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# Malaysian English: Attitudes and Awareness in the Malaysian Context

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## Introduction

When English is used as a second language in a country, it serves many functions related to various domains namely the social, educational, business, literary and economic domains and most recently the information technology domain. As a result, it has acquired great popularity and has become deeply rooted in the country. English has become a part of the life of the speakers as it fulfills their communicative needs. As it is the nature of language to adapt itself to the needs of the users in the country in which it is used by absorbing local elements, there is an inevitable tendency for this second language to develop its own variety of English. Such new varieties are called "New Englishes" One example of these New Englishes is our very own home grown variety, i.e. "Malaysian English."

The English language does not only belong to the British or the American speakers. It is a universal language which was first introduced to many countries via colonisation and trade. Since then, the English language has not only become one of the means of communication in these societies but it also serves as a marker of social identity for the people in these countries. This is especially true in the Malaysian context. The English language has adapted itself to the Malaysian situation and has resulted in a variety called Malaysian English. Whether this is a favourable phenomenon or not depends on the individual, his attitude, educational background and his ethnic origin. On the one hand, there are purists like Prator who are against these varieties and categorise them as "heretical" This could be because the deviations in these New Englishes are not acceptable to a native speaker like Prator. On the other hand, there are writers like Halliday, Kachru, Abercrombie and Stevens who disagree with Prator. For example, Kachru claims that it is merely an "*inevitable process of acculturation*"(1986:103). This topic is debatable and even today there is a considerable diversity of opinion not only among writers but also among the users of the native variety and most importantly among the users of the non-native varieties.

Malaysian English has become the type of English mostly used by Malaysians especially in speech. Platt and Weber (1980) define it as " a continuum ranging from the basilect to the highest variety, the acrolect" . Malaysian English has gone through a process of change since the British introduced the language to Malaysia. Although it is still close to the parent language, it has many new characteristics which make it quite distinct from the parent language and other varieties of English. It is undeniable that Malaysian English is different from British English in the areas of lexis, phonology and grammar. This is because a process of acculturation and nationalisation has taken place resulting in a variety influenced by local languages, i.e. Malay, Chinese and the Indian languages. This distinction is very obvious as T.T. Koh, Singapore's representative to the United Nations has pointed out:

"when one is abroad , in a bus, train or aeroplane and when one overhears someone speaking, one can immediately say this is someone from Malaysia or Singapore." (in Tongue 1979:17)

Today, English is an important tool of communication among many Malaysians and the characteristics borrowed from different languages have become

a natural part of Malaysian English. This is because the intended meaning is conveyed through the use of local words and expressions so much so that we generally do not see the reason for dropping them. Malaysians have become so accustomed to these Malaysianisms that they may or may not realise that they are not speaking the native variety of English. Their main need is to communicate in English and this can be done conveniently in Malaysian English.

In Malaysia, the norm or model used to teach the English language is that of Standard British English. Textbooks and teachers' handbooks prescribe the sound system of Standard British English. Thus, teachers being non-native speakers themselves can only try their best to teach the native variety. Whether this attempt is successful or not is a different matter. However, when students enter the real world of communication, the variety practised is not the one prescribed by the teachers in school but more of a mesolectal variety. Thus, whether we should forget about sounding British or American and stick to our very own variety depends largely on the attitudes of the users especially the teachers who are the people who mould the language speakers and their speech.

### **Methodology**

To compare the attitudes of Malaysians towards Malaysian English, a study was conducted among 80 teachers and 80 non-teachers. The subjects were chosen from various parts of the country, i.e. urban and rural, so as to obtain valid findings.

#### ***Respondents***

For the teachers' group 80 responses were received. There were teachers who were as young as 25 years of age and also retired teachers who had been reemployed. The respondents also ranged from graduates to non-graduates. The teachers were also chosen from all ethnic groups. The same criteria were also used to choose the respondents from the second category. The occupations of the respondents included the following: managers, bank officers, secretaries, store keepers, technicians, government officers, clerks and an assistant superintendent of prison. The ethnic groups were not limited to Indian, Chinese and Malay but included Dusun and Iban respondents. In the same ethnic group, an attempt was made to ensure that the respondents had different mother tongues. For example, respondents from the Chinese ethnic group in-

cluded those who spoke Cantonese, Hainanese and Hokkien, whereas respondents from the Indian ethnic group included Tamils, Malayalees, Telegus and Punjabis. This was done to obtain a good sampling.

### **A detailed look at the research tool**

The first section of the questionnaire attempts to find out to what extent the teachers and non-teachers accept examples of Malaysian English. The aim of the second section was to find out their general attitude towards Malaysian English.

#### **Section 1**

question 1 - word order	question 11 - correct form
question 2 - local structure	question 12 - pluralisation of mass noun
question 3 - local structure	question 13 - wrong verb phrase
question 4 - using nouns as verbs	question 14 - redundancy
question 5 - wrong word	question 15 - simplification
question 6 - local structure	question 16 - 'lah' particle
question 7 - word from local language	question 17 - wrong question tag
question 8 - local structure	question 18 - wrong question tag
question 9 - redundancy	question 19 - correct form
question 10 - wrong question tag	question 20 - local structure

#### **Section 2**

Questions 1 and 2 attempt to find out the respondents' attitude towards the use of Standard British English among Malaysians and foreigners.

Question 3 attempts to find out whether the respondents think that the local expressions make Malaysian English unique or otherwise.

Question 4 investigates the respondents' attitude towards the use of Malaysian English to teach English in the classroom.

Question 5 seeks to investigate if the respondents regard Malaysian English as lower than other L1 varieties or otherwise.

Question 6 seeks to find out whether the respondents feel that Malaysian English should be accepted in Malaysia.

The examples of Malaysian English used in the questionnaire are varied. The examples have been chosen to represent various areas and sub-varieties of Malaysian English. Malaysia is a pluralistic country and there are three main languages and a variety of other indigenous languages spoken. This diversity results in the ethnolectal variation in Malaysian English. There are differences in the way each of these ethnic groups use English especially in terms of lexis and pronunciation. Besides, there is also the sociolectal variation. Standard Malaysian English or the acrolect is the highest form and closest to the native variety. The only difference is the pronunciation and intonation patterns. There are also vocabulary differences but these are very minimal. Examples of questions which reflect the acrolect variety are questions 7, 11 and 19.

Besides the acrolect, there is the mesolectal variety which is lower than the acrolect but higher than the basilect. However, it is important to note that it is difficult to draw a line between these varieties. It is indeed a continuum ranging from the lowest variety to the highest variety.

Thus, one should not conclude that the examples in the questionnaire reflect the way all Malaysians speak. There are many examples taken from the mesolectal and basilectal varieties too. A few examples of basilect are no.16 and no.4. Therefore, it is inappropriate to conclude that all Malaysians speak in one particular way or another. The lect they choose depends on many factors such as content of speech, setting, interlocutors, relationship with interlocutors, speakers, education and social standing.

### **Analysis of Data**

The tables below show the percentage of subjects who accepted or rejected the examples of Malaysian English submitted to them. Although the questionnaire had four choices for the respondent to choose from to show his degree of acceptance, the analysis combines them into two which is "accept" and "reject" This is to make the difference between them clearer. As there were only 80 respondents for each group, the number for each choice would have been too low to show a good comparison between the percentage of acceptance and rejection if the four choices had been used.

## Section1

1. Hundred over people attended my birthday celebration.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	57.5	42.5	7.5	92.5
Non - teachers	70.0	30.0	41.3	58.7

The example above depicts the common word order used in Malaysian English. In Standard British English it would be "Over a hundred people attended my birthday celebration" Around 57.5% of the teachers seem to accept the structure in speech and almost 70% of the non - teachers accept it. This shows that this is quite a common structure among Malaysians. The teachers seem to be against the use of the structure in written English, while the non-teachers appear to be a little more tolerant towards its use. It is obvious that this structure is commonly used in everyday life, but the teachers, however, are against the use of this structure in written exercises. According to Soo (1990), "the use of structures like this has become quite common in Australian English too."

2. Last time I don't like durians but now I do.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	42.5	57.5	21.3	78.7
Non - teachers	76.3	23.7	53.8	46.2

"Last time" is a very common structure used in the Malaysian context to mean "formerly" or "initially" At times the word "before" is used as an alternative. This is an influence from the Chinese language. In the Cantonese dialect, for example, the same structure is used for all these meanings. The teachers seem to reject the structure especially in writing. However, the non-teachers largely accept it in speech and almost half of them accept it in writing. This shows that even if teachers do not expose their students to this structure, ultimately they will be exposed to it in their everyday life.

## 3. Your passport expired already?

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	36.3	63.7	7.5	92.5
Non- teachers	56.3	43.7	27.5	72.5

This item shows the use of “already” to indicate the past. This is added with the intonation of a question that converts this statement into a question. “Has your passport expired?” would be the correct form in Standard British English. The use of statements as questions may reflect the influence of local languages such as the Indian languages and the Malay language. In Malaysian English, “already” is used to indicate a past action or condition but this is not the function of “already” in Standard British English. In Standard British English, “already” is used “for emphasizing occurrence” (Collins Cobuild, 1990) and also to indicate the completion of something. The teachers seem to naturally reject this item in both modes and especially object to its use in writing. The non - teachers, too, seem to have a similar stand for the writing mode, but they are more willing to accept it in the spoken mode.

## 4. I don't want to friend you.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	13.7	86.3	0	100
Non - teachers	28.7	71.3	16.3	83.7

The tendency of Malaysian English to use nouns as verbs is obvious from the example above. Another example of this sort is using the noun “horn” (car horn) as a verb. In Standard British English, the correct verb would be “be-friend” but this form is not widely used in Malaysia especially in speech. Both groups seem to reject the structure completely both in speech and in writing. One significant point to be noted here is that the teachers are totally against the structure in writing. Perhaps, this is because it is a classic example of a Malaysianism which is very deviant from Standard English.

## 5. Can you borrow me your typewriter?

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	21.3	78.7	7.5	92.5
Non - teachers	66.3	33.7	16.3	83.7

The use of "borrow" in place of "lend" and vice versa is a prominent feature of Malaysian English. Malaysians use it widely knowingly or unknowingly. The teachers who obviously know the distinction between the two words seem to reject it in both modes. This is perhaps because it can deliver the wrong meaning to the interlocutor. The non -teachers too seem to reject it in the written mode but accept it more in the spoken mode.

## 6. My boyfriend is studying in the varsity.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	78.7	21.3	36.3	63.7
Non - teachers	81.3	18.7	41.3	58.7

Varsity is used in Malaysia as a contraction to mean university. This is very common especially among the university students themselves. Formerly it was used in Britain to refer to Cambridge and Oxford. In the United States, it is often used to refer to a team representing the university especially in sports. According to Soo (1990), in Australia it was used when there was only one university in each state and few people had the opportunity to go to university. However, in Malaysia, this word seems to go beyond all these meanings and is used as an alternative to the word "university" The former word, i.e. varsity seems to have found great favour among both the groups especially when used in the spoken mode. This form also appears on T-shirts bearing the name of the university, for example, Putra Varsity .



## 7 Let's go and have some roti canai.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	92.5	7.5	63.7	36.3
Non- teachers	100	0	76.3	23.7

The word "roti canai" is a Malay word which refers to a type of bread. As this is a Malaysian food, it does not have an equivalent in English and as such the Malay word has been used even when the speaker is speaking in English. According to Baskaran (1988), these types of words are "native (local) culinary and domestic referents specifically akin to a characteristic of local origin and ecology". These words are often freely used in speech and writing without any qualms by Malaysians. Other examples are "durian", "saree" and "cheong sam" to name a few. These words are making their entry into English dictionaries. According to Baskaran (1988), "Such a phenomenon of lexical entry East to West is not altogether remote if one considers how words like "tortilla" (Mexican) and "croissant" (French) and "sarong" (Malay) have all come to appear in the current English dictionaries". Both teachers and non-teachers seem to be in favour of this structure. It is interesting to note that there is 100% acceptance of it in the spoken form among the non-teachers. Those who have rejected it may need to bear in mind that there is no equivalent for the word in English. Besides, it is difficult to translate it.

## 8. It is very heaty. You must take food which is cooling.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	58.7	41.3	28.7	71.3
Non - teachers	76.3	23.7	46.3	53.7

"Heaty" is an adjective used in the Asian region. It does not have an equivalent in English nor does it exist in the English dictionary. "Heaty" and "cooling" are related to the health system that the Indians, Chinese and Malays adhere to. Food and drinks either make the body "hot" or "cool" and we are supposed to

have a balance according to some Asian belief. The Chinese believe that too much “yin” (cooling) and too much “yang” (heat) is not good for the body. Generally, both the groups seem to accept it in the spoken form. However, the teachers object to it in the written mode. Perhaps, this is because a non-Malaysian would not understand the statement at all as it is culture specific.

9 I can't cope up with my work. There is too much to be done.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	71.3	28.7	42.5	57.5
Non - teachers	81.3	18.7	66.3	33.7

“Cope up” is a classic example of Malaysian English. Malaysians have a tendency to use redundancy. “Cope” means to “deal with” or “attempt to overcome (problem)” The word “up” is redundant as the meaning is conveyed by the word “cope” Other examples of this type of Malaysianism are “discuss about”, “repeat again” and “refund back” to name a few. The correct equivalent in Standard British English would be “I can't cope with my work”. Both groups accept the form overwhelmingly especially in the spoken mode. An interesting point to be noted here is that teachers who obviously know that the structure is grammatically incorrect, accept the form even in the written form. This shows that it is a very common feature of Malaysian English and is used widely among Malaysians. It is widely used because its use does not affect the meaning of what is said.

10. I want to come, can or not?

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	36.3	63.7	0	100
Non - teachers	58.7	41.3	16.3	83.7

“Can or not” is a question tag used in Malaysian English. In the example above, the function is to seek permission. The equivalent in Standard British

English would be “Can I come?” Half of the non-teachers accept it in the spoken form but not in the written mode. The teachers reject it while only 16.3% of the non-teachers accept it. It is obvious that although Malaysians use this structure, they are not really in favour of it.

11 I would like to discuss this matter as soon as possible.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	91.3	8.7	78.7	21.3
Non - teachers	78.7	21.3	63.7	36.3

Unlike the other examples, the above sentence would be accepted in Standard English. However, it was deliberately included to find out if the results would be similar if an example from Standard English was included. Moreover, in Malaysian English “discuss about” is a commonly used alternative. This might make the respondents conclude that the word “discuss” is used incorrectly here. Most of the teachers and non-teachers accept it in the spoken mode. In the written mode too, it enjoys a high level of acceptance from both the groups. However, what is worrying here is that the teachers who should know that the sentence is correct have rejected it. Almost 21.3% of the teachers have rejected the structure in the written mode. Perhaps, they think that “discuss about” is the correct form. This is a very common phenomenon in Malaysia.

12. Many staffs are on medical leave.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	57.5	42.5	28.7	71.3
Non - teachers	91.3	8.7	50.0	50.0

In Malaysian English, the pluralisation of mass nouns is a common phenomenon. In Standard British English, one is likely to say “members of staff” rather than “staffs”. Other examples of the pluralisation of mass nouns in Malaysian English are “furnitures”, “equipments”, “jewelleries” and

“stationeries” to name but a few. However, from the response it is quite clear that many Malaysians are not aware that such use is not to be found in Standard English. This can be seen especially among the non- teachers where 91.3% of them accept such use in the spoken form. On the other hand, only 50% of the teachers accept it in the spoken form.

13. Make sure the bus has stopped before you get down.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	71.3	28.7	42.5	57.5
Non - teachers	76.3	23.7	46.3	53.7

In Malaysian English, “get down” is more frequently used instead of “get off” which would be used in Standard English. However, this is not widely known in Malaysia and “get down” is used very commonly even in writing. Both groups seem to accept it without reservation in the spoken mode. On the other hand, it is not so readily accepted in the written mode.

14. Can you repeat again what you have just said?

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	41.3	58.7	15.0	85.0
Non - teachers	58.7	41.3	38.7	61.3

This is another example of redundancy similar to example no.9. In Standard British English, there is no need at all for “repeat” to be followed by “again” because “repeat means “say again” Therefore, the use of “again” would be redundant. However, in Malaysian English, this is a very common phenomenon. Only half of both groups accept it in speech whereas in writing, while the majority of the teachers are against the structure, about 38.7% of non-teachers accept it. One respondent claimed that these are mistakes only to those

who have undergone a TESL course. "To us, it is perfectly normal" This respondent is a graduate in agriculture from a local university and is an assistant manager in a firm.

15. On the fan please.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	57.5	42.5	7.5	92.5
Non - teachers	68.7	31.3	30.0	70.0

"Switch on" is often shortened and simplified to "on" in Malaysian English. Only half of both groups seem to be comfortable with this structure in the spoken mode. Only 30% of the non - teachers accept it in the written mode while the teachers reject it without reservation.

16. My daughter-in-law one kind lah.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	35.0	65.0	0	100
Non - teachers	48.7	51.3	7.5	92.5

The marker "lah" is a distinctive feature of Malaysian and Singapore English. "Lah" often reduces the social distance between the speakers and is used in informal speech. It is often used to persuade, to express dissatisfaction or denial as well as for other purposes. Only about 35 of the teachers and 25% of the non-teachers accept it in the spoken mode. Both the groups reject it in the written mode without reservation. The teachers especially are totally against it in writing, perhaps, because this structure seems uniquely Malaysian.

17 You want to go or not?

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	57.5	42.5	7.5	92.5
Non - teachers	76.3	23.7	38.7	61.3

This is another interesting feature of Malaysian English. Statements are converted to interrogatives by adding “yes or not” or “or not” tags at the end. This could be an influence from Bahasa Malaysia.

example You want to come *or not*?  
Awak hendak datang *atau* tidak?

Here, “or not” is a direct translation of “atau tidak”. In Standard British English, the equivalent would be “Do you want to come?”

Almost 57.5% of the teachers and 76.3% of the non - teachers accept the form in the spoken mode. However, they realise that when it comes to writing, it is not a suitable form. The teachers, especially, oppose this form in writing.

18. You are not coming isn't it?

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	21.3	78.7	8.7	91.3
Non - teachers	66.3	33.7	23.7	76.3

In Malaysian English, it is very interesting to note that “is it” and “isn't it” are the most commonly used question tags. This is not only common among the speakers of the basilect or the mesolect but also the acrolect. Even teachers tend to use these question tags to replace all the other question tags available in the English Language. In Standard English, the correct equivalent would be “You are coming, aren't you?” According to Baskaran (1988), “these are the only interrogative tags used for tag interrogatives with “isn't it” serving the function of British English's reversed polarity tags, and “is it” that of British English's constant polarity tags.” There is a striking difference in the attitude of the two groups with regard to this example. 66.3% of the non - teachers accept this form in the spoken mode, whereas 21.3 % of the teachers accept such use. Perhaps, the non-teachers' attitude is influenced by the fact that the meaning of what is said is not affected. Therefore, the non - teachers are not very much against it as compared to the teachers who are naturally more conscious of grammatical deviations. Both groups reject its use in writing: 91.3% of the teachers and 76.3% of non-teachers reject its use in writing.

19. I will need to write to him requesting an interview.

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	41.3	58.7	21.3	78.7
Non - teachers	23.7	76.3	13.7	86.3

Similar to question no.11, the example above is a correct example. This example was deliberately included because in Malaysian English it is common to replace "request" with the phrase "request for" "Request" means to "ask for" Therefore, when "for" is added, it becomes redundant. It is interesting to note that many have rejected the form in the spoken mode although it is correct. Even in writing, only 21.3 % of the teachers have accepted the form.

20. My cousin brother is an assistant manager in the factory

	Speech		Writing	
	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject
Teachers	71.3	28.7	57.5	42.5
Non - teachers	95.0	5.0	87.5	12.5

In Standard British English, a distinction is not made between a male and a female cousin. The example "cousin brother" reflects the influence of the Chinese language where the female cousin is referred to as "cousin sister" and the male cousin as "cousin brother" This form is widely used in Malaysia by members of all ethnic groups when speaking in English. It saves the speaker from having to clarify if the cousin is a male or a female. Both groups seem to be in favour of the form. The acceptance is obvious especially among the non-teachers 95.0 % of whom accept the form. 57.5% of the teachers accept the form in writing as do the majority of non-teachers. The expression is widely used in Malaysia but there seem to be little awareness that this form is not found in Standard English. It is possible that this form is on the verge of acceptability.

## Section 2

1. We must use Standard British English in Malaysia even when we speak among Malaysians.

	SA	A	D	SD
Teachers	30.0	46.3	23.7	0
Non - teachers	21.3	42.5	36.3	0

This question was asked to find out the attitude of Malaysians towards Standard British English and to see whether they would like to use it in Malaysia. It is interesting to note that both groups did not strongly disagree with this statement. However, there was greater agreement among teachers than among non - teachers. Generally, more than 50% of both the groups agree with the statement showing that Malaysians have a high regard for Standard British English.

2. We must use Standard British English when speaking to foreigners or they will not understand us.

	SA	A	D	SD
Teachers	13.7	63.7	22.5	0
Non - teachers	7.5	68.7	23.7	0

The majority from both groups agreed with this statement. Perhaps this is because when the wrong intonation and word stress are used, the wrong meaning could be conveyed. Moreover, some words in Malaysian English are local and foreigners might not understand them. However, about 22.5% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Perhaps, if we use Malaysian English, we could convey the basic meaning but it may not always be correctly understood.



3. Malaysian English is unique because it contains local words and expressions.

	SA	A	D	SD
Teachers	15.0	61.3	23.7	0
Non - teachers	21.3	71.3	7.5	0

Malaysian English is influenced by the local languages and this may be seen in the lexis, grammar, pronunciation and intonation. Many people are unable to accept some structures in Malaysian English. Most of the teachers and the non-teachers agree that the local words and expressions far from being errors have given Malaysian English its unique character. More non-teachers than teachers agree with this statement. Those who disagree with this statement may want to think about the fact that if these local words and expressions were taken out, it would be difficult to express certain culturally-bound meanings in English.

4. Teachers should teach Malaysian English in schools because students have to speak Malaysian English outside the classroom.

	SA	A	D	SD
Teachers	0	30.0	53.7	16.3
Non - teachers	7.5	21.3	35.0	36.3

This statement tests the attitude of Malaysians on Malaysian English. Almost 70% of teachers and non-teachers reject the teaching of Malaysian English in the classroom. This shows that although they accept Malaysian English in speech or in writing they do not want Malaysian English to be used in the academic and professional domains. The point of interest here is that even the non-teachers who favour Malaysian English more than the teachers in the statements above, are also against the teaching of Malaysian English in the classrooms.

5. Malaysian English is lower than other varieties of English such as Australian English, American English and New Zealand English.

	SA	A	D	SD
Teachers	20.0	53.7	26.3	0
Non - teachers	0	15.0	42.5	42.5

Here there is a big difference between the two groups. It is clear that the teachers generally feel that Malaysian English is inferior to the other varieties of English whereas the non - teachers do not think so. In fact, almost 85% of the non - teachers disagree with the statement. From the results for statement no.4, it can be concluded that the non - teachers feel that Malaysian English is lower than Standard British English but equal in status with other varieties of English. On the other hand, the teachers generally feel that Malaysian English is not on par with other varieties of English.

6. Malaysian English should be acceptable in Malaysia. After all, we can understand one another easily.

	SA	A	D	SD
Teachers	15.0	57.5	27.5	0
Non - teachers	15.4	46.2	37.4	0

More than half of both groups agree with this statement. Although Malaysian English is different from the Standard British English which was initially introduced to Malaysians, most Malaysians understand Malaysian English. Therefore, the use of Malaysian English will not affect communication among them. The most important thing in communication is to understand and to make oneself understood. Only about 27.5% of teachers and 37.4% of non-teachers disagree with this statement.

### Conclusion

The results clearly show that non - teachers show a greater tolerance towards Malaysian English as compared to teachers. Although both groups seem to accept Malaysianisms more in speech than in writing, it is obvious that teach-

ers definitely have more reservations about them and this attitude will definitely show in their teaching. To what extent will their attitude arrest Malaysian English? It is worth noting that the incorporation of local elements have enriched the English Language and given rise to a unique variety. Perhaps, in time to come, teachers could be made aware of this variety in their teacher training courses and it will be the job of these teachers then to create awareness among students that Malaysian English and its sub-varieties may be used at certain times with certain people depending on the context of communication, its purpose and the interlocutors. It would be short-sighted to disregard Malaysian English because it is different from Standard British English. It is important to recognise that it serves as a useful means of intranational communication and in time to come may be accepted as a legitimate variety of English. Therefore, perhaps, English language teachers in Malaysia should not only teach English Language but also try to educate the students about their very own Malaysian English. After all, Malaysian English is a symbol of our social identity and a result of linguistic creativity and has become the first language of many Malaysians.

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