

# Language Planning in Character & Citizenship Education (Mother Tongue Languages) on Students' Cultural Sensitivity and Heritage Awareness in a primary school in Singapore: A Case Study

David Yong Heng Sai<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received Jul 01, 2024

Revised Aug 16, 2024

Accepted Sep 15, 2024

### Keywords:

Character and Citizenship,  
Education,  
Mother Tongue Languages,  
Cultural Sensitivity,  
Heritage Awareness,  
Language Development,  
Singapore Education

### Conflict of Interest:

None

### Funding:

None

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Character and Citizenship Education in Mother Tongue Languages (CCE MTL) in fostering cultural sensitivity, heritage awareness, and language development among primary school students in Singapore. Through qualitative methods, including interviews and document analysis, the study reveals that the CCE MTL program significantly contributes to cultural sensitivity by integrating cultural narratives and values into the curriculum. Teachers play a pivotal role in adapting teaching strategies to incorporate these elements, thus enhancing language proficiency and artistic appreciation. The findings highlight the program's effectiveness in promoting core values such as Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Integrity, Care, and Harmony (R3ICH) through a curriculum framework centred on Identity, Relationships, and Choices. However, challenges related to curriculum transitions and the need for continuous professional development for teachers are identified. The study underscores the importance of a holistic approach involving whole-school initiatives and cross-disciplinary integration to reinforce cultural education.

**Corresponding Author:** David Yong H S, English Department, State University of Medan, Indonesia. E-mail: davidloves2read@hotmail.com



© David Yong Heng Sai

This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA 4.0 international license.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The role of Language Planning

Language planning refers to activities and decisions that are used to exert conscious and targeted influence on systems of social communication, to introduce desirable changes or to avoid undesirable changes (de Cillia & Busch, 2006). It refers to activities that bring about changes to solve linguistic problems at the national, international or community level. Language planning is essential for maintaining social cohesion and effective communication in multicultural societies. It involves developing and implementing policies that influence the function, structure, and acquisition of languages within a community (Johnson & Ricento, 2019).



In Asia, countries like India, Singapore, and Malaysia have complex linguistic landscapes that require careful planning to manage diversity and promote national unity. For instance, Singapore's bilingual policy, which mandates the learning of English and a mother tongue language, has been successful in maintaining cultural heritage while ensuring proficiency in English, the global lingua franca (Pakir, 2020).

Language planning is a purposeful action involving the formation and implementation of a policy designed to prescribe, or influence, the language(s) and varieties of language that will be used and the purposes for which they will be used for teaching and learning (Wiley, 2015). Schools, as educational institutions, are test-beds for language planning and policy-making. Teachers and leaders in schools have played a major role in promoting national languages and in implementing language reforms and policies.

### *1.2 The role of Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs) in Singapore schools*

Bilingualism has always been emphasized in Singapore's education system. Since 1959, Singapore government leaders have repeatedly stressed that bilingualism is the cornerstone of Singapore's language policy. Scholars researching language policy and planning in Singapore confirm that Singapore has always maintained a consistent stand on bilingualism (Lee & Phua, 2020).

As a policy, all students studying in primary schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Singapore (MOE) must offer Mother Tongue Language (MTL) as a second language. It is a compulsory subject, and there are three official MTLs, namely, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. By default, students of Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnicities will study their own MTLs. However, for students from mixed parentage, schools will assign an MTL based on the first component of their race at registration, usually following that of the father's. For those who wish to study an MTL based on the second component of their race, usually following that of the mother's, they may apply to do so through their schools.

For students who are Eurasian or of other races, and whose mother tongue is not one of the official MTLs, they can request to study any of the official MTLs through their schools, subject to approval, usually based on their parents' consent and comfort level at providing the necessary conducive home support to help their children keep up with their learning. Non-Tamil speaking students of Indian ethnicity can apply to study Non-Tamil Indian Language (NTIL), namely, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu. These language classes are not provided by MOE and are usually conducted outside of school premises and hours.

In Singapore, where the main language of instruction is English, it is important to learn an MTL for three main reasons. Firstly, they can communicate more effectively in MTL under the country's bilingual language policy. Secondly, they can appreciate their cultural heritage taught in their mother tongue. Thirdly, they can connect with wider communities across Asia and the world, especially for students whose mother tongue is not one of the official MTLs. In other words, Singapore's bilingual policy facilitates opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.

### *1.3 The role of Character and Citizenship Education in Singapore schools*

In Singapore, as an immigrant state and multiethnic society, moral education and citizenship education have always been a national issue. The government has promoted various moral education programs to integrate ethnic groups and develop human resources. Moral education from the early days to the 1990s had mainly emphasized state-oriented, abstract ideas such as Confucian ethics, and Asian values, and the norms of behaviour as a good citizen. The Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), which was introduced to primary and secondary schools in 2014, is student-cantered and adopts effective pedagogical approaches (Ikeda, M. 2023).

In general, CCE integrates moral values, cultural awareness, and language planning into the curriculum, with cultural stories and practices playing a significant role in students' understanding of cultural diversity and language development (Banks, 2016). Recent research has emphasized the importance of language planning in promoting linguistic diversity and cultural awareness among students (Hornberger, 2019). Culturally responsive teaching enhances cultural sensitivity and engagement, making education more meaningful (Gay, 2018; Paris & Alim, 2017). Sleeter (2018) supports the use of culturally relevant materials in fostering cultural heritage awareness and supporting language planning.

CCE in Singapore is an integral part of the curriculum that aims to inculcate moral values, cultural awareness, and linguistic skills in students. The Character & Citizenship Education (Mother Tongue Languages), or CCE MTL for short, is unique because at the primary school level, the CCE MTL program is delivered by Mother Tongue Language (MTL) teachers. The program leverages cultural narratives and practices to teach values and promote language planning. form part of the explicit teaching and learning of moral values, by using

cultural stories, practices, songs, idioms, and proverbs unique to each MTL. Students learn how values are lived in the past and the relevance of these values to today's context. For students who offer the non-Tamil Indian Languages or are exempted from taking MTL, lessons are taught in English.

CCE MTL is a unique and essential component of education in Singapore as it navigates students' lives in their most formative years in primary school. Singapore is also unique in that while English is the main language of instruction, the government has proactively written into policy that all students should be effectively bilingual if they continue their educational journey in government schools. This study will investigate how the CCE MTL program contributes to students' cultural sensitivity, heritage awareness, and language development, with a focus on language planning.

#### *1.4 Research Questions (RQ)*

RQ1: How does the CCE MTL program facilitate language planning and its integration with cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness among students?

RQ2: What are the specific impacts of language planning in the CCE MTL program on students' language development, cultural sensitivity, and heritage awareness?

#### *1.5 Significance of the study*

Conducting this study is crucial for enhancing educational strategies by providing insights into how the CCE MTL program integrates cultural narratives and practices to boost students' moral values, cultural awareness, and linguistic skills. It can guide educators and policymakers in developing effective approaches that promote cultural sensitivity, heritage awareness, and language planning, ensuring a well-rounded education that respects and celebrates multicultural diversity.

Additionally, the study will contribute to the existing body of research on CCE and culturally responsive teaching. By addressing specific research questions on the impacts of the CCE MTL program, it offers empirical evidence that can inform policy and curriculum development. This can lead to more engaging and meaningful education, supporting students' academic and personal growth while advancing multilingualism and cultural appreciation.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Previous studies in Europe and Americas*

There has been a significant amount of research on language planning in education and its impact on students' cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness in the past two decades. One notable study from Canada examined the role of bilingual education in fostering cultural sensitivity among elementary school students. Cummins (2000) found that students enrolled in bilingual programs showed a greater appreciation for cultural diversity and demonstrated higher levels of cultural sensitivity compared to their monolingual peers. This study highlights the importance of incorporating mother tongue languages in the curriculum to enhance cultural awareness and sensitivity among students.

### *2.2 Previous studies in Asia and Southeast Asia*

In Asia, numerous studies have explored the role of mother tongue languages in education and their impact on cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness. A study conducted in Japan by Tsuneyoshi (2004) analysed the implementation of heritage language programs in elementary schools. The research indicated that these programs not only improved students' proficiency in their mother tongue but also strengthened their cultural identity and sensitivity towards their cultural heritage. The findings suggest that heritage language education plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural connections and fostering a sense of belonging among students.

In Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, research has been conducted on the integration of mother tongue languages in primary education. Gill (2005) studied the effects of the national language policy on cultural awareness among primary school students. The study revealed that the policy, which emphasizes the use of Malay alongside other mother tongue languages, significantly enhanced students' understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage. This approach not only promoted linguistic diversity but also reinforced cultural sensitivity among young learners.

### *2.3 Previous studies in Singapore*

Focusing specifically on Singapore, several studies have addressed the role of language planning in CCE and its impact on students' cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness. One key study by Vaish (2007)

investigated the effectiveness of the bilingual education policy in Singapore's primary schools. The research demonstrated that the inclusion of mother tongue languages in the curriculum significantly enhanced students' cultural awareness and sensitivity. Furthermore, the study highlighted those students with a strong foundation in their mother tongue exhibited a deeper connection to their cultural heritage and a better understanding of their cultural identity.

Another significant study by Cavallaro and Serwe (2010) explored the impact of mother tongue education on the cultural identity of primary school students in Singapore. The findings indicated that students who actively engaged in mother tongue language classes were more likely to develop a strong cultural identity and demonstrate higher levels of cultural sensitivity. This study underscores the importance of mother tongue education in fostering a sense of cultural belonging and awareness among students.

These studies collectively emphasize the critical role of mother tongue languages in promoting cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness among primary school students. From Canada to Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore, the integration of mother tongue languages in the educational curriculum has been shown to strengthen cultural identity and enhance students' appreciation for their cultural heritage.

The findings from these studies provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers in designing effective language planning strategies that support cultural diversity and awareness in schools. They also form the background and foundation on which this research is based. There are relatively few studies that are published that involved primary schools and what the impact of language planning has on cultural sensitivities and cultural awareness, and fewer still on studies that investigate the Singapore context.

#### 2.4 CCE MTL Syllabus

In 2021, the Ministry of Education, Singapore (MOE) rolled out a new syllabus for CCE MTL to start implementation at 2022 gradually starting from Primary 1. This provided an interesting perspective as the gradual implementation meant that other levels were studying based on the former syllabuses as appended in the Table 1.

Table 1: Schedule of Implementation

	New Syllabus (2022)	Former Syllabus (2012)
2022	Primary 1	Primary 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2023	Primary 1, 2	Primary 3, 4, 5, 6
2024	Primary 1, 2, 3	Primary 4, 5, 6

This is an interesting study as at the time of this research, the school has already clocked in three years of implementation of the new syllabus at Primary 1, 2 and 3, while the former syllabus is being phased out at Primary 4, 5 and 6. There is basis for comparison in terms of how the new syllabus is implemented compared to the use of the former syllabus at other levels.

CCE MTL forms part of the explicit teaching and learning of moral values. Delivered by MTL teachers, students learn the values taught through cultural stories, practices, songs, idioms, and proverbs unique to each MTL. For students who offer the non-Tamil Indian Languages or are exempted from taking MTL, CCE lessons are taught in English.

Values are better internalised when students' daily life experiences are used as contexts to make the learning more relevant and meaningful (Arthur, 2019). This helps students to apply the skills, values and attitudes in authentic and meaningful situations. At the end of the CCE MTL program, students are expected to:

- i. put good values into practice
- ii. be responsible in their actions
- iii. cultivate good communication and social skills
- iv. develop good habits because of consistently doing what is right and good
- v. promotes harmony and social cohesion in a multiracial and multi-religious society

The framework of the CCE MTL Syllabus outlines how students learn values through three overarching ideas, namely Identity, Relationships and Choices in six domains, starting with self and extending to the family, school, community, nation and the world. Table 2 below shows the Core Values, the 3 Big Ideas and the Expanding Domains in the CCE syllabus.

Table 2: Core Values, 3 Big Ideas and Expanding Domains in the CCE syllabus

Core Values	3 Big Ideas	Domains	
Respect	Identity	Self	: Being who I am and becoming who I can be
Responsibility	Relationships	Family	: Strengthening family ties
Resilience	Choices	School	: Fostering healthy friendships and team spirit
Integrity		Community	: Understanding our community and building an inclusive society
Care			
Harmony		Nation	: Developing a sense of national identity and nation building
		World	: Being an active citizen in a globalised world

The 3 Big Ideas, Identity, Relationships and Choices, are core concepts of the syllabus. They are interconnected and impact one another in that firstly, through Identity, students need to know who they are to relate positively with others. Secondly, through Relationships, students forge their identity and consider the choices they make. Finally, through Choices, students master the ability to make good choices impacts their understanding of their own identity and the relationships they form.

### 2.5 *Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs) Syllabuses*

Bilingual education in English and the MTLs is a fundamental aspect of Singapore's education system. The approach that MOE adopts encompasses three primary objectives, namely, communication, culture, and connection. These objectives are designed to equip students with essential language skills, cultural understanding, and a sense of identity and belonging.

The first objective, communication, emphasizes the importance of proficiency in MTL as a valuable 21st-century competency for life and work. Mastery of MTL provides Singaporeans with a competitive edge in Asia. The goal is to nurture a positive attitude towards MTL and to develop students' confidence and competence in using the language. This involves acquiring six key language skills: listening, reading, speaking, writing, spoken interaction, and written interaction, along with essential language knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, and cultural references.

The second and third objectives focus on culture and connection. Learning MTL helps students appreciate their unique identity through an understanding of their culture, traditions, literature, and history, which is crucial for preserving cultural values and traditions. Additionally, proficiency in MTL allows students to connect with their heritage and fosters a sense of belonging to Singapore. It also enhances their ability to engage with communities across Asia and the world who share the same language and cultural background, thereby promoting cross-cultural competency and global connectivity.

In this chapter, the researcher has chosen to focus on the CCE MTL and MTL syllabuses. However, the study has shown that integration with other subjects and programs is key in language planning to achieve outcomes in effectively teaching cultural sensitivities and heritage awareness. This will be covered in the chapter on Findings and Discussion.

## 3. Method

This study uses a qualitative case study approach. Firstly, using a semi-structured format, the researcher interviewed one CCE MTL teacher, named Alex (pseudonym to maintain confidentiality), who is actively involved in teaching and implementing the CCE MTL program in a primary school. The interview gathered insights into the practical implementation and perceived effectiveness of the program. The semi-structured format allowed for open-ended questions to go in-depth to gather detailed insights into their experiences with the CCE MTL program, focusing on language planning.

Secondly, the interview data was thematically analysed to identify patterns, trends, and insights regarding language planning and delivery of CCE MTL outcomes. This involved identifying recurring patterns, topics, or concepts that emerged from the data. The data analysis process for this study employed thematic analysis, following six-step process proposed by Creswell & Poth (2006), namely, Organizing, Coding, Generating Themes, Interpreting and Representing data. Thirdly, data was also collected through document analysis where the researcher examined the CCE MTL and MTL syllabuses to understand the role of language planning in the curriculum.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This chapter addresses the research questions that guided this study:

RQ1: How does the CCE MTL program facilitate language planning and its integration with cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness among students?

RQ2: What are the specific impacts of language planning in the CCE MTL program on students' language development, cultural sensitivity, and heritage awareness?

##### 4.1 Teaching Schedule

The research found that a fixed schedule that allows continuous adaptation plays a key role in facilitating language planning and its integration with cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness among students. Alex teaches Primary 5 CCE MTL in Malay Language under the former syllabus and Primary 1 CCE MTL in Malay Language under the new syllabus. In a typical week, Alex spends 3 periods (90 minutes) on CCE with each class. This transition highlights the need for teachers to adapt to changes in curriculum and teaching materials.

While schools have autonomy on how the 3 periods can be scheduled e.g. single periods held through the week, Alex's school has planned for the 3 periods to be together. According to Alex, the principal has agreed to this as 3 continuous periods will allow students and teachers to carry out needful activities like discussion, role-plays and hands-on activities adequately with minimal interruptions.

This is a wise decision as effective language planning is crucial for accommodating syllabus changes to enhance teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Gao & Zheng, 2021; Lee, 2020). Stability and preparation in teaching roles are essential for maintaining continuity in education (Zhang & Chan, 2019). Alex described how he used time to introduce case studies, stories, videos and role-plays in his classes. In a week, there is also schedule time during school hours, called time-tabled time (TTT) where Alex meets other colleagues teaching the same levels that he does. These designated sessions allowed for professional discussions with colleagues, and underscore the value of professional exchange and development, supporting improved teaching practices (Johnson & Golombek, 2020).

##### 4.2 Values-Centred Syllabus: Core of Education

The research also found that the CCE MTL curriculum is based on the three big ideas of Identity, Relationships, and Choices, focusing on developing core values and social-emotional competencies to cultivate a sense of purpose in students. The Core Values are: Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Integrity, Care, and Harmony (R3ICH) form the foundation of shared societal and national values.

The schooling environment nurtures personal character strengths, shared values, and civic values, such as cultural sensitivity, empathy, and respect for others' perspectives. Integrating a sense of purpose into students' identities is vital for their development and future transitions (Banks, 2016 & 2019). Purpose development starts at younger ages, helping students discover their values, strengths, and talents for meaningful application in their lives (Arthur, 2019). Alex's school has national and school values prominently displayed from the school lobby and throughout different locations to remind students, teachers and visitors what the school stands for in terms of values.

##### 4.3 Integration: Whole-School Approach

MOE emphasizes promoting multi-racial harmony, cultural sensitivities, and heritage understanding in primary schools. The new curriculum integrates cross-cultural literacy into the MTL component, for example, by comparing traditional foods from different cultures. Other subjects, school events, and community initiatives further support these goals.

Firstly, the Social Studies Curriculum focuses on appreciating Singapore's multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-religious society, fostering mutual respect and understanding (Chua & Rubdy, 2019). The art and music syllabuses are also aligned to CCE MTL in that elements of culture and heritage are woven into art and music lessons. For instance, in Alex's school, during art lessons, students learn how to design and create their own 'kolams'. A 'kolam' is a floor drawing made from colored flour or rice, and is used for ornamental or ceremonial design during traditional Indian festivities.

In Alex's school, during music lessons, students learn how to play the 'kompang', a traditional musical instrument among the Malay people used during celebrations. This musical instrument is originally from Arab, and is estimated had been brought by Muslim Indian traders to the Malay region in the era of Malacca sultanate, or by Arab traders through Java Island since the 13th century. Students also learn how to play the

ukelele, a four-stringed instrument which looks less like a miniature classical guitar. Although it is today associated with Hawaii, the ukulele has its roots in Portugal. Portuguese immigrants introduced the ukelele to Malacca, a well-known town in Malaysia, and the influence was further brought to Singapore among the Eurasian community.

Secondly, Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) provide practical opportunities for students to engage with different cultures through activities like cultural clubs, dance, music, and arts, promoting social integration (Vaish, 2020). Thirdly, cultural celebrations and observances are organized by the school to celebrate various cultural festivals, building cultural awareness and inclusiveness among students (Pakir, 2019). Fourthly, there are also school-based heritage programs that encourage students to explore their cultural backgrounds through field trips, projects, and presentations, instilling pride and appreciation for cultural heritage (Lee & Alsagoff, 2020).

According to Alex, his school faithfully celebrates the milestone festivals like Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Puasa, Deepavali with classroom activities, static displays at the school canteen, games at recess, games, quizzes and mini-concerts. Students, teachers and parent volunteers put up skits and performances, or help out with setting up of stalls to add to the festivities. During such festival commemoration days, students and teachers don traditional clothes to school.

Alex also accompanies his students to on heritage tours to places like Kampong Glam (Malay), Serangoon Road (Indian), and Chinatown Kreta Ayer Museum (Chinese). At these tours, there are trained facilitators who not only introduce the cultural significance but also conduct hands-on activities like Chinese calligraphy, food-tasting and making of handicrafts.

#### *4.4 Teachers as Role Models*

Teachers play a critical role in imparting values. They must embody the values they teach, stay updated with current trends, and ensure the relevance of their teaching content. Explicit strategies, group discussions, and role modeling are effective for teaching values (Allen & Rhind, 2019). Teachers' positive influence on students can significantly impact their learning and value internalization (Arthur, 2019).

#### *4.5 Teaching Strategies and Relatable Content*

Alex highlighted the importance of incorporating real-life experiences and current events into the curriculum. For example, with primary 5, Alex described how students shared that their definitions of honesty and respect for authority were different from their parents. In his class discussions, Alex realised that his students were largely influenced by social media, and that he needed to keep up with the times. He realised that his students did not conform to traditional values not out of rebellion or disrespect, but because definitions of values have evolved.

Alex now uses social media as talking points with his students. This approach makes lessons more interesting and helps students see practical applications, enhancing engagement and learning outcomes (Fredricks et al., 2016). The integration of cultural stories, festive celebrations, and traditional activities into the curriculum illustrates how cultural heritage can be preserved and taught in schools (Banks, 2019; Gay, 2018).

The findings highlight the importance of adapting to curriculum changes, integrating cultural heritage into teaching, addressing moral dilemmas, balancing religious influences with secular policies, and the critical role of teachers in modeling values. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges and strategies involved in teaching cultural sensitivities and heritage through Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) in a multicultural context.

## **5. Conclusion**

### *5.1 Summary of findings*

This study explored the role of Character and Citizenship Education in Mother Tongue Languages (CCE MTL) in fostering cultural sensitivity, heritage awareness, and language development among primary school students in Singapore. Through interviews, document analysis, and thematic analysis, several key findings emerged.

The CCE MTL program significantly contributes to language planning by integrating cultural narratives and practices into the curriculum. Teachers like Alex adapt their teaching strategies to incorporate cultural stories, traditions, and values, making the lessons more relatable and meaningful. This approach not only enhances language proficiency but also fosters a deep appreciation for students' cultural heritage.



The CCE MTL curriculum's focus on core values such as Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Integrity, Care, and Harmony (R3ICH) underpins the development of students' moral and social-emotional competencies. The structured framework, built around the three big ideas of Identity, Relationships, and Choices, provides a comprehensive approach to instilling these values.

The integration of CCE MTL with other subjects and school activities, such as Social Studies, Art, Music, and Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs), reinforces cultural awareness and sensitivity. Celebrating cultural festivals, organizing heritage tours, and involving students in hands-on activities further enrich their understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures.

Teachers play a crucial role in modeling and imparting values. Their ability to connect real-life experiences with teaching content, stay updated with current trends, and embody the values they teach significantly influences students' learning and value internalization.

### *5.2 Implications for Educators and Policymakers*

The findings underscore the importance of a well-structured and culturally responsive curriculum in promoting cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness. Educators and policymakers should enhance teacher training as continuous professional development for teachers is crucial to equip them with the skills and knowledge to effectively integrate cultural narratives and practices into their teaching. Continuous development also prepares schools to adapt quickly and relevantly to curriculum changes. This means providing adequate support and resources for teachers during curriculum transitions to help maintain the effectiveness of educational programs.

Educators and policymakers can also promote more cross-disciplinary integration as encouraging collaboration between different subject areas can provide a more holistic approach to cultural education, reinforcing the connections between language, culture, and values. They should enable schools to continue to organize cultural events, heritage tours, and other activities that promote cultural awareness and sensitivity among students.

### *5.3 Limitations of the Study*

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of CCE MTL in promoting cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study focused on a single primary school and included only one teacher's perspective. The findings may not be generalizable to all schools in Singapore. Secondly, the data was primarily collected through interviews and document analysis. Observations of classroom interactions and student feedback could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the program's impact. Thirdly, the reliance on self-reported data from the teacher may introduce bias. Future studies could include multiple teachers and a broader range of stakeholders, such as students and parents, to gain diverse perspectives.

### *5.4 Recommendations for Future Research*

Future research could address the limitations of this study by:

1. Expanding the sample size to include multiple schools and teachers to enhance the generalizability of the findings.
2. Incorporating a mixed-methods approach, including classroom observations, student surveys, and parent interviews, to gather a more comprehensive dataset.
3. Conducting longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of the CCE MTL program on students' cultural sensitivity, heritage awareness, and language development.
4. Exploring the perspectives of students and parents to understand the broader impact of the program on the school community.

By addressing these areas, future research can provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of language planning in education and its role in fostering cultural sensitivity and heritage awareness among students in Singapore. Language planning is essential for maintaining social cohesion and effective communication in multicultural societies. Effective leadership and administration who are learned in language planning will ensure the way forward for schools in Singapore in terms of educational policies and decision-making.

## **References**

Allen, G., & Rhind, D. (2019). Taught not caught: exploring male adolescent experiences of explicitly transferring life skills from the sports hall into the classroom. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(2), 188-200.

- Alsagoff, L. (2010). English in Singapore: Culture, capital and identity in linguistic variation. *World Englishes*, 29(3), 336-348. doi:10.1111/j.1467-971X.2010.01656.x
- Arthur, J. (2019). *Teaching values and citizenship across the curriculum*. Routledge.
- Banks, J. A. (2016). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching*. Routledge.
- Banks, J. A. (2019). *An introduction to multicultural education*. Pearson.
- Bebeau, M. J., & Monson, V. E. (2019). Guided by theory, grounded in evidence: A way forward for professional ethics education. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 24(3), 451-469.
- Bokhorst-Heng, W. D., & Wee, L. (2021). *Language policy and modernity in Southeast Asia: Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand*. Springer.
- Cavallaro, F., & Ng, B. C. (2021). Bilingualism and multilingualism in Singapore. In W. O'Grady & J. Archibald (Eds.), *Contemporary linguistic analysis: An introduction* (pp. 445-461). Pearson Canada.
- Chua, C., & Rubdy, R. (2019). Singapore's language policy and its globalized conceptions of citizenship. *Language and Education*, 33(4), 283-297. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2019.1578790>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Cummins, J. (2000). Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire. *Multilingual Matters*.
- de Cillia, R., & Busch, B. (2006). in *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics (Second Edition)*, 3(3), 317-345.
- Fishman, J. A. (2018). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Multilingual Matters.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59-109.
- Fredricks, J. A., Wang, M. T., Schall Linn, J., Hofkens, T. L., & Parr, A. K. (2016). *Using qualitative methods to develop a survey measure of math and science engagement*. *Learning and Instruction*, 43, 5-15.
- Gao, X., & Zheng, Y. (2021). *Language learning and teaching beyond the classroom: An introduction*. In X. Gao & Y. Zheng (Eds.), *Language Learning and Teaching Beyond the Classroom* (pp. 1-12). Routledge.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Gill, S. K. (2005). *Language policy in Malaysia: Reversing direction*. *Language Policy*, 4(3), 241-260.
- Goh, C. T., & Wee, L. (2020). *Language policy and planning in Singapore: Challenges and prospects*. Routledge.
- Hornberger, N. H. (2019). *Negotiating methodological rich points in the multilingual turn: Critical ethnography and linguistic anthropology in education*. In M. Martin-Jones & D. Martin (Eds.), *Researching multilingualism: Critical and ethnographic perspectives* (pp. 1-21). Routledge.
- Ikeda, M. (2023). *Citizenship Education in Singapore: Implementation of Character and Citizenship Education and Revised National Education*. In *Citizenship Education in the ASEAN Community* (pp. 203-214). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Johnson, D. C., & Ricento, T. (2019). *Language Policy and Planning: Theory and Practice*. Springer.
- Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2020). *Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy*. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(3), 316-328.
- Lee, C. L., & Phua, C. P. (2020). Singapore bilingual education: One policy, many interpretations. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 30(1-2), 90-114.
- Lee, H. L., & Alsagoff, L. (2020). *English in Singapore: Policies and prospects*. Springer.
- Lee, J. S. (2020). *Globalization and language education in the Asia-Pacific region*. Springer.
- Lee, K. W., & Alsagoff, L. (2020). Heritage education in Singapore schools: Exploring the connection between past and present. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 26(6), 570-584.
- Leeman, Y., & Ledoux, G. (2018). *Cross-cultural education in multicultural societies: Critical reflections*.

Educational Review, 70(1), 25-38.

Leeman, Y., & Ledoux, G. (2018). Teachers on intercultural education and diversity. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 29(3), 229-240.

Lovat, T., Toomey, R., & Clement, N. (2021). *International research handbook on values education and student wellbeing*. Springer.

Merryfield, M. M. (2020). The difference global education makes. *International Journal of Social Education*, 21(1), 1-24.

Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore (2012) *Character & Citizenship Education (CCE) Syllabus Primary, Curriculum Planning and Development Division*.

Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore (2021) *Character & Citizenship Education (CCE) Syllabus Primary, Curriculum Planning and Development Division*.

Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore (2023) *Mother Tongue Languages Syllabus (Abridged) Primary One to Six, Curriculum Planning and Development Division*.

Mok, K. H. (2019). *Globalizing education policy: An agenda for education reform*. Routledge.

Nucci, L., & Narvaez, D. (2020). *Handbook of moral and character education*. Routledge.

Pakir, A. (2019). Cultural celebrations and school inclusivity: The Singapore experience. *Journal of Southeast Asian Education*, 1(2), 98-113.

Pakir, A. (2020). *Bilingual education policy in Singapore: A sociohistorical and linguistic perspective. Language Policy*, 19(2), 163-183.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world. *Teachers College Press*.

Sleeter, C. E. (2018). Critical multiculturalism and multicultural education. In G. Ladson-Billings & W. F. Tate (Eds.), *Education research in the public interest: Social justice, action, and policy* (pp. 39-61). *Teachers College Press*.

Tsuneyoshi, R. (2004). The "new" multi-cultural Japan: Exploring contemporary education within the context of an evolving national identity. *Comparative Education*, 40(1), 55-72.

Vaish, V. (2007). Bilingualism without diglossia: The Indian community in Singapore. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(2), 179-195.

Vaish, V. (2020). Co-curricular activities and cultural engagement in Singapore schools. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 40(1), 1-13.

Wee, L., & Goh, R. B. H. (2021). Language, space and cultural play: Theorizing affect in the semiotic landscape of Singapore. *De Gruyter Mouton*.

Wiley, T. G. (2015). Language policy and planning in Education. *The handbook of bilingual and multilingual education*, 164-184.

Zhang, Z., & Chan, P. W. (2019). *Multicultural education in Asia: Challenges, prospects, and practices in multicultural education*. Routledge.

#### **The Author (s):**

**David Yong Heng Sai** (<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8926-1435>), English Department, State University of Medan, Indonesia. E-mail: [davidloves2read@hotmail.com](mailto:davidloves2read@hotmail.com)