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ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

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Ethnolinguistic Vitality of The Malays of Singapore

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the ethnolinguistic vitality of the indigenous Malays of Singapore forty-five years after Singapore's separation from Malaysia. The study sets out to explore the vitality of the Malay language in Singapore and the factors that influence it. It also seeks to know whether the Malay language has really come to a deficit in Singapore, in terms of language use.

The general literature on this subject shows that sociolinguistic researches in Singapore are more focused on socio-psychological framework, especially when dealing with the Malay language-use situation. Such approach lacks the sociological framework that together would provide a holistic look at the issue of language use. The need for sociological approach becomes more apparent with the Singapore government's interventionist stance in language planning and demographic engineering, because sociological factors condition the individual's socio-psychological and interactional climate, apart from playing decisive role in the survival of a language. Hence, this study embarks on a macro-sociolinguistic research to determine the influence or effect of social factors on individual language use and attitude.

The data is derived from a total of 2435 youths in the form of questionnaire survey and interviews. This study has benefited from Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977)'s Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) framework that provides the sociological factors needed to evaluate the position of the Malay minority against the dominant Chinese and the hegemony of the English language in Singapore. The factors have provided the elements needed to generate detailed descriptions of the intergroup situation that help to explain what makes the Malays behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations.

The overall finding from EV theory subscribes to the notion of the hypothetical question of whether the Malay language has come to a deficit. It shows that Malay vitality is in the low to medium range, which translates into a situation towards language deficit. Malay relies more on ethnolinguistic affiliations rather than government support. The geographic and informal institutional support factors are identified as significant in generating the vitality despite the weak status and low demographic position of the Malays. This proves that EV theory is able to accurately assess the sociological situation and perceptions of a group and its language position in an intergroup situation.

However, socio-psychological data from the use of surveys, interviews, and personal observations in this study has provided consistent findings on the overall vitality of Malay in Singapore. The actual language use situation shows high vitality. The individual's language use vitality is high and is motivated by home, school, friends and religion that create the necessary environments to instil the identity, loyalty, and attachment to the language. Out of this all, home and religion play the most significant roles in nurturing language use while school and friends provide the linguistic (standard use of language) and sociolinguistic (variations in colloquial usage) support respectively. This means that the EV theory has to be complemented with other conceptual tools to generate a more accurate interpretation of language vitality because sociological factors alone may only generate superficial outcomes.

This study concludes that Malays are able to differentiate the role of English and Malay and to use the languages based on context and needs. English is preferred for education and jobs while Malay continues to be cherished as a marker of ethnicity. Hence, Malays' ability to make pragmatic choices when it comes to language use helps to maintain a healthy vitality for Malay in Singapore.

ABSTRAK

Tesis ini menerangkan keberdayaan bangsa dan bahasa peribumi Melayu Singapura setelah 45 tahun berpisah daripada Malaysia. Kajian ini bertujuan meninjau keberdayaan bahasa Melayu dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhinya. Kajian ini juga bertujuan mengenalpasti sama ada bahasa Melayu di Singapura benar-benar telah mengalami defisit, khususnya dalam aspek penggunaan bahasa memandangkan masyarakat Melayu terus menjadi bangsa minoriti hingga hari ini.

Umumnya, kajian dan penyelidikan bahasa di Singapura menunjukkan kecenderungan dalam menggunakan kerangka sosio-psikologi. Kerangka ini menjadi lebih holistik apabila digabungkan dengan pendekatan sosiologi kerana pendekatan sosiologi membentuk sosio-psikologi individu dan sekitaran interaksi, selain dari memainkan peranan penting dalam menentukan pelestarian sesuatu bahasa. Pendekatan sosiologi amat penting dalam kajian bahasa di Singapura kerana sikap pemerintah Singapura yang sering campur tangan dalam perihal perancangan bahasa dan pengawalan demografi. Maka kajian ini adalah kajian sosiolinguistik makro yang cuba menentukan pengaruh faktor-faktor sosial terhadap sikap dan penggunaan bahasa individu.

Data bagi kajian ini diperoleh daripada 2435 belia Melayu dalam bentuk soal-selidik, tinjauan, dokumen, dan pemerhatian. Kajian ini memanfaatkan kerangka Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) oleh Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977). Kerangka ini juga mengenalpasti faktor-faktor sosial (geografi, demografi, sokongan institusi, dan status) untuk menilai kedudukan bangsa minoriti Melayu yang berdepan dengan bangsa Cina yang dominan dan hegemoni bahasa Inggeris di Singapura. Faktor-faktor tersebut mampu memberikan gambaran mengenai kedudukan bangsa Melayu (sama ada ianya berjati diri dan aktif) di dalam suasana hubungan antara kaum etnik di Singapura.

Dapatan keseluruhan daripada teori EV menunjukkan bahawa bangsa Melayu di Singapura berada di tahap rendah hingga tahap pertengahan berdasarkan skala keberdayaan. Ini bermakna bahasa Melayu juga mengalami kedudukan yang serupa kerana teori EV menjelaskan bahawa tahap keberdayaan sesuatu bangsa itu melambangkan tahap keberdayaan bahasanya. Ini bermakna bahawa hipotesis bahasa Melayu sedang mengalami defisit adalah wajar. Analisis sosiologis menunjukkan bahawa faktor geografi dan sokongan institusi memainkan peranan utama dalam menjana keberdayaan masyarakat Melayu sementara faktor status dan demografi melemahkan kedudukan bangsa Melayu. Faktor geografi memberikan keberdayaan tinggi kerana masyarakat Melayu Singapura terus memanfaatkan hubungan geolinguistik dengan kawasan Nusantara, khususnya Malaysia, yang menyumbang kepada keberdayaan bahasa Melayu di Singapura. Sokongan institusi pula memaparkan keberdayaan sederhana kerana sokongan ini hanyalah bersifat tidak rasmi yakni sokongan institusi Melayu sendiri. Pemerintah Singapura tidak memberi sokongan secara langsung kepada masyarakat Melayu.

Dapatan daripada kajian terhadap penggunaan bahasa di kalangan individu Melayu menunjukkan tahap keberdayaan yang tinggi dari segi penggunaan bahasa, pemilihan bahasa, kecekapan berbahasa, dan sikap terhadap bahasa. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan bahasa Melayu amat tinggi di dalam keluarga, sekolah, di kalangan teman dan agama, yang sekaligus berjaya menanam identiti, kesetiaan dan keakraban kepada bahasa. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa keluarga dan agama terus memainkan peranan utama dalam pengekalan bahasa sementara sekolah menyediakan keperluan linguistik dan teman-teman menghasilkan kesekitaran sociolinguistik yang diperlukan. Maka kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa teori EV perlu disokong dengan lain-lain pendekatan untuk memastikan bahawa ia dapat memberi satu tafsiran keberdayaan bahasa yang lebih tepat dan menyeluruh.

Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa keberdayaan bahasa Melayu di Singapura adalah atas dasar kemampuan masyarakat Melayu untuk membuat pilihan yang pragmatik dalam perihal bahasa. Umumnya, mereka dapat membezakan peri pentingnya bahasa Inggeris untuk pendidikan dan pekerjaan, dengan peri pentingnya bahasa Melayu untuk pengejalan bangsa, budaya, bahasa, dan agama. Kemampuan ini memastikan pengejalan keberdayaan bahasa Melayu di Singapura.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASAS '50	Angkatan Sasterawan '50
AMP	Association of Muslim Professionals
CI-NTU	Confucius Institute-Nanyang Technological University
GCE	General Certificate in Education
IDA	Inforcomm Development Authority
IPS	Institute of Policy Studies
ITE	Institute of Technical Education
MAEC	Malay Activity Executive Committees
MABBIM	Majlis Bahasa Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia
MABIMS	Majlis Agama Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapura
MASTERA	Majlis Sastera Asia Tenggara
MBMS	Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura
Mendaki	Majlis Pendidikan Anak-Anak Islam
MESRA	Malay Activity Executive Council
MOE	Ministry of Education
MTL	Mother Tongue Language
MUIS	Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura
NIE	National Institute of Education
NTU	Nanyang Technological University
PAP	People's Action Party
PKMS	Pertubuhan Kumpulan Melayu Singapura
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
SAP	Special Assisted Plan [Schools]
STP	Special Training Programme [NIE/NTU]