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**EMPOWERING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MALAY
LANGUAGE AS A COMMUNICATION TRANSMISSION AND
ELEMENT OF IDENTITY**

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Abstract:

The discussion in this paper refers to the effort to empower Malay language as a communication transmission bridge that is a significant element of Malaysian identity. The issues refined in this discussion refer to (i) The significance of the mother tongue as the language of knowledge in educational institutions, (ii) The balance between the use of Malay and English in HEIs, (iii) Efforts to uphold the Malay language as the national language, and (iv) The use national language in the public service sector. The application of a qualitative approach in this writing utilizes secondary sources such as research results in journals, scholarly writing, online news sources and public forums. The results of the study found that the government plays a critical role in the continued use and position of the Malay language by the people of this country and should be empowered by all parties. The rationale in the effort to dignify the Malay language is the maintenance of the nation state as enshrined in the national constitution which declares the Malay language as the official language of the country. The direction of this study is to pioneer the efforts of various parties in taking responsibility for preserving and empowering the mother tongue regardless of different backgrounds, religions and beliefs, in order to nourish the elements of identity, improve the quality and quality of the use of the national language, while maintaining the image of self-identity, race, and country. This is because in the face of global competition, the Malay language should be a bastion to defend the strength of the Malay nation's identity.

Keywords:

Malay Language, Mother Tongue, National Language, Identity, Plural Society

Introduction

Language reflects the identity of a country, nation, race, society and individual. Regardless of differences in religion, race and origin, Malay is the main language of our nation. Since independence, the Malay language has been declared as the mother tongue which becomes the bridge of communication transmission when it is dignified as the national language (Yusoff, Othman, Jupiter & Mokhtar, 2021). The Malaysian Constitution has established the Malay language as the official language of the country as well as the medium of education (Ku Samsu, Adnan, Ismail, Lee, Ab. Majid & Ab. Razak, 2020). Malay as the official language of the country of Malaysia after being declared by His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong in 1967, which is based on the action of the Parliament that passed the National Language Bill (Mohamad Kamil & Mohamad, 2020).

In addition to being one of the significant elements that display elements of the identity of the Malaysian people, Malay is also raised as an intermediate language in educational institutions that becomes a point of unification for all students. The issue of the Malay language in the era of globalization continues to be a hot topic of conversation that is often debated by various parties in an effort to dignify the Malay language as the language of knowledge (Othman, Yusoff, Jupiter & Mokhtar, 2021a). In going through the current educational modernization, the educational institution bears the responsibility of maintaining or elevating the position of the Malay language as an official medium of learning and teaching as well as being the main medium of communication among students including those coming from abroad (Mohamed & Hassan, 2019; Othman, Yusoff, Abdul Hamid, Jupiter & Awang, 2018a).

However, there is no denying that the importance of learning and mastering the English language is closely related to the awareness of current needs and challenges at the international level (Abu Bakar, Othman, Mokhtar & Esa, 2021a). On that note, the advantage of mastering the English language in addition to strengthening the Malay language is critical. This continuity resulted in a sharp increase in the rate of English language use, especially when we take into account the gradual international involvement of IPT learning (Yaacob, Ali & Abd Wahab, 2017). At the same time, there is a concern about mastery, especially with learning English, which will create an imbalance in the use of the mother tongue and further affect the stability of unity in a country (Baharudin & Yusoff, 2014). Therefore, in order to take steps to preserve the Malay language, the field of education has become an important medium in creating and maintaining the identity of the Malay community (Abd Razak, 2009).

To preserve the role and function of the Malay language, it is necessary to emphasise a balance between the use of English and Malay among students. Moreover, a balanced language mastery is a skill for graduates to be able to learn Malay proficiently and fluently while also mastering English or a third language with distinction (Othman, 2019a). Clearly, the national language has been used in various contexts for a very long time, especially in the public service sector, which is the heart of the country's economy, including central and local government. Year 2011 saw the introduction of the Service Circular to guide the use of the national language for official business within the public service (Mohamed & Hassan, 2019). Therefore, the use of the national language in the public service sector demonstrates the application of the national language, Malay, for all public service communication channels. Can the issue, rationale, and challenge of the extensive and consistent use of the national language in the national education sector or the public service sector involving all citizens be met?

Literature Review

This paper introduces issues related to (i) The significance of the mother tongue as the language of knowledge in educational institutions, (ii) The balance of the use of Malay and English in higher education institutions (HEIs), (iii) Efforts to dignify the Malay language as the national language, and (iv) The use of the national language in the public service sector as a basis for debate that focuses on the transmission of communication, which is an important aspect of the identity of every Malaysian.

Mother Tongue as A Language of Knowledge in Educational Institutions

Malay language serves as the primary intermediate language, the language of law, the language in religious matters, and the language of knowledge in Malaysia, among other vital roles. According to Othman, Yusoff, Jupiter and Mokhtar (2021), the language of knowledge is a cultured and knowledge-rich language that functions as the language of knowledge development in a society or nation. In other words, the language of knowledge is a language that serves as a vehicle for the disclosure and development of a broad spectrum of knowledge. Malay language has evolved into a literary language that encompasses various forms of prose and poetry. Malay has also become the language of diplomatic relations at the international level, as it is used in diplomatic documents, messages, and agreements with foreign powers and parties (Othman, Jupiter, Awang, & Yusoff, 2017a), Che Hodi & Musa, 2014).

According to Hassan, Angterian and Yusop (2017), Malay has become the legal language for the majority of Malay sultanates, with the Law of Melaka being the most well-known. This relates to the position of the Malay language in the Malaysian Constitution, where it is designated as the country's official language and the medium of instruction (Amir, 2009). The provision regarding the Malay language is a crucial provision in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, as it ensures the Malay language's role and function (Amir, 2009). Education is supported as an influential and effective vehicle for the development of Malay language as the national and official language of the Federation of Malaya (Basir, 2012). Thus, the development of the national language in education is evaluated based on the Razak Statement of 1956 (Education Ordinance of 1957) and the Abdul Rahman Talib Statement of 1960 (Education Act of 1961) (Amir, 2009). These two important documents play a crucial role in the formation of the National Education Policy, which emphasises the use of Malay as the medium of instruction at all educational levels which has then been implemented (Othman, Esa, Ationg & Muda, 2021b). Since then, the Malay language has been required to be widely utilised in both public and private institutions.

However, the position of Malay as the main medium of instruction in the Malaysian education system has been frequently challenged by the occurrence of symptoms that may lead to the language's marginalisation (Othman, Din, Said & Aziz, 2021c). Malay language has been designated as the official language in Malaysia's national education system. Although some subjects were changed from English to Malay, every exam in the school is administered in Malay. In Private Institutions of Higher Education (IPTS) and Public Institutions of Higher Education (IPTA), the use of Malay as the medium of instruction or as a compulsory subject is not implemented in a serious way. In reality, implementation varies across higher education institutions (Othman, Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim, Lukin, & Abdul Hamid, 2021d). The majority of Malay language courses are classified as electives or required electives (Mohamad Kamil & Mohamad, 2020). This is the issue that has led to a decline in the status of the Malay language among students in higher education institutions.

Balance of the use of Malay and English language in Private Institutions of Higher Education

The concept of elevating the status of the Malay language through a balance between the use of Malay and English in higher education institutions refers to the extent to which the significance of the language's use is dependent on certain factors. For instance, English is only used when international courses are involved. In the meantime, Malay became the primary language of intermediate communication, the language of law, the language of knowledge, and the language of religion. According to Peng and Ishak, (2008) the mastery of a language refers to an individual's ability to master and use the language in oral and written communication. According to a study by Mamat (2016), more than 56 percent of the world's people from diverse cultures and backgrounds speak English as a second language. English is the primary language of the world and is recognised as a language that facilitates effective communication among its speakers (Mamat, 2016).

This is supported by the notion that the English language is a channel of communication for western thought and culture (Yalani & Bakar, 2017). Channelling one's thoughts plays a crucial role in enhancing one's command of the language, which is the language of knowledge and essential for the modernization and advancement of society. The majority of developing nations emphasise the significance and utility of the English language and urge their citizens to always strive for competence of this global language (Othman, Mohd Kamal, Yusoff, Norazah, Awang & Jupiter, 2017b). Students are still incapable of balancing the use of English and Malay in the classroom (Dazali & Awang, 2016). Previous research indicates that English proficiency can contribute up to 17.7 percent to changes in language proficiency (Mamat, 2016). In other words, the mastery of the English language should be consistent with the clear development in every university course learning, where soft skills can be enhanced through the preservation of the English language (Yaacob, Ali & Abd Wahab, 2017).

Efforts to Dignify Malay as the National Language

Since regaining its status as the national and official language, the Malay language is frequently confronted with obstacles and limitations in its efforts to fulfil its responsibilities as the official language, the national language, and the language of instruction. Since a very long time ago, the Malay language has also become an international language in Southeast Asian nations. Article 152 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia from 1963 designates Malay as the national language (Amir, 2009). Meanwhile Deraman (2014) examines the level of development of the sovereignty of the national language, Malay, which began before independence since 1930's and is known as the concept of language nationalism, which refers to the struggle to establish the national language as the country's official language. This study examined the obstacles encountered in promoting the national language prior to 1967 (Deraman, 2014). In other words, it brings the objective of determining whether the struggle to make the national language sovereign will be successful or unsuccessful to the threshold between success and failure.

This discussion focuses on the evolution of the position of the Malay language in literary matters during the colonial era as well as its transformations prior to and after independence. The essence of the struggle to establish Malay as the sole official language in Malaysia is not a simple matter or action because the position of Malay as the national language is frequently challenged by numerous parties. Not only do non-Malays fight for their own language, but they also oppose the struggle of the Malays in the process of elevating the national language, as both groups want their mother tongue to be recognised as the official or medium of instruction in

the academic world. This ultimately led to racial unrest on May 13, 1969 (Rambely & Haniffa, 2018). The distinctiveness of multi-ethnic communities such as Chinese, Indian, natives of Sabah and Sarawak, has made them more at ease using their respective ethnic languages (A'zmi, Mustafar & Abdul Karim, 2017).

Attention should be paid to the marginalisation of the use of the national language in order to encourage people to consider how to empower Malay as the national language. Chinese and Tamil national type schools should focus on making it mandatory for students to learn the Malay language in accordance with the requirements issued by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM), in which students must not only be fluent in speaking, but teachers are also responsible for educating students to have an appreciation of literature in Malay (Abdul Hamid, Esa, Ationg, Othman, Sharif Adam, Mohd Tamring & Hajimin, 2021). However, for national schools, the use of each race's mother tongue at home and at school poses a challenge to the maintenance of Malay as the national language in terms of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. Therefore, the implementation of the New Primary School Curriculum has made Malay the primary mode of communication during the era of national education's democratisation (Rahim, Ismail, Ahmad, Aziz & Puteh, 2011).

In the context of the mastery of core knowledge at the primary and secondary school levels, the Malay language has a long and significant history as a language of knowledge and unity that is understood by all groups of people. Malay language is regarded as the national language because every community can embody the Malay language as a mediator of knowledge communication, thereby making it the fundamental language of the Malaysian nation. In this regard, the Malay language is utilised in the education system because it is essential for establishing self-identity or demonstrating national identity (Musa, Che Rodi & Muhammad, 2014). Moreover, it relates to the growth and consolidation of national identity, as speaking Malay will foster a sense of pride in ourselves, the nation, and the language. This is because, in the face of global competition, the Malay language must serve as a stronghold to protect the identity of the Malays as the Malay language has literary, cultural, and religious significance (Othman, Yusoff, Mohd Shah, Mokhtar, Abang Muis, Marinsah & Marzuki, 2021e).

Use of the National Language in the Public Service Sector

Asmah Haji Omar's study (1970) entitled *The Role of the Public Service* in improving the sovereignty of the Malay language shows the role of the public service in the effort to revolutionize the sovereignty of the national language over the years and a discussion of the proactive and effective measures that need to be implemented to improve the quality of the use of the national language. This discussion is related to the role of the Public Service Department in efforts to increase the sovereignty of the national language which also includes the steps that need to be taken for the matter. Public Service Department that is known as JPA's role in efforts to increase the dignity of the Malay language is by encouraging the widespread use of the Malay language in all administrative matters at public universities, hence further implementing language policies in teaching matters such as making Malay the medium of instruction for Public of Higher Education Institutions. As a multi-ethnic society Malaysia faces constant challenges in achieving unity due to disparities in cultural backgrounds, languages, and beliefs among local and international communities (Othman, Mohd Kamal, Abdul Hamid & Yusoff, 2018b).

Not only that the Public Service Department also strives to instil a sense of the national language policy in every civil servant. In the process of glorifying the Malay language, some discourse features have been used in the rules and regulations. Among those characteristics are the expression of thoughts and the use of language which consists of sociolinguistic as well as pragmatic aspects. Overall, it is clear that all the actions taken by the Public Service Department have been successful in their implementation as the ruler of the language policy that is applied or enforced in the service regulations as well as in the use of the Malay language in their discourses. Sharif Adam (2014) discusses the development of the national language after the Federation of Malaya achieved independence on 31 August 1957 until 1966. This discussion focuses on the government's efforts to ensure that the national language is widely used, especially in the fields of administration and education.

The government will hold a national language course for civil servants and officials in an effort to ensure that the administration of the nation is conducted in the national language. It is also recommended that government officials use the national language throughout the year, not just during national language week or month, when statements about the disadvantages of not learning the language are always created. The mentality of a society with a high regard for English makes it simpler to hold a prestigious position. Consequently, graduates are fluent in English, particularly those who are not Malay. In order to elevate the Malay language, the government must revolutionise the national language, beginning with the public service sector.

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative method of research based on social science disciplines that require careful observation of aspects that are primarily concerned with processes and events. Information from a variety of sources, including primary and secondary sources, analysed using secondary data content analysis methods related to history, law, historiography, sociology, and ethnology, and coupled with a descriptive analytic discussion (Creswell, 2014; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The use of a qualitative approach in this writing utilizes secondary sources such as research results in journals, scholarly writing, online news sources and public forums. As such, this academic writing specifically uses literature review by gathering primary and secondary sources to clarify facts based on issues related to real events. The results of the study found that the government plays a critical role in the continued use and position of the Malay language by the people of this country and should be empowered by all parties. The data of the findings elaborate four issues namely (i) The significance of the mother tongue as the language of knowledge in educational institutions, (ii) The balance between the use of Malay and English in HEIs, (iii) Efforts to uphold the Malay language as the national language, and (iv) The use national language in the public service sector. As such, this academic paper utilises a literature review by compiling primary and secondary sources to clarify facts based on real-world concerns.

Issues, Rationale and Challenges

This discussion examines the findings of a secondary study that includes initiatives by the government and various parties in empowering the Malay language as a communication transmission bridge that becomes a significant element of Malaysian identity. The results of the study found that the government plays a critical role in the continued use and position of the Malay language by the people of this country and should be empowered by all parties. The rationale in the effort to dignify the Malay language is the maintenance of the nation state as

enshrined in the national constitution which declares the Malay language as the official language of the country.

The Issue of the Mother Tongue as the Language of Knowledge in Educational Institutions

Since the beginning of the era of the Sriwijaya kingdom in the 7th century until its peak in the era of the Islamic glory in Malaya, Malay has been used as the language of knowledge (Hassan, Angterian & Yusop, 2017). Many great works in the fields of literature, Sufism, and theology continue to be written in the Malay language, bringing it to a new level of distinction. This has resulted in a rise in the prestige of the Malay language, which is now the primary language of instruction in the national education system. In addition, the notion that Malay should be elevated to the status of an official language within the educational system was emphasised heavily, particularly after Malaysia attained independence. Later, Rahman Talib's report intensified efforts to expand the use of the Malay language, specifically by changing the medium of instruction at the primary school level from English to Malay and conducting general examinations in Malay (Jamaluddin, 2017). Since then, efforts to establish Malay as the language of knowledge had continued and were being carried out with increasing vigour.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Language and Library Board (DBP) published either original works or translations of university textbooks that allowed students to make references and answer exams or tests in Malay language (Jamaluddin, 2017). This facilitated the empowerment of Malay as a medium of instruction (Jamaluddin, 2017). Malay is also utilised in scientific writing, such as dissertations and theses (Jamaluddin, 2017). The splendour of the Malay language was also evident in 1987, when Malay was used as the primary language for undergraduate degree courses at public universities (Mahamod, Anak Lasan & Nik Yusoff, 2009). However, major issues in educational institutions such as rating and ranking that require English to be supported as the language of knowledge began to emerge and undermine the authority of the Malay language. This affects the role and status of the Malay language as a language of knowledge in this decade because the English language is increasingly dominant (Musa, 2004). The role of Malay as a language of knowledge, whether at the elementary school level or the higher education level, is frequently undermined by the frequently changing language policy.

This decade, the use of the Malay language in all or the majority of educational institutions must emphasise the use of English as the language of knowledge, as English is a globally used international language (Othman, Yusoff, Awang & Jupiter, 2016a). This includes all aspects performed by teaching staff, including teaching and learning, publishing, research, and consultation. Although educational institutions or universities are the most effective sector for elevating the status of the Malay language, this advantage is lost when administrators prioritise English, diminishing the interest and confidence of students and professors to make it the primary academic language. The issue of empowering the use of Malay language is frequently the subject of heated debate, particularly in the improvising the dynamic of higher education institutions (Othman, Yusoff, Awang & Jupiter, 2016b). The success and glory of Malay as the language of instruction at the university level failed to persuade a number of parties responsible for transferring language of instruction-related acts and policies.

The change in language policy at Public Institutions of Higher Education (*IPTA*) in 1993 and the relaxation given to Private Institutions of Higher Education (*IPTS*) in the Education Act of 1996 regarding the implementation of English as the primary medium of instruction are viewed

as having a negative impact on the position and function of the Malay language. in institutions of higher education (Ramli, 2017). Although English is permitted in *IPTS*, public universities also succumb to the temptation when the majority of courses are taught in English (Ramli, 2017). The diminishment of function and marginalisation of the Malay language in courses mandated by the Federal Constitution, the National Language Act, the Education Act, and the Language and Library Council Act will have a direct impact on the status of the Malay language as one of the pillars of nation building (Ramli, 2017). Consequently, this circumstance is viewed as a formidable obstacle for Malaysia to maintain Malay as the language of knowledge, particularly in the context of education.

Rationale: Teaching and learning activities (PdP) conducted in Malay will not challenge students in higher education to master diverse fields of study (Esa, Abang Muis, Ationg, Othman, Lukin, Mokhtar & Sharif Adam, 2021a). This is because the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) and other parties have made continuous efforts to strengthen the position of the Malay language, as well as to enhance students' writing skills through translation activities, the publication of scholarly books, and the formation of terms. To ensure that the construction and development of the Malay language is always practical and relevant, all parties must support all DBP-implemented plans. Developments in countries such as Japan and Germany demonstrate how quickly both languages developed excellence and adapted to the post-World War II environment (Amir, 2009). It is estimated that between twenty thousand and thirty thousand book titles are translated annually in Japan and Korea, demonstrating that the translation movement has become a national responsibility (Amir, 2009).

This clearly demonstrates how they pursue and attain progress without ignoring their responsibility to build the nation's civilization. When various disciplines of knowledge written in foreign languages are immediately translated into their mother tongue, the empowerment of their mother tongue and the advancement of their nation can be accomplished. Why aren't local educational institutions able to advance with their mother tongue if other countries and nations can? If the mother tongue is only used as a market language, a low-level spoken language, or simply for chit-chat in a coffee shop, its authority and dignity will inevitably decline. Empowering the use of Malay in the educational system, in addition to enhancing mastery of other languages such as English, should not be taken lightly, thus it is worthwhile to make a concerted effort to master any language that can contribute to the advancement of civilization (Esa, Ationg, Othman, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, Ramlie & Abang Muis, 2021b).

The significance of mastering other languages, such as English, is beyond dispute, especially in the modern era of globalisation. Mastery of the English language is crucial in today's educational institutions, especially at the higher education level (Yalani & Bakar, 2017). Thus, the language becomes the primary means of communication with foreigners and outsiders. The current reality in the context of teaching and learning is that the English language has been used to impart knowledge to students, particularly in the technical field. This is due to the fact that the majority of scientific writing in this field is written and published in English (Yalani & Bakar, 2017). However, the significance of the Malay language should not be overlooked when English is the preferred language for teaching and learning. Ironically, the vast of knowledge should not be limited to the mastery of the English language but rather, the use of the English language in the field of knowledge is viewed as an impediment to further intellectual stimulation (Marinsah, Abang Muis, Esa, Othman, Ramlie, Mokhtar & Yusoff, 2021).

Challenges: When the government enacted the Education Act of 1996 and mandated the use of English in the teaching of science and mathematics, the development of the Malay language was slightly halted (Jambi, 2008). The strengthening of the Malay language in the age of education modernization continues to be challenged, thereby affecting its strength as a national language, due to the influence and development of the new world order, which places the English language above the Malay language in education, employment, and interpersonal relationships (Jambi, 2008). A few individuals have begun to doubt or lose confidence in the Malay language as a result of the emphasis on science and technology and the English language, including students of non-Malay ethnicities who are more comfortable communicating and learning in English or their native tongue (Ationg, Esa, Othman & Yusoff, 2021a).

In the field of education, the target audience for Malay speakers includes all members of the educational institution, including the administration and management, the teaching staff, and the students (Mokhtar, Othman, Ibrahim, Esa, Raymond Majumah, Yusoff, & Ationg, 2021). The first obstacle is centred on the student factor. Students are the primary audience for this issue. This is due to the fact that students are the primary clients in the field of education, and they come from various cultures that communicate in different languages. It is difficult for students to use Malay because the process of acquiring their first language is automatically determined by their family background (Mamat, 2016). When a student is born into a family that is a part of the native community and culture, for instance, the first language the student uses in daily life is the language of the natives (Lukin, Esa, Abang Muis, Ationg, Mohd Tamring, Othman & Mokhtar, 2021). If the student has been using native as a language of communication since childhood, it is difficult for them to communicate with others in other languages. Even though they were born into the Malay community, the influence of their dialect or accent on their syntactic structure makes it difficult for them to speak the Malay language. The result is that they feel more comfortable communicating in their native language or in English at school or educational institutions.

In addition, one of the daily occurrences is the impact of technological advancement, which has significantly altered the way of life, including the language used. We live alongside technological tools like computers and the internet as a result of globalisation that has accelerated dramatically. Furthermore, any news or information can be transmitted via email and applications such as Whatsapp and Telegram. This makes it impossible for the community to avoid interacting and conducting business via the internet, especially for students, because electronic facilities and the internet are one of the primary vehicles for acquiring knowledge (Tobi, Osman, Abu Bakar & Othman, 2021). When people begin communicating in cyberspace, new words and abbreviations frequently enter and disrupt our vocabulary, sometimes without being filtered or refined beforehand. The Malay and English languages are combined to create a crossword puzzle. This will indirectly have a negative effect on students when they implement internet-learned language into the field of education. The long-term effect of this issue is that the country's education will become infused with the language of the new media, namely English.

Issues with Regards to the Balance of Using Malay and English in HEIs

The language of instruction during university teaching and learning sessions is crucial for both students and instructors. The flow of knowledge through the medium of language shapes the

students' thoughts and comprehension. However, there are contradictions among language fighters who seek to elevate the status of only one language in higher education institutions. Admittedly, the choice of language in the university should be democratic, allowing students to choose a language in which they feel comfortable expressing their opinions during the presentation session or in scientific writing (Jupiter, Othman, Yusoff & Muda, 2021). The number of students who speak Malay is decreasing, based on the development of their English proficiency and usage. In higher education institutions where Malay and English are commonly used, the imbalance in the use of this language will inevitably have a negative impact on the promotion of the Malay language.

Knowledge sharing in universities should not be limited to a single language, and a culture that places too much emphasis on international languages, especially English, should not exist (Othman, 2021f). In this context, it is indisputable that the English language has surpassed the Malay language as the dominant language in Malaysia. All subjects taught at IPTS are in English, including those required by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency National Accreditation Board (MQA/LAN) (Yalani & Bakar, 2017). All MQA/LAN subjects besides National Language are taught in English, including Malaysian Studies, Islamic Studies, and Moral Studies (Yalani & Bakar, 2017). In certain nations, the increased use of English as a second or third language has an effect on the educational system. Malay speakers, in particular, are distancing themselves from their mother tongue as they pursue information technology. This is closely related to the low number of Malay-language websites, which forces Malay speakers to search for information in English, the lingua franca of the modern world (Musa, 2004).

With a more critical perspective on the fact that some individuals accept and identify English as their native tongue. Malay's status as a language of knowledge was diminished when universities began to promote English as an academic language for assessment purposes (Esa, Ationg, Othman & Jupiter, 2021d). The loss of the Malay language's status as the national language will undoubtedly harm the future of the Malay language, which has depended for so long on the government's efforts. If Malay is recognised as a foreign language, it will not receive the same benefits as other mother tongues, such as Mandarin and Tamil. In fact, it is possible that the Malay language is no longer a required subject for Malay students, as it is no longer bound by the government's mother tongue policies.

Rationale: In this era of globalization, English has become the predominant language of instruction worldwide. By emphasising the use of English, the nation is able to compete on par with other industrialised nations (Musa, 2004). Malaysia is not lagging behind in instituting English language instruction in schools. The government, particularly the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM), is extremely concerned with the teaching and learning of Malay and English in schools. Replacing the Policy on Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI), the ministry has recently implemented the Policy on Enhancing the Malaysian Language and Strengthening the English Language (MBMMBI) in order to create a society that can master the Malay and English languages and foster community unity (MOE, 2014).

In relation to this issue of balancing the use of English and Malay, the lecturer's role is crucial in allowing his students the freedom to express their ideas in writing or in open communication using the two languages. The majority of scientific books and journals are unquestionably

written in English. In addition to using international languages as a means of introduction in teaching and learning sessions, international languages are also utilised as a medium of instruction. Therefore, the majority of students will follow the pace of learning by using English without realising that their ideas and thoughts become inaccurate due to the use of improper grammar and fluency in speaking, which disrupts the concentration of understanding (Language use in the university, n.d). Therefore, encouraging the instructor to offer his students a choice between the two languages will be beneficial for both parties.

Moreover, the increasing number of university students from diverse backgrounds, particularly from rural areas, makes it difficult for professors to choose one language for the learning session. This is due to the problem of students who use English infrequently in everyday life. In addition, with students who have a high background, such as city-dwellers, Chinese, and Tamils, it is expected that their group will frequently use English in daily conversations. Providing language options in a bilingual system is, in fact, the most rational or optimal solution for all students. Students who speak Malay receive the same grading system as those who speak English, based on the ideas and critical thinking that are emphasised during classroom instruction. In addition, bilingual education is essential for enhancing students' English language proficiency and Malay language proficiency. If students succeed in acquiring the ability to communicate with both outsiders and insiders in the English language, this will undoubtedly contribute to Malaysia's low unemployment rate.

In the context of elevating the Malay language through bilingual education, culturalists interpret high culture as a culture of knowledge, thought, and technology. In other words, elevated Malay language is a language variety used as an introduction to knowledge, language used in official situations, standard language, and standard language. In relation to this, it is highly appropriate that the Malay language used by the Malaysian community is now recognised as a high-level and quality language, given its position as a language that shapes culture (Othman, Yusoff, Abdul Hamid, Awang & Jupiter, 2018c). Education in Malay has advanced rapidly since the establishment of secondary schools with Malay as the medium of instruction and the implementation of the National Education Policy, which made Malay the primary language of instruction in institutions of higher learning (*IPT*) (Mohd Yusoff & Jamian, 2011). With this, Malay as the country's mother tongue can be honoured in universities, despite English's prevalence (Yaacob, Ali & Abd Wahab, 2017).

Challenges: In an effort to master the English language and empower the Malay language through balanced bilingual learning, there are also difficulties in the Malay language empowerment strategy. This is evident when despite all efforts, the rate of involved problems continues to rise. As we already know, in the concept of language, language serves as a tool for communication. Additionally, language serves as a bridge that connects communities regardless of skin colour or geographical boundaries. Consequently, language represents the soul of a nation. Nonetheless, Malaysia is a unique nation due to its racial diversity. This demonstrates that every ethnic group possesses its own language and culture (Abdullah, 2010).

Due to this, members of this multi-ethnic society will communicate within their own circles using their respective mother tongues. There are, however, a few elite communities that are so exposed to western culture that they are willing to accept English as their permanent language and are unwilling to promote their native tongue. However, it cannot be denied that the use of English is essential for the advancement of a person's career. For example, the use of English

in other courses is crucial because in the social world, which is the world of work, the private sector does not use Bahasa Malaysia as a spoken language because the majority of private sector projects rely on international cooperation. Indeed, the issue of graduate unemployment is caused by the inability to use English proficiently as an international intermediate language (Not Fluent in English Among the Reasons for Failing to Get a Job, n.d).

In addition to the impact of communication skills that lead to unemployment, the widespread use of English in the daily lives of the community and the younger generation has contributed to the decline of Malay speakers. In contrast, the converse holds true for the Malay community, which speaks English more frequently. In examining the position of the Malay language, it was revealed that the application of English in the education system undermines the position of the Malay language which has led to difficulties in maintaining Malay as the Native Language of Malay Speakers. This is due to the fact that it violates the National Education Policy and the National Language Policy as stipulated in the Constitution or the National Language Act of 1967/68. PPSMI has diminished the role and significance of Malay among Malay speakers (Peng & Ishak, 2008). As a result, the government has implemented a policy to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

Efforts to Dignify and Preserve the Malay Language as The National Language

Language is a means of communication. Communication is essential for conveying information to recipients. The objective of the national action plan at the level of higher education institutions to elevate the status of Malay as the national language is to increase the recognition of the Malay language academy in various fields. Recognizing students who excel in the Malay language in a variety of activities by honouring students who receive the Malay Language Figure Award in the technical sector and the Malay Academic Figure Outstanding Award include students at polytechnics and community colleges, whereas the hope award figure focuses on young professors. The ministry provides money, trophies, and certificates to recipients of this prestigious awards. In addition to being able to honour notable figures and participate directly with the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Public figures are both a part of the programme and a priority as a guest on the programme. The skills possessed by the characters can also be utilised for language-related research.

Raising the status of the Malay language by contributing to the national field through the publication of high-quality books and the production of books, manuscripts, etc. Every student from various fields of study and levels is encouraged to collaborate to elevate the Malay language. In accordance with Article 152 of the Malaysian constitution, which designates Malay as the national language, Malay must be used as the medium of instruction in higher education (Othman, Ibrahim, Esa, Ationg, Mokhtar, Mohd Tamring & Sharif Adam, 2021h). In accordance with Malaysia's Malay Language Education Policy, the action was taken. Teachers have a significant obligation to translate the educational policy into writing or into learning and teaching activities at all levels of study. The instructor's efforts will be acknowledged by the ministry. In addition, the award was given in recognition of the teachers' efforts to preserve the Malay language as a language of knowledge (Peng & Ishak, 2008).

Balancing the Malay and English languages is not viewed negatively and is even a topic of discussion and inquiry among the highest political parties. In Malaysia, the influence of the media has a significant impact on the English language, the use of English-language books, and daily English speech in some communities (Sharif Adam, Othman, Hamid, Esa, Ationg,

Lukin, & Mohd Tamring, 2021). A few individuals believe that Malay is a local language that has not yet reached a level of modernization and are therefore condescending towards it. Some Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines, use Malay as the medium of instruction. Due to the large number of Malays in Malaysia, the Malay language is a priority and the country's official language, despite the presence of numerous dialects. Malay is the language used for conversation, whether inquiring or imparting information. As the national language, Malay is not only understood by students of various races and ethnicities, but it can also serve to unite a multiracial society.

Rationale: The purpose of elevating the Malay language as the language of knowledge and ensuring its continued use as the national language is to improve the language and instil a sense of pride in the nation's official language. This is because communicating with an individual or a group requires an appropriate sentence structure and the use of suitable sentences. This topic also involves the intonation and conversational style of Malay. In addition, the Malay language, as the language of knowledge, contributes to the preservation of the nation-state. This is because Malaysia is a multiracial country with plural societies; however, the Malay language became the official language after agreement and consultation.

Since the time of the Sriwijaya kingdom, traders have used Malay as a means of communication (Hassan, Angterian & Yusop, 2017). In 1956, through the Razak Education Committee, Malaysia resolutely elevated Malay as the official language in the national education system, following the country's independence (Musa & Che Rodi, 2014). Therefore, by recognising Malay as the national language, we can educate young children from a young age to speak Malay so that it does not become extinct. Additionally, some neighbouring countries use Malay as their instructional language. Since the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia, the Malay language began to develop, as the primary user of the Malay language and serves as an example for other communities and nations

Challenge: Although Malay is the official language of Malaysia, maintaining Malay as the national language presents challenges. The widespread use of English in higher education and the public service sector is one of the contributing factors. This is demonstrated by the fact that English is more likely to use methods and learning resources in English in higher education (Peng & Ishak, 2008). This is inevitable given that the majority of learning and teaching terms, particularly in science classes, are based on English. Students are more likely to speak English than Malay as a result of the continued practise. Despite English's position as the world's most widely spoken language, there are a few individuals who believe that Malay is merely a local language used informally, and who consider English to be far more significant. Such scepticism encourages pride in foreign languages and excludes the younger generation from speaking in their mother tongue and concentrating on English proficiency. They also believe that the Malay language is simple because it is frequently heard and used in daily life, whereas the English language must be learned due to its unfamiliarity.

In addition, the social stigma that a person who speaks English fluently is intelligent exists. Due to the fact that they are more proficient in English, the thoughts and methods of parents who teach their children from a young age make it difficult for children to comprehend when they are in school. The Malay language is essential for establishing one's identity, as Malaysian citizens must be fluent in and able to speak Malay in order to appreciate the struggle of national figures in achieving independence and the fight for the Malay language as the medium of

instruction (Musa & Che Rodi, 2014). Some individuals believe that making Malay the language of knowledge will have an effect on a nation's native tongue. It is well-known that Malaysia's population is comprised of people of numerous races and nationalities, making fair and harmonious integration challenging. A few individuals believe that their language rights are violated when Malay is the language of knowledge, and that their mother tongue will be lost if it is only an option for learning and teaching in schools.

Utilizing the Use of The National Language in Public Service Sector

As we already know, issues will inevitably arise before, during, and after the implementation of any significant matter. The same applies to the use of the national language in the public sector. The use of Rojak language by civil servants in their daily speech and writing is one of the most important aspects of this matter. There is no doubt that the mixed language (known as “Bahasa Rojak”) has a long history and has been passed down from generation to generation, particularly by government officials. mix language is a form of communication in Malaysia that involves the use of multiple languages, including English, Malay, and others (Peng & Ishak, 2008). In general, Malay is the primary language, but “Bahasa Rojak” is widely used, particularly among Malaysian public servants.

Furthermore, problem arises when a public organisation is more likely to use a foreign language, such as English, rather than the national language, which is Malay. The fact that many civil servants prefer to speak English and Chinese in their daily lives has caused them to disregard the national language. In addition, this issue has directly eroded the use of the authentic Malay language, which has had a negative effect on the surrounding population. For instance, if a person always communicates in English, co-workers who observe this association will begin to adopt the same behaviour because they are influenced by the workplace environment. There is no doubt that the number of Malay language speakers is growing, but it is still not regarded as the dominant language because it has to compete with other languages, such as English and others, or, in other words, because it is denied. The issue of public servants having a negative view of the national language was met with scepticism.

The spread of false information regarding the Malay language, the national language of Malaysia, is not due to a language problem, but rather to individual's attitude and perception of lack of confidence in his own race's ability. This problem occurs and becomes a stigma that spreads from the lower class of people to the level of leaders, where the perception is that English-speaking workers are more marketable and held in higher regard in the business world than Malay-speaking workers. As an international language that facilitates communication, this occurs when English is regarded as more sophisticated or of higher quality. As a result, the community forgets and refuses to use the national language and practises the mix language instead.

Rationale: From a different angle, the rationale for using the national language in the public service sector with the key word of the public employment sector is a platform for empowering the national language today. The government issued a Service Circular in 2011 with the intent of providing direction on the use of the national language for official business within the Public Service. According to Article 152 of the Federal Constitution and the National Language Act of 1963/67, Malay is the National Language and should be used in the administration of the nation (Amir, 2009). The purpose of this circular is to ensure that the national language is used correctly. The government has established a National Language Implementation Committee to

meet the objectives related to the rationale for the implementation of the National Language in the Public Service Sector in order to further strengthen the use of the national language in the country's primary sectors.

Among these responsibilities is implementing and ensuring the use of the National Language in the Public Service. This can be accomplished by conducting regular monitoring of each public service organisation to ensure that its employees are aware of this implementation and consistently use the national language in their daily conversations and writing. In addition, various programmes or activities pertaining to the national language can be successfully planned and implemented through this implementation. An example of the Malay Language Carnival involving numerous public workers, including teachers, educators, health centres, recreation & tourism, construction, and other public sectors. This can directly achieve the objective of implementing the national language in the respective government ministries and agencies, as well as instil a love of language in every civil servant.

As a result of this exposure, it can also inspire a large number of individuals to always respect the national language. In addition, all Department Heads are reminded through the Implementation of this Circular Letter to always ensure that the National Language is implemented comprehensively in public services. Government departments and agencies are required to use the national language exclusively in all official correspondence and documentation throughout the nation (Che Hodi & Musa, 2014). In addition, the invitation letter, host, prayer reading, welcome speech, opening speech, and closing speech must be prepared in the national language for official events involving the presence of Malaysian citizens. To ensure that this matter runs smoothly and efficiently, every public official should carry out his responsibilities in a professional and responsible manner by using the national language correctly and appropriately in all official matters, including in writing and orally.

These officers should also be proficient in the national language in terms of pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar, and have a profound appreciation for the goals of its use when communicating or performing their duties. As stated in this service circular, department heads and administrative personnel are responsible for ensuring that the national language is used in all administrative matters pertaining to their respective agencies and ministries. Confident and optimistic, it is not impossible for the Public Service in Malaysia to master the national language well on an ongoing basis and to serve as an example for young workers in the future, thereby enhancing the quality of national language usage among the general populace. Therefore, it can be concluded that this Service Circular has a positive effect on public servants and is rationally able to further encourage the use of the authentic national language. This can also prevent this language from being assimilated by the modern era and is continuously valued by all social strata.

Recommendations and Summary

In conclusion, all parties should empower the use and position of Malay in national educational institutions. It has not been an easy process to overcome all of the obstacles and make the Malay language the country's national and official language. Since the era of independence, various internal and external obstacles have been overcome, allowing the Malay language to become a respected national language. To ensure the survival of the Malay language, all parties must work cooperatively to maintain and respect it. Therefore, the scenario of strengthening the Malay language among students should not be taken lightly and must be strengthened prior

to facing the threat of extinction, as the Malay language has great potential as a body of knowledge that can shape the stability of social relations and the continuation of the Malay language's dignity in Malaysian civilization (Othman, Esa, Abu Bakar & Mokhtar, 2021g).

To strengthen the position of Malay as the language of knowledge in educational institutions, it has been suggested that teaching or academic staff who conduct research, publication, supervision, and consultation in Malay should be recognised. Next, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) must consider the most effective means of bolstering and elevating the Malay language within educational institutions (Esa, Othman, Abu Bakar & Mokhtar, 2021c). One of the mechanisms for recognising or rewarding educational institutions, including teaching staff and students, who have demonstrated outstanding performance in the process of elevating the Malay language's status. Students can be recognised through the organisation of carnivals or competitions consisting of speeches, debates, poem recitations, forums, sketches, and poems in the mother tongue. In turn, this will increase the students' motivation to use Malay more frequently and improve their language skills.

Several steps are taken in lower-level educational institutions to plant the seeds of the Malay language's authority in the younger generation as part of efforts to elevate the status of the Malay language. Utilizing the Malay language in the teaching and learning (PdP) of Science and Mathematics is the most crucial step. Increasing the teaching and learning time for Malay language courses in national-type schools (SJK). Thirdly, curriculum enhancements (Primary School Standard Curriculum) include methods for enhancing and mastering fundamental language skills by providing a sufficient number of qualified Malay language teachers. Apart from that is by expanding the use of information and communication technologies and the teaching and learning of Malay language to make the learning environment more enjoyable and creative.

Malay has been the medium of instruction in schools through the higher education level for a very long time. Even though there are numerous obstacles and problems in the way of elevating the Malay language, the fight must continue. The government should take every issue involving the Malay language seriously, particularly if it pertains to education. This is due to the fact that it is the people involved in education who will determine whether the Malay language will develop or remain dormant. Regarding the competition between mastery of the Malay and English languages during the learning process, it is indeed irrational to attempt to elevate one's native tongue. In accordance with this, the young generation, particularly school students, should cultivate their national language identity beginning in school.

In order to make Malay the language of knowledge, we must first cultivate identity among the community, particularly among those who have no identity towards the language, who have overly strong feelings towards Malay, and who lack confidence and self-confidence. Regarding the long-term impact on the graduate unemployment rate, the higher education sector instils a commitment to rational values and optimistic thinking in order to prioritise bilingual education, with Malay as the national language and English as the language of knowledge that supports language mastery for job industry preparation. The steps taken to restore the honour of the Malay language among its native speakers emphasise the commitment of various parties, including the authorities, the media, and the Malay language's native speakers. Particularly, it is anticipated that a shift in the attitude of native Malay speakers will demonstrate efforts to

elevate the Malay language. Admittedly, everyone should be aware that elevating the English language will only hinder the Malay language's development (Che Hodi & Musa, 2014).

In addition, considering the more chronic consequences is to consider the long-term extinction of one's mother tongue. In order to ensure the future viability of the Malay language, all parties and those in positions of authority must contribute to the successful development of the Malay language. As a result, International Mother - tongue Day has been established to foster an appreciation for each mother tongue. This event is actually held every year on February 21 (Che Hodi & Musa, 2014). Challenges in maintaining Malay as the Mother Tongue of Native Malay Speakers (Challenges in upholding Malay as the Mother Tongue of Native Malay Speakers, 2021) suggests that the government's initiative should provide a platform to elevate the status of Malay as the mother tongue of native Malay speakers. It is evident that language reflects the nation and advances the nation.

In this context, the Malay language is essential for maintaining unity because it allows students of different races to communicate in Malay. Because Malay is the national language, the establishment of Malay as the language of knowledge is an important factor. Although the Ministry of Education discusses the issue of promoting the Malay language as a language of knowledge frequently, it is never viewed negatively. In fact, it contributes to the generation of more pertinent thoughts and ideas. Maintaining the national constitution, which designates Malay as the country's official language, is the justification for the effort to elevate the status of Malay. The recognition of figures by the Ministry of Education serves as an example for others, as does the awarding of prizes in recognition of their contributions to enhancing the dignity of Malay. As a leader in the public service sector, every Malaysian should always uphold the national language of our country, Malay, from childhood to adulthood, so that our knowledge of the language can be applied over the long term.

To conclude, we should also be aware of the significance of maintaining the dignity of the national language, especially in the modern world of today, so that this language continues to be praised by many parties, including government employees. Malaysians should avoid using the mix language in everyday speech and writing and maintain a positive outlook on the national language's advantages. To protect the language, it is necessary to plant the seeds of a strong patriotic affection for the national language in each individual and to continually develop and improve knowledge of the national language in terms of grammar and the meaning of each word. It is not impossible to preserve the national language for an extended period of time in order to create a community that always values the Malay language's capabilities. This achieves the national objective of improving the quality and quality of the use of the national language while preserving the image or identity of the individual, the nation, and the country. It can, in fact, strengthen the bond between multi-ethnic communities through social interaction in the national language.

The direction of this study is to pioneer the efforts of various parties in taking responsibility for preserving and empowering the mother tongue regardless of different backgrounds, religions and beliefs, in order to nourish the elements of identity, improve the quality and quality of the use of the national language, while maintaining the image of self-identity, race, and country. This is because in the face of global competition, the Malay language should be a bastion to defend the strength of the Malay nation's identity.

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