

UMS strives to improve lecturers' command of English

NST 25.01.2007 P. 1&3
By MARRYAN RAZAN

TUARAN: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is still not satisfied with the English proficiency of many of its lecturers and will endeavour to improve their command of the language in order to produce more marketable students, says its vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Noh Dalimin.

"We are still not satisfied, as our lecturers come from two schooling systems i.e. national schools and English-medium schools.

"At one time we wanted everyone to follow the national system and many UMS lecturers were educated in that system, and were given exposure to English

just like their students.

"But our lecturers have masters' or doctoral degrees and many have studied overseas, so their mastery of English is better," he told reporters at a press conference here yesterday.

Mohd Noh said as English is an international language and the majority of reference sources are in English, it is vital that lecturers master it so that they can teach and learn in it, he said.

On the flip side, he added, there are also UMS lecturers whose English is good but whose command of Malay is weak, and they wish to improve their Malay.

On Tuesday, Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapha Mohamed revealed that a study

on the English proficiency of students and lecturers in public institutions of higher learning is being carried out as part of efforts to improve their standard of English.

Preliminary findings show students' English proficiency is unsatisfactory, and the universities have been directed to remedy the situation.

Of some 120,000 students surveyed last year, 29.2 per cent of them were placed in bands 1 and 2, the lowest proficiency levels in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET).

But Mohd Noh stressed that although lecturers also need to master English, it is only for certain fields.

"Not every lecturer needs to

be highly proficient in English, it depends on their subject, but in science, engineering and technology we expect them to have a good command of English," he said.

Mohd. Noh said the government's allocation to UMS of RM2.9 million for research and development (out of the RM6 million UMS applied for) would enable the university to improve its research capacity.

He also expressed the hope that more scientific expeditions into the state's interior could be organised to enable UMS to forge closer ties with rural communities.

UMS has some 12,380 students and 6,000 academic staff, including at its Labuan campus.



Vice chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Noh Dalimin dissatisfied with UMS lecturers' proficiency in English - page 3

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH