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Henry Bating

TELIPOK: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has launched the 5M Ethnic Language Module Innovation to expand the use of mother tongues among the younger generation of Dusunic, Murutic and Paitanic language families, recently.

Dean of the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning (PPIB), Prof. Datuk Dr. Ismail Ali, said the module innovation, implemented under the Knowledge Transfer Programme, aims to support the sustainability of mother tongues, which are valuable treasures of local wisdom in Sabah.

“This programme sets two main targets: the under-15 age group and the facilitator group,” he said during the launch ceremony held at Kg Lapasan, Telipok.

His speech was delivered by Dr. Daron Benjamin Loo, Deputy Dean of Research, Innovation and Community Service.

Dr. Ismail emphasised that the first target is to nurture a generation under 15 who possess knowledge of traditional gong-playing and classical songs, alongside skills

in listening, speaking, reading and writing in their ethnic language.

According to Dr. Ismail, the elements of the 5M are not merely about knowledge and skills but also serve as symbols of identity, creativity and generational connection to cultural heritage.

The second target, he said, is to produce a group of facilitators among trained ethnic language teachers who will act as key drivers in implementing the 5M Innovation through a “Tutorial in Community” concept.

“With well-trained facilitators, knowledge and culture can be transmitted systematically and effectively to the younger generation,” he added.

The programme was designed and pioneered by the Chairperson of the Kadazan-dusun Language Programme at UMS, Dr. Henry Bating, together with team members Florina Jumil, Brenda Olivera Well Joe-makker and Vurisia Fidelia Dadong.

The innovation integrates music and language arts modules based on the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR), where learning materials and difficulty

levels can be adapted according to Bloom’s Taxonomy and participants’ skill levels.

Through this knowledge transfer programme, the community tutorial series is conducted in three stages before being expanded to various ethnic groups according to their respective mother tongue dialects.

A total of 39 pupils from different schools in Kg Lapasan participated in the first series, which focused on Bundu, Liwan and Tangaa’ dialects. The three-hour session also included activities such as gong performances, singing and language practice.

Former Village Head Ponsius Solipat, who welcomed the programme, expressed confidence that participants would gain valuable artistic and linguistic skills to help sustain traditional arts showcased in various festivals, which have become key cultural tourism products.

The village-level organising committee was chaired by Domiun Sibir, assisted by Freddy Lojikim.