ROUTLEDGE CRITICAL STUDIES IN ASIAN EDUCATION

Languages in the Malaysian Education System

Monolingual strands in multilingual settings

Edited by
Asmah Haji Omar

The HEAD Foundation

ROUTLEDGE

Languages in the Malaysian Education System

This book provides an overview of language education in Malaysia, covering topics such as the evolution of the education system from pre-independence days to the present time, to the typology of schools, and the public philosophy behind every policy made in the teaching of languages. The book consists of chapters devoted to the teaching of languages that form separate strands but are at the same time connected to each other within the education system. These chapters discuss:

- Implementing the national language policy in education institutions
- English in language education policies and planning in Malaysia
- Chinese and Tamil language education in Malaysia
- Teaching of indigenous Malaysian languages
- The role of translation in education in Malaysia

It also discusses the development of language which enables the national language, Malay, to fulfil its role as the main medium of education up to the tertiary level. This book will be of interest to researchers studying language planning, teacher education and the sociology of education, particularly, with regards to Malaysia.

Asmah Haji Omar is Professor Emeritus at the Academy of Malay Studies (AMS), University of Malaya (UM). She was formerly Professor of Malay Linguistics, Director of the Language Centre, and Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics of the university. After retiring, she was invited by the University of Education Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim, Perak, to occupy the Za'ba Chair of Malay Civilization, and established the Institute of Malay Civilization (2001–2005). As a member of the Language Council of Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia (MABBIM) from its inception in 1972 until today, she has been involved in the development of Malay/bahasa Indonesia, specifically in the standardization of the spelling system, formulation of rules for the coining of scientific terminology, and the method of compiling dictionaries of scientific terms.

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Contents

Abbreviations

Abbreviations that occur most frequently and across chapters

CLT	Chinese Language Teaching
DBP	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Institute of Language and Literature)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FLL	Faculty of Languages and Linguistics
MCE	Malaysia Certificate of Education
NEP	New Education Policy
POL	Pupils' Own Language
SITC	Sultan Idris Training College
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (*see* MCE)
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
UiTM	Universiti Teknologi MARA
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia)
UM	University of Malaya
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
UPSI	Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Sultan Idris University of Education)
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia

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1 Positioning languages in the Malaysian education system

Asmah Haji Omar

Introduction

Malaysia consists of the Malay Peninsula or Malaya (now known as Peninsular Malaysia), which is part of the Southeast Asian mainland, and two other states, Sabah and Sarawak, which together with the Labuan Island are located on the Borneo Island. The whole Malaysian region is part of the Malay Archipelago, a nomenclature which was given by early Western voyagers due to it being populated by the Malay race. Having a geographical location between China and India, this region was much visited by people from east and west, for the purposes of trade and missionary activities. Among people from outside the region who came and established an influence in terms of language, culture and religious beliefs were the Indians and the Chinese, followed by the Arabs, and much later by the Europeans. Early European visitors were the Portuguese followed by the Dutch and the British.

This volume is about the positioning of languages within the system of education for the main purpose of the integration of the Malaysian peoples of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Each of the many ethnolinguistic groups has its own language, and with language comes the speakers' background history of traditions, which explains the existence of the differences in cultural practices, belief systems, and worldviews. And compounded with this history are the socio-political processes which had given rise to the current education system. In a pluralistic situation, languages are bound to be placed on different levels in a system of hierarchy. But rather than looking at them in the vertical axis, we prefer to look at them as horizontal strands which together make up the system. The length of the strand attributed to a particular language shows the extent of use of this language not only in the education system but also in the life of the Malaysian society as a whole.

The Malaysian linguistic diversity

Malaysian indigenous languages belong to two entirely different families: the Austronesian and Austroasiatic. The former consists of Malay, which

is spoken all over the country, and approximately 80 languages in Sabah and Sarawak, which are separated by the South China Sea from the Malay Peninsula. The Austronesian region stretches from the hills of Taiwan in the north to New Zealand in the south, and from the Easter Islands in the east to Madagascar in the west. The Austroasiatic group in Malaysia comprises less than 20 languages which are akin to the Mon-Khmer languages spoken on mainland Southeast Asia, such as in Cambodia, Laos, and the northern part of Thailand.

Although the Malaysian indigenous languages in Borneo show a close relationship to one another and to Malay, the degrees of relationship between them vary in terms of the cognate count of their basic core vocabularies. For example, Iban, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 of this volume, has about 65% cognates with Malay (Asmah Haji Omar, 1993), in contrast with about 35% of the corresponding cognates between the latter and Kadazandusun (see Chapter 8 in this volume). Linguists dealing with a comparative study of these languages use the term *Malayic* to describe languages such as Iban, due to their close relationship with Malay, while Kadazandusun does not fall into this subgroup on the basis of the lower percentage in its cognate count. This does not mean that there is mutual intelligibility between speakers of Malay and Iban and the other Malayic languages such as Miriek and Selakau (both in Sarawak), but being close to Malay not just in terms of the near-relationship of the vocabulary items but also in the rules of word-formation makes it easier for Malay speakers to learn any of the Malayic members, and vice versa.

Diffusion of other languages into Malaysia can be seen as belonging to three categories. The first is of the cross-border type, brought about by speakers of heterogenous languages from across the Malaysian borders. In the first place, there are languages from the islands of the archipelago, i.e. from Indonesia and the Philippines, which are genetically related to Malay, and their diffusion into Malaysia has been taking place from centuries past but is more intensified today with job opportunities that Malaysia has to offer. In the peninsula, there are small communities of speakers such as Javanese, Acehnese, Bawean, Mandailing, and various Malayic members from Sumatera. In Sabah and Sarawak there are niches of settler speech communities from the Philippines and Indonesian Borneo. The cross-border type is also represented by the diffusion of Thai, better known to Malaysians as Siamese, which is neither Austronesian nor Austroasiatic. It is spoken as a home language by settlers of Thai origin on the border of Peninsular Malaysia and Thailand, which stretches from the state of Perlis in the west through Kedah and Perak to Kelantan in the east.

The second category results from the migration and settlement of speakers of languages from outside the Malay Archipelago, as is the case with Portuguese, Chinese, and languages from India and Sri Lanka, all of which are represented by communities of varying sizes. The Portuguese speech

community, the only one with a European origin, is located only in Melaka and consists of about a thousand speakers. They are the descendants of the Portuguese who came during Portuguese rule in 1511–1640 C.E. The language which is still spoken in the home domain has its base in the Portuguese of the 16th century (Baxter, 1984).

Earlier than the Portuguese were the Chinese who became settlers in Melaka in the 15th century during the days of the Melaka Empire, and there is clear evidence of their early settlement in the region known as Bukit Cina (Chinese Hill). But today descendants of these early settlers cannot be said to represent the Chinese speech community, because over the centuries the Chinese language that came with their ancestors had undergone a loss, and in its place is a Malay Creole, known as Baba Malay. The speakers, however, are known as Baba Chinese as a generic term, but analytically *Baba* refers to the male of the community, and *Nyonya* to the female.

The actual Chinese speech community in Malaysia has a more recent history, as the speakers came with the opening of tin mines in the 19th century, which also saw the beginning of Malaya as a British colony. Chinese in other types of vocation, mostly in merchant trading and shopkeeping, arrived soon after. Present-day Malaysian Chinese are of various dialectal groups, about 10 of them, forming dialectal communities which are found all over the country, the two most populous being the Hokkien and the Cantonese. Certain geographical regions can be identified with particular dialect groups who form the majority there. For example, the Kinta Valley in Perak and the Kelang Valley in Selangor are identified with Cantonese, as they are populated by descendants of the Chinese who first came to work in the tin mines in these two regions. The Hokkiens are mostly in the northern states of Penang, Kedah, Terengganu, and Kelantan, while Sabah Chinese are in the majority Hakka. In general Cantonese and Hokkien are the dialects most widely spoken, but Mandarin is the language of the schools and the media.

Like the Chinese, the first group of Indians had come to settle in Malaysia, specifically in Melaka, as early as the 15th century. They were traders from Panai in Tamil Nadu, and their descendants today are known as Melaka Chitty. Their linguistic journey seems to have followed the same path as the Baba Chinese, meaning that they have totally lost their original language and now speak a variety of Malay, known as Chitty Malay. Linguistically speaking, this community cannot be placed in the same category as the many heterogenous speech communities which reflect the diversity of peoples from the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka who are part of the Malaysian population. Of these, it is the Tamil speech community that is the largest, as its speakers comprise about 80% of the total Malaysian Indian population. The Tamil Indians came with the opening of the rubber estates towards the end of the 19th century, brought by the East India company. The others in the subgroup of languages of the Indian sub-continent can again be divided into Southern Indian languages (e.g. Telugu, Malayalam)

and Northern Indian languages (e.g. Punjabi, Bengali, Hindi, Sindhi, Urdu). To add to the list is Sinhalese, spoken by people from Sri Lanka who have also made Malaysia their home.

The third category of language diffusion into Malaysia is represented by Arabic and English. These two do not have speech communities of native speakers by which they can be identified. Nevertheless, they have occupied prominent positions in the life of the country. In other words, their presence is synonymous with the values that Malaysians attach to their being. With Arabic it is the religio-educational values that form the basis of the lives of Muslims who comprise 64% of the population, while with English it is the educational and socio-economic values that the country strives to uphold in its quest to be a fully developed nation.

Typological diversity of Malaysian languages

The linguistic diversity of Malaysia is seen not only in the heterogeneity of the languages and in their countries of origin, but also in terms of their genetic membership. To add to the native Austronesian and Austroasiatic families, there are the Sino-Tibetan, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Semitic, and Anglo-Saxon. These different language families are a reflection of diversity in terms of phonology, morphology and syntax. Such diversity has great implications in the teaching and learning of a particular language among children whose mother tongue is characterised by a typology that is quite different from those of the languages that are taught in the schools. An example is the difficulty faced by Malay, Iban, Kadazan, and other children of the Austronesian ethnolinguistic groups whose mother tongues are of the agglutinative type, when they learn English, which is typologically an inflectional language. The same goes when Malaysian children of any group learning Arabic, which has a higher degree of inflection compared to English. Chinese children, brought up in the typology of isolative languages to which Chinese belongs, may not find it easy to get used to the agglutinative aspect of the Malay language,[1] but living in Malaysia and surrounded by Malay-speaking people, and plus the fact that the language is also the national language of the country, they are able over time to internalise the intricacies of Malay word formation through the process of immersion. In syntax, it may not be that difficult for non-Malay children to learn Malay, as the language does not have the systems of case, tense, number and grammatical gender. In the absence of these systems, the sentence which basically has the SVO structure does not have the rule of subject-verb agreement.

Typological differences of the languages taught in the schools in Malaysia come out most clearly in the pronunciation of words in the languages which are not the mother tongues of the students. It is not only the articulation of sounds in another language that a speaker tends to transfer the phonetic features of his own language to, but also in the intonation where he is inclined to suit prosodic features of his own language to this other language. This

is most obvious that when Malaysians of the three major races – Malays, Chinese, and Indians – speak English, they tend to transfer their own type of intonation, such that one can always tell when the English spoken is by a Malay, a Chinese or an Indian, without looking at the speaker. Malay as well as Indian children, if they enrol in a Chinese-medium school, may take some time to acquire the ability to differentiate the distinctive tones that are characteristic of Chinese as a tonal language, because in their own languages there is only the rise or fall of the pitch contour at the end of the sentence.

Another typological feature which shows most clearly in the diversity of these languages lies in the writing systems. Through English, the Roman alphabet has been adopted to write Malay, Iban and Kadazandusun. The Malays have a history of literacy quite different from the latter two groups, in that they currently have two writing systems for the writing of their language: the older of the two is the *Jawi* writing, which is based on the Arabic script, while the other is the Roman script. Up to 1957, the former system had as much currency in usage as the latter, but with independence the latter was made the more preferred script as provided for by the Language Act 152 of the Malaysian Constitution. The reason given at that time was to make the learning of Malay, the national language, easier for the non-Malays. This being the case, while the *Jawi* script has not really been pushed into oblivion, its use is very much confined to Islamic religious texts. Iban and Kadazandusun, on the other hand, began their history of writing only in early 20th century. Their writing system, which is the Roman alphabet, was introduced through Christian mission schools, and in the translation of the Bible from English to the vernaculars (see Chapters 7 and 8). As for Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil, each has its own writing system.

Schools in Malaysia are divided into two main categories according to their medium of instruction: the national and national type schools. However, the curriculum is the same throughout. What this means is that a teaching subject has the same syllabus in all the types of school but is taught in different languages, i.e. the national language in national schools, and Chinese or Tamil in national type schools. The objective of this policy is the integration of the peoples of the various racial and ethnic groups through education by using a common syllabus. At the same time there is the Pupils' Own Language (POL) programme, which means that any Malaysian ethnic language can be taught as an elective in the national school, if there is a request from at least 15 pupils from the ethnic group concerned. Allocation of language use in education reverberates throughout the chapters in this volume.

Malay and its choice as national language

The language policy of Malaysia states that Malay is the national and official language, as provided for in the Malaysian Constitution. In terms of the language of instruction in the schools and other educational institutions,

Malay is given the place as the main medium of instruction. The fact that it is not the sole language medium in the education system of the country is usually forgotten in debates obsessed by its 'hegemony' (a favourite term used in statements by critics of the language policy) over all other languages. But the chapters in this book are testimony to the fact that the national language policy accords the right of other languages to exist and develop as part of their speakers' heritage.

Several factors were taken into consideration in the choice of Malay as the national and official language of Malaya at the time of independence in 1957, but none of these relates to the linguistic properties of this language in terms of the simplicity of its systems and of its typology compared to the other languages. The factors that were more convincing to the public who would have to accept the language with its newly ascribed status were its indigeneity and social history. The indigeneity factor is related to the spread of Malay over the whole of the archipelago from historical times until today. It is the language of the indigenous people, the Malays of Malaysia and of the various islands in present-day Indonesia, particularly Borneo and Sumatera, not to mention the small groups of islands in the South China Sea, the Java Sea, the Indian Ocean, and along both sides of the Straits of Melaka. Choosing an indigenous language to be the national language places the country in the endoglossic category, as opposed to the exoglossic one where the place is given to a non-indigenous language. This is far from saying that there is no merit in elevating an exoglossic language to play the most important role in the country concerned; on the other hand it can just be as successful if not better. But an endoglossic one, which is suitable in the role after considering all factors in its choice, may be more representative of the geolinguistic context the country is in.

The socio-historical factor in the choice of Malay as the national and official language of Malaya and later Malaysia, was its time-tested role of being the main language of inter-insular communication. As the most widespread lingua franca in the Malay Archipelago through the ages, Malay was spoken not only between the people of the region, but also between these peoples and foreigners who came to the islands to trade, or to preach, or just to have a stopover at the ports for fresh water and foodstuff. Visitors from east and west found that they had to know the language in order to be able to deal with the natives of the islands from Sumatera in the west to the Celebes in the east. They made it a point to produce bilingual glossaries and dictionaries with rules of pronunciation and grammar of the versions of the language they learned through speaking with people they met with in the various ports. Examples are the Chinese vocabulary dated between 1403 and 1511 C.E. (Blagden and Edwards, 1930–1932), which is known to be the earliest bilingual glossary with Malay entries. Later there came the Italian-Malay wordlist collected by Antonio Pigafetta, an Italian seaman who was in this part of the world from October 1522 to August 1524 (Antonio Pigafetta, undated; Agostino Cacciavillan, in Antonio Pigafetta: Appendix 1; Bausani,

1961). In the 17th century, the Chams of Champa (now Vietnam), whose language was of the same family as Malay, also found it necessary to produce Cham-Malay wordlists as they plied the islands in quest for trade (Po Dharma, 2000), because they discovered that it was the only speech system they could use to communicate with people they came in contact with.

William Marsden who worked as Writer in the service of the East India Company in Bencoolen, West Sumatera, from 30 May 1771 to 6 July 1779, made the following observations of the Malay language, which he referred to as *Malayan*:

> The *Malayan* language, which has commonly been supposed original in the peninsula of *Malayo*, and from thence to have extended itself throughout the eastern islands, so as to become the *lingua franca* of that globe, is spoken everywhere along the coasts of Sumatra, prevails without the mixture of any other, in the inland country of *Menangkabau* and its immediate dependencies, and is understood in almost every part of the island.
>
> (Marsden, 1811: 197, reprinted in 1966)

Marsden also made his evaluation of the many varieties of Malay spoken in Sumatera and the Malay Peninsula: 'The purest or most elegant *Malayan* is said, and with great appearance of reason, to be spoken at Malacca' (Marsden, Ibid.: 199).

There were languages other than Malay in the archipelago, and among these was Javanese, which had a greater number of native speakers compared to Malay, but this language until today has never been as widespread in use as Malay. Even in the days when the Javanese Majapahit Empire ruled over the islands from 1222 C.E. to about 1525 C.E. (Berg, 1965, with Map of Javanese Kingdom before 1525), Javanese did not take over from Malay as the lingua franca of the region. An inference can be made as to the factors which had given rise to this situation. One lies in the typology of Javanese phonological features, namely in the presence of heavy aspirated as well as retroflex consonants which non-native speakers may find difficult to articulate, as opposed to the absence of such types in Malay. The other is the sociolinguistic property of the language, specifically in the four levels of varieties placed on a scale from the lowest level, *ngoko*, through *madyo* (meaning 'middle'), to *kromo* (the high refined level), and finally to *kromo inggil* (the most refined of all). Differences between the levels are not only in the choice of lexical items of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, but also in the grammar, especially in word formation. All this makes Javanese more difficult than Malay for non-native speakers to master.[2] This is not to say that Malay does not have sociolinguistic levels in its use, but the high and low varieties of this language are easier to learn and manage than Javanese. There is the presence of royal court Malay, but this variety differs from its non-royal counterpart in only a handful of lexical terms, among which are

personal references and ways of addressing the king and queen, and the sultans and their consorts. However, only people in high places or with certain public responsibilities that have to do with the palace that get to meet the royals, and they are the ones who are brought into situations where elements of the palace language have to be included in their discourse (Asmah Haji Omar, 1987b: 83–97).

A lingua franca, as defined by Ostler, is a language of convenience (Ostler, 2010: xv). Hence, Malay for its 'easy' pronunciation, and a relatively less complicated grammar and sociolinguistic rules, became a language of convenience for early traders and visitors to the Malay Archipelago. Trade was nevertheless an important factor which brought about the widespread use of a lingua franca, but according to Ostler in his study of the rise of English as the world's foremost lingua franca, this factor has become a cliché: 'It is a cliché that business is conducted in the customer's language. To take the initiative in gaining new customers one has to be able to make one's pitch in a language that they understand' (Ostler, 2010: 25).

English as a lingua franca has other attributes, arising from the dominance of the United Kingdom and the United States, with their economic and political power, and 'technologies of production and communication' (Ostler, Ibid.).

In the same way, being a lingua franca used by traders in the ports of Southeast Asia was not the only attribute to elevating Malay to the status of national language of Malaya. To achieve this status and to ensure that it gained the acceptance as well as the respect of all the races that formed the Malayan nation, it had to have something more, and this it did. For centuries past, each of the nine sultanates in the Malay Peninsula, not to mention those in Brunei, Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) and Sumatera had had their forms of governance which used High Malay, not the lingua franca version, as attested by texts containing their laws and traditions. At the same time Malay had also been the language of communication between the different kingdoms in the Malay world, and between rulers of these kingdoms and those outside the Malay world, in the form of letters. This form of communication is attested by collections of letters from Malay rulers to representatives of the British colonial government in the Malay Peninsula, and to officials of the East India Company Head Office in Bengal (Gallop and Arps, 1991; Gallop, 1994).

The language of governance that took the form of High Language (L_H) was already in use in the early centuries of the Christian era. A most convincing proof can be seen in the texts of the 7th century stone inscriptions of the Srivijaya kingdom which held hegemony over the Malay world from the 7th to the 13th century – three inscriptions in Southern Sumatera, and one in the adjacent Bangka Island. These texts were written in the Pallava script of Southern India, and the language is Malay of the L_H variety of the time. Besides indigenous Malay words, there are words and phrases borrowed

from Sanskrit reflecting the type of governance and rules of ethics practised in the region (Coedès, 2009).

Malay has also been the language of the spread of religions, beginning with Hinduism and Buddhism early in the Christian era, followed by Islam in the 10th century or even earlier, and finally Christianity in the 20th century. Islam had given the Malays a writing system, the Arabic script, which the Malays had made full use of not only for the purpose of reading religious texts in their language, but also to record their own traditions of laws, ethics, and just as important those of the literary genre including the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana from India, and tales from other parts of the world brought to them by people who visited their world. The literary richness of the Malay language did not escape Marsden's observation: 'The Malayan books are very numerous, both in prose and verse. Many of them are commentaries on the *korān*, and others romances or heroic tales' (Marsden, Ibid.: 199).

The indigeneity and the socio-historical factors as properties of Malay were the basis for the Malays in their struggle for independence to use the language as a symbol of the Malay world. The socio-historical factor in particular was proof that Malay had gone through a chain of development in its phylogenetic aspects through contact with other languages, specifically Sanskrit, Arabic and English. Its systems at the levels of phonology and morphology are sufficiently flexible for the adaptation of elements from these languages resulting in its enrichment, and this was later proven at the corpus planning stage after the 1970s when Malay became a language medium for the teaching of the sciences in the universities (Chapter 10).

Nationalist movements which united the Malays of all the sultanates in the Malay Peninsula finally led to the Malayan independence, and from the beginning they were focused on making their language a national symbol. They were very much inspired by the Indonesians who for the same purpose had chosen the very same language as early as 1928, before the birth of the Indonesian nation. This was the time when leaders of the various islands under Dutch rule formed a united front to free their lands from the shackles of colonialism. As each island had its own set of languages, which were different from those of the others, and that the only language used in interaction between them was Malay, the group of leaders led by Soekarno of Java, and Mohammad Hatta of Sumatera (who were to become President and Vice-President of independent Indonesia respectively), decided to choose Malay as their common language, giving it the label of 'language of unity' (*bahasa persatuan*), in 1928.

The step taken by the Indonesians in giving an elevated place to the lingua franca that had been their form of communication in informal situations had opened the eyes of the Malays in the Malay Peninsula on the potential that could be derived from the promotion of their very own language in their struggle for independence. Just like the peoples of the islands of

Indonesia prior to 1928, the Malays of the peninsula before the Second World War were still a disparate group. They were the subjects of their own sultans who ruled the states, albeit with some intervention or 'protection' from the British. Although the states had their own Malay dialects which they used in all situations, these dialects converged into a common system when it came to the written language in which the laws of each state were codified, and which was also the form used in official letters sent from one state to the other. What this means is that the Malay language used in governance in the Malay states was of the L_H variety, not the lingua franca (L_L) type used in the ports of call and marketplaces, as was the variety used in schools and the *madarasah* long before the formation of Malaya in 1948. The standard variety evolved naturally through communication between the different Malay states.

Types of schools in the colonial period

The typology of Malaysian schools as we see today has its beginning during British rule, when there were two main streams: the vernacular, consisting of Malay, Chinese, and Tamil schools; and the mainstream English schools. On top of that there were the Arabic schools, the *madrasah*, which formed a category by themselves.

The Malay school using Malay as the medium of instruction was first introduced by the British in the 19th century. Until after independence the Malay school provided education at the primary level only. An exception was the use of this language in the training of teachers for the Malay schools, at two institutions; one was for male teachers and this was at the Sultan Idris Training College in Tanjong Malim, Perak, built in 1922, and the other for the women in 1935 in Durian Daun, Melaka. In both institutions the training was a two-year course for Malay boys and girls who were successful in the examinations of their final year in the six-year programme of the Malay school.

Differences in the treatment of schools in the vernacular stream on the part of the British were based on their political and economic interest in the Malay states. In this sense, there was some similarity between the Malay and the Tamil schools. Both functioned only in giving education at the primary level in the basic knowledge of the 3R's of reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic, and they were built in places away from towns and commercial centres; the former in the rural areas where the Malays were, and the latter in the rubber estates.

Another similarity between the Malay and the Tamil schools was that they were 'under the radar' of British authorities. This is seen in the fact that the Malay schools were fully funded by the government as a show of their obligation to the 'sons of the soil'. As for the Tamil schools, they were built at the request made by the East India Company office in Calcutta to the British colonial government, as labourers were obtained through the good

services of this company. The Labour Ordinance which came into enforcement in 1912 paved the way for the establishment of Tamil schools in Malaya. This ordinance stated that if there were 10 children aged between 7 and 10 years in a rubber estate, then the estate management should build a Tamil school. However, while the government agreed to the establishment of these schools, the task of building and managing them was assigned to the management of the rubber estates. Tamil education, at that time left to the expediency of the European managers, is discussed in Chapter 6.

As for Chinese education, there was no support given in any form from the government of the day. The colonial government's attitude was based on the fact that the Chinese came to Malaya on their own accord, not at the invitation of the British. The difference in attitude towards the Tamil as against the Chinese schools can be seen in the following excerpt:

> Malaya was under no obligation to educate in their own vernacular the children of the immigrants. The truth, however, is that we are definitely bound by orders from the Colonial Office to provide education for the children of Assisted Indian Immigrants. The Government will thus be caused no embarrassment in treating them differently from the Chinese.
> (*Annual Report of the Education Department, Kelantan 1934*)

The Chinese were not affected by this policy, as the community had wealthy people, tin miners and merchants who helped to provide education for Chinese children up to the secondary level (Chapter 5). In this sense, Chinese schools were on a level higher than the Malay and the Tamil schools.

Education in the Arabic schools was unique in itself. It was the first type of school education introduced to the Malays long before the establishment of Malay schools. The Arabic schools were built by the Malays themselves in their own villages, financed mainly through the collection of tithes from paddy farmers. This was the institution that brought literacy to the Malays through the teaching of Islam. In the eyes of the British colonial government, they did not seem to exist. They did not appear in any annual report pertaining to school education during that time.

In the colonial period, mainstream education for Malayan children was in the English schools, i.e. schools using English as the medium of instruction. These schools provided education from the primary to the upper secondary level, and there were avenues for students to pursue their higher studies in the United Kingdom or any other country that offered higher education in English. However, education in these schools was not accessible to a majority of the population of all races in the country, mainly due to the high fees they charged. Moreover, the fact that these schools were built in big towns proved to be another constraint for village children to attend them as it meant an increase in expenditure in having to get accommodation in the towns. As such, only the rich and the urban children were able to study in these schools. Government scholarships were few and far between, and they

were only awarded to bright Malay children after an assessment of their progress in school.

Children attending English schools had a straight road to secondary level education. For those attending Malay schools, after passing the Standard 4 examination they could enrol in a transition programme at the English schools, before they could be fully absorbed into Form 1 of these schools. This programme was of a duration of two years, conducted in two tiers, Special Malay Class 1 and Special Malay Class 2. As the number of intake for a single year was small, and the high expenditure needed to study in the English schools was not affordable to the Malays, there were more Malay students attending the *madrasah* after their education in the Malay schools, than there were in the English schools. While Chinese children could get secondary level education in Chinese schools, there was no avenue for Tamil children in the estate schools. But if these children attended the Malay schools, they could further their education in the English schools through the Special Malay classes.

During the colonial period Malay was taught as an elective in the secondary level classes in the English schools. There was no training for teachers teaching the language at the secondary level. Those who were given the task of teaching the subject were qualified teachers, i.e. with a general certificate of teaching in English, not in the Malay language.

Efforts at streamlining schools in pre-independence period

To reach the current situation, various committees were appointed to examine problems and issues in education. The committees involved in pre-independence days were the Barnes Committee for Malay education, and the Fenn-Wu Committee for Chinese education. Their recommendations are discussed in Chapters 2 and 5 in this volume, on the teaching of Malay and Chinese respectively. In both cases, the recommendations could not be implemented as they were far ahead of their time, and did not give much thought to the political atmosphere then. The *Barnes Report* recommended a bilingual education using Malay and English for all Malayans, but this was designed only for the primary school. At the secondary level, all instructions were to be in English. Opposition came from the Malays for side-lining their language for the secondary education (Chapter 2), and from the Chinese for excluding their language altogether (Chapter 5). The *Fenn-Wu Report* was also not acceptable to the Malays and the Chinese, as their languages were to be taught only in the primary schools, while English was to be the language of instruction in the secondary schools.

The first education policy for independent Malaya was formulated based on the recommendations of the *Report of the Committee for Education 1956*, popularly known as the *Razak Report* (after its chairman, Abdul Razak Hussain, who was to become Malaysia's second Prime Minister),

which focuses on education at the primary level. Written into this report was the categorisation of schools in Malaya into standard and standard type schools, the first using Malay as medium of instruction, and the other using a language other than Malay. The terms 'standard' and 'standard type' were later changed to 'national' and 'national type'. This was seen as a compromise, in that while the national schools are for all citizens to uphold the national language policy, the national type ones symbolise the consideration given to ethnic communities to maintain their linguistic and cultural heritage.

As the policy was restricted to primary education, a review committee known as *Education Review Committee 1960* was set up with the task of making recommendations for secondary level education in Malay. This committee, also known as the Rahman Talib Committee (after its chairman, Abdul Rahman Talib, the then Minister of Education), recommended the use of Malay fully as the medium of instruction in all subjects at the secondary level. With the implementation of this recommendation, the Malay language entered a new phase in its social history, emerging as a language of instruction in secondary schools.

In anticipation of the Rahman Talib recommendation, in 1958 the first classes at the Form One level, i.e. Year One of the secondary school, had already been set up in English schools for the teaching of school subjects in Malay. The curriculum was the same as those for the classes using English. As there were no textbooks in Malay for subjects taught at this level, English textbooks were used, but the teaching was in Malay. This was just a temporary measure while various preparations were being made from erecting school buildings to the writing of textbooks and the training of teachers. This all seemed most promising for the birth a single-stream education system for the country. However, it was not to be. This was due to people's attitude as seen in their preference for the type of school for their children. The English school was the preferred type. It was populated with children of families who could afford to meet the financial requirement, and this meant that a great majority of the students were Chinese. Although English schools could offer the best education, it was also a great wall that divided the multiracial population of the country, when at the same time there was already a three-pronged division of the three main races – Malay, Chinese, and Indian – at the primary school level.

The community based schools produced literate people, but they were literate only in their own language. Interactions between the different races were only at the 'needs level', where the lingua franca in the form of pidgin Malay was used. When a Malay and a Chinese met, it was only in the context of the Malay wanting to buy something from the Chinese, and the Chinese wanting to sell it. The needs situation also occurred when an Indian and a Chinese were found to be in interaction with one another. This was the general scenario of the time. Ghazali Shafie, a former Foreign Minister

of Malaysia, related a similar observation of this situation in August 1969 in a speech on solving the problem of national unity, as follows:

> In talking of national unity to the non-Malays, some of whom are of the professional class and university students, I have often asked them one simple question: Do you speak Bahasa Malaysia? I mean by this not merely for purposes of buying fish or fruit in the market, or the usual opening remarks of a conversation which then quickly switches into English. I mean of course the use of Bahasa Malaysia in their work and in serious discussions.
>
> I need not tell you how many of them can truthfully answer "yes" to that question. And this twelve years after independence!
>
> (Ghazali Shafie, 1985: 212)

It was the National Education Policy (NEP) of 1970 that brought the full implementation of the national language policy in the schools, re-affirmed the continued existence of national type schools, and recommended the phasing out of English schools, as discussed below.

Malaysian schools in their current typology

The subtitle *Monolingual Strands in Multilingual Settings* given to the main title of this volume in a way presents a picture of the social positioning of languages in Malaysia, at least the ones that are taught in schools which are fully and partially funded by the government. In the present situation, the institution of 'national type school' is represented by the Chinese national type school and Tamil national type school. Using the metaphor 'strands', the national school represents a much longer strand than the national type ones in that it is the most central in the education system, offers both the primary and secondary levels of education, has the most number of students, and is spread all over the country. The English school which previously belonged to the national type category ceased to exist in 1983 due to the substitution of English for Malay as the medium of instruction in a phasing-out programme which began in 1970.

The Chinese and the Tamil national type schools provide education only at the primary level. Of the two, the former seem to be more populated than the latter, for the simple reason that the Chinese population in the country is larger than that of the Tamil ethnic group, and even more than the totality of Indians in Malaysia. These schools are not given the label 'mother tongue', probably for two reasons. The first has a political consideration; they are national in the sense that their presence in the country reflects the significance given to the Chinese and the Indians as citizens of Malaysia. So there is a national interest in having these schools, only that they cannot be equated to national schools as their language of choice is based on a single ethnic community. Although these languages are not used in official

situations they are very much visible in the public life of the country, as in the media (in national TV and radio channels, and in newspapers), and publications of magazines and books, and are used on sign boards in the shopping centres and marketplaces. The only regulation that has to be observed is that on bill boards the size of graphic symbols used for languages other than the national language should be smaller than those of the latter.

The second reason for not giving the label 'mother tongue' to these schools is that although they are based on a single ethnic language, they should be open to others who do not speak that language. For example, there is a tendency for the uninitiated to think that all Chinese in Malaysia speak Chinese as their mother tongue or as their home language. This is not always the case, as there is a growing number of Chinese living in big cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya, who have taken to English as their home language, and there is the probability that this language will go down the generations as their first language.[3] Besides the English-speaking group of Chinese, there are also those who have been using Malay, or a variety of Malay, since the days of their forefathers who came to Malaya some centuries ago. These are the Baba Chinese, as mentioned previously. They are scattered all over the peninsula, but as a definitive group their areas of concentration are Melaka and Penang.[4] In Kelantan and Terengganu there are also Chinese communities who speak Malay as their mother tongue, who are known as *Peranakan Chinese*.[5] While the Chinese form one single ethnolinguistic community, this is not the case with the Indians, who speak heterogeneous languages as mentioned earlier in this chapter, besides the Melaka Chitty.[6]

Another factor which has to be taken into account concerning the national type schools is that admission is also open to children from any ethnic group. For example, there is a growing number of Malay children attending Chinese schools, for various reasons, among which is the more strict discipline imposed in these schools (Chapters 5–6).

The shortest language strands in the Malaysian education system are represented by Iban (Chapter 7), and Kadazandusun (Chapter 8). Through efforts of the people themselves, both the languages have succeeded in being included in national schools as POLs. The POL policy is an open one, inspired by the recommendations of the *Razak Report* which states that 'every language has a place under the Malayan sun'. There are also POL classes for Chinese and Tamil in national schools, which can be taken as optional subjects leading to the Malaysia School Certificate (at the end of Form 5). Iban made its entry as a POL in national schools in Sarawak in the early 1980's, but Kadazandusun as a POL came more than a decade later. Issues and problems faced by these two languages to be part of the national school curriculum are discussed in detail in chapters 7 and 8.

To date there is no such institution as national type school for Iban or Kadazandusun. In practical terms such an institution may not be feasible in the near future as the history of the inclusion of these languages in the

education system is rather recent. For Iban and Kadazandusun to reach the status enjoyed by Chinese and Tamil, the tasks ahead are enormous, in terms of language development, such as standardisation of the spelling system and enrichment of the lexicon (which the Malay language was not spared of when it became the national language), developing textbooks and other reading materials, and training of teachers. Another factor which echoes in the chapters on Iban and Kadazandusun is that the speakers themselves have to be fully committed in the promotion of their language. This shows that, as has been the case with Malay, Chinese and Tamil, the promotion of a community's language is the function of its speakers. The policy makers are the ones who determine the allocation of language use within the overall national policy, but it is the speakers themselves who determine the success or otherwise in making a success of the allocation given to their language.

Arabic is considered a special status language for a reason other than that conferred on English as a second language. It is the language of Islam, the official religion of the country. In terms of time-depth, Arabic has been much longer on the Malayan soil compared to English, Chinese, or Tamil (Chapter 4).

English pervades all types of schools: national, national type and Islamic/religious. This is due to its position as the second most important language in Malaysia, second only to the national language. The government has always been aware of the pragmatics of maintaining English in Malaysia as an instrument for acquiring knowledge of all kinds, including the latest in science and technology. Chapter 3 discusses in depth the significance of English in Malaysia in its use at the national level, as well as at the regional and international levels.

The typology of schools today was arrived at after evaluating the type of education in Malaya during British rule, taken together with recommendations of various committees with the objective of providing a unified system of education for the country. Although there is still the feature of divisiveness in the current typology, there is freer movement of students of a particular stream to another. On top of that, all the schools use common curricula where Malay and English are taught to all, and prepare their students for the same public examinations.

A change in the fortune of English schools

As mentioned earlier, the continued existence of the English national type schools did not fare well for the national schools. In other words, the national language policy was not making progress in the presence of the English school which was most preferred by parents for their children's education. The ramification was that the integration of school-going children of the various races was still far from being achieved, as the racial proportion of students in the English schools would remain as they were in the colonial days. Hence, the English school had to go, despite its long history of quality

education and the long-term advantages promised by its certificates of education. But the English language would not be sacrificed as there were other ways of maintaining it as an important language in the life of Malaysians as a whole. In the worldview of the policy makers there lies a difference between English schools and the English language in terms of their position in the education policy of Malaysia.

Schools in their history of establishment in Malaysia had always been seen as a mode of attachment to the community, as the Malay school was to the Malays, and the Chinese and Tamil schools to the Chinese and Indians, respectively. However, the English school was not identified with a community of settlers of British origin as there was no permanent definitive community of speakers of English as first language in Malaysia. English schools were built by the colonial government to fulfil certain objectives, and this undertaking could be seen in the location of these schools where the ordinary people could not get easy access to. Through this, the English school exacerbated the divisiveness already existing between the races. Taking into account all these factors, its replacement with national schools was seen to be a non-sensitive issue. However, the other national type schools had to be maintained as they provided an identity feature to the communities that had been integrated into the Malaysian society.

The change in fortune of the English schools came with a programme of the gradual replacement of English with Malay as the main medium of instruction. This began in 1970, starting with the use Malay in Standard 1 at the primary level in all the English schools. At the end of this replacement programme in 1982, all former English schools became national schools. This change affected only the language medium used, not the curriculum and the contents of the syllabuses. It was done in a most efficient way, taking two or three school subjects at a time. The first groups of subjects that were affected by this process were those in the Arts stream. Mathematics and the science subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) were in the last phase of this process. This gradual approach gave time for the training of teachers, the preparation of textbooks, and the development of a scientific lexicon in Malay for the various fields of knowledge.

By the end of 1976, the changeover completed for the Arts subjects, which means that these subjects were taken by the students for their school certificate examination at the end of that year in the Malay language. These students continued in 1977 to a two-year programme which led them to the Higher School Certificate examination at the end of 1979. In the academic year 1980/81, intake into the local universities in the Arts stream consisted of students who had had their school education wholly in Malay. As for the science stream, the process completed three years later, as depicted in the schema below (E = English; M = Malay).

With the transformation of national type English schools to national schools, secondary level education is only available at the national schools, when previously it was offered at both the national and the English schools.

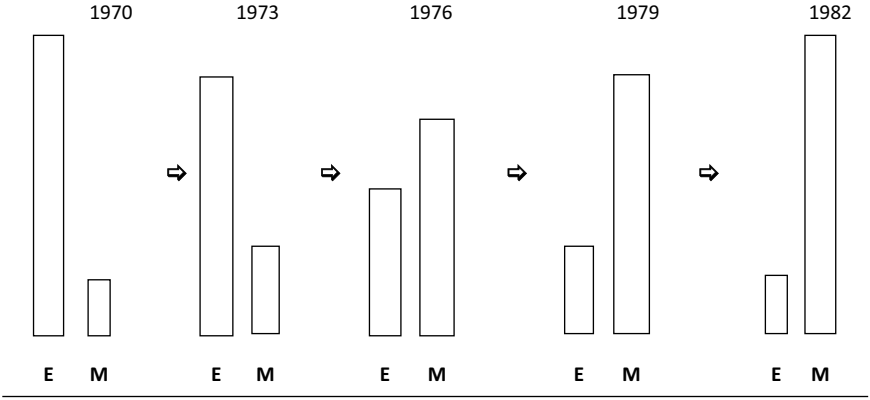

Figure 1.1 Schema Showing the Changeover from English to Malay in the National Type English Schools 1970–1982, to become National Schools

Following the NEP 1970 there is a transition class in national secondary schools for one year for students from the national type Chinese and Tamil schools, before they can join the national secondary school. This one-year transition course, known as Remove Class (somewhat similar to the previous Special Malay Class), was set up for the purpose of upgrading the students' proficiency in the Malay language in preparation for their absorption into the national secondary school. However, students of the national type schools who have shown excellent performance in their Malay language subject in the examinations are exempted from attending the Remove Class and can go straight to Form 1 of the national school.

Reversal of policy: ways of bringing back English into the school system

Under NEP 1970, the status of English as a second language is implied in the ruling that all government schools as well as the grant-in-aid schools have to give a certain number of hours of teaching the language as a compulsory subject. Implementation of this ruling means that every schoolchild in Malaysia has the opportunity of learning English which previously had been the privilege of only those who attended the English schools, comprising less than 10% of the total school going population.

The obverse effect of the NEP, as perceived by the general public, is a decline in proficiency in English among Malaysians. This observation arises from a comparison made of the level of English attained by people learning the language in two different eras. The more proficient ones are those of the older generation who had attended schools where English was taught as a first language, while the less proficient are those of the younger generation

who were taught English as a subject in the school curriculum. The methods of teaching in these two different eras are different, and in the aspect of the intensity of using the language there is a wide gap between the two, because the first group used English all the time they were in the school compound, while for the second group the intensity was in using Malay, Chinese, or Tamil. In the NEP era, with a variety of social situations in which English is taught, and to many different types of student population, resources have to be distributed far and wide, in contrast with the era of the English schools where teaching the language was concentrated on a smaller space and to a much smaller population of learners. Given the differences, it is to be expected that the attainment level of English in the NEP era is not as high as that of the time when the English schools represented the mainstream education in the country.

There are many levels of English language proficiency attained by Malaysian students who are the products of the national education system, from the very high to the very low. The curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education is common to all schools, so are the textbooks. Teachers are trained specifically in handling the school subjects in the classroom. However, as in any teaching programme the outcome of ELT in Malaysian schools is never the same for all students, and in all regions in the country. There are factors of an extra-curricular nature to contend with, such as the context and opportunity of its use which differ from one student to another depending on the social environment he is in. A student who is in an environment where English is one of the languages in interaction with friends and members of the family is sure to have a better proficiency in the language compared to one who does not have such a context to practise the language. A school which has programmes in making the learning of the language interesting and enjoyable to students is one to chart a better outcome than the one that does not have a programme of this nature. The results of the examinations for the Malaysia School Certificate each year show that students in urban schools tend to do better in English than their cohorts in the rural areas. From this, one can infer that students in the cities and the large towns have more opportunity in listening to and using English than their peers in the smaller towns and the rural areas.

With the best of intentions, teaching English as a subject in the curriculum of the national school, and the national type schools, does not produce approximately the same level of attainment in the language compared to using it as the medium of instruction for subjects as taught in the English schools. Supplementary courses designed to increase students' proficiency in English as part of the university curriculum do not necessarily produce the level of ability required in speaking and writing English for academic and professional purposes.

Deficiency in the ability to communicate in English at an accepted level of proficiency among graduates of Malaysian universities, who entered the government service and the private sector, became a public concern in the

late 1970s. These were the graduates who had gone through their school education from the primary to the secondary level fully in Malay. Feedbacks from government departments and private institutions showed that something had to be done so that Malaysian university graduates could function better as professionals using English. There was a suggestion for the re-establishment of English schools, but this suggestion could not be considered for political reasons. There was also a suggestion to adopt a bilingual mode where both Malay and English could be used as mediums of instruction in the national schools, where the school subjects could be divided between the two, but this suggestion also was not considered politically feasible. Hence, local universities had to search for their own remedies, such as in giving intensive courses during university vacations, and designing materials and techniques that could enhance their teaching and motivate students' learning of the language.[7]

The impossible in policy that was perceived in the 1980s became possible in 2003 when the Cabinet under the steermanship of the then Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, took a decisive measure in passing a ruling that national schools were to be bilingual Malay and English. The subjects chosen for the teaching of English were science and mathematics, and all other subjects were to remain using Malay as the language of instruction. This ruling was implemented at the beginning of the school year, in January 2003. This shift means that almost 50% of the national school curriculum at the primary and secondary levels were taught in English. The national type schools were similarly affected, as the school subjects had to be divided between Chinese or Tamil and English.

The choice of the subjects to be taught in English was a strategy to achieve two objectives simultaneously. One was to provide enough context and practice for students to use English, and the other to sharpen their ability to comprehend concepts in science and mathematics through English. Despite these two objectives which were academic in nature, the policy of using English in teaching those subjects did not go down well with Malays, Chinese and Indians alike. To the Malays this policy was the undoing of the national language which had successfully played the role of the main medium of instruction for all school subjects in the national schools since 1970, and also for most of the academic disciplines in the universities. To the Chinese and the Indians, using English for the very purpose mentioned above meant a reduction in the number of hours for the subjects taught in their respective languages. The outcome was seen to be a dilution of their cultural heritage (Chapters 5–6).

After some years of the return of English to schools in Malaysia, specifically for teaching science and mathematics, surveys were conducted in schools, mostly those in the rural areas, to assess students' attainment level in English and in science and mathematics. Results from the rural schools showed that there was no significant improvement in the students' performance in these subjects. The main reason given was found in the teachers

themselves who had been trained in the teaching of those subjects in Malay, Chinese or Tamil, and who had to perform the same task in English in which they were not trained.

After over four years of the programme of Teaching Science and Mathematics in English (TSME), a survey was conducted by the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development of the Sultan Idris University of Education in 2007 and 2008 to assess the effectiveness of the policy in terms of the students' attainment in the subject matter as well as in their proficiency in English. The focus was the attainment of the Year Five primary school students from all over Peninsular Malaysia, both in the national and national type schools. Below is a summary of the findings of the study as given in the Abstract of the Report:

> These pupils have gone through the process of learning Mathematics and Science in English for four years, since 2003. The findings of data analysis from these three data sets are consistent, that is over 75% of these pupils indicated that they 'do not/ barely comprehend' their teachers' teaching of Mathematics and Science in English, and found it 'difficult/fairly difficult' to learn Mathematics and Science.
>
> (Isahak Haron et al., April 2008: iii)

As a result, the performance in science and mathematics, as well as their proficiency in English were generally low. Students in the national schools reported that teachers would resort to code-switching of Malay-English in explaining concepts and the meaning of the questions put to the students. They also found it difficult to compose in comprehensible English descriptions of objects in biology classes.

The findings of this research appear to corroborate with those in a Ph. D. Thesis (2012) by Asiah Mohd. Sharif. The thesis, titled *The Impact of LEP Teachers' Knowledge: Bases on Implementing Change through ETeMS in a Rural Primary School*, discusses the problem in the implementation of TSME in great detail. According to Asiah Mohd. Sharif, Low English Proficiency (LEP) among the teachers affected their overall skills in handling the subjects in terms of pedagogy, knowledge and confidence. They were not able to go beyond the questions and answers that were provided in the textbooks.

From these two research projects, one can conclude that the failure of TSME was located in two areas. One was the inability of students to function in English in school subjects which demanded an understanding of highly abstract concepts the moment they entered school, whereas all the other subjects, except for the English language classes, were taught in the national language (in the national schools) and the mother tongue (in national type schools). The other was the inability of teachers to transmit knowledge in these subjects as their efficiency in being teachers of these subjects was in Malay, Chinese, or Tamil.

Dissatisfaction over the teaching of science and mathematics grew and reached its peak in 2009 in the form of demonstrations led by Malay non-governmental organisations, urging the government to revert to using Malay in the teaching of those subjects in the national schools. The Chinese and the Indians followed suit in urging the reversal of the policy of using English to using Chinese and Tamil in national type schools. The government had to comply, and the reversal began in 2011. This means the students would only be using English in the English language classes which were limited to a few hours a week. The drastic decrease in the use of English in the national and national type schools affected mostly students of the rural areas. To those in the urban areas, English remained as one of the speech systems in their language repertoire, and they could still enjoy watching English language programmes on the pay-television channels, and read English story books available in the public libraries and on sale in abundance in the book stores.

Compensation for the loss of English-language hours due to the reversal of the policy in 2011 had to be found so that there would always be a programme for enhancing students' ability in English. Again, there came the suggestion that English schools should be reinstated, but this was not possible. As the national language policy goes, whatever there is to be done for English should not in any way disturb the status given to Malay. The relationship between these two languages is clear. Both are important but in a different way. They should complement, not rival each other.

A programme which applies to every level of education was mounted, crystallised in the slogan, 'Upholding the Status of Malay, Strengthen the English Language' (*Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu, Memperkasakan Bahasa Inggeris*, abbreviated as *MBMMBI*). Since using English in teaching school subjects is not accepted in national and national type schools, the only method left is to increase the number of hours of English language classes as well as to use more English in co-curricular activities. This policy is included and emphasised in the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025*, launched on 6 September 2013 by the Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhiyuddin Mohd. Yassin, who was also the Minister of Education.

As given in the *Blueprint*, there will be no change in the current system in the national and national type schools. However, emphasis is given to bilingual proficiency as a target to be achieved in the list of achievements projected for the students. Bilingual proficiency here means proficiency in Malay and English. Acquisition of a third language is encouraged. The official statement is as follows: 'Every child will be at a minimum, operationally proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English, and will be encouraged to learn an additional language'.

The third language mentioned here is one of the languages with a wider diffusion, i.e. one of the United Nations languages, or any other language that makes knowledge in any field of study accessible to Malaysians. Some of these languages, such as French and Japanese, are already taught in the

schools. Local universities have also offered them in programmes leading to a degree in modern languages, or as electives for students doing other degree programmes.

The *Blueprint* has charted another step forward in maintaining the policy of Malay- English bilingualism. This is seen in making a pass grade in English in the School Certificate Examinations compulsory, starting from 2016. Without this qualification the student would not be issued with this valuable certificate even if his grades for all other subjects are well above the passing line. With this requirement, the *Blueprint* has paved a round-trip journey for the return of English to the level of importance it occupied before 1957. Starting from 2016, a two-language requirement is included in the issuance of the School Certificate to Malaysian students on the completion of their secondary education. The schema below shows the language requirement for the school certificate in Malaysia through the decades:

Before 1957	**1957–2015**	**2016–**
English	Malay	Malay & English

In the School Certificate Examination in 2011, only 28% of the students scored a grade in the English language paper which is of the level of the Cambridge English Language Test 1119. To improve the situation, the government mounted a number of remedial programmes, directly targeted at the students as well as the teachers. With the students, enhancement of their proficiency is by introducing English literature as a component of the English language subject. Another is hiring teachers from English-speaking countries, such as Great Britain, United States and Australia. In improving their English language proficiency together with teaching efficiency, teachers are required to take the Cambridge Placement Test (CPT). In 2012, 5,000 teachers attended an advance course as teachers of English conducted by the British Council, and more were in line for this course (*Berita Harian*, 7 September 2013: 6).

The *Blueprint* received mixed reactions. The attitude of the Malays was positive, because the national language was returned to its proper place, and emphasis on the teaching of English was for the good of the country. The obverse reaction was from the Chinese and the Indians, because the increase in the number of hours for Malay and English meant a decrease in the teaching of Chinese and Tamil.

English as a neutral second language

Today English is a neutral language in Malaysia in that it does not have a definitive ethnolinguistic community. However, the English school during the colonial period and the two decades after the Malayan independence cannot be considered as a neutral ground for the coming together of the

various racial groups, as mentioned earlier. Dissatisfaction with the NEP 1970 was not just due to the overall use of the national language (being the grouse the non-Malays), and to the existence the national versus the national type schools (which is a problem with the Malays), but also to the apparent inability of Malaysians, specially the graduates of local universities to speak English well; the last mentioned factor seems to reflect the unhappiness of all the three races. In the *Blueprint*, the national language policy has remained intact, which means that no amendment can be made to the Constitution of Malaysia regarding the National Language Act. But upgrading the ability of Malaysians in using English has been placed as a most important agenda in education policy of the country. With a history as the language of the colonial rulers, and that of the rich and the powerful, English in the current policy has turned into one which, besides the national language, can provide a neutral ground for the people to interact with one another.

English is not given the status of official language, as the status expired in 1967, 10 years after the implementation of the national language policy in 1957 in Peninsular Malaysia, in 1973 in Sabah, and in 1985 in Sarawak. As Malaysia's second language, there is no clear-cut definition given to this term in any official document of the Ministry of Education, except that it is said to be 'the second most important language after the national language'. In the 1970s, in seminars of the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore, member countries were divided into two categories: TESL and TEFL. The former consisted of Singapore and the Philippines as these two countries provided a clear picture of using English as a language of instruction in the education system, and this means that English was their second language. Malaysia was placed together with Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, as these countries only taught English as a subject in the schools, i.e. as a foreign language, not as a medium of instruction. The typology was considered useful in assisting member countries design their methods of teaching English.

Taking 'T' out of the acronym TESL and TEFL, Malaysia was not an ESL country of the same category as Singapore and the Philippines, but at the same time it could not be called an EFL country based on the definition given by experts on ELT. The volume of the use of English in the country at the official, professional and commercial levels, as well as in social interaction far exceeds its use in the EFL countries given in the typology. The criterion applied in arriving at TESL as opposed to TEFL countries was just based on English being a medium of instruction or otherwise. Malaysia did not accept this typology and kept using the term 'second language' to refer to English, although experts from Great Britain who were invited as consultants in ELT by the Ministry of Education and local universities remained in their belief that Malaysia was indeed an EFL country (Asmah Haji Omar, 1997: 2).

There is a theoretical issue in the above typology, as it centres only on the role of English as a language of instruction, without taking into consideration other factors which relate to its use in society. In Malaysia, English

has never really faded off in use. After 1967 and until today, it has been very much alive in almost all societal domains: governance, education, the various professions, business, industries and politics. Official documents of great significance in the governance of the country, particularly its laws, are written in both Malay and English, with the former being the authoritative version in the sense that this would be the one referred to should there be a misinterpretation of any part of the laws. Malay has already been implemented in trials in the lower courts of law since 1982, and judgments are given in Malay; however, in the High Courts, English is also used at the request of those concerned.[8] In every domain of the life of the Malaysian society, English is there side by side with Malay. Even in driving schools in Kuala Lumpur and the big cities, people taking the theory course in highway code are given the option of whether to register for the class conducted in Malay or the one in English.

There are two situations where English is not allowed to intrude. One is in the running of the day to day affairs in government departments, specifically in official letters and the writing of reports of meetings and other types of reports, although in the conduct of meetings it is normal for members to resort to Malay-English code switch. The other situation is in official ceremonies officiated by the King or the sultan of any of the Malay states (Asmah Haji Omar, 2012). All these situations are an indication that English is far from being a foreign language in Malaysia. The intensity of the teaching of English in Malaysia today, and the preference given to this language in the allocation of the annual budget over and above the other languages, including the national language, are privileges that are usually not given to a foreign language.

The ESL-EFL typology is restricted to the classroom situation. One's ability to speak and write a language other than one's own does not depend on a single situation. There is no doubt that using it as a medium of instruction for 50% or so in the school curriculum is a boost to its learning, but without the support of other situations in the community of users and learners the target attainment level may not be achieved. There may be cases where the TESL practice in certain countries may not produce the target results in terms of English language proficiency, or it may also be the case where a country under the TEFL label may show results which are equal or almost equal to those of its TESL counterpart. All the situations and factors described above are an indication that English is far from being a foreign language in Malaysia. In the same way, Malaysia does not label Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil as foreign because in the eyes of the country and its people, these languages are part of the life of Malaysians.

Conclusion

The evolution of the language policy in education in Malaysia since 1957 is a history of efforts to seek a compromise in the face of multiplicity, taking into consideration the following factors: the significance of having a

national identity through the national language; the multiracial and multilingual nature of the population; the maintenance of linguistic and cultural heritage of ethnic groups; and quality education through Malay-English bilingualism and a third language. Ethnic languages are given places in the school system as long as they respect the designated status of Malay and that of English.

Attaining Malay-English bilingualism is not through the allocation of school subjects between Malay as first and English as second language, as in bilingual models in other parts of the world, but through the intensification of the teaching of these two languages. All the while Malay will remain the main, not the sole, medium of education, in line with the national language policy.

This volume, *Languages in the Malaysian Education System: Monolingual Strands in Multilingual Settings* paints a holistic picture of the history and evolution of the different language strands to become part of the national education system. Presentations of the story in chapters on Malay, Chinese and Tamil refer to the various Education Acts as instruments shared by them in their development up the social ladder, from the days when they were in the back waters of the colonial system of education. As for English, the NEP 1970 brought it down the social ladder of the school system, but the *Blueprint* has given it a most visible place in making Malay-English bilingualism an important element in the education system. Arabic is a strand by itself, and has never been a controversy when new policies came into being. The POL is an open-ended programme, and it is for language communities to decide how and when they plan for their language to be included in the national schools as a POL.

The Malaysian education system has gone through many phases to become what it is today. Having monolingual strands of schools and the POL is to serve the idea of integrating the Malaysian peoples as *Bangsa Malaysia* rather than assimilating them. Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia 1982–2013, in his autobiography (2011: 602–603) sums up the situation, as follows:

> We are a multiracial country whose component races are mutually incompatible – they differ from one another in ethnicity, culture, language, and religion, and most importantly, are divided in their economic and social achievements. . . . *Bangsa Malaysia* basically means that people should regard themselves, first and above all, as Malaysians. . . . Achieving *Bangsa Malaysia* will require a focus on the education system.

Designing an education system that pleases everyone is just like climbing up a very steep hill. A great deal of balancing has to be done in the effort to get to the top or even near the top. It is more so with Malaysia, which

according to Tunku Abdul Aziz, a well-known newspaper columnist, is *a 'difficult, dynamic, multiethnic, and potentially volatile nation in search of greatness' (New Straits Times*, 27 April 2015: 17).

Notes

1 For a discussion of the degrees of agglutination of these languages, see Asmah Haji Omar, 2014.

2 I learned to speak Javanese as a student in Jakarta (1958–1963), but because of its sociolinguistic complexity I never had the courage to use it in an interaction even with my course mates. The *ngoko* as a rule is the lowest level in the sociolinguistic hierarchy and can be used in interactions when the interactants are of the same age group and social level and who are close friends. But one can never be sure if an interactant is of one's social level and close to one.

3 My research of 1991 on non-Malay academics and students, mostly Chinese and Indians, in the University of Malaya, shows that these two groups were using the language they were educated in as home language. The subjects were those who had had their education in English. Among the Chinese, their self-consciousness of being Chinese motivated their parents to send them to private tuitions for Mandarin, when the parents themselves did not speak the language. Chinese students, who could speak a Chinese dialect, would use this dialect with cohorts of the same dialect group. Similarly, an Indian would use his language if the interactant shared this language with him. But Malay and English were the tools of interaction when participants were of a mixed group (Asmah Haji Omar, 2003: Chapter 10).

4 Besides speaking a creolised Malay, the Baba Chinese have a culture of their own which appears to be a fusion of Malay and Chinese cultures. Cultural items of this nature are given the label *nyonya*, such as *nyonya cakes*, *nyonya sarong*, and so on.

5 These Malay-speaking Chinese are not given the label *Baba*, but are known as *Peranakan Chinese*. Their language is also a Creole, but is quite different from Baba Malay, as its Malay base is the dialect of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia (Teo Kok Seong, 2003). The Malay word *peranakan* is used as a prefix to the name of an ethnic group whose members have been assimilated with the Malays in terms of their language and way of life. Another group with the *peranakan* label is the *Jawi Peranakan*, comprising Indian Muslims who, professing the same religion as the Malays, practise many aspects of the cultural life of the latter, and are easily assimilated with the Malays (Halimah Said and Zainab Majid, 2004).

6 The Melaka Chitty not only speak a variety of Malay but adopt much of the Malay way of life. The only difference is that they are Hindus, and not Muslims.

7 From 1978 to 1983, the Language Centre of the University of Malaya embarked on two projects known as the University of Malaya English for Special Purposes Project (UMESPP) for reading comprehension, and the University of Malaya Spoken English Project (UMSEP), to develop teaching materials for the teaching of English to all undergraduates of the university. A series of books were published by the University of Malaya Press for use for the purpose.

8 The trial of a former Deputy Prime Minister over a criminal case were conducted in both Malay and English. The use of English was allowed not only due to the presence of foreigners to testify on the plaintiff's behalf, but also to local scientists and medical experts not because they could not speak Malay but that they could explain their field of specialisation better in English. The judgments of the trial, read out to the court on 10 February 2015, were also given in English.

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2 Implementing the national language policy in educational institutions

Fauziah Taib

Introduction

The Malay language, *bahasa Melayu*, is the national language of Malaysia. Its status is enshrined in Article 152 of the Constitution of Malaya, and then Malaysia, when the latter came into existence in 1963. With the formation of Malaysia, a variation to the name of this language came into existence in the form of *bahasa Malaysia*, meaning 'the language of Malaysia'.

Malay has played the role of lingua franca since the early centuries of the Christian era by people in the Malay Archipelago which covers Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Brunei. Melaka, situated in the west coast of the Malay Peninsula and facing the Straits of Melaka, was an important maritime route, for ships plying between India and China. It was also an entrepôt centre of trade from the 14th until the 19th century. This means that it was a meeting place of traders and migrants from all over the archipelago, as well as from east and west, and Malay was the language of communication between them. The spread of Malay to the islands of the archipelago was further assisted by the fact that Malay is comparatively an easy language to acquire due to the simplicity in its phonological and grammatical systems (Asmah Haji Omar, 1993: 4). At the cultural level, the spread of Malay came about with the dissemination of religion and literature. Islam which came long before Christianity to the archipelago brought along not only religious texts but also Arabic tales and poetry which remain popular in Malaysia today.

As Malay is spoken not only in Malaysia, but also in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, there have developed which three national varieties, and each of these varieties has its own dialects just like any other natural language (Asmah Haji Omar, 2014: 729). In Malaysia, among the dialects are those of Kedah, Perak, Johor, Kelantan, Sabah and Sarawak which differ in varying degrees in terms of pronunciation and lexical items. However, in the school and official language use, two types of pronunciation are generally accepted, i.e. the a-variety (a Kedah-based type), and the shwa variety (a Johor-based type) (Asmah Haji Omar, 1991: 416). The former prevails in the northern states of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, and the

latter in the southern states of the peninsula. In 1987, it was decided by the Ministry of Education to have only one standard pronunciation of Malay based on the spelling of the language. This came to be known as the *bahasa baku*. It lasted for about 10 years until 1998 when the Malaysian Cabinet decreed that the policy be reverted to the one previous to 1987, which gave the freedom for people to choose any of the two varieties mentioned above. The reason given was that the *bahasa baku* type of pronunciation was queer and its intonation unnatural (Asmah Haji Omar, 2014: Ibid.). In terms of grammar, the standard Malay adopted for use in schools and other formal domains is based on the Johor-Riau Malay, a variety used by the Melaka sultanate which shifted to Johor, and then to Riau after the capture of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511 (Gut and Pillai, 2015: 56).

The implementation of Malay as the main medium of education began after the independence of Malaya in 1957. This chapter discusses the teaching of Malay through the colonial days to the period of independence from British rule in 1957, to the reform in the education system based on the New Education Policy of 1970, and the recent *Malaysian Education Blueprint of 2013–2025*.

Developing Malay literacy

Before the 19th century, the focus of education for the Malays was the religious type where children were taught to read the Quran and learn the tenets of Islam. There was no Malay language class where the children could learn to write and speak well in their language as the general contention was that there was no necessity to learn their own mother tongue, as it had not been the tradition to establish a place where Malay was formally taught (Asmah Haji Omar 1976: 7; also Chapter 4 in this volume). Furthermore, the Arabic language was considered more important as it is the language of the Quran. Despite the high regard for Arabic, the Malays never used the language in their daily communication. The focus during that time was the use of Arabic in Islamic education where teaching was carried out in teachers' homes, mosques, *surau, madrasah* or the *pondok* schools (Chapter 4).

It was only in the 19th century that Malay made its presence in formal education with the establishment of Malay classes as part of the Penang Free School (an English medium school) founded in 1816 (Holgate, 1948 cited in Asmah Haji Omar, 1976: 8). The first Malay school was the Gelugor Malay School (1826), followed by the Bayan Lepas Malay School, and the Air Hitam Malay School, all located in Penang. At the same time there were English schools in Melaka which taught Malay to Malay children.

The English schools in Penang and Melaka were missionary schools funded by the London Missionary Society. In other parts of Malaya, Malay as a medium of instruction was introduced in religious schools known as the Quran schools, a programme which started in 1860 after the colonial government was urged by the English East India Company to provide

education in the vernacular language, Malay. The Quran schools in Melaka were granted funds on the condition that Malay was used as the medium of instruction to teach the three R's. Subsequently, these Quran schools developed into formal schools and finally became Malay schools run by the government. Although Malay schools were established in the various decades of the 19th century, schools in two east coast states, Kelantan and Terengganu, were non-existent until the beginning of the 20th century. The first Malay school in Kelantan was established in 1903, and in Terengganu in 1915.

The objective of the colonial government in providing the Malay boys and girls with education at the primary level for six years at the Malay school was to ensure that they were sufficiently literate, but not for them to be too educated to the level that they could cause instability to the government as what had been happening in India. Hence, Malay boys and girls of the age of 5–14 years were taught the three R's for them to read write simple texts in their language. Besides that, the boys were taught 'local crafts and industries and gardening in rural areas'. As for the girls, the extras in their school curriculum were 'Needlework and Handiwork, Nursing, Cookery and Domestic Economy generally' (Cheeseman, 1928, cited in Asmah Haji Omar, 1976: 10).

The effect of such a school system was that the majority of the Malays remained in the villages to continue with their rice-planting, fishing and handiwork. After their primary education where Malay was the medium of instruction, Malay students had the option of continuing their education in English schools as there were no Malay secondary schools then. However, this was only accessible to bright students of good financial means from the urban areas as these schools were usually situated in towns, and money which was hard to come by for the village folks was required for school fees as well as to buy books. This was unlike the Malay system of education which was free. As the colonial government did not provide for Malay secondary education, there was no channel for the Malays in general to reach this level of education.

An option for the Malays after completing primary education was to become teacher-trainees or 'pupil teachers', in teaching school subjects in the Malay schools to children in their own districts. The best among these teacher-trainees were selected for either the Sultan Idris Training College (for men) established in 1922 in Tanjong Malim, Perak, and the Malay Women's Training College in Melaka established in 1935.

After the Japanese occupation of Malaya ended in 1945, the British continued to rule the country until 1956 in which there was a period called the Malayan Union (1946–1948). The government of the Malayan Union aimed to provide free primary education in all mediums of instruction, namely Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English. For the Malay schools, English was also taught but only in the more advanced classes. There was insufficient time to implement the proposed free elementary education, as the Malayan Union was replaced by the Federation of Malaya in 1948.

In 1950, a committee was formed to make recommendations on Malay vernacular education. Known as Committee for Malay Education, Federation of Malaya, it was headed by L. J. Barnes of Oxford University.. The report of the committee, better known as the *Barnes Report* 1951, had the following recommendation: All Malay and English schools should be preserved and other vernacular schools should be closed down and replaced by a common school for all, which would be known as national school where only Malay and English were to be used at the primary level, and education would be free. This recommendation had great significance as it propagated the teaching of Malay at the national level, and that it recognised the important role the Malay language could play in educating children of all races in Malaya. But the recommendations were rejected by the Chinese and the Indians. (See Chapters 5–6 for reasons behind their rejection.)

Another committee was established in 1956, on the eve of the country's independence, known as the Committee for Education 1956. It was composed of high level government officials and education experts from various local and foreign groups, to recommend a national system of education for independent Malaya. The committee was headed by Abdul Razak Hussain, the Minister of Education of the time, who later became the second Prime Minister of Malaysia. For this reason it is popularly known as the Razak Committee for Education.

In its report, better known as the *Razak Report*, the committee recommended a national system of education which was more representative of the Malayan nation that would be born when independence was achieved, in taking into consideration that Malay would be the national language while simultaneously recognising the languages and cultures of the other races. This recommendation was seen as an effort at unifying the nation through a common language, and as such it was also necessary to have a common syllabus for all schools even though the medium of instruction would differ, such as Chinese and Tamil in the Chinese and Tamil schools respectively. *The Razak Report* was later adopted as the education framework for independent Malaya.

Joshua Fishman (1968: 10) sees the relationship between language and nationalism as an 'ideologised interaction', since 'nationalism commonly elaborates upon language as one of its markers of symbolic unity and identity' (Alis Puteh, 2010: 28). As such, efforts taken to make Malay the national language had the objective of achieving nationalism through a common language. Choosing Malay as a national symbol would not only unify its people, but would also give them a sense of national identity as members of one nation.

The Razak Committee spelt out six measures in the implementation of the *Report*, as follows:

a. making the Malay language a qualification at the various levels of entry into the government service;

b. using the Malay language as a factor for selection for secondary education;
c. making the use of the Malay language compulsory in all government departments;
d. making the Malay language a requirement for anyone aspiring for a scholarship from public funds;
e. giving grants to schools depending in part on the successful learning of Malay as and when adequate facilities could be provided;
f. making the Malay language a compulsory part of teacher training courses and examinations.

(*Report of the Committee for Education 1956*: 14)

One breakthrough made by the committee was the proposal to have only one type of secondary school known as national secondary schools using both Malay and English. With the implementation of this proposal, Malay made its presence in English secondary schools in 1958 as a medium of instruction of school subjects. The use of space in the English schools was only a temporary measure before Malay secondary schools were built as well as for making other preparations, such as the writing of textbooks and training of teachers.

Malay in the schools after independence

With the *Razak Report*, the Malayan education policy at the time of independence was already in place with its aim at providing a system of education to all citizens regardless of race, through a common language medium and common core syllabuses, with a conviction that a common language would create a common culture and so create a new national identity, with 'a common Malayan outlook' (*Report of the Committee for Education 1956*: 12).

The Ministry of Education at that time was not ready to implement the policy, and this brought much dissatisfaction among members of the Association of Malay Teachers such that they not only resigned from their jobs, but also from their membership in UMNO, the ruling political party. To pacify them, a Malay secondary school was built in Kuala Lumpur in 1958. This was the *Sekolah Alam Shah*, the first ever institution to provide secondary education using the Malay language. It became known as the 'forerunner of education conducted in the Malay language' (Abdullah Hassan, 2005: 7).

An Education Review Committee was set up in 1960 by the then Minister of Education, Abdul Rahman bin Haji Talib, and was thus known as the Rahman Talib Committee, with the aim of laying down initiatives to speed up the process of national integration in independent Malaya. Recommendations of the *Report of the Education Review Committee 1960*, also known as the *Rahman Talib Report* (1960), was incorporated into the

Education Act 1961 that provided for the legal basis for Malay to be a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools, and in teacher training institutions. The Act also required students in the secondary level of education to obtain a pass grade in the Malay language paper before they could be awarded a certificate for any of the school public examinations (Asmah Haji Omar, 1976: 109). The establishment of *Sekolah Alam Shah*, coupled with making Malay a compulsory subject in schools and training institutions, marked the progress made in implementing the national language policy at various levels of educational institutions.

The racial conflict of 13 May 1969, in which language was one of the main issues, motivated the enforcement of the Education Act 1970, referred to as the New Education Policy (NEP) 1970. The provision of this Act requires that all schools, consisting of government and grants-in-aid schools, use a common curriculum, and that students sit for the same set of examinations. From 1970 schools in Malaysia were referred to as national schools, and national type schools; the former using Malay as the medium of instruction, while the latter using a language other than Malay. In the early years of the implementation of the Act, there were three national type schools. On the one hand, there was the English national type schools for both primary and secondary level of education, and on the other the Chinese and the Tamil national types schools which were primary schools. The English schools were soon phased out to become national schools, using Malay as the medium of instruction. (For a detailed account of this change, see Chapter 1 in this volume.) Following the provision in the Education Act 1970, Malay is also taught as a compulsory subject in the national type Chinese and Tamil schools. This move further upholds the national language policy.

Before Malay became the medium of instruction in national schools, most of the Arts subjects were taught in Malay, well before the shift from English to Malay in the science subjects. To ease the transition, some schools were teaching science subjects in two languages, namely Malay and English, while students were also allowed to use either language in their homework and even when answering examination questions. During this period some residential schools, where the majority of the students were earmarked for further studies overseas after completing secondary education, chose not to use Malay as a medium of instruction for the science subjects especially at the upper secondary level. The choice was made to facilitate their studies in the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries. All this shows that implementing the national language policy was not at the expense of students' welfare and their future in education.

The conversion of all English medium primary schools to national schools, where Malay was used as the medium of instruction, was completed by 1976. It was not until 1982 that English medium secondary schools were fully converted to national schools in Peninsular Malaysia (Solomon, 1988: 46). The change in schools in Sabah and Sarawak was completed three years later, i.e. in 1985, as the process there only began in 1977.

A committee was set up in 1979 to see whether the education system's evolution was meeting the needs of a progressive Malaysian nation. This committee was chaired by the then Minister of Education, Dr Mahathir Mohamad (who later became Prime Minister). As members of the committee consisted of Cabinet Ministers, the committee came to be known as the Cabinet Committee on Education 1979. Its objectives were: 'to achieve national unity in a multiethnic society besides instilling a sense of patriotism; to produce skilled manpower for national development; and to further extend the policy of the democratisation of education in order to strike a balance in all aspects of education between rural and urban areas' (Cabinet Committee Report, 1979: 227). Although the report of this committee, also known as *The Mahathir Report*, did not put forward a new education policy, the emphasis was on building a truly Malaysian society of the future, where at all levels of schooling a holistic (intellectual, spiritual, physical and emotional) approach to quality human development was adopted. The reform of the education system in the years that followed would be based on this report.

The Education Act 1996 provides for preschool, primary and secondary school education, as well as teacher, religious, technical, and special education. The Act is thus described as a paradigm shift for the national education system as its scope is extended to include all levels and categories. At the same time it also seemed fit to amend the Private Higher Education Act 1996 to allow for the establishment of more private higher education institutions. The latter Act also stipulates the use of Malay as a medium of instruction in all educational institutions in the education system. However, there has been no real enforcement of the National Language Act in private schools (Gill, 2002: 12), a situation which is not acceptable to the Malays.

The government's intention to make Malaysia the hub of education in the region means that there should be freedom with regard to the policy on medium of instruction to attract foreign educational institutions to set up branches in Malaysia, and thereby attract international students to attend universities available in the country. As the government does not provide funding for private educational institutions, enforcing the national language policy would not go down well with the financiers of these institutions, and this would have a negative effect on its plan as mentioned above.

Teacher training for Malay

The first teacher training college was established in 1878 to offer a training programme for the teaching of Malay (Asmah Haji Omar, 1976: 63). It was offered to Malay school masters from Singapore, Penang and Melaka, also known as the Straits Settlements. Three years later in 1901, a training college was set up in Melaka, and this was followed by one in Taiping, Perak in 1913. The last mentioned shifted to Tanjong Malim in 1922, taking the new label 'Sultan Idris Training College' (SITC). As has been mentioned

previously, a college to train women was established in 1935 in Melaka, the Malay Women's Training College.

At the SITC, a Malay linguist by the name of Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad, better known as Za'ba, wrote a series of books in three volumes namely *Kitab Ilmu Bahasa Melayu* (1927), *Pelita Bahasa Melayu* (1940), and *Ilmu Mengarang Melayu* (1934), which were used in training teachers at the college (Asmah Haji Omar, 2012: 11). Za'ba believed that language teaching should include activities that trained students to organise their thoughts in good language. In addition, a language teacher must know the rules of language usage, to make their teaching effective. He also advocated the use of context in developing a language teaching methodology.

While preparing for independence and with it the use of Malay as the main medium of instruction in schools, an institution was established in 1956 specifically for the training of teachers of the Malay language for the secondary schools. This institution was the Language Institute (*Maktab Bahasa*), built in Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur. In 1998, the Language Institute was elevated in status to become the Institute of Teacher Education Malay Campus, and is now the main centre for the development of pedagogy for Malay. It also functions as the main institute in the management of programmes and activities pertaining to the development of Malay language and culture, including publishing, producing and contributing materials for teaching and learning, as well as providing consultancy services in Malay language and literature.

The SITC with its original responsibility of training teachers for the Malay schools, which later became national primary schools, was upgraded in 1987 to include training teachers at the secondary level. In line with this elevation it was renamed Sultan Idris Teachers' Institute. In 1997, this institute was elevated to the status of a full university known as the Sultan Idris University of Education (*Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris*), which specialises in training graduate teachers not just for Malay, but also for the other languages taught in national and national type schools, as well as those taught as Pupils' Own Language (POL).

Besides the SITC and the Language Institute, there were other teacher training colleges that had come into being from the time of the Malayan independence, and the number increased with the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak when Malaysia came into being in 1963. Until the end of the 20th century, there were about 27 of them. Starting from 2005, some of them have been elevated to become institutions under the umbrella of the Institute of Teacher Education, which means that they could offer courses leading to the degree of the Bachelor of Education. This degree programme is not confined to one that is specific to the study of Malay language and literature, but is open to all other disciplines, both in the arts and the science streams. The language medium of these institutes is Malay except for designated courses which require the use of other languages in the training of teachers for other languages, such as English, Chinese and Tamil.

Malay at the university level

The use of Malay at the universities is an extension of the implementation of the national language policy which has been applied at the primary and secondary school levels. As mentioned earlier, in 1983 the changeover from English to Malay in the former English schools was completed. This means that all university intake from that year comprised students who had undergone their school education totally in Malay (Chapter 1).

With the change in medium of instruction, universities that had been using English as the main medium of instruction, and even in their administration, found it expedient to have a centre, department or unit responsible for conducting the teaching of Malay to those who needed to acquire or improve their proficiency in the language. These were the University of Malaya (UM), established in 1948 (formerly in Singapore but shifted to Malaya in 1956), and the Science University of Malaysia (USM), established in 1969 in Penang. Universities built after 1969 started off with using Malay as their main medium of instruction and as the language of administration. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), also known as the National University of Malaysia, was established in 1970, following a memorandum from Malay intellectuals proposing the setting up of a public university in which Malay was the main medium of instruction. Its establishment can be interpreted as a reaction to the racial riot of 13 May 1969 (Gill, 2005: 5). The need for such a university was to strengthen the basis for national unity through a common language of communication among Malaysians (Hazri Jamil and Nordin Abd. Razak, 2010).

At UM, a language service centre was set up in 1972, known as the Language Centre, to assist in the implementation of the national language policy. From that year Malay language courses were organised for the academic and administrative staff as well as for students. Each cohort had its own curriculum, with its type of objective and outcome. As a result the university was able to change its language use in all the administrative offices from English to Malay within a short span of time. Training of staff to conduct their academic courses in Malay took a longer time as this involved all the academics, including expatriates, in all the faculties in the university. The programme proved to be a success, as indicated by the ability of the university to implement the national language policy fully in 1983. As for the students, each faculty defined its own objective in terms of language attainment, and the Language Centre had to comply with the specific objectives of each faculty in the teaching of the Malay language (Asmah Haji Omar, 1976: Chapter 4). In fact the University of Malaya had been offering courses to faculties that required their students to have a certain level proficiency in Malay, even from the time the medium of instruction in this university was English.

Most of the local universities offer courses which lead to degrees in Malay Studies specialising in Malay linguistics, literature and culture. UM was the

first to offer such courses in its Department of Malay Studies for the Bachelor of Arts degree, from the beginning of its establishment. Other universities have similar programmes but with different nomenclatures (Hajibah et al., 2010: 15).

Since the 1990s, local universities in Malaysia have been receiving students from foreign countries. These are public as well as private universities. In the 21st century there have been branches of a number of well-known universities from abroad. This means that English has come back as a medium of instruction in universities in the country. In response to changing times, even public universities funded by the government have to offer part of their degree programmes in English, and these programmes are usually in the science-based faculties. For the national language policy to remain relevant, a requirement handed down by the Ministry Education in its Action Plan has to be complied with, and that is making Malay compulsory for international students to enrol in a course known as 'Malay for Communication'. The emphasis on communication using simple spoken and written Malay is for these students to be able to socialise effectively while in Malaysia. They are taught pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary and grammar within the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

A flexible stance in the use of English, especially in public universities was a subject of debates among Malay intellectuals who were of the opinion that it would affect the status of the Malay language as the national language in the education system (Zainal Abidin, 1996: 39; Nik Safiah and Awang Sariyan, 1996: 15). Furthermore, this is seen as a deviation from the government's efforts to uphold Malay as the main medium of instruction. There were grounds for their concerns when studies show that a large number of these institutions not only did not use Malay as a medium of instruction, but also did not make Malay a compulsory subject for local students (Juriah et al., 2002: 56). In addition, the admission requirement of private universities does not include a minimum pass in Malay at the school certificate level. This is unlike in public universities which require at least a credit in Malay at the said level as a requirement for admission.

Malay-English bilingualism

Towards the end of the 20th century, there were several rapid changes in Malaysia as a result of developments in science and technology and the explosion of information. Malaysia's Vision 2020, that is to reach the developed nation status, has become the basis for the nation's policy in development. Education is basic for national development, and therefore it was necessary that the national system of education be well-established in order to realise this vision. As a corollary to this, the *Education Development Plan for Malaysia 2001–2010* was enforced, taking into account the aspirations contained in Vision 2020, i.e. 'to build a resilient nation, encourage the creation of a just society, maintain sustainable economic growth, develop

global competitiveness, build a knowledge-based economy (K-economy), strengthen human resource development, and maintain sustainable environmental development' (*Education Development Plan, 2001–2010*:1).

In line with the *Development Plan*, the Ministry of Education revised the secondary school integrated curriculum to enable students to face challenges in education in the 21st century by incorporating various skills, among which are those of communication and information. In terms of the Malay language curriculum, the emphasis is on making the teaching of Malay more comprehensive, hence the inclusion of Malay literature as a component of the Malay language subject. With these moves, the government has to ensure that schools are equipped with the infrastructure and that teachers receive adequate training to understand the curriculum and to acquire skills that need to be integrated in the teaching of the language (Shahrina et al., 2012: 118).

The move in 2010 to introduce a language policy, 'To Uphold Malay and Strengthen English' (MBMMBI), is aimed at upholding Malay as 'the main language of communication, language of knowledge and the language of nation-building crucial towards achieving the objectives of 1Malaysia' (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010:10). Not only does the policy strengthen the position of Malay in fostering unity as evident in the MBMMBI, it also means that English language proficiency needs to be enhanced among Malaysians as it will enable them to compete globally. The enhancement of bilingual proficiency in Malay and English is further promoted in the *Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025*, which was launched in September 2013 as part of a transformational programme aimed at making Malaysia a developed country by 2020. The education system had to be revamped to produce thinking and innovative students to meet future needs as reflected in the focus of the *Blueprint*, i.e. knowledge, thinking skills, leadership, bilingual proficiency, ethics and national identity.

For positive results of bilingualism, Cummins (2014) advocates for 'different educational treatments' for the two languages involved such that threshold levels of proficiency can be attained. As far as Malay is concerned, as emphasised in the *Blueprint*, the teaching has to ensure that every schoolchild is proficient in the language, and that both national and national type schools use a standard Malay curriculum. Arising from this objective the number of hours for teaching the language has to be increased. This means that students in the national type Chinese and Tamil schools will have a higher level of proficiency in Malay than they do now, such that they will no longer have to spend an additional year in the Remove Class before entering the national school for their secondary education.

The highlights in terms of the teaching profession are to transform teaching into a profession of choice where only the top 30% of the graduates will be recruited for teaching in order to produce effective teachers. Teachers would also get a new career package and reduced administrative duties so that they can concentrate on the core function of teaching. Competency and

performance-based career progression is to produce efficient teachers and subject specialists, and finally to inculcate in them leadership and a culture of excellence.

Malay language teaching could be improved with the upgrading of the teachers' knowledge in both language and literature, as among the existing teachers of Malay there are those who do not major in Malay language and literature while studying at the teacher training institutes or universities (Juriah et al., 2002: 71). Furthermore, teachers are not equipped with teaching techniques for the different types of students, namely students learning Malay as a second language, as opposed to those learning it as a foreign language in private universities. On the subject of using computer and information technology in the teaching and learning of Malay, studies have found that teachers are highly aware of its importance. However, their knowledge and skills in this area are found to be of the average level (Sabariah Samsuri, 2006: 45).

Conclusion

In sum, the *Razak Report 1956*, the *Rahman Talib Report 1961*, and the Education Act 1996 aim to make Malay a language of acquiring and imparting knowledge in institutions of education, while the *Education Blueprint of 2013–2025* further affirms the role of Malay in meeting future needs. The implementation of Malay as a medium of instruction in stages in schools may appear to be slow, but it allows for the preparation of the necessities, namely writing and publishing of textbooks, development of terminologies for the various subjects taught in schools and universities, and upgrading the proficiency of the teaching staff in the use of Malay. The implementation of the national language policy in the various educational institutions is not without challenges, but it is these challenges that have paved the way towards firmer actions to uphold the national language in its role in national unity.

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3 English in language education policies and planning in Malaysia

Azirah Hashim and *Gerhard Leitner*

Introduction

The geopolitical, demographic, linguistic and cultural space of Malaya and Southeast Asia has ensured that language contact has always been pervasive. Britain and the Netherlands have caused a major reshuffling of the demographic and linguistic make-up of the Malay Peninsula and island world during the colonial period as Malaya was divided and integrated into the wider Asian colonial empires of these nations. English (and Dutch) had slowly carved out a considerable space for themselves at the expense of other languages in their received language habitats. Inheriting colonial outcomes at independence, Malaysia and other former colonies in the region have formulated national policies of their own with regard to their colonial heritage and the other national languages. As for Anglophone colonies, Malaysia is one of the few countries that have reduced the status of English, others have maintained English or increased its presence. The more contemporary changes brought about by regional organisations like ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and globalisation have added new challenges that national language policies need to respond to. English has thus gained a strong foothold everywhere.

The three levels at which English is used in Malaysia today, i.e., the national, regional and global, help structure this chapter (see Azirah and Leitner, 2014). They imply a rough-and-ready, if overlapping, progression in time, the development of a national form of English during the colonial period from a cluster of reasonably independent forms of English, and a somewhat fluctuating shift towards the current role of English as the 'second most important language' in the country. The three functions of English in Malaysia (and some other countries in the region) bring about a conflict between accepting or, at least, tolerating local forms of English nationally and meeting the needs of regional and global viable demands.

Malay and English before and after independence

The English East India Company had arrived in the region during the 17th century, but the relevant period for today starts from the early 19th century.[1]

Till the mid-19th century Malay was the main language at the level of international relations and government in the Malay region. There was a considerable body of what could be referred to as high literature and of cultural documents in standard Malay. British educators indeed aimed to make use of them (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008; 2013: 31–33). For low-level commercial transactions there was a pidginised form, Bazaar Malay.

Stamford Raffles, the founder of Singapore, outlined an education policy that included English but was multilingual so as to cater for all races. The Singapore Free School, which was to follow the spirit of his policy, was set up as late as 1834. Other English language schools followed. Unlike in India, however, there were no debates between what were referred to as Anglicists and Orientalists there. The former had argued that English should be imposed by the colonialists so as to create a class of people akin to British culture and interests, while the latter pointed to the value of India's classical languages, Sanskrit and Arabic, and their potential of winning the elite for the British cause. Given the failed experience in making English widely available in Bengal, the situation in Singapore and Malaya did not invite a replication.

British colonialists brought about major changes to the demographic, settlement and linguistic make-up of the Malay region when a workforce from India and China was brought in with their native languages. As the East India Company and the Empire were mainly interested in trade up to the 20th century, it was natural that they did not see it as their task to assimilate or integrate these ethnic groups into some kind of pre-national or colonial polity, nor did they consider it essential to facilitate a common identity. This would possibly have even been detrimental to them as the united groups might eventually have been hostile to British interests. Thus, the Chinese were to work in the tin mines, the South Indians in the rubber plantations, and the Malays remained largely rural. This division of labour was paired with settlements in different regions, adherence to different religions, and use of different languages. These generalisations should not be taken too strictly as some Malays were active in the mining industry and elsewhere, and there was a considerable amount of migration or, perhaps more adequately, movement of people within the Malay region (Abdur-Razzaq and Khoo, 2003: 85–97). The Chinese also moved into the growing small towns where they set up small shops and became traders. Today they form a strong component in a more self-conscious urban middle class. They play a considerable role in the formulation and uptake of educational language policies.

With independence in 1957 the Federation of Malaya, i.e. Malaysia's former name for Peninsular Malaysia, thus, inherited a number of different languages and dialects: Malay with its dialects, the languages and dialects of the migrant Chinese and Indians, and countless other indigenous, inclusive of aboriginal, languages of the Peninsula occupied the traditional geographic and ethnic space developed through colonisation. When the two states Sabah and Sarawak joined Malaya in 1963 to form Malaysia, they

added to the complexity. Mobility and urbanisation increased as the nation became more affluent. There are few historical statistics of migration to and during the rule of Malay sultanates so that it is difficult to know absolute numbers and the proportion of Indian and Chinese migrants from the 19th century onwards. But the general picture is well described in many studies.[2] The population today is about 28.3 million with the main ethnic groups being Malay, inclusive of the other indigenous groups (67.4%), Chinese (24.6%), and Indians (7.4%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). The ethnic diversity that these figures reflect originated with British colonialism but contains changes since. The languages had not become a local sediment in Malaysia, when independence was granted. Given that and the Islamic history of the country, nation building was perhaps a bigger issue than for other nations in the region that had acquired independence between 1945 (Indonesia) and 1985 (Brunei).

While the indigenous groups speak Malay and their own ethnic languages, 'settler populations', i.e. the Chinese, Indians, Eurasians and Europeans use Chinese, Indian languages, or English. An understanding of this linguistic diversity shows the ethnic focus in status planning and educational language policies, the role of Malay as national language, and that of the former colonial language, English. Azirah and Tan (2012) argue that this complexity clearly required decisions in nation building on a number of language issues and on their repercussions in the domain of education (Azirah, 2009: 2012; 2013).

Malay was the natural choice as the national and official language of the new nation. It was the language of the dominant ethnic group, the Malays, and has also had a long history in the region. But if Malay was to replace English in all domains such as administration, parliament, law, etc. in which the latter had been used before, it had to be modernised on a broad scale. A shift could, therefore, only be gradual. It was uncontroversial even among non-Malay groups. The question of what to do with English was discussed quite controversially in the context of independence. India could represent a model at first sight when it stipulated in 1947 that English should disappear as *de jure* official language and be replaced by Hindi and other Indian languages within fifteen years (i.e. around 1963). That did not happen, and a consensus was found in the Three-Language Formula (English, Hindi and one South Indian language). In Malaya in 1957 such a solution could not have been foreseeable, so English too was to be phased out after ten years. It would be retained as the 'second most important language', a somewhat vague status, whose interpretation may reflect conflicting interests and must be responsible for much of the instability of Malaysia's language-in-education policies henceforth (Azirah and Leitner, 2014). English did lose ground even if the shift took longer in some domains such as in the higher courts than in others like school education. That loss of ground has turned up again and again as a major obstacle to modernisation in education policies. Broadly speaking, further developments followed the provisions in the Constitution.

Article 152 had made Malay the official and sole national language of Malaysia. English would be phased out after ten years unless government made a different ruling.

The *Razak Report* of 1956 stipulated the establishment of an education system that incorporated national practices and guaranteed a place in schools for all children regardless of ethnicity or religion. The education policies outlined there were the foundation of the formation of a national education system that placed high emphasis on national unity. The *Rahman Talib Report* of 1960 confirmed the educational policy in the *Razak Report* and its general acceptance by the public. Its principles have remained key elements in subsequent reports. This does not mean that the principles were arrived at without disagreements. Moses et al. (2014) argue convincingly that the ethnicisation of language debates was possible partly because of the demography, partly because 'ethnicization is present in the mainstream political parties'. In such a political climate, conflicts were likely to continue. But the principles arrived at in these two reports became the integral components of the Education Act 1961. It was extended to Sabah and Sarawak only in 1976.

There existed four school systems up to 1957, which were distinguished in terms of mediums of instruction: Malay, Chinese, Tamil, and English. The English schools taught in English and catered for any child of any ethnic background whose parents were willing to pay fees. In practice, students mainly came from the Chinese community. The ethnic divisions that were so clear during the colonial period and early independence became more permeable in school enrolment patterns subsequently.

In 1970 English schools had to transform to national schools and adopt Malay as medium of instruction; yet, English was and continues to be a compulsory subject in the national as well as national type schools (Asmah Haji Omar, 2012: 158; Chapter 1 in this volume). There has been little change to this situation during the period leading up to the *Blueprint 2013–2025*.

The aim of achieving unity through the use of the national language as medium of instruction in national primary and secondary schools was adopted in 1970 and implemented in stages. In Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah, English ceased to be the medium of instruction at the primary level in 1976, and at the secondary level in 1982. In Sarawak, the conversion of the medium of instruction from English to Malay was implemented in 1977 beginning with Year One of the primary school. At the tertiary level there was a slow phasing out of English after 1976 in favour of Malay, but its use as a medium of instruction has not been totally replaced by Malay, especially in the science-based and law faculties of local universities.

In 2003, the government under Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad decided to teach mathematics and science in English from Year One of the primary school, hoping at the same time that students would learn enough general English to transfer from these subjects into other areas of life. The rationale for this implementation was to curb the decline in English among

students, which was seen as affecting the progress of the country. As an important international language, graduates' proficiency in the language was seen as an important goal of education. This concern for English actually goes back to years in the 1970s when there was already concern in its declining standard (Asmah Haji Omar, 2012: 163).

Projects on English had been undertaken, English was made a compulsory subject in the curricula of all universities in Malaysia, and in 1993 the Cabinet made a decision that courses in science-based faculties in universities in the country could be taught in English. Furthermore, in 1994, 45.5% of primary school students failed to acquire the minimum level of proficiency in English in the UPSR (end of primary school) public examinations. Also in the same year, 41.8% of students failed to achieve a minimum level of proficiency in English in the PMR examinations, i.e. the public examinations at the end of the first three years of secondary education. Between 1995 to 1999 the passing rates of English ranged from 62% to 66% for the Malaysia School Certificate Examination, which was not a satisfactory performance at all (Tan and Santhiram, 2014: 140).

In terms of employment, it was recorded that about 44,000 graduates were unemployed, and most of these were Malay graduates who lacked the required proficiency in English. It was this urgency that made the Prime Minister opt for the policy of teaching mathematics and science in English. The reasons given included the need to facilitate the learning of English to enable access to knowledge in science and technology. Underpinning this decision was the assumption that the teaching of mathematics and science in English would lead to improvement in English, which would in turn contribute to the country's economic development. However, as the following paragraphs show, the implementation of this policy has become a contentious issue with the public divided on its benefits and many claiming that it fails to take into account a number of other issues and factors related to it (Asmah Haji Omar, 2012; Tan and Santhiram, 2014).

The policy was hampered by serious shortcomings that made a nationwide success unlikely. A crucial and unresolved problem was the divide between rural and urban schools. Examination results showed that a large component of students from the rural areas were unable to cope with the two subjects taught in English. Part of that was due to an acute lack of competent subject teachers in English. Re-training or in-service teacher training was not done at all, or not with enough verve; hence teachers lacked the required proficiency in English and were unable to deliver mathematics and science lessons effectively. Although teachers were sent for courses that taught them how to use ICT to facilitate the teaching of these subjects, this was insufficient to enable interactive communication between teacher and student. The short term in-service courses to enhance linguistic skills were also viewed with scepticism as they were taught by senior mathematics and science teachers (Tan and Santhiram, 2014: 146). There was also an added ethnic component as a higher proportion of Malays tended to live in rural

areas than Chinese. The hoped-for transfer from the teaching of mathematics and science into other domains is doubtful to have been achieved, even in urban schools.

The use of English in the teaching of mathematics and science ended in 2011, and the situation reverted to using Malay in the national schools, and Chinese and Tamil in the national type schools. Not unexpectedly, that triggered another kind of public outcry. This time it came from the more highly educated, affluent and urban middle class, who considered English proficiency a critical skill for obtaining good jobs and for social mobility. They believed that the earlier the children learned English, the more proficient would they be in the language. Given the children's background, they had more home exposure to English and had an edge over rural children. Dr Mahathir, who had initiated the teaching of these subjects in English in 2003, was among the most vociferous in demanding a return to English. He was quoted as saying, 'We will become a race which cannot create anything if we fail to master science and mathematics, which are mostly in English' (*The Star*, 2 October 2014, "Dr. M: Bring back PPSMI or get left behind").

Not long after the release of the *Blueprint 2013–2025*, parent groups in Melaka and elsewhere attacked the 'abrupt halt in many schools', regarding the implementation of the use of language as given in the *Blueprint*. The Melaka Action Group for Parents in Education (Magpie) chairman, Mak Chee Kin, said teachers from several schools in the state had been told by trainers from the Ministry of Education not to continue teaching mathematics and science in English, and that despite the promise of a bilingual policy in December 2013 and the earlier commitment of 2009 that these subjects would be taught in English till 2020 (*The Star*, 5 January 2014, "Uproar over premature halt to PPSMI policy"). The political elite in the governing coalition and the opposition Islamist Party PAS countered that Dr Mahathir's policy had been wrong from the start and that such subjects would require the mother tongue, i.e. Malay. Some support for the call for mother tongue teaching came from academics like Kirkpatrick (2010: 123), who argued that 'the early introduction of English is ill-advised as is the introduction of English for science and maths'. Other language specialists have added that English is not relevant to very young children's priorities and has no role outside school where other languages are used. The strengthening of English does sideline local languages as the allocation of time to it reduces time allocation to other languages in the curriculum (Coleman, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010). The ethnic angle of the debate was de-scaled with the emphasis on the division between urban and rural citizens on the one hand, and middle and rural classes on the other. To counter criticisms, a promise was also made by the government that the teaching of English as a second language would be strengthened by allocating additional hours to it. English will also be made a compulsory pass in public examinations. But to appease Malay nationalists, the government stressed that a policy to uphold the national language would take place alongside the strengthening of English. This

may sound like a defensible argument against these criticisms, but the constant populist shifts in language policy affect stability and the long-term training of a competent teaching workforce. The debate about medium of instruction continued with the Parent Action Group for Education (PAGE) demanding that students/parents be given the choice of language as medium of instruction. However, by May 2013, it was announced that there would be no reversal of the latest policy and that Malay was to stay as medium of instruction in national schools (Tan and Santhiran, 2014: 159).

Regional support for English

The transnational or regional centre of the geopolitical space of Southeast Asia is clearly circumscribed by ASEAN. A number of historians, political scientists and linguists (Low and Azirah, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2010) include Hong Kong and Macau in Southeast Asia, but they are excluded here and treated as part of East Asia. As the external history of modern and especially post-colonial Southeast Asia was dealt with briefly above, we can confine ourselves to two sub-periods that are of importance to the educational dimension in the region. The first one begins with the East India Company's activities between South Asia and Southern China and Japan from the middle of the 17th century onwards when English began to acquire a regional role; it ended with the Second World War. After phasing out other languages such as Malay and Bazaar Malay that the company and representatives of the British Empire (Tarling, 2008: 1–78) had used in their dealings, the use of English accelerated in the colonial Southeast Asian region by the 1880s. While the success of English was limited to British colonies, a collective social memory of the relevance of English may have developed in countries that did not have a colonial past like Thailand (Kirkpatrick, 2010: 43–64). When former non-Anglophone colonies became ASEAN members, there was no resistance to English and it was made the sole official and working language of this institution.

The second and continuing period of regional development begins with the end of the Second World War. Up to 1984 it saw the independence and formation of all of today's nations. Such developments were often outcomes of older and now rejuvenated forms of nationalist movements that acquired pace during the period of the Cold War (1947 to 1989) and the struggle with the Chinese and Russian brands of Communism. The subsequent history of many of these countries was also heavily influenced by the Vietnam War and the struggle between pro-Communist Russian and Chinese factions against the United States. Peace and a restart of national politics were achieved only by the late 1980s.

While these events led to the informal spread of English – South-East Asian countries were aligned with the West – the debates about the current significance of English are typically connected with the foundation of ASEAN in 1967. Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia were founding members. Without any debate English was assumed to

be, and made, the only working language from the beginning (Kirkpatrick, 2010: 7). The new ASEAN member states, i.e., Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Burma (later Myanmar), which had no Anglophone past and whose economic standing was such that they depended on outside help, did not raise any objection when the status of English was officially sanctioned with the signing of the ASEAN Charter in 2009.[3] Article 34 of the Charter states that 'the working language of ASEAN shall be English'.

While the ASEAN member countries of today are at different stages of nation building, they all aspire to become integrated nations by 2015 and regional and global players with partners within ASEAN and beyond. In that geopolitical area English is used for multiple functions as a second, foreign or even first language, and is accepted as the lingua franca for regional and global purposes. The competition between English and other languages can be seen in all countries. Nonetheless, English is seen, and promoted, as a vehicle of empowerment. English has acquired a dynamic role and serves as a lingua franca to enable communication between neighbours. What Bolton (2008: 3) states for the whole of Asia is true also of Southeast Asia, where English has gone hand in hand with economic growth and that is '. . . across Asia, the numbers of people having at least a functional command of the language have grown exponentially over the last four decades, and current changes in the sociolinguistic realities of the region are often so rapid that it is difficult for academic commentators to keep pace'.

English has thus been re-implanted into novel, multilingual and cultural spaces way beyond its earlier colonial role. As a result of its expansion across domains and the whole of Southeast Asia, it has changed. The growth of new varieties in the Outer Circle (Kachru, 1992: 355–365) in former colonies and protectorates of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei was in line with developments around the world. What was less foreseeable was the growth of less stable, *de facto* varieties in the Expanding Circle in former non-Anglophone nations. A regional lingua franca seems to be developing at the level of educated speakers whose likely properties are being investigated in a project led by Andy Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Even at a more informal and less educated spoken levels, one can notice expressions common across English in Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia (Leitner, 2014). Yet, the extent to which these varieties will ever develop norms of their own and become national forms of English is highly doubtful. It is more likely that they will be peripheral members of a Southeast Asian variety of English.

As English functions as the sole or one of the official languages, a second national language, a foreign language, or a lingua franca, tensions arise between *de facto* national and the regional and global forms. Given its embeddedness in multilingual habitats, this development impacts on other traditional languages and creates tensions between the needs to express, broadly speaking, local identities and international ones. Even in the Expanding Circle countries like Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), there is a drive to increase the English proficiency level of their citizens. In Cambodia, for example, there is the realisation that while it

has a high competitive base in terms of basic English language skills, there is a need for the next level of communication to succeed in business, international trade and international diplomacy (Azirah, Yee and Pheak, 2014; Azirah and Leitner, 2014: 18).

In all countries in Southeast Asia except Indonesia, English is now taught from the lowest forms of primary schools. The general trend is that children are learning English even at the Kindergarten age. That may well result that English may no longer be a foreign language, but a 'near universal basic skill' (Graddol, 2006: 72), which may speed up the rise of local forms. Over the last 25 years, many studies on World Englishes have indeed highlighted the existence and vitality of localised forms throughout the Asian region. Varieties like Malaysian English, Philippine English etc. are now referred to as stable new varieties. They are exported to other ASEAN countries through networks of co-operation, knowledge transfer, and training. As it is not just British, American or Australian English that people are exposed to, more attention needs to be given to the question of which model of English is to be taught and used. This question has not been addressed enough in the debates on language policy which limit themselves to the need for an international form of English.

Global support for English

The use of English as an international or global language is the third dimension that has influenced educational policies in Malaysia and elsewhere. Unlike the regional layer that was mentioned in the preceding section, the global one has been widely recognised from the mid-20th century onwards. A more pragmatic approach to the role of English appears to be desirable to ensure that Malaysians are kept abreast with the rest of the world. In the 1990s, countries in the region became more involved in international engagement and strategizing in terms of language.

To come back to India briefly, at independence in 1947 English was debated purely at the national level and was seen as an obstacle to nation building. Malaysia was quite similar. English was to be phased out so that the Malaysian nation could communicate internally with locally rooted language speakers. That has not come true in either country. As English has slowly grown and become the working language in all global institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the 'aid' industry, it began to be accepted as a necessity internally in the transformation of society to enable citizens to participate in globalisation. The key to achieving this is education, a point made strongly by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Abdul Razak in his Foreword to the *Blueprint 2013–2025*:

> Education is a major contributor to our social and economic capital. It inspires creativity and fosters innovation; provides our youth with the

> necessary skills to be able to compete in the modern labour market; and is a key driver of growth in the economy. . .. we must ensure that our education system continues to progress in tandem [with other policies, AH & GL]. By doing so, our country will continue to keep pace in an increasingly competitive global economy.

To meet these challenges '. . . requires students . . . to have strong universal values such as integrity, compassion, justice, and altruism, to guide them in making ethical decisions. At the same time, it is important to balance the development of global citizenship with a strong national identity' (*Blueprint*, E-13). The Prime Minister and many in the political domain see an increasing demand for high quality education and English as the language of modernisation and of access to knowledge. While former education systems tended to create or preserve national identity and tried to balance national priorities with the need to make available resources for global demands, globalisation now places pressure on governments to shift policies in general, especially language policies in education that make citizens proficient enough in English so that they are not left behind in a competitive era. Such educational reforms have taken place in Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries in the last few years. Rankings such as *Times Higher Education* and *QS World University Rankings* have influenced the way universities conduct themselves, as international and local students tend to use rankings as indicators and guidelines for choosing a university. With Malaysia's aspirations to become an education hub, foreign universities are setting up branch campuses in the country such as Nottingham University, Monash University, Swinburne and others. With competition between universities at the world and the regional level, more and more stringent key performance indicators are introduced that provide further support for English. Many universities market their programmes and services around the world and actively network with other universities. Publication in high impact journals has become very much a priority, and academics have to write in English and to acquire an international readership; and all this adds to the support for English.

Malaysia has formulated a number of responses to the global challenges, with the *Blueprint 2013–2025* being the crystallisation of past responses and the formulation of new ones. The following are the stages of higher education development in Malaysia:

> Stage 1 (1990) – convergence of (a) plan to reverse the 1980s higher education overseas exodus, and (b) new educational requirements of the *First Industrial Masterplan* (1990 policy to reverse HE export model).
>
> Stage 2 (1996) – landmark reforms of 1996 *Higher Education Acts* (including *National Council of HE Act* and *Private HE Act*) especially with regard private institutions which have now access to the college sector.

Stage 3 (2001) – Following 9/11 in 2001, Middle East students have become a strategic focus of the renewed internationalisation policy.

Stage 4 (2010 — In 2010 Higher Education designated National Key Economic Area (NKEA) within wider *New Economic Model* (NEM); EduCity and related policies have been developed.

The growth of English as a medium of instruction in Higher Education is linked to the increasing diversity of student population, the demand from stakeholders about what kind of education is required in working life and global competition. In contrast, a number of researchers (Kachru, 1992; Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999) have argued that the expansion of English has brought about a need to go against capitalism and imperialism so as to protect human, community and language rights.

There is thus a conflict. While the global status of English impels its adoption in Higher Education and its adoption further advances its global influence, it sidelines even important local languages. English is promoted as the language of the academia and the sciences, and the language we have to use if we wish to prepare students for an international career in a globalising world (Coleman, 2006: 4). Unsurprisingly, it is the most taught language in virtually all countries in Southeast Asia. The fact that it is taught in both primary and secondary education adds to its already strong position. Graddol has described this trend and its sociocultural and economic consequences in these words:

> One of the most significant educational trends world-wide is the teaching of a growing number of courses in universities through the medium of English. The need to teach some subjects in English, rather than the national language, is well understood: in the sciences. For example, up-to-date text books and research articles, for instance, are obtainable much more easily in one of the world languages and most readily of all in English.
>
> (Graddol, 1997: 45)

He suggests that graduates who went through an English medium education would usually extend the language to social use and use it with their children believing that that would give their children a competitive edge or indicate social privilege: 'English-medium higher education is thus one of the drivers of language shift, from L2 to L1 English speaking status' (1997: 45). This can be seen in Malaysia where a number of children in urban areas go to international schools and are taught in English. English-medium teaching has been widely adopted in Asia and Malaysia despite predictable problems. The reversal in policy on the teaching of mathematics and science in Malaysia proves the instability of policies. A number of factors have thus combined to create problems with the formulation and implementation of new policies: inadequate language skills overall, the need to train local staff

and students, ideological objections arising from a perceived threat to cultural identity, the unclear status assigned to native languages as languages of science or as knowledge languages, the unwillingness of local staff to teach through English, and the lack of availability on the international market of sufficient Anglophone subject specialists.

The acceptance of English as a global necessity jars with the deficient competency and the demand for local languages in education at the primary level. Kirkpatrick (2014: 16) mentions three issues that need to be considered with the increase in English medium education. Firstly, the adoption of English as a medium disadvantages many people for whom English is not a first language. Secondly, English medium policies usually exclude other languages; and thirdly, English as a medium is often based on native speaker models and not on new varieties of English.

Changes in the curricula

Given that there were several distinct school systems, there existed differences in the syllabuses of English curricula (Selvaraj, 2010: 52) that will not be discussed here. What is relevant to the discussion is the shift in teaching methods from after independence in 1957 to the *Blueprint 2013–2025*.

As in other parts of the world, English language teaching went through three types of instructional methods: the translation method, the direct method, and the situational approach. Grammar rules and correct pronunciation were emphasised with little attention to speaking and listening in the first two, while the situational approach emphasised that language should be taught realistically so that meaning and grammar were tied to real life situations in which a language is used (Asmah Haji Omar, 1984 in Selvaraj, 2010: 55). The next phase took place during 1970 and 1990 when Malay became entrenched as the language of administration, though English was still widely used in certain domains like in the courts. A new curriculum, the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (KBSM) was implemented in 1988 in response to dissatisfaction over the old curriculum, which was seen to be too examination oriented, too reliant on rote learning, and too dependent on correctness. The curriculum did not produce the kind of well-trained workforce that was needed and the syllabus needed to be amended.

An upper secondary school syllabus was introduced to address this need. The communicative language teaching approach was based on the rationale that:

(a) there was a vital need for communication,
(b) the service sectors, for example, the tourism industry needed a workforce that was versatile in international communication, and
(c) English gained importance in the mid-1970s when 90 percent of Form 5 school leavers entered the job market.

(Darus, 2009: 22)

Communicative language teaching was adopted in the English curriculum in the 1970s with an emphasis on students' ability to communicate, and less on grammar and structure. Students were encouraged to speak from the beginning of the class as part of the learning process. Communicative competence was the key to learning a language rather than linguistic competence and precision. Tasks involving pair and group work were common, and errors were tolerated and accepted as a part of learning. A new English paper for the Malaysia Certificate of Education (*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* – SPM) was used in the examination of English, known as English 122/322. There were further reforms from 1990 to the present day. Developments in higher education and in work places, globalisation and mobility of students and workers demanded that skills were crucial. Cognitive factors and insights into the cultures of the Anglophone world were no longer relevant. Such demands have played a role in school curricula all over the world and have impacted on higher education. Skills, such as critical thinking, ICT, languages, and intercultural competence are now seen to be necessary in the curricula. Malaysian 'Smart Schools' were conceptualised in 1997 by the Ministry of Education whereby creative and thinking skills were included in the integrated School Curriculum of English. These skills were taught using different types of media ranging from the traditional to the latest in Information Technology (Darus, 2009: 24).

The *Blueprint* continues the trend towards the teaching of English communicatively and adds some decisive steps forward. Malaysian education now accepts the stipulations of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages, which are output-based and operationalized in the sense that three main communicative outcomes (with two differentiations each) are introduced. Level A (A_1 and A_2) goes somewhat beyond the Council of Europe's former Threshold Level, which means that students acquire enough language competence to 'survive' in the foreign language. C_2 is the highest, near-native level. The *Blueprint* argues that B_2, the operationally proficient level is a good exit point for school leavers. There is a gap to what Higher Education Institutions need, i.e. C_1 or C_2, but that issue has not been addressed (Azirah and Leitner, 2014: 25).

Implications in future planning for English

The importance of English in the regional context involves the concept of English as a lingua franca, which represents a new paradigm for the way English can be viewed and taught (Seidlhofer, 2001: 133–158; 2010: 365–366; Kirkpatrick, 2010: 169–189; 2012: 331–344). If it were selected as a tenable concept in education, there would be several implications on English teaching and learning. Kirkpatrick (2012:169–189) mentions language learning goals, language teachers and the curriculum. He argues that English could be presented as an 'Asian' lingua franca spoken by multilinguals who would usually need English to talk to fellow ASEAN speakers

rather than to native speakers. The acquisition of idealised native speaker norms would cease to be relevant. The main objective would be to acquire English as a lingua franca so that it can be used successfully in multilingual settings. Kirkpatrick (2010: 186–189) further recommends that learners be measured against the norms of successful Asian multilinguals. Other scholars have put forward similar views. McKay (2009: 238), for example, has proposed that 'reliance on a native speaker model as the pedagogical target must be set aside'. Instead of adopting the traditional second language acquisition paradigm, there is a recognition that a more socio-communicative perspective is important.

English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the regional context is studied by teams across East and Southeast Asia, who collect data for the *Asian Corpus of English* (ACE) (Kirkpatrick 2010: 71). ACE will allow researchers to compare ELF used in primarily European settings (*Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English*-VOICE) and ELF in Asian settings (ACE). The ACE and VOICE corpora allow researchers to investigate linguistic features of ELF in the two regions and the use of speakers' communicative strategies to get themselves understood as well as the negotiation of cultural norms. Such norms are especially important to support job mobility in the region. In addition, the actual content of the corpora – that is to say, the topics that participants discuss – are useful to study as they help the development of intercultural competences across cultures (Kirkpatrick, 2010: 186–189).

Conclusion

This paper addresses the history of education policy pertaining to English in Malaysia and the Southeast Asian region, leading to a debate on the linguistic responses to globalisation and local identities. At the international level, Malaysia has to keep itself globally competitive. Universities and other bodies in Malaysia participate in various networks with international partners. English is often used in meetings which involve the production and dissemination of knowledge. Universities are evaluated in a global marketplace where they are ranked in world league tables. There is pressure on academics to publish in top journals, which almost always use English. In addition, the attempt to get bigger numbers of international staff and students means that courses have to be taught in English. Curricula become more international and students are required to go on attachments abroad. These developments strengthen the need for proficiency in English and, more specifically, require the teaching of academic English. They also require curricula that promote awareness of diversity in terms of culture, religion, work experience and learning preferences. Different students from different cultural and educational backgrounds will come with different expectations and concerns, and bring different perspectives with them. Key competencies would include being able to interact well in heterogeneous groups, and in many contexts the language used would be English. Education systems will need to look

into how to educate students to have globally relevant competencies, and this would differ from country to country, and job to job. Therefore, there is a need to examine what these competencies are and how they can be embedded in curriculum and education policies.

Notes

1 The East India Company acquired Penang in 1786 but there had been commercial contacts before, unrelated to land acquisition.
2 http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/; chapter 20 covers the Malayan sultanates and Singapore. On Chinese, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysian_Chinese.
3 The situation is somewhat more complicated with regard to Myanmar, former Burma, which was colonised after three Anglo-Burmese wars (the first one was in 1824). The continuity of English was almost destroyed through the military regime. The teaching of English was revived in the last two decades.

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4 Arabic in Malaysia

A special status language

Asmah Haji Omar

Introduction

Using Charles Ferguson's schema of sociolinguistic profile, Arabic in Malaysia can be placed in the category of language with a special status. The definition given by Ferguson for this category is that it is widely used in any of the following situations: religious or literary, as a teaching subject in secondary schools, a lingua franca by a substantial number of people within the country, or a major language for an age-sector of the population (Ferguson, in Bright (ed.), 1971: 309–324).

Arabic in Malaysia complies with Ferguson's categorisation in two of the situations: its use for religious purposes, and as a subject in secondary schools. In the first situation, Arabic is very much synonymous with the religion of Islam, and its entry into Malaysia from its homeland in Saudi Arabia was through the introduction and spread of Islam beginning in the 10th century CE. In the second, it is taught as an important subject in the Islamic schools at the primary and secondary levels, as an elective in national schools at the secondary level, and as a degree programme in the universities.

Clear presence of Arabic in Malaysia

In Malaysia Arabic, like English, does not have a native speakers' community, and the other similarity between the two is that both have a clear presence in the life of Malaysians. Here ends the similarity between them. Whereas the status of English is given a definition in the Education Policy as 'the second most important language', there is no definition given to Arabic.

Arabic in Malaysia does not have the essential feature of being a language of wider diffusion which is the privilege of English, nor does it have the type of background history of being an important language in the general education of Malaysians. To consider it a foreign language does not seem right, for two reasons. Firstly, its presence in Malaysia has a deeper time-depth compared to English, Chinese and Tamil, and these three are never considered foreign languages. Secondly, and this is more significant than the first,

to the indigenous Malays of Malaysia, as well as to other Muslims in the country, Arabic is the language of the religion of Islam and of the spiritual life of followers of the faith, who are the majority in the country. Each day of their lives, Muslims say their prayers in Arabic at least five times a day, and they use set phrases in Arabic in greetings, and in expression of joy, contentment, grief, dismay, despair, hope, gratitude, etc. The Muslims know the meanings of these phrases just as they understand the Arabic texts they recite in their prayers, but it does not mean that they are able to converse in the language.

The clear presence of Arabic is also seen in the public life of the country. As Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, all ceremonies and events at the federal and state levels, which are conducted in Malay, are interlaced with Arabic texts in the form of the recitation of verses from the Quran before and after the ceremony, as well as in texts of speeches.

Malaysia is made up of 14 administrative-cum-political units, consisting of 13 states and a federal territory. Nine are sultanates, meaning that the supreme leader of each of these is a sultan, who also holds the prerogative over matters relating to Islam and Malay customs. In the implementation of Islamic law and Malay customs each state, be it a sultanate or otherwise, has its own Malay Customs and Islamic Religious Council acting as adviser to the sultan and the state government. Above these state councils is the Federal Islamic Advisory Council which advises the King in such matters.

Quran reading competition is also another feature of the clear presence of Arabic. It has been a tradition since 1960, which until recently has been unique to Malaysia, that each year in the month before Ramadan, the month of fasting, competitions in Quran reading are scheduled. The first part in the series of the competitions is at the state level for the states to select their champions among local reciters for the men and the women, who will then compete at the national level, the second in the series, to become national champions, in both categories. The final part is at the international level, where participants come from various Muslim, as well as Muslim minority countries (such as Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Philippines, United States, and Belgium). At the international level the official languages are Arabic, Malay, English and French, a testimony to the languages that are most widely spoken in the Muslim world. The Quran recitation in the competitions is judged on the *tajwid* (articulation and prosody), the *taranum* (melody), and voice control.

Religion and Malay literacy

Although Arabic came to Malaysia with Islam, the preaching of the religion to the Malays was done in Malay. Every Muslim in Malaysia, from as early as six years old, is taught to read the Quran. Constant reading of the Quranic texts and keeping the faith in saying the daily prayers in a way implant Arabic passages and set phrases in the minds of the followers.

Muslims understand quotations from the Quran although they are not able to communicate in Arabic.[1]

Teaching others in the same faith to read the Quran is a duty entrusted upon every knowledgeable Muslim, a duty known as *fardhu kifayah* (an obligatory service to one's fellow human being and community) in Islamic jurisdiction (*fiqh*). From the beginning of the Islamisation of the Malay world, this duty has been undertaken by people of both genders, who have this special skill. Recitation has to follow the *tajwid* as any deviation may cause a change in the meaning of the text. This means that anybody who can recite the Quran well can also be a Quran teacher. In a single village, there could be more than one Quran teacher who provides the service in their home.

It is not the custom for Quran teachers who conduct classes in their home to charge any fee for their service, as they consider it their duty to pass down their skill for the sake of Allah. However, parents of the pupils are not unmindful of the good service of the Quran teachers, and they show their gratitude in the form of gifts (*sadaqah*) of rice after the harvesting season, and other agricultural and farm products. As more and more Malays move to settle in the urban areas, this village tradition of offering Quran reading classes in the home moves with them. The *sadaqah* may take the form of cash and the quantum is according to what the parents feel the teacher deserves. In the city areas including Kuala Lumpur, it is not uncommon for working women who have retired from salaried jobs to invite former colleagues, friends, and neighbours to send their children to their home to be taught Quran reading on particular afternoons of the week or during the weekends. The same activity is also carried out in mosques in towns and villages for the benefit of Muslim children in the neighbourhood.

As evidence from the Quran reading competitions, reading the Quran by Muslims all over the world is not only a religious obligation but also an art, based on the *taranum*, and voice control. Traditionally Quran reading skill was handed down from the village Quran teacher to the student. Today there are special institutions run on a private basis which specialise in teaching this art.

Through reading the Quran, Malays from centuries past until the middle of the 20th century came to recognise the graphic symbols of the Arabic writing system. This they learned through listening and imitating the teacher who would point to the written words as he/she read the verses, using a short stick cut out from the spine of a coconut leaf, as there was no chalk and board, or pen and paper, in teaching and learning at that time. If ever the students could write the symbols on any medium, it was through their own effort in furthering their skill in order to achieve literacy.

At this juncture it is necessary to mention that before the coming of Islam, the southern and northern regions of Sumatera as well as Sulawesi, now in Indonesia, were already in possession of native writing systems to write their own speech systems, i.e. Malay and the local vernaculars (Crawfurd,

1852: Volume 1; Marsden, 1811/1966: 200–202). Malay groups in Southern Sumatera, for example the Malays of Lampong, Rejang and Kerinci, are known for their *tulisan rencong*. These systems were the privileged possessions of those influential in society to record words of significance in performing rituals, on leaves of a kind of palm known as *lontar*. The symbols are limited, and as such there has been no evidence of any of these writing systems being used to record a narrative of any nature.

Besides the native systems, there was the Pallava writing from Southern India which can be seen until today on stone inscriptions of the seventh century found in Southern Sumatera and the Bangka island, and the texts of the inscriptions are records of the achievements attributed to the Srivijaya kingdom that is said to rule over Southeast Asia from the 7th to the 13th century CE. Just like the native writing systems, the Pallava writing was localised in terms of geographical distribution, and restricted in terms of use and users (Coedès, 2009). This shows that the Pallava writing was not meant for the ordinary people, but 'belonged', as it were, to a very small group of people entrusted by the rulers to record events of the state.

The Arabic script did not have any restriction in terms of territory, use, or users. It spread all over the Malay world as a vehicle of the Islamic faith, through the Quran and religious texts, regardless of social class. Hence, it was not a privileged possession of a few. Later on, Malays like other Muslims, such as those in Africa and various parts of Asia, adopted the script and made it their tool not only in the writing of texts for the teaching of Islam but also those of other genres, such as folklore and traditions which hitherto had been handed down to them by word of mouth. What proves to be significant here is that literacy among the Malays came with the need to profess the religion they adopted. This goes to show that their early acquisition of a writing system which came with Islam was not for the primary purpose of giving permanency to their oral traditions, let alone to glorify their rulers, but to make them knowledgeable in their religious faith. According to Albertine Gaur, writing 'is meant to aid the storage of information, information essential to the prosperity and survival of a particular group' (Gaur, 2003: 413). This statement really sums up the importance of the Arabic writing system as the tool to learn texts of the Quran and the *Hadith* (records of Prophet Muhammad's sayings in his imparting of the religion). Short of this function which was instrumental in the early spread of Islam, the Arabic script would have been only confined to the Arab world.

The Malays were content to read the Arabic texts and listen to the explanation given by their religious teachers of the meaning of those texts, and at the same time relating the Arabic symbols to the sounds in the Malay language. This explains the fact that a great majority of the Malays in the villages were able to read Malay texts rendered in the Arabic script, but not to write them. In this sense they were able to read public notices in their own language in this script put up by the government of the day (Asmah

Haji Omar, 2014b). Over time the Arabic writing system was fully adopted by the Malays as their own but with certain modifications to suit Malay phonology, and it was for this reason the modified inventory of Arabic symbols used in the writing of Malay is known as the *Jawi*[2] script. In the Malay schools, *Jawi* was the primary writing system; the other was *Rumi* (the Roman alphabet) introduced in the in the first quarter of the 20th century when more Malay schools were established.

The earliest known evidence of the use of *Jawi* in the writing of Malay texts is the Terengganu Stone Inscription dated 1303 CE. This inscription consists of a short passage of about 270 words (as some words have been erased through the effect of the weather and other forms of natural phenomena), containing a set of Islamic ethics as a guidance for the people of the area where the stone was located, i.e. Kuala Berang, in the upper regions of the Terengganu river basin (Asmah Haji Omar, 2012: 81–98). This shows that by the 14th century the Malays were already using the Arabic script to write their own language. In the text, only one extra symbol had been added to the original Arabic inventory, and that is the symbol for the alveo-palatal nasal sound [ɲ] which does not exist in Arabic. The symbol was a Malay creation, by adding two more dots to the Arabic *nun* (pronounced *noon*), i.e. the symbol for [n], which has one dot. This innovation is the beginning of *Jawi*, or the nativisation of the Arabic script by the Malays. By the end of the 16th century four more new symbols had been added to *Jawi*; these were the symbols for [p], [g], [ʧ], and [ŋ], which are also non-existent in Arabic. These five new symbols occur in the Malay text written in 1590, the Malay translation of the Arabic text, *'Aqaid Al-Nasafi* (Asmah Haji Omar, 1991).

With a full inventory of symbols for Malay consonants, the Malays moved a step further in using the script in recording their folktales, verse forms, the laws of the community, and even epics of Hindu origin, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, as well as the *Jataka* tales from Buddhism, all of which are now included in the inventory of classical Malay literature. Without *Jawi*, the Malays of today would not be in possession of their rich literary heritage which would have been lost through oral tradition.

Teaching was usually conducted in mosques and *surau* (small prayer house, or any space in a particular premise designated for praying). No furniture was required as teacher and students could make themselves comfortable sitting on the floor. It was a form of tuition class in which the teacher read from a book or a manual, copies of which were also given to the students. If the text was in Arabic, the teacher would read the text and translate it to his students phrase by phrase into Malay, and the students would echo him so that they could internalise the Arabic phrases they heard, and finally understand what was being taught to them. If it was a Malay text, the teacher would still read it out to be echoed by the students.[3]

It can be said that the tuition class described here was the first type of formal education that the Malays ever had, long before the establishment of

the Malay schools. It was also through this humble institution of learning the religion of Islam that they became literate in their own language (Asmah Haji Omar, 2014b: 1–12).

The role of *madrasah*

In time the tuition class style of teaching evolved into a proper school, known by its Arabic name, *madrasah*, or the Malay label, *pondok* or *pondok* school.[4] The *madrasah* was also known as *sekolah Arab* (Arabic school), rather than *sekolah agama* (religious school). Labelling it as a language school was in accordance with the norm of the period in having schools according to the language taught, as in Malay, English, Chinese, and Tamil schools.

Following tradition, the institution was established by an *ulama* of the village, supported by the villagers through the *waqaf* system or the *zakat* (tithe).[5] The method of teaching remained the same as in the mosques and the *surau*, using texts written in Arabic as well as in Malay. But the *madrasah* had more teachers than just one, and subjects taught could include history, geography, and oratory. There was no standard curriculum for the various *madrasah*, except that all offered the Arabic language and subjects related to the religion of Islam (Sheikh Abdul Hamid bin Haji Abdullah, 2003: 105–106).[6]

Arabic was taught according to the grammar-translation method. At the beginning simple Arabic readers were given, starting with single words, moving on to the phrase, and finally the sentence. The teachers did not have any training in language teaching, and in most cases they themselves were products of *madrasah* education. The texts used consisted of short compositions describing things and events in the community. As students progressed, they were given texts on Islamic theology and jurisprudence.

Almost every state in the Malay Peninsula had *madrasah*, but most of them were in Kedah and Kelantan. In general they provided education for boys and girls, but lessons were conducted separately for the different genders, although in the same building. It was not possible to build separate institutions for them as financial support from outside their village, not to mention the government, was scarce.

Teaching materials were written and published by the *ulama* themselves for the teaching of both Arabic and the religious subjects. Texts for the latter were written in Malay. Among these publications, which are still used in the teaching of Islam in Thailand, are those written according to chapters (*surah*) of the Quran, or the *Hadith*. Each quote taken from these two holy texts is given a copious explanation in Malay, known as *tafsir*. An example is the *tafsir* of the third chapter of the Quran, which was published as a book in itself, written by Haji Muhammad Said bin Omar, Qadhi of Jitra, Kedah. The third printing of this volume was in 1391 H (1946 CE). And

this book as well others in the genre are still used in Thailand after going through several reprints. Such books are referred to as *kitab kuning* (yellow book), as they used to be printed on yellow paper, i.e. paper of low quality, although today this is no longer the case as the paper used is of high quality and the cover is beautifully designed.

All *madrasah* provided education at the primary level. Some, especially those which managed to acquire sufficient endowment to pay allowances to the teachers, were able to move to the secondary level (the *thanawi*). At this level, there was sufficient time for the students to improve their Arabic, although teaching was strictly based on the grammar-translation method. Ability to speak Arabic among the students was attained through constant listening to the teachers in the classroom, and most probably through the learning by rote of the Arabic being spoken to them in the classroom. The technique of drilling was unheard of. Reading Arabic passages was not supported by any test in comprehension, as the focus was on the ability to translate the text phrase by phrase, and sentence by sentence. Despite their shortcoming, the *madrasah* and the tuition classes were about the only institutions for Malays to get education up to the early years of the 20th century.

The majority of Malay school children who were unable to get admission to English schools had no other channel to further their education, except at the *madrasah*. It did not matter to them if they could not get salaried jobs which to them were only available in the religious departments. The most important thing was to get educated, and in the *madrasah* they were taught how to be better Muslims, and to know more about Islam through the language of the religion. From the knowledge gained they could bring up their own kind to be good Muslims, and to a certain extent intellectualise them using their own language, Malay.

With a basic education in the *madrasah*, students were able to go to Mecca to get enrolled in the well-known school, *Dārul 'Ulum*, and to Medina. Malay students had been going to these two holy cities from the middle of the 19th century.[7] Many stayed much longer in Mecca to be *ulama*, and returned home to establish *madrasah* in their hometowns. Among the well-known ones were *Al-Madrasah Al-Muhammadiyah Al-Kalantaniyyah* in Bunut Payung, Kelantan which was established in 1917, *Madrasah Al-Mashhoor*, Penang, in 1916, and *Ma'had Mahmud*, in Alor Setar, Kedah in 1936. A number of *madrasah* students were successful in getting admission to the Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

Some *madrasah* had been able to offer post-secondary education. An example was the Islamic College of Kelang established in 1955 by the state of Selangor, which was absorbed as a department of Islamic studies and Arabic in the UKM in 1970. Likewise, the Islamic Institute of Higher Studies of Kelantan (*Yayasan Pengajian Tinggi Islam Kelantan*) which had its beginning in 1965 was taken over by UM in 1981 to be part of its Academy of Islamic Studies.

Arabic after independence

Most writings on the system of education in Malaya before independence mention only four streams, Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil, forgetting the fifth, the Arabic stream, for the simple reason that this stream did not appear in *Annual Reports* on education during British rule. Apparently the British did not pay much attention to the Arabic schools, most probably for two reasons. Firstly, in the political sense the *madrasah* did not give any problem to the government; and secondly, in matters pertaining to Islam and Malay customs the authority was with the sultan. In states which had no sultan, such as Penang and Melaka, authority over these schools was with the Islamic Religious Council.

In the division of schools into national and national type (Chapters 1–3, 5–6), the former *madrasah* became a category of its own. It is now known as *sekolah agama* (religious school), rather than *sekolah Arab* (Arabic school), where *agama* (religion) refers to Islam. There are currently three categories of religious schools. The first consists of those that are fully financed by the government and implements the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The second comprises grant-in-aid religious schools (*Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan*), which can carry on with their erstwhile curricula but at the same time implement the curriculum of the national schools, which among other things has the stipulation that they teach Malay and English as compulsory subjects. Most of these grant-in-aid schools are financed by the Religious Councils, or governments of the various Malay states. In the third category are the private religious schools.

Primary level students of the first category are taught the school subjects common to the national and national type schools. In addition they have to take a subject known as Language of the Quran, consisting of two parts. The first focuses on reading, writing and memorising prescribed words, short phrases and sentences. At the beginning the students are taught the Arabic script, after which they are taught to read important words and phrases taken from the Quran. This is followed by practising to write those words so that they are able to recognise and memorise them. The second part consists of understanding and memorising sentences, also taken from the Quran. This involves giving the meaning or interpretation of those sentences (Abdul Halim Muhammad, 2003: 64–66).

With the three categories of religious schools mentioned above, the National Education Policy has given a new orientation to Islamic education in Malaysia. Previously there was no clear separation in the teaching of Islam and that of Arabic. In the current national curriculum, Arabic is treated as a separate entity from the religious subjects. This seems to attract more students from before to the religious schools (Abdul Monir Yaacob, 2003: 80–81). Schools which implement this curriculum have seen great success in their students sitting for the Malaysia School Certificate Examination, and the Malaysia Higher School Certificate Examination. The latter

qualification enables them to get places in Islamic or Arabic studies in local universities, universities in Indonesia, and those in Arabic-speaking countries, such as the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the Ummul Qura University in Mecca, and the Islamic University in Medina (Abdul Monir Yaacob, 2003: 93).

Schools adopting the national curriculum are able to get trained teachers for Arabic. These teachers go through the same process as teachers of other languages in getting into teacher training institutions. UM and UKM also contribute in the training of graduate teachers for Arabic.

Arabic at Malaysian universities

Arabic was first taught as a subject at the Department of Islamic Studies of UM. Students taken into the department were required to know Arabic to enable them to follow courses in Islamic doctrines and law. When this department was elevated to become the Academy of Islamic Studies in the 1980s, a matriculation programme of two years in intensive Arabic was mounted for candidates for the Academy before they could be absorbed into the first year undergraduate programme leading to a degree in Islamic Studies. In this Academy, as in its predecessor, Arabic is taught with the objective of enhancing the ability of students in understanding the holy texts. Difficulty in understanding these texts due to the complexity of the language may lead to various interpretations of what the texts actually mean (Osman Ishak, 1979: 190).

In 1972 when UM set up its Language Centre (now the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics), languages which until then had been in the 'custody' of the studies departments, i.e. Malay Studies (Malay), Chinese Studies (Mandarin), Indian Studies (Tamil), Islamic Studies (Arabic), and English Department (English), were the first to be included in the curriculum of the centre. That was the start of the teaching of Arabic for communication. In other words, Arabic in the Language Centre was treated just as any other language, and that is as a tool of verbal communication. Teachers are mostly those who have degrees in Arabic Studies, although there are also those whose specialisation is Islamic theology, or Islamic jurisprudence.

The faculty now has a Department of Arabic which offers courses leading to the Bachelor's degree in Arabic language and linguistics. In this programme, all the courses of the department for the three-year study leading to the Bachelor's degree are conducted in Arabic. Students entering the first year of the programme are those who have the specified level of proficiency in the Arabic language. Otherwise they would not be able to follow lectures, participate in tutorials and seminars, and write their assignments. To get into the undergraduate programme, candidates are first given an interview to assess their proficiency in Arabic. Paper qualification at the school certificate level may not give the true picture of their ability to function in the language. In the first two years, among the prescribed courses are Arabic

morphology and syntax, history of Arabic, Arabic rhetoric, sociolinguistics, and skill in using the Arabic dictionary. The third-year courses comprise Arabic philology, discourse analysis, prosody and phonetics of the Quran, comparison of linguistic features in Arabic and Malay, Arabic literature, and a two-way translation of Arabic and Malay (*Handbook: Undergraduate Programmes 2011/2012*: 38–58, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya).

The trend in teaching Arabic for purposes other than the religious one is also seen in other local universities that offer the Arabic language in their Arts and Humanities programmes, such as the UKM, and the Universiti Teknologi MARA. The International Islamic University not only offers a Master's degree programme in Arabic language and literature, but also one in Arabic as a second language.

Arabic for religious education versus Arabic for communication

As has been shown in the previous pages, teaching Arabic for communication in Malaysia is a recent phenomenon, where previously the purpose of teaching it was to read and understand religious texts. A similar trend in teaching Arabic also takes place in other Muslim countries, where Arabic and Islam are considered as two sides of the same coin; the one cannot be separated from the other. On this basis, Arabic grammar, meaning the grammar of the Arabic of the Quran, is supreme in the study and learning of the language. This approach is important for keeping the text of the Quran in its pure state without any single diversion, however small it may be, from the original text of the message (*wahyu*) that was handed down by God through Archangel Jibrail to Prophet Muhammad. It is also for this reason that the teaching of Arabic in religious schools has in its syllabus the art of memorising verses from the Quran. In many Muslim countries, there are schools established for the purpose of training students in memorising the whole Quran, known as *tahfidz* school. People with this ability are known as *hāfidz*. In Malaysia *tahfidz* schools are run on a private basis, or are given grants-in-aid by the Religious Councils of the various states.

From generation to generation there have been debates on the importance of grammar in learning Arabic. The famous Abbasid Caliph (786–809 CE), Harun Al-Rashid, is said to have defended the study of grammar when a grammarian was attacked by a jurist in his (the Caliph's) court who said that grammar was useless. The Caliph replied that grammar was what he wanted to know in order to understand the Quran and poetry (Kennedy, 2001: 21). Here again is a testimony that Arabic grammar is always viewed as the grammar of the Arabic of the Quran, and this variety of Arabic is also known as classical Arabic.

It is not surprising then that manuals for the teaching of Arabic grammar in Malaysia are written based on classical or Quranic Arabic. This appears

to be the norm despite the fact that the objective of teaching Arabic is for communication. The everyday language of the native speakers is not for the classroom. To quote Hugh Kennedy (2001: 21–22):

> . . . the study of classical grammar became one of the main fields of intellectual activity and a major constituent of early Islamic culture, because for early Muslims grammar was useful – in fact, it was more than useful; it was vital if they were to understand the basis of religion.

Arabic is spoken in many countries outside the Arabian Peninsula as first language, mostly in the Middle East and Africa. This means that there are many regional varieties, and to keep the Quran in its pure state, it is imperative that there is one standard variety, and the teaching of this variety has to start from the school. In Muslim countries with languages different from Arabic, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, the teaching of Arabic also has to conform to the requirement of maintaining the purity of the Quranic text. With a standard grammatical guideline, variations in the interpretation of the holy text can be kept to the minimum.

All this does not mean that Islam rejects language variations. In fact there is a verse in the Quran which states that variations, including those of language, are signs from Allah: 'among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and variations in your languages and colours, verily those are signs for those who know' (Quran 30: 22).

Sayeed M. Syeed sums up the significance of learning Arabic through the learning of classical Arabic for Islam and the Islamic community, as follows:

> Since Islam wants to build a stable international community, it has identified one language for the unification of various speech communities. While Islam recognizes the variation of languages as a natural process, it also stresses the importance of preserving the Qur'an as the "Qur'an in the Arabic language", thus encouraging Muslims to learn a common language shared by all as the language used by Allah for revealing his last message.
>
> (Sayeed M. Syeed, 1989: 550)

The link between the study of grammar and the study of religion is a reflection of the Islamic theory of education. In Islam there is no separation of religious and non-religious education, as evident from the meaning of the word *ilmu* which applies to both types of education (Ekmeleddin and Aslam, 1983: 27).

Hence to Muslims in general learning Arabic for the purpose of understanding the Quran and the teaching of Islam is superior to learning the language simply for communication. Looking at the *ulama* of non-Arabic speaking countries who are fluent in classical Arabic, and they are those who had learned the language through the grammar-translation method, there is

something positive to be said of this method, specifically in the internalisation of the rules of Arabic grammar. One can just infer that they acquired communicative competence in the language through total immersion when they went for their studies in the Middle East, already with a knowledge of the grammatical rules.

The inference above is supported by my field research in Mecca and Medina in the months of February and March 2014, on Malay settlers who had made these two cities their home. The interviewees were those who migrated to these cities just before and after the Second World War, and they are now of the grandparent generation. The male informants went to Mecca and Medina after their schooling in the *madrasah* or *pondok*. They admitted that their communicative ability was rudimentary at the time they set foot in Arabia, but living among the Arabs had motivated them to learn to communicate in the language and be proficient in it. Most of the wives said they could not speak Arabic at all at the time they left Malaya, although they understood the meaning of single words and popular phrases in context. But with time they were able to communicate in the language as they had to use it at the marketplaces and in the mosques interacting with Arab ladies (Asmah Haji Omar, 2014a).

Ahmad Shalaby, an Egyptian scholar who went to Indonesia to teach Arabic and Islam in 1955 and stayed on for 30 years, bemoans the lack of a method of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers of the language. According to him schools in Arabic- speaking countries had only focused their teaching on Arab children. There was never any thought of conducting research that would lead to a method of teaching Arabic to non-Arabs. He goes on record to state that students from non-Arab countries in the Al-Azhar University attend classes together with Arab students, and the textbooks are not useful at all for the purpose of learning Arabic by foreign students (Ahmad Shalaby, 2001: 1).

The concern of Muslims is to ensure that linguistic aspects of Arabic are properly interpreted as to the possible meanings that they may have at the lexical and grammatical levels. A misinterpretation at any of these levels may result in the misuse of the word, phrase, or sentence, which in turn will bring about a negative result on society at large. An example is the word *jihad*, from the root word *jahada* which means 'struggle for the better'. The meaning of this word has been taken in its narrowest sense and is restricted to the context of war, as evident in its usage in terrorism, and has given Islam and Islamic institutions of learning, such as the *pondok*, a bad image. This has motivated the Insaniah University College in Kedah to establish a centre, known as *Pusat Kajian Pondok* (Centre of Pondok Research) in early 2015. The objective of the centre is given in the speech of the Rector, translated into English, as follows:

> Through this research centre we will be able to cleanse the *pondok* institution of its image, and we can prove that students of the *pondok* are

able to assist in the building of the nation and in the strengthening of the religion.

(*Berita Mingguan*, 15 March 2015, page 3 of the National Section)

Conclusion

The fact that Arabic is a special status language in Malaysia is obvious in the life of the Malays and other Muslims, as well as in the typology of schools where Arabic/religious schools are given a place unto themselves. Learning the tenets of Islam and reciting verses of the Quran had indirectly made the Malays literate through the nativisation of the Arabic script, now known as *Jawi*.

Studying in the humble *madrasah* in the early days is an indication that to the Malays education had the prime objective of enhancing one's knowledge and of making oneself a better person. It was not for the purpose of achieving an economic gain. Today education through Arabic in Malaysia is able to open avenues for students to universities at home and abroad.

Notes

1 The characteristic of not understanding or communicating in the language of one's religion is not peculiar only to the Muslims. Chew Hock Thye cites the same characteristic of the Chinese who are able to read but do not understand what is said in their four holy books, *Ta Hslieh*, *Chung Yung*, *Lun Yii*, and *Mencius* (*M'en Tzu*), although these books have been around for 2,000 years; this is due to the complexity of the language of the texts (Chew Hock Thye, 1979: 75–76).

2 The term *Jawi*, a derivation from the word *Jawa* (Java), was used by Arabs in the old days to refer to the Malay race.

3 From my field research of six Malay communities in Bangkok (2013), and Southern Thailand (2014), I found that this was still the method of teaching the religion of Islam. Malay and Arabic were used although the students were more proficient in Thai than in Malay and less so in Arabic. According to the teachers, it was easier to use Malay than Thai in explaining Islamic concepts taken from Arabic.

4 The word *pondok* has its origin in Arabic *funduq* 'lodging house' or 'hotel'; hence, boarding school, in today's terminology. The *madrasah* usually attracted students from other villages. Communication was difficult in those days for them to travel from their home to the school. The solution was to build small huts in the compound of the *madrasah*.

5 An *ulama* is one who is knowledgeable in the affairs of Islam and is able to speak, read and write in Arabic.

6 A *waqaf* is an endowment in the form of land and/or building for a religious purpose, while a *zakat* is an obligatory tithe paid annually based on one's income and property after various deductions have been made. The quantum to be paid takes guidance from the Quran.

7 Both the tuition and the *madrasah* methods were adopted from the tradition of teaching Islamic doctrines and the Arabic language in Mecca before the 20th century. The tuition method was given in the Great Mosque (the *Masjid al- Haram*). Students from the Malay world (present-day Malaysia and Indonesia) were found to be in both types of institutions. See Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, Reprint 1970, E. Brill, Leiden, last chapter.

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5 Evolution of Chinese language education in Malaysia

Tan Siew Kuang and *Chong Siew Ling*

Introduction

The development of Chinese language teaching (CLT) in Malaysia is an account of education that began as a means to serve a migrant society that evolved to be part of the main stream of the education system of a multiethnic society. Whilst Chinese migrants established schools whenever there was a significant number of settlers in different parts of Southeast Asia, it is only in Malaysia that CLT has survived and Chinese schools have remained part of the official education system. It has been noted that 'Malaysia has Southeast Asia's most comprehensive Chinese-language system of education' (Heidhues, 1992: 13), and is said to have the largest and most extensive Chinese education outside China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (Goh, 2012: 3). It is significant that while Chinese schools in many countries in the region have been forced to close, Chinese schools in Malaysia have managed to retain their identity as Chinese schools, and continue to remain relevant to the local education system. Yet the course of development of Chinese language education has been said to be a 'protean saga' that developed through the 'political will' as well as 'blood, sweat and tears' shed by the Chinese community to defend their mother tongue (Kua, 1999: 2). Seen through the lens of linguistic hegemony, its path of development has been an attempt by the Chinese community to resist linguistic dominance brought about by language policies implemented before and after independence, in which the Chinese had had to grapple with the challenge of 'linguistic dominance' of first English, and later Malay. It is this strong resistance by the Chinese that has ensured the survival of Chinese education in Malaysia to this day. This is in line with Canagarajah's claim that any exercise of power or dominance tends to be accompanied by a 'counter-power' that exists 'in relationships, in social institutions, and in community life. . . . this interlocking system of power provides scope for tension and conflict between the divergent domains to enable opposition and change' (Canagarajah, 1999:33).

The concept of hegemony which originates from the Greek word meaning 'to lead' was introduced by Gramsci (1971) to explain the power relationships between social groups, where a dominant group is able to exert

and maintain their power over other groups either through persuasion or consent (cited by Suarez, 2002:512). The paradox of resistance to linguistic hegemony is one where the minority group or groups compromise to some extent in order to resist successfully (Erisen 1992 as cited in Suarez, 2002:512). To the Chinese, their language is connected to their culture and ethnicity, and this is why the status of CLT lies close to their hearts. This chapter traces the beginnings of CLT in Malaysia and highlights some of the main developments and compromises made in its development, and the challenges faced in the effort to survive.

Traditional private schools 1819–1919

Many immigrants from China arrived in Malaya to work as labourers during the British colonial period. Over time, the demography of the Chinese population changed from a migrant, largely male population, to a more stable community with more women and children. As more children were born, the need for education grew, and as the British rulers in Malaya did not take the responsibility for this, it fell on the Chinese themselves to take initiative to open schools. This was a carryover from the practice in China where the demand for education was provided through schools set up by families or local communities.

In Malaya prior to the building of schools, *sishu*, private home schooling, was the most common form of education available. These were followed by more organised classes run at temples, clan houses, and district associations. The schools were built in areas with a sizeable number of Chinese families. They were generally small with just a single teacher employed to teach the students numbering between 20 and 30. Penang was the first to have such schools, the earliest being *Wu Fu Shuyuan* built in 1819 followed by Sin Kang (1906) and Eng Chuan (1917) set up by Khoos and Tans; Kong Min (1909) by Guangzhou Tingzhou Huiguan; Aik Hua (1913) by the Hainanese; and Han Chiang (1919) by the Teochews (Tan L.E., 2000: 237). Similar patterns of the establishment of schools according to surnames, regional and dialect groups as well as organisations, were also built in other states.

The aim of the establishment of Chinese schools was to ensure the continuation of Chinese cultural and linguistic heritage. As noted by Wang, the Chinese immigrants that settled in different parts of the world always tried to remember Chinese ways and attempted to transmit these norms and values to their descendants (Wang, 1991: 135, 136). Chinese dialects were the medium of instruction in the early days, and the curriculum and teachers were imported from China. The books studied generally were Confucian texts, such as Trimetrical Classics, Great Learning, Odes for Children, 100 Surnames, Analects, Mencius, and moral self-cultivation. Culture was emphasised through the teaching of Confucian values like filial piety, loyalty and good ethics, as well as the teaching of calligraphy and abacus.

In the early days, classes were small, loosely organised, with very limited facilities, and largely patterned on the practice in China. The 1898 Education Reform in China resulted in the establishment of new schools, and Malaya followed soon after through the building of modern Chinese schools starting from 1903. In 1904, the Chung Hwa Confucian School was founded in Penang, followed by the Confucian School in Kuala Lumpur (1906), Yuk Chai School in Ipoh (1907), Pay Fong School in Melaka (1913), and Foon Yew School in Johor (1913) (Tan L.E., 2000: 231). Girls' schools such as Kuen Cheng (Kuala Lumpur), Perak Girls' school (Ipoh), and Fukien Girls' school (Penang) were built in the towns soon after. As Chinese schools grew, influenced by China, the medium of instruction gradually changed to Mandarin or *Putonghua*. (The term 'Chinese' will replace 'Mandarin' for the rest of this chapter.) New subjects such as English, history, geography and mathematics were added to the school curriculum. With an increase in the number of children born locally, Chinese education flourished. By 1920, there were as many as 494 Chinese schools in Malaya. Due to historical and cultural factors, teaching objectives, materials and methods were directly influenced by those implemented in China.

CLT prior to the Second World War until the Malayan emergency

The British colonial government began to exercise control over CLT when it became obvious that the Chinese in Malaya were very much influenced by the nationalistic movement in China. In 1920, the British Colonial Government Schools Act was implemented, which required that schools with an enrolment of over 20 students be registered. These schools were also obliged to ensure that the school curriculum, administration, and health requirements be consistent with the standards set by the colonial Government. The Deputy Education Secretary was assigned with the duty of school inspection to rein in the Chinese schools. By 1938, there were 86, 147 children enrolled in Chinese primary schools, which was more than the number attending the Malay schools, and double the figure in English schools (Ministry of Education, 1968). As most of the schools provided education at the primary level, students wishing to pursue education beyond this level were sent to China. Being aware of the need for secondary education in Malaya, members of the Chinese community began to donate generously for the cause. The first Chinese secondary school, Chung Ling in Penang, was established in 1917, and by the 1920s there were over 10 secondary schools, although most only provided three years of secondary education.

Night classes and reading classes were set up for illiterate working adults to acquire or improve their reading ability (Yen, 1976: 112–115, 158–160). The spread in literacy can be inferred indirectly from an increase in the number of newspapers and magazines published. Between 1881 and 1913, there were only 12 publications, compared to 291 Chinese newspapers and

magazines (published in Singapore) between 1914 and 1945 (Wong, 1995: 25). In terms of students and schools, in 1924, there were 27,476 students in 564 Chinese schools in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, compared to 86,147 students in 996 schools in 1938 (Tan, 1985: 19–20). However, many of the people were still illiterate.

The dynamic growth of Chinese education in Malaya came to a temporary halt during the Japanese occupation during the Second World War. Many Chinese school teachers and students were killed or forced to flee due to the Sino-Japanese war in China and Chinese resistance to the Japanese. Many schools were closed as the premises were destroyed or occupied. The few schools that were allowed to open were required to have Japanese as the medium of instruction (Tay and Gwee, 1975: 20–2).

There was a revival in CLT after Japan surrendered. This was due to the post-war baby boom as well as the overall development of Chinese language schools. Many of those whose education was interrupted by the war also returned to school to continue with their schooling. In 1946 there were 4508 students enrolled in schools at the secondary level, but this figure grew to 49,536 students in 1957 (Tan L.E., 2000:234). Financial support for the schools came mainly from the Chinese business community. The realisation of the need for higher education during this period culminated in the opening of classes at the Nanyang University, Singapore, in 1956 when Singapore was still a part of Malaya, and the establishment of the Department of Chinese Studies at the University of Malaya in 1963.

During the anti-colonial struggle, Chinese educators faced a lot of hostility from the colonial rulers. Many school principals, teachers and students were suspected of being sympathetic towards the communist cause and so were detained or deported during the Malayan Emergency which began in 1948. A number of schools were also forced to close down. To prevent the Chinese in the rural areas from supporting the Communist Party of Malaya, the British colonial government relocated them to 480 new villages. Chinese schools suffered varying degrees of damage during this period, and this impacted on the development of CLT.

The struggle for identity in the education system

The decade 1950–1960 was one with many challenges faced by Chinese education in Malaya. It began in 1949 when a proposal for a unified education system by the colonial government establishing English as the primary medium of instruction was met with much protest by the Chinese and the Malays. Then came the *Barnes Report* of 1951 which advocated the termination of vernacular education for a single system of schools (Chapters 1–2). This was recommended as a step to foster national unity (*Barnes Report*, or *Report of the Committee on Malay Education, Federation of Malaya*, 1951: 23). The *Fenn-Wu Report* on the other hand argued against the 'restrictive imposition' of one or two languages and recommended instead that the

various communities be permitted to retain their own languages and cultures (*Report of a Mission Invited by the Federation Government to Study the Problem of the Education of the Chinese in Malaya: Chinese Schools and the Education of Chinese Malayans*. Council Paper No. 35 of 1951: 4–6).

The response of members of the boards of governors as well as teachers of the Chinese schools to the *Barnes Report* was to organise themselves to fight for the survival of the Chinese schools as a legitimate part of the future of Malaya in a national system of education (2000: 240). This resulted in the formation of *Dongjiaozong*, a joint body consisting of the United Chinese School Committees' Association (UCSCA), or *Dongzong*, and the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA), or *Jiaozong*. Dongjiaozong's initial stand against the colonial rulers developed to become an alternative vision of a nation where the rights of the different ethnic groups in maintaining their languages and cultures are legitimate and accepted. In this struggle Lim Lian Geok, the leader of UCSTA, who was the most prominent and articulate spokesperson projected the colonial government's push to establish English as the only medium of instruction as both imperialistic and undemocratic.

The Chinese education movement which was launched in 1952 worked together with the leaders of the Malayan, later Malaysian, Chinese Association (MCA) to fight for reasonable rights and interests of Chinese education and status in Malaya. An outcome of the education movement was the realisation for the need for a local curriculum and syllabus to teach the Chinese language in Malaya. This significant turning point resulted in *Jiaozong* working with the Education Department to produce new Chinese textbooks with a Malayan content, replacing teaching materials that were previously sourced from China (Tan L.E., 2000: 242). At the same time, the Chinese educationists recognised that in order to survive they needed to tone down their demands and work towards achieving independence together with the other ethnic groups.

The *Razak Report* recommended that Malay be adopted as the main medium of instruction 'to bring together the children of all races under a national educational system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction' (*Report of the Education Committee*, 1956: paragraph 12).

In 1957, the recommendations of the *Razak Report* were adopted by the Malayan government as the educational framework for independent Malaya in the Education Ordinance 1957. Among other things, the *Report* recommended that there be a national education system that consisted of schools using Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil at the primary level, and Malay and English at the secondary level, with a uniform national curriculum regardless of the medium of instruction. Malay-medium schools would be known as national schools), while those using other languages would be known as national type schools (Chapter 1).

The *Razak Report* also recommended strengthening and expanding existing schools provided that they adopted the national curriculum. In this way Chinese primary schools together with Tamil schools were accepted into the national education system. The status of the secondary schools was not as clear. Although secondary schools were allowed to teach in different vernacular languages, they were required to prepare their students to sit for public examinations that were conducted in either Malay or English (*Report of the Education Committee*, 1956). The *Rahman Talib Report* of 1960 required that all secondary schools within the national system must teach in one of the two official languages, Malay or English (*Report of the Education Review Committee*, 1960: paragraphs 17–20, 173–174, and 183–187). The government encouraged Chinese secondary schools to accept full government aid and be reformed into national type secondary schools with English as the primary medium of instruction. Most of these schools accepted this condition. Only 16 of the total number of 69 Chinese secondary schools declined to do this and became Chinese independent high schools. The outcome is a situation where Chinese is used as the medium of instruction in national type Chinese primary schools, and also in Chinese independent high schools.

Chinese independent high schools (CIHS) are funded by the Malaysian Chinese, and are coordinated by the *Dongzong*. Despite the many challenges faced, Chinese schools continued to emphasise the Five Aspects of Formal Education in Confucianism (*Wuyu Jiaoyu*). These are moral (*de*), intellectual (*zhi*), physical (*ti*), social (*qun*) and aesthetic (*mei*).

The resulting scenario was a situation where at the secondary level students could opt to attend the national secondary school, the national type secondary school, or the CIHS. In the national type secondary school, the Chinese language class was part of the normal school timetable, but in most of the national secondary schools Chinese was taught after school hours, except when the majority of students were those of the national type Chinese primary school.

Pupils' Own Language 1952

Many of the Chinese wanted their children to learn Chinese for the maintenance of their own language as well as for pragmatic reasons. It is a useful language to know in the private sector as well as for communication with Chinese from other countries, particularly so because of the economic power and success of China and Taiwan. The Pupils' Own Language (POL) programme was introduced following the 1952 Ordinance which allowed for the teaching of the pupil's own language in the national schools (Yang 1998: 34). In principle, if at least 15 pupils or their parents requested for it, Chinese could be taught as a subject in the national schools, or in the English schools. Initially, POL was only offered in primary schools, but was later was extended right up to Form 5. POL is taught as a second language

at the primary level, but as a first language at the secondary level. However, the programme is commonly perceived to be weak as the teachers are normally part-time instructors (Tan C.B., 2000: 57). In a memorandum to the Ministry of Education by 226 Chinese and 20 Indian literary, educational and cultural organisations in 1983, weaknesses in the implementation of the *Razak Report* were highlighted (*New Straits Times*, 14 March 1983). Among them were the lack of permanent POL teachers assigned to schools, which resulted in the delay or even demise of POL classes. Another issue raised was the fact that POL classes were often held after school hours or in the weekends, which was not conducive to learning. These issues still remain unresolved till today.

Starting from 2007, the Ministry of Education selected 150 national primary schools nationwide to offer Chinese and Tamil language classes to their Standard 1 students. After an experimental period of three years teaching Chinese and Tamil as a second or third language, by year 2010 more than 350 national schools appeared to have offered Chinese language classes to their students. The majority of the students in these schools were Malay, and they were given the opportunity to learn Chinese if they wanted to. The approach in teaching Chinese to these students is that of a second (or foreign) language, instead of a first language as applied prior to 2007 when these Chinese language classes were treated as *muyu ban* or POL classes, and these classes were open only to Chinese students.

Implementation of NEP 1970

Following the National Education Policy (NEP) 1970, English-medium primary and secondary schools, which were national type schools, were gradually changed into Malay-medium national schools. This policy was aimed at integrating Malaysians through the main language, Malay. It was envisioned that Malay would become the vehicle to support inter-ethnic communication and understanding. The language change was effected gradually starting from the first year in primary schools in 1970. By the end of 1982, the change was complete.

The Chinese primary schools were not affected by the policy in terms of the medium of instruction, but the fear that the government would initiate a similar move for all Chinese-medium schools was a source of political tension. Chinese primary schools still continue to follow the national curriculum, and Malay and English are compulsory subjects. Though these schools are funded by the government, it is not uncommon to find the more affluent Chinese to donate generously to them to enable them to have better facilities for their students.

As said earlier, students could choose to continue to their secondary education at any of these schools: national secondary schools (SMK), national type secondary schools (SMJK), or Chinese independent high schools (CIHS). Unlike the SMK and SMJK which receive funding from the government,

CIHS are funded mainly by the Chinese community. Students of the SMJK are able to continue with their Chinese language and sit for the Chinese paper in the examination for the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) at the end of the third year of secondary education, as well as the Malaysia Certificate of Education (MCE) at the end of their secondary school education. Students in the SMK, on the other hand, can opt to take Chinese via the POL classes. Chinese is also taught as a subject in pre-university programmes as it is also entered as a paper in public examinations.

The duration of study in CIHS is six years, consisting of three junior middle levels, and three senior middle levels. In the latter, three streams are offered for students to choose from Science, Arts, or Commerce. Some schools have as addition a vocational stream with subjects like electrical engineering, food and beverage studies, and art design.

Students at the CIHS have to take standardised tests as a requirement for a certificate known as the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC), at the end of Junior Middle 3 and Senior Middle 3. The UEC is available in three levels, namely, Vocational Unified Exam (UEC-V), UEC Junior Middle Level (UEC-JML/JUEC), and Senior Middle Level (UEC-SML/SUEC). At the UEC-V and UEC-JML, the syllabuses and examinations are only available in Chinese, while at the UEC-SML, questions for mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, book-keeping, accounting and commerce are available in both Chinese and English. As UEC-SML is not recognised as an entry qualification into Malaysian universities, some of the CIHS also offer their students the option of having additional classes that follow the public secondary school syllabuses, to prepare them for the public examinations that are sanctioned by the government and recognised by Malaysian universities. Nevertheless, education in CIHS has become increasingly popular. In 2010, there was a total of 63,765 students and the number has increased to 83,042 in 2015, a growth of 30.2% (Dongzong, 2015). Student increase was seen in all the states with Johor and Kuala Lumpur having the highest number. A contributing factor to the popularity of CIHS lies in the fact that the UEC examination results are accepted as an entry requirement by certain universities in Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, and Europe.

In 1996 the government implemented the Education Act 1996 which states that there is only one type of secondary school run by the government, thus terminating the national type secondary school. This means that all government secondary schools are to consist only of national secondary schools, but the national and national type primary schools are left intact.

As a programme of racial integration beginning with primary school children, vision schools (*sekolah wawasan*) were established. Under this concept, three schools (one national, one national type Chinese, and one national type Tamil) would share the same school compound and facilities like the school field, canteen and school hall to encourage closer interactions between children of the different racial groups. Although this move did not

affect the medium of instruction in the schools, it was met with objections from Chinese and Indian communities as they believed this would restrict the use of their mother tongue in schools. To date only six vision schools have been established.

Teaching of science and mathematics in English (TSME)

A case was made at the beginning of 21st century for the use of English as a medium of instruction of teaching subjects, for the purpose of nation building on the basis that access through an international language will enhance international competitiveness. In 2002, the government made an amendment to the Education Act, changing the medium of instruction for science and mathematics to English. In 2003, English was made the medium of instruction for these subject in Standard 1 in primary schools, as well as Form 1 in secondary schools. In order to help teachers and students cope with the change, bilingual switching was allowed. For Chinese schools, science and mathematics in both English and Chinese. Questions in public examinations were set in both languages, and students were allowed to answer the questions in either language. This lasted until 2008 when the questions and answers in these subjects in public examinations were totally in English (Ye and Yu, 2007: 2–3).

This change in policy was not accepted by Chinese educators. This was because Chinese medium schools had always performed better than national schools in these two subjects. Another concern of theirs was that the change of policy was seen as a threat to mother tongue education (Kua, 2005: 175, cited by Gill 2007: 116). With the change, at the Primary School Evaluation Test, commonly known as UPSR, (the first public examinations students sit for and is held in the last year of primary education) the subjects would be Malay, Chinese, English as well as science and mathematics in English. This would in reality change the Chinese schools into English schools, with Chinese and Malay taught as single subjects in the curriculum. The Dong Jiaozong was especially vocal and threatened to hold protests as they claimed that the use of English as a medium of instruction in Chinese schools would dilute the character and quality of Chinese schools (*The Sun*, 9 December 2008). The Chinese, however, were not against the TSME at the secondary school level (*The Star*, December 14, 2008). For the implementation of the policy, a compromise was arrived at with the application of the '2–4–3' and '6–2–3–2' formulae.

The '2–4–3' formula was applied in the first three grades, Standard 1 to Standard 3, with two periods of English classes, four periods of mathematics in English (the other six periods in Chinese), and three of science in English (the other three in Chinese), in the weekly teaching schedule. The 6–2–3–2 applied for the next three grades, Standard 4 to Standard 6, in which out of a total of eight periods of mathematics, six periods would be in Chinese and two in English. Of the five periods of science taught weekly,

three periods would be in Chinese and two in English. This was initially seen as a 'win-win' approach for all parties.

Research on TSME as a result of the change of policy, carried out by Jiaozong, showed negative consequences of this policy and many of the findings were corroborated by Chan (2010: 27, 28). Jiaozong's study which involved 282 schools, examined the issue from different angles, such as from students' learning perspective, teachers' teaching perspective, learning and teaching outcomes, and parents' perspective, on the implementation of the TSME. The result of the survey implies that the formulae arrived at had a negative impact on the teaching and learning of the two subjects in the Chinese primary schools, as many students were unable to master English. In addition, the use of two different languages simultaneously in teaching also created confusion among the students. This bilingual approach also resulted in the reduction of the number of teaching periods for mathematics, from seven to six, making it challenging for teachers to complete the syllabus in time. The shortened teaching time also affected the students' ability to master mathematics and Chinese, and this ultimately resulted in the loss of interest in learning their own language. In addition, the prescribed Chinese textbooks used were essentially translations of English textbooks. Repetition of a subject matter through two languages was actually an impediment to effective teaching as it brought boredom to the students (Chan, 2010: 28).

Challenges in the implementation of the TSME were also reported for the national schools. In 2009, after much debate, the Minister of Education announced the reversal of the policy, and in 2011 the medium of instruction for science and mathematics in the Chinese primary schools reverted back to Chinese.

Chinese language teaching in higher education

Chinese language teaching is possible in Malaysia up to the tertiary level. The University of Malaya (UM) offers two programmes with Chinese as the medium of instruction at the Bachelor's level. The programme taught at the Chinese Studies Department, Faculty of Arts and the Social Sciences, has been in existence since the establishment of UM, while the Bachelor of Languages and Linguistics (Chinese), taught at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, began in 1998. Chinese studies can also be pursued at the Master's and PhD levels in both faculties. Similarly, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) offers Chinese studies at the Bachelor's, Master's and PhD levels. In many other institutions of higher learning, Chinese is also offered as an elective course.

Among the private universities, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, which has programmes in Chinese for the Bachelor's, Master's and PhD levels, has the largest number of students pursuing Chinese studies at the tertiary level. Similar programmes, including those at the diploma level, are also run by

other private institutions of learning, such as Southern University College, New Era College and Han Chiang College.

Training for Chinese primary school teachers is available at teachers' training colleges where trainee teachers for national type Chinese schools are required to undergo a two-year training programme. Teachers for secondary schools were previously required to apply for a Diploma in Education offered by the Faculty of Education of UM, after the completion of the first degree prior to being posted to schools. This training of teachers for secondary schools was later taken over by teachers' training colleges, and the programme is known as *Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijazah* (KPLI), or Courses for Post-Graduate Teachers, which is offered by the Ministry of Education. This has since been transferred to the Sultan Idris University of Education where the entry requirement is the Higher School Certificate. Students who successfully complete this training are conferred with the degree of Bachelor of Chinese with Education. Holders of the Malaysia School Certificate can apply to a teacher training college that offers a Bachelor in Education degree. The issue of shortage of Chinese language teachers in both primary and secondary schools is critical. In January 2014, it was reported that there was a shortage of 150 teachers at former national type secondary schools, about 300 for POL classes at national secondary schools, and over 1,000 at primary schools (*Oriental Daily News*, 24 January 2014).

National Education Blueprint 2013–2025

In 2006, the first draft of the *National Education Blueprint 2006–10* was released. The aim of the *Blueprint* was to address the problem of racial polarisation in schools. A number of activities for students were proposed, such as seminars on the Constitution of Malaysia, motivational camp, and food festivals to increase cultural awareness, as well as essay competitions on different cultural traditions. At the same time Chinese and Tamil language classes were proposed for national schools, beginning with a pilot project conducted in 220 schools in 2007.

The *Blueprint* was unveiled by the Deputy Prime Minister, who was also Minister of Education, Tan Sri Muhiyuddin Mohd. Yassin, in September 2013. It articulates Malaysia's aspiration to have one of the best education systems in the world, and outlines the strategy to transform the system where emphasis is on developing students in a holistic manner. It focuses on producing six key 'attributes' for students, with bilingual proficiency listed as one of them. The master plan also reiterates the status of Malay as the national language while giving students the necessary exposure to English to improve proficiency in the language. It also encourages all students to learn an additional language. Thus the *Blueprint* has been designed to have an impact on the learning of languages and will lead to the fulfillment of national aspirations. As one of the aspirations of the government is for students to learn a third language, an important goal is to train more Chinese language teachers to meet this need. Another proposal is that

Chinese primary schools adopt the same curriculum and teaching materials as national primary schools from Standard 4 to Standard 6 which would result in an increase in the teaching periods for Malay in Chinese schools.

These proposed changes in the *Blueprint* are perceived by some Chinese educators to be contrary to the development of multilingual education, as seen in the views expressed by Dongzong which stated that the *Blueprint* was unfavourable to the survival as well as development of vernacular education in Malaysia (*The Malaysian Insider*, 2013). Their stand regarding the matter is also reflected in the comment made by Yap In Tian, the Chairman of Dongzong, who said that although Malaysia is a multiracial country, the government's move to implement a monolingual education policy will increase a hegemonic situation, and lead to the drawback of freedom, democracy, and the human rights of the minorities, thus resulting in national division (*Guangming Daily*, 2014). This perceived threat to vernacular languages is echoed in the press release of National Education Reform Initiative (NERI) which consists of 29 non-governmental organisations in Malaysia (*Rakyattimes*, 2014).

Conclusion

The evolution of Chinese language teaching in Malaysia is a story of accommodation and perseverance. A number of factors have contributed to its survival since the beginning of the first Chinese school 19th century, the main one being the consistent support from the Malaysian Chinese community. The community has through the years been prepared to sacrifice to defend their mother tongue education. The contribution of Jiaozong and Dongzong in fund raising and in the development of Chinese education cannot be over emphasised. The increasing importance of Mandarin as a lingua franca in the Asian region due to the economic power of the People's Republic of China has encouraged more people to learn Mandarin due to its marketability, and this is manifested in advertisements for posts in the business sector indicating preference for applicants who can speak Mandarin, and the preference given to Chinese visitors coming to Malaysia visa-free or visa-reduced. There is more use of Mandarin in Malaysia than before among tourist guides, counter clerks at airports, and staff of various service centres. The *Blueprint* does note that Chinese will be among the languages offered to students as a third language. This can be seen as opening the door to more Malaysian students learning Chinese in time to come.

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6 Tamil education in Malaysia

A survival against the odds

Supramani Shoniah and *Krishnan Ramasamy*

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to explore the course taken by Tamil education in Malaysia since Independence in 1957. The *Report of the Education Review Committee (1960)* shows that there were 811 Tamil medium schools in the country. As most of the Tamil schools were located on private land in rubber plantations, they were categorised as partially aided, i.e. schools which were not wholly financed by the government but were given grants for their management. In 2000, the Social Strategic Foundation, a social wing of Malaysian Indian Congress (a political party representing Indians in the government) carried out a study on Tamil schools and reported that 433 out of 520 schools were situated on private land, and these were categorised as partially aided schools. The rest were government schools. To understand the state of education in the Tamil language in Malaysia, one has to go back to the history of the migration of Tamil-speaking people to the country, and the establishment of schools for Tamil children.

History of Tamil language teaching before independence

According to Nilakanta Sastri (1938), as cited in Sandhu (1969: 21), India's contact with the Malay Peninsula probably goes back to pre-Christian times. His summary of the first wave of Indian arrival in the peninsula is as follows:

> This flow was in all likelihood paralleled by the movement of Southeast Asian, especially Malaysian, traders and others across the Bay of Bengal. This two-way traffic through intermarriage and cultural assimilation, witnessed the Indianization of the local way of life, the emergence of a number of city states and the flowering of civilization throughout the more favoured coastal planes and riverine tracts of the strategic Siamo-Malay Peninsula.

The Malay Peninsula was called by Indians *Swarnabhumi*, which means 'land of gold'. Relics found in the Bujang Valley in Kedah of the earliest

Indian settlement in the Malay Peninsula prove as evidence that the place was a centre of bilateral trade. Hence, it can be concluded that the earlier Indians came to the peninsula mainly to trade.

The second wave of Indians which arrived in great number in the peninsula were mainly of South Indian origin. They were indentured labourers who were brought in by the British in the second half of the 19th century. The Indians who settled in rubber, coffee and sugar plantations started Tamil language teaching to their children informally in temples and in estate community halls on their own initiative. As a matter of fact, Tamil education has a history of more than 150 years in Malaysia, and Tamil schools play a very important role in the Indian community both culturally and politically. Tamil language education is also one of the many unique features of the Malaysian education system.

Education in Tamil first started in Penang, Meleka and Singapore. Records show that Rev. R. Hutchings introduced Tamil classes as a section in the Penang Free School in 1816. However, due to poor response from the people it was closed down after two years. Later, in 1834 a section of the Singapore Free School was given to the teaching of Tamil (Arasaratnam, 1970: 178). In early 20th century, there were already a number of Tamil schools in the peninsula. Most of them were funded by the management of rubber estates, and a few by the British colonial government as well as by Christian and Hindu missionaries.

The Labour Ordinance which came into enforcement in 1912 paved the way for the development of Tamil schools in Malaya. This ordinance stated that if there were 10 children aged between seven and ten years in a rubber estate, then the estate management should build a Tamil school. In 1920 when the rubber price increased, estate managements started to build more Tamil schools to attract the labour force. As a result, in 1925 there were 8,153 students studying in 235 Tamil schools in the Federated Malay States (Arasaratnam, 1970: 180).

At the same time during this period 13 Tamil schools were built by the British government in urban areas, and this effort was joined by individual philanthropists and religious missions. Among the philanthropists were Raja Sooriya who contributed to the building of the Tambusamy Pillai Tamil Primary School in Kuala Lumpur in 1905, and Swami Athmaraam whose generosity went into the building of the Appar Tamil School also in Kuala Lumpur, in 1937. To add to the list was the contribution of the Vivekananda Mission in the establishment of a Tamil primary school in Brickfields in 1914. The number of Tamil schools slowly increased to 333 in 1930 with 12,640 students in all (Arasaratnam, 1970).

New thoughts and ideas after the Second World War

After the Second World War when the British government returned to rule the country, more attention was given to mother tongue education. An

Education Act was introduced in 1946 which provided free mother tongue education for all races, and the allocation for Tamil schools was increased. The period also saw an increase in student enrolment in Tamil schools to 38,700 in 1949. A central working committee was formed to study the education system in the country and this committee proposed that English be the main language, but it was rejected by the Federal Legislative Council. After this a series of committees were set up to make recommendations to the government for a unified system of education. These committees came up with their recommendations in the form of Reports for consideration considered by the government of the day, but some could not be implemented for various reasons.

One was *Report of the Committee on Malay Education* 1951, or the *Barnes Report* which recommended that only Malay and English be the mediums of instruction in all schools (Chapters 2–3, and 5 in this volume). If recommendations of this report were implemented, it meant an end to education in Chinese and Tamil, and hence putting their cultures at stake. It was natural that the Chinese and the Indians rejected them. A second report concerned Chinese schools and education, and this was the *Fenn-Wu Report* 1951, as discussed in Chapter 5.

There was no committee set up by the British government to make recommendations for Tamil education. As the position of Tamil, or rather its absence, was implicated in both the reports on Malay and Chinese education, three foremost Indian organisations of the time, namely the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), the Labourers' Union, and the Teachers' Union took the initiative to form an education committee, which insisted that Tamil schools must remain as part of the education system, and that Tamil should be the medium of instruction in all these schools until Standard 5 of the primary school. However, English must be taught from Standard 4, and Malay from Standard 6. The committee also proposed that English should be the medium of instruction in Standard 6.

Taking all recommendations into consideration, the government came up with a new proposal in the form of the *Education Ordinance 1952*, which stated that there should be only one type of school in the country, i.e. the national school, defined as one using Malay as the medium of instruction. To achieve this objective, there should be a gradual transition from Chinese and Tamil schools to national schools. However, Tamil and Chinese language classes could be provided for in the national schools if there was a request from at least 15 students. Due to opposition from the Chinese and the Indians, the ordinance was not implemented.

Tamil education after independence

As enshrined in the Malaysian Constitution, the Malay language is the national language, and teaching and learning of other languages are not prohibited. It is clearly stated in Article 152 of the Constitution:

(1) The national language shall be the Malay language and shall be in such script as Parliament may by law provide:
Provided that –
(a) no person shall be prohibited or prevented from using (otherwise than for official purposes), or from teaching or learning, any other language;
and
(b) nothing in this Clause shall prejudice the right of the Federal Government or of any State Government to preserve and sustain the use and study of the language of any other community in the Federation.

When the schools were categorised into national and national type schools based on the *Razak Report 1957*, the Tamil schools fell into the category of national type schools. See Chapter 1 in this volume for a more detailed discussion on this topic.

Prior to independence, there was no standardised curriculum for Tamil education. Basically the schools were managed by a board of governors headed by the estate management where they were located, and it was the management that was the real employer of the teachers, as well as owner of the school. Hence, the curriculum differed from school to school, while textbooks were imported from India and Sri Lanka, and syllabuses were formulated based on the contents of these textbooks. The Tamil language and mathematics were taught as main subjects, besides gardening. The proposal of the *Razak Report* that there should be a common national curriculum for all types of schools regardless of the language medium, be it Malay, English, Tamil or Chinese, led to the writing of Tamil textbooks with a Malayan background by local writers. Consequently, importing textbooks from India and Sri Lanka for Tamil schools ceased.

Recommendations of the *Report of the Education Review Committee 1960*, which came to be known as the *Rahman Talib Report* (Chapters 1–3, 5) were incorporated into the Malaysia Education Act 1961. This Act enforced the teaching of the Malay language starting from Primary One, and English from Primary 3 in all the national type schools, including the Tamil primary schools. After completing six years in the national type Tamil school the students were allowed to continue their education in the national school, where Tamil was taught as a subject upon the request of 15 parents, under the Pupils' Own Language (POL) programme. As a subject in the school curriculum, Tamil was included in public examinations which awarded certificates at various levels of education, i.e. the Lower Certificate of Education, the Malaysia Certificate of Education, and the Higher School Certificate.

However, the Tamil POL classes were far from satisfactory, arising from the lack of well-drawn syllabuses, suitable textbooks, and trained teachers. To crown it all, the POL classes were conducted after school hours, and these were done mostly by teachers of the primary schools on a part time

basis. All these factors discouraged Tamil-speaking students to register for the POL for Tamil.

In 1979 the national education system was again reviewed and revamped. The committee responsible for this task was a Cabinet Committee headed by the then Minister of Education, Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The result of the review was a report, known as the *Report of the Cabinet Committee Report 1979*, and among its recommendations was that emphasis should be given to the teaching of the 3Rs, i.e. reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, for all primary school students. This committee proposed a new curriculum, common for all schools including private schools irrespective of medium of instruction. This curriculum is known as New Primary School Curriculum (*Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah*, or KBSR for short). For the first time in its history, Tamil education in Malaysia was given equal importance and on a par with the other streams of education in terms of curriculum which aimed to develop a balanced individual physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, as proposed in the National Education Philosophy.

At the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education, special education officers were appointed to develop a new syllabus for the Tamil language for the primary schools as well as for the teaching of Tamil at the secondary level. For the purpose of a common curriculum, teaching materials for all other subjects in the national type Tamil schools were translated into Tamil from the original texts written in the national language. In 1980, education officers in the Tamil Unit of the Curriculum Development Centre prescribed systematic teaching and learning methodologies and techniques for teachers of Tamil schools. As a result of these efforts, there was improvement in the quality of teaching on the part of the teachers as well as in students' achievement. The implementation of this curriculum very much benefitted Tamil schools since syllabuses and teachers' guides were available in the Tamil language. In 1988 a standard form of examination was administered for the first time for all schools at the end of the sixth year of primary education. It was known as the Primary School Assessment Test (*Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah*, or UPSR for short).

In 1994 the curriculum for all types of primary schools was evaluated to identify its weaknesses and strengths. Prior to this date, subjects like science, history and geography were taught as an integrated whole under the rubric 'Humans and the Environment'. It was found that students in the Tamil schools were weak in the science part, and there was a probability that they could not cope with the subject when they reached the secondary schools. Again the curriculum was revised and these subjects were taught separately from 1995 onwards. This revised curriculum was known as the Integrated Primary School Curriculum (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah*, abbreviated as KBSR). Integrated into this curriculum were thinking skills, multiple intelligences, mastery learning, contextual learning, self-access learning, futuristic study skills, and lifelong learning.

The advancement of Information Technology (IT) brought tremendous changes throughout the world in all fields including education. In order to face future challenges and achieve the developed nation status, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, came up with the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) plan in which smart schools played a vital role in the Malaysian education system. In 1999 a new curriculum was created for smart schools and tested in 90 of them. Tamil schools were also included in this programme. This curriculum encouraged new ideas in teaching and learning where democratisation of education and lifelong education were emphasised. Students were given freedom and opportunities to learn according to their abilities and capabilities. Unfortunately the smart school programme was not successful, and it was replaced by one known as vision school (*sekolah wawasan*). These schools are basically the existing regular schools, but the difference lies in the fact that a number of schools, at least three of them, are built close to one another so that their students can freely share facilities available which may differ from school to school. The main idea is to encourage students of the various races to intermingle more with one another.

Teaching of Tamil in national schools

Students who have completed their schooling in the national type Tamil schools, secondary school education for them is at the national schools. However, before going fully into these schools they have to go through a transitional period of one-year where they get immersed in the national language so that they are able to follow all the teaching done in this language as the medium of instruction. This specially instituted class, better known as the Remove Class, is also meant for students from the national type Chinese schools. In line with the innovations introduced as shown above, a new Tamil language syllabus was designed for POL Tamil in the secondary schools.

Provisions for the teaching of Tamil in secondary schools from Remove Class until Form 5 since 1961 are given in the Malaysia Education Act 1961, as follows:

> "national secondary school", or *sekolah menengah kebangsaan*, means a fully-assisted secondary school
> (a) providing a five-year course of secondary education appropriate for children between the ages of twelve and nineteen years;
> (b) using the national language as the main medium of instruction;
> (c) in which the English language is a compulsory subject of instruction;
> (d) in which facilities for the teaching of the Chinese and Tamil language shall, if it is reasonable and practicable so to do, be made available if the parents of fifteen children in the school so request;
> (e) preparing pupils for such examinations as maybe prescribed. . . .

Ever since the implementation of this Act, Tamil has been taught as POL in secondary schools. The time allocated per week to teach Tamil in the Remove Class is 160 minutes, and 120 minutes in the secondary school from Form One to Form 5. The syllabus which reflects the requirement set by the Examination Syndicate of the Ministry of Education mainly focuses on skills in language usage for examinations leading to the Certificate for Lower Secondary Education, and the Malaysia Certificate of Education. For the latter, Tamil literature is also offered as a separate subject. It is taught at the request of the students, taking into account the availability of favourable school hours and of teachers. In most cases this subject is taught outside the normal school hours.

For four decades from the time Tamil was first introduced as a POL programme in national schools, its status was as an elective school subject at the secondary level. In the first half of the first decade of 2000, it was found that 60,000 Malay students were studying in National Type Chinese Primary Schools (Abdullah Hassan, 2005) throughout the country, and the number increased to 63,400 in the year 2013 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). These figures show that non-Chinese, especially Malays, preferred the Chinese stream of education even though the medium of instruction was Chinese. This situation had made the government realise that there should be strategies undertaken to retain Malay students in national schools, and at the same time make the national stream preferable not only to Malay students but to students of all ethnic groups. Arising from this consideration, Tamil and Chinese were introduced as elective subjects to be taught in national primary schools. In 2006, these languages were taught in 120 national schools: Tamil in 40 schools, and Chinese in 80 schools. A new syllabus was developed for the school subject, under the rubric 'Tamil Language for National Schools', for the purpose of teaching Tamil to non-Tamil students.

Teacher training for Tamil

In 1938 there were 535 Tamil schools, and student enrolment was 28,098. To solve the problem of the shortage of teachers, courses for teacher training were set up in regular schools and conducted during weekends. This programme was known as Normal Teacher Training, and it was not just for Tamil, but for all school subjects. The duration of the training was three years, after which successful candidates became fully qualified teachers. As the period was still before independence, candidates for the Tamil language were recruited by the estate management that was responsible for Tamil education. Those who could read and write fluently in Tamil were selected to become teachers, and among them were priests of Hindu temples.

This training programme was disrupted by the Second World War. During the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) there was no advancement either in teacher training or Tamil education. After the war, when the British returned

to Malaya they resumed the training programme for Tamil school teachers. In 1946, Standard 7 was added on to the Tamil schools, and students who passed the examinations prescribed for this level were recruited for the Normal Teacher Training programme.

With the implementation of the recommendations of the *Razak Report*, Standard 7 in the Tamil schools came to an end, and its place was the Teachers' Preparatory Examination programme, which continued until 1959. The change was made based on the recommendation of the report which stated that a candidate for teacher training had to have at least the Lower Certificate of Education. This prerequisite also spelt the end of the Normal Teacher Training programme in 1962.

The year 1959 saw the establishment of Day Training Centres (DTC) to train teachers in towns in the Malay Peninsula. Training was conducted for various subjects in these centres. At the end of a three-year stint candidates were awarded with the Certificate in Teaching. Intake of Tamil teacher trainees began in 1960 at the Jalan Kuantan Day Training Centre in Kuala Lumpur, and the training for Tamil teachers lasted for eight years until 1968. A total number of 331 Tamil teachers were trained under this programme. In the meantime the untrained teachers who were teaching in Tamil schools were selected to be trained during school holidays at the Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College, in Tanjong Malim. The duration of this training was also for three years, and it was named Training Course for Teachers of Tamil Primary Schools (*Kursus untuk Guru Sekolah Rendah Tamil*). This programme came to an end in 1981, with the establishment of several teachers' training colleges in the country, among them the Malaysian Teachers' Training College in Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur.

Of the above mentioned training colleges eight were offering training programmes for Tamil teachers by 1999. At present there are only seven teacher training institutes which provide training for Tamil teachers. Besides the normal programmes for secondary school leavers to be trained for three years to become teachers, the Ministry of Education introduced several new programmes such as Special Programme for Graduating Teachers (*Program Khas Pensiswazahan Guru*), and Teacher Training Programme for Graduates (*Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Izajah*, or KPLI for short), all in line with the aspiration of the government to ensure that 80% of the teachers in the primary schools were graduates by 2010. The programme leading to the degree of Bachelor of Education was started in 2007 in certain universities where secondary school leavers are recruited and trained for five years to become primary school teachers, including for Tamil schools.

On the whole, the academic qualification of teachers in Tamil schools is at par with those in other schools. But the quality reflected in their performance is much to be desired. A survey carried out in 2013 by the Action Plan Committee for Tamil schools initiated by the Prime Minister's Department revealed that teachers faced difficulties in teaching subjects such as mathematics, science, moral education, physical education, music, and art

in the Tamil language, as they were trained in the Malay language for these subjects. Furthermore, those who were trained under the KPLI programme were not graduates specialising in Tamil language teaching and did not have a sound knowledge of the Tamil language. Hence, there was this problem of the quality of teaching in Tamil schools which stretched far back into the history of the teaching of this language as a school subject, as has been shown in the preceding pages. This has resulted in the lack of interest among parents to send their children to these schools. As for the POL classes it appears that the management of certain schools discourages students from taking the subject in public examinations for the Lower Certificate of Education, and the Malaysia Certificate of Education, for fear that that the overall school attainment level would drop. However, there are parents who encourage their children to learn Tamil by sending them to private tuition classes. Annually around eight thousand students sit for the Tamil language paper at the school certificate level through their own pursuit in learning the subject outside the school curriculum.

Achievement of Tamil schools and Tamil education

According to the *Information Book 2013* published by the Ministry of Education, there are 523 national type Tamil schools in this country. As a new initiative of the Prime Minister, a new school was opened on 1 March 2015, making up the total number to 524, with six more new schools on the way. This is done in the interest of giving the Indian community in this country basic education through their mother tongue. In the year 2012 a special fund was allocated to improve the infrastructure of 39 Tamil schools.

On the whole, though Tamil schools are few in number compared to the other schools, over the years their performance has shown a gradual improvement. The Primary School Achievement Test or the UPSR mentioned earlier on is a yardstick to measure the achievement of primary school students at the end of the six-year primary education. In 1999 only 49 out of 16,000 students obtained a distinction in all the seven subjects taught. But the number gradually increased to 1,306 in 2013. This has been a tremendous improvement in a time span of 10 years.

According to the *National Education Blue Print 2013–2025*, Tamil schools have shown significant academic improvement for the four years prior to 2013. The difference in National Average Grade obtained by Tamil schools in comparison with national schools and Chinese schools is very much reduced. This is highlighted in the *Blueprint* which serves as a guideline for educational transformation in the years to come.

> The achievement gap between National and National-Type primary schools is also closing. The difference between National schools or Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) and National-Type Chinese schools or Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) (SJK(C)s) is insignificant. Over the past 5 years,

> National-Type Tamil schools or Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil). (SJK(T)s) have more than halved the gap between themselves and both SJK(C)s and SKs, and are now less than 4 percentage points behind.
>
> (*National Education Blueprint 2013*–2025: E7)

New initiatives by the government

In January 2012 the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Mohamad Najib Abdul Razak proposed that a comprehensive action plan be developed for transforming Tamil schools in the country. A committee was formed in May 2012 to carry out a comprehensive study on the shortcoming faced by the Tamil schools, and to propose a suitable action plan by 2014. The recommendation was an action plan to rectify problems in areas such as policy and legal matters pertaining to Tamil education, pre-school education, infrastructure and facilities, teachers and teacher training, students and academic achievement, curriculum, remedial and special education, leadership, parents and community involvement, relocation of Tamil schools, and finance. It was found that Tamil schools were lagging behind in these areas compared to the other schools. The committee also found out that about 37 Tamil schools needed to be relocated due to poor enrolment caused by migration of the Indian population from rural areas, especially from the rubber plantations, to urban areas as a result of development. If the action plan is implemented, the Tamil schools may be able to achieve academic success equal to that of national schools.

Tamil at the tertiary level

For students who wish to continue to study Tamil at the tertiary level, a pass in the subject in the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations is a prerequisite. The syllabus for this subject is one prepared by the Malaysian Examination Council. But classes are not formally conducted in schools due to administrative problems as well as the lack of trained teachers and textbooks. Generally, students take it upon themselves to study for the Tamil paper for the HSC examinations.

The University of Malay started offering Tamil courses since 1956 in its Department of Indian Studies, Faculty of Arts and the Social Sciences. From the beginning until today, the department has been offering courses in Tamil literature and culture, such as *Sanggam* (classical) literature, medieval literature, *bakthi* (devotional) literature, modern literature, traditional grammar, and Tamil culture. Students taking this programme graduate with the Bachelor of Arts degree in Indian Studies. Courses are also conducted in English and Malay for non-Indian students who wish to learn about Indian epics, culture and philosophy. Besides the undergraduate programme, post-graduate studies are offered in various fields related to Tamil language, traditional grammar, literature and culture.

The Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya, was formally the Language Centre, established on 3 March 1972, which was responsible for conducting language courses relevant to the needs of faculties, academies and other institutions of the university. Tamil was one of the fifteen languages offered in this centre, for full-time students of the university, as well as for outsiders, who needed to communicate in Tamil.

The centre was upgraded in 1996 to become the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. As a faculty on par with other faculties in the university, this institution has developed significantly in terms of the expansion of academic programmes offered at the degree level. In 1998 a Tamil unit was established in the Department of Malaysian Languages. This paved the way for the introduction of a programme leading to the degree of Bachelor of Languages and Linguistics (Tamil). This was the first time in the history of the Tamil language in Malaysia that Tamil language and linguistics was offered to undergraduate students. In the list of courses offered are Tamil phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. At the post-graduate level, students are encouraged to carry out research on Tamil language and linguistics.

Besides the University of Malaya, Tamil is also given a place in the Sultan Idris University of Education, Tanjong Malim, starting from 2009. However, the programme in the latter focuses on the training of teachers of Tamil for primary and secondary schools. The degree awarded is Bachelor of Education in Tamil. So far only the two universities mentioned here offer degrees specifically for Tamil.

There are also other local universities which teach Tamil, but their programmes do not lead to the award of a degree. These are Universiti Sabah Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and Universiti Putra Malaysia. In these universities, Tamil is taught as a second language to non-Tamil students.

Conclusion

Tamil language education has had a long history in Malaysia, going through various stages of development. From being in the backwaters of school education during the colonial period, the Tamil language has been given a place in the national education system of the country, i.e. in the national type Tamil schools as the medium of instruction, in the national primary schools as an elective subject for non-Tamil speaking children, and as a POL in national secondary schools. By and large, it cannot be denied that Tamil education in this country has seen a dramatic improvement after independence in 1957. The success of Tamil education is not just the responsibility of the leaders; it also depends on members of the community themselves.

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7 Taking Iban to school and university

Rosline Sandai and *Marilyn Ong Siew Ai*

Introduction

Iban is spoken by people of that name who belong to the most populous indigenous group in Sarawak, in the island of Borneo. The Iban speakers comprise about 30% of the total population of approximately 2 million in Sarawak, the largest state in Malaysia. They are found mostly throughout the lowlands and coastal areas.

Traditionally the Iban live in longhouses built along river banks. A longhouse can be likened to the modern terrace or link house, consisting of units which are attached to one another. Each unit is known as *bilik*, which is the living quarters of a single family of parents and children. This means that a new *bilik* is attached to the existing structure when a new family is formed. This happens when a marriage takes place, and the newly wedded couple have to move out of their parents' quarters to a *bilik* of their own. However, the traditional longhouse is different from the terrace house in that it is built on stilts, and that all the units or *bilik* share a common concourse which is known as *ruai*. This means that while there are partitions between the *bilik*, there is none as far as the *ruai* is concerned. It is here that the mores and folkways of community life are formed through constant discussions (*aum*) between the *bilik* people, a way of living which may be said to be instrumental in maintaining their language and rich cultural traditions.

Like any other natural language, Iban has various regional dialects, and it is common for people to refer to the language or its speakers according to the name of the river which runs through the locality where the dialect is spoken. For example, the name *Balau* refers to the dialect as well as its speakers of the Balau River basin. The same goes with the name *Saribas*.

Over the years the Saribas dialect has evolved to become the standard language, mainly due to its use in Radio Sarawak, established in the 1950s, which as a norm provided services mostly in English and Malay. Iban was the first indigenous language (after Malay) to be used by Radio Sarawak. Writing in the Iban language means using the Roman script. This did not happen until the second half of the 20th century, with the setting up of mission schools and the Borneo Literature Bureau. Having a written form has also assisted in the evolution of a standard language for Iban.

The Iban who received formal education in mid-1950s mostly attended mission schools which used English as the medium of instruction. Education in these schools also meant their conversion to Christianity from their indigenous traditional religion. Texts for followers of the faith were translated from English to Iban by the missionaries, and these written materials had played a significant role in standardising the Iban language.[1]

Introduction of schools to the Iban world

The pre-Malaysia period referred to here was the one in which Sarawak was under Western rulers. The first part of this period was when the state was ruled by the Brooke Dynasty, while in the second part was when Sarawak was a British colony.[2]

During the Brooke Dynasty, Sarawak was ruled by a succession of three English rajahs who were known as Rajah Brooke from 1841 to 1946. The founder of this English dynasty was James Brooke who was an adventurer of fortune who happened to be in this part of the world when there was a rebellion in Brunei against the reigning sultan. It was due to Brooke's success in putting down the rebellion that the Sultan of Brunei awarded him part of his kingdom consisting of the vast land that we now know as Sarawak. While making Malay the official language of Sarawak, James Brooke paved the way for the introduction of schools using English as the medium of instruction. The establishment of these schools by the Christian missionaries was in line with their effort to spread Christianity. An example was the St. Paul School, established in 1853 in Banting in the Second Division, which was successful not only in producing educated Iban who were qualified to work in the local government, but also in producing several missionaries to spread Christianity in the plains of Batang Lupar River and its tributaries, Saribas and Saratok. Since then, the course of change occurred with great swiftness in the social institutions of the Iban people, in particular in relation to education and the spread of Christianity. Other schools built by the missionaries which are worthy of mention were the St. Francis Xavier School in Kanowit (1884), and the St. Peter's School in Saratok (1926). The attitude of the authorities in this period towards the education of the natives can be seen in the following excerpt:

> although the Government expended increasing sums of money in this field (education), rising to 4.3 percent of the total expenditure in 1932, the Iban and other pagans were systematically excluded from state schools. Iban education remained entirely in the hands of the missions, whose efforts could reach only a tiny proportion of the more accessible Iban population.
>
> (Pringle, 1970: 339)

There was change, though slight, in the official stance in native education, when Sarawak became a British colony in 1946. It was in 1955 that the

Iban language was first included in the government school curriculum, specifically in secondary English schools where it was placed under the rubric 'Asian language', but this was replaced by 'Iban language' in 1957. In that year it was offered as a subject for the Sarawak Junior Certificate (SJC), using the name 'Sea Dayak'.[3] There was no standard syllabus or teacher's guide for its teaching.

Placing Iban in the national system of education

In 1963, Sarawak became part of the Federation of Malaysia (see Note 2). But just before that date, the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly decided that Iban was to be taught only to Iban children, as proposed in the *Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1963*, in the section titled 'The Curricula and Syllabuses for Junior Schools'. The crucial statement reads: '*Bahasa Iban is taught to students of Iban descent only*'. The time allocated for teaching was 120 minutes or three periods a week, and the purpose as stated in the syllabus is that an Iban student:

> should be able to use his mother tongue accurately and effectively, even if in the course of his daily work he uses English. An educated man who has lost his fluency in his own mother tongue will find that there is a barrier between him and the older generation, and he will be unable to help his own people fully.
>
> (*The Full Teaching Syllabus For Junior Secondary Schools*, 1964)

Language teaching was focused on the attainment of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, language study, appreciation of Iban traditional poems, interpretation of texts, and a two-way translation of Iban and English.

A committee, known as The Joint Committee of Officials was set up to look into the feasibility of extending the Education Act 1961 (already implemented in Peninsular Malaysia) to Sarawak. In its report dated July 1975, there was no mention of the status of the Iban language in the national education system that was to be extended to Sarawak. Hence, when the Education Act 1961 was enforced on 26 December 1975 in Sarawak, Iban was not listed as a subject to be taught in schools. Subsequently, there was no per capita grant (PCG) that could be utilised for the language because it was not provided for in the Education Act. In December 1986, the Minister of Education agreed (in an administrative action) that Iban was to be taught as an additional language in the new curriculum of the secondary schools in Sarawak. Following this there was a circular dated 13 May 1987, originating from the Federal Government, which allowed Iban to be taught as a primary school subject on condition there was a request from at least 15 pupils – a directive under the Pupil's Own Language (POL) guidelines.

Another step up the ladder for Iban took place in 1988 when the Ministry of Education approved the teaching of Iban in the lower secondary schools. In 1989 the Sarawak Education Department submitted a proposal for the teaching of the language in the upper secondary schools, but this proposal could not be implemented until the formulation of the Education Act 1996.

With the enforcement of the Act of 1996, gazetted on 31 December 1997, Iban was given a place as a POL in national schools, both at the primary and secondary levels. A unit to manage educational matters and the teaching of ethnic languages was set up in the Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education, in 1996 for the enforcement of the intent of the said Act. Several other developments also followed which helped to facilitate further the teaching of Iban. The publication of textbooks by the Textbook Division of the Department of Education, Sarawak, began in 2001. Today, all ethnic language textbooks (from Form 3 to Form 5) for use in the schools are published by this department. Nevertheless, in the *Rules on National Education Curriculum 1997*, Iban or any other ethnic indigenous language is not listed as an 'additional language subject'. This means that Iban is not considered as a subject on par with other subjects like history, geography etc. for all schools in Malaysia, but remains as a POL in Sarawak. The *Malaysia National Education Blueprint 2013–2025* makes no mention of the position of Iban in the long term, although the objective of the *Blueprint* was 'building an education system that gives children an appreciation for our unique identity as Malaysians', to quote the Prime Minister in the Foreword to the *Preliminary Report Executive Summary, Malaysian Educational Blueprint*.

Traditional type of education: the role of storytelling

As in many indigenous communities, the Iban use oral literature as a means to educate the young. Folktales are a form of life-lesson; in other words they serve as lessons to be passed on from generation to generation, being representation of the community's cultural knowledge and all aspects of its life, in the form of rules and guidance, values and virtues.

There are many folktales which are meant for children. However, in many instances the contents have nothing to do with children. This could be due to the fact that childhood was not looked at as a special period of life in Iban tradition. Nevertheless, various aspects of indigenous life are incorporated into these stories, mainly through trickster animals found in the rainforests and humorous adult characters for inculcating social and moral values in Iban traditional community.

Longhouse living and the kinship system are the basic sociocultural structures for the Iban people. Social and moral values thus revolve around group conformity, co-operation, and institution of equal right. Animals in the rainforests are given star roles in folktales which tell stories of Iban social values, beliefs and taboos. For example, the necessity of co-operation among

longhouse occupants is reflected in folktales where success is achieved through co-operation among animals of different sizes, while wisdom and wit is commonly the characteristic of small animals. Two most popular trickster animals in Iban folktales are the mousedeer (*pelanduk*) and the tortoise (*tekura*), who always work together in problem solving and would outsmart bigger and stronger animals. Narratives such as 'The mousedeer kicks the roots', 'The story of crocodile eggs', and 'The story of the elephant who lost his way' are those of small-sized trickster animals who win battles through co-operation and wisdom.

In *Ensera pelanduk numbit bandir* or 'The mousedeer kicks the roots', an elephant and a rhinoceros organised a competition to pull up a big tree in a party to celebrate their friendship. The mousedeer and tortoise drilled the roots of the tree the night before the competition. They defeated all the animals including the elephant and the rhinoceros when they pulled up the big tree by kicking the roots they had drilled. They won the competition through wit and intelligence, and were rewarded with coconuts.

'The story of crocodile eggs' or *Ensera telu baya* is about a misunderstanding between a mousedeer and a female crocodile. One day, a mousedeer was eating wild fruits at the edge of a field while a farmer was clearing his land ready for planting paddy. The mousedeer met a female crocodile on his way back from the field. The crocodile was angry when she saw the mud on the mousedeer's feet, and she accused him of eating her eggs, to which the mousedeer denied. Nevertheless the crocodile challenged him to a tug of war. The mousedeer's best friend, the tortoise, helped him by tying the end of the rope to the root of a coconut tree during the tug of war, and thus they were able to defeat the crocodile. The tortoise then explained to the crocodile that the farmer had smashed her eggs, and it was her fault for laying eggs in the farmer's land. The mousedeer was found not guilty, and the female crocodile was ashamed of herself.

'The elephant who lost his way' or *Ensera gajah sesat* is about an elephant who lost his way and eventually came to a pool. There were many animals having fun drinking and bathing in the pool. He jumped into the pool and would not allow anyone drinking or bathing near him. The animals were annoyed and they wanted to chase him out of the pool. A crocodile tried to bite one of his legs but the elephant threw him out of the pool by using his trunk. The elephant challenged all the animals to a duel and he passed his tusk to a deer to show to everyone how big his tooth was. He invited anyone with teeth as big as his or bigger to fight him. All the animals were scared and felt hopeless until a porcupine showed up. The porcupine pulled one of his spines and asked the deer to show the spine to the elephant and tell the latter that he would only fight if the elephant's hair was as big as his. The elephant was terrified when he saw the spine, and left the pool for good.

Egalitarianism is one of the core values in Iban traditional society. There is equality between *bilik* families within a longhouse, and equality among members in a *bilik* family. Each individual is expected to respect the right

of others and to value group living in the longhouse. The Iban teach lessons of humility and righteousness in folktales such as *Ensera tekura pechah kerubung* or 'The story of the broken tortoiseshell', and *Ensera malu pelanduk*, or 'The story of the shamed mousedeer'.

In *Ensera tekura pecah kerubung*, a story of ungratefulness and betrayal is told through the greediness of a tortoise. The tortoise almost died in a famine when he was rescued by a flock of birds which were on their way to attend a party in a palace in the sky. The birds gave the tortoise their feathers so that he could fly with them. When they reached the sky, the tortoise became greedy and he decided to fool the birds. He was respected by other animals for his brilliant ideas as he was well travelled. All the birds believed him when he told them that they must change their name as a courtesy to the king. He gave himself a new name, *Kita Semua*, which literally means 'all of you'. When they had an audience with the king, the tortoise asked the king who should eat the food that was served. The king said, 'It's for all of you'. The tortoise then ate the food by himself and told the birds to eat the left over. The birds refused, except for the eagle. They pulled out their feathers from the tortoise's body before they left the palace. The tortoise was very worried as he could not fly home. He asked the eagle to deliver a message to his best friend, the mousedeer, to put a lot of soft materials on the ground so that he could land on it when he jumped down from the sky. However, the eagle forgot the actual message and asked the mousedeer to put hard materials instead. The mousedeer then laid stones and gravels on the ground for the tortoise to land. The tortoise broke his shell the moment he touched the ground. That fall had since left the cracked design on tortoiseshell.

Ensera malu pelanduk or 'The story of the shamed mousedeer' teaches that mockery is forbidden in a longhouse. It is about a mousedeer who despised a snail that moved so slowly on a rock as he was looking for food. The snail was offended by the mousedeer who kept laughing at him. He then invited the mousedeer to run in a race and the mousedeer was more than happy to take up the challenge. The snail informed his relatives about the race but none of them thought he should go ahead with it. He then asked them to line up along the race track and to call out to the mousedeer when the latter was behind any one of them. All the relatives did what was instructed by the snail, who eventually won the race. He then advised the mousedeer to be humble and never to underestimate others.

Iban oral literature consists of epics and sagas that can involve long storytelling sessions over the course of a few days or nights. Listeners would gather in the *ruai*, and children would lie down on the floor, paying attention to the stories created by the storyteller. Being engrossed in a story is an experience of attention and focus, which in turn readily transfers to other learning experience. In Iban traditional life, informal learning through storytelling develops a flexibility of thinking and critical consciousness about events and choice of actions. The information transmitted through folktales is not passed on as a 'fact' or a 'single answer', but is open to

listener interpretation. This helps in developing initiatives and creative problem-solving skills in appreciative listeners.

Learning how to listen carefully is crucial in order to acquire knowledge of the world and the community as reflected in traditional oral literature. It is encouraged through the use of narratives for an understanding of relationships, having a sense of process and continuity, and instilling personal responsibilities. Children learn the importance of relationship and community cohesion, and the relationship between human beings and the natural world. Hence, folktales are one of the important mediums of transferring values and virtues. Modern education has integrated much of Iban traditional oral literature in its written forms into teaching materials, and the folktales serve as words of power in educating young children besides being a valuable treasury of information and wisdom of human experience from generation to generation.

Development of written materials for Iban

Materials for the teaching of Iban are products of various sections of the Ministry of Education. These are the Iban Unit of the Sarawak Education Department, Ethnic Languages Unit for Language and Literature in the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education, and Division of Education Technology, Sarawak. These co-developers of teaching materials have also collaborated in organising workshops for teachers. Their products are in the form of teaching and learning modules, textbooks for primary schools (Standards 3–6), and for secondary schools (Forms 1–5).

Government and non-government institutions have also contributed to the production of written materials for use in the teaching of Iban as well as for general reading, since the 1950s, in the form of books, newsletters and articles. A weekly Iban newsletter published by the Sarawak Information Office in the 1950s was the medium for transmitting information on government policies to the Iban community. The Sarawak Museum on its part published articles on Iban language and culture in *The Sarawak Museum Journal*. In the 1970s, the Rajang Area Security Command (RASCOM) published *Berita Rakyat* (People's Newspaper) that included activities in RASCOM areas, and Iban stories and legends.

The establishment of the Borneo Literature Bureau (BLB) by the British government on 15 September 1958 had made significant contributions to the publication of texts in the Iban language. BLB aimed at reconciling social and economic development with cultural preservation through publications of Iban stories. Besides helping in building a local book trade, BLB also supported various government departments in their production of technical, semi-technical, and instructional printed materials for the people of Sabah and Sarawak. In a period of 10 years from 1963 BLB had published about 120 Iban books of folklores and traditions. Added to its publication list is a series called *Nendak* which became a popular reader in schools. In

its 10-year 'life', 125 issues of *Nendak* were published. Besides being a rich repository of Iban folklore, *Nendak* provided an insight into the role of Iban intellectuals in state-sponsored efforts to modernise Iban culture and society on a wide front, from customary law to political organisations, and from agriculture and health to home economics.

Two non-government institutions in Sarawak that have contributed significantly in conserving Iban oral traditions in written form and promoting the Iban language are the Tun Jugah Foundation (TJF), and the Dayak Cultural Foundation (DCF). TJF has also moved on to the publication of dictionaries. One is the bilingual *Handy Reference Dictionary of Iban and English* (1994) compiled by Vinson and Joanne Sutlive, and the other is the Iban monolingual dictionary titled *Bup Sereba Reti Jaku Iban* (Ensiring, Umbat, and Menua Saleh, 2011). In 2006, TJF published a volume containing Iban idioms and proverbs, under the title *Jaku' Dalam*, compiled by Jenang anak Siring and Robert Menua Saleh.

Support from DCF is seen in the development of teaching and learning materials, for example in the production of *The Iban Language System in School* published in 2007. This book has since become an important reference for the teaching and learning of Iban in schools and other institutions.

Teaching Iban in the schools

Up to 2009 there were 55 secondary and 367 primary schools. which included Iban as a teaching subject. The number of teachers involved was 1,059 in the primary, and 227 in the secondary schools. Students were estimated to be 30,656 in the former, and 24,382 in the latter.

In 2011, the Iban language was offered in all primary schools throughout Sarawak in tandem with the vision and aspiration of the Malaysia Plan for Educational Development of Bilingual Skills. The aspiration is for every student to master the Malay language as it is the national language, and English as a second and international language. In addition, students from every ethnic group and community are encouraged to learn at least three languages: Malay, English and another. The last mentioned can be chosen from any of the following: Mandarin, Tamil, Arabic, Iban and Kadazandusun.

The syllabuses for both primary and secondary schools are reviewed from time to time. Emphasis is given to competency in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as in knowledge of Iban culture. At the same time other types of skill and knowledge are also incorporated into the syllabus of the secondary schools, and these are interpersonal and information skills, language appreciation and aesthetics.

In the area of interpersonal skill, topics are related to communication and interaction with others. Information skill focuses on getting ideas and information through information technology, both audio and visual, so that students are able to acquire new knowledge and ideas and present them accurately. Aesthetics and language appreciation language are taught for the

development of creative thinking and an understanding of usage of numeral classifiers, proverbs, myths and legends, as well as traditional verse forms.

There was no special programme for the training of teachers for the Iban language until its inclusion in the curriculum of the Sultan Idris University of Education, or UPSI, in Tanjong Malim, Perak. Teachers assigned to teach Iban in schools were those qualified in pedagogy for Malay or English at teachers' training colleges, such that they were found to adapt their training skill in teaching these languages to Iban. From time to time there were short courses as in-service training to enhance their linguistic knowledge and their teaching techniques. Among these are Principal Trainer Orientation Courses for Iban, which began in 2002 for both primary and secondary schools. The one for the primary schools lasted until 2005, and the one for the secondary schools until 2007. The other type of training was the Enhancement Courses, conducted for both primary and secondary school teachers in 2008 and 2009. These courses were also meant for new Iban language teachers in secondary schools.

Iban language programmes at the universities

In 2010 an Iban language unit was set up in the Department of Malay Language and Literature, Faculty of Languages and Communication of UPSI. The Iban Language Minor Programme made its debut in that year to cater for the needs of trained secondary school teachers for Iban. A programme leading to the Post Graduate Diploma was offered in two semesters from September 2011 to September 2012 as a 'one off' in the effort to upgrade the status of untrained temporary teachers. As part of the Faculty of Languages and Communication, the Iban Unit is an avenue for research into the Iban language, leading to the degrees of MA and PhD with specialisation in Iban.

For the Minor Iban Programme, the maximum number of students approved by the Ministry of Education for each intake is 20. If ever there are students who had previously learned Iban when they were in school, these were few and far between, as most of them did not have this experience although they speak the language. Anyway, this programme does not require any prerequisite qualification in the Iban language. Among the courses offered for this programme are Iban phonology, morphology, and syntax; communication skill; writing and reading skill; and the study of Iban literature and culture.

Teaching and learning materials have been developed by lecturers and linguists for use by teacher trainees. Among these are two bilingual (Malay–Iban) books on Iban phonology and morphology, co-written by Asmah Haji Omar and Rosline Sandai. Using Malay and Iban simultaneously for the teaching of these two technical subject matter is a strategy of killing two birds with one stone. Firstly, the trainees are able to understand the texts better in Malay as they had undergone their education in

this language. Secondly, linguistic terms which have been fully developed in Malay can easily be transferred into Iban due to the close genetic relationship between the two languages.

At the University of Malaya, specifically at the Department of Malay Linguistics of the Academy of Malay Studies, Iban is offered as an elective course to the undergraduate students. The history of its place in Malay linguistics goes back to the 1970s when the Academy was still a department in the Faculty of Arts and the Social Sciences of the same university. Since the 1990s the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, also of the University of Malaya, has also been conducting Iban classes for students of the Department of Southeast Asian Studies of the Faculty of Arts and the Social Sciences.

Iban spelling system

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Iban language was first given a written form by Christian missionaries for the teaching of Christianity. When BLB was set up in 1958, a major undertaking of this institution was to collect Iban folktales and other forms of Iban oral tradition, and publish them. Iban speakers who became literate in English over the years of attending mission schools were employed to be collectors of Iban folktales, customs and traditions, and transcribe them into texts using the Roman alphabet which they were already familiar with through their education in the English schools.

The folktales were collected from Iban elders living in longhouses, mostly in the Second and Third Divisions. However, looking at the publications of BLB, it is obvious that there was no standardisation in spelling the language. There are variations in the spelling of words, but one who knows Iban can still make sense out of them. As the BLB was the only major publisher of Iban language materials from 1958 to 1977,[4] the type of spelling in any chosen text became the model for users of the language. So the existence of a variety of spelling for the language became widespread with many models for readers and users to choose from. Hence, the need for a common spelling system for all purposes was compelling, especially when the language was being taught in the schools. The task was undertaken by the Dayak Cultural Foundation, and the new standardised system (1995) has enabled the language to be taught more efficiently in schools and institutions of higher learning.

One of the factors which brought about variations in Iban spelling was the transcription of words by users according to the way they were pronounced in the dialects. And this usually occurred with vowels. For example in closed syllables, there were various ways in rendering the back vowels /u/ and /o/. The word for 'hair' which in the standardised system is *buk* used to be spelt as *bok* and *buok*. When the English word *ball* was adapted into the language, there were three ways of spelling it: *bul*, *buul*, *buol*. Vowel

lengthening as rendered in *buul*, and the vowel cluster in *buol* are not functioning features of Iban phonology, and can be dispensed with. So in the new Iban spelling the adaptation of *ball* is *bul*.

The English alphabet which was the source of symbols in the writing of Iban does not have symbols which differentiate the writing of the vowel /ə/ from /e/. While this lack of differentiation of graphemes for different phonemes is also found in the writing of other languages of the world, Iban language users were in the habit of creating their own graphemes, based on the pronunciation in their own dialect. So while some were content with using one grapheme, and in this case 'e' for both the phonemes mentioned above, others preferred 'ey' to stand for /e/ while keeping 'e' for /ə/. The new system has settled for the symbol 'e' for both. Language users can identify the one from the other from the context in which words having the 'e' symbol are used. This is not too difficult as the frequency of occurrence of the schwa /ə/ is much more than that of /e/. A similar rule is prescribed for the writing of graphemes for these two phonemes in Malay, which Iban speakers had already been familiar with in their learning of the national language (Chapter 10).

In the old spelling, the rendering of the semi-vowel /y/ in the intervocalic position was 'i' rather than 'y', such as in the words *maia* [maya] 'time', and *maioh* [mayoh] 'many'. In the new spelling, this phoneme is given a more recognisable grapheme 'y'. Hence, the above words are now spelt as *maya* and *mayuh*. This way of spelling these words helps in the teaching of pronunciation compared to the their renderings in the old spelling.

The spelling of prepositional phrases where the preposition which ends in a vowel is followed by a full word which begins also with a vowel had also caused a confusion in the reading of Iban texts. This is because in most of the texts the two elements of the phrase, the preposition and the full word, are merged by dropping off the vowel of the former. Examples are seen in *datas* 'at the top', 'up above', and *katas* 'going up', whereas if the rule of grammar is followed these two phonological entities, which are in actual fact prepositional phrases, should be written as *di atas* and *ke atas*. Other examples are *dulu* 'upstream' and *kulu* 'going upstream', which given their grammatical status should be rendered as *di ulu* and *ke ulu*. In the new spelling, the two elements of the phrase are clearly represented; hence *di atas*, *ke atas*, *di ulu*, *ke ulu*.

Loan words in Iban are mostly from Malay and English. There are also those from Arabic, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tamil, but most of these appear to be transferred from Malay. Malay loans, and loans from other languages but taken through Malay, do not have to go through much change in their spelling due to a near-similarity in the phonology of Malay and that of Iban. But loans taken directly from other languages are adapted to suit Iban phonology, as in the case of *bul* for the English word *ball*. Other examples of loans from English are: *butul* 'bottle', *buding* 'boarding', *kinsil* 'cancel',

deriba 'driver', *entuka* 'motorcar', *pelin* 'plan', *guhit* 'go-ahead', and *sepita* 'hospital'.

Conclusion

The inclusion of Iban in formal education has come a long way from the time of Rajah Brooke. To date, the Iban language is the only ethnic language of Sarawak to be taught in national schools in the state of Sarawak. Iban has also arrived and taken its place in the secondary schools, and from there to the tertiary level of education in the country. At the beginning there were problems faced by teachers who taught Iban due to the lack of professional knowledge as required in their performance as teachers of Iban. But due to their resilience and with the support of the community, they have been able to give visibility to their language in the national education system.

Notes

1 A retired teacher and a former student from St. Paul Primary School, Banting (Second Division, Sarawak) in a phone interview with Rosline Sandai in 2010 mentioned that a missionary called Arthur William Stonton who was the head of the school (1955–1959) translated a lot of teaching materials on Christianity from English to Iban.
2 James Brooke installed himself as king of Sarawak in 1841, and named himself Rajah James Brooke. There were two more English kings of Sarawak after him, Charles Brooke and Charles Vyner Brooke, before Sarawak was ceded to the British colonial government in 1946 (Reece, 1982). Sarawak was given independence by the British when it joined Malaya, Sabah and Singapore to form Malaysia in 1963. Singapore seceded from Malaysia to become an independent nation in 1965.
3 'Sea Dayak' used to be the name for Iban. The latter came to be the official nomenclature when Sarawak became part of Malaysia in 1963 (Asmah Haji Omar, 1981; and new edition 2013: Chapter 1).
4 In 1977, the BLB was taken over by the Institute of Language and Literature (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, or DBP) for the promotion of the national language in Sarawak. Among the activities of the Sarawak Branch of DBP is to collect folktales and traditions of the indigenous groups of Sarawak and translate them into Malay. It has also produced an Iban – Malay dictionary, titled *Kamus Bahasa Iban – Bahasa Malaysia*, first published in 1989.

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8 Teaching Kadazandusun as mother tongue

Rita Lasimbang

Introduction

There are 50 indigenous languages that have been identified in Sabah: 22 of these languages are categorised under the Dusunic language family, 17 of which belong to the Dusun group of languages, 4 to the Bisaya group, and 1 as Dumpas. The other language families are Murutic, Paitanic, Sama-Bajau and others (Lewis, 2009: 471–474).

According to the 2010 census (Sabah Statistics Department), there are an estimated 3.2 million people in Sabah today, 568,575 (17.73%) of whom are people of Kadazan/Dusun ethnicity, making it the largest single language community in the state. The other groups in Sabah comprise Bajau (14.0%), Murut (3.19%), Chinese (9.22%), Malay (5.7%), Indian (0.23%), others (1.51%) and non-Malaysian (27.5%). There are heavy concentrations of Kadazan/Dusun speakers in the districts of Ranau, Tambunan, Penampang, Papar, Tuaran and Kota Belud as well as in Beaufort, Kinabatangan, Labuk-Sugut and Keningau districts, with some migrant villages in the districts of Tenom and Tawau (Banker and Banker, 1984: 297).

'Kadazan' and 'Dusun' are terms that various groups of people who speak varieties of the Dusun group of languages have come to refer to themselves. The term 'Kadazandusun' is the name of the standard variety of the language that has been introduced in formal teaching beginning in 1997. This term goes back to November 1989, when at the Fifth Delegates Conference of the Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA), now Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (KDCA), a resolution was taken to use the term to unite both Kadazan and Dusun people, and this was seen as "the best alternative approach to resolve the 'Kadazan' and 'Dusun' identity crisis" (KCA Sabah, 1989; *Daily Express*, 15 February 2009).

Kadazan folklore as a tool in bringing up children

For the traditional Kadazan community, oral tradition has been an important transmitter of indigenous culture and values. Children from an early age are exposed to the different types of life-skill activities in the village,

where parents or grandparents bring them along to 'learn-by-doing' through work in the farm, for instance. Through examples of adults around them, children also learn their customs (*adat*), which entail how one ought to live in a community.

Usually at home in the evenings, Kadazan culture and values are taught to children at an early age through their folklore. The most common folk stories which are used by parents or elders in the community to teach children their culture and values are stories such as, 'The Tortoise and the Monkey', 'The Tortoise and the Bear', and 'The Snail and the Deer'.

In 'The Tortoise and the Monkey' story, the tortoise and the monkey were good friends. They planted a banana tree each. The tortoise waited for his tree to bear fruits. The monkey couldn't wait, he ate any young shoot of his banana tree. As such, it didn't get to grow. When the banana tree of the tortoise bore fruits and ripened, the monkey offered to climb the tree to get the fruits for both of them. The tortoise agreed. However, when he was up in the tree, the monkey ate all the fruits without giving any to the tortoise. The tortoise became angry with the monkey and asked his friend, the crab, to climb up the banana tree and to punch the monkey. The monkey fell off the tree and died.

In 'The Tortoise and Bear' story, the tortoise is portrayed to be hard working, and the bear to be lazy as he was always sleeping and whenever he was hungry he went off to steal some honey from others. Tired of hearing the tortoise's advice to do some honest work, the bear challenged the tortoise to a game called, 'Who gets burnt'. They collected dried twigs for the game. The tortoise had to be the first to go through the burning. As the dried twigs which were heaped over him started to burn, he dug deep into the soil, and with his hard shell he was protected from the heat of the fire and soon he came out of the ground away from the fire. When it came to the bear's turn to be burnt, he was not able to dig like the tortoise, and as his fur caught fire he ran out to save himself but it was too late. He got burnt in the process.

In 'The Snail and the Deer', the deer first saw the snail when he went to drink at a stream. He noticed that the snail was so small and moved so slowly compared to his own beautiful body and long legs. He laughed at the snail who became angry and challenged him to a race. The deer agreed and they raced on the seventh day, over seven hills. However, unbeknown to the deer, the snail outsmarted him by asking six of his friends to be at each of the hills, so that when the deer arrived at each hill, there was already a snail there. The deer naturally lost the race and had to swallow his pride and apologise to the snail.

The tortoise and the snail are two animals in Kadazan folklore which are always winners although they both move very slowly. They are considered to be humble and smart. On the other hand, the monkey is considered to be greedy and thinks only of himself, while the bear is lazy, and the deer too proud of himself. These stories serve as moral guidance which says that one should not be like the monkey who is greedy but must learn how to

share. Likewise, the bear represents people who are lazy to work for their own livelihood, but instead make it a habit to steal from another's hard work. Arrogance is also shunned in the moral teaching of Kadazan children although they may be better than others; otherwise they would one day find themselves humbled by those they think inferior to them, as in the case of the deer who was brought to shame by the tortoise.

The age of literacy 1880s to 1960s

According to Catholic Church records, formal education was first introduced to the Penampang populace through the Mill Hill missionaries who arrived in the early 1880s. Through them, came 'the building of a big school for Kadazan boys in the village of Inobong' (Poilis, 2000: 17). Since then, literacy multiplied in the birth of more schools throughout the district of Penampang – the heartland of the Kadazan people – but the arrival of the Second World War made this a short-lived experience. In 1945, the teaching staff comprising the founding priests and some resident students were arrested and taken to unknown locations, '. . . never to be seen again' (17).

According to Reid (1997:125), mission schools that were resumed after the war were readily available for many Kadazan and Dusun children. Dubbed Native Voluntary Schools (NVS) later on, these schools were about the only schooling option for the natives, as the NVS 'opted to teach literacy to rural folk initially through their local Kadazan or Dusun dialect, shifting gradually by the third or fourth year into English'.

The year 1953 began a media-filled era for the Kadazan language. The all-English newspaper *Sabah Times* started a 'Kadazan Corner' that featured the widely accepted dialect of Kadazan Penampang (known as Tangaa'). The following year, the Kadazan language hit the airwaves for the first time. Radio Sabah started a Kadazan programme that ran for 15 minutes daily for three years. The response was overwhelming, so much so that Radio Sabah had the programme running for 14 hours per week 1960 (Reid, 1997:125).

Non-religious literature was also published for the first time. The post-war publication *Kadazan Dictionary & Grammar* by Rev. A. Antonissen in 1958 was produced with the assistance of Australian Colombo Plan led the way. As ". . . a first step towards human understanding and friendly co-operation amongst peoples", it was a suitable legacy to the spirit of literacy that the missionaries were noted for (Antonissen, 1958: Foreword).

The Borneo Literature Bureau (BLB) based in Kuching, Sarawak (see Chapter 7) was the first to print publications in the Kadazan language *en masse*. The first Kadazan publications by BLB, *Tanong do Kadazan* in 1962 is a compilation of Kadazan stories by Samuel Majalang from Penampang. Fiction works like Peter Lidadun's *Nipizan do Poulolou* [Daydreams] (1968), and Donald S.J. Malinggang's *Singonuon Di Poguhu, I Zada' Di Touvi* [Abandoned Once Possessed] (1970) topped the list, as James Ongkili's *Susuzan Totopot Do Sabah* [History of Sabah] (1965) geared towards

non-fiction readers. Thus began the development of the mother tongue in Penampang through printed texts.

The Kadazan language in the 1970s and 1980s

A musical era unfolded for the Kadazan language in the 1970s. It saw many local songwriters creating lyrics to match traditional tunes. These songs, rich in Kadazan vocabulary, evoked images of simple village living. Songs of love and life were bountiful, no doubt with themes that remain evergreen.

On the other hand, mother tongue development on the whole was going on a decline. Much of this dormancy happened during the nationalism era (upon joining Malaya in 1963 to form Malaysia) due to the focus given towards the acquisition of the Malay language. Kadazan and Dusun parents in this particular generation felt that it was in their children's best interest for the Malay language to be used in the homes as well. The idea was to encourage easy assimilation into the fast growing Malaysian culture, as well as for the of social and economic status.

A pidgin language of Kadazan and Malay and/or English soon developed to become a common means of communication. This scenario, however, bred problems that spelt imminent language erosion. A survey on attitude towards the use of mother tongue (Lasimbang et al., 1992: 345) has shown that preference for mainstream languages has a direct effect towards the diminishing value of the mother tongue by speakers of particular groups.

Oblivious to the ill effects of code switching, Kadazan and Dusun songwriters were meanwhile enjoying the novelty. Hence, the music industry became filled with songs written in broken Kadazan and Dusun. Though funny and catchy, language usage in these songs threatened the development of the mother tongue. It was at the same time assumed that speaking the mother tongue had for the most part been maintained within the Kadazan community. However, intensive use of Malay and English coupled with the need to excel in the newly structured Malaysian education system had put the survival of the mother tongue in question.

In 1985 John and Carolyn Miller, linguists attached to the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), who were assigned to research on the Kadazan language of Penampang, co-authored a manual, *Learn to Speak Kadazan* (Miller and Miller, 1985). This book brought awareness within the community that it had been using a pidginised Kadazan. This had spurred on members of the community to identify the problem, and adopt a formal approach as a solution to the apparent decline of the language. Growing awareness of the state of the language fuelled more interest in mother tongue preservation. The Kadazan community came together to produce literary works during the first-ever Kadazan Children's Literature Production Workshop in 1985 which produced an alphabet book, a picture dictionary, folktales and story books on personal life experiences, science and health, such as *Iisai Aanangan do Zinamut?* [Who likes Dirt?], and *I Jini om Nipon Dosido* [Jini and her Bad Tooth]. Towards the late 1980s, awareness had

resulted in the re-learning of the mother tongue, as seen in the publication of more language learning materials.

In 1987, the Kadazan community took a big step in literature production when under the auspices of the Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA), a project to update Anthonissen's 1958 *Kadazan Dictionary* was launched. The update is manifested in the first-ever *Kadazan – Dusun – Malay – English Dictionary*, published in 1995 by the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (KDCA).

Kadazan orthography

Strict memorisation of crucial knowledge had been the only way Kadazan language speakers maintained the use of their language. However, as a Chinese proverb goes, 'The palest ink is better than the sharpest memory', over time it was felt that a programme had to be instituted in the recording of Kadazan literature, history and traditional science. Writing these down was one aspect of the problem, but there was no writing system to be had for the Kadazan language.

The arrival of foreign Christian missionaries in North Borneo had brought the Kadazan language into the realm of written language as early as 1881. When the missionaries left, they left behind a legacy of literacy among the people, as well as a Kadazan orthography. The Kadazan writing system introduced by the missionaries then is based on the Roman alphabet and is influenced by the English sound system, thus resulting in inconsistency in giving symbols to certain speech sounds in the Kadazan language. However, using the one-to-one correlation between symbol and sound, this early writing system has made it easy for Kadazan speakers to learn to read and write their language as well as for non-Kadazan language learners to reproduce them with reasonable accuracy. An article by Miller and Miller (1983:1) points out the following:

> In a spelling system which is truly phonemic, every symbol represents only one sound and every sound is represented by only one symbol . . . The Kadazan language has had from the time it began to be printed a remarkably phonemic writing system. This has made it possible for the language to be widely used in books and in the newspaper, and to serve as a standard for other related languages and dialects.

New things about the Kadazan language were being discovered through more linguistic research and analysis, and several problem areas were identified. Miller and Miller (1983:2) in an article, 'Problem areas within the Kadazan writing system', report the following:

> In two areas, however, the writing system as it has developed, fails to reflect the sound system of the language. It has used no regular way to show the difference between words in which the vowel is followed by a

> glottal stop, and those in which the vowel simply subsides at the word boundary with sometimes a slight breathlessness being noted. The other area is where the spelling system fails to reflect a distinction between sounds which are distinguished by speakers of the language . . . for what is described by some speakers as "hard" and "soft" 'b' and 'd'.

Other problems were also pointed out. These were the use of the hyphen, spelling of particles and clitics, and variant spellings. These findings prompted the then Kadazan Cultural Association to take a course of action to solve the problems of inconsistency in the writing system and to propose a new one. This matter was then brought to the attention of the community and they were made aware that standardisation of the spelling system was the first part of language development. After looking into various options, and taking into account comments and suggestions from leaders of the Kadazan community, a standardised Kadazan orthography was arrived at.

Adoption of the standardised spelling system

Responses to the standardised spelling system, as decided by the KCA Language Committee, was in general positive. This could be seen in its adoption by various sectors, among them being the Coastal Kadazan Bible Translation Committee, the Kadazan Children's Literature Production Workshop 1985, and the *Kadazan Dusun – Malay – English Dictionary*. The Coastal Kadazan Bible Translation Committee adopted the standardised spelling system in their translation work that began in 1985. The new spelling was also implemented in the weekly mimeographed scripture readings for Kadazan church services throughout Sabah, as well as in the *New Reader Series* booklets on moral values, thus showing that the church has always been a supporter of vernacular language use.

Encouraged by the adoption of the standardised spelling system in materials produced by the church, leaders within the Kadazan community went on to promote the system through non-religious texts. Their initial effort was to organise a two-week Children's Literature Production Workshop that was held in July 1985. During the first week, evening sessions were held for those interested in learning to write in Kadazan. They wrote short composition on a variety of topics comprising interests and experiences of Kadazan children. For some of the participants, this was their first experience in writing in their mother tongue.

During the second week, participants from the workshop, mostly Kadazan primary school teachers on school holiday, wrote, edited and selected materials for 12 booklets. These included an alphabet book, a picture dictionary, folktales, stories of village living, and health and science stories. Volunteer artists illustrated the books. Financial backing for the workshop expenses and for publication of the books came from KCA and a local service organisation, the Penampang Jaycees. These groups also assumed the responsibility of marketing the books (Lasimbang, Miller and Otigil, 1992: 342).

As part of the Kadazan Children's Literature Production Workshop, a language survey was also conducted to determine the language ability, use and attitude of Kadazan children. From the survey, it was clear that the Kadazan community had long wanted their language to be taught in schools, but their desire was never made public. Efforts by KCA to request for the teaching of Kadazan in the schools began just shortly after the first part of the survey was conducted (Lasimbang, Miller and Otigil, 1992: 341).

The standardised orthography was also implemented in the publication of *Kadazan Dusun – Malay – English Dictionary*, which took almost 10 years to complete. It was compiled primarily for use by the Kadazan community as an important step in the development of their language. In recent years, with widespread bilingualism and use of the national language, native speakers of Kadazan/Dusun were unaware of the richness of the vocabulary of their mother tongue and of the multitude of forms available in their language. While parts of the dictionary include more grammatical information than the casual user is likely to need, it is a record of the treasury of the language (Lasimbang, 1994: 2). Support for the new orthography was also seen in other publications of KDCA, as well as those by the Sabah Museum, and the Kadazandusun Language Foundation (KLF).

Standardisation of Kadazan dialects

A symposium, *Towards the Standardisation of the Kadazan Dialects*, was organised by KCA in January 1989, to look into the long-standing issue of standardisation. It was participated by Kadazan writers, journalists, educationists, researchers, linguists, agricultural and health workers, and social workers. The objectives of the symposium included:

> . . . to create awareness among participants as to the problems, challenges and prospects in the preservation of existing Kadazan dialects with the view of arriving at a consensus on the need to standardise the Kadazan language, and to identify possibilities for the production of appropriate teaching materials in the Kadazan language.
>
> . . . to formulate strategies for introducing the Kadazan language as part of the school curriculum in Sabah.

The previous year, in November 1988, the Minister of Education made a statement that 'the Ministry of Education may incorporate the study of other languages such as Iban and Kadazan into the school syllabus' (*Sabah Times*, 19 November 1988). Hence, there was great hope that the issue of standardisation be finalised during the symposium to make way for the above to happen. But as the case is with Kadazan/Dusun politics in Sabah, the mother tongue has always been taken as a direct reflection of identity. Whether Kadazan or Dusun, the subject has become a perennial bone of contention between the two camps (Reid, 1997:134). Strong arguments quickly brewed on the question of which label to use for the standard language: Kadazan or

Dusun. Once again conflicting stands on identity took centre stage, and the issue of standardisation was put aside. With that, the idea of pushing for the Kadazan language as part of the school curriculum was shelved.

Revival of efforts to re-introduce Kadazan in schools

The idea for the inclusion of the Kadazan language in schools was revived in June 1994, when a concerned Member of Parliament, Bernard G. Dompok, began seriously pursuing the matter (*Borneo Mail*, 15 June 1004). At that time there was no provision yet for the Kadazan language to be taught in national schools. Hence, a private class was proposed and set up under the trade license of the Kadazan Language Centre (KLC).

In anticipation of a near-future inclusion of the language in the schools, Rita Lasimbang, together Anne Lasimbang and Evelyn Annol, put together a proposal for the teaching of the language as a pilot project to create a syllabus. Before the classes at KLC began, a two-day workshop, *Get to Know the Kadazan Language*, were conducted in August 1994. The workshop was focused on knowing the Kadazan language – its sound system, the standardised orthography, word order, and word formation. It was attended by 13 participants, comprising pre-school teachers, several community organisers, and a primary school teacher. The feedback from the participants was very encouraging. They finally realised that the Kadazan/Dusun language, their language, had a grammar!

After the workshop, came the preparation of the Kadazan language syllabus, and worksheets to be used at KLC. The first class session, for children aged between 7–14 years old, was held in October 1994, and was attended by 15 students who graduated a year later with Level 1 proficiency. After the first batch graduated, a second batch of 14 students attended Level 1, while the 15 students who had graduated at Level 1 continued to Level 2. Level 1 syllabus of KLC stretched from Year 1 to Year 3, and the attainment level was equivalent to the level of language proficiency prescribed for language teaching in primary schools for other languages. Subsequently the curriculum designed was extended to Year 6. The syllabuses used for the KLC classes became the basis for discussions in the planning of the official curriculum for the teaching of Kadazandusun in schools in Sabah. In a way the Kadazan language programme of KLC could be considered as a pilot project for the teaching of Kadazandusun in the schools.

Signing of agreement between KDCA and USDA

Approval for the teaching of the Kadazandusun language in the schools was announced by the then Chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Salleh Tun Said, on 1 April 1995. Prior to this, however, and in order for the State Education Department to begin working on the Kadazandusun language syllabus

and curriculum, the two culture custodians, Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association (KDCA) and the United Sabah Dusun Association (USDA), had to decide once and for all on the name of the standard language to be taught in schools. On 24 January 1995, they signed an agreement that the language to be taught in schools was to be officially known as *Kadazandusun* – a conjoined term. Another agreement was reached on 11 April 1995 that the dialects of Bundu and Liwan (hence the conjoined dialect 'Bunduliwan') would be the base or reference dialect for the development of the standard Kadazandusun language, and the chosen base system was to be enriched by other dialects within the Dusun group of languages.

Setting up a language body: Kadazandusun Language Foundation

While the request to have the Kadazandusun language to be taught in Sabah schools was being considered by the Minister of Education, on the home ground a community was set up to discuss the appointment of an official body to monitor and co-ordinate programmes and activities pertaining to the development of the language. In December 1994, the official body comprising the first five trustees-to-be met to discuss the formation and registration of a Trust, and on 2 January 1995 an application for the Declaration of a Trust was submitted. On 20 June 1995, the joint trustees were granted a Certificate of Incorporation under the Trustees (Incorporation) Ordinance 1951 Cap. 148 (Sabah) under the name 'The Registered Trustees of the Kadazandusun Language Foundation of Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan'.

The Kadazandusun Language Foundation (KLF) began operating in January 1996 with a specific role in the preservation, development and promotion of the Kadazandusun language, i.e., to support and ensure continuous development of the Kadazandusun language, giving mother tongue education (MTE), as well as overseeing mother tongue maintenance (MTM). From the time of its establishment, KLF has given special concern in mobilising the Kadazan/Dusun community towards taking increasing responsibility for the preservation and development of the mother tongue, through language programmes and activities, as described in the subsections below.

Imparting basic linguistic knowledge

This is a programme in the form of seminars to instil awareness of the community on the importance of MTE and MTM. In a seminar with the theme *Knowing the Kadazandusun Language*, linguistic aspects of the language were central to the discussion among community members. The interest shown by members in knowing more about their language was overwhelming.

On-going production of local literature

Literature is an instrument in the preservation of the mother tongue, besides the fact that it is a mark of prestige for the language. Planning to produce books in the local language means ensuring a legacy for future generations. In the effort to realise this objective, KLF continues to conduct a series of training and workshops for local writers and illustrators. The purpose for such training is to develop the skill for the creative production of vernacular materials. At the same time, in a workshop of this nature, illustrators and writers have the opportunity to work together to co-ordinate their ideas, and this helps to enhance a positive attitude towards their mother tongue and education in the language concerned. Among the topics discussed in these workshops are: How to write, what to write, principles of translation, and process of material production.

Setting up network for local writers and illustrators

Writers and illustrators who have been exposed to proper training in writing in the mother tongue can further support their work by forming a network, the KLF's Local Writers' and Illustrators' Network, in 1997. The network brings together people with the same interest with the hope that they have a single voice in advocating the larger goal of preserving and promoting the mother tongue.

Workshop for training editors

This workshop aims to impart editing skills to local writers, as editing is a vital part in the process of producing books. In this workshop, participants are trained in checking whether a story is appropriate in terms of locality, community and culture. To do this they have to assess the appropriacy of a given story vis-à-vis the intended readers, the clarity and comprehensibility of the subject matter, the suitablity of the language used in terms of the proficiency level of the readers and its acceptability to the speakers of the language in general, and such like.

Writing competition

Another way to increase literature production is through activities such as writing competition. This programme has a two-pronged goal. One is tapping on local resources for materials written in the mother tongue, and encouraging the community to write stories and folkflore in the mother tongue. The other is compiling winning entries in the competition into a book, to add to the building of an iventory of literary works written in the language.

National policy on mother tongues and promotion of Kadazandusun

Towards the end of 1995, the Education Bill 1995 was tabled and passed by Parliament early the following year as the Education Act 1996, which

allowed for the Kadazandusun language to be taught initially as a Pupil's Own Language (POL) in national primary and secondary schools. Consequently, a directive was given by the Ministry of Education to proceed with preparations for the formal teaching of Kadazandusun in schools in Sabah. This came about 100 years after the writing system was introduced for Kadazan by the Christian missionaries in the 1880s.

Various steps were taken to include Kadazandusun as a POL in the Malaysian education system. The task of developing a Kadazandusun syllabus was initiated by the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education and the Sabah State Education Department. A panel was formed with the task of preparing a Kadazandusun Language Syllabus, Teachers' Guide, and students' activity books. The first two were given two-language versions of Malay and Kadazandusun.

Training of teachers

An orientation course for teachers who were selected to teach the Kadazandusun language was conducted. The selection was based, firstly on them having taken a language course such as Malay or English as an option while undergoing training at their respective teacher training institute, and secondly they must have a strong command of the Kadazan or Dusun language. Training was conducted by the Sabah State Education Department.

Refresher courses for these teachers were given from time to time. Orientation and trial courses were conducted to prepare for the inclusion of the language in the curriculum of the upper classes in the schools. In addition, in-house training was organised from district to district in order to add to the number of schools teaching the language, with financial support from KLF and the Progressive Education Foundation (PEF).

For all these programmes, KLF acted as consultant in terms of linguistic input. In support of MTE, KLF first started collaborative efforts with the Sabah Education Department, and the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education in October 1996, by providing training in the linguistic aspect of the Kadazandusun language to Kadazan/Dusun teachers who were selected to teach the language in primary and secondary schools. KLF's training programmes on the linguistic aspect of Kadazandusun comprise five modules: Phonetics (Module 1), Phonology (Module 2), Orthography (Module 3), Morphology (Module 4), and Syntax (Module 5).

Implementation of the teaching of Kadazandusun

After two years of preparation, the teaching of Kadazandusun started on a trial basis on 17 February 1997, administered on Year 2 students in 15 selected primary schools in Sabah. A year later, trials were conducted for Year 4 and Year 5 in various districts of Sabah, followed by Year 6 in 1999. The year 2000 saw the full implementation of the teaching of the Kadazandusun language up to Year 6 in primary schools throughout the state.

In 2006, nine years after the admission of the language as a POL at the primary level, the efforts and commitment of teachers and language activists culminated in the implementation of the teaching of the Kadazandusun language in secondary schools. This means that secondary schools had to offer the subject in the public examination of the first level of the secondary school, i.e., at the end of Form 3, together with other school subjects. This objective was fulfilled at the end of the school year 2009. Students who took and passed in the Kadazandusun language paper in this examination had the subject and the grade obtained recorded in the Lower Certificate of Education. In 2011, the Kadazandusun language was offered as an examination subject for the first time, for the Malaysia School Certificate Examination, which was taken by a total of 315 candidates.

Development of teaching material

The Curriculum Development Division together with the Sabah State Education Department prepared the *Puralan Boros Kadazandusun id Sikul*, which is an introductory grammar of the Kadazandusun language. The Technology Division of the Ministry of Education prepared teaching aid for use in the programme *Radio Pendidikan Off-Air*, as well as story books. KLF on its part produced *Learning Kadazandusun CD-ROM*, graded reading materials, workbooks, story books, and a brief guide to the linguistic aspect of the language.

Lexical Development

A Lexical Development Working Committee of the Sabah State Education Department was formed for the purpose of developing a standard lexicon for the formal teaching of the Kadazandusun language. Its first meeting was held on 23 February, 2000. The following are the criteria for lexical development of the Kadazandusun language for teaching purposes:

(i) There should not be any negative connotation in any of the dialects within the Dusunic language family.
(ii) Words can be borrowed from the Malay language for concepts which have no corresponding items in the Dusunic language family.
(iii) Existing words can be used if they convey accurate meaning.
(iv) Words chosen should be those that are widely used among the various dialects within the Dusunic language family.
(v) Any lexical item sourced from the various dialects within the Dusunic language family will be considered as standard vocabulary and will be incorporated to enrich the Kadazandusun lexicon.

On 10 April 2013, the Lexical Development Working Committee consisting of members from the Malaysian Institute for Teacher Training at its Kent Campus in Sabah, and those of KLF was set up to develop a standard

lexicon for use in the teaching of the Kadazandusun language at the tertiary level. This was in preparation for the inclusion of Kadazandusun as a degree programme at the Malaysian Institute for Teacher Training at its Sabah campuses.

Kadazandusun at the tertiary level

The formal introduction of the Kadazandusun language at the tertiary level of education marks a significant milestone in the history of Kadazandusun in the Malaysian education system, from its humble but tenacious beginnings in 1994.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) was the first local university to offer the Kadazandusun language as an elective subject in 1998. Nevertheless, students with Kadazan/Dusun ancestry were not allowed to take the elective subject as the Kadazandusun language was offered as a foreign language course. This was a disappointment to many Kadazan/Dusun parents who initially did not start their children with speaking Kadazan/Dusun at home and had had hope for their children to learn their mother tongue at the university. After the UMS, it was the Sultan Idris University of Education that introduced the Kadazandusun language as a minor in 2010 in the Bachelor's degree programme. Starting in 2011, this university also offers the Kadazandusun language as a course in a programme leading to Diploma in Education (DPLI).

Beginning in June 2012, the Kadazandusun language has been offered as an 18-month Preparatory Course for the degree of Bachelor of Education (Hons.) in Kadazandusun Studies, at the Malaysian Institute for Teacher Training, specifically at its Sabah campus. The first batch of graduates who are slated to receive their degree in December 2017 will be posted to schools throughout Sabah to teach the language.

Instilling cultural identity

The Kadazandusun studies introduced at the Malaysian Institute for Teacher Training in its Sabah campuses offered not just the teaching and learning of the linguistic aspect of the Kadazandusun language, but also its cultural aspect. Students who are pursuing Kadazandusun Studies are expected to undertake actual cultural training, i.e., learning about traditional songs and dances, music and musical instruments, costumes and accessories, crafts, food, and the customs and traditions of the Kadazandusun community.

As cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge are embodied in the mother tongue, it is important that children learn about and practise their cultural heritage so as to instil a sense of pride in their cultural identity. For this purpose, practitioners of traditional dances and expert musicians in traditional musical instruments are hired and traditional musical instruments

are purchased. This programme is financially supported by KLF, in line with its objectives in upholding MTE and MTM.

Facing challenges

The following are some of the challenges in mother tongue development as far as Kadazandusun is concerned.

Lack of trained Kadazandusun language teachers

For a smooth implementation of Kadazandusun MTE, there should be enough trained teachers to teach the language. However, in the present situation, the only criterion being fulfilled is that the Kadazan/Dusun teachers teaching the language in schools are native speakers of any one of the 13 dialects within the Dusunic language family. Some of them are either English or Malay language teachers, and most are trained in other fields other than language teaching.

Prior to teaching the Kadazandusun language in schools, these teachers had undergone in-house training courses organised either by the Sabah State Education Department, or the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education, both in collaboration with KLF. However, many of these teachers are not well equipped to teach the language as they lack adequate knowledge in the linguistic aspect of the language concerned.

Attitude of teachers and others

The other challenge in Kadazandusun MTE is the rigid mindset of Kadazan/Dusun teachers who are teaching the language. They are mostly those who not only do not have sufficient knowledge in the linguistic aspect of Kadazandusun, but who have only been exposed to Malay and/or English language. They are also the ones who have the notion that their mother tongue is lacking in prestige compared to other languages, especially those of wider communication, and that it has no grammar. Their complaint is that Kadazandusun is hard to teach, and they have the tendency to apply language rules that they are familiar with in teaching Malay or English, rather than teach the rules of Kadazandusun. In most cases this is understandable as they are not trained to teach Kadazandusun, only that they are its native speakers.

At the same time there are also negative evaluations of the Kadazandusun systems and structures. An evaluation of the Kadazandusun orthography (hence, phonology) states that the system is not conducive to learning, compared to Malay, as given in the following extract:

> This [the Kadazandusun 29-alphabet writing system] will not only slow down the learning process by the students but it will also complicate

> and impede their understanding because the writing system that they are learning is not the same as that of Malay.
>
> (Noorartini binti Hj Arjikal, July 2012)

In another write-up, specifically in the minutes of a meeting on the development of the teaching of Kadazandusun, held at the Sabah Education Department, Kota Kinabalu, on 29 June 2012, the following opinion has been recorded, stating that the language is ' . . . too complicated and not client-friendly so much so that its clients [clients not users] would not be attracted to study or learn the language and this in turn will impede its maintenance and preservation'. Both extracts reflect a lack of understanding in language acquisition and learning, and in its teaching.

Conclusion

The Kadazan community has been aware that for language maintenance or language development, one of the resources that is needed is expertise which means necessary training to handle the work entailing language development. Aside from assistance from those outside the community, it is important to have the community's very own local expert from within its language group. Indeed professional development brings credibility, and it must be seen as an on-going need with a futuristic outlook.

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9 The role of translation in education in Malaysia

Sakina Sahuri Suffian Sahuri and *Fauziah Taib*

Introduction

Many take for granted that translation is a simple activity which merely involves the search for equivalence between one language and another. No matter how good a piece of translation work is, it will never be considered in the same light as an original work. Nevertheless, translation activities and translated works have continued to flourish right up to the present century, and in Malaysia translation has played a very important role in education and it is still an important area of study in the country.

Translation in the early years started due to contact between the Malays and foreign traders, who brought in their culture including stories and folk-tales which were transmitted to local folks. Tales such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were translated into Malay from Sanskrit for the shadow play, and tales of romance known as *Panji* tales were translated from Javanese. Later, when the Malays became Muslims, Islamic romances, such as *Hikayat Iskandar Dzulkarnain* (*The Story of Iskandar Dzulkarnain*), and various religious texts were translated into Malay. It should be noted that these translations were done by individuals (Haslina, 2001: 129–131). However, translation activities increased with the translation of texts from English to Malay for use in schools and universities, involving a variety of genres. This chapter traces the history and development of translation activities in relation to education in Malaysia, starting from the establishment of the Translation Office at Sultan Idris Teaching College (SITC) to the current development in the practice and study of translation.

Translation for the Malay school

The history of organised translation for education in Malaya began during British rule as an activity of the Department of Education in Kuala Lumpur, under the supervision of the Deputy Director, Alexander Small. The main purpose was to provide texts in Malay for use in the Malay schools. Two years after the SITC was established in Tanjong Malim (Chapter 2), the government decided to move the translation office there. This move was

initiated by O.T. Dussek, a staff member in department, who later became the principal of the college (Mohammad Nazari, 2012: 3–4). With this move, SITC was given the dual responsibility of producing teachers for Malay schools, as well as reading materials for use in schools.

The translation unit in SITC which was known as *Pejabat Terjemah Menterjemah* (Translation Bureau) was managed by Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad (Za'ba), who was to become an eminent Malay linguist of the 20th century, assisted by a clerk. By 1925, it was renamed *Pejabat Karang Mengarang* (Office of Book Writing). R.O. Winstedt, the then Director of Education, appointed himself as Director, O.T. Dussek as Editor, and Za'ba as Senior and Chief Translator. However, the actual work was handled by Za'ba. He had an enormous task ahead of him as there was a real lack of reading materials in Malay. Translators had to be recruited, so Za'ba came up with a two-year training programme and taught the translator-trainees himself. Only one or two trainees were taken each year and the entry requirement was a pass at the level of Standard 5 of the Malay school and a Senior Cambridge School Certificate of the English school. An allowance of $20 (Straits dollars) a month was given to these trainees while in training, and a monthly salary of $90 as translator with a maximum of $300. In 1930, those on Za'ba's staff were three translators and two Malay writers recruited to translate, edit and guide trainee-translators (Mohammad Nazari, 2012: 5–6).

As the number of Malay schools had already increased to 200 by the end of the 19th century (Md. Sidin, 2005: 27), and to make up for the lack of reading materials in Malay, the *Pejabat Karang Mengarang* came up with two major programmes, one of which was *The Malay School Series* (Asmah Haji Omar, 2014: 40). Between 1924 and 1957, a total of 85 titles were translated into Malay and published under this series. These books were for Standards 1–5 in the Malay schools covering all subjects such as mathematics, geometry, geography and hygiene. They included school readers known as the *Malay Reader* textbooks (Asmah Haji Omar, 2014) and books on handicrafts. Guide books for the Brownies, Scouts and Girl Guides were also published under *The Malay School Series* (Mohammad Nazari, 2012: 9).

The second programme was *The Malay Home Library Series* published for children and adults. With Za'ba at the helm, 64 titles were translated under this series between 1929 and 1957. The books were all translated from English, and they were carefully selected to ensure that they could be easily understood (Mohammad Nazari, 2012: 11). The titles included classics such as *The Prince and the Pauper* which was translated by Za'ba himself, and Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies which were translated into simplified prose form for teacher training and general reading (Asmah Haji Omar, 2014: 43–44). There were also literary works of various genres, such as *Around the World in Eighty Days, Gulliver's Travels, Treasure Island, Sherlock Holmes, King Solomon's Mines, Arabian Nights, Grimm's Fairy Tales, Andersen's Tales, Cinderella*, and *Aladdin and his Magic Lamp*

(Mohammad Nazari, 2012: 11), *Aesop's Fables, Red Riding Hood, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* (Asmah Haji Omar, 2104 : 41–42). In addition, the *Pejabat Karang Mengarang* translated books on musical scores (Mohammad Nazari, 2012: 11).

Throughout its existence, the *Pejabat Karang Mengarang* had published over 200 titles with the more popular titles being continuously reprinted, and about 3,000 to 5,000 copies were printed for each edition. About half of the titles printed were books for children with the aim of instilling a love for reading and an awareness for written literature. By publishing books in Malay, the *Pejabat Karang Mengarang* had indirectly developed the Malay language and produced competent teachers and writers (Md. Sidin, 2005: 37).

The number of titles translated and the number of reprinted editions are indicative of the hard work put in by *Pejabat Karang Mengarang* in meeting the demand for basic education in the Malay schools, despite its limited manpower. Translation works under *The Malay School Series* and *The Malay Home Library Series* played a major role in increasing the literacy rate in the country. There may be sceptics who feel that education in Malaya at that time should use reading materials which were localised, but the situation of the day showed that there was an urgent need for Malay books, and suitable texts with local resources could prove to be too long in the making. Translating English texts which were already tried and tested was a better solution for the purpose.

Extending translation activities: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP)

After the Second World War, the translation office was divided into two; one operating in Tanjong Malim, and the other in Kuala Lumpur, both under the Ministry of Education. A department known as *Balai Pustaka* was established in 1956 in Johor Bharu, under the Ministry of Education to develop the Malay language as the national and official language of the country in preparation for independence. With independence from the British in 1957, Balai Pustaka was renamed *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (*Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka 2007*). The *Pejabat Karang Mengarang* in Tanjong Malim ceased its operation and all its activities and staff of six translators were transferred to DBP with the responsibility of producing school textbooks (Md. Sidin, 2005: 46). As DBP did not have a translation department, translation was placed under the Textbook Section (Cik Ieda, 2013: 182).

Based on *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Ordinance 1959*, DBP was given authority over the Malay language in terms of the formulation of specific policies, establishment of programmes to strengthen and spread the use of the language and its literature, and to publish and sell books (*Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka 2007*). In the beginning, DBP's publications were focused on

young readers. Among its first publications was a translation by Za'ba of Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), in 1957. It was continuously reprinted in and the last reprinting was in 2001 (Md. Sidin, 2005: 49).

By 1959, DBP had published 15 titles for use in schools, and in addition re-published those of the *Pejabat Karang Mengarang*. The latter were books originally published under *The Malay Home Library Series*, such as *Coral Island*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. By 1965, DBP had published 419 titles for primary and secondary schools, as well as for higher education.

When the UKM was established in 1970, the need for books in Malay became more immediate with the implementation of the national language as the medium of instruction, and likewise when new universities subsequently came into being. DBP had to work fast; it had to revise its strategy and policy in terms of the selection, translation, and publication of translated books in the various areas for use at the tertiary level of education (Raja Masittah & Rahmah Jaafar, 2003: 28).

In 1982, the National Action Council of the Parliament held meetings with DBP and institutions of higher learning to expedite the translation process as there was no specific body in charge of the translation of academic books and books of higher learning. Due to the immediate nature of the situation, DBP took on the task of establishing a translation department. This was officially established in 1982 but DBP, as previously mentioned, had actually been involved in translation work since the beginning of its existence. One of the first academic titles published and translated into Malay by the department was *The History of India* by C.H. Phillips, first published in 1966. It was used as a basic text for the first group of Malay medium students at UM (Raja Masittah & Rahmah Jaafar, 2003: 27–28).

In the period 1980 — 1984 DBP translated books from the following fields of study: geography, history, anthropology, sociology, economics, politics, chemistry, biology, medicine, physics, engineering, agriculture, mathematics, law, and linguistics (Raja Masittah & Rahmah Jaafar, 2003: 29–35). By 1985, there was a slight increase in the number of books translated with the addition of some new fields: finance, education, political science, Islamic studies, and public administration. *Katalog Judul Terjemahan 1991* (*Catalogue of Translation Titles 1991*) shows that between 1986 and 1991, a total of 299 titles were translated with the new fields being language, art, literature, applied science, pure science, social science, and Islamic civilisation. DBP's *Senarai Buku Terjemahan* (*List of Translated Books*) of 2003 indicates the publication of 18 linguistics and 12 education titles. These include *Psikologi Pendidikan (Psychology of Education)*, 1980; *Teori Semantik (Semantic Theory)*, 1989; *Asas-Asas Bimbingan (The Fundamentals of Guidance)*, 1993; and *Linguistik Sejarawi (Historical Linguistics)*, 1994.

In 1999, the International Malay Language Development Section of DBP was formed to promote the Malay language outside the country. Through its programme of 'Dissemination of Malaysian Literary Works', the best

literary and non-literary works were translated into English and other languages (*Klik DBP*, 2005: 8–9).

In sum, DBP took on the role that was assigned to SITC by continuing with the practice of translating and publishing Malay books for schools. In time, its responsibilities extended to the translation and publication of Malay books for the tertiary level. This demand for educational books is indicative of the development of education which is in line with the development of the country and the progress of the national language policy.

National institute of translation and production of books

In September 1993, *Institut Terjemahan dan Buku Negara* (ITBN), known in English as National Institute of Translation and Production of Books, was established by the government to focus on translation and transfer of information (ITBN 2014a). The institute is fully responsible for handling all translation matters previously handled by DBP, which means that all translation activities hitherto under DBP had to be transferred to ITBN (Mohd. Khair 2008: 21–22). Among its objectives are: 'to increase the translation and publication of quality knowledge-based material into Malay, to increase efforts in the translation and publication of important national work into foreign languages, and to support the government policy and interested parties in the field of translation and book publication' (ITBN 2014c). According to published statistics, 1,058 titles of translated works were produced by the institute from the year it was established in 1993 right up to 2009 (ITBN 2014d).

In 2009, when the government decided to revert the teaching of science and mathematics back to Malay from English (Chapters 1–3), ITBN was given the task to translate 130 of the best science and mathematics titles sourced from various countries, such as the UK, USA and Germany, into Malay. The collection of 100 science and mathematics titles was launched in April 2011, and the books were distributed to primary and secondary schools in the country as supplementary readers (ITBN 2104f).

ITBN's collaboration with foreign institutions

ITBN's collaboration with foreign institutions is seen in the activities of its two-way translation programmes. One is 'Translation of Local Literature into International Languages', and the other is 'Translation of International Literatures into the National Language'. These two programmes had produced 100 titles by the end of 2010 (ITBN2014j). Under these programme various works of local writers have been translated into foreign languages, and vice versa.

The collaboration with the Goethe Institute Malaysia has produced the translation of a Malay kampong story told through cartoons, *Lat the Kampung Boy*, into German, with the title *Ein Frechdachs aus Malaysia* (2008),

besides other titles. Among these are an anthology of folktales *Märchen und Volksgeschichten aus Malaysia und Deutschland* (*Malaysian and German Fables and Folk Tales*), and an anthology of poems *Gedichte aus dem West-Östlichen Divan* (*Poems from East-West Diwan*), both published in 2009.

When translation was the responsibility of DBP, 13 Japanese novels were translated into Malay, among which are: *Bushido; Isteri Hanaoka Seishu* (*Hanaoka Seishu's Wife*); *Desa Salji* (*Snow Village*); *Kepulangan* (*The Return*); *Deru Ombak* (*The Roar of the Waves*); and *Toto-chan: Gadis Kecil di Jendela* (*Toto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window*). Some of these titles have now been re-published by ITBN, as it is aware of the huge potential to market these books as Japan is actively purchasing works translated from Japanese and published overseas (ITBN 2014i).

The same goes with translation of Chinese into Malay and vice versa. ITBN's partner in this collaboration was the Taipei Chinese Centre PEN International, and the product was *Antologi Cerpen Malaysia-Taiwan* (*An Anthology of Short Stories: Malaysia-Taiwan*), a two-volume collection of six short stories from Malaysia and six from Taiwan, published in 2014. The best writers from each country were selected with the Malaysian writers coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and the Taiwan writers representing the different generations.

ITBN's programme with the French Les Indes Savantes Company have resulted in the translation of works by Malaysia's national laureates into French, such as *Les derniers jours d'un artiste* (*The Last Days of an Artist*) by Anwar Ridhwan; *Le Grand commercant de Kuala Lumpur* (*The Big Businessman from Kuala Lumpur*) by Keris Mas; and *Pluie du matin* (*Morning Rain*) by A. Samad Said. With Editions Arkuiris, the product is a dual (Malay – French) language book, *Malaisie-France: Un Voyage en Nous-Mêmes* (*Malaysia-France: A Journey of Self-Discovery*), published in 2013, containing various articles on Malaysia and France which cover the history, sociology, culture, economy, education, and the physical infrastructures of the two countries.

Translation in non-government institutions

Institutions involved in translation were initially those affiliated to government departments. As time went by, publishing and media companies also played their part in the translation business. One was the Oxford University Press (OUP) which first established its office in Malaya in 1957 (Myerson, 2013: 693).

OUP Kuala Lumpur published its first Malay book in 1958, *Buaya Mati Dua Kali*, a translation of Shamus Frazer's *The Crocodile Dies Twice* (1955). By 1967 it published its one hundredth book in Malay (Myerson, 2013: 710). In 1969 OUP decided to adopt a local identity, and this was achieved by establishing *Penerbit Fajar Bakti*, a subsidiary company

publishing educational materials in Malay. A division was responsible for academic, university and general books, while another unit formed in 1972 contributed to the publication of English Language Teaching (ELT) materials in the region (Oxford Fajar Sdn. Bhd. n.d.). An important publication from this unit is a picture dictionary which was adapted and sold all over the world with more than twenty bilingual editions, titled *Picture Dictionary: Kamus Bergambar: Bahasa Malaysia-English*, by E. C. Parnwell (1972; Amazon, 1996–2015: 1).

OUP's major contribution in terms of translation is its bilingual dictionaries. Aside from the earlier mentioned dictionary by E. C. Parnwell, there is the *Oxford Fajar Bilingual Dictionary* (2014) by Joyce M. Hawkins which is targeted for secondary school students. Already in its fifth edition, it is a revised edition of *Kamus Dwibahasa Oxford Fajar-English-Bahasa Malaysia/ Bahasa Malaysia-English* which was first published in 1996 and was originally sourced from the *Oxford English Mini Dictionary* first published in 1981. This latest edition contains 2,000 new words and phrases consisting mainly of ICT words and comes with a companion website with language tips and bilingual ICT terminology (Oxford University Press, 2015a).

Another important contribution is the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD) by A. S. Hornby, an English monolingual dictionary. It was first published by OUP in 1948 and has reached its 9th edition. The OALD has a 'remarkable reputation as an efficient English monolingual dictionary' for students learning the English language (Hornby 2000: Preface), and on that premise a translation of the dictionary was undertaken. The publisher appointed Asmah Haji Omar as the translator of the dictionary, and the product is a bilingual dictionary titled *Oxford Fajar Advanced Learner's English-Malay* Dictionary (OF), first published in 1998.

Translating a dictionary which has a high occurrence of culture-specific items like that in the OF could pose a great challenge to a translator who is not a native speaker of the English language and who may not be familiar with the English life and culture. It is thus imperative for the translator to not only 'understand the definition meant for the native speakers but also transfer it into the psycho-cultural mapping of the recipient language' (Hornby 2000: Preface). Of particular challenge is the translation of sociolinguistic elements as both Malay and English have their own sociolinguistics rules (Hornby 2000: Translator's Notes). For example, there is a need to differentiate between informal 'you' and formal 'you' in order to translate the pronoun into Malay, and matters to consider would be the social distance, family relations, and social event before such a distinction can be made.

The difficult endeavour undertaken by Asmah has nevertheless resulted in a bilingual dictionary which is equally rich in content as well as in breadth of coverage to include the special needs of Malay-speaking learners of English. With more than 57,100 base words accompanied by compound words and phrases, arranged in alphabetical order with clear definitions in Malay and English, the OF is a complete and systematic bilingual dictionary. Examples

of the usage of the words in both languages and sometimes with illustrations enhance the understanding of the users of the dictionary, while the inclusion of idioms and proverbs related to certain base words with their explanations further enrich the two languages. Concise and easy instructions on how to use the dictionary is provided for new learners, while a more detailed guideline is made available for advanced learners, thus making it a user-friendly dictionary.

Translation at local universities

The national language policy was adopted by the UM in November 1969. Prior to that, it had used English in all areas of teaching and administration. With this new focus on the use of Malay, there was a need to create Malay terms in the different areas of specialisation, especially in science and technology. To handle this problem, the post of Assistant Register (Terminology) was established at the Language Centre of the university. As the different faculties in the university had already established committees dealing with technical terms in their respective areas, the job of the Assistant Registrar (Terminology) was to coordinate the terms used in the various faculties of UM with those of DBP (Asmah Haji Omar, 2004: 94).

Institutions of higher learning were also involved in translating academic books from various foreign languages in specific subject areas, into Malay. By the early 1970s many public universities established publication units and sections for the purpose. The Engineering Faculty of UM, and the University of Technology of Malaysia (UTM) are two such examples. UTM in collaboration with DBP published among the earliest mechanical engineering textbooks translated into Malay, such as *Penyelesaian Masalah dalam Mekanik Bendalir (Problem Solving in Liquid Mechanics)*; and *Mekanik Bendalir: Teori, Contoh, Penyelesaian dan Masalah (Liquid Mechanics: Theory, Examples, Solutions and Problems)* (Yahaya dan Khalil, 2003: 49–50). The UKM appeared to focus on geography titles. Their products include *Asia Tenggara dengan Malaysia dan Singapura (South East Asia with Malaysia and Singapore)* by A.J.F. West (1982); *Asia Tenggara (South East Asia)* by E.H.D Dobby (1982); and *Teknik Korelasi dalam Geografi (Correlational Techniques in Geography)* by Roger Dalton et al. (1987).

In 1985, a committee represented by members of various local universities was established to increase and advance academic publications in Malaysia. This committee came to be known as *Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia* (Malaysian Council for Academic Publications), referred to by its Malay acronym MAPIM, with the task of increasing and developing academic publications, including translated works, to be undertaken by universities, research centres, and DBP. At that time, it was estimated that there were 218 translated publications under MAPIM in the fields of science, technology and medicine. Among the titles published in the 1990s were: *Termodinamik Kejuruteraan Kimia (Chemical Engineering Thermodynamics); Pengenalan*

Statistik (Introduction to Statistics); and *Pengeluaran Makanan Hidroponik (Hydrophonic Food Production)*; and those between 2000 and 2003 were *Prinsip Pengawalan Kualiti Udara (Air Quality Monitoring Principles)*, *Pengenalan Kebarangkalian dan Statistik (Introduction to Probability and Statistics)*; and *Farmakologi Klinikal (Clinical Pharmacology)* (Roosfa 2003: 3–23). As the need for reference books in Malay became more crucial, different faculties in different universities took on the task of translating the necessary texts on their own, or in collaboration with DBP.

Training translators and interpreters

In 1973, Royal Professor Ungku A. Aziz, Vice Chancellor of UM, felt that there was an urgent need for a training centre for translators and interpreters as there was none in the country or the region, and the university's Language Centre was fully established and able to carry out this function. Through UNESCO, he enlisted the help of Professor Maurice Gravier, Director of the School for Interpreters and Translators, University of Paris-Sorbonne. This resulted in the establishment of a Translation and Interpretation Division at the Language Centre, which was the first training centre for translation and interpretation in the country. Experts were brought in from Paris to train translators and interpreters (Haji Yassin, 1988: 65–77).

Beginning in the academic session 1974/75, courses offered were two full time two-year courses: Diploma in Conference Interpretation, and Diploma in Translation. As a continuation of these two diplomas, two one-year full time courses were added: Diploma in International Interpretation, and Diploma in Advanced Translation. According to Lim Chung Tat (2013: 303), by the 1978–79 session, the Language Centre provided translation services to the university, and provided Malay terms for teaching purposes especially for the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Science.

The two-year Diploma in Translation programme was later reduced to one year as those enrolled in the courses were mostly translators working in government agencies, and the two-year study period was too long for them to take time off from work. This one-year diploma consisted of theory and practice of translation. The theoretical part included translation theory, meaning and interpretation, genre studies, and discourse analysis, while the practical part consisted of courses such as translation of general texts, editing and proof reading, and a translation project of a given text of 20,000 words. At the end of the course, students were required to go for a one-month long attachment in institutes with translation programmes in order to gain a practical experience (Zubaidah, 2002: 84–85). These diploma courses came to an end in 2000 when the university was instructed by the Ministry of Higher Education to offer only courses at the Bachelors', Masters', and PhD levels.

When the Language Centre of UM became the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics in 1996, the Minor in Translation Studies for undergraduate

students of the faculty was introduced in Semester 1, 2010/ 2011 session. This is a 30-credit minor programme comprises 10 courses on various aspects of translation, such as principles and theories of translation, translation methods, translation workshops, meaning at word and sentence level, text and discourse analysis for translators, register and style in translation, translation tools, proof reading and editing, translation quality assessment, and translation practicum (*Buku Panduan Ijazah Dasar Fakulti Bahasa dan Linguistik*, 2011–2012: 235).

Students doing the Bachelor's degree with language specialisations in Arabic, Chinese and Tamil, but not the minor in translation at the Faculty of Languages & Linguistics, have to take two translation courses: one at the general level covering theory and practice, and the other at the level of specific fields (*Buku Panduan Ijazah Dasar Fakulti Bahasa dan Linguistik*, 2011–2012). This is made possible as these students have the equivalent of an A-level in the language of their specialisation, and English or Malay as part of the entry requirement of the university. In addition, those doing Chinese and Tamil speak these languages as their mother tongue. They are already proficient in the languages involved, but these courses provide them with a better understanding of the languages and their grammars. The other BA students of the faculty specialising in French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish are also exposed to two translation courses as part of their academic programme, but they do two courses in practical translation to help them understand the structure of the languages involved and build their vocabulary(*Buku Panduan Ijazah Dasar Fakulti Bahasa dan Linguistik*, 2011–2012).

Translation at USM is offered as a full programme leading to the degrees of BA, MA, and PhD. Currently, USM is the only university which offers a degree in translation, from the basic degree level right up to the PhD. At the Bachelors' level, the degree was first introduced in the 1992/1993 session at the university's Centre of Languages and Translation. It is an honours degree programme known as Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Translation with Interpretation. This programme is different from the ones discussed earlier as it is a combination of translation and interpretation courses. The difference does not end there. Despite the similarity in offering basic theoretical and practical courses as well as courses in editing, there are also courses on computer translation and professional ethics relevant to this field. Another difference is the objective of the programme which aims at producing graduates who are able to function as mediators in the following areas: language, culture, politics and social. In this connection they are also trained to be in the conduct of their vocation (*Universiti Sains Malaysia 2012–2015a*).

At the postgraduate level, the Masters' degree is known as Master of Arts (Translation Studies), and it is offered as a mixed mode as well as by research only. The 40 credit mixed mode programme consists of a maximum of six courses and a 25,000-word dissertation. The MA by research, on the other hand, requires the submission of a thesis of not more than

50,000 words at the end of the course. Having an MA in translation would enable one to pursue a PhD once the Malay and English language requirements are fulfilled. PhD candidates are required submit a thesis of not more than 80,000 words at the end of their candidature (*Universiti Sains Malaysia 2012–2015b*).

Translation courses are also run by ITBN, and the Malaysian Translators Association (PPM), and these courses lead to the qualification of Diploma in Translation. ITBN offers three translation courses and three translation workshops, which can be taken as an intensive programme or on a part-time basis throughout the year. The former requires students to put in a full six-hour day during the duration of the programme, while the latter is stretched over several weeks. The general aims of these programmes are to provide participants with an in-depth knowledge of concepts and techniques in order to produce high quality translation work. The translation courses are general translation, translation from Chinese to Malay, and translation from Arabic to Malay (ITBN 2014k).

The three workshops are also run on an intensive or part-time basis with the Translation Editing Workshop taking up 24 contact hours; Finance/Management/Accountancy/Economics Workshop 18 hours; and the Technical Science & Technology Workshop 12 hours. The theory section encompasses translation procedures, methods and techniques, language register, terminology, semantics and pragmatics of translation. Translation practice covers registers in various types of texts, such as general, mass communication, law, science and technology, social science, and creative literature. The option of taking it as a part-time or intensive course provides flexibility for working adults, and as there is no entry requirement it is assumed that anyone can apply for these courses (ITBN 2014k).

The Diploma programme offered by the Malaysian Translator's Association consists of five modules: Science of Translation & Translation Techniques; Communicative Translation; Screen Translation; Translation for Law; and Editing Translation. The specific modules offered indicate that this is not a basic level course, but that its target group consists of translators who want to hone their skills in certain areas of translation. The courses are linguistic in nature with semantics, morphology and syntax forming the basis of the course, in addition to translation theories (*Persatuan Penterjemah Malaysia* 2013).

Conclusion

The preceding pages attest to the fact that translation has always played an important role in education in Malaysia. During the pre-independent period the focus was on Malay primary education. However, during the early post-independent period when there was a need to implement the national language policy in educational institutions, the focus was more on secondary and tertiary education, as formal education had moved on to a higher

level. In the current state of affairs, translation is used to educate people from different languages and cultures so that they can learn to understand one another and be able to live and work together.

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10 The development of Malay
A supranational collaboration

Asmah Haji Omar

Introduction

Development of language as a conscious effort on the part of its users means refining and streamlining its systems so that it is able to handle the needs of the community in giving significations to new concepts and forming new expressions. A living language grows with its use in society, and in this process changes take place in the form of innovation on the one hand, and replacement of old items on the other. With its status as national language, the domains of use of Malay increased by leaps and bounds, especially when it was made the main medium of education from the primary to the tertiary level. Colossal increase in the number of domains of use filled the curricula of educational institutions as never before. For the first time Malay had to play the role as medium of instruction at the secondary level. As a living form of communication it had to be able to carry the burden of expressions in school subjects which were newly introduced in the system of education of the country.

Knowledge of arithmetic, history, geography and nature study were not new to the Malays, but what was new to them was placing these subjects in a formal syllabus and introducing them to a class of students at the secondary level of education, in a systemic manner. This was an innovation which required a formalised way of thinking supported by the usage of appropriate terminology and forms of expression, an innovation handled through corpus planning.

The need for a corpus planning for Malay

Corpus planning for a particular language means handling the development of this language for practical purposes in terms of its systems. The corpus planning for Malay involved two major undertakings: the standardisation of its spelling system, and the expansion of its lexicon. The first was given priority, as its formulation could easily pave the way for the second, and language planning had to be centralised, in the sense that there should be one single authority in formulating and realising its objective. For this purpose a

central agency was established by the pre-independent Malayan government in 1956, i.e. the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), which is to this day the authority in the development Malay, and in the publication of Malay literary texts of various genres, inclusive of academic books and journals of various disciplines.

The need for the standardisation of the spelling system was not due to the lack of a codification of Malay phonology. It was more historical in nature, due to the existence of a number of Malay spelling systems which had emerged from early days, being creations of institutions and groups, working independently one from the other. Schools and government departments used one particular system known as the school system (*ejaan sekolah*), because it was used in the schools. But the newspapers and publishing houses had their own ideas about what should be the most efficient system, and each formulated its own. To crown it all, the universities, specifically UM and UKM, as well as DBP itself decided to have their individual systems of spelling (Asmah Haji Omar, 1979: Chapters 6 and 7). In Indonesia there was a different system of spelling for *bahasa Indonesia*, and this was based on Dutch orthography. The Indonesian version 'joined' the overcrowded inventory of spelling in Malaysia, as Indonesian books were already being used in schools since the days of pre-independent Malaya, especially in Form 6 Malay literature classes, not to mention general books and magazines that flooded the book stores.

In the early days of the implementation of the national language policy in the schools, Indonesian textbooks were also used in the universities, especially for courses in the social sciences and the humanities. UKM was the first to start using Malay as the medium of instruction on a large scale at the university level.[1] At that time, not many Malaysian academics were able to use Malay in their teaching especially in science-based faculties, and the solution was to recruit Indonesian lecturers to fill in the gap, while Malaysians were being trained to become competent scientists and academicians using Malay, instead of English, in carrying out their duties as lecturers. [2] Thus the Indonesian variety of Malay, *bahasa Indonesia*, pervaded the usage of Malay, specifically in terms of spelling and terminology. This means that corpus planning had to be taken across the international border, to involve Indonesia.

For the DBP, the task it had to undertake at its inception was not only to standardise the spelling system, but also to develop terminologies for the various academic disciplines taught at the schools and the universities. During the first decade of its establishment, terminology committees were set up for the school subjects, such as history, geography, mathematics, and the basic sciences of biology, physics, and chemistry.

The only two universities at that time, UM and the USM, were still using English, although they were aware that the time would come when they had to comply with the national language policy of the country. It was when UKM came into being in 1970 that there was a pressing need for

terminologies for various branches of the sciences as well as for the social sciences and the humanities. With Indonesian academics teaching various disciplines in the university, it was natural that lexical items, though strange to the Malay speakers of Malaysia, were flowing into the Malay lexicon. Just as in the case of the standardisation of the spelling system, it was clear that for the advancement of the Malay language, it was most necessary that there should be a standardisation of academic terminologies of both countries.

The standardisation of the spelling system and the development of the terminologies, which required the involvement of the governments of both Malaysia and Indonesia, was an indication that the degree of divergence between the Malay language of Malaysia and that of Indonesia was rather high. In comparison, differences between the two are much more than those existing between British English and American English.[3]

Partners in collaboration: examining the linguistic divide

A discussion of the differences in language usage between Malay in Malaysia and *bahasa Indonesia* has to take into account the historical background and the socio-political development of both nations. As Malay is also used as national and official language in Brunei, it was inevitable that this neighbour had to be considered in the discussions. For convenience, the acronym BIM is used here to refer to the three countries involved – Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia. In fact this acronym is part of a bigger one, and that is MABBIM, which stands for *Majlis Bahasa Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia* (Language Council of Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia), which came into being in 1985. It is an extension of MBIM (*Majlis Bahasa Indonesia-Malaysia*), i.e. the Language Council of Indonesia-Malaysia, which was formed in 1972, for the purpose of standardising the spelling systems of Malaysia and Indonesia, and then on to develop the terminologies for use in schools and universities in both countries. At that time Brunei was still under British rule, but it was invited as an observer in all the meetings of the Council. It was only after the country became a sovereign nation in 1985 that it was taken in as a full member, and the Council thenceforth became known as MBBIM.

The BIM countries comprise the core area of the use of Malay. What is meant by 'core area' of language spread is one which has a stable speech community, shows a density of communication network using the language concerned, and with a time-depth which has enabled the community to evolve into a civilisation using this language as its main speech system (Asmah Haji Omar, 2003: 344; 2013: 4). With these properties, Malaysia as a country represents a core area, so do Indonesia and Brunei.

When one refers to a whole country being a core area of a particular language, it does not mean that the whole expanse of space is the predominant area of spread of this particular language. There is no problem with Brunei,

as it occupies a small geographical space, and looking back into history when it was far bigger than it is now, the region which makes up present-day Brunei was a core area from which Malay diffused to other areas. The situation is quite different with Malaysia which covers a very large area of land divided by the sea, and more so with Indonesia which consists of almost the whole Malay Archipelago.

The part of Malaysia which was the original core was the Malay Peninsula. The Malaysian territories in Borneo, i.e. Sabah and Sarawak, were formerly non-core areas. Having converged with the Peninsula to become part of Malaysia since 1963, they have now become part of the core area. As for Indonesia, the original core was Sumatera and the islands off its eastern seaboard, the most notable being the Riau-Lingga Archipelago, and the Bangka Island. It was the Malay language that unified all the islands of today's Indonesia with a great number of heterogeneous languages, in the people's fight for independence from Dutch rule. This was due to the fact that Malay was the only regional speech system that the peoples of these islands knew and understood when they interacted with one another, as well as when others from outside the Malay world interacted with them. John Crawfurd writing in the middle of the 19th century had this to say about this lingua franca:

> The Malay tongue is now, and was, when Europeans first visited the Archipelago, the common language of intercourse between the native nations among themselves, and between them and foreigners. . . . All nations who hold intercourse of business with strangers must understand it, and all strangers must acquire it. . . . The enterprising or roving character of the people whose native tongue it is, with its softness and sound, simplicity of structure, and consequent facility of acquirement, have given it this preference over so many other languages.
>
> (Crawfurd, 1852: x)

So if Malay is now used all over the BIM countries which occupy almost the whole of the Malay Archipelago, why the 'divide' as suggested in the above heading? The reality of the situation is that it is not the language as an overall speech system that forms the invisible divide, but rather the linguistic aspects and intricacies of language usage. To understand the presence of this divide one has to examine the development of the language arising from social and demographic factors in the Malay geolinguistic region, as well as those which were the results of contact with the outside world.

Social and demographic factors in the Malay geolinguistic region

In terms of size Indonesia is a huge country, stretching from Sabang, on the extreme west on the island of Sumatera, to Meraukee on the extreme

eastern border on Indonesian Papua; the country now with a population of approximately 240 million. The total size of Malaysia's land area cannot even fill the whole of Borneo Island, and the total population is approximately 28 million. Brunei which is sandwiched between Sabah and Sarawak has a population of about 2 million.

The differences in size of the land area and the population in a way reflect (though this is not always the rule) the number of heterogeneous languages in each of the two countries. In each country, Malay or *bahasa Indonesia* as national language pervades every nook and corner within its own national boundary. This means that elements from the lexicons of the local languages are bound to seep into the lexicon of the national language of each country. As a consequence, although there is a common core system shared by the national language varieties of BIM, influences from the different local languages have no doubt enriched each national variety. And it is also this enrichment factor that has created a divide between these countries.

The enrichment rate from local languages in *bahasa Indonesia* is much higher than in Malaysia and Brunei. Even without a statistical analysis, one who is familiar with this variety can see the deluge of new words from local languages into it, and the majority of these words are from Javanese. Other languages such as Sundanese and the Malayic[4] languages of Sumatera do make their contribution but not to the extent of Javanese.[5] Influences from the local languages are reflected in all types of discourse – social, political, journalistic, and academic. The transfer of linguistic elements from one language to the other is what Bloomfield calls 'cultural borrowing'. He defines it as the type of borrowing 'which occurs when two languages are spoken in what is topographically and politically a single community' (Bloomfield, 1933: 444).

Malaysian Malay usage, on the other hand, does not show much of cultural borrowing from local languages within the Malaysian border. What is more visible in the Malaysian context is 'dialect borrowing', i.e. where the borrowed elements come from the various dialects of the same language. The standard language itself arose from one of the dialects, the Johor dialect. Just as Malaysians face difficulties in understanding certain usages in *bahasa Indonesia*, so do Indonesians with reading Malaysian texts and listening to spoken Malay in formal situations, as well as in everyday social interactions.

Contact with the outside world

It is an undeniable fact that the geographical location of the Malay world made it readily accessible to people from outside the region, and they were of different linguistic and cultural traditions. The ports along the coasts of the Peninsula and the islands were convenient stopovers for travellers plying through between India and China, and among them were missionaries

of the world's great religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, in that chronological order. The spice trade was a pull factor for traders from east and west. From trade and missionary activities came colonisation which affected all the three BIM countries.

In short, the Malay world experienced three waves of influences from three different civilisations which were to have a great impact on the development of the Malay language – the Hindu/Buddhist Indian, the Muslim Arab, and the Christian West. The point of departure from one region to the other not only lies in the intensity and time-depth of the influences, but also in the reaction of each region to elements originating from them.

Ancient relics which attest to influence from India, in the form of Hinduism and Buddhism, are found in Kedah in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatera, Southeast Borneo and Java. All are Malay language areas, with the exception of Java which is an area of the spread of Javanese, Sundanese and Banten. Most of the relics of Indian influence in the form of temples are concentrated in Central Java. This shows that influence from India was more intensive in Java, than in the Malay areas. This is further supported by another historical fact, and that is that Java became the area of spread of Hinduism to the outer islands of Bali and Lombok.

With the teaching of Hinduism and Buddhism came Sanskrit words bearing important concepts in these religions, into Malay and Javanese. The intensity of the teaching of these religions in Java is manifested in the great number of Sanskrit loanwords in Javanese, compared to the presence of this category of words in Malay. And when Malay was chosen to be the national language of Indonesia, the transfer of Javanese lexical items, including Javanised Sanskrit words, was an important process of enrichment for *bahasa Indonesia* (see Note 5). A comparison of two comprehensive Malay/*bahasa Indonesia* dictionaries, *Kamus Dewan* (Malaysia) and *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, shows that there are many more words from Sanskrit which have been 'nativised' (mostly through Javanese) than there are in the Malaysian lexicon. Names of institutions in Jakarta, including hotels and business houses, either have Sanskrit origins, or that the neologisms are the products of local geniuses using Sanskrit elements.[6] Javanese personal names are mostly derived from the Sanskrit source, and they have become a model for personal names for other ethnic groups in Indonesia even to this day. As one looks at *bahasa Indonesia*, one gets the impression that the reservoir of Sanskrit loanwords gets revitalised through ingenious means of linguistic manipulation in formulating new words. It is not an over-generalisation to say that the Sanskrit reservoir in *bahasa Indonesia* keeps being replenished through Javanese which has a treasury of classical literature with origin in Sanskrit, but written in the Javanese script (the *hanacaraka*) which is based on the Indian Pallava script. And Sanskrit is a very important language prescribed to students of archeology and of Indonesian language and literature in universities which offer these courses.

John Crawfurd had made the following observation of the influence of Sanskrit on Javanese, as given in the following excerpt:

> Sanskrit is found in Javanese in a much larger proportion than in any other language of the Archipelago, and to judge by this fact and the numerous relics of Hinduism which are still found in Java, this island must have been the chief seat of the Hindu religion in the Archipelago, and probably the chief point from which it was disseminated over the rest of the islands.
>
> (Crawfurd, 1852: xxxix)

The scenario in Malaysia and Brunei was quite different. With a smaller land area and population, even if the two countries are combined, linguistic influence from the direction of India could not be as widespread as it had been in Indonesia. It is not just in terms of geographical space but also in terms of culture that the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism in these Malay areas was on a much smaller scale than in Java. Hence, the flow of Sanskrit elements into Malay was thinner, and the reservoir of Sanskrit loanwords in the Malay language is many times smaller than the Indonesian one.

The acceptance of Islam by regions in the BIM countries brought about a change in the belief system, and hence the way of life, of the major ethnic groups in the Malay world, the two most significant being the Malays and the Javanese. The linguistic impact of this religion, through Arabic, on these two groups was different in intensity, and the difference remains until today. The Arabic script was subsequently adopted by the Malay regions as a tool to write their own language (Chapter 4). With Islam, the reservoir of Sanskrit words in Malay became stagnant, and if there are new additions, which are relatively few, the flow is not from India but from Indonesia. If the lexicon shows the presence of Sanskrit elements in the names of institutions and of Malay men and women in Malaysia and Brunei, they are 'imports' from Indonesia. All this shows that in terms of lexical items with Sanskrit and Arabic origins, the Malay language of Malaysia and Brunei seems to have more of Arabic, and less of Sanskrit, while it is the obverse with *bahasa Indonesia*. In the two Malay countries, personal names and those of government institutions show that the preferred source is Arabic. Neologisms deriving from Arabic elements appear from time to time, especially in formal language.

There are other races who were originally from regions outside the Malay world, but who have made Malaysia their home for more than a century. The most notable are the Chinese and the Indians; of the latter the majority are those speaking Tamil. However, the influence of Chinese and Tamil on the Malay language is minimal compared to Sanskrit and Arabic, and to English. The same goes with Indonesia where the population also consists with people of Chinese origin, but they are too few in number, consisting of

about 2% of the total population, to make an impact on *bahasa Indonesia*. Furthermore, the Chinese language has almost disappeared in Indonesia as it has been replaced totally by *bahasa Indonesia* in the everyday life of the ethnic Chinese.

Western rule and the division of the Malay world

Another point of departure between the British Malay territories of Malaysia and Brunei on the one hand, and Dutch-ruled Indonesia on the other, was the use of the languages of the Western rulers in governance and education. The impact of English on the life of the people of Malaysia and Brunei was not the same as that of Dutch on the life of the Indonesians. This could probably be due to the different styles of governance by the British and the Dutch, and also due to the fact that English was a language of wider diffusion compared to Dutch.

At the time of the struggle for independence in Malaya, the idea of doing away with English once Malaya became a sovereign nation was never heard of. In fact people were always reminded of the importance of English even when there was already a national language which was a symbol of the nation's sovereignty. As shown in previous chapters in this volume, the English language has always been there as part of the national education system. Things were different in Indonesia. The Dutch language became somewhat of a reminder of the bitterness suffered by the people under Dutch rule, and independence brought to a halt the teaching of Dutch in schools and universities.[7] These differences in the attitude of the ruled towards their former rulers had contributed tremendously in the divergences in the use of modern Malay/*bahasa Indonesia*, when BIM attained independence and decided to overturn the official language policies of their colonial rulers, and used their own language instead.

Although education in English in Malaysia and Brunei, and in Dutch in Indonesia, was not universal in terms of the colonised peoples, and that it was only accessible to the privileged few, it was to have a significant influence in the development of the national language in BIM later on. First and foremost, the spelling of the language differed, one from the other. The Indonesian version was based on Dutch graphemes, and in Malaysia and Brunei it was the English graphemes that were adopted. Besides the graphemes, it was also the way words were spelt that caused the divide between the British and the Dutch former territories. If two different texts were given to one who was not familiar with the different national varieties of Malay, he or she would think that those texts represented two different languages.

Realising these differences, both Malaysia and Indonesia knew that they had to collaborate for their common language to develop into a medium that could be used efficiently in the field of education. This means that they had to narrow the gap between the two varieties. The focus was not to be on expressions in social interaction because that would prove to be an

impossible task. A more feasible course of action would have to be one that brought closer together the speech systems used in teaching in schools across the divide, and this had to begin with having a common system of spelling. It was envisioned from the start that once this goal was achieved, the two sides of the divide could move on to collaborate towards the development of other aspects of the language, such as the development of terminologies in academic disciplines, which could lead to the production of books that could be used across the national boundaries.

A common spelling system for two national varieties of Malay

Two years after Malaya attained her independence from the British, the Treaty of Friendship (*Perjanjian Persahabatan*) was signed between the Federation of Malaya and the Republic of Indonesia on 17 April, 1959. Clause 6 of the Treaty states the following in its English version:

> The two High Contracting Parties, conscious of the fact that Malay and Indonesian languages have a common origin, shall strive through co-operation, collaboration and consultation to achieve the greatest possible uniformity in their use and development.

This was the first official mention of the need to narrow the gap between *bahasa Indonesia* and Malay. In the wake of the treaty, plans were made to develop a common spelling system for both countries.

Discussions on a common spelling system between the two countries began in 1959, and the final one took place in Jakarta on 4–9 December 1959. But the system known as *Melindo Spelling* (*Melindo* being an acronym of Melayu-Indonesia) could not be implemented as symbols chosen to replace such digraphs as *ng, ny, ch, j, sh* were those taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) which were not included in the ordinary typewriters. Many other issues also came to the fore such as in the writing of complex and compound words, reduplications, and prepositional phrases. Before any amendment could be made to the system, hostility was simmering between the two countries, culminating in September 1963 in what is known as the Confrontation, i.e. Indonesian war against the newly-formed nation of Malaysia, consisting of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore.

Meetings between the two countries on the common spelling system which was the uppermost item in the agenda of the Treaty of Friendship between the two countries resumed after the Confrontation ended in 1966. It was not an easy task to compromise two well-ingrained traditions in the writing of the Malay language. It was only in 1972, on 16th August of that year that both countries announced exactly at 12.00 noon[8] the birth of a common spelling system that had been so long in the making. It was a most important event for both sides, as the announcement was made by no less

than the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak Hussain, and the President of Indonesia, General Soeharto. The public was informed of the existence of a booklet containing guidelines in the use of the new system in both countries starting from that date. In Malaysia, the title of the booklet was *Pedoman Ejaan Rumi Baru Bahasa Malaysia* (*Guidelines for the New Romanised Spelling for Bahasa Malaysia*), while in Indonesia, it was *Pedoman Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia Yang Disempurnakan* (*Guidelines for a Perfected Spelling of Bahasa Indonesia*). The official acceptance of the common spelling by the two countries heralded the establishment of a language council in December 1972, known as the *Majlis Bahasa Indonesia-Malaysia* (MBIM) as mentioned above (Asmah Haji Omar, 2004; 2013).

The common spelling system of 1972, still in use today, is a far cry from the Melindo system of 1959. Having agreed on a single set of graphemes was a manifestation of goodwill between the two parties. Although the two sets of graphemes that had been in use for centuries in the writing of Malay were derived from the Roman/Latin original, each arrived in the Malay Archipelago through different channels: the one in Malaysia was from the English alphabet, and the one in Indonesia from the Dutch. The first step was to iron out the differences in the graphic symbols inherited from these sources. The Dutch/Indonesian <j> for the palato-alveolar semi-vowel was substituted for <y> of the Malaysian alphabet, and this paved the way for another compromise, and that was the acceptance by Indonesia of the Malaysian <ny> to replace <nj>, for the palatal nasal sound [ɲ]. Another offshoot of the <j> → <y> substitution is a new grapheme <sy>, for the Malaysian <sh> and the Indonesian <sj>. Although there was a substitution in <j> for <y> in *bahasa Indonesia*, the grapheme <j> was retained so that it could function as a representation of the voiced alveo-palatal affricate <j> as in the Malaysian system. So the erstwhile <dj> in the Indonesian alphabet was deleted from the common system.

In the two sets of alphabet, <ch> gave different sounds. In English and Malay this grapheme represented the voiceless alveo-palatal affricate [ʧ], but in Dutch and bahasa Indonesia it stood for the voiceless velar fricative [x]. On the other hand, this velar fricative in Malay was always represented by <kh>, while [ʧ] in *bahasa Indonesia* took the symbol <tj>. To get out of this intricacy, it was decided that the Malaysian <kh> be chosen as the grapheme for [x]. Although the rationale for the choice was not put on record, <kh> occurs more frequently in Malay than in *bahasa Indonesia*, due to the greater number of Arabic loans in the former than in the latter.

Retaining <ch> for [ʧ] following the Malaysian tradition would have caused a confusion. So would it be if the grapheme <tj> of the Indonesian spelling was retained as a replacement of the Malaysian <ch>. Hence, both had to be deleted altogether. Another symbol had to be found, and the choice was <c>. Although the letter <c> had been in the alphabets of both

Malaysia and Indonesia, it existed only in combination with <h>, resulting in the grapheme <ch>, which meant different things to the two countries. In other words, <c> was never a grapheme in its own right, but this did not prevent it from being given the status of a full grapheme in the common spelling system. Thus, a new grapheme was born in <c>, which represented an innovation in the writing of Malay/*bahasa Indonesia*. In another sense, this symbol is a manifestation of neutrality, as in choosing it there was no one side giving in to the other.

Taking the two alphabets that were used in the writing of Malay and bahasa Indonesia in the pre-MBIM period, it can be said that most of the consonant graphemes on both the divide were retained in the common spelling system. Five were deleted, and these were <nj>, <dj>, <sj> and <tj> on the Indonesian side, and <ch> which was shared by both Malaysia and Indonesia but which represented different sounds.

As for the writing of the vowels, the differences between the two traditions were in the representation of the central vowel or the schwa [ə], and the mid-low front vowel [e]. For both the vowels, the letter 'e' formed the basis of the grapheme. In Indonesia, the central vowel was represented by the grapheme <e> without any diacritic, but in Malaysia, the diacritic < ˇ > was placed above <e>, hence <ě>, to symbolise the same sound.

As for the mid-low front vowel [e], there was no diacritic used on the Malaysian side; hence, the grapheme was <e>. On the other hand, the use of a diacritic on top of the letter of <e> was considered necessary for Indonesia; hence the Indonesian grapheme for this sound was <é>. As a compromise, both sides agreed to do away with the diacritics. So <e> in the common spelling system stands for both the sounds under consideration. In the common spelling system, differentiation between the schwa and the mid-low front vowels can be made when words which bear the grapheme <e> are used in context.

The table below shows the graphemes on both sides before the common spelling was agreed on, and those that have replaced them in the common spelling system.

Malaysian and Indonesian spelling: differences and compromise

No.	*Malaysian Spelling*	*Indonesian Spelling*	*Common Spelling*
1	y	j	y
2	ny	nj	ny
3	j	dj	j
4	sh	sj	sy
5	ch	tj	c
6	kh	ch	kh
7	ě	e	e
8	e	é	e

There are also new features in the systems and structures in the phonological rules of the language, for example the acceptance of consonant clusters as coda and onset of syllables, and that of certain vowel and consonant clusters hitherto deemed to be non-existent in the language. Such clusters feature in technical terms in English which have origins in Latin and Greek. It was a reluctance to accept such clusters that had generated the pre-MBIM Malay terminology, such as *saikoloji* (psikologi), *kelinik* (klnik), *petroliam* (petroleum), etc. Flexibility in the face of innovation has not only facilitated the absorption of new words in the sciences, but has helped in preventing further distancing between Malay and *bahasa Indonesia*.

Standardisation of terminologies

As for the development of scientific terminologies, Malaya had been doing it all alone from 1957 using her own local expertise. Experts from institutions of learning and various professions, as well as linguists and writers were invited by the DBP as members of terminology committees in looking for Malay equivalents of English technical terms. The focus was first on mathematics and the basic sciences, i.e. physics, chemistry, and biology, as these are important school subjects. English terms were used as the basis for transferring the scientific concepts into Malay. Glossaries were published by the DBP and prescribed by the Ministry of Education for use in school textbooks.

The Malaysian lists of terminologies for the various disciplines which belonged to the pre-MBIM period show that there were two main methods by which these terminologies were arrived at: loan translation, and adoption of English terms based on Malay perception of how those terms were pronounced. Examples of the first method are *kaji hayat* (biology), *kaji haiwan* (zoology), *kaji bumi* (geology), *ilmu perhutanan* (forestry), and *ilmu alam* (geography). The second method is exemplified by *oksijan* (oxygen), *haiderojan* (hydrogen), *saikoloji* (psychology), and *kelinik* (clinic).

These two methods are also seen in the coining of scientific terms for *bahasa Indonesia* in the pre-MBIM days. In some of the loan translations, the Malayan and the Indonesian versions seemed to be similar but could cause some confusion, when placed side by side. For example, the Indonesian term for *geography* was *ilmu bumi*, and that for *geology* was *ilmu bumi alam*; in both versions *bumi* means 'the Earth', and *alam* 'the universe'. Loan translation of Dutch terms was rendered for *oxygen* and *hydrogen* in the Indonesian versions as *zat asam* (*zuurstof*), and *zat air* (*waterstof*) respectively. Outright adoption of Dutch words was guided by the way those words were pronounced in Dutch, and adapting the spelling where necessary. Examples are *departemen* (department), *kantor* (office), and *moderen* (modern).

It was clear that the two sides of the linguistic divide had their own separate ways of developing terminologies to be used in educational institutions.

It was natural for them to work along the traditions in language usage inherited from the languages that they were taught by their former colonial rulers, and those involved in the early days in terminology development were graduates and professionals who were trained in those languages, English and Dutch.

The Malaysia-Indonesia collaboration in developing a common corpus for technical terms for various academic disciplines took off in early 1973. Before the actual task of the coining of those terms could be undertaken, a set of guidelines agreeable to both parties had to be formulated. An important consideration was the choice of the source material for use in transferring concepts into Malay/*bahasa Indonesia*. Was it to be the English or Dutch version, or both? It was to Malaysia's great relief when Indonesia agreed on the English source. This was in 1972, and the linguistic scenario among academics had changed from that of 1959 when Dutch influence on *bahasa Indonesia* was still obvious. This situation explains the 'heavy' Dutch influence in Indonesian terminologies before the MBIM period. The Indonesian team in the MBIM belonged to a different generation from those who were involved in the Melindo spelling system. Most of them could speak English as a foreign language, and some of them were educated in English-speaking countries, at least at the post-graduate level.

Guidelines in the coining of technical terms were finalised and submitted to the governments of both countries through their ministries of education in 1975, in the form of booklets, with the title *Pedoman Umum Pembentukan Istilah* (*General Guidelines to the Formation of Terminology*). As guidelines, experts involved in the coining of the technical terms were advised to choose the source which could be the contributor to the new lexical items, by moving along the following prescribed steps:

(i) Current vocabulary of Malay/Indonesian
(ii) Vocabulary no longer current in Malay/Indonesian
(iii) Current vocabulary in languages related to Malay/Indonesian
(iv) Vocabulary no longer current in related languages
(v) Translation of source words
(vi) Adaptation of English source words
(vii) Vocabulary in languages other than the ones mentioned above

In their search for a *Malay/bahasa Indonesia* term for the corresponding word in English, the terminologists were to start with step (i). If the search was successful, a decision had to be made between the parties involved on how to spell the word. If step (i) proved to be unsuccessful, they had to move on to the next step in the list, and so on until a suitable term was found for the corresponding English word.

Committees of experts in the various academic disciplines and sub-disciplines in each country were formed. A committee in a particular discipline in one country had a counterpart in the other. They exchanged

the results of their work and met to thrash out the differences before a co-authored product was submitted to the Council. The terminologists were advised to try as far as possible to arrive at a full agreement on their products, but if there were cases in the lists they were working on that could not be compromised into standard linguistic forms, they could agree to disagree. These cases were usually those that had been rooted in the lexicon of the countries involved, and changing them would upset the smooth flow in using Malay/*bahasa Indonesia* in teaching academic subjects.

Concepts signified by the technical terms used in the various sciences were new to Malay and related languages, and in most cases translation was not the answer. There were items which could be found in the indigenous languages related to Malay, but they could not be considered equivalents for most of the concepts in the sciences, except for nomenclatures in agriculture, forestry, and such like. For all practical purposes, adoption of the English source words appeared to be the most favoured method (step vi), as shown by the lists of items agreed on by experts on both sides of the divide. And these items were adapted to suit Malay phonology, which had been given flexibility by the new spelling system. Hence, a great number of hitherto different representations of words in the Malay and Indonesian lexicons could be standardised. Thus came forms such as *geografi*, *geologi*, *oksigen*, *hidrogen*, etc. to replace the ones already existing in the lexicons of both countries. In addition there were words in the standardised lists which were spelt in ways that were unthinkable in the old spelling systems of both sides. Among them were those with consonant clusters as onsets and codas of words, such as *stratosfera*, *psikologi*, *klinik*, *obstetriks*, *eksport*, *morf*, *teks*, etc. Such phonological, hence graphemic, features were shunned at in the pre-MBIM days. Rationalisation won the day, as MBIM members consisting of linguists and scientists decided to inject new systems into the phonology of their common language, in order that the language could move on in the face of innovations through science and technology.

With the development in linguistic thinking as mentioned above, the booklet *General Guidelines* was reviewed, and instead of seven steps of operation for the terminologists to consider, only three were left, and these were (i), (iii) and (vi). With the revised guidelines, the formulation of terminologies for use in educational institutions could be speeded up. In time, courses in the universities in scientific disciplines and sub-disciplines could be delivered fully in Malay. This was the reason why there was great opposition from the Malays in Malaysia when the Malay language which had been used in teaching science and mathematics in the schools since the 1970s was replaced by English in 2003 (Chapters 1–3).

Conclusion

In the collaboration between the BIM countries, the objectives were clear, although the methods had to go through a great deal of trial and error so

that the outcome was acceptable to target users. The spelling and terminology story in a sense can be called a success story in that it has brought the BIM countries together through a narrowing of the linguistic divide. Communication between teachers and academics has been made easier. However, glossaries and dictionaries have their limitations. They provide lexical items which are context free, when to all intents and purposes such items need to be used in a discourse in order to be 'alive'. This means that these items have to be used in texts written for the disciplines where they belong. With the availability of glossaries and terminologies used in academic disciplines covering most of the branches of the sciences and the social sciences, more publications in the national language have been produced for use at the university level. And these publications include translated works of English texts.

Notes

1 Two universities established before UKM, i.e. UM and USM, had been using English from the beginning of their existence. Their changeover to using Malay was a gradual one, in line with the phasing out of the English schools (Chapter 1 in this volume).
2 Many Malaysians went to Indonesia for their university degrees. Those who studied in English-speaking countries for their degrees had, on returning home, to undergo a course in the Malay language to prepare them for teaching their academic disciplines to their students.
3 In 1998 I conducted a study to find out to what extent Malaysian students understood *bahasa Indonesia*, after 25 years of MBIM. These were students of Malay Studies at the Bachelors' and Masters' degrees, UM. They were given two texts from two different Indonesian newspapers, and were told to mark items which to them were (1) unfamiliar, and (2) sounded strange, based on: (a) spelling, (b) meaning, (c) form, and (d) style. It was found that 30% of the tokens in the text were unfamiliar and strange to them. At the same time I also conducted a somewhat similar study on British and American English, using language teachers (of English and other languages), and the findings show that they could identify differences between the two varieties, which were represented by only a few lexical items (Asmah Haji Omar, 2013: Chapter 5).
4 Malayic languages are those which are very closely related to Malay.
5 This is due to two main factors: (1) The centre of the growth and development of *bahasa Indonesia* since the country's independence has been Jakarta on the Java island; (2) A great number of intellectuals, literati, academics and those in the governance of the country are Javanese. It is to be expected that elements from their language flow into their discourse in *bahasa Indonesia*.
6 An example is the name *Aryaduta* given to one of the hotels in Indonesia, as a translation of Ambassador Hotel. Both *arya* (noble) and *duta* (ambassador) are Sanskrit words, but the combination of the two as given in the above name is a product of Indonesia (personal correspondence with the late Dr. Haryati Soebadio, Professor of Sanskrit at the Faculty of Arts, University of Indonesia, who was the creator of the name).
7 In the days of MBIM through to MABBIM, Indonesians could not understand why Malaysians were still speaking in English when they had Malay as the national language. This was clearly articulated by a linguist in a seminar in Puncak, Java in the late 1990s.

8 At that time Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta were still in the same time zone. Malaysia chose to change the time zone in 1982 to make it one hour earlier to Jakarta, so that Peninsular Malaysia and the Malaysian states in Borneo could be in the same zone.

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