

Headline	Bad English is the easy option		
Date	15 July 2003		
Media Title	Streets	Section	Vocal
Page No	17	Size	1colx19cm

Bad English is the easy option

MR Philip Lee made some pertinent points in his commentary, "Fix the grammar, then talk..." (Streets, July 11).

His observation of the fractured English inundating street interviews aired on television is a case in point.

It does seem to me that grammar is indeed the medication, as Mr Lee suggested, for the ailment.

This can be taught in school from Primary 1 or revised to inculcate, to a deeper extent, the absorption of the rules of grammar, which at present appears to be like water off a duck's back.

The difficulty of inculcation, however, lies in this: that broken English has been used for so long and by so many that, like smokers, the users have developed an addiction to this brand of the language.

It will be very hard for the Speak Good English campaigners to teach this category of people who have no desire to speak correct English.

I fear that they also have no desire to learn it.

The campaign has to compete with low-level English, which is, to many, the easier version to speak – without much effort, and with almost nothing to learn except the English words used.

Like water, the man in the street, and even his children in school, will be tempted to take the path of least resistance – downhill.

– Dudley Au]