

LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC FEATURES
OF MALAYSIAN ENGLISH
IN A LOCAL ENGLISH MOVIE

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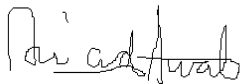
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ABSTRACT

As the second language of the country, English is used by Malaysians in various domains such as administration, education, business and communication. The multi-ethnicity of Malaysian citizens contributes to the unique characteristics of English as spoken by Malaysians, and this is known as Malaysian English. Malaysian English, like the other varieties of English around the world, has unique features that significantly distinguish it from the standard variety. Linguistically, the differences could be seen in terms of phonology, morphology (vocabulary), syntax, semantics and pragmatics; all of which have been subjects of investigation amongst linguists since decades ago. This study examines lexical as well as syntactical structures of Malaysian English as used in a locally produced English movie. The dialogues used in the movie are carefully transcribed in order to collect the data relevant to the study, i.e. the utterances (vocabulary and syntax) of Malaysian English. The data analysis is qualitatively done based on some features of Malaysian English established in previous studies, within which comparison with standard British English is made, where necessary. The comparison is not intended to prove that Malaysian English is a sub/non-standard language, but rather to establish its uniqueness as a variety of English that warrants some linguistic explanation. Although the selected movie is not to be seen as a representative of all local English movies, it does serve the purpose of this particular study based on the setting, characters and script it carries. Being one of the media of popular literature, it is hoped that more Malaysian produced English movies are to function as a useful source in the future study of Malaysian English.

ABSTRAK

Sebagai bahasa kedua di negara ini, bahasa Inggeris digunakan oleh rakyat Malaysia di dalam pelbagai bidang seperti pengurusan, pendidikan, perniagaan dan komunikasi. Kepelbagaian etnik dan pengaruh bahasa ibunda menyumbang kepada keunikan ciri-ciri bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan khas oleh rakyat Malaysia, atau dikenali sebagai 'Malaysian English'. 'Malaysian English' sebagaimana variasi bahasa Inggeris yang lain di seluruh dunia, mempunyai ciri-ciri unik yang membezakannya daripada bahasa Inggeris 'standard'. Secara linguistik, perbezaan ini dapat dilihat dari segi fonologi, morfologi, struktur ayat, semantik dan pragmatik; subjek-subjek yang telah menjadi fokus kajian pengkaji bahasa sejak beberapa dekad yang lalu. Kajian penulis secara khususnya memfokuskan kepada perbendaharaan kata dan struktur ayat dalam 'Malaysian English' yang digunakan di dalam sebuah filem bahasa Inggeris terbitan tempatan. Dialog yang digunakan dalam filem ini ditranskripsi dengan teliti bagi mengumpul data yang diperlukan, iaitu perucapan (perkataan dan ayat) yang bercirikan 'Malaysian English'. Analisis data yang dikumpulkan dilakukan secara kualitatif berdasarkan ciri-ciri 'Malaysian English' yang diakui oleh kajian-kajian yang berkaitan sebelum ini, yang mana perbandingan dengan bahasa Inggeris 'standard' turut diselitkan sekiranya perlu. Perbandingan ini perlu bukan bertujuan membuktikan ketidaktepatan 'Malaysian English' sebagai suatu bahasa, tetapi keunikannya sebagai satu variasi bahasa Inggeris yang memerlukan penjelasan secara linguistik. Walaupun filem yang dipilih untuk kajian ini tidak boleh disifatkan sebagai mewakili semua filem bahasa Inggeris tempatan, ia diyakini dapat memenuhi matlamat kajian ini berdasarkan kesesuaian seting, latar belakang dan ciri-ciri watak serta skrip yang disampaikan. Sebagai salah satu medium kesusasteraan yang popular, adalah diharapkan lebih banyak filem bahasa Inggeris terbitan Malaysia akan digunakan sebagai satu sumber penting untuk kajian 'Malaysian English' pada masa hadapan.

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