Variable impact of Malaysia's national language planning on non-Malay speakers in Sarawak[1]

Impacto variável do planejamento linguístico nacional da Malásia sobre não falantes do Malaio em Sarawak

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the impact of the national language policy on the language use of three main ethnic groups in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. The data analyzed was based on a sociolinguistic survey on language use in six domains that involved 937 Malay, Chinese and Iban adolescents from three major towns in Sarawak. The results showed that the use of Bahasa Malaysia exceeded English usage for all three ethnic groups, showing the success of compulsory education in the national language. However, the language planning has greater impact on the Iban than on the Chinese who are shifting away from the ethnic languages of the Chinese sub-groups to Mandarin Chinese. The availability of an alternative standard language with international standing which also functions as a symbol of cultural solidarity compromises the impact of the national language policy.

KEYWORDS: National language, Language planning, Malaysia, Chinese, Iban, Malay.

RESUMO: Este estudo examinou o impacto da política de ensino da língua nacional de três principais grupos étnicos no estado malaio de Sarawak. Os dados analisados basearam-se em uma pesquisa sociolinguística sobre o uso da língua em

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seis domínios e envolveu 937 adolescentes malaios, chineses e *Iban* de três grandes cidades de Sarawak. Os resultados mostraram que o uso da língua *Bahasa* da Malásia superou o uso do inglês para todos os três grupos étnicos, comprovando o sucesso da escolaridade obrigatória em língua nacional. No entanto, o planejamento do estudo da língua tem maior impacto sobre o *Iban* do que sobre os chineses. Estes estão se afastando das línguas étnicas dos subgrupos chineses para o chinês Mandarim. A disponibilidade de uma língua alternativa padrão, com prestígio internacional, que também funciona como um símbolo de solidariedade cultural, compromete o impacto da política de ensino da língua nacional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Língua Nacional, Planejamento Língua, Malásia, China, Iban, Malaio.

Introduction

In the context of status planning, language implementation it is important to ensure the adoption and spread of the language form that has been selected and codified. "It is not enough to devise and implement strategies to modify a particular language situation; it is equally important to monitor and evaluate the success of the strategies and progress shown toward implementation" (KAPLAN; BALDAUF, 1997, p. 37). Studies on language implementation across settings can serve to monitor policy success and inform language planning theory. For example, in the Southeast Asian region, the promotion of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language of Indonesia has succeeded as more and more urban, middle-class; indigenous families in Java and elsewhere are adopting Indonesian as the home language (OETOMO, 1988, cited in OETOMO, 1991). Census information from 1971, 1980 and 1990 shows an increase in the knowledge of Indonesian and a concomitant decline in the knowledge of Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Batak, Buginese, Minangkabau and other languages among the people of Indonesia (STEINHAUER, 1994). Steinhauer attributed the success of Indonesian to the fact that it has never been the language of a specific dominant group and hence cannot be stigmatised as the language of a culturally or economically identifiable section of the population. In neighbouring Thailand, language planning has somewhat succeeded in shifting ethnic labelling as some Thai people of Chinese descent describe their grandparents as Chinese Teochew but themselves as Thai Chinese. Studies by Morita (2003) revealed that the Chinese elite and the Thai-born Chinese identified with the Thai rather than with the Chinese. Many Chinese and mixed Thai and Chinese ancestry have experienced language shift to Thai and no longer learn Chinese to use at home

(MORITA, n.d.). This language shift is a result of the decline of Chinese education, rejection by the China-born Chinese and the government's pro-Thai campaign (MORITA, 2004). Unlike Thailand, ethnic delineation is still obvious in Singapore despite the adoption of English or Mandarin Chinese as a language of daily communication. The Singapore government's definition of bilingualism means "being proficient in English and one's 'ethnic mother tongue' (Mandarin, Malay or Tamil) as a cultural language" (CHUA, 2004, p. 68). Research has shown that the Speak Mandarin campaign and the bilingual education policy introduced in 1966 has resulted in the young Chinese using Mandarin in place of the languages of the Chinese sub-groups such as Hokkien and Teochew (e.g., CHUA, 2009; KUO; JERNUDD, 2003; LI; SARAVANAN; NG, 1997; RINEY, 1998). Similarly, in the Philippines there is increasing use of Filipino, the national language, despite earlier resistance (see HILDAGO, 1998).

Thus far, the review of key studies in the Southeast Asian region indicates that status planning for the national language has succeeded to different levels in various settings. Without a common framework, comparison of detailed descriptions across disparate settings is not easy. A common framework allows "field researchers to collect and compare data to the extent such data can be comparable across countries" (LAITIN, 2000, p. 154). An important framework that has emerged is the strategic model of language choice based on game theory developed by Laitin (1992), a political scientist interested in language policy outcomes in multilingual settings (KAMWANGAMALU, 2011) and using language as a proxy for ethnicity in order to study the link between ethnic heterogeneity and civil war (see FEARON; LAITIN, 1996; 2003). Game theory emphasises strategic choice based on the expected utility model of decision making and links it to the concept of equilibrium to generate predictions (MUNCK, 2001).

The game theory of language regimes applied to national language programmes conceptualises "economic pay-offs, local honour [cultural solidarity], and external acceptance [as] the three components of a language choice utility function" (LAITIN, 1993, p. 232). Laitin explained that in making a rational language choice, an individual seeks the highest returns possible for their language choice through rational calculation of returns, and the choices are seldom binary except in the case of medium of education for children. Based on this analysis, Laitin concluded that the multilingual repertoire which includes a global and a national or regional language is an

efficient equilibrium in the emerging world system of language. Laitin (1992) predicted that market forces would force multilingual countries to formulate policies geared towards a 3±1 outcome, with the 3-1 outcome for citizens whose mother tongue is the same as the national language and the 3+1 outcome for the others (KAMWANGAMALU, 2011). This paper adopts Laitin's (1993) game theory on language policy outcomes as its theoretical framework.

Aim of the study

This study aimed to compare the impact of the implementation of the national language policy on the language use of the three main ethnic groups in the Malaysian state of Sarawak: the Malay, the Iban and the Chinese. As the national language of Malaysia (Bahasa Malaysia) is the standard language of the Malay speech community, their language use patterns are taken as the basis for comparison with the two non-Malay groups.

In this paper, the term "Malay languages" encompasses Bahasa Malaysia and other varieties of the Malay language, including the regional Malay variety spoken in Sarawak which the speakers refer to as "Sarawak Malay Dialect", "Local Malay" or "Bahasa Melayu Sarawak". The abbreviated version, Bahasa Sarawak, is used in this paper. The term "Chinese languages" refers to Mandarin Chinese, which is the standardised Chinese language and the languages of the Chinese sub-groups such as Foochow, Hakka and Hokkien. Although Foochow, Hakka and Hokkien are referred to as dialects by Chinese speakers, this paper keeps to the usage of "languages of the Chinese sub-groups" to avoid having to differentiate between languages and dialects. The term "Indigenous languages" is used to include the languages spoken by the Indigenous groups in Sarawak, for example, Iban, Bidayuh, Kayan and Kelabit.

Sociocultural background of Sarawak

Sarawak is a Malaysian state located on the island of Borneo, flanked by Kalimantan in the East and Sabah in the North. The other part of Malaysia is Peninsular Malaysia, located south of Thailand. Out of the population of 2 million in Sarawak, the Iban constitute 29.2%, the Chinese, 25.5% and the Malays, 22.7 % (Department of Statistics Malaysia, Sarawak, 2011).The Iban is the largest indigenous group in Sarawak. The languages of the Iban and other

indigenous groups in Sarawak are mutually unintelligible. Chinese comprises several sub-groups such as the Foochow, Hakka, Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese, each with their respective languages which are also mutually unintelligible. The difference is that the Chinese share a common standardised language, Mandarin Chinese. Those who go to Chinese schools can read and write Mandarin Chinese but others who learn the language informally may not have written competency in it. The Malays in Sarawak speak different regional varieties of the Malay language and those with formal education also speak and write Bahasa Malaysia. However, as the regional Malay variety that was used as the basis for developing the standardised Malay language was the Johor variety, Bahasa Malaysia is seen as a Peninsular Malaysian language in contrast to the Bahasa Sarawak (TING, 2001). Despite regional variation in the Malay varieties spoken in different parts of Sarawak, Malay speakers can understand one another.

The Malay languages have more institutional support than the other languages because the ruling government of Malaysia has greater Malay representation than other ethnic groups. The political power held by the Malays accords vitality to the regional Malay variety. This advantage is augmented by the fact that language-in-education planning propagates Bahasa Malaysia as the official language of Malaysia. Bahasa Malaysia was instituted as the national and official language when the then Federation of Malaya gained independence from the British in 1957. The status of Bahasa Malaysia as the official language of Malaysia means that official communication by and with the government is conducted in Bahasa Malaysia. Later when Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, Bahasa Malaysia was adopted as the national language. Then, in 1985 the Sarawak State legislature agreed to use Bahasa Malaysia as the official language after infrastructural inadequacy and resistance were addressed (see LEIGH, 1974; PORRITT, 1997). Bahasa Malaysia was only introduced as the medium of instruction in Sarawak schools in 1977 at Primary One [Year One] level. By 1987, Bahasa Malaysia was used as the language of instruction up to Form Five [Year 11] (see TING, 2010a for further details). Because of the prevailing linguistic milieu in Sarawak, many government officers who had an English educational background are inclined to speak English in an official capacity, particularly those who are not Malays and hold positions at higher hierarchical levels (TING, 2007).

Subsequent to this, there was a remission in status planning whereby English was allowed restricted status as medium of instruction for Science and

Mathematics in 2003. Ong (2009) sees the 2003 language-switch policy for the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English in secondary school as a gradual shift back to the ideology of the early post-independence era when state language management was characterised by English-Malay bilingualism. However, the concern with the widening performance gap between urban and rural students, which was affecting mainly Malay students, and pressure from language nationalists escalated into a cabinet decision on 8 July 2009 to revert to Bahasa Malaysia in national schools and mother-tongue languages in national-type schools from 2012 onwards (CHAPMAN, 2009; "Maths and Science back to Bahasa, mother tongues", 2009). The reversal to Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics signaled a return to the "national unity / integration / identity" (ONG, 2009, p. 211) agenda that is anchored by the national language.

An apparent exception to this national language policy is the use of English in higher education. In the tertiary educational scene, reforms have brought about the reinstatement of English as the medium of instruction in public universities since the 1990s (ONG, 2009). Flexibility in implementation is deemed necessary because of the globalisation of higher education and the need to be relevant to the international student market. Studies have shown that English is used, with some code-switching to Bahasa Malaysia, in some public universities for lectures, particularly in the sciences (YEO; TING, 2010).

Socioculturally, the Malay, Iban and Chinese communities in Sarawak are distinct with some blurring of ethnic boundaries in urban centres due to the social transformation that has accompanied modernisation. The Chinese who migrated from China were mainly involved in agriculture and trade. The Chinese sub-groups lived in their respective enclaves. The Ibans were mainly farmers and concentrated in the Rejang River basin. The Malays were known to be fishermen and rice planters who lived along river banks. With modernisation, urban migration for better employment brought about the mingling of ethnic groups as they began to share work places and neighbourhoods. However, culturally they remained distinct.

Interethnic contact in Sarawak in rural areas may take place in the language of the numerically dominant community but this may not be in the case in the cosmopolitan urban areas. In earlier years, the common language of communication was English because of the remnants of the colonial influence. However, in later years, Bahasa Malaysia emerged as a shared

language due to the formal teaching of the language in schools. The current scenario is the use of *Pasar Malay* (a pidginised form of the Malay language) by older Chinese speakers and Bahasa Malaysia by younger Chinese speakers, usually in the transactional domain, in Sarawak (TING; CHONG, 2008; TING, 2010b) and also in Sabah (WONG, 2000) and Peninsular Malaysia (BURHANUDEEN, 2006). The Chinese have reservations about speaking Malay languages among themselves. Ting and Nelson's (2010) survey of 200 university students in Kuching, Sarawak showed that they view Bahasa Malaysia as a language of the Malays. The Iban and other indigenous groups of Sarawak are not as resistant towards the adoption of the Malay languages. Studies by Ting and Campbell (2007) on the Bidayuh show the use of the Bahasa Sarawak in family communication when spouses are not Bidayuh (see also DEALWIS, 2009; 2010; DEALWIS; DAVID, 2009). These research findings point to some differences in the receptivity of the different ethnic groups towards the use of Bahasa Malaysia for intraethnic communication, although the same reservation is not evident in learning the language for utilitarian purposes. This paper offers sociolinguistic data on the language use of Malay, Iban and Chinese adolescents in Sarawak to obtain insight into the future linguistic milieu in Sarawak, particularly with regards to place of Malay languages in relation to other languages.

Study method

A sociolinguistic survey was conducted in three major towns in Sarawak (Kuching, Sibu and Miri) from January to March 2011. The survey involved various indigenous groups in Sarawak but only the data on the Iban are reported in this paper because the numbers from the other groups are too small. In the original study, the language-ethnicity link was also examined but the results are not included in this paper and the items are also not included in the questionnaire attached (see APPENDIX A).

The respondents in this study were 937 adolescent students aged 13 to 18 (mean: 15.6) in six schools: one located in the urban and another in the rural hinterland of each of the three towns. Using personal contacts, informal consent for the study was initially sought from the principals of the schools. Then the names and addresses of the schools were submitted to the Malaysian Ministry of Education and subsequently to the Sarawak State Education Department for approval to conduct the study. The official letter granting approval for the study was sent to the school principals, after which the details

of the study were explained by the research assistants involved in the study. Arrangements were made for about 200 students from each school to fill in the questionnaire. Students were asked to stay back after school to fill in the questionnaires which were collected immediately. A total of 1188 questionnaires were returned but only the data from the 324 Iban, 348 Chinese, 265 Malay respondents were included in this particular study in line with its aim to compare the non-Malay speakers' language use with that of the Malay speakers. Some of the respondents came from families in which one parent was Malay and another Iban but following Phinney (1992), the ethnic identification for this study is based on their self-identification.

Within these ethnic groups, the gender distribution is balanced. TAB. 1 shows other demographic characteristics of the respondents which are relevant to language use. The frequencies in the table refer to the number of respondents and the percentage was calculated out of the total for the respective ethnic groups. The majority of the Iban respondents had Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of education from pre-school to secondary school; this experience was similar to that of the Malay respondents. However, a large proportion of the Chinese respondents had attended Chinese pre-schools (78.74%) and continued with Mandarin Chinese as the language of instruction in primary school (90.23%) before attending public schools which used Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction. To make the switch, the students go through a transition class after Primary Six [Year Six] before proceeding to Form One [Year Seven]. There were slightly more Malay and Iban respondents in the rural sites (about 60%) than the urban sites (about 40%) but the pattern is reversed for Chinese respondents. The socio-economic status of the respondents in this study was gauged by using the monthly income of the parents. Regardless of ethnicity, the respondents were in the lower income bracket of less than RM2000 per month.

TABLE 1
Demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of ethnicity, gender and educational background, locality and parental monthly income

Demographic characteristics			Malay (n=265)		Iban (n=324)		Chinese (n=348)	
			Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Gender		Female	123	46.07	180	55.56	178	51.45
		Male	142	53.93	144	44.44	170	48.55
Educational background	Pre-school	Bahasa Malaysia	243	91.70	284	87.65	27	7.76
		Mandarin Chinese	7	2.64	245	7.41	274	78.74
		English	3	1.13	10	2.89	44	12.64
		Iban	1	0.38	6	1.85	0	0
	Primary school	Bahasa Malaysia	254	95.85	292	90.12	31	8.91
		Mandarin Chinese	9	3.40	29	8.95	314	90.23
		English	2	0.75	3	0.93	3	0.86
	Secondary school	Bahasa Malaysia	261	98.49	319	98.46	336	96.55
		Mandarin Chinese	0	0	1	0.31	11	3.17
		English	4	1.51	4	1.23	1	0.29
Locality		Urban	110	41.51	124	38.27	218	61.64
		Rural	155	58.49	200	61.73	130	37.36
Parental monthly income		Less than RM2000	199	75.09	252	77.78	207	59.48
		RM2000-3999	43	16.23	38	11.73	76	21.84
		RM4000-5999	13	4.91	20	6.17	40	11.49
		RM6000-7999	4	1.51	6	1.85	15	4.31
		More than RM8000	5	1.89	8	2.47	10	2.87

*The percentages do not add up to 100% for pre-school because some respondents did not attend pre-school and for parental monthly income because one respondent was an orphan

A 37-item questionnaire was used to examine the language use of the adolescents (see APPENDIX A). A section of the questionnaire examined language use in six domains relevant to school-going adolescents: family, friendship, education, transaction, mass media and religion. The less relevant domains of government, employment and legal were omitted from the questionnaire for the purposes of this study. The categorisation of domains was based on Platt and Weber's (1980) classic study on language use in Malaysia. Nine items were allocated to the family domain as this is the bastion of ethnic language use (KHEMLANI-DAVID, 1998; LAWSON; SACHDEV, 2004). The section had four items on language use in the mass media encompassing radio, television, movie and online communication. Language use in the other

domains was examined with only one item each. Altogether the respondents were asked to report their language use for 17 situations within these domains. For these items, respondents could put down more than one language as the use of two or languages is common in a multilingual setting.

The final section (20 items) elicited demographic information on their family, social network and educational background in order to describe the context for the language use patterns. Li (1994) found that the composition of an individual's social network, and especially the ethnic composition of a network, had a greater explanatory value for language choice than variables such as age and gender (cf. also LI, MILROY; PONG, 1992) (cited in LANZA; SVENDSEN, 2007).

Results

The results in this section show that the Iban respondents are closer to the Malay respondents in their language use patterns than they are to the Chinese respondents.

(1) Language use of the Malay respondents

TAB. 2 shows the number of times the Malay respondents reported using a particular language for interactions in the six domains examined in this study. For the Malay, interactions in all the domains can take place in either Bahasa Malaysia or Bahasa Sarawak. The balanced use of the standard Malay language and the regional Malay variety is evident in online communication, and the transactional and friendship domains, with Bahasa Malaysia used for interethnic communication and Bahasa Sarawak for intraethnic communication. In the mass media domain, two sub-domains where English is the preferred language for a substantial proportion of the Malay respondents are television programmes (103 reports) and movies (117 reports) but the majority still prefer Bahasa Malaysia (212 and 191 reports respectively).

TABLE 2
Frequency of languages used in six domains by Malay respondents

Domains	Indigenous language		Malay languages		English	Chinese languages		Other languages
	Iban	Others	BM	Bahasa Sarawak		Mandarin Chinese	Chinese sub-group languages	
Mass media								
• radio	1	0	227	2	80	2	0	0
• TV	0	0	212	0	103	14	0	10
• movie	0	0	191	0	117	7	0	5
• online	0	0	141	121	70	2	1	0
Transaction	7	5	194	207	49	3	1	0
Friendship	23	18	212	235	59	6	0	0
Education	5	2	236	161	69	3	0	0
Religion	1	2	152	221	4	0	0	0
Family	39	96	421	1734	134	16	4	3
Total	76	123	1986	2681	685	53	6	18
(Percentage %)	(1.35)	(2.19)	(35.29)	(47.64)	(12.17)	(0.94)	(0.11)	(0.32)

The education domain is the only domain where Bahasa Malaysia usage exceeds that of Bahasa Sarawak. The formality of the teacher-student relationship necessitates the use of the official language, Bahasa Malaysia (236 reports). Nevertheless, as 161 (or 60.75%) of the 265 Malay respondents also reported speaking Bahasa Sarawak with their teachers, this shows that the shared ethnic membership needs to be acknowledged through the use of the local Malay variety. Further evidence of Bahasa Sarawak being the language of the Malay community is found in the family and religious domains.

From Malay languages, we move on to examine the use of other languages by the Malay respondents. English has specific relevance when it comes to television programmes and movies, and is sometimes used for family communication (only 134 reports). Indigenous languages are used with friends and family members from other ethnic groups. Altogether 48 respondents were products of exogamous marriages but they had identified themselves as Malays. Five were from Chinese-Malay marriages and 40 were from Indigenous-Malay marriages, but the remaining three respondents did not have Malay parents.

One respondent had Bidayuh-Iban parentage, the second had Melanau parentage and the third had Chinese-Melanau parentage. Their parents were probably Muslim converts. In Malaysia, marriages with Malays entail conversion to Islam. Article 160 of the Malaysian Federal Constitution states that a Malay is "a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, [and] conforms to Malay customs" (Legal Research Board, 1997, p. 198). When non-Malays take up Islam as their religion, they also tend to adopt the Malay identity. "*Masuk Melayu*" (*Enter Malay*) is the term used the Muslim Malayalee respondents in Nambiar's (2010) study. A similar phenomenon is reported in Indonesia by Steinhauer (1994, p. 772) whereby "Dayaks who give up their tribal religion and convert to Islam appear to consciously abandon their own language and to shift to Banjarese as a sign of total conversion". Speaking the language is integral to the cultural identity of the Malay, reflective of Fishman's (1977) patrimonial dimension of ethnic identity. Although they have English in their linguistic repertoire and use it to some extent, the Malay languages will be the mainstay of communication for the Malay speech community.

(2) Language use of the Iban respondents

TAB. 3 shows the number of times the Iban respondents reported using a particular language for the domains specified in the questionnaire. Iban is the most frequently spoken language for the Iban respondents, particularly in the family and religious domains as the interactions are mainly within the Iban community.

When there is need for a standard language as in the case of interactions with teachers in school, reading of religious texts and the mass media domain, the Iban respondents opt for Bahasa Malaysia rather than English. Although Iban is now a written language using the Roman alphabet, its written use is not popular as can be seen from the 33 reports of Iban use for online communication. The domains with a balanced use of Iban and Bahasa Malaysia are the transaction and friendship domains – the former for interactions within the Iban community and the latter for interethnic communication. For these two domains which involve ethnic diversity, the gravitation is towards Bahasa Malaysia, followed by Bahasa Sarawak and English. English movies are preferred by 166 Iban respondents but slightly more (184) reported a preference for Malay movies. Bahasa Sarawak and Chinese languages do not feature as much in daily language use of the Iban respondents.

There is no doubt that the private family domain is where the ethnic language reigns for the Iban respondents (2436 reports), supporting the adage that the home is the last bastion of ethnic language use. On the other hand, the presence of other languages for home communication cannot be ignored: Bahasa Malaysia (433 reports), English (315 reports) and Bahasa Sarawak (171 reports). A check on the ethnic descent of the parents showed that there were only eight Iban respondents who had one parent who was not indigenous. Of the eight respondents, only one had a Malay mother and the rest had Chinese mothers. This result shows that the ethnic language is giving way to other languages in the family domain for the Iban respondents under study.

TABLE 3
Frequency of languages used in six domains by Iban respondents

Domains	Indigenous language		Malay languages		English	Chinese languages		Other languages
	Iban	Others	BM	Bahasa Sarawak		Mandarin Chinese	Chinese sub-group languages	
Mass media								
• radio	106	1	208	0	96	7	0	0
• TV	2	0	254	0	142	41	0	16
• movie	1	9	184	0	166	19	0	6
• online	33	9	174	74	96	4	0	0
Transaction	219	9	282	86	71	15	1	0
Friendship	295	21	288	150	114	35	3	0
Education	179	6	320	56	154	12	1	0
Religion	286	7	129	32	83	7	0	0
Family	2436	107	433	171	315	37	19	2
Total	3557	151	2272	569	1237	177	24	24
(Percentage %)	(44.40)	(1.88)	(28.36)	(7.10)	(15.44)	(2.21)	(0.30)	(0.30)

(3) Language use of the Chinese respondents

TAB. 4 shows the number of times the Chinese respondents reported using a particular language for the domains covered in the language use questionnaire. For the Chinese respondents in this study, the use of Indigenous

languages and Bahasa Sarawak is almost negligible but English is the preferred language for movies and online communication.

TABLE 4
Frequency of languages used in six domains by Chinese respondents

Domains	Indigenous language		Malay languages		English	Chinese languages		Other languages
	Iban	Others	BM	Bahasa Sarawak		Mandarin Chinese	Chinese sub-group languages	
Mass media								
• radio	2	0	25	0	155	262	0	1
• TV	0	0	49	0	165	282	4	18
• movie	0	0	27	0	220	232	1	13
• online	1	0	51	10	239	161	1	3
Transaction	5	1	206	13	159	299	77	0
Friendship	20	7	190	25	148	329	189	1
Education	5	0	295	10	227	281	25	0
Religion	6	6	30	3	59	290	101	0
Family	94	58	174	23	263	2117	1512	4
Total	133	72	1047	84	1635	4253	1910	40
(Percentage %)	(1.45)	(0.78)	(11.44)	(0.92)	(17.82)	(46.36)	(20.82)	(0.44)

Bahasa Malaysia accounts for 11.44% of the language choices reported – the most in education, and slightly less in the transactional, friendship and family domains. Although Bahasa Malaysia is the main language used by the Chinese respondents with teachers in school, this domain is shared with Mandarin Chinese and English. The use of standard languages other than Bahasa Malaysia shows a compromise in adherence to the official language policy, possibly to take account of the ethnicity and language preferences of the teachers. In the ethnically-diverse transaction and friendship domains, Bahasa Malaysia is mainly used for interethnic communication. This is because shop attendants tend to be from Indonesia or Sarawak indigenous groups in the current Sarawak retailing scenario. The main language in these two domains is, in fact, Mandarin Chinese for communication with Chinese interlocutors.

The results point to the growing role of Mandarin Chinese relative to the languages of the Chinese sub-groups for communication within the Chinese community – in the mass media, family, religion, transaction and friendship domains. If there is need for a standard language as in the case of movies, radio and television programmes and online communication, the use of Mandarin Chinese is understandable. Similarly, the need for a written language for the reading of Christian and Buddhist religious texts and religious liturgy makes Mandarin Chinese more relevant. However, for spoken communication, the infrequent use of Chinese sub-group languages with friends, family and shop retailers compared to Mandarin Chinese provide strong evidence of a shift towards the latter.

Discussion

If the language use patterns of the adolescent respondents from the Malay, Iban and Chinese speech communities can be taken as an indication of the patterns in the larger community, the results show that the national language planning is more successful amongst the Iban than the Chinese. The language use patterns of the Iban are similar to those of the Malay in their preference for Bahasa Malaysia to English, apart from the use of their respective ethnic languages in the family and religious domains. On the other hand, the Chinese use Mandarin Chinese in most of the domains, and generally prefer English to Bahasa Malaysia. The question arising from the results is: why are the Iban closer to the Malay in their language use patterns? Culturally they are different. Religiously, a large proportion of the Ibans are Christians and the Malays are Muslims. Three possible explanations can be posited.

The first is educational background. The data for this study show that both the Iban and the Malay groups have Bahasa Malaysia as their medium of education from pre-school to secondary school. Through this, they develop familiarity with Bahasa Malaysia and use it for daily communication. The familiarity also makes them prone to using Bahasa Malaysia for formal and written communication, unlike the older generation which resorted to English (see TING, 2007).

The second explanation is anchored in the linguistic similarity of the Iban and Malay languages. At a basic level, there are similarities in the vocabulary. Both Iban and Malay belong to the Malayic subgroup. Hudson (1970) classified Iban, Salako, Kendayan and related languages into a single subgroup which are relatives of Malay that have undergone separate

development (cited in ADELAAR, 2006). The similarity of Iban and Malay languages makes it easier for their speakers to adopt the Malay languages for daily use.

Thirdly, in the political scenario of Malaysia, the Ibans are categorised together with the Malays as *Bumiputra* (sons of the soil), which is likened to the indigenous peoples of Malaysia. The official categorisation could facilitate a social aggregation of the two ethnic groups. There is support in the data in that a majority of the Iban respondents in this study reported having Malay friends and vice versa. In comparison, fewer of the Chinese respondents reported having Malay friends. Since the Iban and the Malay are drawn together on various counts, it is to be expected that their language use patterns are also similar. The only language feature that distinctively distinguishes between the two groups is the Iban's use of their own ethnic language.

In the context of Laitin's (1993), strategic model of language choice based on game theory, the rational choice of Malay languages for daily interactions by the Iban opens up means to enter the politically strong Malay community. There are also economic pay-offs in the form of business contracts and social contacts. As the Malay group has established itself in the bureaucracy, the school system and gradually in the commercial centre, "the speakers of other languages must typically learn their language in order to penetrate those arenas" (LAITIN, 1988, p. 289). Thus, it is important for the Iban to be competent in Malay languages for social mobility. This process is assisted by compulsory education in the national language, perhaps coupled with stigmatisation of their ethnic language, similar to the effects of the compulsory public school in France:

> Thus arose a powerful mechanism of displacement of local by national languages, as the school language gradually became the language the parents would speak to their children, partly in order to prepare them for school, partly also in response to the growing intranational mobility generated by industrialisation and urbanisation, and facilitated by the very spread of the nation's official language (Van PARIJS, 2000, p. 218).

However, it seems that Chinese languages are not as easily displaced by Bahasa Malaysia. Although Bahasa Malaysia and, for that matter, English are used for utilitarian purposes, the Chinese hold on to their ethnic language. In the past, it was the languages of the Chinese sub-groups but there is a shift towards Mandarin Chinese reflected in the language use of the adolescent respondents

in this study (see also TING; HUNG, 2008; TING; MAHADHIR, 2009). The diminishing prestige of these Chinese languages can be attributed to the prevalence of a diglossic situation among the Chinese whereby Mandarin Chinese functions as the supra-ethnic, official language, whereas the languages of the Chinese sub-groups are used for intimate intra-ethnic communication and local cultural events (see SNEDDON, 2003; STEINHAUER, 1994 on Indonesian). This paves the way for the emergence of a supra-Chinese identity linked to the use of Mandarin Chinese (TING; CHANG, 2008).

The resistance of the Chinese to the national language agenda could stem from the perception of the Chinese language and culture as superior (see WU, 1991). The Chinese also treat their language as integral to the Chinese identity. Through the language, they establish cultural solidarity with the broader Chinese community worldwide and receive economic pay-offs in the form of jobs in companies with Chinese ownership. To facilitate access to these benefits, Chinese parents choose Chinese private schools over public schools which only teach Mandarin Chinese as a subject. The use of Mandarin Chinese beyond the school system is facilitated by institutional support in the form of the mass media as well as the linguistic landscape. The rational choice of Mandarin Chinese, supplemented by English, offers the Chinese community better pay-offs than full-scale adoption of Bahasa Malaysia because intranational mobility for them is limited by affirmative action policies favouring the Malays (see CROUCH, 2001).

Conclusion

The study examined status planning in a setting where the national language is derived from the language of a majority ethnic group in the country. This is a case of rationalisation through the recognition of the language of a majority group and the imposition of a single language for education and administrative communication (see LAITIN, 2000). The study showed that in the Malaysian state of Sarawak, the Iban adolescents are closer in their language use to the Malays than are the Chinese. Like the Malays, the Ibans frequently speak Malay languages in the mass media, friendship and transactional domains and even in the family domain. On the other hand, the Chinese are inclined towards Mandarin Chinese although the ethnic languages of Chinese sub-groups are still a feature of daily language use at this point in time. The religious and family domains show ethnocentric patterns of language use and are still the bastion of ethnic language use. In the education domain,

the dominance of Bahasa Malaysia is a direct outcome of the status planning for the national language. Laitin's (1993) 3±1 multilingual repertoire has explanatory power in a restricted domain of application. For all the three ethnic groups under study, English is the global language that is used in domains such as higher education and a gateway to the outside world and Bahasa Malaysia is the regional or national language which is the medium of education and also the language of government. For the Malay whose ethnic language is the national language, these two languages are needed to function in Malaysian society; hence the 3-1 outcome as predicted in Laitin's (1993) game theory of language regimes. The assumption is that the standard Malay language and regional varieties are considered to be one language. Using this assumption, Laitin's formula of language outcomes is not applicable to the Chinese and Iban who need three languages to function in the Malaysian community. Besides English and Bahasa Malaysia, they need their respective ethnic languages for community membership and local honour, giving rise to the 3+0 outcome. The language outcome is not 3±1 because Bahasa Malaysia is both a language for national integration and a regional language. Between the two non-Malay ethnic groups, the findings revealed a greater dominance of Bahasa Malaysia in the lives of Iban respondents than in the lives of Chinese respondents. The impact of the national language policy is compromised when the Chinese can resort to Mandarin Chinese, an alternative standard language with international standing, which also functions as a symbol of cultural solidarity for the speech community worldwide. In the absence of a standard language of this standing in the case of the Iban, they embrace their ethnic language which provides access to community membership and adopt Bahasa Malaysia for intranational mobility. The findings suggest that for the implementation of status planning for the national language to succeed with groups whose ethnic language have a larger sphere of usage and influence than the national language, the socio-economic gains derived from mastery and use of the national language has to be unequivocal. Even then, the returns from using the national language may be less than returns from using the global language. In the context of Laitin's (1993) game theory on language policy outcomes, language planning which seeks to elevate the national language and obliterate contesting languages may no longer be feasible, and it is more rational to seek equilibrium of these languages.

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