Excerpt 3

A last example shows Singh again at another rally as he addresses public unease over overcrowding due to immigration policies in Singapore.

1	Singh:	So far the government has interpreted these trade-offs in
2		economic terms. This is a relevant consideration, but there are
3		<u>many</u> other considerations that the government looks to- needs
4		to look into, because they are related to the <u>quality</u> of our life.
5		<u>Especially</u> (.) if the government has some plan (.) to increase
6		the population to seven (.) or <u>eight</u> (.) or *don't know how many*
7		*million.*
8		(7.2) ((jeers from crowd))
9	Singh:	Our elites (1.4) may enjoy themselves, in the gardens of their
10		landed properties but the rest of us rely on public spaces to
11		relax and rejuvenate. The PAP elites do not see, and <u>feel</u> the
12		reality of a large number of foreigners and migrants in HDB
13		estates on a daily basis, but ordinary Singaporeans DO!

Singh, in lines 1-4, informs the audience that the government's (PAP) policies on population and immigration has always put growth of the economy as their priority. The population policy paper (Population White Paper) released in February 2013 was seen as the government calling for an increase of Singapore's population from the then-5.4 million to 6.9 million by 2030[7], drawing a huge backlash of reaction from Singaporeans that resulted in rare public mass protests (Koh, 2013). Singh gives an explanation for why he disagrees with the white paper, saying that the government needs to think about the impact such a large population might have on the quality of life for Singaporeans. In line 5, he then adds a comment on the white paper itself, saying 'Especially if the government has some plan to increase the population to seven, or eight, or don't know how many million'. Here, Singh is exaggerating for rhetorical effect, pausing after 'seven' and 'eight', accompanying each number with an upward push of his hand to indicate the number going higher and higher. With *'don't know how many million'*, he uses syntax not associated with SSE, but more usually with Singlish. Singh shows his disapproval through the utterance, but also manages to insinuate that the PAP do not care for the common Singaporean, and population policies are at the PAP's whim and fancy. Indeed, after the jeering from the crowd, Singh continues in SSE, separating the 'elites' from the 'rest of us', the 'PAP' from the 'ordinary Singaporean', positioning himself with the audience.

As we can see from the excerpts above, deviating from SSE into utterances that contain recognizable Singlish elements during specific moments to laugh at or dismiss the PAP is a systematic and repeated strategy that defines the opposition politician performance. I have shown that both Singh and Low find explicit solutions to manage the tension between distinctive, even contrastive indexical fields. They profit from the bivalent relationship between English and Singlish features of speech, and purposefully mix semiotic resources to simultaneously index different social meanings in the English and Singlish indexical fields. Thus, this particular practice of *mixing* by the WP members, motivated by ideologies surrounding SSE and Singlish, is what solidifies their position as opposition party politicians in a one-party Singapore, and is what carries *interactional meaning*. The overall impression, or the 'overall effect of using a code-switching style', is what is 'tactically exploited for group identifications (Alvarez-Caccamo 1998:36-37), and not just the individual stances that are taken when speakers alternate into different codes.

4 Conclusion

This paper has uncovered the patterned strategies of code-switching used by Singaporean opposition politicians, and how they are constrained and afforded by language ideology. Having competency in SSE holds overt prestige and is indexical of high education and ability to lead but is also indicative of an elite, ruling party politician.

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[7] All Worker's Party Members-of-Parliament in the House voted against the motion to endorse the Government's White Paper on Population. The motion passed 77-13 on 8 February 2013 (Yahoo News Singapore, 2013).

Singlish, being seen on the opposite end of the pole to SSE, can point to localness and community membership. In managing the tension between these ideological poles, WP politicians vary their performance in order to be able to benefit from both indexical fields. Through the data analysis, I hope to have shown in studying linguistic variation, it is crucial to recognize the multiplexity of relationships between the ideologies of language varieties, and how these various amalgamations are managed locally leading to emergent identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

In studying language use by Barack Obama, Alim and Smitherman found that Obama's success lies in his linguistic awareness as well as his ability to 'style-shift' in different situations. This quote below summarizes this succinctly:

> 'Barack Obama's mastery of White mainstream ways of speaking, or "standard" English, particularly in terms of syntax, combined with his mastery of Black culture's modes of discourse, in terms of style, *was an absolutely necessary combination* for him to be elected America's first Black president' (Alim & Smitherman, 2012:20, emphasis added).

Similarly, Worker's Party politicians in Singapore had to master two modes of discourse, and within the Singaporean context, combine them in ways that allow for them to be seen as 'not too elite like the PAP, but not too uneducated' at the same time. Also, just as Alim and Smitherman's monograph on Obama's style-shifting highlights that race in America is often viewed through linguistic lens, this paper also comments on how sensitivity to class issues are often reflected through the way people manage their linguistic resources in Singapore.

4.1 Bivalency and simultaneous indexicalities

Hybrid languages like Singlish problematize our traditional understandings of code-switching, that alternation happens between two distinct codes. The data provides supports that we should see multilingualism as a host of semiotic resources (Blommaert, 2010) - resources that can simultaneously belong to more than one linguistic system, and more than one indexical field. I have adopted Woolard's (1998) concept of *bivalency* to explain why the defining a traditional 'language switch' between English and a hybrid language like Singlish is hard to make. Speakers are able to utilize the potential bivalencies between English and Singlish forms to simultaneously index alternative and sometimes contrasting social meanings. This blurs the lines between what is traditionally acceptable in the public sphere and what may not be, and most importantly, the artful mixing produces new ideologies through language use. In the case of Singapore English, our understanding of what the mix is might best be approached through our understanding of ideology. Such hybrid performances, where lines between one language and the next are more categorically ideological than they are grammatical, question the way we analyze linguistic practices, and encourage a deeper look into classical methods of language description. In the paradigm shift towards a superdiverse (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011) view of the world, communities of practice such as Singapore provide an insight into the linguistic dynamics of multilingual spaces.

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