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Tessa Wong  
News Reporter

## Singlish as it is spoken

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Tessa Wong listens in as Lim Boon Heng recounts his English lessons.

WHEN Mr Lim Boon Heng first went to school, English was a problem for him.

The minister in the Prime Minister's Office told reporters at the launch of this year's Speak Good English Movement yesterday that he skipped nursery and kindergarten as a kid, and hopped straight to primary school.

Problem was, he came from a Teochew-speaking home, and his English barely passed muster.

As luck would have it, he had an English teacher who loved to tell stories to the class.

"He was so captivating that at the end of each story, we would ask him for more," Mr Lim told reporters yesterday.

"So he would tell us, you like stories? Well there's so many books with so many stories. Learn to read, and then you can have as many stories as you want."

"And that's how it kindled my interest in the language, and I read and read, and improved my English."

But while Mr Lim was a good ambassador for The Cause – speaking good English – several who attended yesterday's event, held at the restaurant Lawry's The Prime Rib, were decidedly less so.

As cameramen jostled to decide the best spot to get a shot of the minister, one pointed to a giant portrait of a regal-looking woman and piped up: "Aiyah, do there, lor."

So much for speaking proper English.



Queen's English?  
ST photo

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