

Rising demand with home-based learning



(From far left) PAP Community Foundation's senior Tamil language specialist Rajendran Padhmavathi, Malay language specialist Sanesa Salleh and senior Chinese language specialist Qian Xiaoli.

ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

Source: The Straits Times © SPH Media Limited. Permission required for reproduction

FROM C1

The series comprises more than 100 titles covering content ranging from feelings and manners to local festivities and cultural norms.

Mr Yeoh says buyers of such books are mainly parents with pre-school children.

The rising demand could be attributed to increased home-based learning and work-from-home arrangements, in which parents spend more time with their kids, he adds.

Home-grown company Armour Publishing says some titles in its English children's series Timmy And Tammy by local author Ruth Wan-Lau were translated into Chinese in 2017 and Malay in 2019, with support from the Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism.

More than 280,000 copies in the series, which started with 10 titles in 2014, have been sold. This includes about 70,000 copies of the translated versions.

The series has grown to 37 titles in English, with 10 translated into Chinese and six into Malay.

Armour Publishing plans to translate some of its other locally produced children's series into mother tongue languages, says Ms Dorothy Kang, its senior editor.

"Through reading stories they can relate to and talk about with their family and friends, children learn vocabulary that is applicable in their everyday lives, and gain confidence and mastery in the language," she adds.

Mr Tan Kwang Liang, who has

two daughters aged four and six, says he noticed that his older girl's Chinese language improved after she spent time reading in school.

The 40-year-old operations manager says: "She can recognise words in Chinese and we can have a simple conversation in the language."

His daughters attend full-day childcare at NFC's My First Skool centre in Fernvale.

While reading is important, he says, his girls do not naturally gravitate towards books in their mother tongue.

"We've a lot more hand-me-down books in English from friends and family, and the Chinese books we have aren't suitable for pre-school level," he says.

Having more books in Chinese for the younger ones with familiar landmarks and content will help to spark interest and curiosity about the language, he adds.

ateng@sph.com.sg