

'M'sia's English standards better than Singapore's'

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Faced with criticism over the country's falling standards in the English language, Deputy Education Minister P Kamalanathan today peddled a survey which he said showed Malaysians' command of English is in fact better than Singapore's.

Furthermore, Kamalanathan said, Malaysia is ranked number one among Asian countries.

"We are number one and you will be happy to know that behind us is Singapore.

"And this is not what I said. I've given you the reference point.

They give you a good explanation on how this research is done and where we are," he told a students' conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

He was referring to the English Proficiency Index which is done by Sweden-based EF Education First.

According to Kamalanathan, Education First is a research website which focuses on the usage of English in the business community among 65 countries in which English is not a native language.

"When we are doing well, we don't talk about it, but when we do something bad, everyone talks about it," he told students at the conference titled 'Moderation: Youth Empowerment and Education Towards Vision 2020' by What Youth Should Know.

'Only top managers can speak English'

Social activist Marina Mahathir (below), who was also present at the conference, however, was skeptical about the survey results.

She countered that those who are proficient in English are usually the top managerial level and that staff at the lower rank are not able to converse in English, especially during jobs interviews.

"But most companies are made up of few managers and a lot of staff. Talk to the one right at the bottom.

"When we interview people, they can't speak (English). That's where they are coming in right?" she asked.

Previously, Education Minister II Idris Jusoh had also insisted the country's higher education system is on par with those of developed nations such as the United Kingdom,

Germany, and Australia.

Idris made his statement, citing the 2014 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World Ranking, in which Universiti Malaya was ranked at the 151st position, out of 400 top institutions in the world.

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