

AESTHETIC WRITING

'KHAT LESSONS JUST ON TRACING, ADDING DOTS'

It will be taught only 4 times a year for 10 minutes, says UPM professor

KUALA LUMPUR

TRACING, copying jawi characters and adding dots to produce khat are all that is required of Year Four pupils in Chinese and Tamil primary schools when the art form is introduced as part of the Bahasa Melayu (BM) subject next year.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's (UPM) Department of Malay Language lecturer (Language Learning and Acquisition) Professor Dr S. Vijayaletchumy said the subject would be taught only four times a year for 10 minutes as support material for the syllabus.

Vijayaletchumy, who is among panel members involved in drafting the curriculum, also said that



The cost of tools used in the learning of khat will be borne by the Education Ministry. FILE PIC

in classroom sessions, only five or six jawi characters would be introduced to pupils.

"People, as well as certain parties, have misunderstood the issue or are confused between jawi and khat. Jawi is a form of writing used for official purposes while khat, or calligraphy, is a decorative art form using flowing cursive lettering.

"The Education Ministry is incorporating khat in the BM syllabus because it is part of Malay heritage and has aesthetic value.

"What is going to be taught is khat and not jawi, and this has caused much confusion."

As such she said parents need not fear it as this had nothing to do with religious lessons because khat was an art and very much



Universiti Putra Malaysia's Department of Malay Language lecturer (Language Learning and Acquisition) Professor Dr S. Vijayaletchumy says khat lessons incorporate aesthetics in writing and will not be included as a criterion in assessing student achievement. BERNAMA PIC

like Chinese calligraphy.

"Khat lessons include aesthetics in writing and will not be included as a criterion in assessing student achievement. This has been stated in the Standard Document for Curriculum and Assessment (DSKP).

"The lessons will be conducted in a relaxed manner and it is just an additional activity.

"This is also a psychomotor assessment as khat requires pupils to extend their writings to the left, right, bottom and so forth.

"It is also good for the mind because for pupils, this will be a fun session as they don't have to

pass the test, thus making learning conducive."

At the same time, she said, the introduction of khat would not require additional teachers.

On top of that, she said, parents did not have to worry about the cost of tools as this would be borne by the ministry.

"I hope this issue will no longer be politicised as it is for the benefit of the future generation," said Vijayaletchumy.

She said the matter had been discussed and agreed upon by more than 30 linguists, with Chinese and Tamil school teachers who sat on the panel. **Bernama**