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## No more *lahs*, please

Woe to the individual who calls the Speak Good English Movement a "campaign" in front of Mr David Wong.

The chairman of this year's movement insists that it is "a group of like-minded individuals channelling efforts towards a larger cause".

This year's tag line reads: "Speak Well. Be Understood."

In its fourth year, this year's instalment was launched yesterday by the Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, Dr Lee Boon Yang, at Woodlands Regional Library.

Dr Lee spoke about the need for Singaporeans to create "an environment in which speaking good English is the norm".

He also emphasised the need to be understood by "fellow English speakers around the world".

Similarly, Mr Wong hopes that there will be a "Singaporean brand" of English that is not pidgin, which native English speakers and people around the world can identify with and understand.

Good English is defined as "grammatically correct," with "rules for constructing

sentences ... strictly adhered to and avoiding words and phrases from local dialects and Malay".

The movement believes that this can be achieved by convincing people that speaking good English is about "speaking simply and clearly" and "having a good reading habit".

The National Library Board (NLB) will be the main coordinator of this year's movement, together with its partners: The Society for Reading and Literacy, the British Council and the Julia Gabriel Speech and Drama Centre.

The programmes include workshops and activities on reading and speaking and Wish (Women Learning English), a free 12-unit course that teaches English to women here.

Ms Jennifer Yin, director of community and international relations at the NLB, said that they are developing the programmes.

"A lot of it is messaging," she said. "It is not our job to teach people how to speak good English. Our job is to point them to where they can do so."

— *Teng Qian Xi*