

A Relocation of Malay Language Varieties Based on the Diglossic Description

QUAH CHIEW KIN

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to discuss the Malay language varieties within the diglossia notion proposed by Ferguson. The Malay language varieties is found to be more of a triglossic in nature than diglossic as described by Asmah Haji Omar and polyglossic by Platt. The Malay language is made up of several layers or varieties, which are used in different context groups or speakers. This paper then focuses its discussion on one of the two High varieties (the standard variety) and one of the two Low varieties (the regional variety). The differences between these two varieties are also briefly discussed.

Key words: Diglossia, standard Malay, royal Malay, regional Malay. High varieties, Low varieties.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of diglossia is seen in the Malay language and has been described by Asmah Hj Omar (1987). This paper attempts to rework Asmah's description of the Malay language within the frame proposed by Ferguson (1959/1972) and Fishman (1980). The concept of diglossia, according to Ferguson (1972: 245):

is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

Ferguson (1959: 326) uses Arabic, Swiss German, Haitian Creole and Greek as examples to characterise his notion of diglossia. Ferguson (1959: 328-336) has differentiated between the High (H) and the Low (L) in nine areas, i.e. function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardisation, stability, grammar, lexicon and phonology. He identifies the H-variant as the superposed variety (Ferguson and Gumperz 1973) and the L-variant as the regional dialects (Ferguson 1959: 327). A superposed variety refers to one

variety of a language, i.e. a standard language, used in formal situations with the speakers of a community. His famous dichotomy of H- and L-variants points to the use of the H-variant in formal contexts and the L-variant in informal contexts. In most cases, the H-variant has received some kind of proper planning and development compared to the L-variant. Hence, the grammatical structures of both varieties are different, although they may share most of the vocabulary. However, Ferguson's H-variants and L-variants definitions need to be redefined to suit the varieties of the Malay language.

VARIETIES OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE

In broader terms, the Malay language can be divided into three main varieties used in the Malay speaking community. These varieties are used in different contexts:

1. royal Malay, which is found in written or in spoken form only among the royal members or in their presence.
2. standard Malay, which is found in written form and sometimes spoken in formal contexts.
3. colloquial Malay, which is usually spoken in informal contexts. This variety can be then subclassified into two subvarieties:
 - a. regional Malay dialects spoken usually among speakers from the same locality in informal contexts,
 - b. Bazaar Malay (a pidginized Malay) spoken between the native Malays and non-native Malay speakers in informal contexts.

The royal Malay variety is at present used within a limited domain. This is due to the fact that this particular variety is used either in written form or in spoken form among royal members and on occasions where royal members have conversations with commoners. Conversations between royal members and commoners are to take place in two directions where the royal members "speak down" and the commoners "speak up". For example, *berjumpa* [to meet] is used when royal members "speak down". On the other hand, when the commoners "speak up", the word is *mengadap*. There are also terms that can only be used to refer to royal members such as *beradu* [to sleep], *murka* [to be angry], *gering* [to be ill]. These words are different to words used by commoners such as *tidur* [to sleep], *marah* [to be angry] and *sakit* [to be ill] respectively (Asmah Hj Omar 1987: 84-5). In addition, royal Malay has not expanded or developed in the last four centuries (based on the written (classical) texts of the courts of the Melaka sultanate) (Asmah Hj Omar 1987: 90) and the number of speakers are confined to the members of the royal family in Malaysia.

The Malay language of the royal courts in Indonesia was recognised by the Dutch as High Malay. This is to distinguish the other variation spoken by the people of diverse ethnic origins at the trading port of Batavia (Jakarta), which is Low Malay. High Malay was protected from the interference of Low Malay by the setting up of a body called *Balai Pustaka* (Anton Moeliono 1986; Husen Abas 1987) in 1917 to print reading materials in High Malay which was the lingua franca used by the Dutch. The establishment of *Balai Pustaka* triggered the beginning of a new written literature of the Malay language, which is different from classical Malay (Mohd Taib Osman 1986: 5, 35).

Prior to the British colonisation the Malay language was the language of communication and when Malaya (then) came under the British rule, English took over in official functions, and administration. English was the 'High-language'. Asmah Hj Omar (1993: 181) states that:

the status of Malay as an L-language came about with colonisation. Its low status was accorded by the colonial programme of the use of English in important spheres of the life of the Malays through education and government institutions ... that demoted Malay from its status as an H-language to that of an L-language.

Bazaar Malay or more widely known as *bahasa pasar* [market language] in Malay is a form of colloquial Malay. The language contains mixture of words from other languages such as Chinese, Tamil and English, which is commonly used as a language of communication on the streets by people from various linguistic backgrounds. Under the British rule, the status of the Malay language was given L-language status as the H-language was English although it has been "the language of administration of the various Malay empires in Malaya and the islands of Southeast Asia" (Asmah Hj Omar 1993: 181-2). The notion of colloquial variety in this paper is broadened to accommodate Asmah's (1987: 86) refined variety, which is also a form of colloquial Malay.

After the initial definition and characterisation of diglossia by Ferguson, several revisions have been made to the model of diglossia. One of them, Fishman (1980: 4) identifies the existence of different types of linguistic relationships between the H-variants and the L-variants as:

1. two varieties are genealogically related, where H is the classical and L is the vernacular, e.g. classical Arabic and vernacular Arabic respectively or Sanskrit and Hindi respectively,
2. two varieties are genealogically related, where H is the written or formally spoken form and L is the vernacular, e.g. High German (Germany) and Swiss German (Switzerland) respectively,
3. two varieties are genealogically not related, where H is the written or formally spoken form and L is the vernacular, e.g. Spanish and Guarani in Paraguay respectively,

4. two varieties are not genealogically related, where H is the classical and L is the vernacular, e.g. textual Hebrew and Yiddish respectively,

The notion of diglossia proposed by Ferguson (1959) assumes that two varieties of a language, which exist together in a community, each has a specific role to play in that community. Although Fishman agrees with Ferguson in the case of the classical variety as exemplified by Arabic and Greek, he departs from Ferguson on one point when he proposes that in some cases the H-variant, regardless of it being classical or not, is a structural variant. Hence, the major difference between Ferguson's diglossia and Fishman's is that while Ferguson confines the definition to the existence of different varieties within the same language, Fishman has extended the definition to include varieties of languages which are not genealogically related. Nevertheless, the original definition by Ferguson and Fishman's extended definition has to be remodified for the Malay language. Malay society has two H-varieties in conjunction with one L-variety (although this is further subdivided into two L-varieties). Therefore, the Malay language may actually be triglossic, rather than diglossic in nature. Another triglossic setting is found in Tanzania described by Abdulaziz (1972) with English-Kiswahili (Swahili)-local languages (Bantu – approximately 90%) as high, middle and low respectively (quoted by Salmons 1990: 80).

The concept of triglossic for the Malay language proposed in this paper is in contrast with Platt (1979). He has categorised several languages that exist side by side according to contexts (domains) as polyglossia in Malaysia. It includes Mandarin, Tamil and English, which are used in certain contexts along side with the H-varieties and L-varieties of the Malay language. The fact that the use of other vernacular languages, i.e. the Chinese dialects and Indian languages in Malaysia, occurs outside of the Malay language scenario, these vernacular languages should not be taken into consideration in determining the Malay language as a polyglossia.

MALAY H- AND L-VARIANTS REVISITED

For the case of the Malay language, the concept of diglossia can only be applied loosely. Asmah Hj Omar (1987: 92) has classified the royal Malay language as the H-variant and the commoners' Malay language as the L-variant as illustrated in Diagram 1:

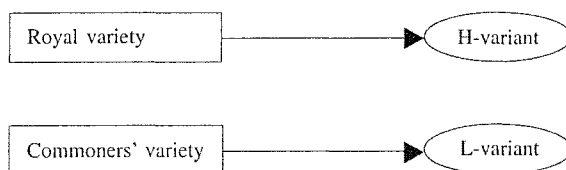


DIAGRAM 1. Basic classification of the Malay language varieties

Although the royal and the commoners' varieties share a large percentage of the Malay vocabulary, the differences between the two are personal pronouns (Quah 1997) and certain lexical items as mentioned elsewhere in this paper. Burgess (1975: 185) states that:

the feudal structure of Malay society has had a remarkable effect on the language. Words appropriate to the common man cannot be used in connection with a ruler – sultan or raja. I walk ('jalan kaki' – go on foot) but the Sultan must "berangkat". I eat (makan), but the Sultan "santap". I sleep (tidur), while the Sultan "beradu".

The commoners Malay language according to Asmah has three varieties: educated, refined and colloquial. The educated variety is also referred to as standard Malay while colloquial Malay is usually referred to as the regional Malay dialects. Asmah Hj Omar (1987: 86) defines the refined variety as marked by words and phrases which are considered "refined" and "reflecting good breeding". The L-variant is subdivided into three subvariants: L-high (L_h), L-medium (L_m) and L-low (L_l) respectively. The colloquial variety has consistently been occupying L_l . On the other hand, the educated variety and the refined variety are interchangeable between L_h and L_m depending on the type of contexts. In other words, the educated variety occupies L_h in academic contexts and occupies L_m in social contexts. This is illustrated in Diagram 2:

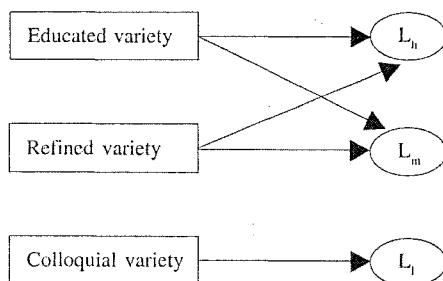


DIAGRAM 2. H- and L-varieties of the Malay language

Asmah (1987: 94) has also made another suggestion for the treatment of the H- and L-variants by grouping the refined variety and the colloquial variety as L_l and the educated variety as L_h , thus eliminating the L_m level. Royal Malay remains as the H-variant. Here L_l (Low-low) is subdivided into L_{l1} (Low-low1) and L_{l2} (Low-low2) for the refined variety and the colloquial variety respectively. She justifies this grouping on the basis that the refined and colloquial varieties (c.f. Kana 1994) are acquired informally, while the educated variety is acquired through formal education. This is illustrated in Diagram 3 below:

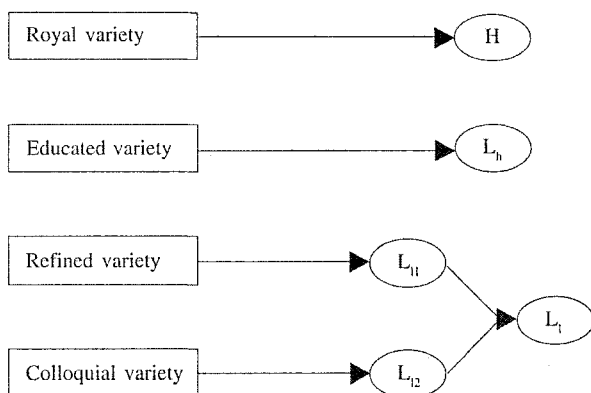


DIAGRAM 3. Classification of H- and L-varieties of the Malay language by Asmah Hj Omar (1987)

Based on Ferguson's dichotomy of H- and L-variants (1959: 327), the royal variety and the standard variety fall under the H-variant and the colloquial under the L-variant. The major difference between Asmah's H- and L-varieties distinction (1987), which is proposed in this paper is the shift of variant level from Low to High for the standard variety. This is due to the fact that the standard variety has undergone language planning at the phonological, morphological and syntactical as well as other processes such as borrowing from other languages. Thus, it fits the notion of the H-variant proposed by Ferguson (1959). The upgrading of standard Malay to the H-level is similar to the step taken in Tanzania with the upgrading of Kiswahili to the H-level from the middle level sharing the H level with English. Kiswahili today is widely used in official domains (Salmons 1990: 80).

Within the H-variants, the royal variety and standard variety is subdivided into H_h (High-high) and H_l (High-low) respectively. The colloquial variety, which comprises the regional and bazaar varieties is subdivided into L_h and L_l respectively. This is illustrated in Diagram 4:

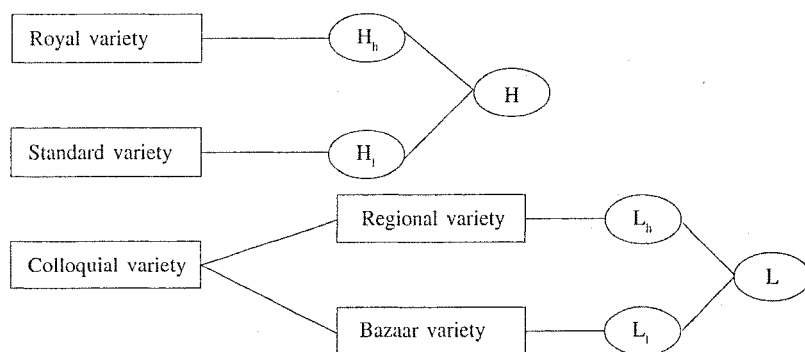


DIAGRAM 4. Reclassification of H- and L-varieties of the Malay language

The varieties that are of interest in this paper are the standard variety and the regional variety. The subtle differences between H_h and H_l or L_h and L_l are not within the scope of this paper. Therefore, the standard variety and the regional variety will simply be referred to as the H-variant and L-variant respectively. In the next few sections, some brief discussion of the H- and L-variants are given to show their differences.

H-VARIANT: STANDARD MALAY

The standard variety has been “upgraded” to H-variant (Nik Safiah Karim 1986) in this study compared to Asmah’s (1987). This is based on the nine characteristics proposed by Ferguson (1959: 328-336) to determine the difference between standard and regional variety for the Malay language:

1. the standard and regional varieties have complementary functions,
2. the standard variety is regarded as an obligatory requirement for the community,
3. the standard variety has a written literature,
4. the standard variety is obtained through formal education, on the other hand the regional variety is acquired through the natural contexts of situations,
5. the standard variety has undergone standardisation and modernisation,
6. the standard variety has certain degree of differences in grammatical structures compared to the regional variety,
7. the standard and regional varieties share the bulk of the vocabulary but there are some differences,
8. the standard and regional varieties may share the same phonological structure,

9. the condition for diglossia (the standard and the regional) for the Malay language was only created in the 1950s. Hence, it may not qualify the requirement of stability in Ferguson's definition of diglossia.

As mentioned earlier, the standard variety did not "emerge" until the 1950s in Malaysia. Due to the several regional varieties that exist in the country, the decision to have one single variety proved to be rather difficult⁵. There were uncertainties among the Malay speakers as to which variety should be chosen to become standard Malay. Asmah Hj Omar (1975: 30) points out that:

the Johore-Riau Malay which is the basis of standard Malay was the form of Malay spoken in the Malay Empire of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ... Malay literature produced during this period including the most-famed "Sejarah Melayu" ("The Malay Annals") was written in this dialect.

Asmah Hj Omar adds that the decision to use the Johor-Riau dialect was incidental. In addition, the Perak dialect and the Melaka dialect are closely related to the Johor-Riau dialect. The standard variety, i.e. the written Malay, has undergone standardisation processes and is now used for academic, professional and literary as well as in all official communication and administrative purposes.

As a H-variety, standard Malay does not have a long history compared to the royal variety which existed over four centuries ago. The standard variety emerged when the writings (modern, creative literature and journalism) of *ASAS 50* (the Literary Writers of 1950) were accepted as modern Malay literature.

L-VARIANT: REGIONAL MALAY

The Malay language is a continuum of dialects. Most of the Malay dialects are based on the geographical location of the speakers. Abdullah Hassan (1974: 2) has pointed out that the boundary of each Malay dialects does not necessarily coincides with the political boundary of the state where the particular dialect is spoken. He has divided the regional variety into five main dialects: Kedah, Johor, Kelantan, Perak and Negeri. Asmah Hj Omar (1982: 175) originally divides the dialects into four major groups of the Peninsular (excluding Sabah and Sarawak dialects). Later Asmah Hj Omar (1983: 84) divides the Malay language into seven major dialects (c.f. Hendon 1966) based on the geographical location of the speakers. The Negeri Sembilan dialect, however, was not included in her classification of major dialects of the Peninsular as the dialect originated from Minangkabau (Sumatra), which is quite distinct from other dialects in the Peninsula. The divisions are:

1. the Northern dialect – the north-western part of the Peninsula (comprises the states of Kedah, Perlis, Penang and northern part of Perak),
2. the Kelantan dialect – the north-eastern part of the Peninsula (comprises mainly the state of Kelantan),
3. the Terengganu dialect – the eastern part of the Peninsula (comprises mainly the state of Terengganu),
4. the Southern dialect – the southern part of the Peninsula (comprises the states of Johor, Melaka, Pahang, Selangor, central and southern part of Perak),
5. the Negeri Sembilan dialect – the west central part of the Peninsula (comprises the state of Negeri Sembilan). It has its own distinct dialect as the majority of the speakers are Minangkabau immigrants from Sumatra (Le Page 1985: 33). The dialect is spoken mainly within the state,
6. the Sarawak dialect – the western part of Borneo island (comprises the state of Sarawak). Sarawak and Sabah dialects are closely related to the Indonesian language and are also influenced by the indigenous Borneo languages such as Iban dan Kadazan respectively (Le Page 1985: 33),
7. the Sabah dialect – the north-east of Borneo Island (comprises the state of Sabah).

Most of the regional dialects are quite closely related in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures, with the exception of pronunciation and certain lexical items; differences in syntax are minimal. Differences between the dialects include the pronunciation of certain sounds, the use of certain morphological features such as affixes, and the use of certain words (Asmah Hj Omar 1992: 217; Le Page 1985: 33). Hendon (1966: xi) states that “besides standard Malay, which is accepted throughout Malaya as the norm of cultivated speech, there exist regional dialects which differ from the standard language in numerous points of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary”. Some of these dialects are closer to some others. For example, the Kelantan dialect is more likely to be understood by the Malays from the state of Terengganu than the Malays from Kedah. Asmah Hj Omar (1985a: 191) states that,

the differences between the dialects are not as great as to imply basic differences in their grammatical systems and structures. A wider divergence may be imputed to their lexical items, but even in a single regional dialect, lexical items may differ from one language register to that of another... . However, since the verbal systems concerned are in dialectal relationship with one another, the systems and structures are fundamentally the same.

Standard Malay of *Sejarah Melayu* (The Malay Annals) and contemporary Malay of today, however, are quite different. Despite the changes, it has been mentioned earlier that Standard Malay of today was very much based on the *Sejarah Melayu*. The Perak dialect is quite closely related to the Malay language written in *Sejarah Melayu* where the verbal prefixes of *me-*, *ber-*

and *ter-* are also used. For the regional variety of Perak and subsequent discussion of the Kelantan and Terengganu dialects will be based on the study done by Brown (1956). It is to be noted that the description of these dialects by Brown was originally published separately, 1921 (Perak dialect), 1927 (Kelantan dialect) and 1935 (Terengganu dialect) and was compiled together in the publication in 1956. The study of the Kedah dialect is by Asmah Hj Omar (1985a, 1985b). It is to be noted that the regional dialects of Perak, Kelantan and Terengganu discussed in Brown was based on *Sejarah Melayu* as the "standard Malay" then and the Kedah dialect discussed in Asmah Hj Omar was based on the contemporary Malay language as the "standard Malay". Nevertheless, Brown's work is valuable since this was an earlier major attempt at that time to do more than merely recording lexical peculiarities of Malay dialects (Hendon 1966: xi). Although the two studies were done thirty years apart, these regional dialects did not undergo extreme changes compared to standard Malay. Many works have been carried out academically since then, for example Ajid Che Kob (1993), Asmah Hj Omar (1985a, 1985b), Colins (1983), Zaharani Ahmad (1989), Rohani Mohd Yusoff (1986), Farid M Onn (1980). Similarly, the passive voice and prepositions are employed in the dialect as in *Sejarah Melayu*.

The most distinctive lexical items to the Perak dialect are the pronouns, viz. *téman* and *mika*, the first and second pronouns respectively. The other derivations in the dialect from standard Malay are the pronunciation of the final syllable of a word. For example, the final syllable of /ar/ in /bésar/ [big] is changed to /or/ with a silent-r, thus /béso/ (Brown 1956: 57-58). Phoneme /é/ is the old spelling for the schwa /ə/ sound. In the present spelling, the accent has been dropped (due to standardisation). Thus it does not indicate the different sound from /ə/ compared to the half close cardinal vowel /e/ in orthographic writing. For the purpose of the illustrations, the accent of the old spelling is maintained.

Both Kelantan dan Terengganu dialects are much more different from the *Sejarah Melayu* Malay than the Perak dialect. Brown (1956: 124) discovered that,

1. the prefix *mé-* is not found after words such as *pandai* [clever], *pérgi* [go], *héndak* [want],
2. the passive construction to express an agent such as *dilihatnya kérieta itu* [the car was seen], *dipukulnya budak itu* [the boy was hit], which is abundant in *Sejarah Melayu* was rarely found in these two dialects,
3. the use of the prefix *ke-* is sometimes used for euphonic purposes, for example *kébuleh kétulong* [can help] (1956: 157), which defies the grammatical rules of the Malay language,
4. the ellipsis of prepositions *ké* [to], *dari* [from], etc. expressing motion,
5. the preposition *ké* is used in replace of *képada* [to] which is used in standard Malay.

In the case of pronouns, the Kelantan and Terengganu dialects have their own. In Kelantan, *hamba* (the derogatory form of I) or *kawan* [friend] can be used for first person singular. In Terengganu, *saya* [I] is more often used. Another form, which is also common is *aku*. This form is found in the Kelantan dialect as well as in other dialects in the country. For the second person singular, in Kelantan, when *hamba* is used, then the person addressed to is referred to by a title (honorific) such as *éncik* [mister], *cik* [miss], and so on. The same situation can be said about the Terengganu dialect. However, in Kelantan, if *kawan* [I] is used, then the second person is called *dema* [you] and in Terengganu *mu* or *diri* [you] (Brown 1956: 125). With respect to pronunciation (c.f. Brown 1956), the final syllable of a word in the Kelantan and Terengganu dialects differ from the Perak dialect. In addition, there is ellipsis of consonants in the spoken Kelantan and Terengganu dialects. The ellipsis of consonants occur in the first closed syllable of words, for example /*sampah*/ → /*sapah*/, /*nantil*/ → /*natil*/, etc. The peculiarity of the Terengganu dialect is the addition of the nasal consonant /ng/ or /g/ to the final position of words that end in the nasal consonants /n/ or /m/, for example, /*likan*/ → /*likang*/, and /*minum*/ → /*minung*/.

In the Kedah dialect, Asmah Hj Omar (1985a: 193) states that words are either simple, complex or reduplicative. The simple words in this dialect occur in the same root forms as the Kelantan and Terengganu dialects. However, in the complex words, the Kedah dialect takes mostly prefixes unlike Perak and Kelantan dialects where circumfixes (prefix + suffix) can be found (Brown 1956: 65, 158). On the other hand, suffixes are found in the Perak, Kelantan and Terengganu dialects (Brown 1956: 76, 223 & 234). For reduplicative, the root form is usually fully reduplicated (Asmah Hj Omar 1985a: 207). A similar phenomenon can be found in the Perak dialect (Brown 1956: 143). Apart from full reduplication, partial reduplication is also found in the Perak dialect (Brown, 1956: 82). One peculiarity is found in the Perak, Kelantan and Terengganu dialects, but not in the Kedah dialect, is the suffix '-ma' to indicate plurality in pronouns as in *dia-ma* (*dema*) [they], *kita-ma* [you and I and the others]. According to Brown (1956: 63, 157) the suffix -ma in Perak dialect is the abbreviation of *séma*. In Kelantan and Terengganu, *séma* is a substitute for *sémua* [all]. There is a possibility of its equivalence in the Kedah dialect which is *depa* [they].

Although the regional dialects are said to be sufficiently closely related where speakers of the two varieties are able to understand each other, there are still variations. For example, the Perak and Kedah dialects of the west coast is linguistically closer, they are not the same compared to the Kelantan and Terengganu dialects of the east coast. The various dialects of Malay occur within "a relative homogeneity of language" (Teeuw 1961: 43). Generally, the division of regional varieties is determined by the political division such as the Malays in Negeri Sembilan state speak the Negeri Sembilan dialect. In

some areas, however, a mixed variety of two or more regional dialects can be found especially in the areas around the political borders of the states. Two regional varieties that have a wider population of speakers are the Kedah dialect and the Johor dialect which are influential and play a significant role in being chosen as the standard pronunciation and the standard written form respectively. Teeuw (1961: 43) has pointed out that the difference between the north and the south dialects of Malay is that:

the language of the South of the Johore area (and the off-shore Riau Archipelago), is regarded as correct, 'polite' Malay: the language which shows most resemblance with official, literary Malay, without, however, being identical with it The further to the North, the greater the divergence from standard Malay and, especially on the East coast of the peninsula, the deviations from official Malay are fairly large. Unfortunately, the point of departure of dialect descriptions has also been the standard language, often even the written language ...

As far as standard pronunciation is concerned, the two dialects of Kedah (northern) and Johor-Riau (southern) have existed side by side. On the other hand, for the standard written variety, the Johor-Riau dialect "became the norm of language usage, specifically in formal, official context, and in written language" (Asmah Hj Omar 1992: 171) after the establishment of the Federation of Malaya in 1948. The Federation of Malaya comprised nine Malay kingdoms (states), viz. Kedah, Johor, Kelantan, Perlis, Terengganu, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Selangor and the British crown colonies of Penang and Melaka. Unlike the standard variety, the regional variety is a form of speech in a community within a social context. Crawford (1852: 75) states that:

the dialects of oral Malay, – for there are none of the written language, although considerable difference in the skill with which it is composed, – consist in little more than the use of different personal pronouns by different parties, ... above all, in variations of pronunciation.

STANDARD MALAY VERSUS REGIONAL MALAY

It has been acknowledged that a difference exists between the regional and standard varieties. According to Raja Mukhtaruddin (1992: 7), the standard variety is not the same as the various regional dialects. The distinction between standard Malay and regional Malay is rather vague due to its historical development (c.f. Mangantar Simanjuntak 1983). Teeuw (1961: 42) has pointed out that the distinction between Malay dialects is complicated due to:

the enormous expansion geographically ... through dispersion and colonisation, the intensive contact of many Malay speakers ... with local populations, by mixing and influencing in various ways and at very different periods with differing intensity, an

extremely intricate complex of Malay, Malay-like and Malay-influenced languages and dialects ...

Weinreich (1964: 99, 102) states that a standardised version of a language is a symbol and have close affiliation to intellectualism. The written standard variety is sometimes referred to as the high or school language by a number of Malay linguists. Standard Malay is the variety, which has undergone certain standardisation processes. Regional Malay is usually spoken in a certain geographical area. However, standard Malay goes beyond the geographical boundary. One of the main characteristics of the regional variety is the simple affixation system. Most regional varieties make use of nouns and verbs either in their root or simple affix form (either prefix or suffix). In the regional variety, very often the use of personal pronouns is often omitted as the speaker and the hearer are well within the context to identify the references. The following examples, sentences 10a and 11a, are usually found in regional variety compared to the standard version in sentences 9, 10b and 11b (taken from Brown 1956b: 13). If the action is intentional, then a pronoun is used as in the case of sentence 9. However, if the action is incidental as in sentences 10a and 11a, then the pronoun is dropped. The pronoun in sentences 10b and 11b appears if the action is intentional.

9. *Saya sudah membeli rumah.*

[I have bought house]

I have bought a house.

10a. *Pisau sudah hilang.*

[knife already lost]

I have lost my knife.

or b) *Pisau sudah saya hilangkan.*

[knife already I lost]

I (purposely) loose my knife.

11a. *Kunci tertinggal di rumah.* or b) *Kunci sudah saya tinggalkan di rumah.*

[key left at home]

I have left my keys at home.

[key already I left at home]

I (purposely) have left my keys at home.

In the regional variety, very often the constructions are made indirectly and the meanings are implicitly conveyed. Indirectness and implicitness mean politeness in spoken situations. No reference is usually made either to the speaker or the hearer or the subject/object in the discussion as the participants of the conversation were meant to "understand" what or who is the topic of discussion. Asmah Hj Omar's article on *Indirectness as a rule of speaking among the Malays* (1992: 173-186) shows how speaking indirectly indicates good breeding with humility, knowing one's position in a situation and refinement.

The spoken (regional) variety has simple sentence structures and most words are in root forms. On the other hand, the written (standard) variety consists of formal use of lexical items, the correct affixation usage according to its grammatical rules (Raja Mukhtaruddin 1992: 67; Asmah Hj Omar 1975: 36). For the Malays, to be direct and to make meanings explicit is to be impolite and rude, and to a certain degree, to show some arrogance of the speaker. If the intention of the speaker is to distance himself or herself from the hearer, then it is achieved through being direct. Usually this is done in formal situations. This is echoed by Yunus Maris (1966) when he points out that this is a variety used in various dialects, formal speeches, public functions, conferences, and education (Raja Mukhtaruddin 1992: 71).

By and large the meaning in standard variety is often explicitly implied with obligatory participant markings, proper morphological structures in the sentences. In formal situations, sentences with explicit meanings are a suitable strategy used to distance the speaker from the hearer and it is also seen as showing some form of respect of the social position of the hearer. Benjamin (1993: 355) states that "such a mode is especially appropriate to languages standardised for public use in modern-nation states, ...". Therefore, standard Malay is a variety that cuts across all the various regional dialects and a variety that is parallel to the Indonesian language (Raja Mukhtaruddin 1992: 65). However, it is rather odd to use the standard variety in any verbal situations as described by Asmah Hj Omar (1975: 36-37) where "it would be most ridiculous if a speaker were to use the standard language in an informal conversation, just as it would be undesirable for a speaker to use a regional dialect in a formal speech ..."

It is easier to achieve the standardisation of the written variety than the spoken variety due to the regional variations (c.f. Vachek (1989) on written versus spoken language). The early influence from English on Malay came with Abdullah Munshi (Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi) in the early 1920s (Hashim Musa 1994). Abdullah's writings were found to contain English influence due to the close association he had with English colonials. Abdullah was dubbed as the 'father of modern Malay writing'. His autobiographical writings, e.g. *Hikayat Pelayaran Abdullah* (The sea voyage of Abdullah) and *Hikayat Abdullah* (Autobiography of Abdullah) were written in the then so-called modern Malay language. By this time, the country was already under British administration. Apart from Abdullah Munshi and Raja Ali Haji's writing in the 19th century, no other significant writings were produced later. There were two reasons, one was that the British did not encourage the Malays to be educated and two, the British were afraid that if the Malays were educated, they might go against the British administration (Hassan Ahmad 1995: 6). The Western influence was significant in shaping the development of the language.

SUMMARY

The Malay language has been standardised and in the process it has been influenced by other languages, especially English, in the area of grammatical structures. As pointed out by Asmah Hj Omar (1975: 113):

indeed, the standardisation is easier achieved in the written language than in the spoken one, and communication between scientists either in their own national milieu or across national boundaries is largely via the written language.

What is perceived to be a true Malay language no longer applies to the standard variety, although to some degree it still does to the regional variety.

The concept of a true Malay language was defined by Brown (1956: ix) to be:

the Malay spoken by the Malays of the countryside amongst themselves, ... in their own environment. This is a language entirely free from the influence of English: it is the bahasa Melayu jati "true Malay", ...

Regarding *Melayu jati*, Azhar M Simin (1988: 48) cautions "the writers of Malay grammar that their descriptions and interpretations may likely not to be, if they are not careful, the descriptions and interpretations of the language of Melayu jati". Although the development of the Malay language started as early as 1886. Another version states that the society was founded in 1888 (Winstedt 1950: 144) in Johor by a society called *Pakatan Belajar Mengajar Pengetahuan Bahasa* (Society of Learning and Teaching Linguistic knowledge) (Mohd Taib Osman 1986: 13), it was not until the establishment of the Sultan Idris Teachers Training College in 1922 that it officially begun. However, the development made an impact only in the 1950s after the Second World War. This is due to the position of English as the language of the colonials and the lack of local (Malays) political motivation. The momentum began to pick up when the Malays witnessed the advancement of the Indonesian language (originally called Malay language prior to 1928) as the language of science and technology.

The most significant event was the establishment of ASAS 50 during the post war period. The political dissatisfaction towards colonialism and the desire to modernise the Malay language led to the establishment of a body, *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (DBP) in 1956 (Mohd Taib Osman 1986: 103). During this period, many items of Indonesian vocabulary found their way into the Malay language (Mohd Taib Osman 1986: 15). The development of the Malay language officially started with the establishment of the DBP, the counterpart of Balai Pustaka in Indonesia, in 1956. The language of Balai Pustaka (the Indonesian government's publishing house) is said to be from the Minangkabau dialect of Sumatra, forming a newly created variety. The emergence of standard Malay was based on this dialect. Khaidir Anwar (1976: 25) states that

"Minangkabau is a variety of Malay and modern Malay...". The work concerning Minangkabau people of Sumatra and its dialect can be found in Khaidir Anwar (1976).

The notion of "modern Malay" has been expressed by Brown (1956: ix) to be a language that has been influenced by another language, i.e. English. Brown finds the influence to be "disastrous" and states further that although modern Malay contains English constructions coupled with Indonesian vocabulary it may be useful to Malay journalists, "... it is not the language of the vast majority of Malays..." (1956: ix). Modern Malay faced some resistance in importing words from the English language as the preference was Arabic, Sanskrit or Indonesian. The vast development of Indonesian has made many Malay linguists turning to their Indonesian counterparts for lexical expansion (Laycock 1971: 882).

The problems of the Malay language emerged as the consequence of absorbing new ideas in the area of science and technology, politics and economy on a huge scale. The most obvious changes take place after the Second World War when Malay journalists become more nationalistic and patriotic in voicing their resentments towards the colonial power and their desires to reinstate their own language i.e. the Malay language, as the language of communication. According to Le Page (1989: 14) due to the anti-colonial movement, the Malay language has to be developed to take over the colonial language, i.e. English. At the same time, scientific and technological advancement entered Malay rapidly. Many Malays were sent overseas (especially to America, Australia and the United Kingdom) to gain knowledge.

The development of the Malay language at the formal and regional levels needs a much more complex description. Several layers or varieties of the language were found using the diglossia notion of Ferguson's (1959/1972). The discussion in the earlier part of this paper points to the locations of the varieties of the Malay language to be more triglossic than diglossic or polyglossic in nature.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah Hassan. 1974. *The morphology of Malay*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Ajid Che Kob. 1993. Dialektologi di Malaysia: Retrospek dan prospek. Dlm. *Teori Linguistik dan Bahasa Melayu*, disunting Ajid Che Kob & Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin. Bangi: Jabatan Linguistik, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 87-97.
- Asmah Hj Omar. 1975. *Essays on Malaysia linguistics*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- _____. 1982. *Language and society in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- _____. 1983. *The Malay peoples of Malaysia and their languages*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

- _____. 1985a. Language and the world-view of the Malay peasants. Dlm. *Malaysian world-view*, disunting Mohd Taib Osman. Singapore: Southeast Asian Studies Program (Institute Of Southeast Asian Studies), 184-252.
- _____. 1985b. *Susur galur Bahasa Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- _____. 1987. *Malay in its sociocultural context*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- _____. 1992. *The Linguistic scenery in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- _____. 1993. The first congress for Malay. Dlm. *The Earliest stage of language planning: The First Congress Phenomenon*, disunting oleh Fishman, Joshua A. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 181-198.
- Azhar M. Simin. 1988. *Discourse-syntax of yang in Malay (Bahasa Malaysia)*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Benjamin, Geoffrey. 1993. Grammar and Polity: The cultural and political background to standard Malay. Dlm. *The Role of theory in language description*, disunting Foley, William A. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 341-392.
- Brown, C. C. 1956. *Studies in country Malay*. London: Luzac & Co.
- Burgess, Anthony. 1975. *Language made plain*. Fontana: Collins.
- Colins, James T. 1983. *Dialek Ulu Terengganu*. Monograf 8. Bangi: FSKK, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Crawford, J. 1852. *Grammar and dictionary of the Malay language*. Vol. 1. London: Smith, Elder & Co.
- Farid M Onn. 1980. Perubahan bahasa dan kajian dialek: Suatu pendekatan tatabahasa generatif. *Jurnal Dewan Bahasa* 24 (8): 4-12.
- Ferguson, Charles. 1959. Diglossia. *Word* 15: 325-340.
- _____. 1972. Diglossia Dlm. *Language and social context: selected readings*, disunting Giglioli, Pier Paolo. Harmondsworth: Penguin: 232-251.
- _____. & J.D. Gumperz. 1973. Variety, dialect and language. Dlm. *Readings for applied linguistics: the Edinburgh Course of Applied Linguistics Volume I*, disunting Allen, J.B.P. & S. Pit Corder. London: Oxford University Press, 91-99.
- Fishman, J.A. 1980. Bilingualism and biculturalism as individual and as societal phenomena. *Journal Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 1 (1): 3-15.
- Hashim Musa. 1994. Aliran pertumbuhan dan perkembangan bahasa Melayu. Dlm. *Linguistik Melayu*, disunting oleh Zaharani Ahmad. Bangi: Pusat Teknolong Pendidikan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 213-237.
- Hassan Ahmad. 1995. Syarahan pendeta Za'aba: Cabaran dunia berbahasa Melayu: Menangani budaya dalam dunia globalisasi. Kertas kerja Kongres Bahasa Melayu Sedunia. 21-25 Ogos 1995, Kuala Lumpur.
- Hendon, Rufus S. 1966. *The Phonology and morphology of Ulu Muar Malay (Kuala Pilah District, Negeri Sembilan)* USA: Yale University.
- Husen Abas. 1987. *Indonesian as a unifying language of wider communication: a historical and sociolinguistic perspective*. Series D- No. 73. Australia: Pacific Linguistics.

Key words: Hikayat, novel, adventure, individuality, Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi, Ahmad Kotot, Malay elites.

PENGENALAN

Sehingga dekad 1960-an, Ahmad bin Mohd. Rashid Talu (1889-1939) dan novel-novelnya tidak banyak dibicarakan. Hanya setelah Dayang (1963) menulis rencananya, baharulah pengarang ini dan novel-novelnya dibincangkan dan dikaji dengan menyeluruh. Antara pengkaji yang banyak menyelidiki Ahmad Talu dan novelnya ialah Yahya Ismail pada tahun 1970-an, Safian Hussein pada tahun 80an dan Sarah Sadon pada tahun 1990-an. Ada banyak sebab pengarang ini kurang dibicarakan, walaupun telah menghasilkan sembilan buah novel. Antaranya ialah beliau pengarang yang “tersendiri”, dalam erti kata tidak dapat dikategorikan dalam golongan sasterawan, atau ‘ulama, wartawan dan guru, yang telah memainkan peranan yang besar dalam perkembangan dan sejarah kesusasteraan Melayu. Ini disebabkan beliau tidak menjadi guru akibat hanya mendapat pendidikan sehingga darjah tiga di sekolah Melayu Chowrasta, Pulau Pinang. Beliau juga bukan wartawan, walaupun pernah bekerja dengan syarikat akhbar *Bahtera* pada tahun 1933, tetapi akhbar itu sudah terhenti pengeluarannya pada Ogos 1933. Beliau juga mencuba nasib menerbitkan majalah cerita *Kawan Bercakap* pada tahun 1934, tetapi majalah itu hanya sempat diterbitkan tiga keluaran sahaja.

Namun demikian, beliau seorang pengarang yang berbakat. Bakatnya itu diasah lagi dengan kepekaan jiwanya yang dibentuk daripada pengembaraannya ke Singapura, Kelantan dan Selatan Thai. Pengembaraan yang panjang itu bukan sahaja meluaskan pandangannya, tetapi juga memperkayakan pengalamannya. Setengah kisah pengembaraan di tempat-tempat itu dan juga watak-watak yang ditemuinya itu telah disuratkan dalam novel-novelnya. Dengan novellah, beliau mencurahkan imaginasi, bakat dan kreativitinya, maka menjadikannya seorang novelis Melayu yang dikagumi.

NOVEL-NOVEL AHMAD RASHID TALU

Sepanjang yang diketahui, Ahmad Talu telah meninggalkan kepada kita sembilan buah karya. Tiga daripadanya, iaitu *Silap atau Ciu Yang Taat* (1934), *Sedih* atau *Riwayat Sekapur Sirih* (1935) dan *Dua Kali Selamat* atau *Selamat Yang Beruntung* (1934) telah dikategorikan sebagai novelet kerana panjangnya sekitar 30 halaman. Dua buah novelet yang awal itu pernah diterbitkan semula dalam *Berita Minggu*. *Silap* telah disiarkan setiap Ahad: 15 September 1963, 22 September 1963, 29 September 1963 dan 6 Oktober 1963. Sementara itu, *Sedih* pula telah disiarkan pada 17 November 1963, 24 November 1963, 1

Disember 1963 dan 8 Disember 1963. Manakala novelnya bertajuk *Rahmah bt Abdullah* atau *Peti Rahsia* (1933), yang hanya terbit satu penggal, maka dianggap tidak selesai. Novel beliau yang mendapat perhatian paling banyak ialah *lakah Salmah*, tujuh jilid dan diterbitkan pada 1928. Karya ini telah dua kali cetak ulang setelah terbit pertama kali. Dua buah novel beliau yang lain *Kawan Benar* (1927) adalah novelnya yang pertama yang telah diterbitkan semula oleh Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka pada tahun 1976, sementara novelnya *Perangkap Hitam* atau *Kelawar Pulau Pinang* (1934) pula diterbitkan oleh Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka pada tahun 1987. Sementara novelnya *Dua Belas Kali Sengsara* (1929) yang diterbitkan dalam lima penggal dan *Siapa Jahat* atau *Datuk Cincano* (1932) terus tinggal dalam edisi pertama masing-masing. Mungkin novel yang kedua itu telah hilang sehinggakan tidak dapat dikesan lagi. Kesukaran mendapat novel-novel Ahmad Talu itu mungkin menjadi faktor menghalang pengkaji dan pengkritik yang ingin menerokai pemikiran, idea, pembaharuan yang cuba diungkapkan pengarang ini. Oleh itu, usaha agresif perlu dilakukan untuk memastikan novel-novel Ahmad Talu yang lain dapat dibaca pelajar, pengkaji dan peminat sastera.

Dalam konteks kesusasteraan Melayu, novel-novel Ahmad Talu yang disebutkan itu telah lahir ketika genre novel Melayu masih dalam proses pembentukannya. Kemunculan genre novel dalam kesusasteraan Melayu baru bukanlah penjelmaan langsung dari Barat, tetapi lebih berupa persambungan daripada tradisi bercerita orang Melayu sendiri, dengan sekadar menggunakan pengertian dan bentuk sastera dari negara Barat (Safian et al. 1981: 20). Sebelum kedatangan barat, orang Melayu telah mempunyai tradisi bersastera dalam bentuk hikayat dengan naratif prosa, misalnya disampaikan dalam bentuk lisan. Antara hikayat yang terkenal ialah *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* dan *Hikayat Ali Hanafiah*.

Namun demikian, hasil pembauran antara genre sastera tradisi dengan pengaruh, realiti dan kisah semasa yang mula berkembang dalam akhbar ketika itu sedikit sebanyak telah mempengaruhi pemilihan cerita dalam novel-novel Melayu masa itu. Dalam kehidupan yang baru itu, yang menonjol ialah sifat realismenya (A. Wahab Ali 1988: 93). Pembentukan novel di peringkat awal dalam kesusasteraan Melayu baru itu telah melalui proses 'peralihan' daripada perkataan 'hikayat' kepada judul novel. Antara contohnya ialah novel Zulkarnain Yaacob yang berjudul *Hikayat Perjumpaan Asyik* (1926) dan *Hikayat Khalik dan Malik* (1926).

Pertumbuhan novel Melayu ketika itu juga berlatar belakangkan novel Syed Sheikh al-Hadi, terutamanya *Hikayat Faridah Hanum* (1925 dan 1926) atau *Hikayat Setia Asyik Kepada Masyuknya*. *Hikayat Faridah Hanum* mengutamakan kisah percintaan antara Shafik Affendi dan Faridah Hanum dengan Mesir sebagai latar belakang. Faridah Hanum digambarkan sebagai watak yang telah diberi kebebasan oleh pengarangnya untuk dapat menyatakan perasaan tidak puas hatinya terhadap nasib anak-anak perempuan yang tidak