ABSTRACT

This research is a study of the use of Malaysian English in creative writing in Malaysia. Focusing on the extraction and categorization of Malaysian English lexis used by two Malaysian writers, this research set out to study the extent to which these writers use lexical items from the non-native variety in their prose writings.

Language purists have often accused non-native varieties as being the result of a failure of approximation. The deviations in these varieties are seen in a negative light and therefore the non-native varieties are considered inferior to Standard British English. If that is the case, the question arises as to why writers, who are educated speakers of the language, choose to use the local variety in their works.

Analysis of data using Baskaran's (1985) categorization, shows that the two writers do use non-native lexical items in their writings. The concentration of the lexical items is in the category of "Substrate Language Referents", i.e., use of local lexicon in Malaysian English , as opposed to the other category, "Standard English Lexicalisation", i.e., English lexemes with Malaysian English usage. This finding shows that although there are equivalents in the English language, the writers consciously chose to use local words in their writings. This was especially

apparent in the dialogues. The writers seemed to have done this to depict the actual linguistic scenario in the country as the stories have a Malaysian setting.

Thus, the study shows that there is a need for the use of Malaysian English in local creative writing. The use of local lexis in creative writing which gives our home grown variety of English a distinct and unique flavour, should make it more acceptable as a legitimate sibling of Standard British English and not as an enigma to be hidden in the closet.