

Poll: 97% favour schooling in English

By HARIATI AZIZAN

KUALA LUMPUR: Ninety-seven per cent of people responding to a poll by *The Star* say they want English-medium schools to be re-introduced to enable Malaysia to integrate with the new global economy.

The 4,142 respondents favoured reviving such schools.

While 95% thought that the English-medium schools should not be limited to primary level, 87% felt it should be extended to the secondary level.

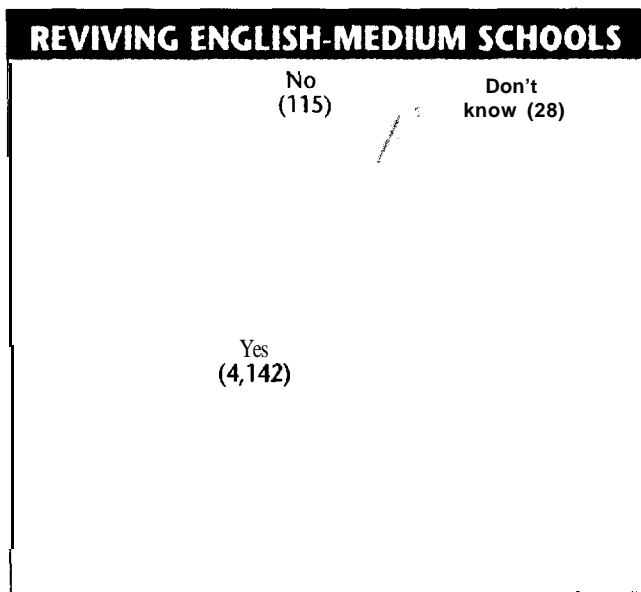
The poll showed that about 85% of the respondents believed English-medium

schools could become a reality, with 14% proposing a time frame of 10 years, 80% mooted five years and 5% undecided.

While 78% were confident that the move to improve proficiency in English would not be at the expense of students' proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia, 15% disagreed.

The poll was conducted in response to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's proposal that English-medium schools be re-introduced to help boost the standard of English in the country if the people wanted it.

But on Friday, the Umno supreme council rejected the



proposal and called for the teaching of Mathematics and Science subjects in English from primary school instead.

The poll also showed that 97% of respondents were in favour of having some subjects in English if there were no English-medium schools, with 94% asking for science-based subjects, 86% for Mathematics and Additional Mathematics, and 81% for Economics.

Or perhaps, another solution worth considering might be the introduction of a bilingual system in schools where students can have equal exposure to Bahasa Malaysia and

English.

The poll showed that 82% of respondents were open to the idea with 71% proposing that public exams like PMR (Form Three), SPM (Form Five) and STPM (Form Six) be offered both in Bahasa Malaysia and English for students to have a choice.

Interestingly, more than half of the respondents (60%) comprised those who went through a Malay-medium education in secondary school.

The poll, with its small sample, was in no way representative of the Malaysian public.