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Uniqueness of Singlish does not mean we should tolerate it or be reluctant to curb its growth

I REFER to the letter, 'Time to get tough on problem of Singlish' by Mr Ng Ya Ken (ST, Aug 10). I agree with his views on the need for a more definitive solution to address the issue of poor English usage in Singapore.

Admittedly, Singlish may be unique to Singapore, and its usage may be limited to here but does this really mean we should tolerate it and be reluctant to curb its growth? I think not.

Singlish may be a substitute for spoken English here but we can know its problems only when we converse with people of different nationalities. I have had personal experience interacting with many foreigners and realise their discomfort at conversing normally with Singaporeans here.

Our image as a modern metropolitan city and a growing hub is tarnished by the use of such improper or 'broken' English. It serves only to hinder our development. Is this what we strive so hard to achieve?

It is not fitting to name this issue controversial, as Mr Ng rightly puts it. If we do not end this debate now, we may not find a solution soon and this will culminate in an inability to infuse proper English in the speech of our citizens.

I am not saying we have to carry out conversations in perfect English to rival native speakers, but just avoid grammatically incorrect English. As our 41st birthday passes, it is time to reconsider our use of language for the better of all of us.

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