

# Language attitudes towards Singapore mandarin and putonghua : a comparison between Singaporean chinese and Chinese nationals

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**NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**



***Language Attitudes towards Singapore Mandarin and  
Putonghua: a comparison between Singaporean Chinese and  
Chinese nationals***

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A Final Year Project submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
Nanyang Technological University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Bachelor in Arts in Linguistics and Multilingual Studies

Year of Publication: 2012

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>SSM</b>	<b>Singapore Standard Mandarin</b>
<b>SCM</b>	<b>Singapore Colloquial Mandarin</b>
<b>PTH</b>	<b>Putonghua</b>

## **Abstract**

With the stabilisation of the Chinese diaspora all over the world and the rapid spread of Mandarin with the rise of China, many new varieties of Mandarin have emerged outside of China, but such “new Chinesees” have hardly been researched upon in terms of language attitudes. With the increasing ties between Singapore and China, it seems useful and important to understand how people of these two countries view each other by examining the dynamics of the interactions between them. Thus, this study aims to uncover the attitudes that Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals have towards each other’s Mandarin variety in relation to their own Mandarin variety. To do so, 64 participants were recruited to take part in a matched-guise and verbal guise test to evaluate their language attitudes towards two varieties of Singapore Mandarin, Singapore Standard Mandarin (SSM) and Singapore Colloquial Mandarin (SCM), as well as Putonghua (PTH), on a 7-point Likert scale with respect to status and solidarity traits. This was followed by several optional open-ended questions which were aimed at uncovering possible reasons for their attitudes. Findings from this study revealed that both Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals view PTH as highest in status among the three varieties. However, their attitudes towards SSM and SCM differ, with Singaporean Chinese rating SSM higher than SCM on all traits and Chinese nationals rating SCM higher than SSM on all traits. Furthermore, interestingly, all three varieties of Mandarin, even the standard ones, are rated higher in terms of solidarity than status, suggesting that Mandarin is now seen as a language of solidarity.

# 1 Introduction: Globalisation of the Chinese language

According to Ethnologue (16<sup>th</sup> edition, 2009), the Chinese language is currently the most widely spoken language in the world, with approximately 1.4 to 1.6 billion native speakers all over the world. This is not only due to the large population size of China, but also due to the spread of the Chinese diaspora in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in many regions in the world having a significant population of Chinese, especially in Southeast Asia.

Also, in recent years, with increasing globalisation and the rise of China, a “Mandarin fever” has started to spread across the globe and is gaining pace rapidly. Currently, there are more than 680 Confucius Institutes set up in over 90 countries to promote the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language (Gao, 2011).

With the globalisation of the Chinese language, Tan (2006) posits that its contact with other languages has caused and is likely to cause further variation in the Chinese language, resulting in the development of “New Chineses” and the formation of a “polysystem of World Chineses” (Fig. 1).

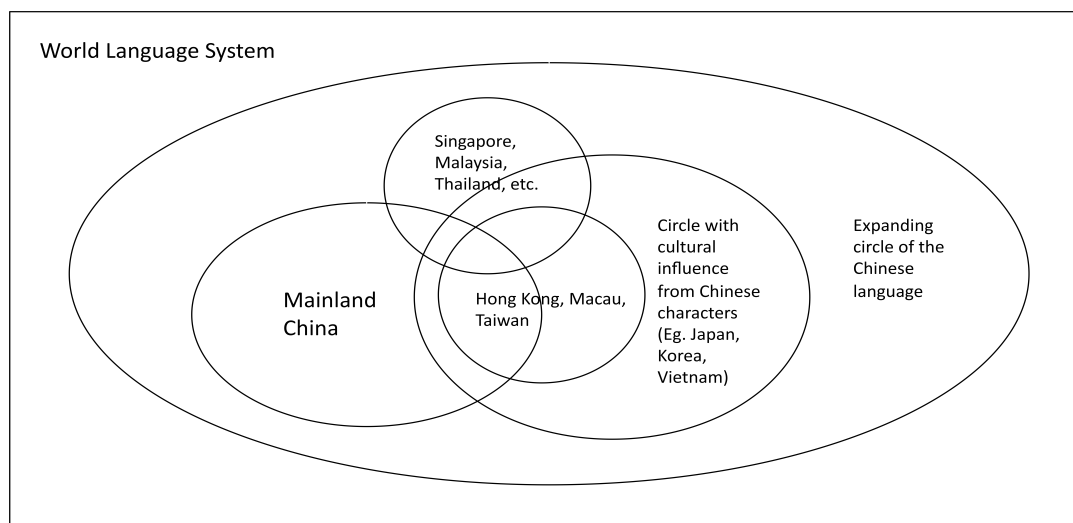


Fig.1 The Polysystem of World Chineses (adapted from Tan, 2006)

Such a system attempts to classify countries based on the nature and extent of influence the Chinese language has in various countries in the world, and shows how such influences overlap, resulting in new Chinese language varieties such as Singapore Mandarin, Taiwanese Mandarin, and also scripts influenced by Chinese characters such as *Kanji* in Japanese and *Hanja* in Korean. The expanding circle, which consists of learners of Chinese as a foreign language, forms a huge component of the Chinese language system now, and is believed to expand further rapidly in the next few decades as the “Mandarin fever” continues to sweep across the world.

This paper looks into the language situation in Singapore, a country with a large Chinese population, and also one of the countries with the most number of native Chinese language speakers in the world outside of China.

## **2 The Chinese Community in Singapore**

Singapore is a small multiracial country where the majority of the population is Chinese, due to the large influx of Chinese immigrants to Singapore since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As of June 2012, Singapore has a total population size of 5.31 million, with 3.82 million Singaporean Citizens/Permanent Residents (resident population) and 1.49 million foreigners (non-resident population) (Department of Statistics, 2012). Out of the resident population, approximately 74.1% (2.83 million) are ethnic Chinese. While there have been no official statistics published on the population census of the non-resident population, unofficial accounts have given estimations of the number of Chinese nationals in Singapore. One such source is *China UnionPay*, the national bankcard association in China, which has claimed that there are “nearly one million Chinese nationals living and working/studying in Singapore” as of 2011 (*Singapore now home to 1 million PRCs*, 28 July 2011). This is a significant number, indicating that about one out of five people in Singapore now is a Chinese national.

Such a situation resulted mainly due to the Singapore government’s strategy of attracting foreign talents into Singapore and developing Singapore into an international hub for various fields (eg. education), in order to ensure the economic success of Singapore despite its aging population. However, certain regulations are in place to ensure that these foreigners come from sources that “reflect the ethnic origin and composition of the population” in order to avoid

potential social problems (Chia, 2011, p.8). Following such regulations, Chinese immigrants became one of the preferred groups of immigrants and thus, the Singapore government has been taking certain actions such as giving out education scholarships to Chinese nationals and relaxing immigration/employment laws for Chinese nationals in order to attract them to Singapore.

At the same time, Chinese nationals are increasingly looking for overseas opportunities due to strong competition in their home country. With a relatively close geographical proximity to China and a familiar Chinese culture, Singapore has become a natural choice for many of these outward-looking Chinese nationals.

### **3 A Comparison between Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua**

#### ***3.1 Mandarin or “Huayu” in Singapore***

##### **3.1.1 Background**

Mandarin was first introduced to Singapore by the immigrants from China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, according to the 1957 Census, only approximately 1% of the Chinese population in Singapore claimed Mandarin to be their mother tongue while the rest spoke various local dialects like Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka, and Hainanese. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, communist activists from China saw creating a common language among the heterogenous Chinese community in Singapore as essential to achieving their political aim of spreading communism. Thus, they worked with dialect-based clan associations to “propagate a sense of Chineseness” through the promotion of Mandarin as a unifying language (Purushotam, 1998, p.43). This led to the adoption of Mandarin as the medium of instruction in most Chinese schools in Singapore by mid-1900s.

Singapore gained independence in 1965 and Mandarin was declared as one of the four official languages of Singapore to fulfill the role of cultural transmission and unification for the Chinese community in Singapore. However the use of Chinese dialects still dominated among the Chinese community in Singapore. In view of this, the “Speak Mandarin Campaign” was launched in 1979 to encourage the use of Mandarin in place of dialects among Singaporean

Chinese, and has continued as an annual campaign till today. With the successful implementation of the campaign, the use of Chinese dialects has decreased drastically over the past few decades while the use of Mandarin increased significantly (Table 1).

Table 1. Predominant household language of Singaporean Chinese

Language	1980 (%)	1990 (%)	2000 (%)	2010 (%)
English	10.2	19.3	23.9	32.6
Mandarin	13.1	30.1	45.1	47.7
Chinese dialects	76.2	50.3	30.7	19.2
Others	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4

*Source:* Department of Statistics, Singapore

According to census data as presented in Table 1, there is indeed a language shift away from Chinese dialects and towards Mandarin for the Singaporean Chinese population, with 47.7% of Singaporean Chinese using Mandarin as the predominant household language as compared to only 19.2% using Chinese dialects as of 2010 (Department of Statistics, Singapore).

### 3.1.2 Emergence of Singapore Mandarin as a unique language variety

Over time, the variety of Mandarin spoken in Singapore started to differ increasingly from the Mandarin spoken in China due to the unique multiracial and multilingual environment in Singapore. Now, Singapore Mandarin is widely recognised as a unique and important variety of Mandarin (Chen, 1986; Lu, Zhang, Qian, 2002; Wang, 2002). However, there are still debates going on as to the status of Singapore Mandarin. According to Wang (2002, p. 27) Singapore Mandarin is a “regional variety of Putonghua nurtured in Singapore’s soil” and should be treated as being equal in status to other Mandarin varieties like Mainland China’s Putonghua, instead of being seen as a non-standard variety. Such a stand is also echoed by Shang and Zhao (2012). However, several like Loo (1984) argues otherwise and anecdotal accounts given by Chinese nationals also often point to Singapore Mandarin being regarded by them as a non-standard variety of Chinese that is full of grammatical errors.

According to Tan (1999) and Goh (2010), there are four varieties of Mandarin being spoken in Singapore, namely Beijing Putonghua, Standard Mandarin, Colloquial Mandarin, and ‘Rojak’ Mandarin. However, arguing on the basis that Beijing Putonghua is never spoken among Singaporean Chinese and Colloquial Mandarin and ‘Rojak’ Mandarin are hard to be distinguished, Shang and Zhao (2012) claims that a more feasible classification of Singapore Mandarin would be the identification of just two varieties, Standard Singapore Mandarin and Folk Singapore Mandarin. Thus, following this classification, the current study looks into Singapore Mandarin in terms of two varieties – Singapore Standard Mandarin (SSM) and Singapore Colloquial Mandarin (SCM).

SSM is largely similar to Putonghua, and is the prestige Mandarin variety or the ‘high variety’ (Fishman, 1967) locally, often used in formal contexts such as schools and the mass media. On the other hand, SCM is the ‘low variety’ and is the variety often used in informal contexts and daily communication. SCM is typically characterised by frequent code-mixing with English, Malay, and other Southern Chinese dialects like Hokkien. The use of pragmatic discourse particles like *la*, *leh lor*, *meh*, derived from Southern Chinese dialects, is also common in SCM (Shang and Zhao, 2012). Conversely, SSM does not involve any code-mixing or use of such pragmatic particles, and has only some minor pronunciation, lexical and grammatical differences from Putonghua. These linguistic differences will be discussed further in section 3.3.

### 3.1.3 Mandarin in Singapore today

Mandarin in Singapore today is highly promoted not only as a language of cultural transmission and unification for the diverse Chinese community, but increasingly also for its practical value in terms of economic benefits in view of China’s emerging economy. A good mastery of the Chinese language is encouraged for tapping into the opportunities of working or doing business in China (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999; Wee, 2003).

According to the Chinese government, Singapore was China’s third largest foreign investor in 2008 with foreign direct investment totaling up to S\$6.5 billion, a 40 percent rise from 2007. Also, trade between the countries has risen 17-fold since 1991 to S\$91.4 billion in 2008. (‘Eyeing China, Singapore sees Mandarin as its future’, *Reuters*, 2009). Such statistics

point to bright economic prospects which make learning Mandarin all the more important for Singaporeans.

However, in recent years, negative attitudes towards Mandarin have started to surface among Singaporeans, the main reason cited being the difficulty associated with learning the language ('Was Chinese wrongly taught for 30 years?', *The Straits Times*, 27 November 2009). With such aims in mind, various initiatives have been carried out to inculcate a positive attitude towards Mandarin among Singaporean Chinese, especially the youth, such as the revamping of Chinese language teaching in schools, and the easing of Mother Tongue requirements for university admission to reduce existing resentment towards Mandarin (Ong, 2005).

### **3.2 *Putonghua in Mainland China***

With Beijing being the political capital of China, the Beijing dialect was selected by the Chinese government as the national standard dialect due to its prestige, as well as its similarity to majority of the topolects in China, allowing it to serve well as a lingua franca (Saillard, 2004). It was named 'Putonghua', which literally means 'common speech', and has been widely promoted nationwide since the 20<sup>th</sup> century through language policies and campaigns.

### **3.3 *Linguistic differences between Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua***

Generally, Singapore Mandarin is linguistically similar to Putonghua in Mainland China. However, as has been well documented in the literature, there are still various differences between them in terms of pronunciation, lexicon, and grammatical structure (Chen, 1983, 1986, 2003; Lock, 1986; Ng, 1997; Li and Chow, 2002; Lu *et al.*, 2002; Wang, 2002; Xu and Wang, 2007; Goh, 2010; Shang and Zhao, 2012).

#### **3.3.1 *Pronunciation***

Singapore Mandarin generally follows the pronunciation of Putonghua in Mainland China, though certain phonetic differences do exist to distinguish the two varieties. For example, the absence of retroflexes [zh], [sh] and [ch] in Singapore Mandarin (Chen, 1986; Ng, 1985), the

non-differentiation of nasal sounds [n] and [ŋ], and a “fifth” tone in Singapore Mandarin as compared to just four tones in Putonghua (Chen, 1983).

### 3.3.2 Lexical variation

The lexicon used in Singapore Mandarin differs with that of Putonghua to a considerable extent, mainly due to the influence of southern Chinese dialects such as Hokkien and Cantonese (Zhao, Liu and Goh, 2007). For example, the term used to address one’s grandmother in Singapore Mandarin is a term derived from Hokkien – 阿嬷 *a<sup>1</sup>ma<sup>4</sup>* ‘grandmother’ – for both maternal and paternal grandmothers, while in Putonghua, 姥 *lao<sup>1</sup>* / 外祖母 *wai<sup>4</sup>zu<sup>2</sup>mu<sup>3</sup>* ‘maternal grandmother’ and 奶奶 *nai<sup>3</sup>nai<sup>1</sup>* / 祖母 *zu<sup>3</sup>mu<sup>3</sup>* ‘paternal grandmother’ are used respectively. Also, as Mandarin was promoted in Singapore at a time when Putonghua was not yet standardised, textbooks in local schools taught the variety of Chinese language from the May 4<sup>th</sup> movement in 1919, resulting in Singapore Mandarin using certain words in ways that are no longer used in China now. Also, according to Zhao *et al.* (2007), the lexicon in Singapore Mandarin is heavily influenced by English, Malay, and Tamil, where many words are “transliterated and translated into Chinese using the closest sounds” (eg. 德士 *de<sup>2</sup>shi<sup>4</sup>* for ‘taxi’, 巴士 *ba<sup>1</sup>shi<sup>4</sup>* for ‘bus’).

### 3.3.3 Grammatical variation

According to Shang and Zhao (2012), Singapore Mandarin has a less rigid word order than Putonghua. Also, the presence of pragmatic discourse particles (eg. *la, leh, lor, meh*) in Singapore Mandarin is a point of distinction between Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua. There are also certain grammatical constructions that are used much more commonly in Singapore Mandarin than Putonghua. Shang and Zhao (2012) highlights that the use of the word 过 *guo<sup>4</sup>* ‘over’ in the comparison construct in Singapore Mandarin is one such example:

Singapore Mandarin:

他 高 过 我。  
*ta<sup>1</sup> gao<sup>1</sup> guo<sup>4</sup> wo<sup>3</sup>.*  
 he tall over me

‘He is taller than me.’

Putonghua:

他 比 我 高。  
*ta<sup>1</sup> bi<sup>3</sup> wo<sup>3</sup> gao<sup>1</sup>.*  
he compare me tall

‘He is taller than me.’

## 4 Introduction to Language Attitude Studies

### 4.1 *Definition of language attitudes and factors influencing it*

Generally, language attitudes are believed to arise when “one social group comes in contact with a second social group possessing a different language [and] each group then develops ideas about the other groups’s languages vis-à-vis its own” (Ting, 2003, p.195).

It has been found that language attitudes could be affected by a whole range of factors such as the strength of the accent and fluency of speech (Nesdale and Rooney, 1990; Ryan Carranza, and Moffie, 1977, White and Li, 1991). Also, message content has been found to be crucial to understanding how speakers with different accents are appraised (Giles, Coupland, Henwood, Harriman, and Coupland, 1992; Giles and Johnson, 1986; Johnson and Buttny, 1982).

Furthermore, in a model of language attitudes developed by Cargile, Giles, Ryan and Bradac (1994), several processes and variables were identified to be influential in shaping a hearer’s attitudes. Some of these include cultural factors such as ethnolinguistic vitality and processes of language standardization, sensitivity to stereotypes, etc.

### 4.2 *Methods used in studying language attitudes*

Methods used in studying language attitudes are often classified into direct or indirect methods. Direct methods include data collection through questionnaires and interviews by asking participants directly about their opinions on the languages in question. Such direct methods of studying language attitudes have been used all over the world (eg. Garrett, Williams, and Evans,

2005; Lai *et al.*, 2001, 2005), including Singapore (eg. Poedjosoedarmo, 2002; Xu, Chew, and Chen, 1998).

On the other hand, indirect methods uncover language attitudes through the measurement of subjective reactions towards different language varieties and take the form of matched-guise or verbal guise tests. In a matched-guise test, participants listen to pre-recorded audio clips of one speaker speaking in two or more different accents/language varieties before rating the speaker in each recording on various semantic scales, unaware that all recordings were actually done by the same speaker. Such a test ensures that speaker-related variables that come with involving different speakers are eliminated, and that any differences in ratings given would be mainly due to the language variety used. However, in instances where a large or diverse range of accents/language varieties is involved, a verbal guise test involving different speakers is usually used due to the difficulty of finding people who could render all the different accents/varieties convincingly.

Some examples of studies that used indirect methods of studying language attitudes is that of Wilson and Bayard (1992), which compared New Zealand listeners' evaluations of New Zealand-, Canadian-, Australian-, and British-accented English, as well as Paltridge and Giles (1984), which studied the perceptions towards speakers of several different French-accented varieties. Such studies have revealed a generally consistent pattern of results where most accents can be classified by the degree to which they are considered "standard" or "non-standard" within a particular community, where the "standard" variety is the one associated with status and power, while the "non-standard" variety is the one associated more with solidarity and overall attractiveness (Fishman, 1971).

Also, in the Singapore context, Cavallaro and Ng (2009) used the matched-guise technique to examine Singaporeans' and also foreigners' language attitudes towards Singapore Standard English (SSE) and Singapore Colloquial English (SCE). Findings from the study revealed that both Singaporeans and foreigners view SSE more favourably than SCE in terms of both status and solidarity traits, and that generally, foreigners view both varieties more favourably than Singaporeans themselves.

### **4.3 Significance of studying language attitudes**

Generally, research on language attitudes and perceptions is important in allowing us to gain insights into language maintenance and change, language death and revival, cultural continuity, and issues of identity (Coupland, Williams, and Garrett, 1999). For example, in the Singapore context, Gupta and Siew (1995) found language attitudes of the parents to play a significant role in language transmission to their children, which ultimately impacts language maintenance and shift in Singapore. Language attitudes are also important in determining the success of language policies (Baker, 1992). Thus, because people react to a *perceived* and not the real environment (Gould, 1977), in areas with language contact or possible competition, research on language attitudes might help us predict what the linguistic and cultural scene may look like in the future.

## **5 Language attitude studies on Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua**

While there have been many studies focused on studying language attitudes towards Singapore English, there are few studies examining Singapore Mandarin.

In a study by Xu *et al.* (1998) on English-Mandarin bilingual Singaporean Chinese, it was found that English and Mandarin are ‘polarised in the dimension of instrumentality and affectivity’ (p. 144). Mandarin was rated high in solidarity but low in prestige and power, while English was rated high in prestige and power but low in solidarity.

One study by Ong (2005) looked into the language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese youth, specifically to see if local youths view Mandarin as a ‘tie’ or ‘tool’ language, and sought to examine the reasons behind such attitudes using questionnaires and interviews. From the study, it was found that Singaporean Chinese youth generally have a positive attitude towards Mandarin and use it in a wide range of domains (eg. home, school). Also, it was found that contrary to popular belief, Mandarin did not seem to be declining in importance. Mandarin was also found to be both a tool and a tie to the participants, instead of the two functions being mutually exclusive. The researcher argues that such results seem to suggest that Mandarin might take on a larger socio-cultural role than economic role in the future, given that the Chinese

culture was found to be held in high regard. Also, she suggests that Mandarin could become a class marker, labelling a person as having better education and a more refined character. It was also proposed that the distinction between Mandarin's socio-cultural function and economic function is disappearing, and points to the notion that Mandarin could be used for a variety of purposes.

Language attitude studies on Putonghua mainly focused on comparing Putonghua with different regional Chinese dialects (eg. Zhang, 2005; Wang and Ladegard, 2008), or with other languages/language varieties used in Chinese territories outside Mainland China (i.e. Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau) such as English and Cantonese (eg. Ding, 1998; Giles, 1998; Hylaid, 1997; Lai, 2001, 2005; Lu and Au-yeung, 2000; Lung, 1997; Pierson, 1994). However, these studies will not be discussed in detail in this paper as the focus of this paper is on language attitudes towards Putonghua in relation to varieties of Mandarin outside Greater China, in particular, Singapore Mandarin. To date, limited studies have been carried out to investigate Chinese nationals' language attitudes towards Putonghua in relation to varieties of Mandarin outside Greater China, as well as the language attitudes of Chinese populations outside Greater China towards Putonghua.

One study by Yap (2009) compared Singaporean Chinese's and Chinese nationals' attitudes towards Singapore Standard Mandarin and Putonghua and found that Singaporean Chinese did not favour either variety in terms of status, but viewed Singapore Mandarin as higher in solidarity as compared to Putonghua. On the other hand, Chinese nationals were reported to have an obvious preference for Putonghua over Singapore Mandarin in terms of both status and solidarity traits, though it must be noted that they did not condemn Singapore Mandarin as well, giving it relatively neutral ratings on all traits.

## **6 Research questions and Hypotheses**

This study seeks to build on Yap's (2009) study to examine the language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua by improving on the limitations of Yap's study. Firstly, Yap (2009) looked into Singapore Mandarin solely based on the standard variety, and did not take into account internal linguistic variation

within Singapore Mandarin. As mentioned earlier in the paper, two main varieties of Singapore Mandarin can be distinguished, namely Singapore Standard Mandarin (SSM) and Singapore Colloquial Mandarin (SCM). To date, many studies have been carried out on Singapore Colloquial English (also known as ‘Singlish’) (eg. Cavallaro and Ng, 2009) but no studies have been carried out on its Mandarin counterpart, Singapore Colloquial Mandarin (also known as ‘Singdarin’), be it Singaporeans’ or foreigners’ attitudes towards it. Thus, the current study seeks to look into Singaporean Chinese’s and Chinese nationals’ attitudes towards both varieties of Singapore Mandarin and compare these attitudes to those towards Putonghua.

Also, in Yap’s paper, status and solidarity traits were not well-defined nor backed up by statistical validation. Furthermore, the study used news recordings in the mass media as test stimuli, in which speech is scripted and unnatural. Together with the risk of news content being of a controversial nature, non-linguistic variables might be introduced and those could eventually affect hearers’ perceptions. Also, Yap’s paper only provided generalised findings on the possible links between a few basic social-economic factors (eg. educational level, level of income) to their language attitudes and did not look into the notion of stereotypes and socio-political situation in affecting language attitudes. Thus, in view of these research gaps, this study examines language attitudes using a more reliable methodology (presented in detail in Chapter 7) with a focus on the stereotypes both groups have of each other and socio-political factors such as language policies and immigration/migration issues. Such a study will give a deeper and more nuanced understanding of their attitudes towards the three varieties of Mandarin Chinese and allow us to better understand the dynamics of the interactions between Singaporeans and Chinese nationals.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals towards both the standard and colloquial varieties of Singapore Mandarin, namely SSM and SCM respectively, as well as towards Putonghua. Also, the secondary aim of this study is to uncover any possible influence socio-political factors and the stereotypes each groups have of each other on Singaporean Chinese’s and Chinese nationals’ attitudes towards the different language varieties.

With such aims in mind, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do Singaporean Chinese view the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin in relation to each other and to Putonghua?
- 2) How do Chinese nationals view the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin in relation to each other and to Putonghua?
- 3) Are there any differences between how Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals view the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua?

**Research Question 1: How do Singaporean Chinese view the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin in relation to each other and to Putonghua?**

Given trends indicated by many previous studies which show the standard variety being viewed as high in status but low in solidarity, and the colloquial variety being viewed as low in status but high in solidarity, it is hypothesised that SSM would be viewed more positively in terms of status than solidarity, and that SCM would be viewed more positively in terms of solidarity than status.

It is also hypothesised that Singaporeans would have negative attitudes towards the Mandarin variety that Chinese nationals speak, i.e. Putonghua, particularly in terms of solidarity. This is based on previous studies which have found speech evaluations to be sensitive to stereotypes (Cargile, *et. al*, 1994; Stewart, Ryan, and Giles, 1985) and anecdotal evidence in informal reports and online forums that points to Singaporeans' negative stereotypes of Chinese nationals.

Chinese nationals are often stereotyped by Singaporeans as being loud and crude, unhygienic, and lack civic and moral consciousness. Many also remark that Chinese nationals' behavioural habits from China could "erode social graciousness". Opinions about Chinese nationals' apparent "competitive nature," "loud and brash manner of speech," and "lack of courtesy" also surfaced frequently ("Chinese nationals on campus should make effort to

integrate, local students say', *The NUSpaper*, March 2012). According to Dr Leong Chan Hoong from the NUS Institute of Policy Studies, the large influx of Chinese nationals is the main cause of many anxieties (among Singaporeans) and such resentment against Chinese immigrants has gone "beyond economics" and is now a "contestation of space and identity". Accounts from Chinese nationals about distrust of Singaporeans towards themselves have also been recorded ('The Young Chinese Next Door', *The Straits Times*, 17 Dec 2011).

On the other hand, it is predicted that Singaporeans would rate Putonghua high in status traits. This is because Chinese nationals are often stereotyped positively in the status arena as high achievers and seen as being hardworking, proactive, and smart. These positive status stereotypes, together with the Singapore government's constant promotion of China as a country full of economic opportunities and Putonghua being widely recognised as the standard and native variety of Mandarin, is expected to positively influence Singaporeans' perceptions of Putonghua in terms of status.

→ *Hypothesis 1: In terms of status, Singaporean Chinese would view SSM most positively, followed by Putonghua and lastly, SCM. In terms of solidarity, they would view SCM most positively, followed by SSM and lastly, Putonghua,*

**Research Question 2: How do Chinese nationals view the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin in relation to each other and to Putonghua?**

It is hypothesised that Singapore Mandarin would be viewed negatively by Chinese nationals as 'bad' or 'broken' Mandarin and be rated low in status. While there have been limited studies on language attitudes towards non-native varieties of Mandarin Chinese, many studies carried out on non-native varieties of English have deemed such varieties as 'signals of language decay, language corruption, or language death' (Kachru, 1986), and thus, a similar case is expected for Mandarin too. Also, it is hypothesised that SCM would be viewed as lower in status to SSM as previous studies have shown that the more a language variety deviates from the standard, the lower its status. However, SCM is predicted to be rated higher than SSM in terms of solidarity as it is the variety of informal daily communication.

On the other hand, it is hypothesised that they would rate their own variety of Mandarin highest in status and solidarity, as it is widely regarded as the native Mandarin variety and is the variety they grew up with.

→ *Hypothesis 2: In terms of status, Chinese nationals would view Putonghua most positively, followed by SSM and lastly, SCM. In terms of solidarity, they would view Putonghua most positively, followed by SCM and lastly, SSM.*

### **Research Question 3: Are there any differences between how Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals view the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua?**

When the two groups are compared, it is hypothesised that Chinese nationals would view Singapore Mandarin more negatively than Singaporeans themselves. This is likely given that Singapore Mandarin is the “non-native” variety and Putonghua is the native variety here. Also, with Singaporeans’ negative stereotypes of Chinese nationals, it is predicted that Chinese nationals would view Putonghua more positively than Singaporeans.

→ *Hypothesis 3: Generally, Singapore Mandarin would be viewed more positively by Singaporeans than Chinese nationals, while Putonghua would be viewed more positively by Chinese nationals than Singaporeans.*

## **7 Methodology**

This study used the matched-guise technique to investigate differences in attitudes towards the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin, Singapore Standard Mandarin (SSM) and Singapore Colloquial Mandarin (SCM). On the other hand, the verbal-guise technique was used to investigate differences in attitudes towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua. Although this would introduce speaker-related factors which might influence the results, given the difficulty in finding people who can speak both Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua convincingly, the verbal guise technique was deemed to be more suitable.

## 7.1 Participants

A total of 64 participants, 34 Singaporean Chinese and 30 Chinese nationals from various provinces, took part in the study (Table 2). All participants are in the age range of 18 to 26, and are currently studying in a local university in Singapore.

Table 2. Summary of Participants

Current students in local universities (Age 18-26)			
Singaporean Chinese		Chinese nationals	
Males	Females	Males	Females
17	17	15	15
Total Participants:			64

## 7.2 Test Instruments

### 7.2.1 Stimulus speech samples

A total of six speakers were recruited for this study and their profiles are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Speakers' profiles

	Gender	Nationality	Province	Age	Occupation	Educational Background
Speaker 1	F	Singaporean	-	22	Student	Current university undergraduate
Speaker 2	M	Singaporean	-	24		
Speaker 3	F	Chinese	Sichuan	21		
Speaker 4	M	Chinese	Shanghai	22		
Speaker 5	F	Singaporean	-	22		
Speaker 6	M	Singaporean	-	25		

The perceived nationality and ethnicity of the stimulus speaker has been found to influence the listeners' attitudes (Cargile *et al.*, 1994; Gallois and Callan, 1989). Therefore,

native speakers of both Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua were chosen. Also, while it is true that Putonghua from different provinces of China sounds different and can elicit different attitudes (Li, 2004), this study will not control for the province where the Chinese speakers come from as it is not the purpose of this study to examine the attitudes towards Putonghua from a particular province, but attitudes towards Putonghua from Mainland China in general, in relation to Singapore Mandarin. Thus, for this study, what is important is that the Putonghua speakers speak Mandarin in a way that can allow them to be easily identified as a Chinese from Mainland China and not other countries or Chinese territories.

Studies have also found that perceived age (Gallois, Callan, and Johnstone, 1984) and education level can influence the listeners' evaluations, and thus, the speakers were chosen from people in the same age range (18-26) and with the same education level (university undergraduate) as the participants so as to ensure minimal influence.

To eliminate any effects of topic on the participants' evaluations, a neutral topic was chosen. The topic chosen for this study is "A time you got lost" and the speakers were asked to simply talk about the topic without using a script so that the recordings would sound more spontaneous and natural. While the specific content of each recording differed, the content was restricted to fairly common experiences and contains no extreme or unusual content that might influence participants' attitudes.

Also, as much as possible, the speech samples were kept equal in tone, so that tone would not be an influencing factor in the study. Thus, with care taken to ensure that all other variables were kept relatively constant, the main thing that the recordings differed in is the language variety it is made in. For example, the SSM recordings were essentially Mandarin spoken with a uniquely Singaporean accent, while the SCM recordings consist of frequent code-switching to English, Malay, and other Chinese dialects (eg. use of words like *but*, *then*, *holiday*, *pekcek*), and the Putonghua recordings contains Mandarin speech with a uniquely China accent and lexicon specific to Putonghua (eg. 公交车 *gong<sup>1</sup>jiao<sup>1</sup>che<sup>1</sup>* 'public bus').

Speakers 1 and 2 did eight recordings each, four in SSM and four in SCM, while speakers 3 and 4 did four recordings each in Putonghua.

The Singapore Mandarin recordings were then played to ten Singaporeans who were asked to rate them using a 7-point Likert scale according to:

- How ‘Singaporean’ they sounded;
- How representative of ‘Singdarin’ the SCM recordings were;
- How natural and spontaneous they sounded.

The Putonghua recordings were also played to five Chinese nationals and rated on a 7-point Likert scale according to:

- How ‘Chinese’ they sounded;
- How representative of ‘Putonghua’ the recordings were;
- How natural and spontaneous they sounded.

The top-ranked SSM and SCM recordings for each Singaporean speaker and top-ranked Putonghua recordings for each Chinese speaker were used for the study. Two neutral recordings, provided by Speakers 5 and 6, were also included in the study to distract participants from identifying the purpose of the study, thus preventing any biased results. In total, eight recordings were used in the study, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of recordings

	Female 1	Female 2	Female 3	Male 1	Male 2	Male 3
Neutral / Distracter				Speaker H		
Singapore Standard Mandarin (SSM)		Speaker A			Speaker F	
Singapore Colloquial Mandarin (SCM)		Speaker D			Speaker B	
Putonghua			Speaker G			Speaker C

The following are excerpts from the first ten to fifteen seconds of the recordings (See Appendix A for full transcript).

Excerpt 1 – SSM

我记得今年年头我到香港去一趟，然后在那里有了迷失方向的经历。我和朋友到了一个叫喇嘛岛的岛屿上。听说那座岛屿有个菩萨的雕像，所以我们想去那里观赏那个雕像。

Excerpt 2 – SCM

我还记得我去Australia holiday 的时候，有一次要回hotel的时候迷路。Then 我就问全部那些passer-by, 他们全部都跟我指不同的direction, 问到我pekcek.

Excerpt 3 – PTH

我的那次经历是我的一次面试，然后那次应该是下午一点钟到的。我之前我的手机没有那个手机网络，没有办法看到具体怎么去那个地方，所以我过去的时候是坐了地铁。

### 7.2.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire administered in this study (refer to Appendix B) consists of three sections, which will be described below.

**- Section A: Demographic Details**

Participants had to first fill in their demographic details.

**- Section B:**

Afterwhich, they were asked to listen to eight audio recordings and rate the speakers in the recordings on a 7-point Likert scale in terms of the following ten traits: ‘Friendly,’ ‘Kind’, ‘Honest’, ‘Helpful’, ‘Likeable’, ‘Confident’, ‘Hardworking’, ‘Reliable’, ‘Intelligent’, and ‘Ambitious’.

### **- Section C: Open-ended questions [Optional]**

This section consists of 6 – 7 open-ended questions, and is optional. The purpose of this section is to uncover possible reasons behind the participants' language attitudes towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua. This section consists of two separate sets of questions for Singaporean and Chinese participants. The participants were asked for their perceptions on Singapore and China, the people from both countries, their past experience learning Mandarin, as well as questions pertaining to the intelligibility of the recordings and their intention to work or live in Singapore/China, in order to allow possible links to be drawn.

### **7.3 Data collection methods**

Participants were invited to participate in the study through email or social networking site, Facebook. They were asked to download and complete the questionnaire, which is in the form of a Microsoft Word document.

All responses were recorded in the soft copy of the Word document. Participants then returned their completed questionnaires anonymously and directly to the researcher via the researcher's dedicated GoFileDrop link:  
<https://gofiledrop.appspot.com/?email=hovenyee90%40gmail.com>.

(\*GoFileDrop is a function in *Google Docs* which allows anyone with the specific link to upload and send files anonymously to a specific email.)

### **7.4 Data Analysis**

First and foremost, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using Varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalisation was carried out to assess how and to what extent the ten traits tested correspond with SCM, SSM, and PTH. Such an analysis is important as the traits might mean differently to people from different backgrounds and must not be assumed to correlate homogeneously across all populations. The results from the first iteration of the PCA are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Varimax rotation of the two factors – Iteration 1

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>		
	Component	
	1	2
Friendly	.841	.226
Kind	.800	.201
Honest	.806	.056
Likeable	.784	.349
Reliable	.762	.240
Helpful	.296	.797
Confident	.226	.629
Ambitious	-.081	.835
Hardworking	<b>.479*</b>	<b>.676*</b>
Intelligent	.283	.698
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.		

On the first iteration, the variable ‘Hardworking’ was found to have a complex structure (i.e. factor loadings for both components were greater than 0.4). Thus, the variable ‘Hardworking’ was removed and the principal component analysis was repeated again. On the second iteration, no complex variables were found, and all other requirements for a successful PCA were met, with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy for each individual variable as well as the set of variables ( $=0.820$ ) being greater than 0.5, and the probability associated with the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity ( $p=0.000$ ) being lesser than the level of significance of 0.001. PCA is then completed. From the analysis, two components with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted. These two components explain 66.4% of the total variance and factor loadings of the variables on the two components are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Varimax rotation of the two factors – Iteration 2

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>		
	Component	
	1 (SOLIDARITY)	2 (STATUS)
Friendly	<b>.848</b>	.212
Kind	<b>.808</b>	.194
Honest	<b>.803</b>	.065
Likeable	<b>.797</b>	.307
Reliable	<b>.764</b>	.215
Helpful	.321	<b>.778</b>
Confident	.241	<b>.701</b>
Ambitious	-.061	<b>.867</b>
Intelligent	.307	<b>.634</b>
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.		

From Table 6, it can be seen that both components show a number of strong loadings. The variables ‘Friendly’, ‘Kind’, ‘Honest’, ‘Likeable’ and ‘Reliable’ are clearly marked in Component 1, while ‘Helpful’, ‘Confident’, ‘Ambitious’, ‘Intelligent’ are marked in Component 2. As the variables in Component 1 are associated with solidarity, Component 1 is labelled meaningfully as ‘Solidarity’. On the other hand, variables in Component 2 imply power and prestige and thus, Component 2 is labelled meaningfully as ‘Status’.

From the results, it is interesting to see that while ‘Likeable’ is a trait that is rather subjective, for the participants in this study, it is a trait that is strongly correlated with solidarity. Also, while ‘Helpful’ is commonly seen as a solidarity trait (Edwards, 1999), it is interesting to note that participants in this study view it in strong relation to well-established status traits such as ‘Ambitious’ and ‘Intelligent’. One possible reason could be that participants are evaluating how helpful the speakers will be to them, and not how helpful the speakers seem. This could be because, to the participants, before someone can be seen as a helpful person, they first need to be seen as having the ability to help (corresponds to status), before any evaluation will be made about their willingness to help (corresponds to solidarity). This is a likely explanation given that all the participants of this study are current students of highly competitive top local universities,

where school forms a large component of their lives and help requested for or received is often of an academic or work-related nature (eg. help with school work or professional connections).

The grouping of these variables meaningfully on the two components thus provided statistical validation for an examination of the variables based on the notions of ‘Status’ and ‘Solidarity’.

Afterwhich, through a series of paired samples and independent samples t-tests, data from the matched guise test was analysed in reponse to the research questions highlighted previously, based on ratings given to the remaining nine traits. Responses from the open-ended questions in the Section C were also coded and tabulated to uncover possible trends relevant to the study. These results will be presented in detail in the following chapter.

## 8 Results

### 8.1 *Language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua*

Figure 2 shows the mean ratings given by Singaporean Chinese with respect to the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin, SSM and SCM, and Putonghua.

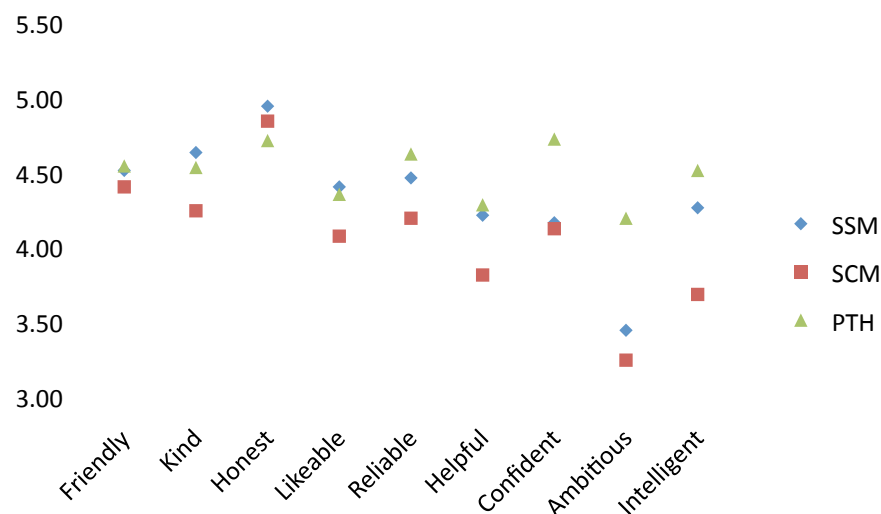


Fig. 2. Mean ratings of SSM, SCM and PTH by trait (Singaporean Chinese)

Generally, Singaporean Chinese participants rated SSM higher than SCM for all traits. However, based on a two-tailed paired samples t-test performed on the data using a  $\alpha$  level of .05, it was concluded that there is a significant difference only between how Singaporean Chinese view SSM and SCM based on **status** ( $p=0.002$ ) but not solidarity ( $p=0.108$ ). Further examination into the individual traits (Table 7) revealed significant differences specifically with respect to the following three traits: ‘**Kind**’ ( $p=0.023$ ), ‘**Helpful**’ ( $p=0.007$ ), and ‘**Intelligent**’ ( $p=0.001$ ).

Table 7: Group statistics and t-test results (SSM vs SCM) – for Singaporean Chinese

Traits	SSM Mean	Std. Deviation	SCM Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Friendly	4.51	0.839	4.40	0.851	0.648	0.522
Kind	4.63	0.864	4.24	0.593	2.393	0.023*
Honest	4.94	1.006	4.84	0.967	0.572	0.571
Likeable	4.40	0.991	4.07	0.986	1.462	0.153
Reliable	4.46	1.076	4.19	1.052	1.285	0.208
Helpful	4.21	0.951	3.81	0.817	2.876	0.007**
Confident	4.16	0.975	4.12	0.993	0.258	0.798
Ambitious	3.44	0.877	3.24	0.907	1.580	0.124
Intelligent	4.26	0.939	3.68	0.662	3.644	0.001*

\*\*= $p < 0.01$  Sig. (2-tailed)

\*= $p < 0.05$  Sig. (2-tailed)

Also, it was found that there is a significant difference between how Singaporean Chinese view **SSM** and **PTH**, the two standard varieties of Mandarin in Singapore and China respectively, based on **status** ( $p=0.000$ ) but not solidarity ( $p=0.837$ ), with PTH being rated higher. However, an analysis of the individual traits (Table 8) revealed that this trend is specific only to the traits ‘**Confident**’ ( $p=0.001$ ) and ‘**Ambitious**’ ( $p=0.000$ ).

Table 8: Group statistics and t-test results (SSM vs PTH) – for Singaporean Chinese

Traits	SSM Mean	Std. Deviation	PTH Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Friendly	4.51	0.839	4.54	0.908	-0.140	0.889
Kind	4.63	0.864	4.53	0.953	0.476	0.637
Honest	4.94	1.006	4.71	1.008	1.097	0.281
Likeable	4.40	0.991	4.35	0.901	0.182	0.857
Reliable	4.46	1.076	4.62	0.729	-0.725	0.474
Helpful	4.21	0.951	4.28	0.923	-0.343	0.734
Confident	4.16	0.975	4.72	0.837	-3.483	0.001**
Ambitious	3.44	0.877	4.19	0.871	-5.745	0.000**
Intelligent	4.26	0.939	4.51	0.949	-1.513	0.140

\*\*= $p < 0.01$  Sig. (2-tailed)

## 8.2 *Language attitudes of Chinese nationals towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua*

Figure 3 shows the mean ratings given by the Chinese nationals with respect to the three varieties of Mandarin – SSM, SCM and PTH.

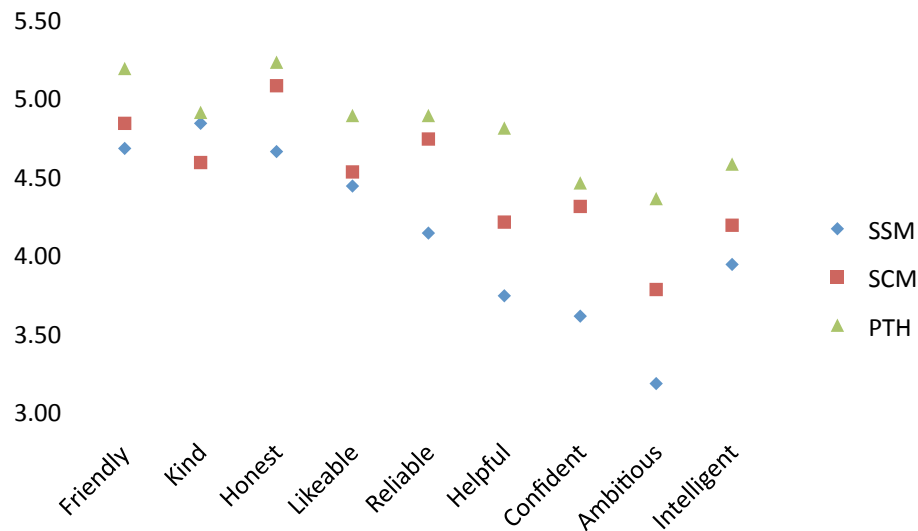


Fig. 3. Mean ratings of SSM, SCM and PTH by trait (Chinese nationals)

Generally, Chinese nationals rated SCM higher than SSM for all traits except the trait ‘**Kind**’. This is an interesting contrast to the trend found for Singaporean Chinese (section 8.1) where SSM is generally viewed more favourably than SCM. However, it was found that Chinese nationals view **SCM** significantly more favourably than SSM only in terms of **status** ( $p=0.000$ ) but not solidarity ( $p=0.084$ ). A paired samples t-test which tested for significant differences between the individual traits (Table 9) showed that significant differences are present for the following five traits: ‘**Honest**’ ( $p=0.011$ ), ‘**Reliable**’ ( $p=0.001$ ), ‘**Helpful**’ ( $p=0.039$ ), ‘**Confident**’ ( $p=0.000$ ), ‘**Ambitious**’ ( $p=0.006$ ). A borderline significant difference is also found for the trait ‘**Intelligent**’ ( $p=0.053$ ).

Table 9: Group statistics and t-test results (SSM vs SCM) – for Chinese nationals

Traits	SSM Mean	Std. Deviation	SCM Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Friendly	4.67	0.699	4.83	0.747	-1.204	0.238
Kind	4.83	0.747	4.58	1.051	1.436	0.162
Honest	4.65	0.872	5.07	0.728	-2.712	0.011*
Likeable	4.43	0.944	4.52	1.054	-0.482	0.634
Reliable	4.13	0.900	4.73	0.807	-3.844	0.001**
Helpful	3.73	0.963	4.20	1.257	-2.164	0.039*
Confident	3.60	0.932	4.30	0.702	-4.146	0.000**
Ambitious	3.17	0.813	3.77	0.763	-2.941	0.006**
Intelligent	3.93	0.679	4.18	0.650	-2.016	0.053

\*\*= $p < 0.01$  Sig. (2-tailed)\*= $p < 0.05$  Sig. (2-tailed)

Also, as can be seen from Figure 3, Chinese nationals rated PTH higher than SSM for all traits. Further tests revealed that Chinese nationals view **PTH** significantly higher than SSM on both **status** ( $p=0.000$ ) and **solidarity** ( $p=0.020$ ), with respect to almost all traits tested: ‘**Friendly**’ ( $p=0.008$ ), ‘**Honest**’ ( $p=0.011$ ), ‘**Reliable**’ ( $p=0.001$ ), ‘**Helpful**’ ( $p=0.000$ ), ‘**Confident**’ ( $p=0.000$ ), ‘**Ambitious**’ ( $p=0.000$ ), and ‘**Intelligent**’ ( $p=0.006$ ) (Table 10).

Table 10: Group statistics and t-test results (SSM vs PTH) – for Chinese nationals

Traits	SSM Mean	Std. Deviation	PTH Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Friendly	4.67	0.699	5.18	0.835	-2.843	0.008**
Kind	4.83	0.747	4.90	0.865	-0.335	0.740
Honest	4.65	0.872	5.22	0.703	-2.716	0.011*
Likeable	4.43	0.944	4.88	1.119	-1.496	0.145
Reliable	4.13	0.900	4.88	0.817	-3.746	0.001**
Helpful	3.73	0.963	4.80	0.896	-4.862	0.000**
Confident	3.60	0.932	4.45	0.661	-4.650	0.000**
Ambitious	3.17	0.813	4.35	0.948	-6.245	0.000**
Intelligent	3.93	0.679	4.57	1.015	-2.955	0.006**

\*\*= $p < 0.01$  Sig. (2-tailed)                      \*= $p < 0.05$  Sig. (2-tailed)

### 8.3 Comparison of Singaporean Chinese's and Chinese nationals' attitudes towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua

Figure 4 shows the mean ratings of Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals for the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin plotted on the same graph to give an overview of how Singapore Mandarin is viewed differently by both groups.

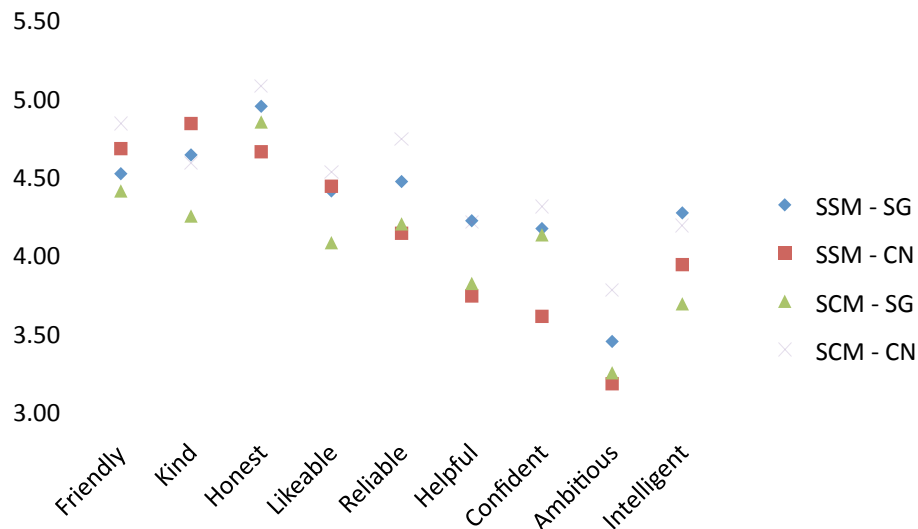


Fig. 4 Mean ratings of Singapore Mandarin by Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals

These trends will be described in detail in the following two sections, where the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin will be analysed separately. Section 8.3.1 will look into SSM while section 8.3.2 will look into SCM.

### 8.3.1 Language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals towards SSM

The means for the ratings given by Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals for SSM is presented in Figure 5.

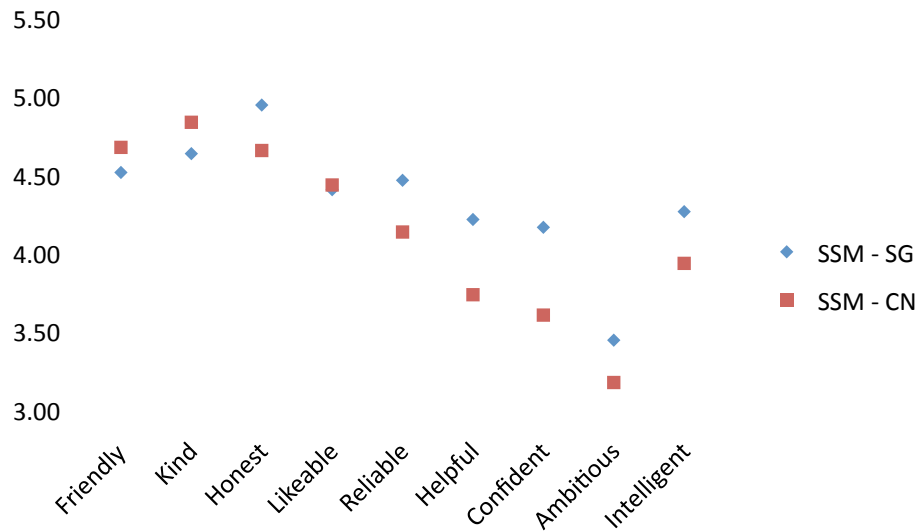


Fig. 5 Mean ratings of SSM by Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals

From Fig. 5, it can be seen that generally, Singaporean Chinese rated SSM higher in most traits as compared to Chinese nationals. However, further tests revealed that Singaporean Chinese view **SSM** significantly more positively only in terms of **status** ( $p=0.014$ ) but not solidarity ( $p=0.809$ ), and specifically only in terms of the traits ‘**Helpful**’ ( $p=0.050$ ) and ‘**Confident**’ ( $p=0.020$ ).

### 8.3.2 *Language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals towards SCM*

Figure 6 shows the mean ratings for SCM given by both Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals.

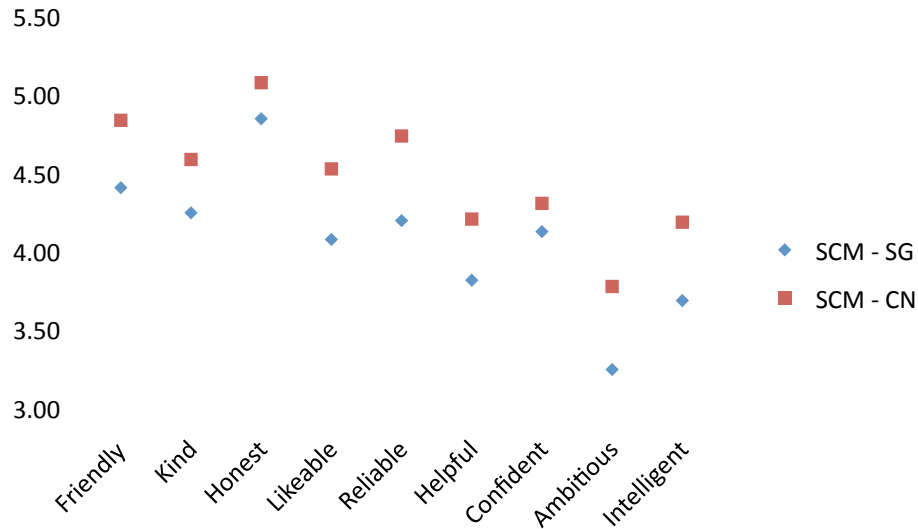


Fig. 6 Mean ratings of SCM by Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals

From Fig. 6, it can be seen that generally, Chinese nationals have a more positive attitude towards SCM than Singaporeans themselves as they rated SCM higher than Singaporeans in all traits. Such differences in perceptions between the two groups is found to be statistically significant in terms of both **status** ( $p=0.014$ ) and **solidarity** ( $p=0.025$ ). However, further statistical analysis of the individual traits found significant differences only with respect to the following four traits: ‘**Friendly**’ ( $p=0.034$ ), ‘**Reliable**’ ( $p=0.025$ ), ‘**Ambitious**’ ( $p=0.014$ ), and ‘**Intelligent**’ ( $p=0.003$ ).

### 8.3.3 *Language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals towards PTH*

After looking into how the language attitudes of both groups compare with each other in terms of Singapore Mandarin, this section examines the language attitudes of both groups towards Putonghua in relation to each other. From the mean ratings given to PTH as presented in Fig. 7, it can be seen that generally, Chinese nationals view Putonghua more favourably than Singaporean Chinese.

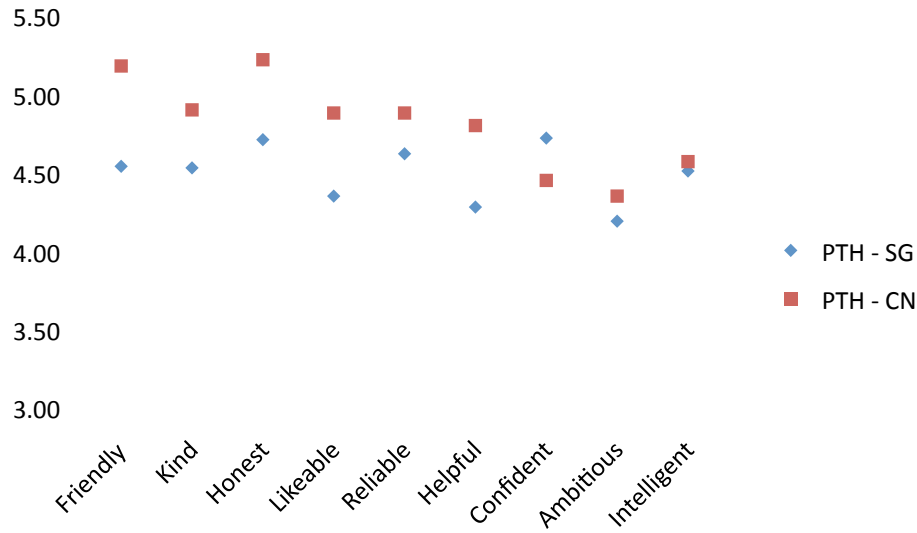


Fig. 7 Mean ratings of PTH by Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals

However, a two-tailed independent samples t-test concluded that the relatively more positive attitudes shown by Chinese nationals are significant only in terms of **solidarity** ( $p=0.018$ ) but not status ( $p=0.452$ ). Further examination between individual traits found significant differences specifically for three solidarity traits, namely ‘**Friendly**’ ( $p=0.005$ ), ‘**Honest**’ ( $p=0.021$ ), and ‘**Likeable**’ ( $p=0.040$ ), and only one status trait, ‘**Helpful**’ ( $p=0.026$ ).

#### 8.4 Gender effects

While examining the effects of gender in relation to language attitudes was not intended to be one of the main purposes of this study, in view of the interesting trends that arose from the data set as presented in the previous sections, it seems important to carry out further tests to examine if the trends identified applies to participants and speakers from both genders or just one, as well as to examine any interactional effect present between the gender of participants and gender of speakers in relation to the three varieties of Mandarin tested in this study.

#### 8.4.1 Gender of participants

In section 8.1, it was mentioned that Singaporean Chinese rated **SSM** significantly higher than **SCM** in terms of **status**. However, upon further examination, it is found that this applies only to **female participants** ( $p=0.003$ ) and not male participants ( $p=0.145$ ). On the other hand, the finding that **PTH** is viewed significantly more positively than **SSM** in terms of **status** is found to apply to both **male** ( $p=0.000$ ) and **female** ( $p=0.030$ ) participants.

As for the Chinese nationals, interestingly, it is the **male participants** (and not the female participants) who view **SSM** and **SCM** significantly different in terms of **status** ( $p=0.001$ ), this time with **SCM** being rated higher. Also, while it was found that as a whole, there is no significant difference between how Chinese nationals perceive the two varieties of Singapore Mandarin in terms of solidarity, further tests revealed that **males** actually do view **SCM** significantly more favourably in terms of **solidarity** ( $p=0.021$ ), while for females, the difference is almost insignificant ( $p=0.888$ ). A comparison of the ratings of **SSM** and **PTH** between participants of different genders also revealed that **females** view **PTH** significantly more positively than **SSM** in terms of both **status** ( $p=0.000$ ) and **solidarity** ( $p=0.034$ ), but **males** only view **PTH** significantly more positively in terms of **status** ( $p=0.000$ ) and not solidarity ( $p=0.277$ ).

#### 8.4.2 Gender of speakers

To examine if the gender of the speakers play a part in influencing participants' attitudes towards the different language varieties, the mean ratings given to all six recordings for all the nine traits were sorted by nationality, tabulated, and presented in Fig 8 and 9 for Singaporean Chinese and Chinese nationals respectively.

From Fig. 8, it can be seen that generally, all the six speakers tested in this study are rated quite similarly except for the male **SCM** speaker (Speaker B) who received much lower ratings than the rest of the speakers for most of the traits. He was rated low consistently on all traits except for the trait '**Honest**', where he received a high mean rating of 4.65.

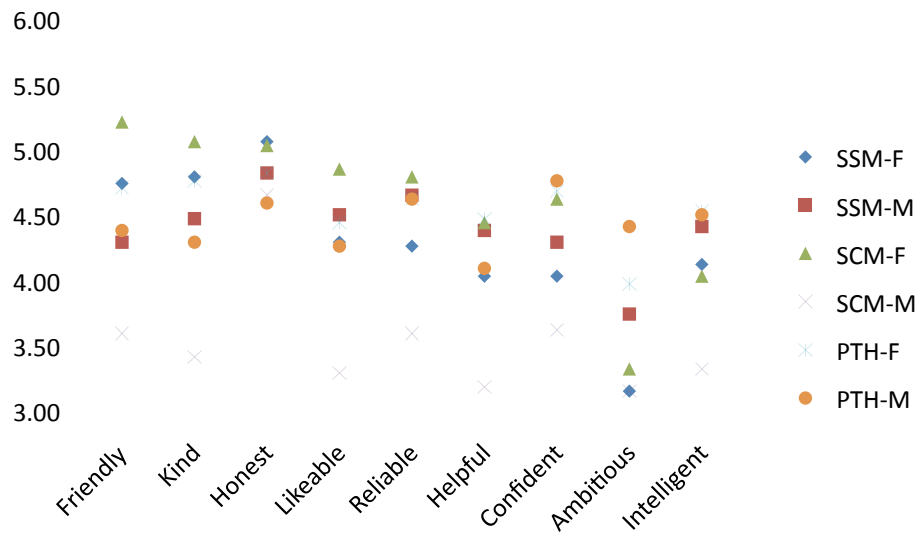


Fig. 8 Mean ratings of SSM, SCM, and PTH by gender of speakers (Singaporean Chinese)

In contrast, for the Chinese nationals, there is generally not much of a difference between their ratings for the various language varieties by both male and female speakers in terms of solidarity (Fig. 9). However, three varieties – namely SSM-Female, SSM-Male, and SCM-Male – appear to be rated much lower in terms of status as compared to SCM-Female, PTH-Male, and PTH-Female.

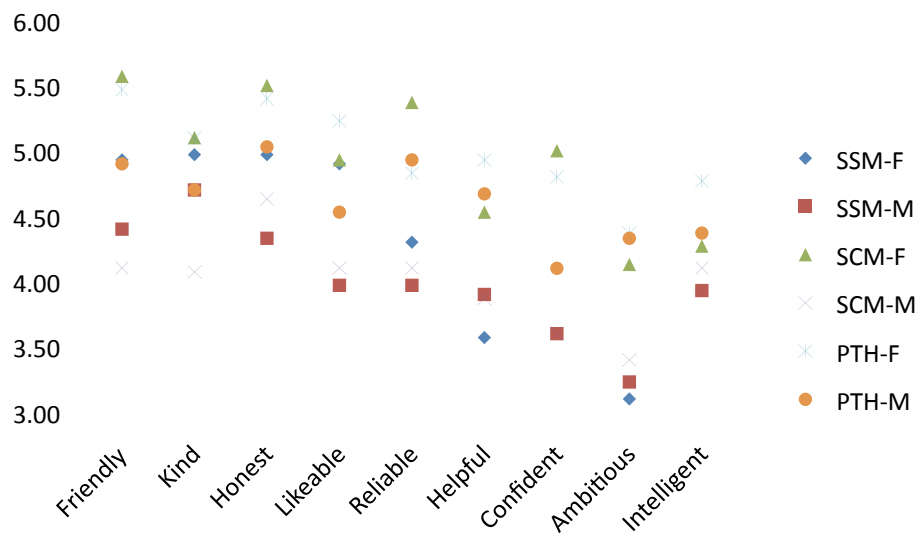


Fig. 9 Mean ratings of SSM, SCM, and PTH by gender of speakers (Chinese nationals)

Given that language attitudes of male and female participants have been found to be significantly different in different aspects for the three varieties of Mandarin (as highlighted in section 8.4.1), the trends in this section will be analysed further to examine how participants of different genders view the speakers of different genders.

### 8.4.3 Interactional effect between gender of speakers and gender of participants

#### ***Comparison of ratings between different speakers of the same language variety***

There is a significant difference between how **female Singaporeans and Chinese nationals** view the male and female speakers of **SSM** in terms of **status** (SG:  $p=0.017$ ; CN:  $p=0.010$ ) but not solidarity, with the **male speaker** being rated higher. Also, there is a significant difference between how both **male and female Singaporeans** view the two speakers of **SCM** in terms of both **status** (Male:  $p=0.000$ ; Female:  $p=0.010$ ) and **solidarity** (Male:  $p=0.000$ ; Female:  $p=0.001$ ), where the **female speaker** is rated higher in both. **Male Chinese nationals** also view the **female SCM speaker** significantly higher in both **status** ( $p=0.020$ ) and **solidarity** ( $p=0.000$ ), but for **female Chinese nationals**, a significant difference is observed only in terms of **solidarity** ( $p=0.001$ ) but not status. As for **PTH**, the **female speaker** is viewed significantly more positively than the male speaker only by **female Singaporean participants** in terms of **solidarity** ( $p=0.000$ ) and **male Chinese participants** in terms of **status** ( $p=0.042$ ).

#### ***Comparison of ratings between different language varieties spoken by the same speaker***

Generally, the **Singaporean female speaker** (Speaker 1 from Table 3), who did both SSM and SCM recordings, is viewed more positively by both male and female Singaporean and Chinese participants in terms of both status and solidarity in the recording where she speaks in **SCM** as compared to the one where she speaks in SSM. However, further tests showed that significant differences are found only in terms of how **male Singaporeans** view her in terms of **solidarity** ( $p=0.043$ ), how **female Chinese nationals** view her in terms of **status** ( $p=0.004$ ), and how **male Chinese nationals** view her in terms of both **status** ( $p=0.003$ ) and **solidarity** ( $p=0.031$ ).

On the other hand, paired samples t-tests showed that the **Singaporean male speaker** (Speaker 2 from Table 3) is viewed significantly more positively by both **male and female Singaporean** participants in terms of both **status** (Male:  $p=0.002$ ; Female:  $p=0.001$ ) and **solidarity** (Male:  $p=0.037$ ; Female:  $p=0.005$ ) when he speaks in **SSM** as compared to when he speaks in **SCM**. However, there is no significant difference between how male and female Chinese nationals view him when he speaks in different varieties of Singapore Mandarin, in terms of both status and solidarity.

## **8.5**      ***Possible reasons for these attitudes towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua***

This section summarises the participants' responses to the questions in Section C [Open-ended questions] of the questionnaire, which seeks to uncover the possible reasons behind their attitudes. Out of 64 participants, 37 completed this optional section, of which 27 are Singaporean Chinese and 10 are Chinese nationals. Unfortunately, a large percentage of the responses given by the Chinese nationals were either very short or unusable due to misinterpretation of the questions, and thus, their responses can only be discussed briefly in this chapter.

### 8.5.1 Responses from Singaporean Chinese

All the Singaporean respondents did not have difficulty understanding any of the recordings, except one, who had difficulty understanding Speaker C (Male, PTH) due to the "strong accent".

Also, 81% of the Singaporean participants felt that it is important to have a good mastery of Mandarin Chinese (Fig. 10). The main reasons cited include the role of Chinese as a marker of their Chinese roots and the rise of China as an economic giant in the world. In comparison, only 7% of the participants felt otherwise, expressing that a basic proficiency in Mandarin is enough as they can always rely on English to get them anywhere.

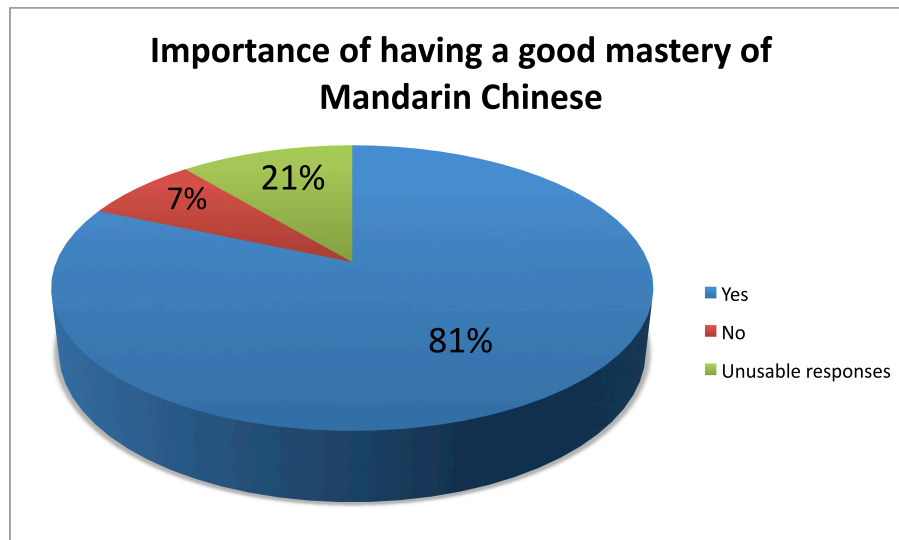


Fig. 10 Importance of having a good mastery of Mandarin Chinese

Additionally, majority of the respondents (67%) had a positive experience learning Mandarin (Fig. 11), contrary to the widespread belief that Mandarin-learning in school has been an arduous task. However, 26% of the respondents did point out negative experiences associated with lots of memorization, difficulty doing well in the subject, boredom, and unenthusiastic teachers.

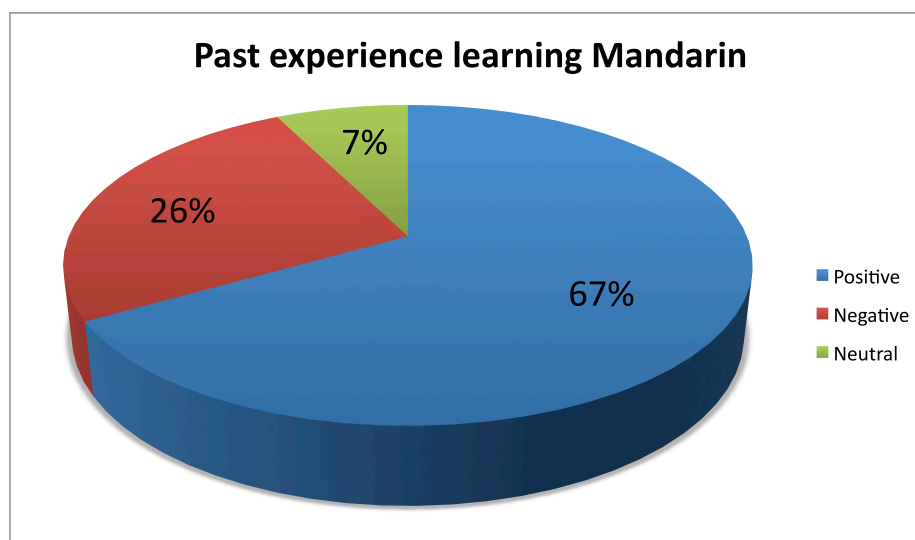


Fig. 11 Past experience learning Mandarin

Also, when asked about their opinions towards the large and increasing number of Chinese nationals in Singapore, as many as 63% of the respondents expressed irritation or annoyance, and only 15% expressed positive attitudes towards them (Fig. 12). The rest showed either mixed (19%) or neutral (4%) attitudes.

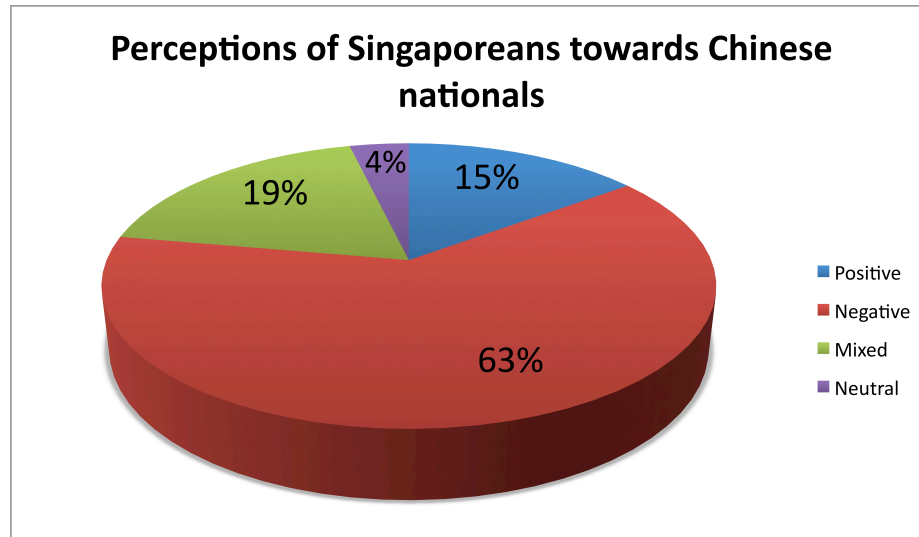


Fig. 12 Perceptions of Singaporeans towards Chinese nationals

The following two comments presented below are examples of the negative responses that some of the participants gave:

“Annoyed. Mostly due to their behavior. They speak loudly, dress badly and seem like country bumpkins.” (Female, 21)

“Do not feel 100% comfortable with them around. They are changing the culture that Singapore used to have and messing up the place I call home.” (Female, 21)

“I feel that they are crowding out Singaporeans and the Singaporean identity is quickly diminishing.” (Male, 24)

However, some of the negative stereotypes seem to apply more to Chinese nationals with a lower level of education, and not well-educated Chinese nationals. This can be seen from the following comments, whereby the lowly-educated Chinese nationals are the ones targeted:

“The problem with Chinese nationals is that many of these Chinese are low educated and they bring their bad habits into the country. They spit on the ground, dirty the place, do not respect traffic rules and so on. The educated Chinese are generally fine as they are more cultured.” (Female, 24)

“I do not really welcome the large influx of Chinese nationals, especially the workers. They bring their culture over to Singapore, like talking loudly, squatting by the roadsides. I find all these unacceptable.” (Female, 22)

However, some of the Singaporean respondents do view the influx of Chinese nationals to Singapore positively, as can be seen from the comments below:

“They are needed for the economy as Singaporeans tend to avoid the jobs they are doing.” (Male, 24)

“Some of the Chinese nationals are still friendly and fun to have around.” (Female, 21)

“Interactions with Chinese nationals may also help us understand and exhibit greater tolerance towards other cultures, and also widen our view of the world.” (Female, 21)

Also, there are several responses that seem generally positive on the surface, but appear to contain certain hidden negative stereotypes too. For example:

“I think it is fine as long as they are socially responsible.” (Female, 22)

“Personally, I think that it is ok, as long as they don’t do things that are against our values.” (Male, 22)

“Alright with their presence, but prefer if they do not come close to me/speak to me.” (Male, 22)

These responses seem to suggest tolerance rather than acceptance, and seem to point to stereotypes of Chinese nationals as being socially irresponsible and frequently doing things that

are against Singaporeans' values, thus the special mention of such criteria for acceptance in their comments.

Lastly, from the questionnaire, 41% of the participants stated that they would not want to work in China at all, 30% said that they would like to work in China for a short term, 7% said they would like to work in China for both short-term and long-term, and 22% said they would consider (Fig. 13).

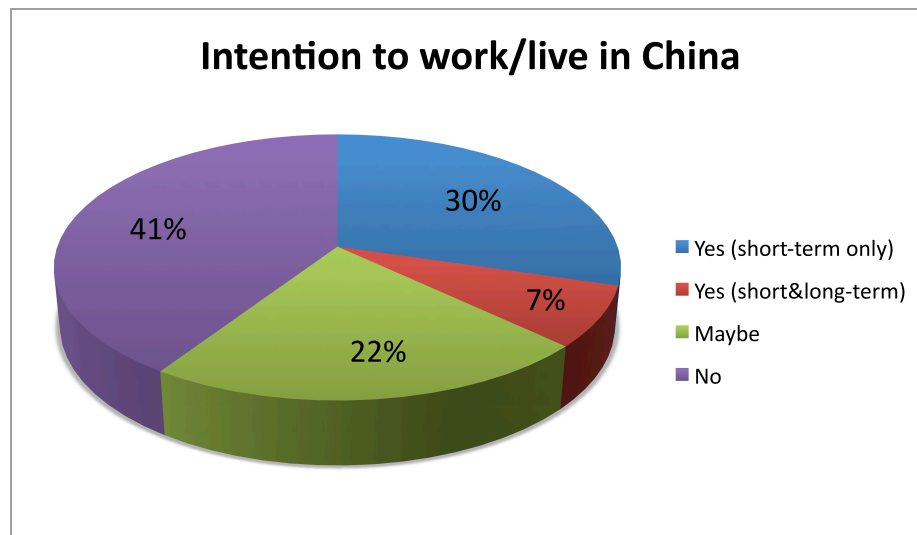


Fig. 13 Singaporeans' intention to work/live in China

Generally, this seems to point to the fact that majority of the participants (59%) are in favour/do not mind working in China. However, upon examination of their responses to the first part of the question asking if China is a good place to work or live in, it is found that majority of the participants, even those who declared an intention to work there in the short term or are considering of working there, viewed China as an unfavourable place to work in. The main reasons cited for their negative attitudes include political instability, significantly different culture from Singapore, unacceptable behaviour and habits of the people, unhygienic living conditions. Thus, we can see that for the 52% who indicated their intention or are considering of working in China for the short-term, most were not readily willing and eager to work in China, but rather, felt that they could try tolerating and sacrificing in the short-term in the hope of

gaining economic returns or valuable international exposure that would help them when they come back to Singapore.

### 8.5.2 Responses from Chinese nationals

For the Chinese participants, none had difficulty understanding the six recordings used in the analysis of this paper (neutral recordings/distractors were excluded from analysis). Many of them stated that the Beijing dialect of Mandarin is the standard variety of Mandarin Chinese. Most participants said that it sounded like the variety of Chinese language spoken in Fujian or Guangdong. Also, most participants expressed positive attitudes towards working in Singapore and their intention to work/live here in the future, citing reasons such as the ‘clean’ and ‘safe’ environment in Singapore, and the people (Singaporeans) being ‘nice’ and ‘friendly’.

## **9 Discussion**

### ***9.1 Mandarin as a solidarity language***

One main trend that can be observed from the data is that all three Mandarin varieties are being rated as higher in solidarity than status, even for the standard varieties like SSM and Putonghua. This deviates from findings from previous studies which consistently found standard varieties to be rated higher on status than solidarity. However, such a trend is in line with findings from Xu *et. al* (2005) which found Mandarin to be rated high in solidarity and low in status, and vice-versa for English. This is perhaps understandable given that English has always been promoted as the working language while Mandarin is mainly valued for solidarity reasons, like establishing a common link language between different dialect groups in the Chinese community and for cultural reasons. Clearly, as compared to English, Mandarin is of a lower status in Singapore.

However, what is even more surprising is that this trend exists for Putonghua too, even though Putonghua is the first language of the Chinese nationals and is the language of administration and work in China. One possible reason for this might be that they have already been in Singapore for a period of time and some might be intending to work/live here after

graduation too, thus, they have started to accept that English is the language that will give them access to higher status in Singapore. Also, it could be that since Putonghua is spoken by almost everyone in China as a first language, having a good mastery of Mandarin is a basic requirement (as can be deduced from the relatively neutral ratings given to Putonghua in terms of status), not an advantage. Instead, knowing additional languages especially an international language like English is the key to higher power and status. Thus, Putonghua is rated higher in solidarity than status because it identifies them with other Chinese nationals (solidarity) but does not give them an advantage in terms of status.

Also, another reason that could possibly have led to Chinese nationals rating Mandarin as lower in status is the stark contrast of how Mandarin is being neglected in China while the “Mandarin fever” spreads across the globe. According to Hong (2001), the education system in China is currently skewed towards English, with English being the qualifying requirement for higher education in universities and Mandarin, an optional one. English is also a requirement or significant advantage for gaining employment or job promotion. Thus, this could lead the Chinese participants in the study to view Mandarin as more of a solidarity language than language signifying status. All these could suggest that Mandarin is generally seen as a solidarity language globally, regardless of whether it is the standard variety.

As stated in Wee (2003), English is now considered a ‘world language, providing access to economic development and social mobility, while other languages are seen as either hindering such access, or to the extent that they are considered important, are treated mainly as repositories of ancient knowledge or cultural heritage’ (May, 2001; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992). Thus, it can be speculated that the findings in this study are not unique to Mandarin, but can actually extend to other bilingual populations in the world where English is one of the languages in the population’s repertoire, in the sense that all language(s) other than English would be viewed as low in status and higher in solidarity. Such a speculation is believed to be highly likely as English continues to grow in strength as an international language.

## 9.2 *Singaporean Chinese's language attitudes towards SSM, SCM and PTH*

The findings from this study which show SSM being rated higher than SCM on all traits does not conform to the usual trend, where the colloquial variety is rated high in solidarity and low in status and the standard variety is rated high in status and low in solidarity. One possible explanation for this is that perhaps, in the Singaporean context, being well-educated (status) is seen as a predictor of how 'nice' (solidarity) a person is, i.e. someone who is more well-educated is likely to exhibit a higher level of social graciousness and possess good moral values like kindness, honesty and trustworthiness. Thus, following such an explanation, language varieties indexing higher education level and status are likely to index higher solidarity too.

Also, in this study, the initial hypothesis that Singaporean Chinese will have negative perceptions towards Putonghua in terms of solidarity because of their negative stereotypes towards Chinese nationals did not hold true. Despite 63% of the Singaporean participants having negative perceptions towards the large and increasing number of Chinese nationals in Singapore (Fig. 12), Singaporeans' attitudes towards PTH seem to be relatively unaffected – their ratings for Putonghua in terms of the various solidarity traits were still slightly above average. One possible reason could be that the speakers are highly-educated university students and such negative stereotypes perhaps refer more to the relatively less educated Chinese immigrants. Such a stand is reflected in several participants whose negative comments in Section C of the questionnaire targeted specifically those with a lower education level, as highlighted in section 8.5.

Also, the fact that the participants in this study are also highly-educated could be a reason for the higher-than-expected solidarity ratings for PTH too, as people usually prefer to associate with others who are similar to themselves. For example, if the participants are lower in educational level, they might perceive the well-educated PTH speakers as snobbish and thus rate them lower on solidarity as compared to the university students recruited for this study. Also, it could be likely that these well-educated participants are more informed about the trends of globalisation and the opportunities it brings. Thus, they might possess a stronger desire to identify themselves with the international community as compared to the less educated, resulting

in them rating a non-local variety like PTH rather high in solidarity ( $M=4.55$ ), and in fact, even higher than SCM ( $M=4.35$ ), their own local colloquial variety.

However, the findings did confirm the hypothesis that Singaporeans would rate Putonghua higher in status than both varieties of Singapore Mandarin. As can be seen from the questionnaire responses, some participants felt that the presence of Chinese nationals in Singapore is good as they help to motivate Singaporeans to speak better Mandarin. Also, many participants see Chinese nationals as threats to employment and academic achievement. This suggests that the presence of Chinese nationals actually raises the bar and makes competition stiffer. Thus, it can be concluded that Singaporeans still see Putonghua as the standard and highest variety of Mandarin, the variety of Mandarin that they should seek to emulate, and one that has more status and power than Singapore Mandarin.

However, given that they rated SSM higher than average for all traits except ‘Ambitious’, it suggests that Singaporeans are starting to accept SSM as a standard variety. This is consistent with findings from Yap (2009).

### ***9.3. Chinese nationals’ language attitudes towards SSM, SCM and PTH***

The results for the Chinese nationals, which showed that they view SCM more positively than SSM in almost all traits, were rather surprising.

Also, it has been found that Chinese nationals view Singapore as a mainly English-speaking country (Yap, 2009). Such a view is also reflected by one of the Chinese participants in this study who expressed that in Singapore, speaking good English is “essential” while speaking good Mandarin is just “value-adding”. Thus, they probably do not have high expectations of Singaporeans being able to speak ‘perfect Mandarin’ and deem it normal for Singaporeans to mix other languages, notably English, into their speech. Also, Chinese nationals are largely monolingual in Mandarin during their daily interactions (even though they do know English), and thus, they might actually be impressed with speakers of SCM for their ability to codeswitch naturally and effortlessly, rather than critical. Also, most Chinese nationals have a relatively lower proficiency in English than Singaporeans, and thus, code-switching to English, a language

viewed as being a superior global language, could actually be viewed favourably. This could be one of the reasons why they are so accepting of SCM, where the speech was constantly peppered with English words. To them, a Singaporean who can speak both languages so well as to be able to readily and effortlessly mix English words into one's speech is someone whom they would hold in high regard.

Such a finding could also be because these Chinese nationals have already been in Singapore for a few years and thus, can understand SCM without difficulty. As can be seen from the survey results, all the Chinese participants expressed that they had no difficulty understanding the six recordings included in the analysis. Also, all participants could speak English and given that they are currently university undergraduates, their grasp of English can be assumed to be reasonably good. Findings from the questionnaire also showed that participants have positive perceptions of Singapore and Singaporeans, describing Singapore as 'clean' and 'safe' and Singaporeans as 'friendly and nice'. Many also expressed that they have the intention to work in Singapore in the future and this is believed to be a factor as to why they are so accepting of SCM. Findings from Lai *et al.* (unpublished manuscript) revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between Chinese nationals' intended length of stay in Singapore and their language attitudes towards Singapore Colloquial English. Thus, this is likely to be the case for the colloquial Mandarin variety, SCM, too.

Also, SCM involves mixing of some Hokkien words and pragmatic particles derived from various Southern Chinese dialects like Hokkien. This could have reminded them of their own code-mixing between standard and dialectal varieties back in China, thereby resulting in them having more positive perceptions towards SCM in terms of solidarity.

#### **9.4 *Limitations of current study and suggestions for future studies***

While much effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results, it must be highlighted that there are still certain limitations with the methodology that could be improved upon if future studies of similar focus are going to be carried out.

Firstly, a larger sample size could be used to ensure more reliable results. Secondly, while the recordings were made more natural by allowing participants to talk about the topic spontaneously without a predetermined script but kept as neutral as possible, it must be noted that the differences in specific content could possibly influence participants' responses. As found in a study by Giles *et al.* (1992), the assumption that evaluative implications can be "controlled" by using "neutral" passages seem to be untrue as the formality of content discussed in recording does in fact influence language attitudes. In this study, while most of the recordings consisted of informal experiences (eg. during a holiday, on a shopping trip), Speaker C's account involved a relatively formal event, i.e. getting lost on the way to an interview. It could be possible that participants have more positive perceptions towards recordings where informal topics are spoken in the colloquial variety and formal topics are spoken in the standard variety, and vice-versa. Thus, future studies should take extra care to control the message content so that more accurate results could be obtained.

Additionally, it must be noted that the principal component analysis used in the study showed that one of the variables, 'Intelligent', had a slightly lower communality value ( $=0.496$ ) than the requirement of  $>0.5$ . However, as the value was just slightly below 0.5 and had rather strong factor loadings, the variable was still deemed to be acceptable for the study and was not removed from the analysis.

Also, this study was carried out on Chinese nationals who have been in Singapore for a few years and have had much interaction with Singaporeans and knowledge about the Singapore culture. Thus, these Chinese nationals are likely to have been accustomed to the colloquial Mandarin variety in Singapore and also the frequent code-switching in multilingual Singapore. Thus, they are able to understand the colloquial variety well and have rather positive perceptions towards the colloquial variety. However, the results of this study must not be assumed to extend to the Chinese nationals in China due to them having comparatively lesser interaction with Singaporeans. Therefore, future studies could duplicate the study on Chinese nationals in China in order to gain insights about their attitudes towards Singapore Mandarin. Such a study will provide useful insights into how Singaporeans are viewed when they speak Singapore Mandarin under the context where Putonghua is the dominant Mandarin variety, as compared to a context where Singapore Mandarin is the dominant variety. Thus, having a further study like this will

enable us to have a more complete picture of the intrinsic nuances in the interactions between Singaporeans and Chinese nationals and the relationship between Singapore and China, which will only get closer in the years to come as both countries continue to grow and prosper.

Additionally, it would also be interesting to examine if attitudes towards other varieties of Chinese outside Greater China (eg. Malaysian Chinese) conforms to the trends found in this study.

Also, the fact that the questionnaire was administered in English to Chinese nationals could be another possible limitation of this study too, given that English is usually their second language and they might not be fully comfortable expressing themselves in it. This can be seen from the relatively large number of Chinese participants (20 out of 30) who chose not to answer the optional open-ended questions in Section C of the questionnaire and the short responses given by those who did answer. Thus, for future studies, it might be better to administer the questionnaire in Mandarin for the Chinese nationals in order for more insights to be drawn regarding their language attitudes and to ensure more accurate results.

Lastly, while several interesting trends pertaining to gender effects have been highlighted in this paper, a discussion of these trends is not possible due to space constraints. Future studies could seek to look deeper into the effects of gender on language attitudes towards Singapore Mandarin and Putonghua and the possible reasons behind such trends.

## **10 Conclusion**

To sum up, this study has found several significant and interesting results in terms of how Chinese nationals view varieties of Mandarin outside China and how Chinese populations outside of China view Mandarin spoken in China. These findings not only shed light on the dynamics of the interactions between Singaporeans and Chinese nationals, but also serves us useful information which can be used in the conceptualisation of language policies and planning in Singapore, as well as in understanding and predicting language maintenance and shift. These findings can also serve as platforms for future research into this area.

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## **Appendix A: Transcript of recordings**

### ***Speaker A***

我记得今年年头我到香港去一趟，然后在那里有了迷失方向的经历。我和朋友到了一个叫喇嘛岛的岛屿上。听说那座岛屿有个菩萨的雕像，所以我们想去那里观赏那个雕像。到了岛上之后，我们走了很远的路，找了很久都找不到菩萨的雕像，几乎走到天都黑了。我们就开始很慌张，担心说可能天黑了会找不到回去的路，所以我们决定放弃寻找菩萨的雕像而选择回家。但是我们也是走了好久的路才找到回家的路，在那里还被野狗追，所以是一次恐怖的经历。很庆幸的是我们最后有找到回去的路。

### ***Speaker B***

我还记得我去Australia holiday 的时候, 有一次要回hotel的时候迷路。Then 我就问全部那些passer-by, 他们全部都跟我指不同的direction, 问到我pekcek. Then 我想搭bus, bus (我都) 我又不懂搭什么bus的号码。问在bus stop的人, 他们也不懂, 也没有听过那个旅馆。Then bopian 我只好搭taxi, 但驾到一半taxi driver 也迷路, 他也不懂怎样去 (那个) 我的hotel. wa, 我就想, jialiat liao. 还好转了大概半个钟, 我终于找到我的hotel。

### ***Speaker C***

我的那次经历是我的一次面试。然后那次应该是下午一点钟到的。我之前我的手机没有那个手机网络, 没有办法看到 (那个) 具体怎么去那个地方, 所以我过去的时候是坐了地铁。下来以后, 换了公交车, 但是公交车的方, 就是那一边坐公交车那个后来没有搞清楚, 最后坐反了公交车。当再次坐对公交车过去的时候, 就意识到 (那个) 下来以后也不知道怎么走。后来又打了个的, 司机也给我把路给搞错了。不过, 晚到了大概十到十五分钟, 最后面试还算挺顺利的。

### ***Speaker D***

小的时候有不见一次，就是跟mummy他们一起去那个Sogo departmental store，在那个tampines那里la。然后就，actually 我也是不懂，就是很像我小，然后就跑去那个toys department, 看看那些barbie doll, 然后转过身来，eh papa 都不见了。Then papa 那天很像是穿一个yellow的polo tee shirt 跟jeans, then 我就看到一个男的，他也是穿polo tee shirt 跟jeans, then 我就跑，快点去抱住他的脚。我就抱他的脚抱到紧紧，然后我就，wa, 头一看上去，“Wa! Huh! 那不是我的papa!” 我就怕到很paiseh, 然后我就（wa then 就）跑跑跑，然后就找来找去找不到papa。然后他就叫我，then我就看到papa then我就快点跑过去lor。跑过去了then我就抱住我的daddy, then我就一直like, 头不敢去看那个刚才我抱错的那个uncle ah.

### ***Speaker E***

我就有很多时候都会迷路。其中一次就是我去我的补习的学生的家。Then 我是驾车去的。Then通常我都会弯左instead of, erm 就是要回家的时候会转左instead of 转右。可是那天不知道为什么我就转了右手边。然后我就在那边看，eh为什么旁边全部都暗暗的，而且都没有什么人。然后我就很慌张因为我（也）那天也没有带我的GPS，我就不知道要怎么（回）驾车回去，所以我就一直转来转去，然后终于我看到一个指示牌，指示我回去我的家，所以我就终于回到家了。

### ***Speaker F***

我还记得小时候，我跟着我的父母到一所百货公司逛街。走着走着我突然看到百货公司的中央有一只巨大的玩具熊。我开始兴奋起来，放开妈妈的手，就跑了过去想去摸一下玩具熊。但摸完之后，我转身才发现我的父母不见了。我开始慌张起来，就...开始哭了。幸好有位叔叔过来安慰我，然后带我到百货公司的询问柜台。过一阵子，当我看到我的父母慌张地跑了过来，我才停止哭泣。

### ***Speaker G***

就有一次我去到另外一个城市然后准备去他们的市中心，和我妈妈一起。结果到了那里之后呢，不知道坐什么公交车，于是就随便上了一个公交车，估计随便哪一辆公交车几乎都会经过市中心，结果发现我们坐错了。然后程车的然后那个车结果开到了郊区，在路上我妈妈就一直抱怨我说把她带错了带错了，然后我反而坐在上面我觉得其实无所谓，当成是沿路看看风景什么的，大不了到了终点站再坐回来。

### ***Speaker H***

哎哟，记得那时候当兵的时候，我们去那个Nelex的那个exercise。wa 那个天很黑ah，then hor只有那个map跟那个compass，totally lost ah 那时候。在那个那里ah，在那个mandai hill 那边走来走去。很sian ah 那个，又这样多那个苍蝇ah，那些昆虫，那些bugs ah 这些，then然后走走走，然后那个天黑了，又看不到那个compass，看不到那个map，然后又那个泥巴，又走进swamp，那个路湿湿，aiya然后就走，然后就迷路lor，就不见掉lor，然后就comm那个commander叫他们来载我们回去lor。Then 就fail那个exercise要重新做多一次。

## **Appendix B: Questionnaire**

### **Instructions**

#### **-SECTION A-**

Fill in your demographic details.

#### **-SECTION B-**

Open the 'Recordings' folder. Listen once to the recording titled 'Speaker A' and answer the questions for Speaker A in the questionnaire by highlighting the number you would rate the speaker (on a scale of 1 to 7) for the respective traits. For example, 1 = Not at all friendly and 7 = Very friendly.

Repeat the steps for Speakers B, C, D, E, F, G, and H.

**\*Please look carefully before selecting your answers as the order of the scale has been randomised.**

#### **-SECTION C-**

This section is optional. However, your valuable input will be much appreciated. For those who wish to complete this section, kindly answer the set of questions designated for your nationality.

→ For **Chinese nationals**, please answer **Set A**.

→ For **Singaporeans**, please answer **Set B**.

**Please do not think too long over each question.  
Answer them as quickly and spontaneously as you can.**

**-SECTION A-**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: F / M

Country: China / Singapore

→ For Chinese nationals - Please state Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Language(s)/Dialect(s) you can speak:

\_\_\_\_\_

Language(s)/Dialect(s) you can understand:

\_\_\_\_\_

## **-SECTION B-**

### **Speaker A**

1. Is the speaker friendly?

**Not at all friendly**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **Very friendly**

2. Is the speaker kind?

**Very kind**      **7**      **6**      **5**      **4**      **3**      **2**      **1**      **Not at all kind**

3. Is the speaker honest?

**Not at all honest**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **Very honest**

4. Is the speaker likeable?

**Not at all likeable**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **Very likeable**

5. Is the speaker reliable?

**Very reliable**      **7**      **6**      **5**      **4**      **3**      **2**      **1**      **Not at all reliable**

6. Is the speaker helpful?

**Very helpful**      **7**      **6**      **5**      **4**      **3**      **2**      **1**      **Not at all helpful**

7. Is the speaker confident?

**Very confident**      **7**      **6**      **5**      **4**      **3**      **2**      **1**      **Not at all confident**

8. Is the speaker ambitious?

**Not at all ambitious**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **Very ambitious**

9. Is the speaker a hard worker?

**Very hard working**      **7**      **6**      **5**      **4**      **3**      **2**      **1**      **Not at all hard working**

10. Is the speaker intelligent?

**Not at all intelligent**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **Very intelligent**

**\*Note. This section was repeated for another seven times in the actual questionnaire for Speakers B – H, with the order of the questions randomised.**

**-SECTION C (Optional)-**

***Set A: For Chinese nationals***

- 1) Did you have any difficulty understanding any of the recordings? If yes, which ones?
  
- 2) What do you think is the status of English and Mandarin in Singapore now?
  
- 3) Do you think there will be any changes to the status of English and Mandarin in Singapore in the future? If yes, how and why?
  
- 4) Do you think there is such a thing as Standard Mandarin? If yes, what would be considered Standard Mandarin?
  
- 5) Do you think there is a difference between the Mandarin spoken by Singaporean Chinese and Putonghua spoken by Chinese nationals? Does the Mandarin spoken by Singaporean Chinese sound like any Chinese variety from Mainland China? If yes, which part/province of Mainland China?
  
- 6) Do you think Singapore is a good place to work/live in? Do you intend to work/live in Singapore in the future (either short-term or long-term)? Why?

***Set B: For Singaporean Chinese***

- 1) Did you have any difficulty understanding any of the recordings? If yes, which ones?
- 2) What do you think is the status of English and Mandarin in Singapore now?
- 3) Do you think there will be any changes to the status of English and Mandarin in Singapore in the future? If yes, how and why?
- 4) Do you think it is important for Singaporean Chinese to have a good mastery of Mandarin? Why?
- 5) How was your past experience learning Mandarin?
- 6) How do you feel about the large and increasing number of Chinese nationals in Singapore? Please elaborate and explain.
- 7) Do you think China is good place to work/live in? Do you intend to work/live in China in the future (either short-term or long-term)? Why?

-----**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION! ☺**-----