

**Graduates Must Have Good Command Of English - Muhyiddin  
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BUKIT MERTAJAM, April 30 (Bernama) -- Universities in the country have been told to ensure that their graduates have a good command of the English language before entering the job market, said Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The deputy prime minister said that English proficiency was important, and that many parties, especially those in the private sector have expressed dissatisfaction with the language proficiency among graduates.

"Many graduates, when they write, they can do it well, but when they speak, there are weaknesses. University graduates, particularly when they are interviewed in the private sector fail to answer questions very well," he said in a speech during a friendly gathering at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in Permatang Pauh, here Thursday.

He said therefore, universities needed to hold tests for graduates, so that they could achieve proficiency in English.

"Before leaving the university in their respective fields of study, there should be stronger enforcement of English. They have studied English non-stop since primary school, secondary school and then at university.

"The ability to converse in the English language well is necessary for the purpose of marketability. We don't want graduates to be unemployed just because they don't have a good command of English," he said.

Meanwhile, Muhyiddin, who is also the Education Minister, said the government would continue to give priority to the aspect of development in education in bringing progress to the country.

He said that ever since the country gained independence, the Barisan Nasional government had made education as a tool in tackling the problem of poverty and this had proven to be very successful.

He said the strategy was proven to be most appropriate when the poverty rate among Malaysians, which was more than 60 per cent when the country gained independence, had now dropped to a very low level within a period of 57 years.

"When the country first gained independence, most of the people then did not have adequate educational opportunity. After independence, we endeavoured to overcome poverty by providing our nationals with knowledge so that they could come out of the clutches of poverty," he said. The deputy prime minister said although various efforts had been made to enhance the quality of education in the country, there was still much to be done to further develop the educational sector to be on par with the developed nations.

Muhyiddin said the government had carried out efforts so that science and technology would be given priority to enable more students to go into these sectors.

"This is related to productivity and skills. At the ministry level, we will build facilities for vocational education in the years to come to make it attractive such as collaborating with the industry," he said.

Also present were the secretary-general of the Education Ministry, Tan Sri Dr Madinah Mohamad, the chairman of the Penang Federal Action Council Datuk Seri Zainal Abidin Osman, UiTM vice-chancellor Tan Sri Prof Dr Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar, and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka director-general Datuk Dr Awang Sariyan.

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