Language planning in Malaysia: The first hundred years

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The past, present and prospects of a linguistic range that includes Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, and English

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RECENT developments in Malaysia have brought forth many issues vis-à-vis language planning, notably including the return to English as a medium of instruction. The present review addresses current linguistic issues and their implications for Malay as the national official language, bringing together linguistics, sociology, education, psychology, communication, geography, history, politics, finance and management, in a nation which is not only multilingual but also multiethnic, multi-religious and multicultural. To make the matter more complex still, the immigrant population is almost as large as the so-called indigenous 'majority'.

Introduction

In language planning, scholars typically have to choose a particular language over one or several others, to be promoted as a national language. They then have to persuade and convince not only state executives and leaders, but also those involved at all levels of language use, regarding forms or rules to be cultivated, and eventually balance benefits against cost (cf. Eastman, 1983).

One generalization often made about Malaysia is that three languages are spoken in the country: Malay, Chinese, and Indian. However, while it is true that Malays speak Malay, Chinese and Indians can hardly be said to speak one language each. The Chinese community has several mutually unintelligible 'dialects' that linguists consider languages (such as Hokkien, Cantonese, and Hakka), while the Indian community has at least eight distinct languages (Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Gujerati, Marathi, Oriya, and Punjabi). In addition, various indigenous languages are spoken in peninsular Malaysia (such as Temiar, Jah Hut, and Mah Meri), while the merger with Sabah and Sarawak in 1963 brought in further indigenous languages (such as Kadazan, Bajau, and Penan).

Superimposed on them all is English. Within

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this diverse setting, language issues produce sensitive reactions to government efforts to introduce a common National Language. A detailed sociolinguistic account of the situation can be found in *Language and Society in Malaysia* (Asmah Haji Omar, 1982) and *Language Planning in Southeast Asia* (Abdullah Hassan, 1994).

The search for a common symbol of identity

The end of World War II brought rapid political changes. For the first time, the various Malayan communities worked together to gain independence from their colonial masters, the British, achieving self-government in 1955 and independence in 1957. In 1963, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore merged with Malaya to form Malaysia, but two years later Singapore became a separate nation. After independence, a coalition government formed by the United Malay National Organization, the Malaysian Chinese Association, and the Malaysian Indian Congress faced the urgent task of integrating the three groups into one nation.

Under British rule, the three were kept apart, a policy of divide and rule being implemented through an educational system designed to create a divided population. Malays were given six years of education: to familiarize boys with the arithmetic needed for business; to develop better hygiene; and to train the sons of the aristocracy in English. The Indians were also given six years of education, and were expected to provide labour for the plantations and railways. The Chinese, however, were allowed to establish their own schools and use curricula, teachers and textbooks from China, as the government did not consider that it had an obligation to provide education for a transient population (cf. the annual Report of the Resident-General of the Federated Malay States, 1901).

The government established English schools to supply manpower for the administrative machinery. Thus, the population was divided for a century, and the Malays were divided into various states. Perhaps one of the easiest consensuses arrived at, though (as discovered later) not the simplest to implement, was choice of a national language. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister, formulated the philosophy of an 'authentic' indigenous language. In his speech at the University of Singapore on 9th December 1964, he said:

> It is only right that as a developing nation, we want to have a language of our own. If the National Language is not introduced, our country will be devoid of a unified character and personality – as I would put it, a nation without a soul and without a life.

Wong and Ee (1971:78) report that 'national considerations demanded the replacement of the colonial and foreign language by an indigenous one – Malay'. This was a positive sign, as the choice of a national language 'is most often tied to elements of nationalism' involving struggles between groups (Eastman, 1983:5).

The acceptance of Malay came in July 1947, in the form of the *People's Constitutional Proposals* presented by the AMCJA-PUTERA, in which the AMCJA (All Malaya Council of Joint Action) represented non-Malays and the PUTERA (*P*usat *T*enaga *R*akyat) represented Malays). One of the proposals was that Malay should be the sole official language while the use of other languages would be permitted. This desire to have a common language as a symbol for the new nation was translated into reality when the status of Malay as National Language was enshrined in the Constitution of Malaysia in 1981, Article 152: the result of an understanding between all the ethnic groups.

Coming from different cultures, religions and languages, the people of Malaysia needed more than a national language as an instrument of integration. Political and ethnic leaders considered the schools as the most suitable channel to cultivate a common national outlook. However, as schools were identified with different ethnic groups and their languages, attempts to introduce changes provoked immediate repercussions. Nonetheless, the school system remained the most plausible channel, and language the most useful instrument for future integration. Hence, many of the steps toward these objectives took place in school.

However, Malay, the newly chosen national language, was inadequate in many respects. Though it had been widely used as a language of administration, culture, trade, diplomacy and philosophy, it lacked terminology for science and technology. It therefore needed to be rigorously developed and cultivated to enhance its status and efficiency as a tool for imparting knowledge, values and information.

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Codifying the national language

Language planning involves the careful selection, development and cultivation of certain norms. If, for example, Malay remained inadequate to express science and technology, it would fail to perform its function as a language to impart education. Its role as an instrument of integration for the new nation would also be unfulfilled. In short, Malay had to be developed to enable it to perform as a language of both administration and education.

Within the newly independent nation, language planning grew out of socio-political need and was envisaged as going hand in hand with the other programmes. Malaysia's language planning has therefore been managed by the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* ('Language and Literacy Agency'), an institution established in 1957 with the aim of developing the language to perform its new functions and roles.

I will trace here planning strategies carried out by both the Ministry of Education and the Language and Literacy Agency in the selection of norms for Malay, its codification, modernization (cf. Ferguson, 1968), dissemination, and evaluation. Noss's 1984 definition of language planning includes both form and role planning (through such disseminating agencies as schools, colleges and universities), and this approach will be used here. Norms involving phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic forms have to be prescribed, so that the language can meet the needs of a developing modern society.

The volume of output seemed quite modest during the first ten years of the Agency's existence, but after 1970 strategies were more aggressive. Initial skepticism from all ethnic groups, including the Malays, about the weaknesses of Malay had to be neutralized by enhancing its capabilities in different roles. This was achieved through the codification and implementation of language norms, especially in spelling, pronunciation, and lexical expansion.

Standardization and word coinage

Traditionally, Malay had a writing system based on Arabic letters, and the first Romanized spelling system was introduced in 1905, with a revision in 1972 among whose changes was the addition of the letters O, V, and X, to cater for scientific terms containing these letters. After three years of trial, the system was further modified and stabilized in 1975. Pronunciation, however, was never a problem in Malay, as it was already fairly standardized, but a few changes were recommended recently to bring it into line with the new spelling, which is in harmony with the pronunciation of the Indonesian national language, Bahasa Indonesia, in effect a sister language to Bahasa Malaysia.

One of the most pressing needs of the National Language – vis-à-vis its role as a language of instruction – was for scientific and technical terms. Teachers and textbook writers need such terms to express concepts, processes, names, and so on, in their various disciplines. By establishing working committees of discipline and language experts, guidelines were formulated, and the ISO system (designed by INFO TERM in Vienna) was used. To date, millions of technical terms have been coined for all disciplines. With these came various grammatical and semantic elements, including phonological and morphological forms that affect Malay. The Language and Literary Agency became sensitive to the idea that such elements have to be regulated, and, for example, bringing in from English affixes of Greek and Latin origin (such as *a*, *in*, *im*, *un*, *ab*, *an*, *ir*, *dis*, and *non*) was efficiently handled. The next step was the compilation and definition of scientific and technical terms, so that differing (and confusing) interpretations would not arise.

The former Malaysian educational system (using English, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, and different syllabuses) had kept people apart, and had to be replaced with one that would bring the various groups together. However, implementation of the common language policy encountered resentment. Because it was an important instrument of national integration, and an important feature in educational policy, the leaders of the country had to bargain, persuade and coax the various ethnic groups to adjust. Several issues were however problematic.

The choice of bilingualism

Issues relating to medium of instruction swung from the need to implement the National Language as sole medium to that of accepting kinds of bilingualism, two varieties of which were possible:

parallel bilingualism in which two school systems use two different languages

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sequential bilingualism in which two languages are used, at earlier and later stages.

From 1946 to 1970, policies came under heavy scrutiny and changes had to be made, after which no further reviews were made until 1995. Although this seemed to suggest that the policy had finally been stabilized and accepted, there was still much to be done in order to achieve political and social integration.

Debates on the effect and impact of bilingualism had taken place even before independence. In 1946, after the Japanese occupation, the Cheeseman Plan introduced a policy which advocated free primary (elementary) education in all languages and introduced secondary (middle and high school) education using the four different languages as distinct media of instruction. The teaching of 'mother tongues' was to be made available in English-medium schools and at the same time the teaching of English was to be compulsory in all vernacular schools. This however would have been parallel bilingualism, which paid no attention to the need for integration. The policy was abandoned in 1949 with the demise of the Malayan Union. (Asmah Haji Omar, 1979, provides further information on the social, political and ideological motives of the plan.)

The success of the Malays in bringing an end to the Malayan Union propelled them to seek further benefits and advantages. The Barnes Committee, set up to look into the plight of Malay education, was however unable to propose improvement in the Malay schools without involving the whole system of education. In 1950, therefore, the Barnes Report (Malaya, 1951a) made a radical recommendation that all existing schools should become National schools in which children of the various ethnic groups would be taught through first Malay then English: in effect, sequential bilingualism. As expected, however, the Chinese and Indians reacted strongly, seeing it as a move to eliminate their languages and cultural identities.

The result was the Fenn-Wu Committee, formed in 1952 to look into the needs of the Chinese schools. It gained the impression that most Chinese were prepared to accept Malay and English as media of instruction, while at the same time continuing to learn their mother tongue in order to keep their cultural identity. This would make them trilingual, and indeed they welcomed the advantages that mastery of three languages would give them. The Fenn-Wu Report (Malaya, 1952) seemed to make the same claim for the Indians: mother tongues of the Indian communities (Tamil, Telugu and Punjabi) were to be retained in Indian schools. Further information on the development of education for the Indian community can be found in Ampalavanar (1981, pp.128–136).

A common outlook through common curriculum content

The Razak Report of 1956 and the Rahman Talib Report of 1960 laid the foundation of an education policy for modern Malaysia.

The Razak Report made two recommendations: the existing bilingualism in the primary schools would remain, and all schools, irrespective of language medium, should use common curriculum content. The Malay medium schools were called National Schools and schools using English and Mandarin or Tamil were called National-Type schools. All schools, however, followed the same curriculum and it was hoped that a common syllabus content would inculcate common values and outlook, eventually forging an integrated nation. Even so, however, there was resentment. Early efforts to achieve unity through education were weak and the steps taken were ineffective in bringing about social integration. The only positive change was that secondary education was now available for Malays. The report however was even weaker than the Barnes Report. If that report had been implemented by the British, integration through language and education could have been more positive.

The policy of establishing Malay medium secondary schools was to bring together children of all ethnic groups in one national system in which Malay would be the medium of instruction, which 'would orientate all schools towards a common Malaysian outlook' (Razak Report, 1956, para. 115). The report noted however that 'progress towards this goal cannot be rushed' (para. 12), and in fact its recommendations were hampered by the reluctance of officials in the Ministry of Education to implement the policy, because of uncertainty about identifying a Malay race.

Efforts to implement the national policy outlined in the Razak Report began in 1956. Three schools were established: Sekolah Tunku Abdul Rahman, in Ipoh; Sekolah Dato Abdul Razak, in Seremban; and Sekolah Tun Fatimah, in Johor Bharu. The first two were for

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boys and the third for girls. However, the implementation of Malay as medium of instruction did not take place immediately. Selected children from national primary schools were given one year of intensive English, and they continued their education through the medium of English.

Complications

Because of the reluctance of the Ministry of Education to implement Malay as medium of instruction in National Secondary schools, the *Kesatuan Guru-Guru Melayu Semenanjung* (Association of Malay Teachers) resigned *en bloc* from both their jobs and membership in the UMNO party as a vote of no confidence in the government's way of enhancing Malay interests. To pacify them, the Ministry of Education established a separate school that used Malay as the medium of instruction in 1958. This school, *Sekolah Alam Shah*, became the forerunner of education conducted in the Malay language.

The lack of initial confidence in the national schools slowly disappeared after more affirmative actions were taken by the Ministry. However, as Malay-medium schools flourished in size of enrolment, English-medium schools also prospered. In the eleven years after independence, whilst students in the national schools doubled, enrolment in the English schools increased seven-fold.

After an ethnic riot in 1969, politicians and ethnic leaders realized that common syllabus content alone could not bring the population together. They were willing therefore to experiment with a systematic implementation of Malay as the medium of instruction in secondary schools. However, Chinese secondary schools were left alone, and the conversion of English-medium into National schools took place only gradually over fourteen years, until all schools and universities used Malay as a medium of instruction.

At the beginning of the implementation of this new policy, enrolment into secondary schools in Mandarin dwindled as more students opted for the National schools. However, part of the Chinese community resisted this change. Loh Fook Seng (1975) said that the Chinese 'resisted every effort and plan' to change their identity and Kua Kia Soong (1985) wrote as the opening sentence of his book: 'The Chinese schools in Malaysia [are] an accomplished fact,… fought for with blood and sweat.' There are some 1,000 Chinese primary schools involving 600,000 children, and 45 private Chinese schools with 60,000 students. Though this could be considered a problem that could thwart the plan for integration, Chinese secondary schools were allowed to continue. The wisdom might not have been obvious then, but now it can be seen that those schools did produce the kind of citizens stipulated in the Razak Report (1956). In fact, ironically, in 2003, the Ministry of Education discovered that some 60,000 Malays were enrolled in Chinese-medium schools.

To be or not to be bilingual

The successful implementation of the national education policy was not without its negative effects. The Chinese and Indians did eventually become bilingual and indeed trilingual (cf. Fenn-Wu, 1952), mastering the National Language, their respective mother tongues, and English – and understood the advantages well. On the other hand, the Malays, especially those from rural areas, became monolinguals. They received their education in Malay, and failed to achieve even a rudimentary level of English.

As a result, they became seriously handicapped in securing employment and pursuing higher education in English-speaking environments. Ironically, the Barnes proposal of 1950 recommended bilingualism, and was endorsed by the Malays, but resented by the non-Malays. Yet twenty years later, the Malays had become monolinguals and the non-Malays bilinguals.

There is no simple solution to this. The Malays must accept that they too must be bilingual. The process of national integration might be in jeopardy again, for a monolingual community will suffer serious disadvantages compared to bilingual communities. Educational institutions are already showing some firmness as regards bilingualism: for example, all universities insist that students attain a working knowledge of English before or during their studies, or face failure or deregistration. University education would be seriously handicapped if students cannot consult texts and reference books in English.

In fact, however, the issue of becoming bilingual is accepted by all. The question is how. The Education Act of 1996 made many changes toward this end, allowing the establishment of private universities and colleges

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and making possible the use of other languages. Other institutions wishing to go down the same road need only obtain the approval of the Minister of Education.

Because the present system of education in Malay is judged to be successful, and has produced graduates and professionals who have helped develop the country, some Malays do not see the need to change national policy. The Ministry of Education however in the mid-1990s reintroduced English as a medium of instruction to teach mathematics and science in all schools, colleges and universities. This action was opposed chiefly by Malays and Chinese and the Ministry of Education was evasive and elusive in the matter. Finally, however, in 2003 it was announced that the use of English in teaching mathematics and science would be introduced in the primary schools beginning 2003.

Malay, Chinese and Tamil leaders were adamantly opposed, met, and sent representations to the minister and the prime minister, but to no avail. In fact the ministry became more aggressive. Another announcement at the end of 2002 indicated that the use of English in teaching mathematics and science would be carried out at all levels. The Chinese school-teachers accepted the use of English on condition that Chinese would remain, so that what was taught in English would be repeated in Chinese. However, no such condition was mooted by the Malays, and so, once again, they would end up with only one language.

The case against bilingual education

Ellen Bialystok (2001), professor of psychology at the University of York, Toronto, Canada, undertook a study of cognitive development among children subject to bilingual education. Her findings were echoed by Geneese (1994). Early studies did not produce conclusive evidence that learning through two languages was better. In fact, Macnamara (1966) reported that 'bilinguals have a weaker grasp of the language than monoglots,' which caused 'language deficits', for four reasons:

1. Differences in languages confused the children
2. Cultural assimilation was important in learning a language, and this was absent among the children
3. Learning imitates good models, and there were no such models in homes where the parents did not speak the language
4. Children may already have passed the 'critical period' for learning a language naturally

According to Bialystok, children faced difficulties in a bilingual system of education. Only children with a good command of the second language would be successful: that is, children from the middle class. Certain languages also have a cultural overlap with the mother tongue. Where such overlaps occur, students will have an advantage over other students whose mother tongue is very different from the second language. Such a move as using English to teach Science and Mathematics, as implemented in early 2003, puts children in the rural areas, rubber estates, and city fringes at a disadvantage; indeed, such children have no command of English at all, and receive no help at home, as parents of these lower income groups living in these areas do not speak English.

The need to build a body of basic knowledge in Malay

The Language and Literary Agency was efficient in publishing books for use in the primary and secondary levels of education. Acute shortages occurred at the tertiary level. Publishing academic books for tertiary education was difficult and unrewarding financially. Since the readership was small, royalties can be unattractively meagre. Translations would be more rewarding financially, but tougher and bothersome as regards copyright. In 1967, ten years after the establishment of the Language and Literacy Agency, only 545 titles were published. Few were for tertiary education, and fewer still for science and technology. In a survey conducted in 1987, there were approximately 7,000 courses in the universities but only 380 titles were translated for tertiary education. Students had to rely on books written in English.

This situation became more acute after 1995 when the New Education Act made translation efforts redundant. Roosfa Hashim (2003) provides the statistics below to indicate dwindling efforts to publish tertiary books in Malay: 1990, 21 books; 1991, 24; 1992, 34; 1993, 33; 1994, 10; 1995, 13; 1996, 14; 1997, 17; 1998, 18; 1999, 9; 2000, 6; 2001, 7; 2002, 3 (Publishing Statistics, Council for Academic Books 1990–2003). Malay Language activists saw this as a step backward: Malay was developing well, and a stock of basic knowledge in the language would be necessary for the intellectual development of its speakers.

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Fear of cultural domination

While the implementation of Malay as a medium of instruction in schools and universities was successful, fear of loss of cultural identities and domination by the indigenous culture became apparent. Three incidents demonstrate this point.

On one occasion, some Chinese reacted vehemently against the Ministry of Education's move to promote non-Mandarin-educated teachers to senior positions in Mandarin primary schools. On another, in 1998, part of the Chinese and Indian communities demonstrated against the University of Malaya's decision to use Malay as the medium of instruction in the non-language courses in the Chinese and Indian Studies Departments. Interestingly, nobody felt the same way when English was used to teach all such courses in those departments – including Malay Studies. The third occurred when, in the early 1990s, an integrated school system was suggested by the Ministry of Education. Under this system, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil schools would be located in one compound. The move did not suggest that the medium of instruction be changed, but was a strategy to get the children of the three groups to mix freely and use Malay during extra-curricular activities. This was also resented. Agreement was only reached when assurance was given that they be allowed to use their respective languages in all extra-curricular activities, including teachers' meetings which could be conducted in their respective languages.

Fear of losing one's identity along with one's language is a real one. Within a language is the collective memory of a people: once the language is lost, so is the memory, which contains the values, ethics, and culture of that people. Once a new generation loses the language of its parents, it loses the whole collective memory. In other words, they will no longer be Malays, Chinese or Indians. They will acquire the values, ethics and culture of the new language.

Sensitivities regarding the term *Malay*

The Malays have also had their share of linguistic sensitivities, as noted by Watson (1984), when he asked: 'How will the Malays view the non-Malay citizens who have become proficient in their language and use it in every aspect of their lives?' A couple of events demonstrated this clearly. The first appeared in the name of the National Language itself, and second was the use of Malay in churches.

A group of Malay scholars insisted that the constitution of the country should state that the National Language is *Malay*, not *Bahasa Malaysia* ('the Malaysian language'), a name that emerged after the May 13 1969 ethnic clash and came to be used to denote something common to all. A key issue here was the use of Malay in church. As Malays are Muslims, the use of Malay in churches was received with mixed feelings. There was a fear that Christian literature in Malay would influence Malays. After all, Christian literature in English had had some influence on English-speaking Malays. However, the use of Malay in Christianity was not new: Ever since Christian missionaries came to Southeast Asia (*c*. 1500), they had employed Malay to reach the natives. The Malays may simply have to cope with this. An analogy may perhaps be drawn with Arabic, to allay their fears: in many Middle Eastern countries, Christian Arabs use Arabic in their daily religious rituals. Muslim Arabs are not affected.

A silent policy on other languages

Amidst these developments, one can make a few general observations regarding the status of Mandarin and Tamil in Malaysia. Although the languages were not given official status, they were free to grow, thus ensuring language maintenance. Paradoxically, if these languages were made official, their use could be subjected to certain restrictions vis-à-vis the National Language, and hence not enjoy full freedom. This is regarded as an unofficial policy, the process often working in contradictory ways: by reinforcing weak implementation of National Language policy, and by filling communication gaps overlooked by official policy (Noss, 1984:5).

One may also observe another feature of language issues in Malaysia. Despite criticism that the Chinese and Tamil languages are not given their proper recognition, Chinese schools are undergoing considerable growth. Although establishing new schools is not permitted, there is always a loophole that can be exploited. For example, branches of existing schools can be set up without many encumbrances, as a result of which the Chinese schools in major cities keep growing in size and enrolment (though not in number).

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Meanwhile, the use of Chinese and Tamil in the mass media – especially in newspapers – has been widespread. The Government has not shown any interest in controlling the printing of these newspapers: an indicator that the government has a healthy policy toward their use and retention in their respective communities. Among newspapers, the Chinese *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and *Nan Yang Siang Pau* have the biggest daily circulation: almost a million. The situation with Tamil newspapers and magazines is comparable. Even the Sikhs, a small minority group, have their own newspaper, *Malaya Samachar*.

A significant related phenomenon is the influx of films in Cantonese (from Hong Kong) and in Mandarin (from Taiwan). Their constant screening in the local theatres and on television networks is testimony to the relative freedom of the Chinese to perpetuate their language and sustain their identity. The same is true of Tamil and Hindi films. Currently, with this 'open-sky' policy, the influx of foreign movies has intensified. Malaysians can view close to twenty television channels in English, seven in Chinese, one in Tamil, and one in Arabic, twenty-four hours a day. Only two channels (RIA and TV1) are in Malay, interspersed with Chinese, Tamil and English. The Government's only intervention has been in the form of minimal regulation: that the films and videos carry subtitles in Malay.

Conclusion: Breaking down the barriers

Fifty years of language planning shows that Malaysia has achieved a respectable measure of success. Status (or role) planning has transformed Malay into a viable language in education, administration and regional communication (as for example with Indonesia and Brunei). It has also spread in use; from a language that was once used in full by Malays and in a pidginized version by non-Malays into a language with a standard variety used by all in formal situations. In corpus (or form) planning, Malay has achieved success that is measurable in concrete terms, having developed a systematic and efficient spelling system and pronunciation. It also now has more than 2.5 million technical terms.

We may look for comparison at the situation in the United States. English-speaking Americans with their overwhelmingly Anglo-European culture have almost totally subsumed other immigrants, be it from Asia, Latin America or non-English-speaking Europe. There are however resilient communities that have resisted assimilation, such as the French in Louisiana, pockets of Chinese speakers, and most notably traditional and immigrant Hispanic communities. It was found necessary to legislate English as an official language in California, and thirty-six other states are in various stages of following California. Indeed, Illinois did this as early as 1836, with a clause in its constitution which says: 'our official language is the American Language,' which was no doubt more of an anti-British than a pro-American statement.

In Malaysia, the effort to introduce and sustain Malay as a language of education and administration is not only the need for an integrated nation, but also a desperate fight by the indigenous to avoid being overwhelmed by immigrants, as in Fiji. The world views the Malays as a majority, yet it is a majority too small to permit as decisive a move as in Indonesia. Its political power can be compromised by the economic strength of the so-called minorities. Here, the term *majority* is as tricky as it is deceptive.

Ironically, the implementation of the National Language policy has produced some adverse repercussions. Rural children have tended to be monolingual, because their English (the second language taught) for various reasons never attained a respectable level of proficiency. This handicap is augmented when they are discriminated against in employment, and they suffer serious setbacks in furthering their education beyond the secondary level. Tertiary education will probably remain dependent on English, and students who are not able to make use of materials in English risk being trapped in a monolingual situation, unless and until Malaysia develops a sufficient stock of knowledge in Malay.

Malay can be said to have attained the objectives set forth above in developing new forms and roles befitting a National Language, and is expected to be able to serve more meaningfully as a language of *integration*, a word I have avoided till now. What kind of integration do we have in mind? We can have a multiethnic, multicultural, multi-religious, *and* multilingual nation sharing common values inculcated by a common syllabus. Being homogeneous in term of ethnicity, religion,

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culture and language does not automatically spell integration and stability. Perhaps we can have more faith in our unity in diversity. As the 1970 school generation becomes more skilful in both Malay and English, they may be more willing to come together to break down the ethnic barriers. ■

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