"I speak English, but I'm still a Malay": Language Attitudes and Identity amongst Bilingual Bruneians Living in London

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Abstract
This paper highlights the findings of a study into the language use, identity and attitudes of some Bruneian Malay government officers and students living in London. It is found that their allegiance towards the Malay language and Bruneian culture remains strong, despite their living in a largely Anglophone metropolis which requires them to communicate predominantly in English. As highly proficient bilingual speakers, the respondents are highly aware of the importance of maintaining their vernacular Brunei Malay as a marker of their identity. Through the use of observation and semi-structured interview methods, it emerges that predicted patterns of language shift towards the global language do not occur, and there is evidence of maintenance of strong Malay identity precisely because of their requirement to use more English in out-group communication contexts. The 'zero-sum game' notion, of more English equalling less Malay, is not applicable. This paper includes vignettes which show the participants negotiating between their languages in work and study contexts. It also demonstrates the need to consider how English interconnects with the other languages that are found in the repertoire of globally mobile South-East Asians.

INTRODUCTION

The research on the experiences of studying and living abroad is a research topic of long standing. The interrelationship between linguistic study and experiences abroad has been an interest in the fields of sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, intercultural communication and language and cultural studies (Kaypak & Ortactepe, 2014; Magnan & Back, 2007; Trentman, 2013). A number of studies have attempted to review language use in diaspora communities (Mills, 2005; Potowski, 2015), while there are also research on the effects of foreign setting on language learning and linguistic competence (Mugaddam, 2012; Yu, 2010) and within intercultural communication (Greenholtz, 2000; Williams, 2005). In contemporary sociolinguistics, a growing body of studies on language use, culture and identity construction have been associated with the ideology and the attitudes and aptitude of speakers who are influenced by various factors, including context, motivation, and other sociological factors (Shiri, 2013; Surtees, 2016; Thang et al., 2011).

In the Malay world, for instance, Teo (2000) claims a Malaysian speaker will most likely shift from their first language (*Bahasa Malaysia* or Malaysian language) to English as soon as they are exposed to a foreign setting, while Kamsiah (1993) suggests that bilingualism of Malay and English in the Singaporean educational context can negatively affect competence in both languages. Meanwhile, other similar studies including Putu (2006) also suggest the co-existence of *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language) and English in Indonesia and have similar findings: that Malay has been experiencing decline in its status caused by the hegemony of English. Similarly, several scholars claimed that bilingualism can negatively affect one's Malay identity (Abdullah, 2009; Ainon, 1996; Teo, 2006). These studies in Malay have suggested that a Malay – regardless of being a Malaysian, Indonesian or Singaporean – would undergo crisis in terms of their linguistic identity as well as bilingual competence once they are exposed to English. Such claims have led to the conjecture of maintaining and preserving the status and vitality of Malay as a language and an identity, which are allegedly threatened by English. Nevertheless, other studies that have looked into the issues of bilingualism of Malay and English through language policies, planning and Malay perceptions in the Southeast Asian region including Asmah (1991, 2010), Kirkpatrick (2010, 2012) and Noorashid (2020a) found contrasting findings to the Malay-centric studies cited above towards Malay-English bilingualism.

Whilst the notion of Malay identity in the Malay World is an ongoing significant discussion among scholars that was once historically dictated by the court of Malacca, "[t]he concept of being Malay has a unique significance in Brunei…[which] requires a comprehension of the local importance of being Malay" by considering the notion of linguistic, culture and historical legacy (Maxwell, 2001, p. 173). Noorashid (2020a) highlights that the essence of being Malay or the Malay identity in Brunei is closely associated with its national philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja (Malay Islamic Monarchy) *par excellence* which constitutes of the utmost respect to: Malay as the people and the language of Brunei; Islam as the official religion and Monarchy as the state-nation administration. Hence, amidst a multicultural nation, the importance of Malay as the linguistic identity of the Malay people or being Malay in Brunei is an undisputable fact (Noor Azam & McLellan, 2014) as it is upheld for its official status recognised in the Constitution of Brunei 1959 and is utilised to project the essence of nationalism (Noorashid, 2020a). Thus, it is not a surprise when the exposure and the hegemony of English is seen as 'harming' the Malay language and identity and further caused some pro-Malay factions fail to see English as merely working language, amid contemporary studies on language and identity in Brunei have suggested otherwise.

Therefore, throughout the discourse of English usage in the Malay World, it is normally found that "English globalization in […] the Malay World is both accepted and rejected by the people as it closely relates to identity issues, attitudes and ideology of the locals, and the continuous debates on the possibility of English causing the loss of other languages" (Noorashid, 2020a, p. 52-53) while most of the Malay-centric studies reject and stigmatize the co-existence of Malay and English. This forms the rationale for this study to investigate the attitudes of Bruneians towards their Malay-English bilingualism away from the Malay World. Aside from the study of Malaysians' language use in Lucan, Ireland by Normaliza (2011), there is a lack of studies on the changes of attitudes, preferences and identity of Malay speakers who are living outside their home countries.

Through a qualitative research approach using observations and interviews, this research study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by reviewing the effects of bilingualism, speakers' attitudes and beliefs, and a foreign setting on language use and identity, involving Bruneian Malay officers and students living in London. This paper attempts to achieve the following research objectives: (1) to elicit the current attitudes of the Malay speakers towards their first language and English; (2) to investigate whether bilingualism in a foreign setting can affect one's Malay identity; and (3) to examine whether there could be any signs of language shift among these bilingual Malay speakers.

BRUNEIANS IN LONDON

The historical relationship between Brunei and the United Kingdom can be traced back to the year 1906 when Brunei, already a British Protectorate since 1888, first hosted a British Resident. Since then, the British had a notable influence on the government administration, national education, local culture and lifestyles. Today, Brunei and the United Kingdom have a good diplomatic relationship in various domains, such as in politics and education. The past and current relationships between the two countries are of interest to local and international researchers (Awang Muhammad, 2013; Awang Razali, 2013; Hussainmiya, 2014).

1959 was the first year that Bruneian students were sent overseas to the United Kingdom and Ireland to pursue their higher academic education (www.bsunion.org). "The return *en masse* of students from British universities, who epitomized the young, modern and educated Bruneian, reinforced the notion that English language would guarantee social mobility" (Noor Azam & McLellan, to appear, 2021). This attracts more young Bruneians to study abroad.

The Brunei government has provided ongoing support for Bruneians to pursue their studies in various disciplines in tertiary level institutions in foreign countries, such as the United Kingdom. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that about 3,400 Bruneians have chosen to study abroad, and 2,210 students have travelled to the United Kingdom for education purposes (British Council Research Reports, 2015). There is an increasing trend of Bruneians choosing to go abroad due to the availability of various scholarship and financial supports provided by the government and local companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language attitudes are "the attitudes which people have towards different languages, dialects, accents and their speakers" (Trudgill, 2003, p. 73). Language attitudes deal with the favourable or unfavourable perceptions of speakers towards languages, which are manifested and motivated by linguistic environment and stereotypical elements. Speakers' attitudes might be a strong indication of their language behaviour and change, and the act of identity (Fasold, 1984; Trudgill, 2003). As positive attitudes towards a language will maintain its importance and usage among speakers, negative attitudes can lead to the declining use of a language. In the past, several major studies including Phillipson (1992), Dalby (2003), Harrison (2010) and Phillipson

and Skutnabb-Kangas (2017) have raised the issues of English globalization that may have caused a decline of local languages due to the advancement of English in various domains, including identity, culture, education and politics and inevitably local languages.

Language ideology and attitudes among the Malays focusing on the Malay and English language has been a research topic in the Malay world. Nor Hashimah, Junaini and Zaharani (2010) study the language attitudes of Malaysian students across specific zones and states, while Heri (2011) reviews attitudes towards *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Language) in several areas including formal and informal language use and media. Kamsiah (2000) has looked into the language attitudes among Malay speakers in a more complex sociolinguistic environment in Singapore. Meanwhile, Aminah (2015) conducted a questionnaire-based investigation studying the perceptions and language use of young people in Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia. The results of these studies show that most of the participants have more positive attitudes towards English than Malay, and they indicate concern about the maintenance of Malay language in Malaysia and Indonesia.

In Brunei, Mataim (2001) reviewed the changes of attitudes towards less Malay and more English in the *Dwibahasa* (bilingual) national education system introduced in 1985, which was further exacerbated by the introduction of the National Education System for the 21st Century since 2009 (Fatimah, 2010). Zaim (2010) studies the language attitudes of young people attending two major national universities, while Exzayrani (2015) also investigates the language attitudes towards both Malay and English involving young people in a local Chinese school. These studies have suggested that the Malays are more inclined to use English, and reveal negative attitudes towards Malay. Two possible explanations for the tendency to opt for English over Malay are bilingualism in education and at the workplace, and the globalization of English. Similar to studies of attitudes towards Malay-English bilingualism in the neighbouring Malay countries, the Brunei studies also tend to support the notion of a zero-sum game between Malay and English in these contexts, a black-or-white approach in studying bilingualism in the Malay World, heavily criticised by Noorashid (2020a).

Aside from these studies, the most comparable study to the current research was conducted by Normaliza (2011) who discusses language attitudes of Malay speakers in a foreign setting, by observing 35 Malaysian families residing in Lucan, Ireland. The study finds most young respondents mainly use Malay and not English. Although her study focuses on language patterns and not on eliciting speakers' motivations, it still signals strong positive attitudes towards Malay as their first language. This is also shown from the intergenerational transmission of Malay by the older generation to "…remind their kids to speak in Malay language" (Normaliza, 2011, p. 28). Whilst similar investigation has never been undertaken involving Bruneians, Noor Azam and McLellan (2018) and Noorashid (2020a, 2020b) found that Bruneians who graduated from international universities are confident in using both Malay (first language) and English and in their identity. Moreover, they are able to accommodate these languages in educational settings. This suggests that the exposure to the Western cultures and languages may not necessarily affect Malay as identity and as first language.

As past studies only focus on language use and attitudes among the Malays within the confined setting of Brunei and the other predominantly Malay nations, the present study investigates the language use and attitudes of Malay speakers living in a foreign setting, specifically in the metropolitan city of London. Unlike previous studies which viewed the bilingual situation of Malay and English as being in competition, this study will attempt to minimise the potential bias in reporting the use of languages based on the preferences of the participants as well as using natural observations. As native speakers, these Malays are considered as important stakeholders for the future of the Malay language, despite living outside of Brunei and the Malay region. Hypothetically, these speakers may shift their allegiance from Malay to the more globalized English, due to their international mobility, as has been suggested by many Malay-centric scholars.

Research framework

The Language and Attitudes framework of Baker (1995) was used in this study. This attitudinal framework has been used across sociolinguistic studies to describe language behaviour (Garrett, 2007, 2010), and it is adapted to align with the research objectives complement the research objectives. The three attitudinal components of Baker's model emphasise the cognitive (thoughts and belief), the affective (emotions) and the conative (behavioural actions inconsequence to cognitive and emotions) of a speaker towards language(s). The framework was utilised in administering interview questions (see Appendix A) and in the analysis of data. The attitudinal framework was used to elicit the research participants' mentality and behavioural responses towards the use of Malay (Brunei Malay and Standard Malay) and English, while also indicating their language use and preferences in specific contexts.

Instrument

This study is qualitative in nature. A series of interviews were undertaken by the first author (a Bruneian Malay) at the residential hall (Brunei Hall) in London. Altogether, 17 questions (see Appendix A) were composed to uncover the research participants' language use at home and at university/work, during formal and informal conversations, and their attitudes towards the bilingual use of Malay and English in local and foreign settings. The aim is to understand how the language use can represent the attitudes and identity of the research participants, and to uncover the impacts of their preferences. All of the participants were interviewed individually.

In addition, the researchers observed the language use within the Bruneian Malay community at Brunei Hall for four days in December 2016. This is to avoid over-dependence on self report data from the interviews, so the initial data is triangulated by observing the participants' language use in real situations. Additional interviews were also conducted to confirm the findings. Both the observation and interview data were tabulated using content analysis and are discussed based on relevant themes in the following section.

Participants

Three Bruneian officers working at *Unit Penuntut-Penuntut* known shortly as UPP (the Students'

Unit) at the High Commission of Brunei Darussalam in London, and nine undergraduate and postgraduate students participated in this study. These participants included those who were residing in Brunei Hall and those who were there on vacation. All of them have been living abroad for more than one year with the longest being 8 years. All twelve research participants identified themselves as Bruneian Malays (who made up the largest population of race in Brunei) and are Muslims of between 18 to 57 years of age. Seven of them are male participants, five are female, and all of them were undertaking (or had undertaken) English medium courses in various undergraduate or postgraduate programmes in universities in the UK. Therefore, all of the participants are highly competent in both Malay and English, and are proficient bilingual speakers.

Limitation

This study is exploratory, and the researchers acknowledge its limitations especially in terms of number of respondents and the scope of research. Whilst this study aims to open a new discussion involving the attitudes towards Malay-English bilingualism in a foreign setting involving Bruneians – which has yet to be explored previously, this research also attempts to test the validity of the 'zero-sum game' claim involving the Bruneian Malay community away from their home country and from the Malay World.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Although they have lived abroad for a year and longer, all of the participants still identified themselves as Bruneian Malay. They claim that the Brunei Malay variety is a representation of their local identity. This may signal their allegiance towards being ethnically Brunei Malay. However, during the interviews, only one male participant requested the interview to be conducted in Brunei Malay, while four of them preferred English, and the rest favoured bilingual Malay-English. There was no specific indicator whether the difference of age, level of education or education/employment status would influence their pattern of preference to choose one language over another. This is presumably due to their comfort in using both languages and code-mixing, as all of them had either exposed to the *Dwibahasa* (bilingual) and the National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21) back in Brunei. Similar patterns of use were found when the researchers observed their natural language use in the residential hall. It was found that there was no restriction or reservation of the Bruneians using one language over another in any conversations. Thus, this preliminary data analysis suggests that both direct and indirect attitudes based on self-report survey responses and language use in real settings may be more complex than expected, and it may not be as simplistic as the fixated notion of 'choosing one language over another' raised by other Malay scholars (Abdullah, 2009, 2012; Kamsiah, 1993; Putu, 2006).

Three main communication codes, Brunei Malay, Standard Malay, and English clearly play a major role in the participants' everyday language use and their representation of identity. These may co-occur, resulting in code-mixing, and following sections discuss the participants' attitudes towards the languages and the attached linguistic identities based on their cognitive,

affective, and conative responses drawn from the interviews. The discussion later extends to the participants' beliefs and behavioural responses towards issues of language shift and maintenance of the first language (Malay), co existing with the supranational language (English) in foreign settings.

Brunei Malay as cultural and identity marker

It has been established that Brunei Malay is one of the most important codes in Brunei (Clynes & Deterding, 2011), where "[t]raditionally, the majority of Bruneian people spoke Brunei Malay, a conservative variety of Malay that is substantially different from Standard Malay, which is the official language of the country" (McLellan et al., 2016, p. 11). The differences in terms of phonology, morphology and syntax between these codes can be seen from the phrase "*Aku akan bekerja*" (subject + modal verb + verb) (direct transliteration: I will work) in grammatical Standard Malay is spoken/written as "*Kan bekaraja ku*" (modal verb + verb + subject) in Brunei Malay.

Throughout the interviews, Brunei Malay was the main communication code chosen by the participants when they converse with other Malays, even though these speakers are living outside of Brunei and the Malay World and are exposed to the predominant use of English in the UK. Brunei Malay is used among them in the UK as much as how it is used with their families and friends in Brunei. Affectively, it is also agreed that Brunei Malay is a 'comfort language' as it also represents the value of being Bruneian Malays.

> *…kalau dalam satu komuniti Melayu Brunei sini, cigu akan menggunakan lebih Bahasa Melayu-lah. Ok, melainkan ada yang perlu menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris, jadi Bahasa Inggeris.*
>
> (47, male, UPP officer)

> (If I am around the Malay communities here, I will use Malay more, unless I have to use English, then I will use English.)

> …I prefer the Brunei Malay, 'cause it does like go hand in hand with our philosophy MIB [Malay Islamic Monarchy].
>
> (20, female, undergraduate)

Other participants implied that the use of Brunei Malay can also be a distinct marker of being Bruneian Malay, which they claim to be different from other Malay varieties such as the Malaysian national language (*Bahasa Malaysia*) or the Indonesian language (*Bahasa Indonesia*), and should be maintained by the Bruneians.

> …more to the Brunei Malay so that people somehow I managed to meet my Malay friends, my Malaysian friends, they said oh Brunei Malay and Malaysian Malay is just the same, and when I speak to them, in Malay my Brunei Malay to them, they said wow I said *siuk* [a colloquial Brunei Malay for 'fun'] and they said apa itu siuk [what is siuk?], aaa seronok [standard Brunei Malay or *Bahasa*

> Malaysia for 'fun'], different *seronok macam* other one like, there's many Brunei words I want to share *sama durang* [with them] which, for example there's many, so meaning that *Bahasa Baku Brunei* the Brunei Malay is different from Malay in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.
>
> (21, male, undergraduate)

> I think it is a part of identity, it's a part of your culture, even though Malay in general is quite broad like maybe like people in Malaysia speak Malay, people in Indonesia speak Malay, but I think Brunei Malay is- it's quite unique to Brunei, so I think it's important to maintain it.
>
> (22, female, postgraduate)

The above responses elicited from the participants when they were asked about the language that they identify more with (Q5 in Appendix A); the language which represents their identity the most (Q12, Q13 and Q14 in Appendix A); and the language they normally choose conversing with Bruneian communities especially with family, friends and colleagues in the UK and in Brunei (Q4 to Q9 in Appendix A). The majority of participants claim Brunei Malay as their most preferred code and to represent their inborn identity, even though the interviewer did not specifically refer to either Brunei Malay or Standard Malay (refer to Q13 in Appendix A) – suggesting their awareness of the role of these languages in the Bruneian community. This is amid the common confusion due to the nomenclature of 'Malay' in denoting both Brunei Malay and Standard Malay in the context of Brunei. This is further signalled by their preference for Standard Malay as the formal code in official settings, as discussed in the next section, while Brunei Malay serves as the vernacular code among them.

This finding echoes a statement made by Martin (1996, p. 33) that "Bruneians have great pride in their dialect and are very loyal to it in most situations". As the preferred Malay variety amongst these speakers, it is hardly surprising that Brunei Malay is claimed to be the most spoken variety in everyday contexts of the Bruneians, as it is also the mother tongue of most Bruneians and the second language known by almost all citizens (Clynes, 2014). This current study shows that Brunei Malay is still spoken by the Malays even in a foreign setting.

Brunei Malay also retains its value as the first language amongst these participants. This can be seen as it is continuously transmitted intergenerationally as confirmed by these participants throughout the interviews (when they were asked about their first language (Q1 in Appendix A) and their positive conative attitudes to retain Brunei Malay as their future children's first language (Q12, Q15 and Q16 in Appendix A). All of the participants have reported that Brunei Malay was their first language acquired at home, and it was also the first language of their parents. All of the participants agree that they will pass on the use of Malay, including both Brunei Malay and its standard variety to their children.

Standard Malay as language of respect

Slightly different to Brunei Malay, the Standard Malay (*Bahasa Melayu Standard*) has its own overt prestige as the official language of Brunei, based on the 1959 Constitution of Brunei,

Article "82. (1) The official language of Brunei Darussalam shall be Malay" (*Constitution of Brunei*, 1959). The officiated Malay here refers to the use of Standard Malay in official matters in the Sultanate. Some participants claim that Standard Malay will be used to converse with the higher ranking officials, including the Bruneian nobles and royal family members, even when these officials use Brunei Malay instead. Cognitively, the use of this standard variety as respect to the official institutions or figures prevails among the participants. This finding also shows their understanding to the socio-political system of being Bruneians and embracing the formality of MIB. Standard Malay is also used for formal matters including letters, documents and emails (responses elicited from Q4 and Q8 in Appendix A).

> …we use Standard Malay if we talked with *orang basar-basar*, so there has to be *ada protokol kitani, kalau* family yes normal Brunei Malay, but Standard Malay we use if we talked with people who at the higher ranking, with the *terasul lagikan kitani punya anu*, okay, *kalau* for example *dato-dato yang cheteria apa ani ah*, Sometimes they speak in Malay but if in Malay of course we use Standard Malay *bercakap sama durang*.
>
> (30, female, UPP officer)

> (We use Standard Malay if we converse with the high ranking people. There has to be a protocol for us. If we were to converse with our family, we would use Brunei Malay. But it is the Standard Malay that we use with the nobles and high ranking officers, including the *dato*(s) and *cheteria*(s). Sometimes they would speak in Malay (Brunei Malay), but of course we use Standard Malay to communicate with them.)

> *…dari segi persuratan, persuratan-persuratan ini* will be *rasminya Bahasa Melayu ni ah, ke Brunei ke mana, rasminya Bahasa Melayu, semua laporan laporan, semua barang-barang yang rasmi, yang barang yang kirakan* any official *yang punya atu* documents *dalam Bahasa Melayu…*
>
> (47, male, UPP officer)

> (In terms of official writings, all these letters will be officially in (Standard) Malay, whether it is to be sent to Brunei or anywhere else. All of the reports, official documents, they shall be in (Standard) Malay.)

The use of Standard Malay here conforms to the rule established on 16th February 1960 which states that Standard Malay is to be used in information circular letters in government offices in Brunei, and furthermore English texts are to have Standard Malay translations if necessary (*Utamakanlah Bahasa Melayu*, 2012). Accordingly, the UPP as a government organisation based in London has continued to maintain the use of Standard Malay in formal documents as well as on its virtual information centres. This can be seen from the use of Standard Malay on the official website of UPP which can be accessed at http://upp.org.uk.

Some participants expressed feelings of being "unattached" and "unfamiliar" with the use of Standard Malay in everyday communication, signalling lower levels of affective attachment

(responses elicited from Q8 and Q13 in Appendix A), as also suggested by Azmi (2001) and Martin (1996). Nevertheless, this study found that the standard variety continues to be used in formal settings and events, based on its constitutional status. The participants claim to be able to use Standard Malay according to their needs. This is not unusual, as Standard Malay is the formal variety of spoken and written Malay that is learned through formal education as a second language, representing a higher cognitive value to the formal language, distinct from Brunei Malay (Clynes & Deterding, 2011, p. 259-260). Thus, the affection that these participants have towards the vernacular Brunei Malay may be more positive than for Standard Malay.

English as construction of professional identity

The participants are also competent users of English, as they have to deal with English in their everyday lives including work and school. Nevertheless, the use of English is reported in academic and formal settings only. Some participants claim that they use Brunei Malay to converse in informal conversations with family and Bruneian friends, even when their interlocutors choose to communicate in English. The interview participants are required to use English-medium materials for academic/study purposes, even though a few participants say that they would still look for Malay-medium reading materials or even newspapers to compensate for some materials that could not be found in English (these responses were elicited from Q8 to Q11 in Appendix A).

> …among my friends, *durang Brunei* I prefer *cakap Brunei walaupun durang cakap* English, so *macam okay durang cakap* English, *aku cakap Brunei saja*, I feel more comfortable and I feel *lebih sanang untuk* express thoughts *menggunakan Melayu pasal ia macam labih tajamkah, kalau* English probably in academia, my professional identity.
>
> (27, male, postgraduate)

> (I prefer to speak in Brunei Malay with my Bruneian friends. Even when they speak in English, I will use Brunei Malay instead. I feel more comfortable and it is easier to express thoughts using Malay, as it is more straightforward. I would probably use English in academia, my professional identity.)

The preference for English for its instrumental values for education and work among Bruneians has been claimed by other researchers (Clynes & Deterding, 2011; McLellan et al., 2016; Noorashid, 2020a), which means that it has undisputable cognitive value. This study further found the expansion of 'English as the professional identity' of Bruneian speakers. It is claimed that the use of English creates a professional identity which allows the speakers to reach more audience and obtain more knowledge for mutual understanding and benefits.

The interviews showed that English is used to disseminate the knowledge of Islam. While a Malay language expert consulted for Noorashid's (2020a) raised the fear of using English for Islamic conversion in Brunei, this study shows that English is used to promote understanding about Islam in London. Participants involved in a student organisation, the Brunei Religious Officers Student Association (BruROSA) state that the use of English is significant to reach out

and spread the knowledge of Islam to an international audience, whether they are Bruneians or not. This is because English is shared across ethnicities and nationalities.

> English for international reach so, they usually say if you cite articles, repost articles it's in English anyway, so mostly in English, I also managed groups right, Groups B.S.U Brunei Student Union, BruROSA also which is a religious organization, and then for students, so we want to reach out to more international people, we want to use English, *ada* purpose-*nya* [there is a purpose], I think *sekarang anilah ah* [nowadays] especially like so you're speaking Malay, you're also speaking in English because you have international audience, so as we know Brunei *ani memang dari dulu* [since the old times], we trade with other people *macam* [such as] with Arab tribe, so in order to globalize Brunei again, we have to know the appropriate languages to use, *kira macam* [as] the global language, it's easier for you to reach out using English language.
>
> (27, male, postgraduate)

The statement above was also confirmed by the former president of BruROSA in a later interview. Thus, both English and Standard Malay are used throughout the BruROSA official student website (this can be seen on the use of English on the BruROSA's website which can be accessed at http://www.brurosa.org), and Bruneian students' association blogs which share their life experiences in London.

> One reason would be that the target audience. Since BruROSA is UK-based, we are targeting students studying in the UK. Since most of the students are able to understand English better, hence the English medium. Some of Bruneian Chinese students are more comfortable in English than Malay. It is also because English has been made an international language, so we could reach out to more groups of people, not just Bruneians.
>
> (Muhammad Hamizan Haji Zaini, Former President of BruROSA 2014-2016 (cited with permission))

Whilst the use of Standard Malay is expected in this respect, the Bruneians in this study are highly aware of using English as the projection of professionalism, especially when they are dealing with required official matters and communicating with non-Malays and non-Bruneians, and these have never compromised their solid identification as Malays. The situation also shows similarities with the attitudes of educated Malaysians found in Asmah's (1992) study where "the fear that English may have negative effects on their religious belief, ethnic culture, and nationalism is very minimal" (p. 134).

English only acts as a means of communication for certain purposes, mainly in academic and professional contexts, but no participant mentioned its purpose as a representation of either local or national identity. For these participants, English is only seen as part of a professional identity. Throughout the interviews, it is observed that these Malay speakers are able to compartmentalize the use of these languages between contexts and purposes without having major problems in communication (McLellan, 2009).

The co-existence of Malay and English

Based on the data (particularly on responses elicited from Q17 in Appendix A), the co-existence of these languages can be divided into two major aspects: language use and identity. In contrast with the previous zero-sum game notion on Malay and English, the present study has found that the language use of both Malay and English in a multilingual and foreign setting may not be as 'harmful' as previously suggested by Kamsiah (1993), Teo (2006) and by Abdullah (2009). This is because all of these highly proficient speakers claim to be able to communicate in both Malay (either Brunei Malay or Standard Malay) and English according to their needs and motivations. They also confirmed that they accommodate their speech style and code of communication depending on their audience and occasion.

> *…Bahasa Melayukan tapi,* at times *dipakai jua Bahasa* English *atu,* most of the time *anulah,* what have been preferred lah*, Bahasa Melayu kalau becakap sama orang-orang kitani sini,* depends situation*. Kalau* situation *di luar walaupun dalam keadaan bekumpulan sama bahasa orang-orang kitani, Tapi kalau ada* presence of *orang luar apa, Mau tu ikutlah memakai* English *lah, ikut audience nyalah,* depends on the *anu tu,* the situations*.*
>
> (47, male, UPP officer)

> (I use Malay. But at times, I need to use English as well. Most of the time depends on the contexts and situations. I will speak in Malay if I converse with our Malay people here. If it is outside context, even when we are in our Malay circle but there are non Malays, we would speak in English. It depends on the audience and the situations.)

> ...well that depends on the occasion though, if it's more to like a formal event *like majlis majlis ah, tahlil or khatam*, I'll use Malay, yea but if in different occasion like ice breaking session or sport event then I'll use English, that depends on the audience.
>
> (21, male, undergraduate)

> (It depends on the occasion. If it's in formal events such as religious gatherings, I will use Malay. But in different occasions such as ice-breaking session or sports, then I will use English, depending on the audience.)

The ability to accommodate languages and speech style based on audience has been suggested by Giles (Giles & Coupland, 1991; Giles & Ogay, 2007) in his Language Accommodation theory, and in the Audience Design Model by Bell (Bell, 1984, 2006). Theorists propose that language accommodation is also strongly linked to context and identity (Gallois et al., 2005), hence communicative accommodation made by these participants may also be a strategy to emphasise or minimise social differences amongst them, as their code selection is also altered based on their interlocutors. This can be seen in the use of both pidginised and standard varieties of Malay and English depending on certain contexts, audience and sociocultural factors in this study, as also reflected in previous studies in other international contexts (Kaypak & Ortactepe,

2014; Magnan & Back, 2007; Normaliza, 2011; Shiri, 2013; Surtees, 2016; Thang et al., 2011).

The participants' use of Malay and English shows that both languages complement rather than challenge each other. All of the participants believe that both Malay and English can exist harmoniously as these languages have their own pragmatic value and purpose. Some participants claim that Malay can fill the shortfall of English and vice versa, in either conveying messages or emotions. Thus, the use of code mixing in social media is perceived positively.

> …if I use Malay I can touch more of the Malay people, especially the older ones, because they can't use English right most of them, then if I use English, I can touch the English locals here, if I just stick to my Malay language then how can I reach to them, how can I even approach them since I can't speak in their language.
>
> (21, male, undergraduate)

> …the way I was raised is sort of like an ideal situation because whenever my parents and I have like casual conversation, it's always in like Brunei Malay, but when I need help with like my school, they always teach me in English, so it sort of like a balance of like formality and informality, but obviously that just how I was raised and that's how I'm comfortable with like identifying with like both languages now, and I think that's how like that's one way how the two languages can co-exist.
>
> (18, female, undergraduate)

It is also found that the co-existence of Malay and English does not impair the participants' local and national identity. As competent users of these languages, these participants are proud of their identity as Bruneians, Malays and particularly Malay speakers. Some of them have also claimed that being bilingual only affects the surface use of the languages.

> ...it will affect my language use, but it won't affect my identity, because I personally think that the use of language won't really like affect your identity as, the Malay identity, but it's more to different factor that, different variables that will change your identity as a Malay. I know that I speak English, but I'm still a Malay.
>
> (18, female, undergraduate)

> *Masih Melayu Brunei, masih sama indakan berubahlah*, the only thing is that we have to *jua* communicate in English for certain reason *iatah tu*, ah certain needs, *macam kadang kadang* communicate *sama* staff.
>
> (36, male, UPP officer)

> (Still Bruneian Malay, it is still the same, it will not change. The only thing is that we ought to communicate in English for certain reasons and needs, for instance if we communicate with the (international) staff.)

A few participants stated that the question of language and identity should not be viewed straightforwardly. Coulombe (1995), Fishman (1999) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) have suggested that language, culture and identity may not always exhibit a one-to-one relationship, as there are also discussions on the importance of using languages for diverse knowledge and sustainability. In this study, these participants claim that one's Malay identity cannot be presented solely through language, but factors such as cultural practices, appearances and attitudes can also make one a true Malay.

> ...basically *memang di sana tu bukan saja penggunaan bahasa* despite you speak in English, *penampilan atu perlu jua ditekankan, bukan saja penampilan, dari segi keulahan, dari segi sikap, atu menampakkan kita ani orang Brunei, tapi inda semestinya* if you speak English, that your *kebruneian atu hilang, ada setangahnya orang, ia becakap* English *ya tapi masih lagi kejiwaan Brunei atu masih ada wah*, it's only representing, representation of through *bercakap saja*.
>
> (47, male, UPP officer)

> (Basically, it is not only about language use. Although you speak in English, our appearance should also be highlighted, and it is not just appearance, but also our attitudes in portraying our Bruneian-self. If one speaks English, it does not mean our Bruneian self-qualities disappear completely. There are some Malay people who can speak English but are still very Bruneian at heart. English is only a representation of language use.)

> …for me like language is a tool to communicate with others, essentially how you communicate with others, it's basically how you define yourself, so in terms of the choice of language, I don't think it matters to me like the choice of language or the structure of that language is the focal point of the identification of yourself, because like saying that I speak Arabic doesn't necessarily mean I'm religious and saying that I speak French doesn't make me aristocrat.
>
> (20, male, undergraduate)

One of the female participants claimed that bilingualism of Malay and English has altered her feelings and identity to some extent.

> I like English more, it's more expressive, and I feel like I can articulate it more clearly through English because I feel like I know more vocabularies, as compared to Malay…I think it does change your identity in a way with I might not realize it, because I feel like I feel more rough if I speak Malay but if I speak like English I feel a little bit more formal and more like polite.
>
> (19, female, undergraduate)

The potential negotiation of Malay identity from using different languages was raised by Lee (2003) on her study on Malaysian Malay speakers who experienced the convergence of languages from English as a second language education. Lee reports that the negotiation and masking

of identities do not affect the respondents' inborn Malay identity. Similarly, based on the participant's statement (above), the preference for using English here is only at the level of self identity, and not her local or national identity. This further supports McLellan's (1997) suggestion that high proficiency in English does not negatively affect Malay competence and identity, as Asmah (2000) claims that the linguistic identity among the Malays is not ascribed or static, but they could have more than one identity or even negotiated identities.

The maintenance and preservation of Malay Language

When the participants were asked about the importance of maintaining Malay in the today's world (particularly in responses elicited from Q15 in Appendix A), all of them agreed that the language, either Brunei Malay or Standard Malay, should be maintained and used as part of Malay and national identity and the representation of Malay heritage and legacy. These also signal the participants' positive conative attitudes. As noted earlier, their statements on preserving the Malay language are based on the ongoing practice of intergenerational transmission within family and their aspiration is to pass on the language to the next generation. This is a significant factor in language maintenance and preservation (Fishman, 1991).

> *Bahasa Melayu walaupun inda dipakai di sinikan, sudah balik Brunei karang, Bahasa Melayu tu bahasa rasmikan*, main official language, so *perlu dianulah, nya orang perlu dipraktikkan* all the time, *walaupun di luar negeri kan tetapi kepentingan atu mesti ada jua*.
>
> (47, male, UPP officer)

> (Although Malay is not widely used here in London, but once you go back home to Brunei, you need to use Malay all the time, as it is also our main official language. And here, amongst us, even though we are abroad and away from Brunei, the importance of using Malay still exists.)

> *Yalah, supaya tani* at the same time *tani inda lupa dengan bahasa asal kitani walaupun tani di negara luar ah di* U.K. *apa ni memang cigu sedaya upaya* even to Chinese *jua cigu becakap Bahasa Melayu tu arah bisdurang*, *pasal supaya durang membiasakan diri duranglah*, that's why *kadang-kadang durang* Chinese *atu cakap Melayu tu*. So that *durang inda lupalah ah, bahasa durang sendiri walaupun* Chinese *kalau ia di Brunei memang durang di sekulah sekulah cakap Melayu bah bisdurang* Chinese people *supaya cigu pun membiasakan duranglah, cemana rasa durang di Brunei atu di sini pun inda hilanglah kemelayuan kitani*.
>
> (36, male, UPP officer)

> (Yes, so at the same time we will not forget our own language, even though we are here and overseas in the UK, I am trying my best to use Malay. Even when I communicate with the Chinese students here, I would speak Malay. These Chinese students would sometimes speak in Malay with me. This is to ensure them to get used to speaking Malay, so that they will never forget the

> Malay language. These Chinese, if they were in Brunei, they speak Malay too. So, I am trying my best to instil that here, so we will not lose our Malayness.) I kind of a person who likes to preserve our country assets so I'm trying not to make our language extinct so I try to maintain it, yeah to ensure that it won't die, so that the it's like we can preserve the heritage, yeah identity of Brunei, because it's like our system that MIB, so Malay *Melayu Islam Beraja* so the *Melayu* is like our one of the main components in the MIB.
>
> (21, male, undergraduate)

> It's definitely important to maintain first language because it's your identity like you know what they say right, like identities one of your most price or valuable possession you can have, and like you know being dominant in certain language doesn't mean you should forget your first language, yeah your roots and I'm not saying that you should like be too conservative about the language as well because like you know English takes you somewhere and you know like it's improving our country anyway, cause like yeah that's how I see it so, but to maintain it's a definite yes.
>
> (20, male, undergraduate)

Based on these statements, it is evident that these participants have a strong allegiance to the Malay language, and some of them also mentioned the status of Malay as the official language as well as the national identity of the Bruneians. The notion is further bolstered by their understanding on the concept of being Bruneians by upholding the essence of MIB as the national philosophy embedded in their self.

Based on the underlying principles of Baker's (1995) model of language and attitudes, it is found that the positive attitudes towards Standard Malay still exist for its official purpose, even though they are more inclined to the use of Brunei Malay, demonstrating stronger affection to the latter. Most participants also claim their intention to enhance their proficiency in Standard Malay as they are aware of the importance of the use of the standard variety once they return to Brunei, signalling their positive predisposition towards maintaining use of the language. Embracing both Brunei Malay and Standard Malay does not mean that these participants would compromise their English usage, as they are highly aware of their competence in the use of these languages according to their audience, motivations and contexts. This however does not negatively affect their inborn and national Malay identities. All of the claims made throughout the interviews signal that these participants have embraced multilingualism at large.

Of all the three attitudinal components of cognitive (belief), affective (emotion) and conative (behavioural response) in Baker's (1995) model, Brunei Malay thrives among these Bruneian Malays as it is claimed to be the solidarity marker, while both Standard Malay and English prevail in more formal settings including academia and at work, as also suggested by Aminah (2015) and Azmi (2001). There is no report of abhorrence towards any of these languages, nor are there any negative attitudes expressed by participants in this study. As Baker's (1995) model is also used to review the possibility of language shift and decay, the present study suggests

that the possibility of Malay speakers shifting to English, as proposed by Teo (2000), Mataim (2001), Putu (2006) and Abdullah (2009, 2012), will not occur among these Bruneian Malay participants despite their living abroad.

The maintenance of Malay is comparable to Normaliza's (2011) research finding on the language use of Malaysian families living in Lucan, Ireland. That study on intergenerational transmission and language use of the Malay families found that Malay (*Bahasa Malaysia*) is still used in their everyday lives, in intergenerational transmissions, and during festive and religious events. Therefore, similar to the present findings, it is suggested that a foreign setting may not necessarily be the main cause of the changes in attitudes and identity of the Bruneian Malays. This further supports Noor Azam and McLellan's (2018) and Noorashid's (2020a, 2020b) claims that Bruneian graduates from abroad are highly proficient bilingual Malay-English speakers and highly secure with their identity. This is due to their comprehension towards bilingual practices as they have been through more stable implementation of bilingual education policies in the Sultanate.

The present study has further found that there are strong positive attitudes towards Malay-English bilingualism among these Malay speakers. The use of Brunei Malay and code mixing of Malay English also play a major role in their everyday lives for reasons such as convenience and personal attachment, as claimed by the participants and are used in the interviews, also noted by the researchers' observations. In contrast to the claims made by Ainon (1996), Teo (2006) and Abdullah (2009), the code-mixing phenomenon does not negatively affect the participants' identity and linguistic competence, due to their awareness of their local culture and national identity. Hence, preferences (either positive or negative attitudes) towards Brunei Malay, Standard Malay and English, or even code-mixing among these participants are not as clear-cut as previously claimed. The possibility of any 'zero sum game' between these languages should be eliminated, further challenging earlier claims by Abdullah (2009, 2012), Kamsiah (1993), Teo (2000), Zaim (2010) and Exzayrani (2015). Alarmist concerns of English causing negative impacts to other languages, in this case Malay, by Phillipson (1992), Dalby (2003), Harrison (2010) and Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (2017) may not be valid.

The discussion of language use and identity and the need for maintenance and preservation among these Bruneians, on the basis of their high awareness of every language and its roles and purposes, reflects Mufwene's (2005) claim English does not necessarily cause detrimental effects as bilingual Bruneian speakers are still aware of "[t]he distinction between the vernacular and lingua franca functions of languages" (p. 20) that are usually overlooked in reviewing cases of languages-in-competition in mainstream studies – in this case the Malay-language studies mentioned earlier.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The limitations of this study need to be acknowledged, especially the small number of participants and the relatability of the qualitative interview data. The study of Brunei Malay speakers' language use in foreign settings has revealed some important findings. It is found that the awareness of maintaining, preserving and transmitting the first language, the cultural and

identity marker of Bruneian Malays, is still present, even though these speakers are living away from their home country. They are also aware of the importance in using more than one language based on certain motivations. It is also believed that bi /multilingualism will not affect their Malay identity, and this challenges the traditional belief of 'one language only for one people'. Furthermore, this study has shown that these Malay speakers are able to negotiate between languages in work and study contexts, without compromising their local or national identity of being Bruneian. Therefore, as competent bilingual speakers, the 'zero sum game' notion of more English equalling less Malay, is not applicable among these speakers, when they are in international environments.

As explained in an earlier section of this paper, the current study is exploratory in nature, and there are potential future directions for this research. The researchers recommend an extensive study involving a larger number of research participants, including those from more diverse educational backgrounds and a larger Bruneian community. Various methodologies can be utilised to develop more reliable findings, particularly investigating long-term language contact phenomena in overseas settings. There is also potential for comparing attitudes towards Malay-English bilingualism of Malaysian, Indonesian, and Singaporean and Bruneian communities abroad.

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APPENDIX A

Interview questions for participants

Q1. What is your first language?
Q2. What is your second language?
Q3. What is your (possible) third language?
Q4. Which language do you often use nowadays? (you may list more than one)
Q5. Which language do you identify more with? Why?
Q6. What language do you prefer to use with your family? Why?
Q7. What language do you prefer to use with your friends/colleagues? Why?
Q8. What language do you prefer to use when sorting out errands in BSU? Why?
Q9. What language is commonly used in your community now? (you may list more than one)
Q10. What medium of instruction you prefer in choosing reading materials? Why?
Q11. What medium of instruction do you prefer to use in social media? Why?
Q12. Do you think that it is important to maintain/use your first language today? Why?
Q13. Do you accept that the Malay language is a representation of your identity and cultural marker?
Q14. Do you think that if you use other/more languages apart from the Malay language, your identity will be altered? Why?
Q15. Do you think that it is important to pass on the knowledge and the use of first language to our future generation? Why?
Q16. Would you pass your knowledge/use of the first language to your children? Why?
Q17. Do you believe Malay and English language can co-exist together? Why and how?