

Headline	Speak well? 4 in 10 says 'no need'		
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Description	<p>When it comes to speaking good English, Singaporeans will put in more effort if they are talking to their superiors, business associates and customers, but less so when conversing with family members and friends. This is what a survey conducted last November by Singapore Polytechnic, involving some 1,200 Singaporeans aged between 15 and 39, found. Mr Goh Eck Kheng, chairman of the Speak Good English Movement, believes this group will be "motivated to speak better English and communicate better" when more of their bosses and colleagues do so.</p>		

GOOD ENGLISH

Speak well? 4 in 10 say 'no need'

S'poreans will speak better in front of bosses, but not with family or friends

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WHEN IT comes to speaking good English, Singaporeans will put in more effort if they are talking to their superiors, business associates and customers, but less so when conversing with family members and friends.

This is what a survey conducted last November by Singapore Polytechnic, involving some 1,200 Singaporeans aged between 15 and 39, found.

Mr V Maheantharan, director of Singapore Polytechnic's School of Business, said: "Singaporeans are practical people. It makes sense to communicate well at work, but some of us don't want to come across as stand-offish if we speak proper English in an informal setting. This is a view we want to change."

Two in three respondents claimed their standard of English had improved over the past two years, and almost all rated their English as above average.

But when it came to rating other people, service staff scored the lowest. Clients,



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business associates and bosses took top honours for standards of English, and were voted to have the most influence on respondents to speak good English (celebrities, family and friends, interestingly, garnered few votes).

While all respondents agreed that speaking proper English gives Singapore a competitive edge and allows us to retain a Singaporean identity, 40 per cent did not see the need to speak proper English — a view most strongly held among those between 25 and 29 (48 per cent).

Mr J Koh, 29, a logistics assistant, said: "I don't see how speaking proper English will help me earn more money. So why should I bother? As long as people understand me, it's enough."

But Mr Goh Eck Kheng, chairman of the Speak Good English Movement, believes this group will be "motivated to speak better English and communicate better" when more of their bosses and colleagues do so.

"Like any other language, what's needed is practice and consistency," he added.