

Enthusiastic reviews and praise for “My Lifelong Challenge: Singapore's Bilingual Journey” by both foreign and local luminaries.

What they say:

Chua Tian Poh, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry chairman

Chinese community groups today have a better understanding and appreciation of the long-term benefits that the bilingual policy brings to Singapore and its people. As prime mover of the bilingual policy, Mr Lee Kuan Yew is the most authoritative person to elaborate on this issue that involves politics, culture and race and evokes complex emotions. This is a good book that deserves to be read by every Singaporean, particularly parents who are still undecided over how to create a positive second-language learning environment for their children.

Teo Siong Seng, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry president

In my 30 years of doing business, I feel most deeply how my bilingual education has influenced me. This book not only allows us to fully understand the government's painstaking formulation of the bilingual policy, it also leads us to respect all the more the extraordinary wisdom and foresight of former Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew. His tireless spirit in learning Chinese is worthy of emulation by the younger generation.

Chong Lit Cheong, CEO of CapitaLand Commercial

Many will say language is about communication. I feel it does more than facilitate communication. This book succinctly illustrates other facets of a language.... that it is about livelihood; about survival and most importantly, about knowing who we are.

Eddie Kuo Chen-Yu, Emeritus Professor, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University

Mr Lee's insight and persistence, and the imposition of his personal will, led to Singapore society becoming what some say is the largest and most complex language laboratory, providing rich examples for sociolinguistics and language planning studies. In addition, his recounting of his family background and his life experiences in learning several languages makes this book a fascinating read.

Malcolm Fraser, former prime minister of Australia

One of the great problems in today's world remains the divisions and discrimination that occurs between people of different race, colour and religion. Many countries have tried to solve the problems, the bitterness and even hatred that can arise from these historic differences.

A number have been successful in overcoming division, but none more so than Singapore which has a remarkable record in building one country with a common

language. Chinese, Malay and Tamil in Singapore regard themselves as Singaporeans to which they owe their allegiance.

Much of this is possible because respect is shown for their mother tongue by teaching Chinese, Malay and Tamil as a second language. They are not required to forget their past, to forget their earlier history. Policy shows not only respect for all Singaporeans, but also respect for their country of birth and their historic language.

Building the new Singapore from people speaking a variety of dialects and languages, to be what it is today, is a remarkable achievement. It addresses the problems of difference and overcomes them. It teaches respect, not only for what people are today but also for the past from which they came.

It is not necessarily an easy journey. This book reveals the drive, the single mindedness, the sense of purpose and of nation building which made it all possible.

George H.W. Bush, former president of the United States

In my long life in public service, I have encountered many bright, able people. None is more impressive than Lee Kuan Yew. His book regarding Singapore's journey towards bilingualism will be widely accepted by men and women of all nationalities.

Tung Chee Hwa, former Chief Executive of Hong Kong

Mr. Lee's vision, leadership and persistence have made bilingualism - never an easy goal anywhere in the world - a cornerstone of Singapore's success. The ability to speak English and Mandarin gives most Singaporeans today an unparalleled competitive advantage in capitalising on the opportunities in an emerging Chinese economy.

Bob Hawker, former Australian prime minister

For anyone seriously interested in Asia - and the essentials of good leadership - this book is a must read.

The fascinating story by one of Asia's greatest leaders tells how he and his colleagues achieved a fundamental restructuring of language teaching and usage in Singapore - creating for its people greater social cohesion and competitiveness in a world increasingly exposed to Mandarin.

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Thailand

I consider myself lucky to have opportunities to learn directly from Mr Lee Kuan Yew by conversing with him in English. Now that I am studying Chinese, he sometimes prefers to talk to me in Chinese.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew is known to the world as one of the greatest statesmen. And above all it is undeniable that he is the person who knows Singapore the most. With his keen insight, Mr Lee Kuan Yew always realizes the power of knowing many languages. This is evident throughout his present work, and one statement in particular supports this idea: "if you only know one language, you

can only have a limited social circle and have no chance to expand it. You cannot understand the lives of fellow citizens of other races".

Mr Lee Kuan Yew's lifelong experiences and dedication to Singapore shine vividly in the book. It gives ample and best detailed insight on how he wished to educate Singapore. His multifarious perspectives in this book will be of great benefit to education and educationists of Singapore and beyond. His experiences and perspectives are the inexhaustible source of inspiration for all walks of life.

By encouraging the Singaporean to be educated in English, he has made Singaporean global. By introducing Mandarin to Singaporean life, he has opened up the opportunities to the new century in which Chinese will be the dominating language.

I sincerely wish for the success of Mr Lee Kuan Yew's devotion of time and effort in producing this splendid exposition.

Helmut Schmidt, former German chancellor

Ever since I have met my friend Lee Kuan Yew, I was highly impressed by his brilliant intellect and his straight overview. His life-time achievements as a political leader and statesman are outstanding. The economic and social advancement of modern Singapore is deeply rooted in his capability to establish an adequate political framework for Singapore's ethnical heterogeneity. This book is yet another proof of his perspicacity and competence.

Sir Richard Sykes, chairman of the Royal Institution of Great Britain

This book by former Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew gives a fascinating insight into an essential ingredient of the genesis of modern Singapore. The recognition of the need for a common language in a polyglot society and that the language must be English was a stroke of genius. However, implementing the vision against tenacious resistance required strong leadership, courage and commitment, all of which come through very clearly in the book. The impact of that decision and its implementation has been far reaching in making Singapore a formidable competitor in the world today.

Jack Ma, chairman, CEO and founder of Alibaba Group

Minister Mentor Lee provides great insight into the intersection of language, culture and values and the role they play in the success of individuals as well as nations.