

**THE USE OF MALAYSIAN ENGLISH LEXICAL ITEMS IN THE  
WORK OF PREETA SAMARASAN**

**PREMA A/P JAYA BALAN**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS  
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KUALA LUMPUR**

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Name of Candidate: **Prema a/p Jaya Balan** (I.C/Passport No: **810610-10-5382**)

Registration/Matric No: **TGB070028**

Name of Degree: **Master of English as a Second Language**

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Field of Study: **Varieties of English**

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## ABSTRACT

This research is a study on how Malaysian English is used in creative writing by a Malaysian writer. It studies the novel 'Evening is a whole day' by Preeta Samarasan. Focusing on the extraction and categorisation of Malaysian English lexical items and semantic terms used by a Malaysian writer, this research sets out to study the extent to which the writer uses lexical items and semantic terms from the non-native variety in her prose writing.

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 (2005) categorisation shows that the writer uses non-native lexical items in her writing. She also uses non-native semantic transfers based on the framework from Menon (2003). These findings show that although there are equivalents in the English language, the writer consciously chooses to use local words in her writing.

This is clearly seen in the dialogues. The writer seems to have done this to depict the actual linguistic scenario in the country as the story studied here has a Malaysian setting.

Thus, the study shows that there is a need for the use of Malaysian English in creative writing when the situation requires its usage. The use of local lexis items and semantic terms in the creative writing which gives our home grown variety of English a distinct and unique flavor should make it more acceptable and recognised as a legitimate sibling of Standard British English and not as an enigma to be hidden in the closet. It shows that the Malaysian variety is known around the globe as a branch in the Varieties of English tree.

## **ABSTRAK**

Penyelidikan ini mengkaji bagaimana pertuturan Bahasa Inggeris di Malaysia diadaptasi dalam hasil penulisan seorang penulis dari Malaysia. Kajian dibuat atas novel bertajuk 'Evening is the whole day' yang ditulis oleh Preeta Samarasan.

Fokus kajian ini adalah dalam aspek leksikal dan semantik yang digunakan oleh seorang penulis Malaysia. Ia menunjukkan setakat mana kedua-dua aspek ini diadaptasi oleh Preeta Samarasan dalam prosa penulisanannya.

Data yang dianalisis berdasarkan kategori dari Baskaran(2005). Ia menunjukkan penggunaan aspek leksikal 'non-native' dalam karyanya. Preeta Samarasan juga menggunakan penukaran semantik berdasarkan kategori dari hasil kerja Menon (2003). Hasil daripada kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa walaupun terdapat perkataan yang sama maknanya dalam Bahasa Inggeris, namun penulis masih memilih perkataan dan bahasa tempatan dalam penulisanannya. Ini jelas kelihatan dalam dialog di dalam cerita itu yang mempunyai latar belakang cerita yang berlaku di Malaysia.

Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa wujud situasi dimana cara pertuturan Bahasa Inggeris di Malaysia harus digunakan apabila scenario dalam cerita memerlukan untuk lebih memberi erti kepada jalan cerita. Hasilnya memaparkan bahawa 'Malaysian English' adalah variasi yang dikenali di medan antarabangsa.

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