

Malaysians' English proficiency third in SE Asia
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KUALA LUMPUR (June 7, 2011): "Solee, I no speak England." But, apparently, Malaysians speak it quite well.

According to a survey, when it comes to English proficiency, Malaysians are not at par with their neighbouring counterparts, with the country ranking third out of five countries in the English Language Assessment (ELA).

The analysis of the ELA results by online recruitment company JobStreet.com placed Singapore first for each employee category including non-executive and managerial.

Jobseekers in the Philippines came in second for all levels except for higher management, in which the Filipinos were tops followed by Singaporeans and Malaysians, said JobStreet.com in a statement today.

Thailand and Indonesia came in fourth and fifth respectively.

The ELA test comprised 40 random questions to evaluate an individual's grasp of the English language.

Fresh graduates in Malaysia answered an average of 27 of the 40 questions correctly, while those in the Philippines and Singapore got 28 and 30 questions right respectively.

According to the statement, the difference in scores of Malaysians and Singaporeans revealed that local graduates lacked English proficiency.

"This is a worrying trend because the ability to communicate is among five main criteria that employers look at when considering job applicants. This means people with poor English will face difficulty in finding employment," said JobStreet.com Malaysia country manager Chook Yuh Yng.

The ELA results showed that senior executives in Malaysia scored an average of 29/40 while the managers scored 31/40.

Malaysian workers who scored the highest in the test were those in journalism (33/40), medicine (32/40), higher management (31/40) while the lowest scores in English proficiency came from the general workers (24/40), industrial engineers (25/40) and clerks (26/40).

The ELA test launched in November 2009 has been used by over 1.5 million workers in Southeast Asia to measure their level of English proficiency.