

<b>Headline</b>	Let's make effort to speak well		
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## TOWARDS GOOD ENGLISH

# Let's make effort to speak well

**I** THANK readers for their letters and comments with regard to the Speak Good English Movement. It is a pleasure to see such passion for the English language.

The movement encourages the usage of good English as part and parcel of Singaporeans' everyday lives. This year, we go back to basics. Our message, as Mr Anthony Lee ("What kills good English"; ST, July 5) has rightly pointed out, is to keep it simple: "You don't have to use big words to speak good English."

One of the ways we can encourage those less comfortable with speaking English is to reassure them that it is not difficult to speak

good English. It can be done by using simple words and sentence structures. For those already comfortable speaking in English, using simple and clear language ensures that others can understand us.

This is best demonstrated in scenarios where business and legal jargon apply. As Mr Neo McKeena has pointed out, many "long-winded and confusing documents — but legally binding — ... result in most people signing on the dotted line without reading them" ("Simplify business usage"; ST, July 16).

Mr Michael Loh believes that our bilingual policy hinders us from speaking good English ("Stringent bilingual policy gets in students' way"; ST, July 5). In

developed societies such as the Netherlands, the bilingual policy ensures that the Dutch are able to achieve high proficiency in English and their native tongue.

Singapore can achieve the same result if we continue to encourage the use of good English by everyone, especially those in positions of influence — parents, teachers and all customer-facing personnel.

Mr Yap Kwan Szu ("It all starts with teachers"; ST, July 16) will be glad to know that the Ministry of Education is an active partner of The Speak Good English Movement and is promoting the message of good English in schools.

We agree with Mr Arvin Gopal (ST, July 16) that

Singlish is sometimes understood as ungrammatical English. The use of ungrammatical English should not be encouraged.

Our Speak Good English Movement therefore aims to promote the use of good English. This is key to our global competitiveness and our growth as a young nation.

Mr Loh's recommendation that speaking good English "must start with government institutions that deal with the public" is a sound and timely one. NewsRadio 93.8FM, one of our partners, is in the midst of preparing a fortnightly e-newsletter, English@Work, to help employees improve their use of English in the workplace. We aim to promote this e-newsletter

through the human-resource departments of organisations. English@Work will be launched at the end of this month. Those interested can subscribe to it at [www.newsradio.com.sg](http://www.newsradio.com.sg), free of charge. For more information on where and how one can learn English, please visit our website, [www.goodenglish.org.sg](http://www.goodenglish.org.sg)

Speaking good English boils down to our attitude towards learning and self-improvement. We all need to make the effort. One day, we will get there.

**DAVID WONG**  
Chairman  
The Speak Good English  
Movement