STANDARD ENGLISH AND SINGLISH:
THE CLASH OF LANGUAGE VALUES IN CONTEMPORARY SINGAPORE

David Yoong Soon Chye
La Trobe University, Australia

Singaporean English or Singlish, as it is better known to the local populace, is an English creole that has long been a contesting issue between pro–Singlish and anti–Singlish proponents. This paper uses Fairclough's (1995) 3–dimensional framework, which has been originally developed for critical discourse analysis, to show how discourses and texts have been used by pro–Singlish and anti–Singlish advocates to impart their attitude and in some cases, to promote their values of Standard English and Singlish to the masses. Culling examples from the *Speak Good English Movement* (*SGEM*) and *Talking Cock* websites, one is able to see how attitudes are reflected through discourse and text. Entertainment discourse seems to be a common means that both groups use to enact their attitude towards Singlish. With the exception of *Mr. Kiasu*, the *SGEM* and *TalkingCock.com* both push one step further from merely expressing their general attitude towards Singlish to encouraging others to either avoid Singlish (the *SGEM*) or to embrace the code (*TalkingCock.com*). The *SGEM* uses various discourses to achieve this objective, and that includes eliciting the support of younger generations through entertainment means. Also, Singlish is commonly criticised, mocked and stigmatised in the official *SGEM* website in one form or another. *TalkingCock.com* uses discourses such as a 'declaration' (manifesto), satire and humour journalism, and a dictionary amongst others to propagate the use of Singlish.

Essentially, the real clash between both anti– and pro–Singlish advocates is one of values. Anti–Singlish advocates strive for economic pragmatism whilst pro–Singlish advocates strive for identity. Gupta (in Burnside 2000) states that anti–Singlish advocates resist Singlish because of socially motivated reasons. According to her, '[Singapore] has a tradition of elitism and perfectionism… [hence]… Singapore must be perfect, and Singlish is seen as an imperfection.' But the same socially motivated reason can also be said of pro–Singlish advocates. Singaporeans who subscribe to Singlish and have a positive attitude towards the code sees Singlish as a language that transcends social barriers. To then, Singlish can be used to forge rapport and perhaps more importantly, the Singaporean identity, that users of Singlish can associate with.

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Contact: David Yoong Soon Chye. Linguistics Department, David Myers Building (East) 326, La Trobe University, Bundoora 3083, Victoria, AUSTRALIA. Ph. 0403-042978, Email: daveyoong@gmail.com / dyoongsoonchye@students.latrobe.edu.au