

**SPEECH BY MR JASON LEOW, CHAIRMAN, SPEAK GOOD ENGLISH MOVEMENT
AT THE INSPIRING TEACHER OF ENGLISH AWARD CEREMONY, 4PM, TUESDAY,
1 OCTOBER 2024, AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, SINGAPORE**

Our Guest-of Honour, Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Manpower,

Ms Liew Wei Li, Director-General of Education, MOE,

Mr Lim Han Ming, Deputy Managing Editor, The Straits Times,

Our Principal Master Teachers and Master Teachers from the English Language Institute of Singapore,

Friends from the English Language and Literature Branch at CPDD2, MOE,

Winners, principals, nominees, ladies and gentlemen.

This is the 17th year of the Inspiring Teacher of English Award. In the last 16 years, we have acknowledged the exemplary contributions of 135 teachers across both categories – the Teaching Award and the Leadership Award.

Today, we want to celebrate eight more teachers for their dedication and passion as English Language teachers. Thank you to all the nominees, as well, for joining us in today's celebrations.

Every teacher here has something in common. Beyond imparting the technicalities of the English language, you are instrumental in promoting and creating conducive environments for the usage and practice of standard English. You provide our students with the grammar and vocabulary to express their thoughts and emotions, fostering open conversations, allowing them to become better communicators.

This is what the Speak Good English Movement is also about. The Movement's tagline, "Let's connect. Let's speak good English," encapsulates the essence of why we are here. This Movement promotes better understanding across cultures and borders through the use of good English.

The ability to speak good English opens doors and creates opportunities. It allows Singaporeans, whether they are job-seekers, professionals, linguists or tourists, to engage confidently with other communities here and around the world.

The Movement recognises that language is about context, and this brings me to an exciting new initiative of the Speak Good English Movement: our TikTok profile. Through this platform, we are reaching out to younger Singaporeans, connecting with them where they spend their time, highlighting a crucial aspect of language mastery: code-switching.

The ability to alternate between different languages or language varieties in conversation, is an important skill in our society. Our TikTok content showcases how to navigate between formal English in professional settings and other language varieties in casual contexts, as we hope to help teachers reinforce to students, the understanding that context will determine if you are a *speaker* or a *yapper*.

To our inspiring teachers of English: your role in this endeavour cannot be overstated. You are not just imparting knowledge; you are shaping the communicators of tomorrow. You have the twin responsibilities of nurturing both linguistic excellence and cultural sensitivity.

This year, we thank the National Library Board for hosting us once again at The Pod. This venue has become a home to our award ceremony. I hope we can continue to gather here for many more celebrations to come.

Our enduring partnership with The Straits Times as co-presenter, and the unwavering support from the Ministry of Education, deserve special mention. Your steadfast commitment to highlighting the often-overlooked contributions of our English teachers has been instrumental in elevating the status of language education in Singapore.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Dr Tay May Yin, Mr Cedric Leong and the Master Teachers at ELIS, as well as our colleagues at MOE CPDD, for the time taken to get to know and identify the exemplary educators we celebrate today. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.

I must also thank our very diligent secretariat at the National Heritage Board. Their efforts have been instrumental in keeping the Movement relevant in today's dynamic landscape.

Finally, I would like to thank Sarah, our 2022 ITEA award recipient, for graciously hosting today's award presentation and giving back to the alumni, of which everyone here is a part of.

In closing, I wish to convey my profound gratitude to every educator in this room. Your influence extends far beyond the classroom. May your passion for teaching and the English language continue to shine and inspire everyone around you.

Thank you for supporting the Speak Good English Movement.

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon.