

Re: Half of all Chinese people can't speak Mandarin!

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- *From:* "Dylan Sung" <dylanwhs.tsktsktsk@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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"Austin P. So (Hae Jin)" <nobody@xxxxxxxx> wrote in message [news:d7h282\\$b0o\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:d7h282$b0o$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

> Lee Sau Dan wrote:

>>>>>>"Tak" == Tak To <takto@xxxxxxxx> writes:

>>

>> Even better: avoid such a complicated construction. That sentences

>> can be broken down into simpler sentences, making it much more

>> intelligible and removing the ambiguity:

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>> China has 1.3 billion people. 53 percent of them can speak

>> Mandarin. But many of these are not frequent Mandarin users.

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>> Or:

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>> Many people who can speak Mandarin are not frequent users of

>> the language. They constitute 53 percent of the Chinese

>> population of 1.3 billion.

>>

>>

>> The simpler, the better. Less is more.

>

> And so literary licence goes out with the bath water...of course, that

> is why you are a programmer and not a journalist, hmmm?

Some journalists as a group do a good job sometimes. However not all journalists do a good job all the time. I suspect that this is just a case of sloppy journalism. If the total population of China is 1.3 billion, I would not expect everyone to speak Mandarin, many people in Qinghai or Tibet for instance. If the journalist was worth his salt, he would have said of the total number of Mandarin speakers (... corollary), and not introduce the entire population into it, as only a large proportion of that 1.3 billion do speak some form of Mandarin.

> I personally do not see the ambiguity that (many of) you seem to think

> exists. And I don't think that replacing "who" with "that" changes

> anything...

>

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> "...many (of the 53 percent (of China's 1.3 billion people)(who can  
> speak Manda