

Headline	Stringent bilingual policy gets in students' way		
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Stringent bilingual policy gets in students' way

I REFER to the report on the Speak Good English Movement. I believe that it will not progress very far simply because, faced with four official languages and a stringent bilingual policy in education, there is no real need to speak good English.

Presently, I am having a tough time correcting the grammatical errors my son picked up in Primary 1 from his schoolmates, which is compounded by him having to also speak Mandarin, which is tense independent.

So to him, and to many adult speakers, "Last week I eat chicken rice" is perfectly all right and understandable as, in Mandarin, which the speaker is probably

unconsciously using, it makes sense.

Recently I learnt about the history of a well-known mission school. Apparently when the school was first started with a handful of students, the sons of local businessmen, English superseded Mandarin after a few months, and became the sole reason that parents sent their children there.

During that time, the colonial masters did not give any leeway to bad English and insisted on a level close to, if not at, the level spoken in London.

If English were to be spoken well, even if spoken simply, it must start with the government institutions which deal with the public. Once the frontline staff communi-