LOCAL CULTURE-RELATED LEXICAL ITEMS IN MALAYSIAN CHINESE NEWSPAPERS

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LOCAL CULTURE-RELATED LEXICAL ITEMS IN MALAYSIAN CHINESE NEWSPAPERS

ABSTRACT

Malaysian Chinese language has a different vocabulary from that of other regions due to its unique social and geographical circumstances. As a member of Malaysia's Chinese community, we have all the more reason to compile the discourse's vocabulary in recent years. As a result, this study will examine local culture-related Chinese lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers from three angles: (i) Identify the categories and word classes of these lexical items; (ii) Analyse the word formation of these lexical items, and (iii) Explore the causes of emergence of these lexical items. For textual and comparative analyses, a total of 135 words were collected from the supplements of four Malaysian Chinese newspapers (from 4 April 2021 to 4 July 2021). The findings for the first research objective revealed that four categories of these lexical items were people's livelihood, festival customs and religion, communication and conversation, food and dining, also the nouns are the most used. For the second research objective, word formation of borrowing scored the highest in total. The study also discovered, through expert interviews, that the two main reasons for the formation of these words are language factors and social factors. Furthermore, by analyzing Malaysian word formation patterns, the study discovered a new type of word formation, namely the mixmode pattern, which is not mentioned in Chinese word formation theories. The present research shows that the Malaysian Chinese lexical items are mainly reflected in the absorption of foreign words and the new words created by the local Chinese language users.

Keywords: *Local; Chinese; Lexical item; Malaysia, Newspaper*

ITEM LEKSIKAL BERCIRI TEMPATAN YANG BERKAITAN DENGAN BUDAYA DALAM AKHBAR BAHASA CINA DI MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Bahasa Cina (BC) Malaysia mempunyai perbendaharaan kata yang berbeza daripada kawasan lain kerana keadaan sosial dan geografinya yang unik. Sebagai ahli komuniti Cina Malaysia, kami mempunyai lebih banyak sebab untuk menyusun kosa kata wacana dalam beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini. Hasilnya, kajian ini mengkaji item leksikal bahasa Cina yang berkaitan dengan budaya dalam akhbar BC di Malaysia dari tiga sudut, iaitu (i) mengenal pasti kategori dan kelas kata item-item leksikal tersebut; 2) Menganalisis pembentukan kata bagi item-item leksikal tersebut; 3) Menerokai punca kemunculan item-item leksikal tersebut. Untuk membuat analisis tekstual dan perbandingan, sebanyak 135 perkataan telah dikumpulkan daripada tambahan empat akhbar Cina Malaysia (dari 4 April 2021 hingga 4 Julai 2021). Dapatan bagi objektif kajian pertama mendedahkan bahawa empat kategori item leksikal ini ialah mata pencarian rakyat, adat dan agama perayaan, komunikasi dan perbualan, makanan dan minuman, antaranya kata nama paling banyak digunakan. Bagi objektif kajian kedua, didapati bahawa peminjaman merupakan cara pembentukan perkataan yang paling banyak digunakan. Melalui temu bual pakar, didapati bahawa terdapat dua sebab utama pembentukan perkataan ini ialah faktor bahasa dan faktor sosial. Tambahan pula, dengan menganalisis pola pembentukan kata, penyelidikan ini juga menemui jenis pembentukan kata baharu iaitu pola mod campuran yang tidak pernah disebut dalam teori pembentukan kata bahasa Cina. Item leksikal bahasa Cina tersebut dicerminkan terutamanya dalam penyerapan perkataan asing dan perkataan baharu yang dicipta oleh pengguna bahasa Cina tempatan.

Kata kunci: *Tempatan; Cina; Item leksikal; Malaysia, Akhbar*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Malaysia is one of the countries with a high concentration of Chinese, who make up the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia after the Malays, and are known locally as the Malaysian Chinese (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). They have retained much of their traditional Chinese culture, including the use and transmission of the Chinese language and Chinese characters. In order to highlight the ethnic identity of the descendants of Chinese immigrants, the Chinese language is locally known as "华语" or "Mandarin" (Diao, 2021; Yao, 2021). It is clear that Mandarin is both a cultural vehicle and a symbol of the unity of all Malaysian Chinese. Although the Chinese language has its origins in Mandarin Chinese, it has been separated from its "mother tongue" for a long time due to its distance from mainland China and has been greatly influenced by local factors such as humanities and geography, and as a result, the Chinese language that exists in Malaysia has undoubtedly taken on the imprint of the place where it has migrated to, thus making the differences between the two obvious, especially many new words have emerged in the last decade, such as "*五脚基*", "*安娣*" and so on.

As Huang (2009) stated, the phonological differences between Malaysian Chinese Language and Chinese Mandarin are more limited than the lexical items. When the users look at the issue from a communicative and communicative perspective, the barriers and misunderstandings that those words with differences create in the communication between Chinese Malaysians and Mandarin Chinese learners cannot be ignored. There are historical and geographical reasons for the differences in these words, and its composition has its own characteristics and convenient and unique expressions, some are words that reflect things or concepts unique to the Malaysian Chinese community, some are a "miscellaneous" product of the native dialect with Malay,

English and Mandarin, and are being widely used by Chinese Malaysians. Even foreigners who visit Malaysia must adapt to the situation and learn these words, demonstrating that it is constrained by geographical constraints. Language development is the result of contradictions in the internal systems and functions of languages due to social development (Wang, 2004). Malaysia's social structure and linguistic background has made it a living linguistic ecology, and in such a linguistic environment, the development of its Chinese language is inevitably subject to variation. Among the elements of language, words change with the times, especially with the increasing development of the internet and the unprecedented frequency of communication between China and Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese words are not only evolving in their own way or dying out, they are also changing in a way that is either compatible with or different (such as phonology, morphology and also grammar) from Chinese Mandarin words.

1.1 Research Background

From a linguistic perspective, linguistic variation is a linguistic phenomenon (Sevara & Timur, 2021), as language evolution depends on social development. Chen (2000) indicates that linguistic variation can be caused by many factors, one of which is regional linguistic variation. In simple terms, the American English word "subway" and the British English word "underground" refer to the same item, which is metro. Language variation has always been a popular topic of sociolinguistic research, and in the context of the international spread of Chinese, the study of Chinese language variation in various regions has also received increasing attention.

As Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country, the Malaysian Chinese have been influenced by other languages, cultures, politics, and religions, and have become a distinctive regional variation. This variation has even become a feature of the local

Chinese language and is referred to as "Malaysian Chinese." However, the variation of Malaysian Chinese words has not been given enough attention. As a result, Malaysian Chinese may learn Mandarin without realizing the differences between these words and Modern Chinese, and without knowing which words should be converted to Modern Chinese, or even which Mandarin words they should use or how to use them. All of these differences and linguistic phenomena are not conducive to communication between the Chinese people and the Malaysian Chinese, nor are they conducive to the long-term development of the Chinese language.

Moreover, in order to emphasize the standardization of language, Malaysian textbooks commonly uses Chinese words as the basis for the standard instead of the more commonly used local Chinese words. For example, changing the word "*奇异果*" to "*猕猴桃*" (kiwi), from "*邮差*" to "*邮递员*" (postman), and so on. These words are very different from the habits of the Malaysian Chinese language, and teaching with words that are different from the local habits greatly affects students' learning.

Under such circumstances, this research will objectively reveal the reality of the Malaysian Chinese language and its current development in terms of its use in Malaysian society, i.e., the use of Chinese vocabulary in the local Chinese press, in order to improve understanding and communication between different Chinese communities. At the same time, by shedding light on the variation of the vocabulary, it will draw attention to this issue and help Malaysian Chinese people understand their own language.

1.2 Statement of Problems

Labov introduced the concept of language variation in 1968 (Labov, 2009), which has gradually become an essential part of sociolinguistic research (Ding et al., 2019). The study of language variation examines the relationship between linguistic variation and social factors, aiming to explore the forms, processes, causes, and laws of language variation in real-life (Tian & Tian, 2017). However, language variations have not been actively conducted in some societies during the last five decades. Additionally, Meyerhoff and Stanford (2015) attempted to shift the focus from Western sociolinguistics to globalizing sociolinguistics, which focuses on specific speech communities (Smakman & Heinrich, 2015). Therefore, this study aims to examine the language used in specific speech communities, specifically in Malaysia.

Malaysia is a multiethnic and multilingual country with three major groups, namely Malay, Chinese, and Indians. The Malaysian Chinese are an immigrant society, mainly from Fujian or Guangdong, who settled in Malaysia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Fan, 2012). Although Malaysian Chinese and Chinese from China both speak Chinese, they are significantly different in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary (Huang, 2009). For example, while Malaysian Chinese describe a confused person as *sudong*, Chinese Mandarin uses the word *hutu* (Han, 2011).

Huang (2009) claimed that Malaysian Chinese have been exposed to many new elements such as different culture and society, which have caused their language to evolve differently from Modern Chinese in China, manifesting most fully in vocabulary differences. Therefore, this has led the researcher to investigate the Mandarin lexical variation in Malaysian Chinese Newspapers.

The most fundamental component of language is vocabulary, which is also the most active component of the language system (Xu & Peng, 2020). According to Ember and Ember (1988), the lexical content or vocabulary of a language reflects the culture of the society with which it is associated. Therefore, the words that most accurately reflect a society's culture are those related to culture and religion that are used in that society.

However, there is a lack of in-depth research on the relationship between Malaysian-specific vocabulary and cultural background, both in terms of the number of specific words and the cultural context in which they are found. To address this gap, this study will reveal Malaysian Chinese lexical items related to culture and religion in the Malaysian press. We aim to provide readers with a better understanding of Chinese culture in Malaysia. To collect lexical items related to culture and religion, this study will only analyze newspaper supplements (副刊), which are more likely to be related to social culture than other sections.

In general，the present research gap can be divided into the following points:

1. Previous studies on Malaysian Chinese vocabulary have been conducted by scholars such as Shao (2011), H. Wang (2010) and Fan (2008), but few have focused on culture and religion aspects. However, the study of cultural and religious vocabulary can reflect the social dimension of language speakers. Therefore, this study aims to examine Malaysian Chinese vocabulary in Malaysian Chinese newspapers from the perspective of culture and religion.

2. Although a few scholars such as H. Wang (2010), Guo (2002), Huang (2009) have studied Malaysian Chinese vocabulary in the last ten years, we believe that

in this era of information exchange, Malaysian Chinese vocabulary is becoming more common. Therefore, it is necessary to collate and study Malaysian discourse vocabulary.

3. Previous studies conducted by Shao (2011), Khoo (2017) as well as Lau and Awab (2019) have mainly analyzed Malaysian Chinese vocabulary from the perspectives of lexical properties and word categories, but rarely have they studied the ways in which Malaysian Chinese vocabulary is formed. This study will fill this gap by examining not only the lexical properties and word categories, but also the ways in which they are formed.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research was conducted to achieve three research objectives as follows:

1. To identify the categories and word classes of local culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers;

2. To analyze the word formation processes of local culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers;

3. To explore the causes of local culture-related lexical items used in Malaysian Chinese newspapers.

1.4 Research Questions

This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the categories and word classes of the local culture-related items in the Malaysian Chinese newspaper?

2. How are the local culture-related lexical items created in the Malaysian Chinese newspaper?

3. Why are the local culture-related lexical items used in the Malaysian Chinese newspaper?

1.5 Research Significance

The preservation and development of Chinese language education in Malaysia have been a result of the efforts made by previous generations of Chinese predecessors. Through their struggle for education rights and citizenship rights, the Chinese education system gradually gained recognition and was preserved. As time passed, Chinese education in Malaysia integrated local cultural practices, giving rise to a unique Malaysian Chinese vocabulary. However, to foster stronger connections with the global Chinese language community, it is essential to ensure effective differentiation and choice of vocabulary to overcome barriers that arise when communicating with other Chinese speakers.

This study aims to reorganize the list of Malaysian Chinese vocabulary and analyze its formation. By doing so, it provides a valuable reference point for future researchers investigating this topic. The reorganization of vocabulary helps researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of the lexical items unique to Malaysian Chinese, enabling them to identify and explain the intricacies of this specific dialect.

The Malaysian Chinese vocabulary is influenced by historical, cultural, and linguistic factors. Throughout the centuries, Chinese immigrants in Malaysia adapted their language to local customs and dialects, resulting in the emergence of a distinct Malaysian Chinese vocabulary. This vocabulary incorporates loanwords from local languages such as Malay, as well as terms and phrases that reflect the unique experiences and traditions of the Malaysian Chinese community.

By examining the formation of Malaysian Chinese vocabulary, researchers can uncover the linguistic processes involved. This includes investigating the mechanisms by which loanwords from Malay and other local languages were assimilated into the Chinese language. Furthermore, the study explores the ways in which Chinese language education in Malaysia has shaped and influenced the vocabulary, taking into account the contributions of teachers, scholars, and cultural institutions.

This study carries significant theoretical implications, providing a foundation for future research on Malaysian Chinese vocabulary. By elucidating the details of this distinct linguistic system, researchers can delve deeper into its historical, cultural, and social contexts. The findings of this study contribute to the broader understanding of language evolution and adaptation within immigrant communities.

Furthermore, this research serves as a reference point for scholars studying Chinese language education outside of Malaysia. The insights gained from the reorganization and analysis of Malaysian Chinese vocabulary can be applied to other Chinese-speaking communities in various countries. Researchers can use this knowledge to compare and contrast the formation of vocabulary in different regional contexts, thereby enriching the field of Chinese language studies and expanding cross-cultural linguistic understanding.

The findings of this study hold practical implications, as they can be incorporated into future editions of Global Chinese dictionaries published worldwide. Updating these dictionaries with the latest Malaysian Chinese vocabulary ensures their relevance and completeness. By including regional lexical items unique to Malaysian Chinese, these dictionaries become valuable resources for Chinese language users worldwide.

The integration of Malaysian Chinese vocabulary into Global Chinese dictionaries benefits both native speakers and learners of Chinese. Native speakers can utilize these dictionaries to gain a better understanding of regional terminology, thus promoting cultural exchange and fostering a sense of identity within the Malaysian Chinese community. Learners of Chinese as a second language can enhance their language skills by familiarizing themselves with the distinctive vocabulary used by Malaysian Chinese speakers.

In addition, these dictionaries serve as a valuable resource for non-Malaysian Chinese speakers who interact with the Malaysian Chinese community in various contexts, such as business, education, or cultural exchanges. By consulting these dictionaries, they can bridge the gap created by differing vocabularies and communicate more effectively with Malaysian Chinese speakers. This facilitates intercultural understanding, encourages collaboration, and strengthens relationships between individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Moreover, the dictionaries featuring Malaysian Chinese vocabulary contribute to the preservation and recognition of the Malaysian Chinese cultural heritage. By including these lexical items, the dictionaries

1.6 Summary

This chapter explained the purpose and concept of the research to the reader, which is to analyze the categories, word classes, word formations, and the reason for the local culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. The outcome of this research will allow the reader to understand the significance of the pertinent topic. The following chapter reviews previous literature on this study to help the reader better comprehend the subject's patterns.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the definition of terms, previous studies, and the framework of the present study.

2.1 Definition of Term

2.1.1 Modern Chinese

Modern Chinese is one of the many dialects spoken in China. Its base sound is Beijing Official Chinese (*北京官话*), its base dialect is Northern Chinese (*北方话*), and its grammatical standard is the exemplary modern vernacular (*现代白话文*). It is widely spoken among Chinese people, but it has distinct standards, names, and status in various parts of the world. It is classified into several sets of standards according to the region in which it is spoken. In mainland China, it is referred to as "*普通话*" (Modern Chinese). In Taiwan, it is referred to as "*国语/中文*" (Chinese). And in Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, it is referred to as "*华语*" or Mandarin (Wu, 2005)

In 1923, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China's Preparatory Committee for the Unification of the State Language (*中华民国教育部国语统一筹备会*) decided to develop a "*新国音*" (new Guoyin) based on modern northern official vernacular grammar and Beijing dialect phonetics to replace the old Guoyin. The old Guoyin was adopted as China's official language in 1932 after the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China was established (Zhang, 2020). It is presently the spoken official language of mainland China, one of the most generally spoken official

and national languages in Taiwan, and one of the most widely spoken Chinese dialects in Southeast Asia and other overseas Chinese communities, alongside Cantonese.

In a nutshell, modern Chinese is based on the Beijing dialect and has evolved into the unofficial standard for Chinese learners and users worldwide.

However, according to the notion of linguistic variation, Modern Chinese in mainland China, Chinese in Taiwan, and Mandarin in Southeast Asia all have certain phonetic and lexical differences (Tang, 2005). Modern Chinese has numerous dialects in spoken languages worldwide, including Taiwanese Chinese (influenced by the Taiwanese accent) and Malaysian Chinese Language (with word usage influenced by Minnan, Cantonese, Malay and English). The following section of the paper will provide a definition of Malaysian Chinese Language in order to familiarize the reader with the distinctions between Malaysian Chinese Language and Modern Chinese.

2.1.2 Malaysian Chinese Language

As numerous scholars, including Chen (1986), Zhou (2007), and Guo (2004) stated, Mandarin is synonymous with Modern Chinese and serves as the common language for Chinese people. However, it is worth noting that Guo (2006) subsequently clarified that Mandarin is not synonymous with Modern Chinese and is a product of linguistic variety, a language that is comparable to yet distinct from Modern Chinese.

In addition to the above definition of "Mandarin", Xu and Wang (2004) propose a new concept of "broad international Mandarin". They argue that this broad international Mandarin exists in various places and forms various categories, such as Singaporean Mandarin, Beijing Mandarin, Tianjin Mandarin, Guangzhou Mandarin,

Taiwan Mandarin, Hong Kong Mandarin, New York Chinatown Mandarin, and other specific regional variants. All regional variants of Mandarin form an international Mandarin family without "parents" as equal family members, and there is no difference between good and bad, only between strong and weak.

Simultaneously, Lu (2015) presented the concept of "大华语" (Greater Chinese Language) which he claimed would aid in strengthening Chinese people's cohesion and identity around the world. He thinks that the Greater Chinese Language can aid in the promotion of Chinese language education globally. Additionally, Wang (2008) emphasizes the concept of Greater Chinese Language's interregional inclusivity, i.e., as long as Chinese is spoken in the same part of the world, it is included in Greater Chinese Language's scope (大华语社区).

It is noteworthy that both Xu and Wang (2004) as well as Wang (2008) regard Mandarin as a variation of Modern Chinese, having some parallels to Modern Chinese but also some distinctions due to geographical and cultural variances. According to Huang (2009), Malaysian Chinese Language is a regional variety of the Modern Chinese language that evolved in the unique linguistic and social environment of Malaysia and is the common language of the Malaysian Chinese community.

Thus, we can deduce that the first characteristic stated is that the Malaysian Chinese Language is a regional variant of Mandarin Chinese spoken in Malaysia. This means that it is a form of Mandarin that has been influenced by the linguistic and cultural environment in Malaysia. It may have certain unique features or vocabulary specific to the Malaysian context.

The second characteristic emphasizes that the Malaysian Chinese Language is not equivalent to modern Chinese. This suggests that there are distinctions between the standard Mandarin spoken in China and the variant spoken by the Malaysian Chinese community. These differences could arise due to historical factors, geographical separation, or cultural influences.

The third characteristic highlights that the Malaysian Chinese Language is the common language spoken by the Malaysian Chinese community. This implies that within the Malaysian Chinese community, this variant of Mandarin is widely used for communication. It serves as a means of interaction and expression among the Chinese population residing in Malaysia.

In accordance with previous classifications mentioned by other authors, the passage describes the Malaysian Chinese Language as a regional variety of the Modern Chinese language. It signifies that it is a contemporary form of Mandarin, evolving and adapting within the Malaysian social and linguistic context. The language has been shaped by the unique circumstances and influences present in Malaysia, including local culture, history, and interactions with other languages spoken in the region.

Overall, previous studies emphasizes that the Malaysian Chinese Language is a distinct variant of Mandarin Chinese spoken in Malaysia, separate from the standard modern Chinese. It has its own characteristics and serves as the primary language of communication among the Malaysian Chinese community.

2.1.3 Localized

"Localized" is translated as "*本土化*" in Chinese academia. The researcher found, through a review of the relevant literature, that no prior studies have addressed the meaning of the term "*本土化*". However, the researcher discovered two phrases that are close in meaning to "localized": "*社区词*" (community words) and "*特有词*" (unique words). These terms will be briefly explained before concluding with the study's perspective on "localized".

The phrase "*社区词*" (community words) was coined by Tian (1993). Tian (1993) notes that so-called "community words" are words that have been adapted to and reflect the local social area due to differences in social backgrounds, social systems, political, economic, and cultural life, and psychological factors resulting from different backgrounds. In a similar vein, H. Wang (2010) also argues that "community words" may refer to words that reflect regional things or phenomena that exist in Chinese communities around the world, as well as words with the same name, different names, or different uses of the same word, and foreign words in Chinese that have different translations.

In addition, Tang (2005) classifies the term "*特有词*" (unique words) into a narrow and a broad sense, although the underlying concept is "words that are popular or commonly used in a place". However, the researcher argues that the definition of Tang is too broad and may lead to ambiguity, such as the word "*水草*". The word "*水草*" occurs in two regions, mainland China, and Malaysia, but their meanings are distinct; In China, "*水草*" means "plants that grow in water", while in Malaysia, it means "drinking straw". In this case, according to Tang's definition, is "*水草*" a "unique word" in

Malaysia? Therefore, the researcher believes that the definition of "*特有词*" (unique words) encompasses not only "a word that is popular or used in a region" but also "a word that reflects the people and things that are unique to that region, irrespective of the external form of the language, and whose meaning is only understood by Malaysians". It is a word that is solely understood by Chinese speakers in Malaysia, but not outside of the country.

Moreover, in the context of Malaysia, non-Malays are only granted language education rights for minority-medium education at the primary level, while Chinese schools are solely conducted in Mandarin, which reflects the language's dominant status as the lingua franca within the Chinese community in Malaysia (Albury, 2017). Past research has revealed that cultural components are predominantly present in the lexicon and illustrations of textbooks, with little attention paid to cultural elements in dialogues. They argue that cultural elements within textbooks can serve as valuable resources for fostering cultural consciousness and contemplation among students studying a foreign language. (Lin et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Wang (2002) examined Singaporean Chinese words and discovered eight major categories of Singaporean Chinese words: 1) words that are unique to Singapore; 2) words that have the same meaning as Mandarin but are written differently; 3) words with the same meaning but in a different form from Mandarin; 4) words that are commonly used in other Chinese-speaking countries but are not found in Mandarin; 5) Words commonly used in other overseas Chinese; 6) words that were common in the past but are no longer used in Mandarin; 7) Dialect words; and 8) common names for countries, places, people, or places of interest, structures, statutory bodies, political parties, and societies. Wang's study, in contrast to other studies, clearly

delineates the types of endemic words, providing more detailed descriptions and reference points for unique words.

Last but not least, the present study concluded that the terms "*社区词*" (community words) and "*特有词*" (unique word) should be equivalent to each other. This position aligns with that of Lee (2020). In order to avoid confusion between "community" and "unique," the term "*本土化*" (localized) is used in this study. "Localized" was utilized to encompass both "community" and "unique" terms. In the present study, "localized words" is described as a term that represents the people and objects of a place and is distinct from other regions in terms of its lexical meaning or linguistic structure.

2.2 Previous Studies

Fan (2008) pointed out that the Malaysian social epithet "aunty" is mostly used in English and that its Chinese written form is not as widely used. This is attributed to the fact that users find the word "aunty" more acceptable in written form than its Chinese counterpart, "*安娣*". In her article, she also compared the terms "*老师*" (teacher), "*师傅*" (master), "*同志*" (comrade), "*太太*" (wife), "*先生*" (sir), "*小姐*" (miss), "*女士*" (lady), "*老板娘*" (lady-boss), and "*老板*" (boss) and concluded that the differences in culture, politics, social systems, and values contribute to very distinct differences, such as the differences in vocabulary ("*奇异果*" in Malaysia but "*猕猴桃*" in China), between the common terms used in Malaysian Chinese society and those used in mainland China.

Additionally, X. Wang (2010) explored the mechanisms of change and forms of variation in a social term popular in the Malaysian Chinese community, the term "安娣" (aunty). The article analyzed the relationship between "安娣" (aunty) and "阿姨" (aunt) from the perspective of linguistic variation and pointed out that these two linguistic variants are used in written and spoken language, respectively. Despite the fact that the term "安娣" was still not accepted from the academic and educational perspective, however, the authors discovered that in the written domain, the term "安娣" began to replace the term "阿姨" if the two terms were interchangeable. Notably, this trend was also detected for the male counterpart ("安哥" and "叔叔"). The authors opined that these discoveries were closely related to the fact that Malaysia being colonized by the British, as well as the multiracial society that required effective communication among the people form different races.

Although both studies only focused on social epithets, it is not difficult to find the following points: 1. Malaysian Chinese diction differs from the use of Chinese in other regions; 2. Malaysian Chinese diction has been influenced by various aspects of social culture, politics, and education and has developed its uniqueness Guo (2002). In summarizing the differences between Mandarin and Malaysian vocabulary, Guo (2002) argued that the "Malaysian-specific vocabulary" best reflects the specific social life and changes in the respective societies and that it is often impossible to find an equivalent in the other side, as it is closely linked to the political, economic, and cultural life of a particular region.

Several factors have influenced the emergence of Malaysian Chinese words. The primary factor is the discrepancy between spoken Hokkien and written Chinese, particularly in Penang where Malay, English, and other languages have had a significant

impact. Additionally, low levels of literacy in written Chinese and limited Mandarin proficiency within the Penang Hokkien-speaking community have contributed to the development of new words in Hokkien. Another significant factor is the lack of exposure to other Hokkien dialects and the confinement of Penang Hokkien to informal settings such as family interactions and everyday social exchanges. (Churchman, 2021).

Huang (2009) argues that Malaysian Chinese words are distinctive and reflect the region's unique political and economic culture, living habits, geography, and environment. She contends that Chinese immigrants in Malaysia coined these novel terms upon their arrival to reflect their new lives, new notions, and new items in their new environment. She has compiled a list of words that are unique to Malaysian Chinese, such as those related to folk culture, politics and justice, religion, architecture, food and fruits, education and technology, society, fish, insects, birds and animals, diseases and medicine, and more. These terms encapsulate the numerous facets of Malaysian social life and demonstrate a diverse range of very regional concepts. The list includes 263 entries for nouns and only two for adjectives. This study discusses three distinguishing aspects of Malaysian Chinese slang: 1. The prevalence of nouns; 2. The predominance of loanwords, including Malay, English, and dialectal loanwords; and 3. The transition from polysyllabic to diphthongal. The article discusses the major factors that have influenced these word differences, as shown in Table 2.1.

Shao (2011) analyzed four thematic features of words, including food, folk beliefs, gambling, and characteristic appellations. The research provides a preliminary description and analysis of these four thematic features, which reflects the unique culture, special life patterns, and social phenomena of the Malaysian Chinese. These distinctive words, such as "娘惹糕" (nyonya cake) and "沙爹" (satay), are influenced

not only by local history, geography, politics, and culture but also by the local Malay language, as well as the dialects of Hokkien, Cantonese, and Hakka.

Table 2.1: Factors influencing these word differences

1.	The influence of Chinese dialect words, including those introduced through food culture, folk beliefs, and gambling activities
2.	The influence of Malay, where most Malay words are borrowed as Chinese loanwords via phonetic, transliteration, and phonetic-imagery combinations
3.	In comparison to Malay, English loanwords are less prevalent in Malaysian Chinese's phonetic-phonetic combination, but the proportion of alphabetic words is greater than in Malay
4.	The influence of ancient Chinese terms. In Malaysia, certain older words that are no longer used in standard Chinese are still utilized.

(Summarized from Huang (2009))

Wang (2019) observed that few scholars from mainland China have thoroughly examined language use in Malaysian Chinese literature, which prompted her to carry out a study on Malaysian Chinese literature by examining its language variation. In terms of lexical variation, as far as Wang is concerned, the cause of variation could be attributed to the prevalence of old words that were rarely used or had never been used in Modern Standard Mandarin, and Chinese dialects exerted influence on Malaysian Chinese literature word use. Similarly, regarding the old words with new meaning, Wong (2014) proposed that obsolete words in Beijing Mandarin or old words with the same form, which possess different meanings from Beijing Mandarin, were in use in Malaysian Chinese literature. Concerning this phenomenon, Wang (2019) identified several factors that facilitated such language variation. As she stated, in the Malaysian setting, a multi-ethnic makeup country, it is inevitable for Chinese who migrated into Malaysia to accommodate themselves to the local community by learning the local languages. By doing so, their language use would be influenced, and thus lexical variation would be observed in the literature.

Khoo (2017) researched Malaysian Chinese language by viewing its lexical, phonological, and syntactical variations. While discussing lexical variation, Khoo pointed out that Malaysian Chinese language absorbed many words from Malay, English, and particular Chinese dialects, such as "沙发" from sofa, "咖喱" from kari, and so on. To put it another way, as far as Khoo is concerned, the lexical variation observed in Malaysian Chinese language could be attributed to those languages.

Along with the scholars mentioned earlier, Lau and Awab (2019) analyzed Malaysian newspapers for Chinese words related to education in Malaysia, resulting in the identification of 69 Malaysian-specific Chinese words in the category of Malaysian education. Two corpora were created to represent three years of Malaysian and Chinese education newspapers, respectively. After comparing the two corpora, the relevant words were placed in another corpus, the Beijing Languages and Cultures University Corpus (BCC), to confirm that they were indeed Malaysian Chinese words. Finally, unidentified words were referred to an expert panel to determine their origin. Through comparison and expert identification, this approach significantly improved the accuracy of identifying Malaysian educational terms. Additionally, their study collected three Malaysian Chinese newspapers, ensuring that the corpus is well-sourced and accurately reflects the current state of Malaysian educational vocabulary in Malaysia.

The research conducted by Lau and Awab (2019) raises several significant aspects. As a starting point, just recognizing a vocabulary as Malaysian Chinese by comparing it to the corpus would result in the exclusion of words that originated in Malaysian Chinese but were not included in the corpus in the first place. The reason for this is that just because a word appears in the corpus does not inherently mean that its

provenance can be traced. Additionally, their study deferred to experts rather than referring to dictionaries in determining the origin of words not included in the corpus. This approach is certainly convincing. Therefore, the present study also includes this as one of the research methods.

Additionally, the study used a corpus approach to determine the frequency and usage of each word and interviewed six informants to ascertain the reasons for the development of Malaysian educational Chinese vocabulary. This approach distinguishes the study from previous research.

Along with analyzing the factors that contribute to vocabulary production, Lau and Awab (2019) conducted six in-depth interviews with participants. The researchers concluded that this method raised a topic worth exploring. To begin, can the informant's educational background truly point to the reasons that resulted in some localized education-related lexical items being used in Chinese newspapers in Malaysia? Or is it more of a response based on the interviewers' own experience? If it was entirely based on the respondents' experience, did the respondents possess the competence necessary to answer this type of question? Have they conducted comparable research on the disputed terms? These are things that should be kept in mind for future researchers. In light of this, the current study conducted interviews with experts to ascertain the causes of vocabulary production and also conducted a literature review to ascertain the causes of Chinese vocabulary production in Malaysia through extensive reading of existing literature and prior research. Eventually, while their study is novel in its approach to calculating the frequency of vocabulary use via a corpus, the current study will exclude the technique of corpus analysis of word frequency, as the present study's objective is

not to calculate word frequency. However, there is no denying that their study served as a valuable resource and source of inspiration for the current study.

A study conducted by Indarti (2018) on the syntactic complexity of online English newspaper editorials from various countries. The study collected a total of 215 borrowings, comprising loanwords, compound blends, and loan transitions or claque from multiple languages, all of which were published between January 1, 2019, and May 1, 2019. The study adopted a corpus-based approach to identify the frequency and usage of each word as well as conducted interviews on six informants to understand the reasons behind the development of Malaysian educational Chinese vocabulary. This methodology sets it apart from earlier research conducted (Kunalan et al., 2021).

The previous studies conducted on Malaysian Chinese vocabulary have primarily focused on the classification of Chinese language variations and the factors that contribute to their formation. While these studies have provided valuable insights into the linguistic diversity within the Malaysian Chinese community, there has been a relative lack of emphasis on exploring the structural forms of Malaysian Chinese vocabulary. This study aims to address this gap by not only utilizing the methodologies employed in previous research but also delving into the analysis of word formation in Malaysian Chinese vocabulary.

By examining the word formation processes, such as derivation, compounding, and borrowing, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Malaysian Chinese vocabulary is constructed and expanded. This analysis will contribute to bridging the existing gaps in the current research on Malaysian Chinese vocabulary and shed light on the linguistic creativity and evolution within the Malaysian Chinese community.

Furthermore, during the researcher's exploration of the literature, it was discovered that there has been a dearth of research specifically focusing on cultural and religious-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers in the past five years. This presents a significant research gap that this study aims to fill. By examining the cultural and religious dimensions of lexical items found in Malaysian Chinese newspapers, the study will explore the connections between language, culture, and religion within the Malaysian Chinese community.

The aim of this study is not to duplicate previous research, but rather to build upon it and contribute new insights. By analyzing the word formation processes in Malaysian Chinese vocabulary and investigating the cultural and religious associations of lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers, this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the language, culture, and religious dynamics within the Malaysian Chinese community.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Language Variation

Language variation, a central theme in sociolinguistics, refers to the diverse ways in which language is used by individuals and communities. It encompasses a range of linguistic features, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns. Language variation is not random; instead, it is closely linked to social factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, social class, and geographic location.

The study of language variation has gained significant importance in recent years, as researchers recognize its significance in understanding how language functions in society. By analyzing the patterns of variation, linguists can gain insights into the

social dynamics, identity construction, and power relations within a given community or society.

One of the fundamental aspects of language variation is regional or geographic variation. Languages spoken in different regions or areas may exhibit distinct dialects or accents. For example, English spoken in the United States differs from British English in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Similarly, within a country or region, different cities or towns may have their own linguistic characteristics and variations. These regional variations are influenced by historical factors, migration patterns, and the mixing of different linguistic groups over time.

Social factors, such as social class and education, also play a crucial role in language variation. Sociolinguists have observed that individuals from different social backgrounds may use language differently. For instance, individuals from higher social classes might use more standard or prestigious forms of language, while individuals from lower social classes might exhibit distinct dialects or vernacular varieties. This variation in language use can reflect social identity, group belongingness, and the socioeconomic status of individuals.

Language variation is a central theme in sociolinguistics, and it is closely linked to social factors. Variation is ubiquitous in our daily lives and will exist as long as humans communicate. Thus, linguistic researchers have paid increasing attention to language variation.

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Another significant aspect of language variation is gender-based variation. Research has shown that men and women may exhibit different patterns of language use, including vocabulary choices, speech styles, and conversational strategies. These gender-based variations can be influenced by societal norms, expectations, and stereotypes associated with masculinity and femininity. For example, women may be more likely to use polite language or engage in cooperative speech strategies, while men may use more assertive or competitive speech styles. These gender differences in language use can be seen across various cultures and languages, although the extent and nature of these differences may vary.

Language variation is not limited to spoken language; it also extends to written language and digital communication. In the age of social media and online platforms, individuals have new opportunities to express themselves through written texts. This has led to the emergence of various forms of language variation, such as emojis,

abbreviations, and internet slang. These linguistic innovations reflect the fast-paced nature of digital communication and the need for concise and efficient expression. Additionally, the use of different writing styles and registers can also indicate social factors, such as formality or informality, and can contribute to the construction of online identities and communities.

The study of language variation is not only relevant for linguists but also has practical implications in various domains. For example, understanding language variation can aid in language teaching and learning. Teachers can incorporate regional and social variations into language curriculum, promoting linguistic diversity and cultural understanding among students. By exposing learners to different dialects, accents, and speech styles, educators can prepare them for real-world interactions and foster inclusive language practices.

Language variation research also has implications for language policy and planning. In multilingual societies, it is important to recognize and accommodate linguistic diversity. Language policies should consider the regional, social, and gender-based variations in language use to ensure equal opportunities and access to resources for all speakers. Additionally, language planning can help preserve and revitalize endangered or marginalized dialects or languages, promoting cultural heritage and linguistic rights.

Moreover, understanding language variation is crucial for effective intercultural communication. When individuals from different linguistic backgrounds interact, variations in language use can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Awareness of these variations can facilitate smoother communication and enhance cross-cultural understanding. It can also help challenge stereotypes and promote

appreciation for linguistic diversity.

In conclusion, language variation is a multifaceted phenomenon that is intricately linked to social factors. It manifests in various forms, including regional, social, and gender-based variations. The study of language variation provides valuable insights into the social dynamics, identity construction, and power relations within a community or society. Moreover, it has practical implications in language education, policy development, and intercultural communication. As language continues to evolve and adapt, understanding language variation becomes increasingly important for researchers, educators, and policymakers alike.

As the founder of language variation, Labov (2009) pointed out that language variation refers to divergent perspectives on the same thing. In other words, language variation refers to a particular style of language expression that is frequently used by people who share similar social characteristics and live in similar social environments. Labov began his research on language variation in the 1960s, and it gradually became the primary focus of sociolinguistics (Xu, 2006). Labov published two papers that are significant for sociolinguistic variation research, which were "The Social History of a Sound Change on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts," and "The Social Stratification of English in New York City." To situate his own work within linguistic history and to emphasize the theoretical issues he was criticizing, Labov (1996) listed four linguistic assumptions he found problematic in his dissertation publication: synchronic language systems must be studied separately from diachronic language systems; sound change cannot be directly observed, and feelings about language are inaccessible. By attacking the first assumption, he established the theoretical foundation for his empirical work. He disassociated Saussure's preference for synchronic systems over diachronic systems,

arguing that each synchronic state is marked by its direction and rate of change, and thus the two fields of study are not so easily separable (Beeching, 2013).

As a result, Labov's insistence on language variation research generated new ideas for language study from two perspectives: theory and approach. As a theoretical foundation, "orderly heterogeneity" forces him to abandon the analysis of the ideal state of language in favor of the actual state of language. Labov adapted the theory of "orderly heterogeneity" and made effective use of the quantitative approach as a research method. The "orderly heterogeneous theory" is one of the earliest theories of language variation, and it continues to be a source of inspiration for a large number of scholars and educators.

As previously stated, not all varieties may transition from one category to another, but language variation is certain to occur when the aforementioned transition occurs. In terms of the relationship between "change" and "variation", the best starting point for language change is variation because diachronic language change is always reflected in synchronic language variation. As a result, it is difficult to draw a distinction between "language change" and "language variation" (Zhu, 1992).

By combining these definitions, the current study focuses on examining the variation within the Malaysian Chinese language, specifically in terms of lexical variation. Lexical variation refers to the differences in vocabulary and word choices among speakers of a particular language or dialect. Language variation can manifest in various aspects, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns. However, due to time constraints and limitations in the researcher's capacity, this study specifically focuses on the analysis of lexical variation within the Malaysian Chinese

language. It is also an essential aspect of language variation, as it reflects the diverse linguistic experiences, influences, and cultural backgrounds of speakers. By investigating the lexical variation in Malaysian Chinese, the study aims to gain insights into the unique vocabulary items and linguistic features that characterize this specific linguistic community.

Pronunciation variation, although not explored in this study, is another significant aspect of language variation. Different regions or dialect groups within a language community may exhibit distinct ways of pronouncing certain sounds or words. These pronunciation differences can contribute to the richness and diversity of a language but were not the main focus of this particular research.

Similarly, grammatical variation, including differences in sentence structure, verb conjugation, and grammatical markers, is another aspect of language variation that could have been explored. However, the study's focus on lexical variation implies that the investigation prioritizes understanding the diversity of vocabulary choices and semantic nuances within the Malaysian Chinese language.

Words and phrases play a crucial role in communication and reflect the cultural and social aspects of a language community. The study acknowledges the significance of words and phrases in capturing the essence of language variation, as they encapsulate the specific experiences, traditions, and values of the Malaysian Chinese community.

By examining lexical variation, the study aims to shed light on the unique lexical items and expressions that are used within the Malaysian Chinese community. It seeks to uncover the influences from different linguistic sources, such as Chinese

dialects, Malay, English, and other ethnic languages, which contribute to the rich and diverse vocabulary of Malaysian Chinese.

However, it is important to note that lexical variation is just one facet of language variation, and further studies could explore other dimensions, such as grammar, syntax, and discourse patterns, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Malaysian Chinese language.

In summary, while language variation encompasses various aspects, the current study specifically focuses on lexical variation within the Malaysian Chinese language. This limitation is acknowledged due to time constraints and the researcher's capacity. By investigating lexical variation, the study aims to uncover the unique vocabulary items, semantic nuances, and cultural influences that shape the Malaysian Chinese language. It provides valuable insights into the diversity and richness of the vocabulary used by the Malaysian Chinese community. However, it is important to recognize that language variation extends beyond lexical variation, and future research can explore other dimensions of variation to gain a more holistic understanding of the Malaysian Chinese language.

2.3.2 Word Formation and Creation

According to ten Hacken (2013), word formation is the process by which new words are formed in accordance with certain rules. Additionally, Plag (2003) defined word formation as the process of generating new words from existing ones. As a result of the preceding explanation, it can be concluded that the word formation process is a method for creating new words from existing ones using certain rules.

Along with the term "word formation", another term with the same meaning exists: "morphological processes" (Hu, 2017). Hu classifies this construction into two broad categories: major and minor morphological processes. The major morphological processes are derivation, compounding, and inflection; the minor morphological processes are coinage, blending, backformation, clipping, and acronym.

The process of word formation in Chinese is typically more intricate compared to English. As a result of certain Chinese language characteristics, the inclusion of loanwords from an alphabetical language like English can be even more complicated (Vervaet, 2017).

There are two terms in Chinese lexicography that are used interchangeably: "*构词法*" (word formation) and "*造词法*" (word building). When Chinese was first studied, there was no distinction between the processes of word formation and word building, and there was even confusion between the processes of word formation and word building (Wu & Wang, 1983).

Eventually, researchers were able to distinguish between the two. What is the process of word formation? What exactly is "word formation"? What exactly is the distinction between them? As Ge (2006) pointed out, the meaning of "word formation" is focused on the word "create", and the meaning of "word building" is focused on the word structure. Word formation is referred to as the process of creating words, whereas word building is referred to as the laws that govern the formation of words. Word formation, according to Ge (2014), addresses the issue of a word emerging from nothing, whereas word building refers to the internal structure of the word.

The classification of Chinese word formation and word formation will be listed in the following section to give the reader an idea of the fundamental differences between the two. Rambabu et al. (2016) discussed the differences between the two in terms of a variety of factors and characteristics. The first point is that there is a difference in definition between the two classifications. Ju pointed out that word formation refers to the construction of words, while word formation is a method of studying the internal structural laws of words. The second point to mention is the difference in the content of the research. The word formation category includes the analysis of the internal structure of words and a summary of the internal structure laws of words as research content. In contrast, the research content for word formation is the method of creating words, as well as an investigation into the causes of word name production. The third point is a distinction in classification. According to the classification of Ge (2014), word-creating methods are divided into eight categories: arbitrary combination of sound and meaning, onomatopoeia, phonetic variation, description, analogy, derivation, diphthong, and abbreviation. In contrast, word-formation methods are divided into two main categories, simple and compound words, according to classification of Huang and Liao (2007), as shown in Figure 2.1.

Upon comparing the above classifications between Chinese and English, it is easy to see that the English morphological process classification looks a lot like the Chinese word formation classification. The classification of word formation in this study should take into consideration that the Malaysian Chinese Language is a variant that is a fusion of many languages. Therefore, it should include not only the English word formation mentioned by Hu (2017), but also the Chinese word formation mentioned by Ge (1985) and the classification of word formation by Huang and Liao (2007). This will enable the modification of the classification to better fit the characteristics of the Malaysian Chinese Language's vocabulary.

词的结构类型简表

Simple word			江　红　三	River, Red, Mountain	Monosyllabic words （单音词）	

单纯词

Words of unison 联绵词
- 双声：澎湃　Double voice: Surge
- 叠韵：苍茫　Rhymes: hazy
- 其他：芙蓉　Other: Lotus

Polysyllabic words （多音词）

Phonetic words / Anagrams 音译词 ········· 咖啡、苏维埃　Coffee, Soviets

叠音词 ········· 猩猩、狒狒　Orangutan, baboon

Combination 联合型 ········· 道路、骨肉、国家　Road, flesh and bone, country

Composite 复合式

Partial 偏正型 ········· 皮鞋　Leather shoe

Complementary 补充型 ········· 提高、车辆　Level up, vehicle

Verb-object 动宾型 ········· 司机　Driver

Subject and predicate 主谓型 ········· 地震　Earthquake

Overlapping 重叠式 ········· 姐姐、婆婆、妈妈　Sister, grandmother, mother

Polysyllabic words （多音词）

Additional 附加式

Add before 前加型 ····· 老虎　Tiger

Add after 后加型
- 刷子、红通通　Brush, red and flushed
- 花儿　Flowers

Monosyllabic words （单音词）

Word 词 — 单纯词 / 合成词 (Compound word)

Figure 2.1: Classification of word formations (obtained from Huang and Liao (2007))

Thus, the current study uses the term "word formation" and defines it as the process by which a new word is formed. This process includes the following categories: innovative, borrowing, induction, description, and mixmode. As these categories were modified to fit the corpus in this study, an explanation of these classifications and some relevant examples will be included in the chart below.

Table 2.2: Word formations in Chinese

Word formations	Explanations	Examples
Innovative	Innovative refers to the new words that are created because of new social phenomena. People create new words by using their language and following their own language rules and word-formation methods, that is, innovative words.	*仙，曼煎糕，啦啦*
Borrowing	Borrowing refers to the words borrowed from other languages in various ways for example Malay language, English language and dialect.	*班兰，旺来，摩摩喳喳*
Induction	Induction refers to the creation of new words by means of the derivation of meaning from existing linguistic material.	*山水，身手，骨肉*
Description	Description refers to a method of generating new words by describing things.	*提高，放大，口红，地震*
Abbreviation	Abbreviation refers to the word formation process whereby part of the whole word is omitted, while remaining the same meaning.	*民警，青少年*
Mixmode	Mixmode refers to a new word pattern formed by using two or more constructions.	*马来粽*

(Summarized and modified from Ge (2014); Hu (2017); Huang and Liao (2007)

2.4 Summary

This chapter presents a summary of the current academic developments pertaining to the relevant areas. In addition, it helps the reader comprehend the component of the study that analyzes the culture-related Chinese lexical items localized in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. The following section discusses the research methods employed in this study to assess the localized culture-related Chinese lexical items.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, data sources and research procedure of this study.

3.1 Research Design

The present study used two research approaches to analyze the Malaysian Chinese words in the Malaysian Chinese newspaper. The first approach is text analysis. This study used text analysis to analyze the newspaper copies that were selected. According to Wutich et al. (1998), classical text analysis has two producers, which can be applied to this research, the researcher first narrowed down the newspaper selection before analyzing them in detail. As the cultural and religion lexical items in the newspaper were not detectable by software, the researcher reviewed the dictionaries to identify the data that were relevant to the research.

The second approach adopted in the present study was contrastive analysis. The researcher analyzed the Malaysian Chinese Language lexical items contained in the data. Then, the researcher extracted the words from the newspapers and cross-checked with the BCC corpus developed by Beijing Language and Culture University. The BCC corpus contains modern Chinese vocabulary. Therefore, words that are not included in the BCC corpus will be identified as Malaysian Chinese words. In addition, the researcher also used the 全球华语大词典 (Quanqiu Huayu Dacidian - Global Chinese Dictionary) as a mean to confirm the categorization of Malaysian Chinese words. Quanqiu Huayu Dacidian is a Chinese dictionary that reflects the contemporary Chinese

vocabulary in the major Chinese speaking regions of the world (The Commercial Press, 2016).

3.2 Data Sources

Since this study is examining Malaysian Chinese Language lexical items, hence the research corpus included the Malaysian Chinese newspaper supplements.

You and Zhou (2009) argued that news reports were the most appropriate sources for examining language change. Local representative and popular general newspapers, in particular, are the most direct and rapid means of transmitting information about society's reality and public concerns via written language, and it is for this reason that the texts in the newspapers highly reflect the society, as well as the language used by the region's readers at the time. The researcher examined major Chinese newspapers in Malaysia, including *Sin Chew Daily*, *Nanyang Shang Pau*, *Guang Ming Daily*, and *Seehua News*. These four newspapers are all written in the modern Chinese Language. As a result, the researcher believes that using these newspapers as a source for this study can reflect the Chinese vocabulary in Malaysia and thus the Chinese community's current situation in Malaysia.

It is well-known that newspapers have distinct sections, each of which corresponds to a different type of content. Due to the study's focus on cultural-related lexical items, it is not necessary to analyze every section of the newspaper. As a result, this study concentrated on newspaper supplements (*副刊*), with a particular emphasis on the Malaysian Chinese vocabulary that appears in each newspaper's supplements. Since the news reports in the supplement are more focused on the daily lives of the people, including the people's livelihood, food and health, etc (Liu, 1991). Therefore,

the researcher believes that the supplements are more suitable as the subject of this study.

The newspaper supplements used in this study were dated from 4th April 2021 to 3rd April 2022, comprising 5696 articles. Data were collected over the span of one year to ensure that the size of the corpus would be large enough to harvest meaningful analysis.

3.3 Research Procedures

3.3.1 Data Collection and Formation of the Research Corpus

To ensure the reliability and representativeness of the research corpus, a two-step verification approach was implemented. This approach consisted of two essential steps: the identification of culture-related lexical items and the validation of their origin.

The first step involved identifying culture-related lexical items. Culture-related lexical items refer to words or expressions that are specifically associated with the cultural practices, customs, traditions, or beliefs of a particular community. In the context of this study, the focus was on identifying culture-related lexical items within the Malaysian Chinese language.

The identification of culture-related lexical items was carried out through a systematic process. Various sources were consulted, including Chinese newspapers, publications, and cultural references specific to the Malaysian Chinese community. The aim was to compile a comprehensive list of words and expressions that are commonly used and recognized within the community and are indicative of their unique cultural identity.

Once the list of culture-related lexical items was compiled, the second step involved validating their origin. This step aimed to confirm that the identified lexical items were indeed part of the Malaysian Chinese language and not borrowed from other languages or dialects.

The validation process required a meticulous examination of the lexical items' usage, etymology, and context. This involved consulting linguistic experts, language scholars, and native speakers of the Malaysian Chinese community. Their expertise and knowledge were invaluable in confirming the authenticity and origin of the identified lexical items.

Additionally, cross-referencing with established dictionaries, language resources, and relevant linguistic studies provided further validation for the identified culture-related lexical items. This ensured that the lexical items were not mere coincidences or misinterpretations but genuine linguistic elements specific to the Malaysian Chinese language.

The two-step verification approach was crucial in maintaining the integrity and accuracy of the research corpus. By identifying culture-related lexical items and validating their origin, the study ensured that the lexical items included in the corpus were representative of the Malaysian Chinese language and its unique cultural characteristics.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the verification process may have its limitations. Language is dynamic and constantly evolving, and there may be ongoing

changes in lexical usage within the Malaysian Chinese community. Additionally, the selection of research sources, such as Chinese newspapers, may introduce certain biases in the corpus, as different sections of the newspapers may emphasize specific aspects of lexical items.

To mitigate these limitations, the study aimed to include a diverse range of sources and consulted experts in the field. This helped provide a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the culture-related lexical items within the Malaysian Chinese language.

In conclusion, the two-step verification approach employed in this study ensured the usability and representativeness of the research corpus. By identifying culture-related lexical items and validating their origin, the study ensured that the corpus accurately reflected the unique linguistic and cultural characteristics of the Malaysian Chinese language. While limitations exist, the comprehensive methodology and expert consultation contributed to the reliability and integrity of the findings.

Culture-related vocabulary entails complex classifications, to the point where there is currently no established standard classification and explanation for the vocabulary (Duan, 2020; Li, 2010; Zhou, 2019). As Qi (1992) noted, there were no fewer than 250 definitions of culture drawn from a variety of disciplines and perspectives. Additionally, the current study discovered that previous studies such as Wang (1990), Zhu (2011) and Li (2014) used inconsistent definitions of culture lexical items (文化词语), resulting in the inconsistent classifications of culture-related words using dichotomies, trichotomies, and quadratomies, among others. By examining and combining the works of Wang (1990), Zhu (2011) and Li (2014), the researcher

designed a suitable framework for identification of culture-related lexical items. The categories of the collected culture-related lexical items encompassed the words that were associated with the following categories: people's livelihood, festive customs and religion, communicative conversation as well as food and dining (Huang, 2009; Shao, 2011). The four categories were selected as they have high reflectance of the locality and culture of Malaysia.

After that, the terms were compared against the BCC corpus. If a word did not appear in the BCC, it was assumed to be a Malaysian Chinese word. The word was then compared to the Global Chinese Dictionary to ascertain its origin. If the dictionary made it abundantly clear that the word was of Malaysian origin, it was determined that the word would serve as the corpus for this study. Alternatively, if the word was not found in the dictionary or the BCC corpus, but the researcher suspected it to be a newly created Malaysian Chinese word, the word was temporarily collected and categorized as "others" for later analysis. The researcher compiled a list that was reviewed by the experts once the lexical items had been extracted from the newspapers. The research corpus was successfully formed at the end of the two steps taken.

3.3.1 Classification of the Malaysian Chinese Lexical Items

The Malaysian Chinese lexical items were then sorted into categories accordingly. Firstly, they were sorted based on their different categories in the context of culture as illustrated in Table 3.1. As mentioned earlier, the categories used in this study was compiled and modified from the works of Huang (2009) and Shao (2011).

After that, the culture-related Chinese lexical items were further classified based on their parts-of-speech categories. This was done to count the number of lexical

classifications, and hence the first research question can be completely addressed. A sample of classification is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Categories of Malaysian Chinese Language Lexical Items Related to Cultures and Religions

Culture-related lexical items	Categories			
	L	F	C	D
神料				
嘛嘛档				

L: People's Livelihood

F: Festival Customs and Religion

C: Communication and Conversation

D: Food and Dining

Table 3.2：Lexical Classification of Mandarin Lexical Items in Malaysian Chinese Newspapers

Culture-related lexical items	Word classes			
	N	V	Adj	Adv
神料				
嘛嘛档				

N: Noun

V: Verb

Adj: Adjective

Adv: Adverb

To address the second research question, this study classified the collected corpus according to the categories of Chinese word formation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the word formation of Chinese words in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. Table 3.3 shows the classification of Chinese word formation in

Malaysian newspapers, which was modified from the works of Ge (1985), Huang and Liao (2007) as well as Hu (2017).

Table 3.3： Classification of Chinese Word formation

Culture-related lexical items	Word formation					
	B	A	D	IN	I	M
青包						
马来粽						

B: Borrowing
A: Abbreviation
D: Description
IN: Induction
I: Innovative
M: Mixmode

In relation to research question three, this study used the literature research method to further explain the results gathered from the classifications done. This could provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the factors involved in the creation and variation of the relevant Malaysian Chinese Language lexical items.

3.4 Research Framework

3.4.1 Overall Workflow

The overall workflow of the research work began with the identification of the research questions, objectives, and objects. The researcher coded the data to facilitate subsequent compilation. To answer the first and second research questions, the researcher collected all of the supplement sections from four Malaysian newspapers and select the words related to localized culture-related Chinese lexical items. These words

were categorized based on their categories, word classes, and word formation. The analyzed data were organized into graphs and presented in the form of aggregated corpus data, followed by a detailed description and illustration of each.

Research objective three aims to explore the factors contributing to the emergence of localized culture-related Chinese lexical items through a review of books, journals, and expert opinions. Finally, a conclusion was drawn through analysis, which will be condensed into words to bring the study to a close. Figure 3.1 summarizes the overall workflow of this research work.
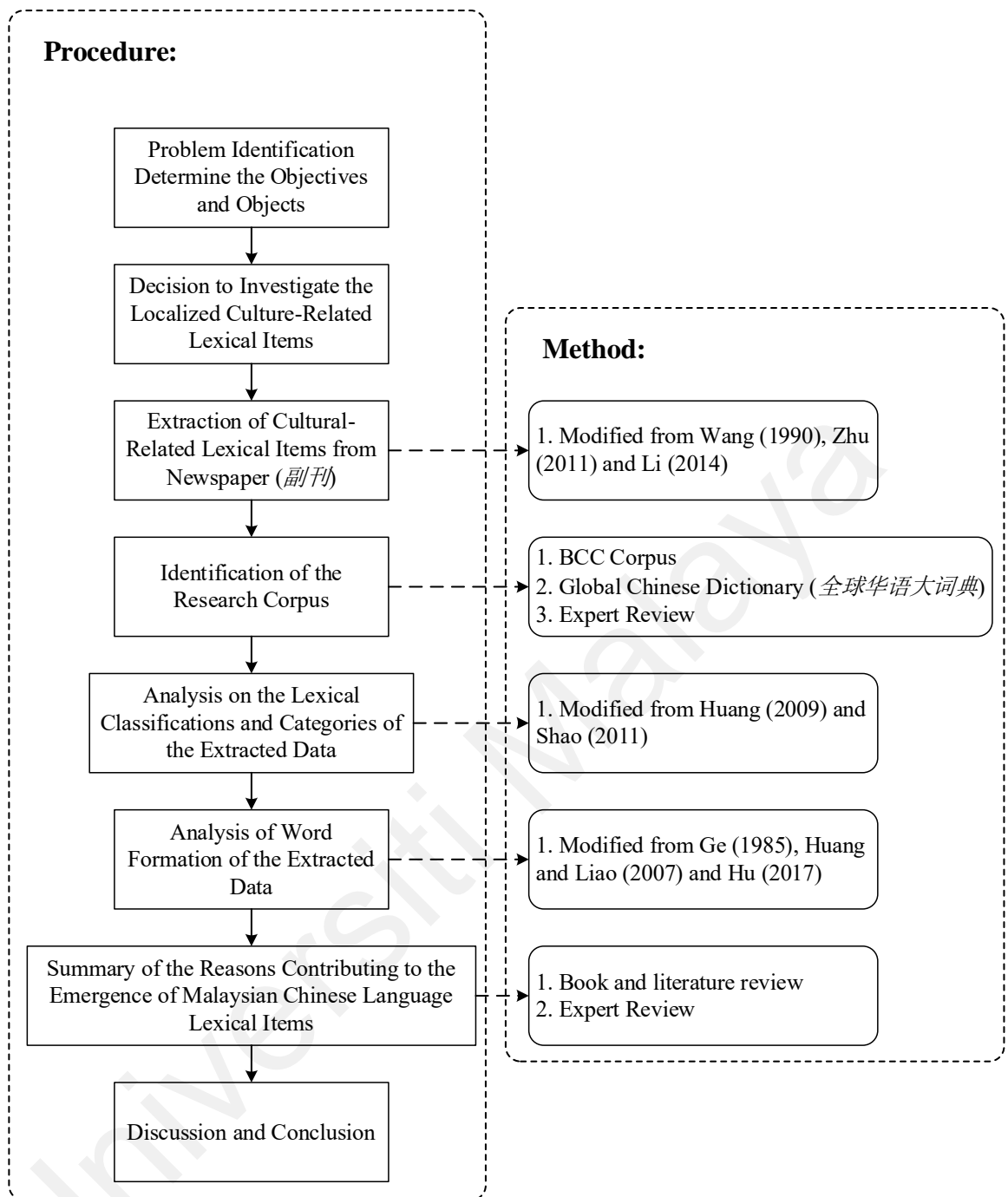
Figure 3.1: Research procedures

3.4.2 Conceptual Framework

The focus of this study was to examine the Malaysian Chinese Language lexical

items in Malaysian newspapers from the perspectives of Huang (2009) and Shao (2011).

Additionally, the classification of Chinese word formation by Ge (1985) and Huang and

Liao (2007), as well as Hu (2017) served as references for this study. Figure 3.2 provides the conceptual framework for this study.
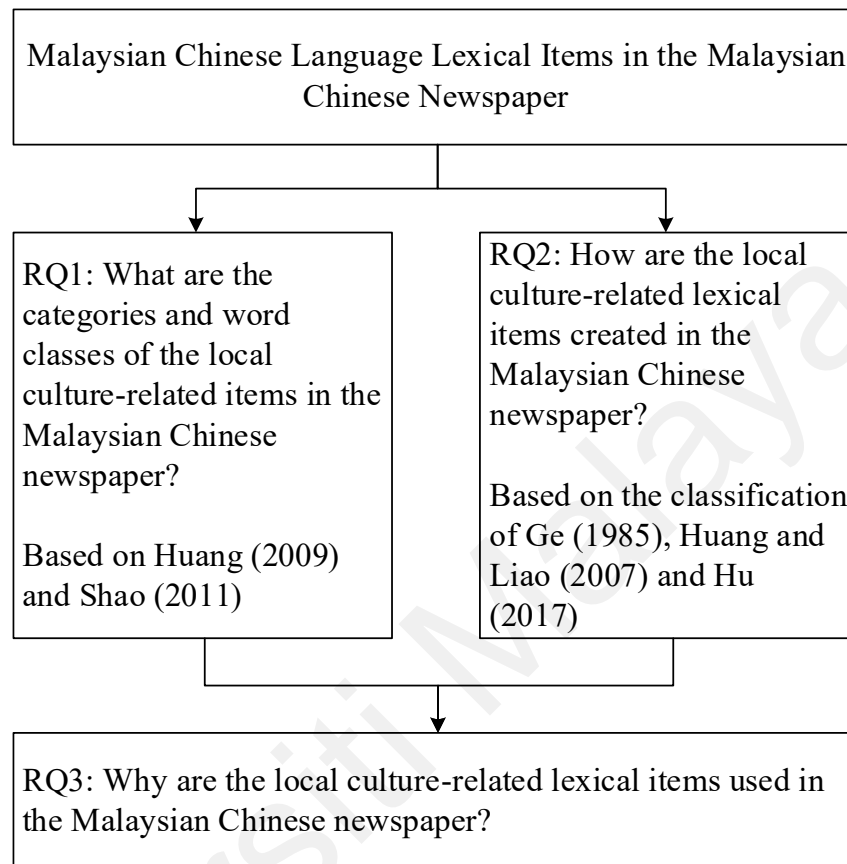

Figure 3.2: Conceptual framework

3.5 Summary

This chapter aims to enable the reader to comprehend the analytical techniques utilized in this study. The study employs qualitative methods and four Malaysian Chinese newspapers. The following chapter will discuss the analysis and findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the study based on the data collected through text analysis and contrastive analysis. A total of four Chinese newspapers were analyzed, including Sin Chew Daily, Nanyang Shang Pau, Guang Ming Daily, and Seehua News. The analysis was divided into four sections, namely the classifications of word classes (section 4.1), word formations (section 4.2), causal analysis (section 4.3), and additional analysis (section 4.4).

Some words in Malaysian Chinese language and Chinese Mandarin (现代汉语) seem to be the same in general, but they actually express different meanings. This can cause trouble and confusion for readers, as the words may seem the same, but different vocabulary has a certain relationship with the local language and culture.

Cultural linguistics is the study of the relationship between language and culture. Language is a manifestation of culture, and social changes can drive language changes. Researchers adopt the cultural background investigation method proposed by Dai (1996) in his book, "Introduction to Cultural Linguistics", as the basis of their research method. Dai (1996) holds the belief that studying the history and current state of a language requires a comprehensive analysis of the cultural and historical context of its speakers. Language is not an isolated entity but rather a reflection of the people who use it and the societies they belong to. In the case of the Malaysian Chinese Language, the emergence of its unique words and linguistic features is not a random occurrence but rather a product of the dynamic and intricate interactions between multiple cultures.

He also believes that the Malaysian Chinese community is embedded within a multicultural environment, influenced by various cultural traditions and historical developments. The Chinese cultural foundation of the community serves as a strong basis, but it is also influenced by the presence of other ethnic cultures in Malaysia. The interactions and integration between these cultures have shaped the language and vocabulary of the Malaysian Chinese community.

Malaysian Chinese Language is not stagnant or preserved in isolation. Instead, it evolves and adapts as a result of ongoing cultural exchanges and interactions. Words and expressions are borrowed, adapted, and integrated from different linguistic sources, including Chinese dialects, Malay, English, and other ethnic languages present in Malaysia. This process of mutual exchange and integration enriches the vocabulary and linguistic repertoire of the Malaysian Chinese Language.

Understanding the cultural and historical background of the Malaysian Chinese community is essential for comprehending the origin and development of the language. It provides insights into the diverse influences and factors that contribute to the formation of the Malaysian Chinese Language. By examining the cultural and historical context, researchers can unravel the intricate web of linguistic interactions and identify the shared elements and unique characteristics of the language.

Moreover, recognizing the non-accidental nature of the emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language words emphasizes the importance of cultural exchange and integration. It highlights the dynamic nature of language and the continuous interplay between different cultures. Language is not static but rather a living entity that evolves through contact and interaction. The Malaysian Chinese Language, with its diverse

vocabulary and linguistic features, serves as a testament to the richness and complexity of cultural exchange and integration.

By acknowledging the cultural and historical background of the Malaysian Chinese community and the influences on their language, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the language's development and its role in shaping identity and communication within the community. It allows for a holistic approach to studying language, incorporating not only linguistic analysis but also cultural and historical perspectives.

The emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language words is a result of the cultural and historical background of the Malaysian Chinese community. The language reflects the dynamic interactions and exchanges between multiple cultures, including Chinese, Malay, English, and other ethnic languages. Recognizing the non-accidental nature of these linguistic developments highlights the importance of cultural exchange and integration in language evolution. By combining linguistic analysis with cultural and historical insights, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the Malaysian Chinese Language and its significance within the broader Malaysian cultural landscape.

The reason why Malaysian Chinese are proficient in using the Malaysia Chinese language is because in a diverse environment, the coexistence and alternate use of several languages has caused the Chinese words to be affected by outsiders. After subtly transforming them, they are "sinicized" and absorbed into a part of it. Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher will explore the relationship between Malaysian Chinese words and cultural background from the perspectives of people's livelihood, festival customs

and religion, communication and conversation and food and dining to explore the relationship between Malaysian Chinese words and cultural background. Based on the culture-related Chinese lexical items compiled in the research corpus, the distribution of the four categories of cultural perspectives is shown in Figure 4.1.
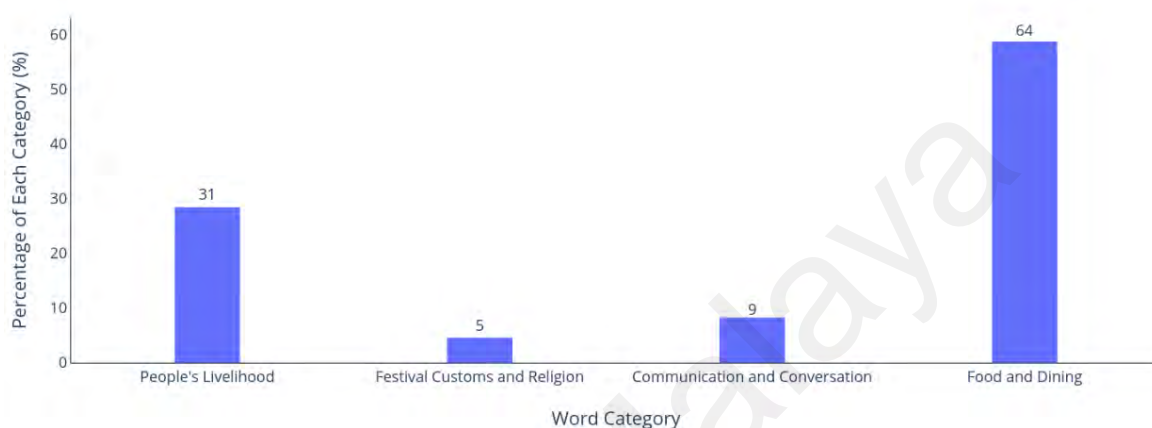
Figure 4.1: Malaysian Chinese Language words in the four categories

As evident from the Figure 4.1, the largest proportion of lexical items (n = 64, 58.72%) is related to food and dining. The second-highest percentage is seen in the people's livelihood category, with n = 31 or 28.44%. The festival customs and religion category have the lowest percentage, with n = 5 (4.59%), followed by the communication and conversation category, which has n = 9 (8.26%).

4.1 Analysis of Word Classes from the Cultural Perspectives

4.1.1 Overview of Results

The culture-related Chinese lexical items were further classified into different word classes based on their "part-of-speech" categories. Figure 4.2 illustrates the compositions of different word classes of the compiled research corpus.
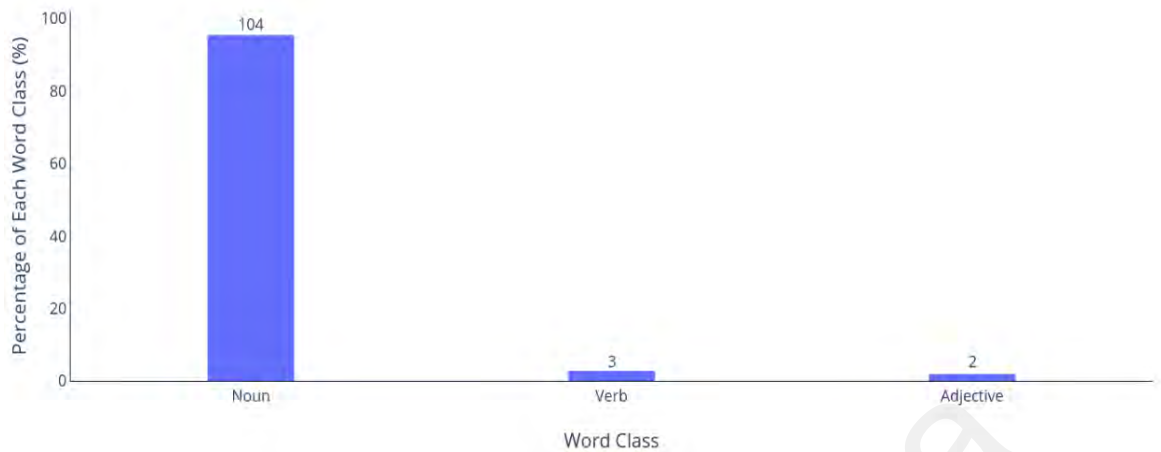
Figure 4.2: Malaysian Chinese Language words in the four word classes

Additionally, the culture-related Chinese lexical items in the four categories were subdivided into different word classes as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Distribution of word classes for Malaysian Chinese Language words from different categories

	Word Categories				
	People's Livelihood	Festival Customs and Religion	Communication and Conversation	Food and Dining	TOTAL

Noun	30	5	5	64	104
Verb	1	0	2	0	3
Adjective	0	0	2	0	2
Adverb	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	31	5	9	64	109

From Table 4.1, it is clear that in the category of people's livelihood, only nouns and verbs appear, where the nouns dominate with the composition of 96.77 % of this category (n = 30) while verbs contributed 3.23 % (n = 1). There are no adjectives or adverbs in this category.

As for the category of festival customs and religion, only nouns appear, also accounting for 100% (n = 5). There are no verbs, adjectives, or adverbs in this category. Similar observation was obtained for the case of the food and dining category, in which the lexical items collected consist of only nouns (n = 64).

Moving on to the category of communication and conversation, nouns have the highest percentage, at 55.55% (n = 5), whereas verbs and adjectives shared the remaining portions equally, both at 22.22% (n = 2).

4.1.2 Different Types of Word Classes

4.1.2.1 Noun

This subsection is devoted to present several selected examples from the research corpus to justify their presence in the corpus as well as their classifications.

Example (1)

马来短剑

Malai-duanjian

Translation: an asymmetrical dagger with distinctive blade-patterning

Example (2)

神料

shenliao

Translation: Religious goods, also known religious gifts or religious supplies. They are materials used in the practice of a particular religious traditions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Chinese folk religion and Christianity among other religions.

The above examples (1) and (2) belong to the category of people's livelihood. The first example belongs to the markets that are often found in the Malay community and, therefore, are a part of the Malay culture. In example (1), "马来短剑 *Malai-duanjian*" refers to an asymmetrical dagger with distinctive blade-patterning, commonly known as *kris* or *keris* in the Malay language. It was manufactured through alternating laminations of iron or nickelous iron. It is frequently mentioned in many Malay manuscripts, may it be myths, historical records or artefacts. The term "马来短剑" carries the meaning of Malayan short dagger, which describes the origin and appearance of the *kris* or *keris*.

On the other hand, example (2) "神料 *shenliao*" refers to the spices and implements used in god-worshiping. This example exemplifies the Chinese worship of religious deities and reflects their religious and cultural practices. In the modern Chinese vocabulary system, these objects are referred to as "祭品 *jipin*", which means ritual items. However, Malaysian Chinese people use the term "神料 *shenliao*" more frequently. The word "神料 *shenliao*" is abbreviated from "祭拜神明的用料"

(materials for honoring the gods). The term "神料 *shenliao*" includes joss sticks, candles, and worship offerings (excluding food for worship). Malaysian Chinese people refer to stores that offer these items as "神料店 *shenliao-dian*" (religious supplies shop). Although the word "神 *shen*" (god) is included in the reference vocabulary, the objects referred to by this term are not necessarily used only for worshiping gods but can also be used to honor deceased relatives and spirits.

Example (3)

娘惹

Niangre

Translation: A race named Baba Nyonya

Example (4)

二十四节令鼓

Ershisijieling-gu

Translation: A type of drum art performance

The above examples (3) and (4) belong to the categories of festival customs and religion. Example (3) "娘惹 *Niangre*" refers to Baba Nyonya, a subset of Chinese community in Malaysia that can be traced back centuries to when Chinese people moved from China to the British Straits Settlements of Melaka, Singapore and Penang. They partially adopted Malay customs to assimilate into the local community. It is often found that "娘惹" (Nyonya) coexists with "峇峇" (Baba) in Malaysian Chinese newspaper sentences. The Chinese subsequently married the local females, and their diverse backgrounds, cultures, and customs mixed beautifully to form the unique

"*Peranakan*" culture of Baba Nyonya, which has a special place in Malaysia's cultural history.

In addition, example (4) "二十四节令鼓 *ershisijieling-gu*" refers to a drum art performance that combines the twenty-four solar terms, calligraphy, and Guangdong lion drums. The "二十四节令鼓" is enriched and innovated based on Chinese traditional drum art. It is not only a drum art performance but also a symbol of the cultural heritage of the Chines in the Southeast Asia. This drum art performance is unique to Malaysia, where it is performed, and is not found in China. China's drums are referred to as "锣鼓". In the 16th century, there were 35 kinds of "drums" with various levels of similarities, including the gong of the Han Dynasty and the cymbals of the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Gongs and drums are the most extensive musical instruments in Chinese history, with roles in religion, politics, military, labor, and daily life.

Example (5)

番仔

fanzai

Translation: A noun to address Malays in Chinese dialect (Hokkien dialect: *huanna*).

Example (6)

安娣

andi

Translation: Aunty, to address middle-aged female.

Example (5) and (6) belong to the categories of festival customs and religion as well as communication and conversation, respectively. Example (5) refers to the term "番仔 *fanzai*", which alludes to the Malay people living in Malaysia. This word originates from the Min dialect (*闽语*) (also known as Hokkien dialect in Malaysia). The word "*仔 zai*" refers to an individual, whereas "*番 fan*" refers to an ethnic group that is not Chinese. Malaysian Chinese use "*番 fan*" to refer to Malay people. Therefore, in the context of Malaysian Chinese, the term "*番仔 fanzai*" refers to Malay people in Malaysia.

Example (6) refers to the appellation given to an older woman, "*安娣 andi*". The Malaysian Chinese language word "*安娣 andi*" is borrowed from the English word "aunty" which has the same meaning but a different vocabulary.

Example (7)

马尼菜

mani-cai

Translation: A type of vegetable, known as *sayur manis*

Example (8)

竹筒饭

zhutong-fan

Translation: A traditional food that is made from glutinous rice, coconut milk and salt.

The above examples (7) and (8) belong to the category of food and dining. Example (7) "*马尼菜 mani-cai*" refers to a type of vegetable, known as the *sayur manis* in Malay language. In Malay, *sayur manis* means beet. It is said that sauerkraut is the most popular wild vegetable in Sarawak. This dish must be available in the economic fast-food stalls on the streets and alleys. The term "*马尼菜*" is the transliteration of its Malay name, in which *manis* is translated to "*马尼 mani*" and "*菜 cai*" stands for vegetable in Chinese.

In addition, example (8) "*竹筒饭 zhutong-fan*" refers to a type of Malay and Minangkabau traditional food that is made from glutinous rice, coconut milk and salt. It is cooked in a hollowed bamboo tube coated with banana leaves in order to prevent the rice from sticking to the bamboo. This delicacy is commonly found in Malay village, especially during the festive season. The term "*竹筒饭*" precisely describes how the food is cooked whereby it can be directly translated in "rice in bamboo tube".

4.1.2.2 Verb

Example (9)

仙

xian

Translation: Meaning of cheat or flicker.

Example (10)

吹水

chuishui

Translation: Chatting, also refers to casual conversation or speech that is not based on facts.

Examples (9) and (10) belong to the category of communication and conversation. Example (9) refers to the term "仙 *xian*", which means to cheat or flicker. For example, "*你不要*仙*人啦!*" means "don't you lie to the other people". However, in modern Chinese vocabulary, words like "*欺骗 qipian*" are used to refer to this meaning. Furthermore, in modern Chinese vocabulary, "仙 *xian*" denotes "*神仙 shenxian*" (gods and immortals). In the Malaysian Chinese context, however, the term "仙 *xian*" not only signifies "*神仙 shenxian*" (gods and immortals), but also refers to "bragging and boasting".

In addition, example (10) "*吹水 chuishui*" refers to either chit chat or speaking not based on facts. This is closely related to "*吹水文化 chuishui wenhua*" (chit chat culture). In modern Chinese vocabulary, words like "*闲聊 xianliao*" and "*唠嗑 laoke*" are used to refer to these meanings. The word "*吹水 chuishui*" in the lexicon of Malaysian Chinese is more likely to have been borrowed from the Cantonese vocabulary and meaning, and therefore belongs to the category of loanwords.

4.1.2.3 Adjective

Example (11)

八

ba

Translation: Describe some nosy people.

Example (11) "八 *ba*" refers to being nosy. In modern Chinese, the word for "nosy" is "八卦 *bagua*". However, when it arrived in Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese modified the original "八卦 *bagua*" to "八 *ba*". It is hypothesized that the influence of Chinese dialects, such as the Cantonese vocabulary system, led to this alteration.

4.1.3 Discussion

Among the four categories in Malaysian Chinese Language: people's livelihood, festival customs and religion, communication and conversation as well as food and dining, nouns scored the highest percentage in all four categories (refer to Table 4.1), with the highest frequency in food and dining (n = 64), followed by people's livelihood (n = 30), communication and conversation (n = 5), and festival customs and religion (n = 5). According to the experts, the increase in the usage of nouns is due to the emergence of various new things with the development of society, leading to a natural increase in the frequency of nouns. In contrast, the increase in verbs or other parts of speech is slower as traditional language habits are difficult to change. The work of Li and Shao (2016) revealed that nouns score the highest because predicates in noun phrases are more likely to be the connection between the root and other components, while all words in noun phrases without a predicate are more likely to have been modified directly from the root. Furthermore, the noun phrase annotation method can increase the accuracy of computerized semantic analysis while providing theoretical support to other domains of natural language processing.

It is interesting to note that the category of food and dining dominated the noun word class with the composition of 61.54 % (n = 64). This shows that the category of food and dining had been closely related to the lifestyles of Malaysian Chinese. Food patterns allow people to connect with their cultural or ethnic group and are frequently

used to maintain cultural identity. People from various cultural backgrounds consume different meals, and their food preferences and dislikes are often influenced by where their families and ancestors came from. These food preferences result in food choice patterns within a cultural or regional group (Sibal, 2018).

On top of that, food has an important function in demonstrating respect among communities. For instance, many of religions have specific dietary rules to be followed. This is supported by Wen (2022), who stated that food is a symbol of cultural tradition and a carrier of human emotional memory. Therefore, through interactions among different races, the transition from one cultural group to another has indirectly caused the emergence of Malaysian Chinese language, such as "仁当 *Ren-dang*", "椰浆饭 *Ye-jiang-fan*", "达刚饭 *Da-gang-fan*" (nasi dagang) and so forth.

On the other hand, lexical items categorized into the people's livelihood class had the second largest share, standing at 28.44 % or n = 31. This result can be directly translated to the fact that new lexical items were invented in order to adapt the Malaysian Chinese to the new living environment. While food-related issue is closely associated to the survival of the immigrants, their daily lives also played important role to sustain the existence for several decades, even centuries through the assimilation of their original and the local cultures.

Meanwhile, the composition of lexical items in the Malaysian Chinese language reveals interesting patterns, particularly in the categories of communication and conversation, as well as festival customs and religion. These categories exhibit a lower frequency or representation of words compared to other categories within the language.

One possible explanation for this phenomenon is the preservation of words related to customs and religions from their original origins. These words may have been passed down through generations without significant reinvention or adaptation. They serve as linguistic markers of cultural heritage and are valued for their historical and traditional significance. As a result, there is less demand or necessity to create new lexical items in these categories, leading to a lower composition overall.

Another contributing factor to the lower presence of words in these categories is the multilingual nature of communication among the Malaysian Chinese community. In Malaysia, where multiple languages are spoken, including Malay and English, individuals often engage in conversation and communication using these languages, particularly when interacting with members of other races or ethnicities. This linguistic diversity and multilingual environment may reduce the emphasis on developing new lexical items specifically related to communication and conversation in the Malaysian Chinese language.

Consequently, the lower percentage of lexical items in the categories of communication and conversation, as well as festival customs and religion, may reflect the linguistic landscape and sociolinguistic dynamics within the Malaysian Chinese community. It is important to note that language is influenced by sociocultural factors, and the usage and development of lexical items are not isolated phenomena but are shaped by the sociolinguistic context in which they occur.

However, it is crucial to consider the limitations and potential biases in the data source when interpreting the findings of this study. The research corpus in this case was derived from Chinese newspapers' supplementary sections, which may focus on specific aspects of lexical items. Different sections of a newspaper may prioritize certain

categories, leading to a potential skew in the representation of lexical items related to communication, conversation, festival customs, and religion. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution and complemented by additional sources and perspectives.

In conclusion, the lower composition of lexical items related to communication and conversation, as well as festival customs and religion, in the Malaysian Chinese language can be attributed to the inheritance of words from their origins and the predominance of other languages for communication within the Malaysian Chinese community. Additionally, the findings should be considered in light of potential biases associated with the data source. Understanding the patterns of lexical composition provides insights into the language dynamics and usage within the Malaysian Chinese community, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the language and its cultural context.

4.2 Analysis of Word Formations from the Cultural Perspectives

4.2.1 Overview of Results

The culture-related Chinese lexical items were further classified based on their formation. Figure 4.3 illustrates the compositions of different word formations of the compiled research corpus.
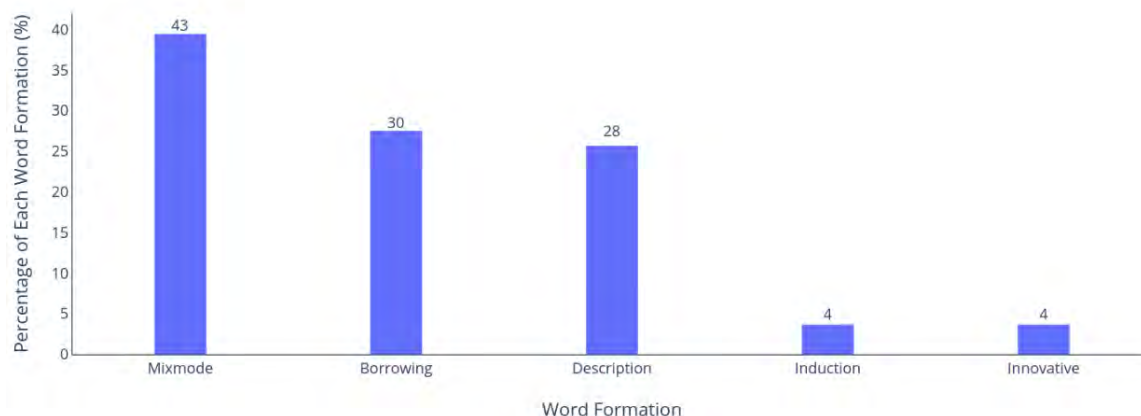

Figure 4.3: Malaysian Chinese Language words in the five word formations

Additionally, the culture-related Chinese lexical items in the four categories were subdivided into different word classes as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Word formation of Malaysian Chinese Language words

	People's Livelihood	Festival Customs and Religion	Communication and Conversation	Food and Dining	TOTAL
		Word Categories			
Mixmode	9	3	2	29	43
Borrowing	6	2	5	17	30
Description	12	0	1	15	28
Induction	3	0	0	1	4
Innovative	1	0	1	2	4
TOTAL	31	5	9	64	109

From Table 4.2, it is clear that word-formation through mixmode scored the highest in total, with a score of n = 43 (39.45 %). The second highest score in total for word formation is borrowing, with a score of n = 30 (27.52 %). They are followed by formation through description with n = 28 (25.69 %). On the other hand, innovation and induction have the lowest total scores of n = 4 (3.67 %) and n = 4 (3.67 %), respectively. The meaning of each type of word formation in the following sections will be explained further with some examples provided.

4.2.2 Different Types of Word Formations

4.2.2.1 Single Word Formations

4.2.2.1.1 Borrowing

Example (1)

班兰

banlan

Translation: A type of tropical plant found in Southeast Asia that is widely used in local cuisines

Example (2)

档口

dangkou

Translation: This word is mostly used in Cantonese colloquialism to describe small businesses.

Example (1) "班兰 *banlan*", known as *pandan* by the Malays, is a native tropical plant in Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia. The leaves of the *pandan* has a fragrant smell, making it to be widely used in Malaysian cuisine to add flavor and fragrance to a variety of dishes. *Pandan* is especially popular in Malaysian desserts, such as *pandan* chiffon cake, *pandan* kaya jam, and *pandan*-flavored glutinous rice. The plant is also sometimes used as a natural food coloring, giving dishes a bright green hue. The term "班兰" is a direct translation of the *pandan* using the Chinese characters.

In addition, example (2) "档口 *dangkou*" falls under the category of people's livelihood and refers to small businesses, especially stalls. This Cantonese term is

mostly used to describe small businesses selling street food in Hong Kong. The term "档口 *dangkou*" has been borrowed by Malaysian Chinese to reflect the Malaysian food culture, while in China, the term "摊位 *tanwei*" is more commonly used.

Example (3)

<div align="center">

米林

milin

</div>

Translation: A leafy vegetable that is commonly used in Malaysian cuisine.

Example (3) "米林 *milin*" is a type of type of leafy vegetable that is usually exists in Malaysian cuisine, particularly the East Malaysia. It is categorized as "wild fern" of "fiddlehead fern". The tender shoots of the fern are usually stir-fried with garlic and chili, and it is a popular dish in Malaysian cuisine. The term "米林" is borrowed from the Malay name.

Example (4)

<div align="center">

峇拉煎

balajian

</div>

Translation: A traditional ingredient used in Malaysian cuisine.

Example (5)

<div align="center">

旺来

wanglai

</div>

Translation: A tropical plant with an edible fruit.

The above examples (4) and (5) come from the category of communication and conversation. Example (4) "峇拉煎 *balajian*", known as *belacan* in Malay, is a traditional ingredient used in Malaysian cuisine. It is a type of shrimp paste that is made by fermenting small shrimp or krill with salt and leaving the mixture to dry in the sun. The fermented shrimp paste is then cut into blocks and sold in markets and grocery stores. Belacan is a key ingredient in many Malaysian dishes, including sambal belacan (a spicy chili paste), laksa (a spicy noodle soup), and otak-otak (a type of fish cake). It has a strong, pungent flavor and aroma, and is often used in small amounts to add depth and umami to dishes. Belacan is an important part of Malaysia's culinary heritage and is enjoyed by many Malaysians as a staple ingredient in their cooking. "峇拉煎" is borrowed from the Malay word "*belacan*".

Furthermore, example (5) "旺来 *wanglai*" is a tropical plant with an edible fruit. Its scientific name is *Ananas comosus* commonly known as pineapple. The term "旺来" originates from the Hokkien dialect pronunciation which is "*onglai*", and the word is like the meaning of "incoming wealth" which made it more likeable to the Chinese community.

Example (6)

摩摩喳喳

momo-zhazha

Translation: A traditional Malaysian dessert made of coconut milk, sweet potatoes, taro, sago pearls, and other colorful ingredients like pandan jelly and red beans.

Example (7)

<div align="center">

咖哩卜

gali-bo

</div>

Translation: A curry puff is a snack of Maritime Southeast Asian origin. It is a small pie consisting of curry with chicken and potatoes in a deep-fried or baked pastry shell. The curry is quite thick to prevent it from oozing out of the snack.

The above examples (6) and (7) belong to the category of food and dining. Example (6) "*摩摩渣渣 momo-zhazha*" refers to a traditional Malaysian dessert, and it is borrowed from *bubur cha cha* (also spelled as *burbur cha cha*). It is a made of coconut milk, sweet potatoes, taro, sago pearls, and other colorful ingredients like pandan jelly and red beans. The dessert has a sweet and creamy taste and is often served chilled.

Additionally, example (7) "*咖哩卜 gali-bo*" is borrowed from the English lexical item "curry puff", which is a snack of Maritime Southeast Asian origin. It is a small pie consisting of curry with chicken and potatoes in a deep-fried or baked pastry shell. The curry is quite thick to prevent it from oozing out of the snack. British colonialists in Asia came up with the name "curry puff", but the dough pockets have been influenced by the colonial cuisines of several European nations over the centuries. When the Portuguese were supplanted in Asia by the Dutch and English, curry puffs evolved, taking on elements of other European cuisines and local twists. Asian countries where empadas had taken hold gave birth to their own versions, which survived Dutch rule and mutated during the British colonial era (Marchetti, 2021). Curry dumplings later spread to Southeast Asia's coastal areas as Malays migrated, and curry dumplings can be found in places where Malays congregate. In recent years, it has been extensively

accepted by different ethnic groups and incorporated into their cuisine, such as Chinese culture.

4.2.2.1.4 Description

Example (8)

排屋

paiwu

Translation: In architecture and city planning, a terrace or terraced house or townhouse is a form of medium-density housing that originated in Europe in the 16th century, whereby a row of attached dwellings shared side walls.

Example (9)

新村

xincun

Translation: New villages, also known as Chinese new villages, were internment camps created during the waning days of British rule in Malaysia.

The above examples (8) and (9) belong to the category of people's livelihood. Example (8) refers to "*排屋 paiwu*", which is a type of housing called a terrace or townhouse that originated in Europe in the 16th century. The term "*排屋 paiwu*" is a transliteration of the English word "terrace house". Terrace houses are landed properties with at least three dwelling units erected in a row. The houses share boundary walls and are built in accordance with Urban Redevelopment Authority requirements. Terrace houses come in a variety of styles, including single-story, one-and-a-half-story, double-story, and multi-story homes. They are constructed by real estate developers or private individuals. Most terrace houses in Singapore and Malaysia accommodate only one family and do not have any communal facilities. The use of this term also reflects the

culture of accommodation in Malaysia, where many "排屋 *paiwu*" still exist due to the country's limited land resources.

Example (9) discusses new villages, also known as Chinese new villages, which were internment camps created during the waning days of British rule in Malaysia. The establishment of new villages is closely related to cultivators in the British colonial period. Most of the cultivators came from the end of the 19th century, when the British colonial government introduced a large number of laborers from Malaya, who later turned to the farming industry. These laborers were primarily Chinese from southern China and Hong Kong. The original goal of Malaysia's New Villages was to keep ethnic Chinese villagers away from the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), which was led by the Malayan Communist Party. This was part of the Briggs Plan, a military strategy established by Sir Harold Briggs immediately after his appointment as Director of Operations in Malaya for the British military in 1950 (Hale, 2013). The plan aimed to defeat the MNLA, which was operating as a guerrilla group in Malaysian rural areas, by cutting them off from their sources of support, primarily among the rural populace. To achieve this, a large program of forced resettlement of rural laborers was launched, with over 500 000 people (nearly 10% of Malaya's population) eventually being transferred from their homes and put in guarded camps known as "New Villages." These New Villages were typically fortified with barbed wire and guard posts. In certain situations, New Village residents were subjected to 22-hour curfews, as was the case in Tanjong Malim (Newsinger, 2015). The structure of the new village prevented people from going out to actively assist the guerrillas and also prevented the guerrillas from entering the new village to be helped by intimidation or persuasion. The new village was able to prevent the guerrillas from obtaining critical supplies, information, and human resources.

Example (10)

<div align="center">

蚵煎

hejian

</div>

Translation: The oyster omelette, a dish of Hokkien and Teochew origin.

Example (11)

<div align="center">

椰花酒

yehua-jiu

</div>

Translation: *Nira kelapa* or better known as *air tuak* by the aborigines.

The above examples (10) and (11) belong to the category of food and dining. Example (10) "*蚵煎 kejian*" refers to an oyster omelet, a dish of Hokkien and Teochew origin renowned for its savory flavor in its native Chaoshan and Minnan regions, as well as in Taiwan and many parts of Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, due to the influence of the Hokkien and Teochew diaspora. In 1661, the Dutch army occupied Tainan, and Zheng Cheng Gong, a native of Nan'an, Quanzhou, led his troops to attack from Luermen with the intention of recovering the lost land. While in hiding, Zheng's army was in a hurry and lacked food. He simply took local specialties and mixed Taiwanese specialty oysters and sweet potato flour with water and fried it into cakes. Unexpectedly, this dish was passed down to later generations and became a popular snack in the province. Oyster fried (sea oyster fried) is a specialty snack in coastal cities in Fujian, Taiwan, and Chaoshan. It has been around since ancient times in Fujian-speaking regions (Southern Fujian - Quanzhou, Xiamen, Zhangzhou, Fuzhou, Putian, Chaoshan). This creative dish was invented in a

poor society as an alternative food by ancestors who were poor and unable to eat enough, and it is a symbol of a humble life.

Apart from that, example (11) "*椰花酒 yehua-jiu*" refers to a drink known as *nira kelapa* or better known as *air tuak* by the aborigines. It is made by fermenting sap of various palm trees. The term "*椰花酒*" means wine made from palm flowers.

4.2.2.1.3 Induction

Example (12)

小贩中心

xiaofan-zhongxin

Translation: Hawker cooked-food centre which is an open-air complex commonly found in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. They were built to provide a more sanitary alternative to mobile hawker carts and contain many stalls that sell different varieties of affordable meals.

Example (13)

神料

shenliao

Translation: Religious goods, also known religious gifts or religious supplies. They are materials used in the practice of a particular religious traditions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Chinese folk religion and Christianity among other religions.

The examples (12) and (13) come under the category of people's livelihood. "*小贩中心 xiaofan-zhongxin*" in (12) refers to a hawker centre or cooked food centre,

which is an open-air complex commonly found in Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Singapore. According to *Lianhe Zaobao* (2020), after more than two years of effort to apply for the World Heritage List, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has included hawker culture in the "Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage".

On the other hand, example (13) "*神料 shenliao*" refers to the spices and implements used in god-worship. This example exemplifies the Chinese worship of religious deities and reflects their religious and cultural practices. In the modern Chinese vocabulary system, these objects are referred as "*祭品 jipin*", which means ritual items. However, Malaysian Chinese people use the term "*神料 shenliao*" more frequently. The noun "*神料 shenliao*" is abbreviated from "*祭拜神明的用料*" (materials for honoring the gods). The term "*神料 shenliao*" includes joss sticks, candles, and worship offerings (excluding food for worship). Malaysian Chinese people refer to stores that offer these items as "*神料店 shenliao-dian*" (religious supplies shop). Although the word "*神 shen*" (god) is included in the reference vocabulary, the objects referred to by this term are not necessarily used only for worshiping gods but can also be used to honor deceased relatives and spirits.

4.2.2.1.1 Innovative

This subsection is devoted to presenting several selected examples from the research corpus to justify their presence in the corpus as well as their classifications.

Example (14)

仙

xian

Translation: Meaning of cheat or flicker.

Example (14) belongs to the category of communication and conversation. Example (14) refers to the term "仙 *xian*", which means to cheat or flicker. For example, "你不要仙人啦!" means "don't you lie to the other people". However, in modern Chinese vocabulary, words like "欺骗 *qipian*" are used to refer to this meaning. Furthermore, in modern Chinese vocabulary, "仙 *xian*" denotes "神仙 *shenxian*" (gods and immortals). In the Malaysian Chinese context, however, the term "仙 *xian*" not only signifies "神仙 *shenxian*" (gods and immortals), but also refers to "bragging and boasting".

Example (15)

曼煎糕

manjian-gao

Translation: Fluffy and thick layer of pancakes in Malaysia

Example (16)

啦啦

lala

Translation: A type of seafood which has shells.

The above examples (15) and (16) come from the category of food and dining. Example (15) "*曼煎糕 manjian-gao*" also refers to the Malay word "*apam balik*", which has been a part of Malaysian street food heritage for many decades. This is a type of chewy pancake that is widely consumed in Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Indonesia, and Brunei. It is often sold by street vendors from food carts and is typically crisp on the outside and mushy on the inside. Malaysian pancakes are served folded in half to form half-moons and are traditionally topped with roasted and crushed peanuts, cane sugar, and sweet corn.

However, various newer variations with chocolate or cheese toppings have recently appeared for "*apam balik*". "*曼煎糕 manjian-gao*" is originally from Fujian, China. In 1855, when the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's army invaded the Fujian region of China, General Tso was tasked with leading an army to suppress the rebels (Dadoun). General Tso chose to change from the flatbread eaten with spring onion and chili sauce to the pancake, which uses locally sourced and mass-produced ground cane sugar and peanut flour as a filler to provide sustenance for the soldiers while not interfering with the lives of local people. The pancake recipe spread throughout Fujian, especially around Quanzhou, and eventually throughout Southeast China. Chinese Hokkien immigrants also introduced it to Southeast Asian countries.

In addition, example (16) "*啦啦 lala*" refers to a type of seafood that has a shell covering its body, such as clams. Clams are classified as part of the Mollusca, Bivalvia, Heterodentate, Clam family phyla, which contain both warm and hot water species and are found in all of the world's oceans. More than 30 species of clams have been discovered along Malaysia's shorelines, with the majority living on the shallow seabed within 100 meters of the intertidal and subtidal zones. Only a few can survive in the

deep sea above 100 meters and in caverns. Clams have a great economic value, with soft and excellent meat that is high in nutrients. In China, they are often called "*蛤蜊 geli*", which has the same meaning as the Malaysian Chinese Language word "*啦啦 lala*". "*啦啦 lala*" is a new innovative word that does not borrow from any language pronunciation.

4.2.2.1 Mixmode Word Formation

Another interesting finding obtained by the researcher of this study is that the combinations of word formation (and hence the mixmode) also have different distributions. Table 4.3 shows the frequency of the different combinations of word formation in the mixmode category.

Table 4.3: Frequency of different combinations of word formation (mixmode)

Combination	Frequency
Borrowing + Description	25
Description + Innovative	11
Borrowing + Abbreviation	2
Description + Induction + Innovative	2
Borrowing + Description + Innovative	1
Description + Abbreviation	1
Borrowing + Induction	1
TOTAL	43

From Table 4.3, it can be seen that the combination of borrowing and description word formation had the highest frequency (n = 25), followed by the combination of description and innovative (n = 11). It is still unclear to the researcher how the combination of different word formations dictates the creation of culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese language. Therefore, researcher suggest the

future researcher can investigate the appearance of patterns in mixmode Malaysian Chinese Language.

Example (17)

<p style="text-align:center">*巴冷刀*</p>

<p style="text-align:center">*baleng-dao*</p>

Translation: The *parang* is a type of knife used across the Malay Archipelago. It is often mistakenly assumed to be a sword; however, there is no evidence that it has ever been used in a formal military conflict, nor that its intended purpose was to be used as a combat weapon.

Example (18)

<p style="text-align:center">*嘛嘛档*</p>

<p style="text-align:center">*mama-dang*</p>

Translation: Mamak stalls are indoor and open-air food establishments particularly found in Southeast Asia.

The above examples (17) and (18) are related to the category of people's livelihood. Example (17) "*巴冷刀 baleng-dao*" refers to the parang, a type of knife commonly used across the Malay Archipelago. The parang is used for various purposes, including in the forest or bush, building houses, assembling furniture, and making equipment. The SAS Survival Handbook by John "Lofty" Wiseman also mentions the parang for these purposes. Short parangs are used to split wood, cut meat, cut down bamboo trees, and even reed bamboo. Long machetes, on the other hand, are used to cut bushes, prune branches, and more. Parangs are also used as weapons, especially by

gangs and robbers in Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and India. In Malaysia, parangs have their origin in Malay culture, where they are often used for cutting various things.

Example (18) "*嘛嘛档 mama-dang*" refers to mamak stalls, which are indoor and open-air food establishments typically found in Southeast Asia. Malaysian Mamak are Malaysians of Tamil Muslim ancestry whose forefathers migrated from South India to the Malay Peninsula and other Southeast Asian locales centuries ago. They are regarded as members of the Malaysian Indian community. In China, the words "*嘛嘛档 Ma-ma-dang*" are not commonly used. This Malaysian culture-related lexical item is a mixmode word, including borrowing and description. In terms of borrowing, "*嘛嘛档 Ma-ma-dang*" is a borrowing word as it imitates the pronunciation of "mamak". Furthermore, in terms of description, "*嘛嘛档 mama-dang*" is also a descriptive word, indicating that the stalls are run by the Mamak ethnic group.

Example (19)

<div align="center">

二十四节令鼓

ershisijieling-gu

</div>

Translation: A type of drum art performance

Example (20)

<div align="center">

青包

qingbao

</div>

Translation: Malay society also imitated the Chinese tradition of sending red packets during the Lunar New Year; Malay society changed the red packets to "green packets" (called *Duit Raya* in Malays).

The above examples (19) and (20) come from the categories of festival customs and religion. Example (19) "二十四节令鼓 *ershisijieling-gu*" refers to a drum art performance that combines the twenty-four solar terms, calligraphy, and Guangdong lion drums. It is enriched and innovated based on Chinese traditional drum art. In addition to being a drum art performance, it is also a symbol of the cultural heritage of Southeast Asian Chinese. This drum art performance is unique and is only performed in Malaysia; China does not have it. China's drum refers to "锣鼓". Twenty-four festival drums are performed in the form of twenty-four single-skin drums representing the twenty-four solar terms, namely, Beginning of Spring, Rainwater, Jingzhe, Spring Equinox, Qingming, Grain Rain, Beginning of Summer, Xiaoman, Mangzhong, Summer Solstice, Xiaoshu, Dashu, Beginning of Autumn, Chushu, Bailu, Autumnal Equinox, Cold Dew, Frostfall, Beginning of Winter, Light Snow, Heavy Snow, Winter Solstice, Minor Cold, and Great Cold (Yang & Chow, 2021). Performers create different drum rhythms for each festive drum, with shouts, body movements, and changes in formation to form a large-scale drum performance. The gongs and drums are the most extensive musical instruments in Chinese history, religion, politics, military, labor, and life. This Chinese culture-related lexical item is a mixed-mode word that includes innovation and description. In terms of innovation, in China, there is no such word as "二十四节令鼓 *ershisijieling-gu*"; they often call drum performances "锣鼓表演". In terms of description, the word describes a drum that has twenty-four solar terms, calligraphy, and Guangdong lion drums.

Example (20) "青包 *qingbao*" refers to money packets in green envelopes that older ladies give to the younger generations. The Malay society also imitated the Chinese tradition of sending red packets during the Lunar New Year, but they changed the color to green packets (called "*duit raya*" in Malays). In China, there is no word for

"*青包 qingbao*" to describe this traditional culture. This Malay culture-related noun is a mixed-mode word that includes description, induction, and innovation. In terms of induction, "*青*" refers to the meaning of green, and "*包*" refers to the packet. These two different words combined together to form a new word with a new meaning. This also shows a process of innovation where "*青包 qingbao*" is a new word for the Malaysian Chinese language. Furthermore, it is a description word where the words show that the packet is green in color.

Example (21)

<div align="center">

番仔

fanzai

</div>

Translation: A noun to address Malays in Chinese dialect (Hokkien dialect: huan-na).

The example (21) belongs to the category of communication and conversation. Example (32), "*番仔 fanzai*", is used to address a Malay guy and originates from the Hokkien dialect. It is a term used by Han people to address foreigners, which was later extended to describe people who speak different languages or could not communicate. The original meaning of the word "*番*" was a term used by Han people to call frontier minorities or foreign countries, and it does not specifically refer to a single ethnic group. Indonesian Chinese, Singaporean Chinese, Filipino Chinese, and Malaysian Chinese all refer to Non-Chinese Southeast Asians as "*番仔 fanzai*". In Taiwan, the Hokkien and Hakka groups used to generally refer to aborigines as "*番仔 fanzai*". Therefore, as history goes, Hokkien and Hakka generally address Malay guys as "*番仔 fanzai*".

Example (22)

马来粽

Malai-zong

Translation: *Ketupat*, *kupat* or *tipat* is a Javanese rice cake packed inside a diamond-shaped container of woven palm leaf pouch.

Example (23)

面粉糕

mianfen-gao

Translation: Mee Hoon Kueh dough is made with all-purpose flour, egg, water, and a pinch of salt.

The examples (22) and (23) belong to the category of food and dining. Example (22), "马来粽 *Malai-zong*" refers to *ketupat*, *kupat*, or *tipat*, which is a Javanese rice cake packed inside a diamond-shaped container made of woven palm leaf pouches. In China, there is no such word as "马来粽 *Malai-zong*". Example (37) is a mixed-mode word that includes innovation and description. In terms of innovation, This lexical item is a new word for China as it was created by Malaysia. Additionally, "马来粽 *Malai-zong*" is a descriptive word that describes the pastry made by the Malay ethnic group.

Furthermore, example (23), "面粉糕 *mianfen-gao*" refers to Mee Hoon Kueh dough made with all-purpose flour, egg, water, and a pinch of salt. In China, there is no such word as "面粉糕 *mianfen-gao*". This Chinese food commonly cooked in Penang and Fujian and often called "Mee hoon kueh." Example (34) is a mixed-mode word that includes innovation and description. In terms of innovation, "面粉糕 *mianfen-gao*" is a

new word for China as it was created by Malaysia. Furthermore, this lexical item is a descriptive word that describes the dough made by the Fujian group.

4.2.3 Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher found that borrowing scored the highest in total with n = 40 in terms of word formation. This is because Malaysian Chinese is influenced by the Malay language in the country, as stated by Tan (2009). Borrowing from Malay language has resulted in the emergence of Malaysian Chinese words such as "*奎笼 kuilong*", "*巴刹 basha*", "*亚答屋 yada-wu*", "*沙爹 shadie*", "*冬炎 dongyan*", "*乌达 wuda*", and many more.

Furthermore, the interaction and communication among Malay and Chinese ethnic groups have caused the appearance of Malaysian Chinese Language, as seen in the example of "*奎笼 kuilong*" borrowed from Malay language "*kelong*" in the people's livelihood category. Tan (2013) also supports this by stating that utilizing Chinese phrases in Malay society is more practical.

The word formation of borrowing in English language to form the Malaysian Chinese Language was also found in this study. For example, "*安娣 andi*" refers to the meaning of an honorable appellation for an older female. This borrowing occurred as Malaysian Chinese interacted with the English language and imitated the pronunciation of English words. This phenomenon is supported by Zhu (2010) who notes that Chinese influence on English learners is unavoidable, especially in syntax and lexical usage.

Additionally, the study found that description scored the second highest in total with n = 30. Next, mixmode word formation style is normal in a multi-racial country

like Malaysia, where interaction and communication among different ethnic groups often occur. This is supported by The Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit which states that Malaysia is a multiracial and multicultural country where people of different ethnicities coexist in peace and harmony.

In conclusion, the study shows that borrowing and description styles of word formation play an important role in affecting the Malaysian Chinese Language, as evidenced by their high scores in this study.

The researcher found that there are new findings in this study which the word formation has more than one such as mixmode style. For example, "*嘛嘛档 mama-dang*" is borrowing and description of word formation. This is because "*嘛嘛档 mama-dang*" is a borrowing and description Malaysian Mandarin word as the stall is open and operate by Indian Muslim which we address them as mamak. Researcher can understand that this Malaysian Mandarin word is borrow from the pronunciation of "mamak". "*嘛嘛档 Ma-ma-dang*" which refer to mamak stalls are indoor and open-air food establishments found primarily in Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia and Singapore, that serve a type of Indian Muslim cuisine unique to the region. Furthermore, "*黄姜饭 huangjiang-fan*" (turmeric rice) is also one of the mixmode in word formation. It is borrowing and description of word formation. This is because this Malay culture-related lexical item borrows the pronunciation from the Malay language "nasi kunyit". From the word "*黄姜饭 huangjiang-fan*", researcher can understand that this word is describing about a type of fragrant rice dish cooked with coconut milk and turmeric, hence the name *nasi kuning* or *nasi kunyit*.

According to the expert, they found out that this phenomenon is quite normal. This phenomenon happens because of the lack of elite norms among the people. Experts stated that the reason of mixmode style word formation occur is because the local Chinese language lacks elite norms and authority and they do not have the professional to guide them in this matter. Researcher supports this statement as from the literature review, researcher do not find any research is done to investigate the emergence of mixmode style which borrowing and description of word formation that appears together in a word. In this study, researcher do not focus on detail for the emergence of mixmode word formation.

4.3 Causes of Local Culture-Related Lexical Items Used in Malaysian Chinese Newspapers

The emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language in Malaysia can be attributed to various reasons, which will be explored in this section. Language serves as a fundamental tool for communication among human beings, with its primary function being the expression of meaning through different sentences. The semantic content of words plays a crucial role in conveying different meanings within sentences. Additionally, language also serves the purpose of conveying emotions, as the same sentence spoken with different words can evoke varying roles and feelings.

One of the key drivers of language development and change is the continuous production of new words. Language evolves and adapts to meet the evolving needs of society. As society progresses and new concepts, technologies, and cultural phenomena emerge, language must keep pace by generating new vocabulary to describe and discuss these developments. This constant production of new words allows for effective communication and expression of ideas.

Language variation is a common phenomenon in linguistic communication and is intimately connected to social life and social psychology. It is influenced by the dynamic interactions between individuals and their social environment. Malaysian Chinese Language, as a linguistic phenomenon, arises in response to the demands of social development and is closely tied to the external world. The external factors that contribute to the emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language can be understood as the result of the unity between opposing elements or external contradictions.

These external contradictions can take various forms. They may arise from cultural interactions, where different cultures and languages come into contact and influence each other, resulting in the emergence of a unique linguistic variety. The multicultural environment of Malaysia, with its diverse ethnic groups and languages, has played a significant role in shaping the development of Malaysian Chinese Language. The interactions between Chinese culture and the local Malaysian culture, as well as the influence of other languages spoken in the region, have contributed to the distinct characteristics of Malaysian Chinese Language.

Furthermore, external contradictions can also stem from societal changes, such as technological advancements, globalization, and migration. These factors introduce new concepts, practices, and experiences that require linguistic expression. As the Malaysian society evolves and undergoes transformations, the language used by its Chinese community must adapt to reflect these changes. New words are coined to describe novel phenomena, address emerging issues, and accommodate the evolving needs of communication.

The emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language in Malaysia is driven by various factors, including the need for effective communication, the constant production of new words, and external contradictions arising from cultural interactions and societal changes. Language is a dynamic system that responds to the demands of society and reflects the cultural, social, and historical background of its speakers. Understanding the reasons behind the emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language provides insights into the linguistic and sociocultural dynamics of the Malaysian Chinese community in the multicultural context of Malaysia. According to Gibbon and Church (1992), the co-variance theory discuss about when gradual or radical changes occur in social life, language as a social phenomenon changes unambiguously with the pace of progress of social life. That is, language co-varies with the social structure, which means that social history is the first and language is the second. Language evolves with the changes in society. Therefore, various factors such as people's livelihood, festive customs and religion, communication and conversation and food and dining. Some words are closely related to the context of people's livelihood, such as "*高脚屋 gaojiao-wu*", "*新村 xincun*", "*亚答屋 yada-wu*" and etc. The differences in festive customs and religion can also affect the differences in Malaysian Chinese vocabulary to a certain extent. For example, "*青包 qingbao*", "*娘惹 Niangre*", "*二十四节令鼓 ershisijieling-gu*" and etc.

Furthermore, Malaysian Chinese are different from China in terms of communication conversation, such as, "*番仔 fanzai*" and etc. In addition, there are also different in terms of food and dining categories of Malaysia and China Chinese language, such as "*仁当 rendang*", "*冬炎 dongyan*" and etc.

According to experts in the field, the emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language can be attributed to the broader social and epochal evolution that language undergoes.

As a dynamic and adaptive system, language constantly changes in response to the prevailing social conditions and evolving needs of its speakers. In the case of Malaysia, a country known for its openness to information and cultural exchange, the Malaysian Chinese Language is deeply influenced by the latest language trends within the Chinese community. These changes are not confined to local influences alone, but often involve a complex interplay of both local and foreign factors.

The multicultural and diverse nature of Malaysia further contributes to the emergence and development of Malaysian Chinese Language. Malaysia's cultural landscape provides a fertile ground for the interaction and integration of various linguistic influences. The Chinese community in Malaysia is exposed to a myriad of linguistic inputs, not only from their own cultural heritage but also from the broader Chinese diaspora and global Chinese communities. This exposure to different varieties and styles of Chinese language usage, along with the influence of other languages spoken in Malaysia, shapes the linguistic landscape of Malaysian Chinese Language.

Furthermore, as Malaysia is a country that embraces globalization and international connections, the changes observed in Malaysian Chinese Language are often intertwined with external influences. The Chinese community in Malaysia has access to a wide range of resources, including media, technology, and communication platforms, which expose them to new language trends and linguistic innovations from around the world. These foreign factors, such as popular culture, media content, and transnational communication, play a significant role in shaping the language practices and lexicon of Malaysian Chinese Language.

The emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language also reflects the cultural identity and sense of belonging of the Malaysian Chinese community. As a distinct linguistic

variety, it represents a form of expression and communication that is unique to this particular community within the Malaysian context. Malaysian Chinese individuals, while maintaining their Chinese cultural heritage, also embody the influences of the local Malaysian culture. The blending of these influences gives rise to a language that reflects the cultural hybridity and multiculturalism of the Malaysian Chinese community.

The emergence of Malaysian Chinese Language is a result of the ongoing social and epochal evolution of language, influenced by both local and foreign factors. The openness of Malaysia to information, culture, and globalization provides the necessary conditions for the development of a distinct linguistic variety within the Chinese community. The multicultural and diverse nature of Malaysia, along with the influences of global Chinese communities, contributes to the unique linguistic landscape of Malaysian Chinese Language. By examining the factors that shape its emergence, we gain valuable insights into the complex dynamics of language evolution and cultural identity in the Malaysian Chinese community. Apart from that, Labov (2009) believes that language variation is affected by two factors, one is the influence of the internal factors of the language, the other is the influence of external factors such as race and social system (Chen, 2000). According to Zhu (2010), language factors and social factors are closely related in the process of language evolution. Any explanation limited to a certain aspect, no matter how perfect it is established, cannot explain the large number of regularities observed in the empirical study of language behavior. Based on the above understanding, this research will analyze the factors affecting the variation of Malaysian Chinese Language from two aspects which is language and society.

4.3.1 Language Factors

In the multilingual environment of Malaysia, the universality of the Chinese language is not only influenced by ancient Chinese, early modern Chinese, and southern dialects of Chinese languages such as Fujian and Guangdong, but also by foreign languages such as English and Malay. Therefore, this research divides the language factors that affect the variation of Malay Chinese vocabulary into two aspects: internal factors of the Chinese language and contact with foreign languages.

First, let's start with the influence of foreign languages on Malaysian Mandarin. Malay is the national language of Malaysia. There is no denying that every Malaysian must learn Malay. Therefore, Malay language is in a very high position in Malaysian society. Malay language served as the sole language of instruction in secondary schools and universities (Albury, 2019). In life, whether it is going to government departments, naming children, or communicating with other ethnic groups, Malay is inseparable from all aspects of life. On this basis, while the Chinese are living in Malaysia, they are inevitably tied up with the Malay language. Naturally, there is a phenomenon of borrowing and using part of Malay vocabulary in Malaysian Chinese. This includes transliteration, free translation, and transliteration combined. Coexisted with Malay for a long time, and some vocabulary influenced by Malay has inevitably been produced in Chinese. For example, "*娘惹 Niangre*", "*亚答屋 yadawu*", "*沙爹 shadie*" and many more. Among them, "*娘惹 Niangre*" are the transliterations of Malay words "*Nyonya*", and "*Nyonya*" refer to the names used by Chinese and Malays after their marriages. Since these Baba and Nyonya cannot speak Chinese, and most of them are only good at speaking English, Malay, and dialects, the locals gave them this name which is different from the Chinese and Malays.

In addition, "嘛嘛档 *mama-dang*" refers to a simple hut built with Ata's stay. It is a transliteration of Malay Mamak Stalls. Furthermore, "*巴冷刀 baleng-dao*" is also a translation from Malay language to become Malaysian Chinese language. This is the meaning of a knife named "*parang*" used across the Malay Archipelago. It is a transliteration of the Malay word "*parang*".

Apart from that, Malay is the only official language and national language of Malaysia, and English is the second most important language (Jamhari, 2019). It is widely used in administration, education, services, media, business, technology, and other fields. Due to the trilingual education, most Chinese Malaysians have mastered Malay, English, Modern Chinese, and one or more Chinese dialects. Under such a language pattern, Malaysian Chinese, Malay, and English have been in frequent contact over a long period of time, thus forming a language contact mode of equipotential contact. The direct result is the borrowing of vocabulary (Chen, 2013). Therefore, Malaysian Chinese borrows more Malay than Mandarin vocabulary, especially the words that express the local special food, appellation, and culture of Malaysia. For example, "*仁当*" is the transliteration of Malay language "*rendang*", which is a type of food that is a rich dish of meat, most commonly in beef, chicken, and fish.

Whereas "冬炎" is also a borrowing word from the Malay language "*tomyam*", which is a famous Thai hot and sour soup made from southern ginger, sour seeds, lemongrass, shallots, lime, chili, and fish sauce. In addition, "*罗惹*" is also the transliteration of the Malay language "*rojak*", which means a salad dish of Javanese origin commonly found in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Aside from Malay, the impact of English on Malaysian Mandarin cannot be neglected. Before independence, Malaysia was a country colonized by Britain. Under the influence of Britain for many years, after independence, both education and law referred to the British system (The Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit, 2016). Today, Malaysia also lists English as its second official language. This has created the characteristic of Malaysian Chinese with the influence of English vocabulary. For example, "小贩中心 *xiaofan-zhongxin*". They are all special vocabulary produced under the influence of English. As explained in the previous chapter, this Chinese lexical item is the translation of "*food court*." It is important to note here that apart from "小贩中心 *xiaofan-zhongxin*", different areas have different names for them. For example, Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh tend to refer to them as "美食街 *meishi-jie*" or "美食广场 *meishi-guangchang*". This is therefore also a linguistic variation. As this study only analyzed the word formation and word classes of these Malaysian Chinese lexical items, it is hoped that further research will be carried out on the phenomenon of linguistic variation in Malaysian Chinese language.

Apart from that, there are also many English loanwords in Malaysian Chinese, and the difference between them and Mandarin English loanwords is mainly in the way of translating the same word. Malaysian Chinese and Mandarin use different translation methods in the translation of the same word. The method of transliteration and free translation is adopted. For example, "安娣 *andi*" and "安哥 *ange*" are also transliterations of the English words aunt and uncle, respectively.

Aside from that, Malaysian Mandarin has come into linguistic contact with various dialects, resulting in a distinct personality. Chinese Malaysians have lived in Malaysia for a long time and interacted with other local ethnic groups, resulting in code-

switching. Due to the long-term communication with other ethnic groups, Chinese Malaysians have gradually abandoned Mandarin words in favor of foreign loanwords, such as "巴刹 *Ba-sha*" (a vegetable market in Mandarin, from the Malay word "*pasar*"). According to Yang and Zhang (2007), like culture, language can be used as a means of reflecting different ideologies, national spirits, and conceptual practices as ideographic means, ultimately taking the form of symbolic systems that reflect.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country, and its characteristic multi-ethnic cultures influence the development of the Chinese language in Malaysia. Contact, interaction, and communication among different nationalities inevitably promote language contact, which is the result of multilingual cultural exchange and one of the factors and conditions for the creation of unique words.

In his "Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech", Sapir (1921) pointed out that languages, like cultural meanings, are rarely self-sufficient. The need for communication brings speakers of one language into direct or indirect contact with speakers of nearby languages or culturally dominant people. In Malaysia today, interactions between nations and ethnic groups, and the increasing integration of languages, have led to the creation of national and ethnic-specific words. The dissemination of culture is, of course, indispensable to national traditional culture. In the case of living together day and night, the interracial marriage between the bumiputera and the Chinese has given birth to male and female offspring Baba and Nyonya. One of the foods that originated from Baba and Nyonya is "*Niangre-gao 娘惹糕*", which refers to "*Nyonya kuih*" ("*kuih*" is a term for Malay cakes): bite-sized desserts that are colorful and popularly taken as a snack. Some are steamed, some grilled, but most are sweet.

This food named "娘惹糕 *Niangre-gao*" has spread in Malaysian society through interracial marriages among Baba and Nyonya.

Although most of the words influenced by Chinese dialects are not limited to Malaysia and are also common in Taiwan and Hong Kong, this is one of the characteristics of Malaysian Chinese. Therefore, Malaysian Chinese is closely related to Mandarin Chinese and Chinese dialects. More than 10 years ago, the usage rate of Chinese vocabulary influenced by Chinese dialects was still very high. To improve the communication skills of Chinese, it borrowed some vocabulary from dialects. The factors include the lack of corresponding vocabulary in Chinese, the expressiveness of dialect vocabulary, the novelty, and even the more appropriate expression. However, in recent years, Malaysian Chinese has gradually been reformed with Mandarin Chinese as the standard, so many words influenced by Chinese dialects have begun to be banned from written language.

However, some vocabularies with local characteristics of Malaysia are still in use, such as "蚵煎 *hejian*", which is transliterated because of the calling habit of Minnan dialect. In Minnan dialect, it is called *O-jian*.

4.3.2 Social factors

Koerner (1991) argues that language variation is a result of social changes. Language and social background are closely related, as language is situated within the broader context of politics, economy, history, geography, and culture. When any of these aspects undergoes change, language is also affected. Vocabulary, being the most active factor in language, is often the most sensitive to reflect changes in social life and social thinking. Therefore, apart from linguistic factors, the variation of Chinese

vocabulary in Malaysia is also influenced by factors such as Malaysian society and culture.

As a multi-ethnic country in the tropics, Malaysia differs greatly from China in terms of natural environment, social system, and folk culture. Consequently, the food, clothing, housing, transportation, and other aspects of the Chinese in Malaysia also differ from those of China (Pin Lick, 2019). However, Modern Chinese vocabulary may not be sufficient to meet the needs of Malaysian Mandarin in social life and communication. To better integrate into Malaysian society, Malaysian Mandarin speakers have borrowed words from other languages and have also created some words that reflect local conditions, which are not used in Modern Chinese. Examples include "*扁担饭 biandan-fan*" and "*新村 xincun*", among others.

The most fundamental reason for language change is to meet the needs of communication. The reason for the creation of words specific to Malaysian Chinese is also for communication. Language is no longer seen as a single, purely structural system; it emerges, exists, and changes to achieve certain functions in social life. The constant changes in language are reflected in the constant emergence of new words (Zhao, 2004). Language is rooted in society, and the development of social life has a great impact on the use of language. It is like a mirror that reflects the development of society in a sensitive and quick manner, and is a direct, fast, and comprehensive reflection of social life, including politics, economy, media information, and social conditions.

Chinese scholar Chen (1988) said, "Language is a social phenomenon, a medium for communicating information or thoughts between people. The most active

element of language, the vocabulary, is often the most sensitive to changes in social life and changes in social thought." In addition, he also said that language arises as society arises, and changes as language cannot exist independently of society. Language and writing are originally the most important tools of communication in social life; they are the means of coordinating interpersonal action, the mirror of social life, and the changes in social life can be reflected in the vocabulary of language. The relationship between the two is very close. It can be seen that the current situation of language life in the Malaysian Chinese community is an objective result of historical and cultural development, as well as a response to the needs of social life. It is also the objective existence of the need to adapt to the life of society.

In addition to the essential need for communication, several factors influence the language landscape of a country, and one crucial aspect is the country's language education policy. In the context of Malaysia, the language education policy plays a significant role in shaping the status and development of different languages within the country. Currently, Malaysia's language education policy maintains the status quo for the national language, Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia), while aiming to enhance the position of English language education. Simultaneously, the policy tends to downgrade the status of Chinese and Tamil languages. As per the policy, Malay language and English language are mandatory subjects for all students in Malaysia.

Regarding the Chinese language and Chinese education, it is evident that the Malaysian government has not accorded much attention to their development and has even marginalized Chinese education through various policies and approaches. This marginalization can be observed through the limited resources, inadequate support, and reduced emphasis on Chinese language education within the education system. Such

policies and methods employed by the government have resulted in the decline of Chinese education and limited opportunities for Chinese language learning and usage in formal educational settings. It is important to note that language education policies reflect the sociopolitical context of a country and are often influenced by various factors, including historical, cultural, and demographic considerations. The aim of such policies may be to promote national integration, preserve linguistic diversity, or emphasize the economic importance of certain languages. The consequences of language education policies can have a significant impact on language communities, affecting their access to education, cultural preservation, and socio-economic opportunities. The marginalization of Chinese education and the downgrading of Chinese language under Malaysia's language education policy highlights the challenges faced by the Chinese-speaking community in terms of language preservation and cultural continuity within the broader Malaysian society.

It is essential to critically examine language education policies and their implications to ensure that linguistic diversity is respected, educational opportunities are equitable, and cultural heritage is valued. Understanding the impact of language education policies can inform discussions and efforts towards fostering inclusive language policies that promote linguistic and cultural diversity within a country.

However, the Malaysian government has not explicitly banned the teaching and use of the Chinese language, and the Chinese education system currently holds a legal status in Malaysia (Yeap, 2012). In recent years, Malaysia's Ministry of Education has listed Chinese as an elective course for elementary and middle schools, increased the number of hours for Chinese language courses, and strengthened and improved the level of Chinese education teachers. Although Chinese education is still not treated fairly, the

Malaysian government still provides a certain space for the inheritance and development of standard Chinese and Chinese dialects, and also creates conditions for standard Chinese to interact with other languages. Influenced by the current language education policy, most Malaysian Chinese have mastered two or more languages.

In daily communication, the phenomenon of language code mixing occurs unconsciously. Under such circumstances, it is quite normal for Malaysian Chinese vocabulary to mutate. Additionally, Malaysia's current language education policy has also reduced the loyalty and sense of identity of Chinese to a certain extent, making them pay more attention to the practicality and economy of language when using Chinese. That is, the efficiency of language expression in order to use Chinese vocabulary more flexibly (Diao, 2011).

4.4 Summary

The above analysis provides an overview of the research conducted on localized culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Mandarin as they appear in different newspapers. The study focuses on three key perspectives: word categories, word classes, and word formation. By examining these aspects, the research aims to shed light on the characteristics and formation of these lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers, contributing to a deeper understanding of the Malaysian Chinese language.

In terms of word categories, the study found that Malaysian Mandarin words were predominantly found in the category of "food and dining." This suggests that food-related vocabulary plays a significant role in the linguistic repertoire of the Malaysian Chinese community and reflects the importance of culinary culture within their daily lives.

Regarding word classes, the analysis identified three primary types: nouns, verbs, and adjectives. These findings indicate that localized cultural-related lexical items in Malaysian Mandarin encompass a range of linguistic functions, allowing speakers to express concepts, actions, and attributes related to their cultural experiences.

The study further examined the formation of these lexical items and identified five categories: innovative, borrowing, induction, description, and mix mode. Innovative formation involves the creation of new words through linguistic creativity and adaptation within the Malaysian Chinese context. Borrowing refers to the incorporation of words from other languages, such as English or Malay, into the Malaysian Mandarin vocabulary. Induction involves the extension of existing words or concepts to reflect localized cultural meanings. Description refers to the use of descriptive phrases or compounds to convey specific cultural references. Lastly, mix mode refers to the combination of multiple formation processes to create new lexical items.

Additionally, the researcher explored the factors that contribute to the emergence of localized culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. Two main factors were identified: language factors and social factors. Language factors encompass linguistic phenomena, such as word formation processes and phonetic adaptations, which shape the vocabulary of Malaysian Mandarin. Social factors include cultural practices, historical events, and societal changes that influence the adoption and development of localized cultural-related lexical items. The interaction between language and society in Malaysia plays a crucial role in shaping the linguistic landscape and the incorporation of cultural elements within the Malaysian Chinese language.

It is important to recognize that the Malaysian Chinese community differs significantly from the original Chinese community, and thus the development of Malaysian Chinese language exhibits its own unique characteristics distinct from Chinese in China. The evolution of Malaysian Chinese vocabulary is complex, reflecting the cultural, historical, and social dynamics of the Malaysian Chinese community. These phenomena contribute to the richness, depth, and splendor of the Malaysian Chinese language.

Furthermore, the researcher examined the sources of Malaysian Chinese language words. From the perspective of word formation and syllables, it was observed that most of the unique words in Malaysian Chinese tend to be formalized. This suggests that these words have become established and standardized within the Malaysian Mandarin lexicon.

The emergence of newly coined words in Malaysian Chinese is often a response to new social phenomena and reflects the evolving nature of language. The vocabulary and expressions in Malaysian Chinese are constantly evolving through the exchange and integration of new words and influences from diverse cultures. This continuous adaptation and enrichment contribute to a vocabulary that is more diverse, colorful, energetic, and vital.

In conclusion, the analysis of localized culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Mandarin newspapers provides insights into the characteristics, formation, and sources of vocabulary within the Malaysian Chinese community. The findings highlight the importance of food-related vocabulary, the prevalence of nouns, verbs, and adjectives,

and the varied formation processes that contribute to the linguistic richness of Malaysian Mandarin. The study also emphasizes the influence of language and social factors on the development of localized cultural-related lexical items. Understanding these dynamics contributes to a deeper appreciation of the Malaysian Chinese language and its cultural significance within the broader Malaysian society.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the overview of the findings of this study. This chapter consists of three subsections. Firstly, the summary of the key findings is presented. Secondly, the limitations are identified and provided. Thirdly, suggestions are given to future researchers.

5.1 Summary of the Key Findings

The primary objective of the present study is to explore the characteristics and formation of Malaysian Chinese Language. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of the vocabulary used in Malaysian Chinese, the study aims to reorganize and categorize the lexical items, providing a valuable point of reference for future researchers interested in this topic. This reorganization will offer a systematic and structured approach to understanding Malaysian Chinese vocabulary, contributing to the overall body of knowledge in this field.

To achieve this objective, the researcher has identified three specific research questions that guide the study. The first research question aims to investigate the categories and word classes to which localized cultural lexical items belong within Malaysian Chinese newspapers. This involves identifying and classifying lexical items that are closely associated with the cultural context of the Malaysian Chinese community, such as terms related to traditions, customs, festivals, and social practices.

The second research question delves into the formation of localized cultural-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. This aspect focuses on

understanding the linguistic processes and mechanisms through which these terms are created and adapted within the Malaysian Chinese language. The study seeks to analyze the word formation patterns, including derivation, compounding, borrowing, and other mechanisms that contribute to the expansion of the lexical inventory.

The third research question aims to investigate the reasons and motivations behind the use of localized cultural-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. By exploring the socio-cultural factors and contextual influences, the study aims to shed light on why these lexical items are employed and the significance they hold within the Malaysian Chinese community. This analysis may uncover the cultural values, identity markers, or communicative purposes associated with the use of such vocabulary.

By addressing these three research questions, the study intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of Malaysian Chinese Language, its formation processes, and the cultural and communicative functions of the localized cultural-related lexical items found in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights for future researchers and enrich the existing knowledge in this field.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has found that the food and dining category scored the highest percentage among the four categories, with n = 64. People's livelihood was the second highest with n = 31. Festival customs had the lowest percentage with n = 5, and communication and conversation had the second lowest with n=9. Furthermore, the results show that there are only three types of word classes which are noun, adjective, and verb.

Furthermore, the researcher has answered the second research question, where borrowing scored the highest percentage. This is because Malaysian Chinese is influenced by the Malay language in the country. Previous research has stated that all languages have impacted the lexicon of Malaysian English, but the Malay language has contributed to some of the most notable features of this form of English. This context can also be applied to borrowing in Malaysian Chinese from the Malay language, which has caused the appearance of the Malaysian Chinese language.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has found that the third research question pertains to the causes of localized cultural-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. The researcher found that there are two factors that cause localized cultural-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers: language and social factors. Chinese people living in Malaysia are inevitably tied to the Malay language. Naturally, there is a phenomenon of borrowing and using part of the Malay vocabulary in Malaysian Chinese. This includes transliteration, free translation, and transliteration combination. As the Chinese have coexisted with Malay for a long time, some vocabulary influenced by Malay has inevitably been produced in Chinese.

Furthermore, social factors play a crucial role in the emergence of localized culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers. The findings of this study highlight the close relationship between language and social background when the language is situated within the realms of politics, economy, history, geography, and culture. Language, being the most active element, is sensitive to changes in social life and social thinking. Thus, the variation in Chinese vocabulary in Malaysia is not only influenced by linguistic factors but also by the broader Malaysian society and culture.

To examine the vocabulary used in Malaysian Chinese newspapers, the researcher analyzed major Chinese newspapers in Malaysia, including Sin Chew Daily, Nanyang Siang Pau, Guang Ming Daily, and Seehua News. These newspapers, written in modern Chinese language, are regarded as important sources for understanding Chinese vocabulary in Malaysia and the current situation of the Chinese community.

The long-standing integration of various ethnic cultures has given rise to the development and growth of Malaysian Chinese Language within the multicultural landscape of Malaysia. In a country where multiple languages coexist, language mixing is a common phenomenon. People create new words due to the limitations of their cognitive scope and also borrow and adapt expressions from each other to better integrate into the local society.

Malaysia's multicultural environment has had a profound impact on the Malaysian Chinese community, shaping their cultural traditions and language practices. The Malaysian Chinese individuals, while maintaining a strong Chinese cultural foundation, are also exposed to and influenced by the various ethnic cultures present in the country.

Language, as a product of society, undergoes changes and adaptations as society evolves. Words, in particular, play a crucial role in language development as they serve as a code of culture and are instrumental in driving language change. The Malaysian Chinese language displays a great diversity of vocabulary, with a significant number of unique words that are exclusive to the Malaysian Chinese community. Through careful analysis, researchers have observed that these new words reflect the linguistic environment specific to the Malaysian Chinese community, which encompasses various

Chinese dialects, Mandarin, Malay, English, and other dialects. This unique linguistic landscape gives rise to a distinctively Malaysian Chinese language phenomenon. Each language used within this community represents a profound cultural phenomenon, and each regional community possesses its own distinct language and cultural characteristics. The multicultural nature of Malaysia encompasses not only the diverse cultures of different ethnic groups but also the unique cultural characteristics of various Chinese dialect groups. This distinctive multiculturalism exerts its own influence on language development within the Malaysian Chinese community.

Loyalty to their language is an essential aspect for Malaysian Chinese individuals as it is deeply intertwined with their national self-esteem. While they may engage in compromise and communication with languages due to practical reasons, the emergence of unique words is influenced not only by other languages but also by Malaysia's geographical environment, climatic conditions, and customs. These factors contribute to the creation of new words that reflect the specific experiences and perspectives of the Malaysian Chinese community.

The literature review conducted as part of this research sheds light on the fact that the Malaysian Chinese language primarily absorbs foreign words while also creating new words. These foreign words are borrowed from Chinese dialects, Malay, English, and other ethnic groups present in Malaysia, reflecting the diversity of the Malaysian Chinese community. Simultaneously, the development of politics, construction, economics, education, transportation, and other fields within Malaysian society has generated a significant number of new words, enriching the Malaysian Chinese language and exemplifying the unique characteristics of Malaysian Mandarin.

In summary, the examination of localized culture-related lexical items in Malaysian Chinese newspapers underscores the influence of social factors on language development. The complex linguistic landscape of Malaysia, shaped by cultural diversity and social dynamics, contributes to the richness and uniqueness of the Malaysian Chinese language. The interaction between language and society, coupled with the borrowing of words from various sources and the creation of new vocabulary, reflects the multicultural nature of Malaysia and the cultural significance embedded within the Malaysian Chinese language.

The Malaysian Chinese language is a testament to the complex interplay between culture, society, and language. It serves as a medium of communication and identity for the Malaysian Chinese community, reflecting their experiences, values, and interactions within the multicultural context of Malaysia. The linguistic diversity and creativity observed in the Malaysian Chinese language demonstrate the adaptability and resilience of language as it responds to social, cultural, and historical influences. It is an ever-evolving and dynamic linguistic phenomenon that continues to shape and be shaped by the Malaysian Chinese community and its interaction with the broader society.

5.2 Limitation

The research limitation of this study is mentioned and stated in the following: While this study contributes valuable insights into the Malaysian Chinese Language and its cultural and social implications, it is important to acknowledge the limitations that exist. These limitations highlight areas where future research can further enhance our understanding of the subject matter. The research limitations of this study are as follows:

1. Insufficient research methods: One limitation of this study is the limited research methods employed. The researcher conducted interviews with only one expert in the field, which may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. To overcome this limitation, future researchers should consider employing a broader range of research methods, such as conducting surveys, focus groups, or interviews with multiple experts, language professionals, and community members. By incorporating a diverse range of perspectives, a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Malaysian Chinese Language can be achieved.

2. Lack of corpus data: Another limitation of this study is the lack of extensive corpus data. The researcher collected corpus data from only four Chinese newspapers over a period of 12 months. While this provides some insights into the language usage in Malaysian Chinese newspapers, it may not be sufficient to fully represent the richness and variability of the Malaysian Chinese Language. To address this limitation, future researchers should consider expanding the corpus by including a wider range of newspapers, magazines, online platforms, and other linguistic resources. This will provide a more extensive dataset for analysis and ensure a more representative picture of the language.

3. Narrow research perspective: The third limitation of this study is the narrow research focus on culture-related words. While exploring culture-related vocabulary is crucial in understanding the cultural and social aspects of the Malaysian Chinese Language, it is important to acknowledge that language usage extends beyond this specific domain. Future researchers should consider adopting a broader research perspective that encompasses a wide range of

lexical categories, including but not limited to educational, economic, technological, and scientific terms. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the language and its usage in various contexts, allowing for a deeper exploration of the linguistic landscape of Malaysian Chinese.

4. Limited generalizability: Another limitation to consider is the limited generalizability of the findings. This study primarily focuses on Malaysian Chinese Language within the context of Malaysian newspapers. While the findings may provide insights into the vocabulary used in these specific sources, caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to other contexts or varieties of Malaysian Chinese Language. Future research should strive to incorporate a broader range of language resources and contexts, including spoken language, literature, social media, and everyday conversations, to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the language and its usage across various domains.

5. Lack of comparative analysis: The absence of comparative analysis with other language varieties or communities is another limitation of this study. By comparing the Malaysian Chinese Language with other Chinese varieties, such as Mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong, or Singaporean Chinese, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the distinct features and influences that shape the Malaysian Chinese Language. Comparative analysis can provide valuable insights into the similarities and differences between these varieties, shedding light on the unique characteristics of Malaysian Chinese and its cultural and social implications.

To address these limitations, future research should consider adopting a more comprehensive approach that encompasses a broader range of research methods, expands the corpus data, adopts a broader research perspective, incorporates comparative analysis, and includes diverse language resources and contexts. By doing so, future studies can overcome these limitations and further enrich our understanding of the Malaysian Chinese Language and its significance within the multicultural and multilingual landscape of Malaysia.

5.3 Suggestions

To further enhance the research on Malaysian Chinese language and its cultural and social implications, the following recommendations are proposed for future researchers:

1. Involving a broader range of participants: While previous studies have primarily focused on interviewing language experts, it is essential for future researchers to engage with a wider range of individuals, including readers and writers of newspapers. By gathering the opinions and perspectives of these individuals, a more comprehensive understanding of the appearance and usage of Malaysian Chinese language can be obtained. Readers and writers can provide valuable insights into the reasons behind the occurrence and utilization of specific lexical items, shedding light on the cultural and social contexts in which they are embedded.

2. Utilizing a larger corpus: In terms of data collection, future researchers are encouraged to collect data from Chinese newspapers across different years. This approach will ensure a more representative sample and enable the creation of a larger corpus for analysis. By including newspapers from various time periods,

researchers can track the evolution and changes in the vocabulary used in Malaysian Chinese newspapers over time. This longitudinal analysis will provide a deeper understanding of the language's development and its relationship to societal and cultural shifts.

3. Comparative analysis with other Chinese communities: Future researchers should consider comparing culture-related lexical items between Malaysia and other Chinese-speaking regions, such as Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. This comparative approach can offer valuable insights into the unique characteristics of Malaysian Chinese language and its distinct cultural influences. Exploring the similarities and differences in vocabulary usage across these regions can help uncover the sociolinguistic dynamics at play and shed light on the specific cultural and social contexts that shape the Malaysian Chinese language.

4. Comparative analysis of different lexical categories: Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to compare and analyze different lexical categories beyond cultural-related terms. Exploring educational and economic words, for example, can provide a broader understanding of the characteristics of Malaysian Chinese language and offer insights into the current state of Malaysian society from a linguistic perspective. By examining these specific lexical categories, researchers can uncover how language is intertwined with education, economics, and other aspects of societal development within the Malaysian Chinese community.

5. Consideration of language policy and education: The impact of language education policies on the development and use of Malaysian Chinese language is an area that warrants further investigation. Future researchers should explore the relationship

between language policies in Malaysia and the status of Malaysian Chinese language, as well as its impact on vocabulary usage. This analysis can provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by the Malaysian Chinese community in preserving and promoting their language within the broader educational framework of the country.

By incorporating these recommendations into future research endeavors, scholars can deepen their understanding of Malaysian Chinese language, its cultural significance, and its relationship with society. These approaches will contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the linguistic landscape of Malaysia, while also providing a foundation for potential language revitalization efforts and the promotion of cultural diversity within the country.

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