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Singlish problem is about poor standard of spoken English

I applaud Ng Ya Ken's letter 'Time to get tough on problem of Singlish' (ST, Aug 10) and agree wholeheartedly with him.

Related to the problem of Singlish is the poor standard of spoken English in Singapore. As a mother of two young children currently attending a local pre-school, I have noticed my children picking up incorrect grammar and usage of English. I believe part of the problem is ignorance and the other, incorrect reinforcement.

In addition, there is currently not a sufficient emphasis on elocution. A friend from the United Kingdom some years back was confused when someone said, 'There are 'tree' people". I have heard the same mistake made by television presenters.

We laughed on that particular occasion but do we really want to be a laughing stock for others? I run the risk of demoralising my children by my constant correction of their incorrect English, which unfortunately is reinforced daily by similarly poor English spoken by others they come into contact with.

As Singapore aims to become more international, her people should aim to be clearly and correctly understood.

Unless we get tough on poor English, we run the risk of earning for ourselves a reputation of being a nation of sloppy English speakers.

I hope the government will take all these into consideration to improve the standard of English in Singapore.

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