

A Typology of the Spread of Malay

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Abstract

A great deal has been said and researched on the role of Malay, as the lingua franca in commercial areas of insular Southeast Asia, and as the national language of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei Darussalam. Its present-day status reflects its rise for centuries as a language of governance of Malay kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatera, Borneo, and in the Moluccas. The presence of Malay in mainland Southeast Asia today extends its insular spread via the Malay Peninsula. These Malay kingdoms played as centres of dispersal of the use of Malay as the language was unrivalled in its sociolinguistic status in the whole of the Malay Archipelago, not just as the language of governance in those kingdoms, but also the language of diplomacy between them and those others within the archipelago itself, and even between those in the latter group. The widespread use of Malay in ancient times has been credited by historians to the hegemony of the Srivijaya Malay-speaking empire which lasted from the seventh to the 14th century C.E.

Today the Malay language is known to have speakers of Malay outside of the archipelago, such as in Australia inclusive of the Christmas Islands and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean (Asmah 2006, 2008), the Holy Land of Mecca and Medina (Asmah et al. 2015), England, the Netherlands, France, and Germany. Away from the Malay world, Malay speech communities have taken shape in these places; small they may be, but they are 'alive,' as a home language of immigrant Malay native speakers who have settled in these places, as products of Malay world migration.

Keywords: *Malay, Speech communities, Migration, Southeast Asia, Immigration*

Introduction

A great deal has been said and researched on the role of Malay not only as the lingua franca in commercial areas of insular Southeast Asia, but also as a major language being the national language of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei Darussalam. Its present-day status is a reflection of its rise for centuries past as a language of governance of Malay kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatera, Borneo, and to a certain extent in the Moluccas. The presence of Malay in mainland Southeast Asia today is an extension of its insular spread via the Malay Peninsula. These Malay kingdoms played their role as centres of dispersal of the use of the Malay language as the language was unrivalled in its sociolinguistic status in the whole of the Malay Archipelago, not just as the language of governance in those kingdoms, but also the language of diplomacy between them and those others within the archipelago itself, and even between those in the latter group. The widespread use of Malay in ancient times has been credited by historians to the hegemony of the Srivijaya Malay-speaking empire which lasted from the seventh to the 14th century C.E.

Today the Malay language is known to have speakers of Malay outside of the archipelago, such as in Australia inclusive of the Christmas Islands and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean (Asmah, 2006 and 2008), the Holy Land of Mecca and Medina (Asmah et al. 2015), and even in England, the Netherlands, France, and Germany. From these speakers, away from the Malay world, Malay speech communities have taken shape in some of these places, small they may be, but they are 'alive' as a home language of immigrant Malay native speakers who have made these places their home. These communities are products of migration from the Malay world.

This article focuses on Malay-speaking communities within and outside of the Southeast Asia, with the premise that in these places there are people speaking the language in whatever geographical or social variety of the language, as a home or a community language. On the other side of the coin there are communities which once were Malay-speaking communities outside of Southeast Asia but now have completely shifted into using another language, thus bringing the disappearance of the language which once was spoken by their ancestors. Two known cases are the Cape Malay community in South Africa and the once Macau Malay community who are known as Macanese. The Malay language is also known to have its presence on the Asian mainland specifically Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

The present-day landscape of the regions of Malay across the globe shows that these regions not only vary in size, space, and population of speakers, but also in their histories of being in those localities. Also, of interest in this study are social and cultural factors having a role in their migration and settling down in those new places.

Theoretical Framework

This framework is based on data collected in the research projects that I had undertaken in Malay-speaking communities in various parts of Southeast Asia (insular and the mainland), Australia including the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and the Christmas Island, as well as in Saudi Arabia, especially Mecca, Madinah and Jeddah. The present-day landscape of the regions of Malay across the globe shows that these regions not only vary in the size of the geographical space they occupy and the population of speakers, but also in their histories of being in their current territories, with social and cultural factors that had influenced their physical movement across the globe.

In linguistic terms, this is an areal study of the spread of language but not in the micro-linguistic sense of dialectology (or dialect geography). In dialectology, the focus is on the geographical area that defines a particular speech community, in the methodology of mapping variations of phylogenetic features, usually those of phonology and the lexemes, to identify the distribution of dialects which represent a particular language. This study presents a macro-treatment of the spread of the language itself, regardless of its variations either geographical or social. In this sense, this approach is eclectic taking into account factors of linguistics, geography, history, culture, sociology, politics etc., which in some aspects may be said to be similar to what linguists understand as sociology of language. This means that the language corpus can be in any domain of use, oral and written. As the community in geographical space is the centre point in this study, the approach taken here may also be considered as one of geolinguistics. Ducrot and Tudorov (1972: 57) define geolinguistics as follows: *We can call geolinguistics the study of all the variations linked to the social and geographical roots.* The definition given by the American Society of Geolinguistics is as follows:

... knowledge concerning the world's present-day languages, their distribution and use among the population, their relative practical importance, usefulness, availability from the economic, political and cultural standpoints, their genetic, historical and geographical affiliations and relationships, and their identification and use in spoken and written form.

(Handbook of the *Department of Modern Languages and Comparative Literature*,
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The premises on which the typology of the spread of Malay is formulated are (i) areas of distribution; (ii) life expectancy of the language; and (iii) theory of migration.

Area of Distribution

An area of distribution of a particular language means that there is a community speaking the language at least as a home language. The aggregation of homes using language X as one of their

domestic languages means that this language is also a community language, and it is a living language.

The identification of the area of distribution is significant in the sense that it indicates the presence of a community of speakers of one and the same language.. A language may be spoken by a number of people in a particular place but if these speakers cannot be identified as a community, then it cannot be considered as an area of distribution of a known language. For example, in the city of London, there are Malay-speaking people from Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia living and working there, but there is no particular area which can be identified as a Malay-speaking area; and the same goes with other parts of Britain. The speakers of this language are scattered all over the place. The Malaysians in London would usually meet at the Malaysia Hall for their meals or some national gatherings, but there is no community that can be labelled as London Malay community. The same goes with Malays in Melbourne and Sydney in mainland Australia. On the other hand, there are Malay communities in Western Australia such as Perth and Kattaning, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, and the Christmas Island.

I would define a community as a group of people who share the same geographical space, where they have their dwellings, and lead a way of life which relate them to one another as belonging to one particular group, be it ethnic, or linguistic. From my experience in working among various groups in the Malay Archipelago and other parts of the world, I find it necessary to be clear with concepts labelling terms attached to the main lexeme “community”. An “ethnic community” is one whose members belong to a particular ethnic group, and when members of this community share a common language, their community can also be referred to as an “ethnolinguistic community”, such as Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Tamil, Iban, and Bajau communities - these communities may be labelled as “ethnolinguistic” as well as “ethnic” communities.

On the other hand, there are also cases where an ethnic community speaking, for example language X, cannot be termed as an “ethnolinguistic community of X”. Examples are to be found in Malaysia among groups within the Chinese and Indian communities, where the ethnic category they belong to does not coincide with their community language, or to be precise, their mother tongue. Of the Chinese groups that belong to this category are the Baba Chinese (of Melaka) and the Peranakan Chinese (of Kelantan). In terms of physical features, they are Chinese, and lead the Chinese way of life, but they speak Malay, or rather Creole Malay as their mother tongue. Another such group are in origin of the Tamil ethnic group and are known as the Melaka Chitty, but their mother tongue is Malay, and the Tamil language seems foreign to them. The current ethnic and linguistic memberships of the Chinese and Tamil reflect their histories of migration from their ancestral lands and their settling down in their adopted country. The earliest Chinese settlers arrived in the peninsula in the 14th century; the Chitty Tamils are believed to arrive in the 16th century when Melaka was under Portuguese rule. Officially these groups are placed under the ethnic categories of Chinese and Indians.

The determination of an area of spread of a particular language has to be based on the presence of the community that speaks it continually as a community language, regardless of whatever ethnic or racial group they belong to (as in the case of the Chinese and Tamil groups mentioned above). Hence, it would be clearer if the term “speech community” is used to specify the area distribution, with examples such as Malay speech community, English speech community (which may also have speakers of various ethnic groups), and so on. In a Malay speech community in today’s Malaysia and Indonesia, the speakers may also belong to different ethnic and ethnolinguistic groups, but in their day-to-day affairs most of them may be using Malaysian Malay or *bahasa Indonesia* (a variety of Malay) much more than their own ethnic language. The implementation of the national language policy in these two countries has made this happen.

The existence of a geographical area identified with a speech community is not only significant in defining the area of distribution of the language concerned, but also in understanding the history of the settling down of members of the community, as opposed to the type of spread of a language which has no defined speech community. An example is English which is widely spoken in Malaysia, and through time a variety of the language has evolved, known as Malaysian English, or Manglish for short. It is taught from the time Malaysian children attend the primary school, or even the kindergarten. In Kuala Lumpur and other urban centres English is spoken by the people as freely as they use the national language, Malay, or their ethnic language. Although the British once ruled Malaysia, and there have been intermarriages between British and Malaysians, there have not been colonies or regions that can be attributed to native speakers of English in the way Malaysians are able to identify Hokkien or Cantonese areas, or Javanese kampongs. English is recognised as Malaysia’s second language, with no specific link to any ethnic community in the country. In Singapore, English is defined as “first language”, with a given status over and above all the languages of the communities of the island nation (Ooi (ed.), 2001). In this type of situation, there is the possibility that this language will one day evolve as the mother tongue of Singaporeans, and Singapore may then qualify as an English speech community.

In Malaysia, another language which does not have a speakers’ community is Arabic, brought to the land by native speakers of the language, as well as Malays educated in Arabic-speaking countries. The presence of a great number of Malays who bear the ancestral titles *Syed* (for the male) and *Sharifah* (for the female), is an indicator that there had been intermarriages between Arab men and Malay women. But there is no Arabic-speaking community in Malaysia and the *Syed* and *Sharifah* do not speak a word of the language unless they have learned it in the Islamic school. Arabic is now spoken as a second language by Malays who have had their education in Arabic especially in the Islamic Holy Land, and these are mostly those of Kelantan and Kedah (Asmah *et al.* 2015).

People speaking the same language but are distributed all over a large city in an adopted land may not share the same history of being in that place. In a situation such as this, with no support

from the community, the use of their original language may get less and less with time, and the language of the home is taken over by the language common to the locality they are in. In the end, they become non-native speakers of the adopted language which will finally be their primary language. This phenomenon is seen in Melbourne and Sydney among Malays who have settled there. In these cities, Malay, as the original language stays with the first generation. Its use gets decreased in the second generation, i.e., children of the first generation. In the third generation, Malay is no longer spoken, but is understood by this generation when spoken to. In Malay families in these cities, English has become their home language (Asmah 2006 and 2008).

Traditional and non-Traditional Areas

Areas of distribution of a particular language may be divided into two main types: traditional and non-traditional. The former has the feature of being in its own indigenous area of spread with a significant time-depth. There may be other languages in the same area but that does not detract from their status as being indigenous languages of the area. Other areas of distribution of the same language may be termed “non-traditional”.

As for Malay, its traditional area of spread is the Malay Archipelago, consisting of Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. The island of Singapore which is enclosed by the islands of Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula could be considered as part of the traditional area of spread, with its original inhabitants as native speakers of Malay. Looking at the island world as a whole, one finds that not all parts of this region have Malay as their indigenous speech system, but the Malay language has been used as the only lingua franca in the communication between people of these islands from earlier times. Its spread began long before the Malay-speaking Srivijaya empire held sway over the whole of Southeast Asia from the 7th to the 14th century C. E. The four Srivijaya inscriptions found in South Sumatra and the Bangka Island, written in the Pallava script of South India, are evidence of a highly developed language which had absorbed a number of Sanskrit words specifically in the domain of governance. (See Coedès, 2009, for the texts of the inscriptions). The fourth century Tra-kieu Inscription of the Malay Champa kingdom (now Vietnam) exhibits the use of Malay of the time; this inscription is written in the Devanagari script of Northern India (Asmah, 2019, Chapter 5).

There were Malay indigenous forms of writing such as the *tulisan rencong* or the *Ka-Ga-Nga* script of South Sumatra, but their use was restricted to particular purposes in keeping information privy to a few people, such as the rulers and the shaman. It was only when Islam came to the Malay Archipelago that Malays in general, not just the rulers and the privileged few, that became acquainted with a writing system. Islam introduced the Arabic script which became synonymous with the religion, to followers who had to read the Quran which is written in this script. The Malays, henceforth, adapted this script to suit the phonology of their language, thus deriving a system to write their own language. This Malayised Arabic script is known as the *Jawi* script. Its creation and use can be said to be the beginning of the refinement of the Malay culture. With this particular instrument the Malays were able to record their history, customs and ethics,

and folklores, including stories from their erstwhile belief systems such as those of the Hindu Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the Buddhist Jataka tales. The earliest evidence of the use of this script is found in the Terengganu Inscription (dated 708H, or 1303 C.E.). The content of the inscription is on *Shari'ah* Law, written wholly in Malay (Asmah, 2012). Correspondence between kingdoms in the archipelago was in Malay in the *Jawi* script, and so was it between Malay rulers and European governments in Europe as well with their colonial representatives in the East. (Gallop, 1994). With the coming of Western powers to the region - the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British in that order - the Malay language availed itself of another form of writing, and that is the Rumi (Romanised) system which is now the official system for writing the language wherever it is in use. The *Jawi* script is still alive in Malaysia and Brunei, but its use is confined to texts on Islam.

Non-traditional areas of speech communities are products of later settlers who have origin from outside of their adopted land, and have been able to build new communities where they keep alive the languages which they brought with them from their original home country. Chinese and Tamil, which are exoglossic to the Malay Archipelago, have their own regions of spread most clearly in Malaysia, especially in the Malay Peninsula. As Chinese have a number of dialects, the regions are also identified according to the dialects of the people who speak them. To illustrate, Kuala Lumpur is an area of the spread of Cantonese, while Penang is that of Hokkien. The Tamil-speaking communities are to be found in places where there used to be rubber estates. In the same way, the Portuguese community in Melaka, though small, which has been there from the 16th century, is still maintaining their language although it is still a variety of the language spoken by their ancestors of that bygone century.

Communities of Malay-speaking people in non-traditional areas have likewise been able to continue using the language and handing it down to their children. They are well represented by the communities in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, specifically in the Home Island; and the Christmas Island, i.e., in a settlement known as Kampong Melayu (Malay Village). These islands belong to Australia and are known as Australian Ocean Territories. On the Australian mainland, Malay communities are mostly located on the west coast, i.e. in Broome in the north, Kattaning in the south, and in between is Perth, especially in the districts of Riverdale, Mirabooka, and Girawheen. Although English is the language that they use in order to earn their living and to socialise with others in their locality, they still speak Malay at home, and living together with members of their own ethnic community has enabled them to maintain their Malay culture which also means keeping to their religion of Islam. Although earlier members of these communities landed in Australia at different times, they were originally from the Malay Archipelago, mostly from the Malay Peninsula. They were brought to where they are now as slaves (Cocos Malays), and workers, (See Asmah 2006, 2008, for an ethnography of each group). In the Cocos and Christmas Islands, the Malay language is taught as a subject in the curriculum of the primary school.

Malay speech communities are also present in the Holy Land of Islam, Mecca and Madinah,

but more in the former. There is a smaller one in Jeddah, the door to the Holy Land. There is no record as to when the people of the Malay Archipelago first went to Mecca for their pilgrimage, the Hajj. By the end of the 19th century, Malay settlements already existed in Mecca, the majority being from the islands that are now Indonesia. Although there was no official policy of using Malay as national language, as the Indonesian nation was not yet born, the common language used in interaction between people of these islands was Malay. Today there are areas of Malay-speaking people in Mecca, and among these are also settlements which are identified with Malays from Malaysia. Other Malay groups such as those from Southern Thailand seem to ‘camp’ with the Malaysians (Asmah et al. 2015.).

In brief, the non-traditional areas of the spread of Malay of today, specifically those discussed in this article, are located in three zones: (i) Australia - (a) the Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands, (b) Perth, Kattaning, Geraldton and Broome on mainland Australia; (ii) Saudi Arabia: Mecca, Madinah, Jeddah; (iii) Mainland Southeast Asia: Southern Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Core and Non-Core Areas

Within a traditional area there may be smaller areas with a high density of speakers of the language, and the language itself is used in almost all domains of life of the people: governance, professional, education, commerce, social, and cultural. An area such as this may be termed a core area. In other words, a core area is the capital of a country, state, or province where most of life’s activities, official and otherwise, are expressed in the language. This means that a particular country may have more than one core area. The obverse of core areas are the non-core ones.

The Malay Archipelago as the traditional area of the spread of Malay has a number of core areas. Brunei which, due to its size, may be said to have only one core area which is the Bandar Seri Begawan. On the other hand, Malaysia has several, and so does Indonesia, not just due to their sizes but more significantly to their socio-political history. The Malay Peninsula before the formation of the Federation of Malaya in 1948 was a conglomeration of nine independent Malay sultanates, each with its form of governance, customs and traditions, and for these purposes each state used its own variety or dialect of Malay. In addition to this, each state has its own traditional literature, now placed in the genre of the classical literature of Malay. Correspondence between the Malay rulers was in Malay where at times dialect differences can be detected in between the common core Malay elements that they shared. The ruling houses appeared to be aware of the existence of a common core Malay, as well as the standard Malay etiquette that they had to conform to in their letters. This can be illustrated by letters of Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah of Kedah written in the late nineteenth century to the Crown Prince of Perak, and to British officials in Singapore and Penang. But his letters to officials in Kedah and to governors of provinces under Siamese rule such as Songkhla and Ligor, as well to the King of Siam and the officials in Bangkok, are rendered in the Kedah dialect. To those in Siam, it was his tradition to send two-language versions for a single message, one written in Kedah Malay using the *Jawi*

script, and the other in Siamese using the Siamese script (Asmah 2013b, Chapter 5).

Although the Malay States became united in the Federation of Malaya formed in 1948, and this federation became a British protectorate, they still kept to their idiosyncratic traditions where Malay customs were concerned, as well as the use of their own dialects for official purposes within their state borders. In 1963 Sabah and Sarawak joined Malaya to form Malaysia, and these two states have kept to their own dialectal speech systems when dealing with their own people. In the precincts of the central government in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, inter-variety code-switching is also heard in speeches of the nation's leaders, and this is not something that is frowned upon. This mode of language usage also features in broadcasting, i.e. in news bulletins and forums in all radio and TV stations. The national TV1 with at least 14 stations all over the country, runs the daily 5.00-6.00 p.m. local news bulletin in Malay by having five newsreaders from five different branch channels. Three of the five slots are filled everyday by the Kuala Lumpur, Sabah, and Sarawak branches, while the other two are rotated among the states in the peninsula. News readers in the peninsula use their preferred standard pronunciation of Malaysia, or a mixture of this and the standard form of their local variety, while those in Sabah and Sarawak appear to choose the northern peninsular standard variety which is closer to their regional pronunciation compared to the southern variety. In this way the Malaysian policy as regards language usage is polycentric rather than monocentric, an attitude which recognises that every region can contribute to the growth of the language (Asmah 2018).

When Singapore was still part of Malaya, and then Malaysia, it had a role as a core area in the development of the Malay language. As a core area, Singapore was instrumental in the dissemination of the dialect that the island shared with Johor to become the basis of the standard Malay of Malaysia. Now this island nation has lost the role of core area of Malay, but the Malay speech community still exists although with a depletion of the population of native speakers, while the language has a smaller role in the life of its speakers and the country's citizens (Mohamed Pitchay, 2014).

Indonesia too has a number of core areas. Before the Republic of Indonesia came into being, the core areas were in Sumatera: Palembang, Jambi, the Minangkabau land, Kampar, Siak and the Riau mainland. The Riau islands were still part of Johor (Malaya). At that time there were also other Malay sultanates in Kalimantan (now Indonesian Borneo), specifically in Sambas, Pontianak, Banjarmasin and Samarinda. The Celebes and the Moluccas did not have Malay as their indigenous languages but adopted it as a high language for use in governance. Letters from the royal courts mentioned above are written in the *Jawi* script and show a close affinity with Malay of the peninsula in grammar and style (Gallop and Arps 1991). Malays of these areas and those in the Malay Peninsula were in constant contact with one another due mostly to family relationship between them, and this close relationship may be said to be a force which kept the language vibrant. It was Indonesia's choice of Malay as the republic's language of unity (*bahasa persatuan*) in 1928 pronounced in the Youths' Pledge of that year, which marked the beginning of the struggle for independence from the Netherlands, that firmly planted the language in those

islands where it never existed before, except only in pidginised versions.

Indonesia's choice of the common variety of Malay spoken in the ports of commerce in the islands and which at that time was considered as a low variety, had catapulted this variety into one that is the country's language of governance and the only medium used in the education system of the country from the primary to the tertiary level. With this development in the use of Malay, new core areas have been added in Indonesia, the most prominent being Jakarta, the nation's capital. Prior to this, the area of spread of Malay in Java was Batavia (Jakarta today) and the coastal areas in the neighborhood such as Tanjung Periuk and Sunda Kelapa. The variety spoken then is still alive and is commonly known as *bahasa Betawi*.

In almost all cases core areas are those which have a role in the governance of the locality. Jakarta became a new core with the birth of the Indonesian nation. In Malaysia there have been new additions as illustrated by Kuching in Sarawak, and Kota Kinabalu in Sabah. When a core area emerges in a state or province where there is already one such centre, an old one faces the possibility of playing a lesser role than it used to. The rise of new core areas seems to be an age-old phenomenon, as evident in epics of old Malay kingdoms where areas of spread became core areas according to where the rulers decided to establish their residence. For example, in the history of the sultanate of Kedah (the oldest Malay kingdom in the peninsula and perhaps in the whole of the archipelago), the core areas seemed to change from place to place as there was a tradition that a new king had to build his own township with a fort, and this place would be identified as his *negeri* (land) or *kota* (fort). This condition was laid down by Merong Mahawanga, the first king of Kedah, some five thousand years ago. The words of this particular condition as given in the Kedah epic, *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* (Siti Hawa Salleh, 1970, p.78) are given in English translation as follows:

... whoever becomes king in the land of Kedah should not stay in one place; he should build a fort surrounded by a moat in the place where he lives; and every king that rules the land must have one fort.

This condition, which had to be fulfilled by a newly crowned king, explains the presence of *kota* all over the place in Kedah, which are extant to this day, such as Kota Bukit Meriam, Kota Sungai Mas, Kota Aur, Kota Kuala Muda, Kota Sarang Semut, Kota Seputeh, Kota Setar, Kota Naga, Kota Mengkuang, Kota Palas, Kota Raja, Kota Bukit Pinang etc. Having the condition as stated above was a sure way of turning jungles into settlements. A *kota*, as understood by the people of Kedah today, is a place identified with a sultan or a nobility, and in it a castle or a mansion, and around the whole area there must be a fort which can be made of stones and bricks, or a moat (*parit*), or some kind of vegetation that when planted in a row around a particular area could give the semblance of a fort, as in the case of Kota Aur (*aur* = a species of the bamboo), Kota Palas (*palas* = a kind of palm with leaves mainly used in Kedah for wrapping food for cooking), and Kota Mengkuang (*mengkuang* = the thorny pandanus).

In general, the non-traditional regions do not have core areas. Each Malay-speaking community in Australia and her Ocean Territories seem to be on its own. It carries the variety of Malay brought in by the earliest settlers. Phylogenetic development in the language is contingent on the contact of this region with some other Malay region. The Christmas Island Malays retain the Melaka dialect of the Malay Peninsula, but features of this dialect are disappearing to replacement by the common standard Malay used in Malaysia. This is a result of formal language teaching in the school using Malaysian texts, and constant contact with Malaysians. The Cocos Keeling Malays have their own specific variety of Malay which dates back to 1827 when their ancestors were transported to the islands from Banjarmasin in today's Indonesian Borneo. The primary school on Home Island which teaches Malay as mother tongue to the children of the island uses the Cocos variety of Malay, with the teachers developing their own primers for the purpose. But the elders in the community are able to switch to Malaysian Malay in their interaction with Malaysians due to their constant contact with the latter. And they are able to get to watch Malaysian programs on their TV (Asmah 2006).

The Indonesians in Mecca have their own common variety, which is *bahasa Indonesia*. But anyone familiar with the language can recognise the diversity in the varieties which are spoken according to those of the islands where the speakers came from. In the Malaysian Malay communities of Mecca, Madinah and Jeddah, the dialect groups seem to choose their own dialects, even in intergroup communication. The most prominent of these dialect groups are the Kedah and the Kelantan groups, as they are in the majority compared to those from other parts of Malaysia. Being free to use the dialect of one's preference is also a tradition enjoyed by Malay-speaking people of Malaysia.

Life Expectancy of the Language

By life expectancy of the language is meant the possibility of the language to continue being a living language, and this means the continuity in the use of the language in the particular area. The obverse is a short life expectancy which will lead to its disappearance in a particular area.

Continuity in the Use of the Language

The importance of the presence of a community of speakers with a geographical site that defines the spread of the language is that it provides the possibility of constant interaction among families that share a speech system for them to use freely. Given this social situation, the community is able to maintain the culture attributed to speakers of their language, especially in the rules of etiquette that go with speaking and writing the language, and other aspects of culture which are characteristics of the traditions of people who use the language. Traditional areas with core areas of spread are assured of the continuity of the use of the language. The Malay language has proved its ability to hold steadfast to its position as the common language of the Malay Archipelago after the fall of Srivijaya, when the region came under the hegemony of the Javanese

Majapahit empire from the 14th to the 16th century (Wolters 1990).

At the time when Malay was spreading as the common medium of inter-insular communication and spreading its wings even to mainland Southeast Asia, there were other languages indigenous to the region which were used as language of governance and conveying instruments of their culture and ethnolinguistic history, each within its own region of spread, such as Javanese, Buginese and Sundanese. Among these other indigenous languages, Javanese could have been a rival to Malay, as the former was in possession of a rich culture and literary corpora, as well as a native-speaker population which far exceeded that of the Malays. These were factors which could have stimulated the growth and spread of Javanese among other native languages of the island region.

The Majapahit empire had succeeded in spreading various aspects of Javanese tangible culture in the form of the *batik* art and the shadow play to its colonies, but the Javanese language did not seem to hold much sway in the region, other than in parts of islands close to Java, such as Madura, Bali, Lombok, and the south coast of Borneo. In *Nagarakretagama*, a record of events undertaken by kings of Majapahit in the expansion of the kingdom from the beginning of its establishment to the year 1365 C.E. (1287 of the Javanese calendar), there is mention of places in the Malay Peninsula which the empire claimed to be under its rule. These places formed a chain or a necklace from the northern part of the west coast (Kedah) round the southern tip of Johor to Terengganu and Kelantan on the east coast (Slametmuljana 1953). In the Malay Peninsula there had been colonies of Javanese from earlier dates, similar to those of groups from islands neighbouring the peninsula, especially those from places in Sumatera, such as Aceh, Kampar, Minangkabau, Palembang, Mandailing, and Bengkulu, and to some extent from Kalimantan. All these migrants, and so were those of Javanese ethnolinguistic group, have absorbed into the Malay society, and to date there has not been much of the retention of their former speech systems in their everyday life. They have certainly added to the population of native speakers of Malay in Malaysia. The use of Malay in the archipelago increased in prominence with the rise of the Malay empire of Melaka in the 15th century, and its use as the language of governance and diplomacy continued even when the archipelago came under the influence of Western powers, i.e., the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. Continuity of language use is also a feature of non-traditional areas, as narrated in the above sections. Efforts towards this end are undertaken by the people themselves, out of an ethos of preserving their heritage.

Language Debilitation, Displacement, Disappearance, Revival

A language may get debilitated due to depletion in use and of speaker population, followed by its total disappearance together with its speakers. In this sense, disappearance of speakers may be taken in the biological sense, i.e., the death of members of the whole speech community. Speaker disappearance may also be caused by their adoption of another language totally in place of their primordial one.

The case of biological disappearance can be exemplified by a few ethnolinguistic communities of Sarawak, such as Lelak and Seru. There is no trace of their speakers, or evidence depicting their linguistic forms as the population became extinct before anybody did any recording of the language. But the groups have been mentioned time and again in the traditions of other groups such as the Iban (Asmah and Norazuna 2020: 21). There has been no such happening in the case of Malay speech communities.

The second category of disappearance of speech community may be better termed as displacement of a language by another. As far as the Malay language is concerned, this process had happened in non-traditional areas. Areas that were affected by displacement are of two types. One is where the displacement had led to a total disappearance of the language, and the other is where the language is still alive with the older generation of speakers using the language even at the peak of the displacement process.

The first type of displacement involved the Malay communities in the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, as well as the one which was once in Macau, China. In both these communities the people are still there but not the language. In South Africa the people still refer to themselves as Malays, i.e., Cape Malays. According to their history, they are descendants of people from Sulawesi (the Celebes) who were transported to South Africa by the Dutch in the nineteenth century. They have remained Muslims and they had intermarried with Muslims from the Indian subcontinent, but due to the depletion in the use of Malay by the community, this language has totally disappeared from South Africa. The community whose ancestors were Malays still refer to themselves as Malays, and likewise by others in their country; hence, Cape Malays.

When the Portuguese ruled Melaka in the sixteenth century, they transported Malays from Melaka to Macau for labour. Descendants of these early Malays in Macau are known officially as Maccanese, but among themselves, especially when they visit Malaysia, they refer to themselves as Malays. They seem to be proud of their Malay ancestry. From their albums, one can see that their ancestors, male and female, before the Second World War still adorned themselves in their Malay costumes.

The second type of language displacement took place in mainland Southeast Asia, i.e., Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. These three regions had previously been communities of native speakers speaking their regional varieties of Malay. Due to socio-political processes in their respective countries, they have to use the language of the country where they reside as citizens. In Thailand the language is Thai, in Cambodia Khmer, and in Vietnam Vietnamese. Displacement of Malay in these countries differs in extent and degree, as well as in the historical processes the Malay communities had to undergo.

Southern Thailand had been a region of the spread of Malay from time immemorial. From the Malaysian border in the south up to the Isthmus of Kra in the north, this region of Thailand has been inhabited by people of Malay origin from centuries past. Today Malay is still spoken there, mostly among those of 60 years of age and above, and the variety they speak is the Kedah dialect,

an indication that this whole stretch of land could have at one time been an area of spread of the Kedah dialect.

This conclusion on Southern Thailand being an original area of spread of Malay is supported by linguistic evidence as seen in place names in Malay, spreading from north to south. In many cases, one has to have a knowledge of the processes of sound change that have affected these lexical items when Malay phonology gets assimilated with that of Thai. Some examples are: Satun (Ml. /sətul/ 'a kind of fruit common to both Malaya and Thailand); Tammalang (Ml. /tamba?/ 'embankment'; /laŋ/ 'eagle' – embankment full of eagles); Phuket (Ml. /bukit/ 'hill'); Kupa (Ml. /kəpah/ 'a type of shell-fish'); and Ranong (Ml. /ranum/ 'over-ripe' – of fruits). Islands in the Andaman Sea off the west coast have Malay names, such as Adang (Ml. 'shelter'), Lipe' (Ml. leper 'flat'), Rawi – which is a misreading of the *Jawi* script for *rawai* (Ml. 'a type of fish trap'), Ligor (pronounced in the Kedah dialect as [ləgɔŋ]) is a truncated form of /gəlugor/ 'a tree whose acidic fruit is used in Malay cooking.'

In the *Kedah Annals (Salasilah Kedah)*, what is now the Thai Province of Satun was a district of Kedah, and for generations it was ruled by a member of the Kedah royal court until it was ceded to Siam in 1909 under the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of that year, i.e., when Kedah came under the influence of the British, through the East India Company which rented the island of Penang in 1786, and Province Wellesley (the mainland opposite Penang) in 1800 (Muhammad Hassan 1968). All this shows that this part of Siam had been a traditional area of spread of the Malay language, until it was taken away from Malay rule. The change of allegiance affected the the language among the Malays there. At first, they were allowed to have their own type of school for their children, the type they were used to when they were still part of Kedah, and that was the *madrasah* type, also known as the *pondok* school. In this school, they were able to teach literacy in their own language, Malay, using *Jawi* script. The curriculum included the teaching of Islam.

Thailand's Education Act of 1921 is clear on the country's objective of assimilating all non-Thai groups (Chinese, Malays, Khmer etc.) to become Thai (Priwan 1974). To the Thai government diversity is a problem, and assimilation means they have to adopt not only the Thai language but also Thai culture (Brudhiprabha 1979). No other language is taught in government schools. To the Malays, Thai has replaced Malay as the primary language, and has even become their mother tongue. Notwithstanding the language policy, the Malays are free to keep Islam as their religion. This means that they are able to practise their Malay-Muslim culture like the Malay Muslims in Malaysia. Maintaining their Islamic faith is of the utmost importance to the Malays of Thailand, and religious teaching is the community's responsibility, mostly in mosques. In communities with financial means, Islamic schools, i.e., the *madrasah* or *pondok*, are built by the Malays themselves in various towns. In these institutions, education is given to children of the community, in Thai and Malay, from the kindergarten right to the high school. They receive a token sum of contribution from the government, but the rest is from the community itself.

The Malays in Thailand may be said to have made a total shift from Malay to Thai when all

domains of their language use, including domestically, are in Thai. In a wedding ceremony in Pattumtani which I attended, everything was conducted in Thai, formal and informal. Apart from the singing of Malay songs (mostly those of Malaysia) accompanied by recorded music, there were two occasions where Malay – the only language other than Thai – was used. One was in conversations with me and my friends from Malaysia, while the interactants on the host's side were people who could speak Malaysian Malay due to their frequent visits to Malaysia, as well as two students and a hotel management trainee who had had their stint in Kedah and Kuala Lumpur. The other occasion when Malay was used was in the solemnisation by the Qadhi of the marriage of the couple, where Malay, not Thai, was used. I asked the bride and the bridegroom whether they understood what was said by the Qadhi, both of them nodded. The bridegroom could speak English and he was a teacher in the use of the computer, but the bride could understand neither Malay nor English. My conclusion was that they had already been briefed on the contents and ramifications of what was read to them by the Qadhi at the time of the solemnisation of the marriage. Much later in Hat Yai in Southern Thailand, the Deputy Mufti explained to me that the language of the solemnisation of Muslim marriages among Malays in Thailand had to be Malay; otherwise the marriage would be null and void.

Thailand's Malay community has the objective of reviving the language as a medium of communication. Although teaching Malay in the *pondok* and *madrasah* is for the specific purpose of understanding Islam, the program also serves the purpose of reviving the language. From my observation in a few *madrasah*, and my conversation with students, learning Islam through Malay helps them to understand the language better and to get used to using it. Some students told me that they had started using Malay with their parents at home. An imam from one of the *madrasah* told me that he had made it a practice that once his children were home, they had to speak Malay, but this practice had not really been taken up by other members of the community. Contact with Malays in Malaysia helps boost their interest and proficiency in the language.

Looking at the situation in Thailand as a whole, reversing language shift to Malay is not really happening at the moment, although there is a small beginning here and there. The people have to think of the stability of their life and that of the future of their children and grandchildren, which can only be achieved through Thai. A Malay gentleman in Bangkok, whose family owns a *madrasah*, and who is a successful film-producer, gave the following summing-up of himself, which also applies to all Malays in Thailand: "I am a Malay which is my ethnic origin, a Muslim based on my religious belief, and a Thai citizen and so my language is Thai."

The final analysis is that the definition of a Malay in Thailand need not include Malay as his or her language. On this basis, Malay communities in Thailand are Malay ethnic communities, rather than Malay ethnolinguistic communities which exist in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei.

In Cambodia, Malay is spoken by the people known as "Cham". As recorded in history, they were originally from Champa located in the central region of present-day Vietnam. The Cham communities in Cambodia are scattered in several places in Siem Reap, Tonle Sap, Pnom Penh

and a few other places in the south. The discontinuity of these areas of settlement is an indication that they were peopled by the Cham at different times.

According to my informants, their ancestors came to Cambodia about 500 years ago from Champa, i.e. the 16th or early 17th century, when the last stronghold of the Champa Kingdom, i.e. Panduranga, was taken over by the Vietnamese (Lafont 1981: 72). But they were not the first group to arrive, as the Cham people had been migrating to Cambodia from earlier times. Conflicts on and off between Champa and Cambodia began as early as 484 C. E. In 1177 C.E, Champa struck an attack on Cambodia and conquered Angkor. This started the migration of the Cham to the region around Angkor, including Siem Reap and Tonle Sap. More migration took place from Champa to Cambodia when the kingdom was facing onslaughts from the Vietnamese. By 1471, almost the whole of Champa was conquered by the Vietnamese, with the death of the last Champa king. The only place that was still unoccupied by them was Panduranga as mentioned above. The Cham who left their homeland were Muslims and they fled because they feared they would be converted into Hinduism by the Vietnamese (Coedès 1981).

Today, although they are a minority group, the Cham in Cambodia are not prevented from using their ancestral language, i.e., Cham, or Cham Malay, and professing their religion of Islam, except in the years 1975-1978 when Cambodia was ruled by Pol Pot and the country was known as People's Republic of Kampuchea. With a language and education policy similar to that of Thailand where the objective is assimilation of all the ethnic groups, children grow up being educated wholly in Khmer, the national language of the country. Over time, Khmer has become the home language of the Cham people, displacing the Cham language.

The period after the holocaust of 1975-1978 was a re-awakening for them, and it came with the freedom given to them to use their language and profess their religion. The fresh air that came with it brought them to neighbouring Malay-speaking countries, where they could have a refresher in their language which almost disappeared from their history of civilisation. Scholarships are given by Malaysia and Indonesia to study in universities and colleges, using Malay in the variety of the chosen country. There are those who choose to specialise in Islamic studies in Malaysia, and on their return from Malaysia, they open classes in mosques to teach Malay and Islam. Institutions in Malaysia, such as the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), send volunteers from time to time to give Malay language classes to the children, and learning Malay in Malaysia is only getting used to standard Malay. As such, they call their language "Malay," or "Cham Malay" (*bahasa Melayu Cham*).

In their language use, the Cham in Cambodia have shifted almost wholly to Khmer, obliged to do so, not just as citizens of Cambodia but also for their well-being, their financial stability, and education for their children. Their attempt to revive their language at least as their community language, mainly through religious classes in Malay, appears to be on a very positive note. Khmer will always be maintained as their primary language and a passport to a better life. Maintaining the Malay language means keeping alive their linguistic and religious heritage (Asmah 2019).

The Cham people who are citizens of Vietnam today as well those who have become citizens of Cambodia, are descendants of Malays of the kingdom of Champa which ruled in a land which has become present-day Vietnam. Today in Vietnam there are three different groups of Cham, based on their religion. These are Cham Jat, Cham Bani, and Muslim Cham (or Modern Cham). The first group consists of the Cham Jat who still maintain their original (Jat) religion, i.e. Hinduism with a mixture of local animism. When Islam first came to Champa, estimated to be circa 10th – 11th century C. E., a section of the Champa population converted to Islam. Over the centuries, there arose two groups of people who called themselves followers of Islam – one in which the teaching has now deviated from mainstream Islam, and the group is known as Cham Bani, while in the other are Cham who are faithful to mainstream Sunni Islam, Muslim Cham.

There is no statistics to refer to, but my informants have their own rough estimate of the proportion between the groups: Cham Jat - 65%; Cham Bani - 25%; Muslim Cham - 10%. The total population is said to be less than a hundred thousand. Cham Jat and Cham Bani are mostly found in Panduranga, while the Muslim Cham are in regions in the south as far as the Mekong Delta, especially in Chau Doc, An Giang and Ho Chi Minh City. There are about 6,000 Muslim Cham in Panduranga itself, such as the community in Ninh Thuan. Cham is the language of these three groups of Cham people. The Imam Soleh of Cham Bani speaks Cham; he does not speak Vietnamese at all. His conversation with me and my friends was in Cham Malay but there were times when we needed translation assistance from our guide. We also visited other Cham Bani settlements, such as the one in Chau Peti, and in fact had a sojourn in one of the homes there. There was no problem communicating with them in Malay. The situation was the same when we stayed at a homestay in Bukit Udong, belonging to a Cham Bani family. The Muslim Cham are able to speak the common Malay of Malaysia, due to their constant contact with Malaysians. Vietnamese has become the primary language of the people. It is the only language that is used in carrying out their life outside of the home, and in their workplace. With the Muslim Cham, Malay which is becoming closer to Malaysian Malay has become a home language.

Efforts taken for the revival of Cham Malay are similar to the those taken by the Muslim Cham in Cambodia and the Thai Malays. Malay is now taught mostly in the mosques on school holidays, as part of religious teaching. In Dom Nai, Long Chan to the north of Ho Chin Minh City, the teaching of Islam and with it Malay is done in the classrooms of the national school in the community during weekends and school holidays. There are 1000 people in this community of 650 families, a mosque and a community centre which they built themselves. They run their own Islamic kindergarten in the community centre, taking children from five years of age. For teachers, they get volunteers from Malaysia. The Kedah government offers full scholarships to their students who enroll in the Insaniah University College in the state. In Chau Doc there is a training centre which provides training in the Malay language for those studying in Malaysia.

As in Thailand and Cambodia, there has been a shift in the use of Malay among the Cham in Vietnam, such that Khmer has become their primary language. The process started after the whole of Champa came under the rule of Vietnam. The assimilation of the locals into Vietnamese

culture began in 1834, when people had to use the Vietnamese language and observe Vietnamese cultural practices (Lafont.1981). Not long after that Vietnam came under French rule, and Vietnamisation came to an end. The people of Vietnam, including the Cham, were allowed to speak and write their own language using their own script, and practise their own culture. Vietnam was ruled by the French for six decades from 1887 until 1954 when it became an independent nation. Assimilation (hence, Vietnamisation) of the people returned under of Ngo Din Minh, and it intensified when the country became the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976.

A reversing language shift in the use of Malay is taking place among the Muslim Cham, and this process comes together with their program in the preservation of Islam as their religion. Their language being another dialectal variety of Malay makes it easier for them to revive it among their people, and that it is the main medium of Islamic teaching in the Malay world.

Theory of Migration

Categorisation of areas of distribution into traditional and non-traditional suggests that there had been migration of speakers away from their original home community. But as we have seen in the case of Thailand and Vietnam, and Singapore included, areas which were once part of the traditional area could be down-graded to the non-traditional category. In such cases, the change that had taken place was not one of geography but rather of allegiance, i.e., one of a socio-political nature. The people in this situation did not move away from their original community.

A theory of migration is relevant in the study of communities in new places away from the traditional area. It has been observed that there are factors which can motivate people to migrate and start new communities away from their traditional areas. Stories of migration from various parts of the world show that people have different reasons for migrating, and underlying the undertaking are push and pull factors. Such factors really had a role in the migration of various ethnic groups within the Malay world when they moved from island to island, as in the migration of the old days of people of Sumatera and Java to the Malay Peninsula, and those from Kalimantan to Sarawak. In modern times we have Malay families moving to cities in Australia and America due to job opportunities, and there is the pull factor there. But these people, as mentioned earlier in this article do not form a community. In this article the focus is on Malay speech communities discussed above. Of the Malay speech communities in non-traditional areas, their migration from the Malay world which had taken place as early as the middle of the 19th century can be divided into two categories: the imposed type, and the voluntary type.

In the imposed type of migration, the migrants had no say in having to migrate, and their moving away to another place was imposed on them by some others who had power over them, or by circumstances such as a warfare or an official policy of the government of the country where they lived. The Malay speech community of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands is an example of imposed migration as their ancestors were slaves who were brought from Banjarmasin by their slave masters. Other examples are the Macanese community in Macau and the Cape Malays in

South Africa. The Cham Malays in Cambodia may also be placed in this group as they were forced to migrate from Champa to Cambodia in two separate waves. The first wave took place after the conquest of Angkor by Champa in the 12th century, and it could have been imposed by the rulers of Champa with the purpose of peopling their newly acquired land with their own racial group. The second wave which took place after the fall of Panduranga in the 17th century may also be considered of the imposed type, i.e. imposed by fear of the people being afflicted by the Vietnamese, physically and ethically (into abandoning their religion) of Islam. This latter group of migrants chose Cambodia as it was not far from where they were, and there were already people of their kind there, while others in the same situation as them fled to the Malay Peninsula, and to Aceh, as told in *Sejarah Melayu* or *The Malay Annals* (Asmah, 2013).

From the Cham experience there seems to be a recurrence of the imposed-type migration. Malays of Cocos have also been affected by recurrence of this type of migration due to a policy of the government of Australia which says that those in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands have to transfer to mainland Australia the moment they reach the age of 57; hence, the beginning of the communities in Kattaning and Perth. The policy also applies to Christmas Island Malays, although their migration from the Malay Peninsula to Christmas Island earlier was voluntary, as the objective of the policy is not to over-populate the islands. (Asmah 2006, 2008).

Earlier in this article, it has been said that Southern Thailand was part of the traditional area of spread of the Malay language. This means that the original population consisted of Malays. Long before the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, Kedah was already under the rule of Siam beginning with the conquest of Kedah in 1824 by Ligor. From this date on, Kedah became a territory of Siam. Skilled workers – paddy planters, canal builders, boat builders, craftsmen – were taken by force to Thailand to help open up land and start industries in fishing, rice planting and crafting jewellery. Communities of these skilled people are still to be found in Ligor and other parts of Southern Thailand (Asmah, 2019, Chapter 4). When Siam managed to take back Ayuthaya from Burma in the 19th century, and needed to rebuild the place, Malays from Ligor were transported there. There is today quite a sizeable Malay community in Ayuthaya.

The voluntary type of migration has the element of intention on the part of the migrants themselves. An example of this type of migration are of Malays going to Mecca and Madinah in late 19th century and even in the first half of the 20th century. There was an intention on the migrants' part, and that was to get a religious education. Later on, after being in Mecca for some time, they returned to the Malay world to get married and take their wives to live in the holy land, and set up families there. Malaysian and Indonesian families in Mecca, Madinah and Jeddah today are those whose ancestors first came to the holy land with the prime intention of being religious teachers and scholars, but stayed on from generation to generation (Asmah et al. 2015). Other examples of voluntary migration are those of Malays from the Malay Peninsula to Christmas Island (Asmah 2008), and to Geraldton and Broome. They were influenced by the pull factor of getting jobs in these places through agents, but they themselves volunteered to leave their traditional land for better pastures, without any imposition from any sector.

Conclusion

The typology offered in this article gives a picture of the spread of the Malay language and how the spread came about. In placing this phenomenon in a typological framework, the life span of Malay speech communities, especially in the non-traditional areas, can be better understood. The methodology applied here also explains the stages that the language may go through before its disappearance in certain localities, leaving people who are Malays but have lost their language totally. Communities that have undergone the debilitation or displacement of their language are able to revive the use of their language, given favourable situations for them to do so. And the revival process, as far the Malay speech communities are concerned, is made possible when its program is co-ordinated with that of the teaching of Islam.

Malay has remained as the common form of communication in the Malay Archipelago for centuries past. This position has been brought about by three main factors. One is socio-political in nature, which lies in the elevation of the language as the national language of Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, although in the last two it had already played the role without the label "national". The second factor is that Malay is relatively easy to learn even in comparison with Javanese; and it was for this reason that Indonesia's fathers of independence chose it as the country's language of unity. And the third reason is the freedom given to core areas, especially in Malaysia, in the development of the varieties of Malay which makes the language accepted by people in all regions in the country.

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