

Headline	Our English no standard, lah!		
Date	20 May 2005		
Media Title	Today	Section	Commentary
Page No	46	Size	5colx



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CITIZENS of this glorious planet, now hear this. It has come to our attention that a significant number of you have been speaking in The Forbidden Tongue.

Let me remind you that if you do not speak the same English as the rest of the galaxy, that is Standard English, the Trade Federation and other members of this great Empire will not be able to understand you.

We are a developed and civilised member of the galaxy. We are not one of those outer-rim planets, where they speak a kind of Pidgin English that has almost destroyed their economic development.

The Forbidden Tongue, or Singlish as it is called in the vulgar vernacular, has to be destroyed!

We need soldiers who can fight the global battle of prosperity and growth.

And Standard English is our weapon.

It is with this mission that we have created a Committee and a Campaign, led by an esteemed scholar and teacher of the Standard Tongue.

Look at her credentials and shudder. You cannot hope to win in any linguistic duels with her, so do not even think of trying.



Surely, the Committee we have gathered before you is enough to make you quiver in fear and trepidation.

And yet, we still hear The Forbidden Tongue spoken in popular culture and that cesspool of anarchy, the Internet.

This must not be! As our slogan goes, "Think in English, Speak in English." Have you not seen our banners?

The problem, I think, is because you misguided citizens actually think in – I hate to even say the word – "Singlish"! Your thoughts are filled with *lahs*, *leh*s and the wrong use of the word "take".

It is a blight upon our fair nation.

Just because you are Singaporeans does not mean you can appropriate a glorious language like English and make

it your own.

The other English-speaking planets of the Western quadrant, prosperous as they are, do not do this.

Have you ever heard of American English, Australian English or Irish English?

Of course not.

They all speak Standard. I am sure that those of you who have had the privilege to speak to a member of the Australian planet, have understood everything they say in their accent.

We have also looked into how to teach English creatively in classrooms.

We are going to be truly radical in our approach.

Even popular music and the language of the Hip and the Hop shall be deemed appropriate for the teaching of Standard.

Look at hip-hop and rap. Who does not understand what "gettin' jiggy with it" means?

Why can't we learn from this colourful street language and use it to improve our

Standard English?

As a famous diplomat once said in a United Nations meeting: "I is be sick of da blog-hatin' and playah-dissin', you gotta be a playah, not a playah-hatah."

"Word. Don't trip a playah jus cuz. Best believe all dem hatahz gon be talking mess and bitin your style. Jus tell dem hatahz to get sucka-free or get outta heah."

"So come on, all y'all, Don't hate! Playa 'preciate! "One love. Peace out."

Did you not understand every word in that passage? Of course, you did.

Because hip-hop is very close in spirit to Standard English.

We looked upon it and it was Good.

The reason why we have Standard English is because the Keepers of the Language have been keeping it pure.

Purity is the key to global understanding. Language is not some growing, living thing that borrows and morphs from the cultures it comes into contact with.

No. That is the sort of liberal nonsense spouted by those who seek to make English impure.

That is why Singlish is banned on our airwaves and TV programmes. We cannot have children learning this bastard tongue.

However, it is still fine to watch American programs where their actors speak with their New York dialects and Texan drawls.

We may not understand every word they say.

But we allow it because it is dramatic license, because that is

how their people speak English on their streets. Our children will not be affected by these localised Western derivatives of English.

Not so with Phua Chu Kang and some local DJs. If we allow this localised Singapore English to be popularised by local celebrities, young children may think it is appropriate to use Singlish for ALL occasions too.

We do not mind if they pick up American slang and terms, because at least, they will be able to become MTV VJs and local radio DJs. But there is simply no economic value in picking up Singlish.

Just like we allow shows from overseas that depict corrupt American policemen or corrupt American politicians, but we do not allow any that depict corrupt Singapore policemen and politicians.

People might believe these dramatisations are real and we cannot allow that.

So once more, I exhort you, citizens of this fine planet, to heed our wisdom.

We know best.

We are not trying to tell you what to think.

But just remember our slogan whenever you find yourself slipping into Singlish: "Think in English. Speak in English."

Or we may be forced to make a New Law. And you know you will not like it when we use The Iron Fist.

mr brown is the accidental author of a popular website that has been documenting the dysfunctional side of Singapore life since 1997.

He is now terrified to use Singlish, leh.