the image planning policy (the SMC) and the prestige planning policy (the Chinese curriculum reforms from 2004 to 2010). In particular, Curdt-Christiansen (2014) revealed that the government continued to increase the image of Mandarin and even portray it as a global language. On the other hand, the Chinese language curriculum reforms reduced the number of productive skill (writing) learning. This, to some extent, lightened the weight of Mandarin learning and did not bring about positive change in Singaporeans' attitudes towards Mandarin. Taking the perspective of students, Curdt-Christiansen (2014) argued that the incongruence between the educational reform and the promotion of the SMC was sending confusing messages that could, in fact, discourage the learning of Mandarin. He also contrasted the situation of Mandarin with English, which, under the prestige planning policy, had gained a steadfast status in Singapore's educational system and become the medium of instruction for all school subjects except mother tongues in all schools. When all benefits are granted to those who master English, Curdt-Christiansen cast doubts on the fate of Mandarin in Singapore.

Interested in exploring language change under the impact

of the SMC, Ng (2017) adopted a mixed method approach to investigate Singaporean dialect-speakers' self-reported language use in public and private spaces, and their attitudes to Mandarin, English, other dialects of Chinese, as well as the SMC. The results of the self-administered survey of the study show that although dialects were still a major language within the family, Mandarin as well as English were overtaking them to become the dominant language in both public (e.g. shopping centres) and private domains (e.g. close friends and colleagues). Ng (2017) attempted to elucidate the language shift by revealing the respondents' general positive attitude towards the practical functions of Mandarin, its economic value in international trade with mainland China and Taiwan, and the official arguments of the SMC that Mandarin can unify Chinese dialect groups and maintain Chinese culture and traditions. Ng also indicated that the government's pro-English educational policy seemed to have caused the majority of the respondents to believe that Mandarin is less important than English. Through the follow-up semi-structured interviews with some of the respondents, Ng (2017) noted that their support for the continuation of the SMC was related to their concern of the decline of Chinese language and culture because English is becoming children's language at home and Singapore is transforming into an English-speaking country. Despite the dominance of Mandarin and English over dialects, Ng (2017) revealed a persistent desire among the survey respondents and the interviewees for preserving dialects because they are identity markers of subgroups within the Chinese community, which may also facilitate transmission of local Chinese culture and traditions and help prevent the marginalisation of the dialect-speaking elderly population in society.

In line with the research interest in shifting language and culture, Lim, Chen and Hiramoto (2021) studied the increasing contact between Chinese Singaporeans and non-local Chinese in Singapore through analysing their discourse (disputes) in two viral videos. The study focused on the changing identity and language ideologies of Chinese Singaporeans in relation to the shift of their dominant home language from Mandarin to English, pan-Chinese Confucian values and the recent influx of mainland Chinese

migrant workers. The findings revealed a distinctive Chinese Singaporean identity marked by fluent English and Confucian values, which seemed to cause division between Chinese Singaporeans and mainland Chinese (im)migrants despite their shared linguistic heritage, and increase social tensions within the nation.

The issues raised in these studies demonstrate that the development of the SMC was explored and discussed in light of the trend of globalisation. The studies seem to question the practicality of the new multilingual approach employed by the Singaporean government for reforming the SMC because English and Mandarin, with their economic benefits, continue to marginalise weaker languages in the country, and the changing Chinese Singaporean identity or Singaporean Chineseness, resulting from ongoing language shift, also seems to cause new fissures in Singapore's population landscape in the context of globalisation, and further complicates its nation-building process.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to provide a review of the scholarly development concerning Singapore's Speak Mandarin Campaign since its inception in the 1970s, and it has revealed that the shifting language policies of Singapore and the progress of the campaign have been profoundly influenced by regional and international sociopolitical climate. In general, studies in the 1970s provided the fundamental political framework regarding the SMC as scholars linked the campaign to Singapore's strategy of nation-building during this decade. In the 1980s, scholars focused on the government's utilization of mass media for promoting the SMC and started to direct attention to language and identity shift among the Chinese dialect communities in Singapore. Works in the 1990s documented cases of rapid language shift in Singaporean families occasioned by the SMC, the development of which was gradually associated with China's rising economic status and pan-Chinese nationalism. After the 21st century, the studies showed that Mandarin and English were emphasised as linguistic capital in Singapore's language policies, and scholars' attention turned to the decline of Singapore's multiculturalism and local Singaporeans'

defense against ethnic identity loss within the framework of the governments' economic pursuits. From 2010 onwards, the studies further explored the development of the SMC in relation to the trend of globalisation and turned to examine the feasibility of the new multilingual approach for the SMC as well as identity conflicts arising from continuing language shift towards English, which foregrounds new challenges to Singapore's nation-building endeavors.

Taken together, the above studies in the past fifty years suggest that scholars shifted from a pro-government's view that attempted to provide political justification for the SMC to a people's perspective that questioned the dominant political discourse by focusing on the negative impacts of the campaign such as language shift within the family and identity conflicts in public spheres. The focus of the subjects being examined also changed from official language policies to personal language attitudes and use (e.g. naming) in response to these policies. The national Singaporean identity that cuts across almost all the studies also shifted from a relatively bounded and static notion to a more flexible and fluid one in light of the pan-Chinese nationalism and the trend of globalisation. The notion of Mandarin as identity marker was likewise expanded to subsume the concept of linguistic capital. As for the sources analysed in the studies, the change from primary official documents (e.g. government policies, laws, statistic reports) to a more dominant use of secondary source such as leading local newspapers was also noted, and the scholars' research methods also changed from conventional content and discourse analysis to the use of ethnographic observation and a mixed use of quantitative survey and qualitative interview. These trends and changes have enhanced understanding of the scholarly developments concerning the SMC and have guided researchers to concentrate on Singaporean people's reaction to the campaign, treat language and identity as dynamic constructs, and employ mixed research methods and diverse sources for further investigation on the progress of the campaign.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Dr. Catherine S. Chan from the Department of History, the University of Macau, for her insightful advice on the earlier versions of this manuscript. The author would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers of *Asian Review* for their constructive comments for improving this manuscript

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