



Radio shows can help banish Singlish

I REFER to the letter, "Citizens must play part in banishing Singlish" (*my paper*, May 25).

I agree strongly with the sentiments expressed.

Many people think that the accent makes Singlish what it is, but they have it wrong. It is the **grammar** and sentence structure that set Singlish apart.

Many adults take Singlish lightly, not aware that using it to communicate with their children would affect the kids' essay-writing skills.

I urge all adults to be more mindful of their use of Singlish and stop imparting it to the young.

Last Tuesday night, I was at a clinic when I heard a woman tell her son: "Ask your dad to run fast, our number is going to be reached."

That is the first time I have heard such a sentence. I would say: "Get your daddy here now, it will be our turn soon."

The issue is not about the speed of running, but that it would soon be the family's turn.

After I had seen the doctor, I went to a hawker centre and **overheard** a parent asking his children in Singlish: "What you want to call?"

He could have said "go order your food", if the kids were ordering their meals, or said "what

is your pick tonight", if he was ordering for them.

Both incidents show that many adults speak Singlish to their children.

They have difficulty in constructing a sentence that makes sense.

This could be a sign that the working environment here is filled with people speaking Singlish.

After all, if you are in an environment where people speak English, you would feel inferior and would try to maintain your **competency** in English, and use it at home as well.

We may have many educated Singaporeans, but look at how incompetent in English we are.

Parents are concerned about their children's education and invest in their studies.

However, all those investments would come to naught if Singlish surrounds the children all the time, from school to home. Their efforts would simply go down the drain.

Singlish need to be watched out for and banned.

We can save Singaporeans from being a laughing stock if more people are mindful about what they say, and are observant, so as to learn to pick up better-constructed phrases.

For that to work, our society needs to have more people

speaking English to help Singlish speakers improve their English competency.

One way is to have radio stations broadcast Singlish-to-English **translation** programmes, where commonly used Singlish phrases, as well as their equivalent English phrases, are featured.

For instance, a Singlish utterance like "you wait for me first. Later, after 10 minutes, I come back", can be translated to "give me 10 minutes and I'll be right back".

Programmes on radio stations are a great way to reach out to people.

MADAM LIM SIEW MEI

I was at a clinic when I heard a woman tell her son: 'Ask your dad to run fast, our number is going to be reached.'

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AN EXAMPLE OF A SINGLISH UTTERANCE AND ITS ENGLISH EQUIVALENT