

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Malaysia is rapidly moving towards industrialization and at the same time is facing the challenge of globalization. The demand for competence in English is due to the fact that it is the language of business and trade. Hence the need for English in this country still continues even though Bahasa Melayu has taken over its status as the official language. Professor Asmah Haji Omar made this clear in her book, *The Linguistic Scenery in Malaysia*:

The fact that English is no longer an official language in the country does not mean that it no longer discharges an official function.

This situation is somewhat paradoxical in nature. (Asmah, 1992, p. 91).

She further states that English is definitely a high status language due to its continuous existence in various domains locally and internationally.

In the current era of globalization, English has become the main tool of communication for generating, disseminating and assimilating knowledge in various fields. English is now the world's first truly global language with a unique non-national, non-regional, non-ethnic stature. In other words, it has been claimed that English now belongs to any country that uses it (Cheshire & Moser, 1994, p. 452).

In his working paper entitled “ Malaysia: The Way Forward” which was presented at the inaugural meeting of the business council on 28 February 1991, Tun Mahathir outlined the government’s intended plan, explained the concept of Vision 2020 and listed 9 challenges to be faced by the country before it can be fully developed. He stressed that the challenge is to establish a society that is fully competitive in a global market to attain the status of a fully developed nation. He also emphasized the fact that in order to be able to compete globally, one of the most important aspects is the language competence of the population of the country. Malaysians need to be proficient in English which is the language of business and the language of knowledge.

The police department is no exception to this rule. With better proficiency, the police personnel will have a better chance to interact with the public and within their organization. In line with their vision to achieve international standards in police procedures such as carrying out investigations and interrogations in the forensic field, writing reports, attending courses and seminars conducted by international organizations, the police force has to be aware of the need to be bilingual meaning to use English as frequently as they use Bahasa Malaysia. Phillipson (2009) points out that bilingual education is recommended by UNESCO and is increasingly institutionalized in many parts of the world.

Poor communicative skills in English have been linked to the mindset of many Malaysians who worry that English will dilute their culture. They also have the preconceived notion that being proficient in English makes one less patriotic and will

cause the younger generation to lose interest in Bahasa Malaysia. The former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammed has said that “...*it is not intended to undermine the culture or the identity of the different communities in Malaysia. We have to acknowledge that English is the language of learning today. We have to accept it, whether we like it or not* (New Straits Times, 5 July 2002).

Meanwhile our government has always promoted the view that mastering English which is the global language for communication, science and technology would enable Malaysians to compete effectively in the world. Towards the late 1980s, the decline in the proficiency of English became a matter of great concern among academicians, prospective employers and our government.

The general view was that the workforce was increasingly being fed by the existing system of education lacked certain skills necessary for today's commercial environment which is global in nature. One of these skills is interpersonal or communicative skills (New Straits Times, 20 July 1997). Language is seen as a tool by the government to develop the country and if we have limited skills in it, it will restrict effective communication. Asmah Haji Omar (1975, pp. 157-165) in her paper highlights that English is important for the workplace as a tool.

1.1 Challenges from Globalization

During the early years of Malaysia's independence, controversies arising from the National Language policy were not spurred on by the people's rejection of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language but rather by Bahasa Malaysia being made the official language and medium of instruction (Asmah, 1979). The Police Force was never embroiled in any of these and continued to support the government's policy of using the national language as the official language in all formal police communication. In the police force, English is used when the particular function involves international guests or foreign participants with the preamble and salutations in Bahasa Malaysia.

The voluntary acceptance of Bahasa Malaysia as the major language later provided a platform for the awareness to master English besides Bahasa Malaysia. The challenge of globalization caused the policymakers to realign the education system in the 80s. In 1994, under the Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, the government proposed the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (Schiffman, 1997). This was the government's initiative in promoting Malaysia's vision to become an industrialized nation by developing science and technology through the English medium. Gomez (1999, p. 20) affirms the move: *“given the aspiration of this country to become a fully developed nation, the proficiency we want our young citizens to acquire is more than a minimum competency in English.”*

1.2 Background of the Study

This project focuses on the English Language needs of investigating officers in a Crime Investigation Department (CID) of the Royal Malaysian Police, specifically those attached to the Selangor Contingent. The main aim of this modest study is to identify the need for English Language among the officers. The Royal Malaysian Police through its 197 years of operation has evolved from keeping peace during the Communist era to a task force that looks into the diverse definitions of crime. Crime today is a mammoth problem and a daunting one for the police personnel involved in it as the police force deals directly with the people on the streets due to its role in community. Thus, language here is functional. In order to carry out a good and thorough investigation, the investigating officers need to be able to communicate well be it in writing or verbally. Foreign cooperation is also a pressing need in the police force dealing with human trafficking, terrorism, smuggling, flesh trade and international crimes.

1.2.1 Royal Malaysian Police

The Royal Malaysian Police is divided into eight departments. They are the Administration Department, Special Branch Department, Crime investigation Department, Internal Security and Public Safety Department, Commercial Crime Department, Narcotics Department, Logistics Department and Counter Terrorism Department.

Each department is led by a Commissioner of Police. The Administration Department handles the management and administration of the overall police department. The Crime Investigation Department handles all the criminal investigations including arresting and prosecuting criminals. The investigation and prosecution of cases involving drug abuse and drug trafficking is under the Narcotics Department. The Commercial Crime Department deals with the investigation, arrest and prosecution of white collared criminals. The Logistics Department supports the Royal Malaysian Police in terms of finance equipment and weapons. The Internal Security and Public Safety Department is the operational wing of the Royal Malaysian Police and the Special Branch Department is responsible for collecting information and internal security.

1.2.2 Crime Investigation Department

The Police Act 1967, Section 3 (3) states that the police force has to prevent, identify crime, arrest and prosecute criminals. The Crime Investigation Department deals with the investigation, arrest and prosecution of hard crimes such as murder, robbery and rape and petty crimes like theft and house-breaking. This department also specializes in cracking down and enforcing law related to vice rings, gambling, vice and secret societies (triads).

The department is headed by a director ranked Commissioner and assisted by three Deputy Commissioners in charge of the Spy/Operational Department, Investigation/ Planning Department and Planning/ Strategy Department respectively.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police, P. Wiresingam, a Corporate Investigation Officer attached to Commercial Crime Division at Bukit Aman, the Crime Investigation Department is divided into various departments. They are:-

- D1 - Administrative Division (Strategic Planning)
- D2 - Criminal Record Registration
- D3 - Internal Affairs
- D4 - Statistics
- D5 - Prosecution and Law Divisions
- D6 - Technical Assistance Division
- D7 - Gambling / Vice / Secret Societies
- D8 - Investigation Division / Planning
- D9 - Special Investigation Division (Serious Crime)
- D10 - Forensic Laboratory Division
- D11 - Sexual Investigation Division
- D12- National Centre Bureau-Interpol Division

1.2.3 Petaling Jaya Police District Headquarters

The district level has the same departments except the Counter Terrorism department. The head of the district level is the OCPD and each department is led by a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP). One of the departments is the Crime Investigation Department. Under the Deputy Superintendent of Police, there are four zones. Each zone is led by an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) who is also known as the Senior Investigation Officer (SIO). They are in charge of all the criminal cases. Under these Senior Investigation Officers there are twenty Investigation Officers (IO). Each zone has five Investigation Officers holding the rank of Inspectors.

The ten respondents for this study were chosen randomly from the four zones. Most criminal investigation officers hold the rank of Inspectors though some senior investigating officers are Assistant Superintendents of Police and Deputy Superintendents of Police. They investigate various criminal cases such as thefts, robberies, rape, murder and kidnapping.

1.2.4 Criminal Investigation Procedure

An investigation begins the moment a complainant lodges a report at any police station. Normally an Investigation Officer known as IO will take down the report and statement from the complainant. Enquiry by the researcher led to information provided by

Superintendent Haris, Assistant Head of Crime Investigation Department at the Headquarters Police Contingent in Pahang on how an investigation is carried out.

When the public lodges a report on a case like housebreaking or robbery, the investigation officer will classify the case under 'seizable offence' or 'non seizable offence'. If it is a 'non seizable offence', there can be no arrest until the officer has obtained consent from the public prosecutor known as the Order to Investigate (OTI). If it is a 'seizable offence', the investigation officer can pursue the investigation without obtaining an order from the public prosecutor.

The first step in an investigation is to interview the witness or the complainant. Next the investigation officer will try to obtain as much information as possible regarding the case to proceed with the investigation. The officer also needs to visit the scene of the crime to gather evidence. This can be done in two ways; one by interviewing the witness at the scene of the crime and by recording the statement and second by recovering evidence such as trace evidence, forensic evidence, fingerprints and other crime scene evidence which will be classified as exhibit and produced in court as soon as the trial begins.

Later the investigation officer needs to put up an investigation paper which contains Folio A, B, C and D. Folio A contains a report and the statement from all the complainants and witnesses. Folio B contains the statements from the suspects while the investigation diary of the investigation officer is contained in Folio C. Folio D contains all the documents pertaining to the case.

After the completion of the investigation, the investigation officer will submit the investigation paper to his superior and if the evidence proves the crime without a reasonable doubt, the officer can suggest the case to be charged in court in accordance to the offence. If the case involves robbery, rape, kidnapping and murder, the case has to be referred to the public prosecutor to be charged in court. During the period of investigation, the investigation officer has to deal with various departments such as the forensic department, chemist department, hospitals and banks.

The influx of foreigners in the country as immigrants, foreign workers, expatriates and tourists mean more crimes involving them as suspects, witnesses and complainants. Thus the need for the investigation officers to be bilingual is important and must be ensured that all officers have a satisfactory level of English. There are also cases where the foreigners are not well-versed in English, so the police department will secure the assistance of interpreters. So in such situations too, the investigation officer has to be proficient in English. This information was obtained via personal communication with DSP P. Wiresingam.

The investigation officers also need to use the language to brief their superiors and Deputy Public Prosecutor regarding the case. The investigation officers need to refer to the Malaysian Law Journal, case laws, statutes, law books and journals in their investigation. All these materials are in English and to understand them the officers need to be proficient in the language.

1.3 Statement of the problem

This study is motivated by the interest in English for Specific Purposes and to see the role it plays in a profession. The chosen profession is one that recognizes the essential need for English yet is at the fledgling level in incorporating the language to fulfill its communicative needs. The evolving functions of the police force in Malaysia has resulted in them performing duties ranging from playing the roles of father figures to little children to crime busting at the international level. Their communicative functions range from saying words of comfort to little children to negotiating with their international counterparts for maximum cooperation in police work. As such, there is a very real need for them to be proficient in the international lingua franca, the English Language, so that they can perform more effectively and efficiently in the execution of their duties.

The police force is no more seen as an internal organization but they deal closely with their foreign counterparts such as ASEANAPOL (Asian Police) and the INTERPOL (Malaysian Police). In the ASEAN arena, The Malaysian Police works closely with the Singapore Police to solve cases involving Malaysians in Singapore and vice versa. The Singapore Police's medium of instruction is English, thus in any dealings with them, the Malaysian police officers need to use the language.

According to Superintendent D.H. Chew, International Senior Command Course Coordinator, recently there are various collaborations with foreign counterparts to exchange ideas, opinions and expertise in carrying out investigations. Many seminars,

workshops, courses are carried out locally or in other countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Indonesia and England to improve ties between the police forces and to achieve a mutual understanding between the parties involved. In these situations, English is the lingua franca.

1.4 Significance of the study

The researcher believes that the police force needs to be bilingual to be able to communicate effectively in both languages. There is a greater need for communication in English in the police force especially in the crime department which the researcher will focus on. Currently there appears to be a number of communication problems encountered by the police force which seriously hinder them in the execution of their duties. This information was gathered via personal communication with DSP P. Wiresingam, a Corporate Investigation Officer attached to Bukit Aman.

The police force being always in the public eye, need to handle any situation in an appropriate manner. They should be well-equipped with the art of communication in both languages. Since most of these police personnel come from an education system where their medium of instruction was Malay, many of them are at a disadvantage due to a lack of proficiency in English. Although most students in Malaysia may have been exposed to the English Language for more than 11 years (Samah & Jawan, 2001) there are still cases of students who are not able to communicate effectively in English.

The crime department in the police force is the most elite department in the force due to the high profile cases and crime rate in the country. They constantly face the ire of the public and media. Many high profile cases like the case of a Mongolian woman, Altantuya Sharibuu who was murdered in Malaysia in 2007 required them to deal with the foreign press, the foreign embassy, media and the public. Such a case that caught the attention of international press and media agencies required English to be used by the police officers in charge. Other than this, crime department officers attend various international seminars, workshops, courses and also form allied cooperation with neighbouring countries and other foreign counterparts.

This study hopes to identify the English Language needs of the investigation officers and the language skills that the investigating officers need to master to be able to communicate and perform their task effectively. This study hopes to elicit information from the police personnel in order to identify what language skills are necessary to aid them to perform effectively in their modus operandi.

To do a research on this elite force which is always in the limelight, receiving the cynosure of the public and media poses a challenge. This is because any entry into their territory is viewed with suspicion due to the nature of their job which is highly confidential and private. Yet for this study the researcher received positive feedback from the Head Police of Selangor Contingent.

1.5 Purpose of the study

This is an exploratory study on the use of English by Criminal Investigating Officers. It is a needs analysis study on the police personnel in their workplace. The study aims to shed light on their perception of communicative needs, wants and what they lack and examine the officers' attitude towards English and the use of English in their workplace.

A broad overview of the police department reveals that Bahasa Malaysia is the lingua franca. However, due to globalization, the police force has realized the importance of being proficient in the English language to be on par with its foreign counterparts, to deal effectively with the public and upgrade their profession. Phillipson (2009) in his paper *'Disciplines of English and Disciplining English'* emphasizes the importance of seeing English in context, warning against thinking that a language of global importance can be ideologically neutral.

Since no studies have been done on the police force in the area of English for Specific Purposes, the researcher hopes her findings will prove helpful in further studies and research in needs analysis or in preparing materials which can complement the current police training at the Police Training College. It is hoped that in the future, police instructors can work in tandem with a language lecturer specializing in ESP in enhancing the competence level of the police personnel in Malaysia.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- i. To find out which language skills are most needed in carrying out their various tasks effectively.
- ii. To identify the specific English language skills and sub-skills that they need for effective performance of these tasks.
- iii. To identify the problems they face in the use of the English language.
- iv. To identify the strategies they need to employ to overcome these problems.

1.7 Research Questions

Based on the objectives formulated, the research questions are:

- i. What language skills are most essential to the investigating officers in a Criminal Investigation Department for an effective execution of their investigation?
- ii. What kind of problems do investigating officers face in using English when doing their work?
- iii. What are some of the strategies the police personnel wish to employ for effective incorporation of the English language in their work?

1.8 Scope and Limitations

This study examines the English Language needs of Investigation Officers at the Criminal Investigation Department in a District Police Department. Since the nature of this research is a project paper and not an in-depth thesis, the researcher has limited the study to investigating officers in the Serious Crime Department under the Criminal Investigation Department in the Petaling Jaya District Police Station, Selangor Police Department.

As only 10 officers in one investigating department were involved, the findings of this research may not reflect the needs of all investigating officers of crime departments in Malaysia. However it is hoped that a similar study on a larger scale will be conducted. The 10 officers were randomly chosen. It has to be noted that the results obtained through this exploratory investigation are only valid to the subjects involved in this study and should not be extended to other departments of police because the focus is on Investigation Officers' English Language needs. Nevertheless the findings from this study can provide an insight into the English language needs of the investigating officers.

Prior to the research being conducted, the researcher was advised to adhere to the rules and regulation of conducting a study on the department by the head of the Criminal Investigation Department. Any data and findings pertaining to the study has to be transparent to the department and any written texts and documents regarding the cases are prohibited and restricted from being used in the study.