

Headline	Singapore turns to rap and hip-hop		
Date	13 May 2005		
Media Title	Associated Press	Section	
Page No		Size	

Singapore turns to rap and hip-hop

SINGAPORE (AP) - Singapore's prime minister launched the country's latest behaviour modification campaign on Friday, urging teachers to use hip-hop and rap music to teach proper English and warning that continued use of the mutated local form of the language could make Singaporeans unintelligible.

"Speak in a normal Singapore tone, which is neutral and intelligible," Lee Hsien Loong said. "But speak in full sentences, with proper sentence structure and cutting out all the 'lahs' and 'lors' at the end of each sentence."

Lee was referring to two words commonly added to the end of sentences in "Singlish" - a mishmash of English and local dialects.

"Can or not? I think can," he said, using another commonly used phrase in Singlish.

The city-state is well known for its numerous social engineering campaigns, most of which are government-backed. Singapore in the past has urged its citizens to wave at fellow motorists, flush public toilets, be more romantic and arrive at wedding receptions on time.

Lee urged teachers to use "pop songs, hip-hop and rap as mediums for teaching good English."

"If our English becomes too mutated, then we become unintelligible to others," he said. "If we speak in a dialect which only some Singaporeans can understand, then we are handicapping ourselves and cutting ourselves off from the rest of the world."

The administration began waging war on Singlish in 2000 and attacked the country's most popular TV character, Phua Chu Kang, blaming his use of Singlish for a rise in bad grammar among citizens.

Critics have denounced the numerous behavioural campaigns as Orwellian and condescending.