
INTERLINGUAL AND INTRALINGUAL COMMUNICATION IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: SOME FACTORS GOVERNING CODE CHOICE.

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This study examines a number of aspects of language use in Negara Brunei Darussalam. Its main emphasis is on the use of Malay in intergroup and intragroup communication and on which particular varieties of the language are selected for various purposes. It is also concerned with the function of the minority languages in the country. A number of factors affecting code selection are considered. As little has been reported in the literature on the linguistic situation in Brunei Darussalam, the first section of the study provides an introduction outlining the linguistic background of the country.

Negara Brunei Darussalam (henceforth Brunei) was, historically, the centre of a maritime empire which, in the early part of the last century, included most of the coastal and riverine areas of what are now the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah. In earlier periods Brunei's influence is said to have extended from Luzon in the Philippines to western or even southern Borneo. From 1888 until 1984, when the country regained full independence, Brunei was a British protectorate.

Although small in area and population, the country is linguistically complex. The largest ethnic group, the Malays, comprise 69% of the total population of 241,000 (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 1989). A further 18% of the population is of Chinese stock, 5% belong to "other indigenous groups" and the remaining 8% are foreign workers (Niew, 1990:4). These figures, however, give little indication of the complex linguistic make-up of the country.

Table 1: The population of Brunei Darussalam

Malay	69%	166,3000
Chinese	18%	43,300
Other indigenous	5%	12,100
Foreign workers	8%	19,300

Sources: Gov of Brunei Darussalam (1989); Niew (1990).

1.0 The linguistic background of Brunei Darussalam

In order to understand how complex the situation actually is it is necessary to clarify the term Malay, as it is used in a number of different ways in the literature on Southeast Asia. Maxwell (1980:151) gives examples of the term being used to designate a religious identification, a legal status, a census category, a linguistic variety of culture. In the Brunei context Malay is both a marker of legal status (Government of Brunei, 1961: 118-119) and a census category (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 1987:18). Thus, legally and for census purposes, Malay comprises seven groups, (Brunei, Kedayan, Tutong, Belait, Bisaya, Dusun and Murut) the so-called *puak jati* or original inhabitants of the country. The concept of *puak jati* is similar to that of *bumiputra* in Malaysia.

The seven *puak jati* in Brunei, legally labelled Malay, have, however, different linguistic backgrounds. Two of these groups, the Brunei and the Kedayan, are Malay speaking Muslims. The Brunei, traditionally fishermen, traders and craftsmen living along the coast and especially around the capital, have been "immemorally dominant" (Brown, 1971) in the country. There appear to be two distinct varieties of Malay spoken by the *puak* Brunei, Brunei Malay and Kampong Ayer (Simanjuntak, 1988; Maxwell, 1980). The former is the first language of around 85,000 people (Wurm & Hattori, 1983: map 1). It has received scant attention in the literature, although Simanjuntak (1988) and Maxwell (1980) have written on the phonology and morphology. Prentice (1986) and Maxwell (1985) have commented on its lexis and probable origin. The other variety, Kampong Ayer, is used by about 25,000 speakers, mainly in the water villages in the Brunei River. The other Malay speaking Muslim group is the Kedayan, numbering about 30,000 (Nothofer, 1987). The existence of the Kedayan variety of Malay has been documented by A.B. Ahmad (1978) and Maxwell (1980).

Brunei Malay, Kampong Ayer and Kedayan, then, are the three varieties of Malay which are the first languages of approximately 140,000 people. There are a small number of phonological and lexical differences between these three varieties of Malay and they are between 82-84% cognate with Peninsular Standard Malay (Nothofer, 1987).

Table 2: The Brunei Puak Jati and Their languages

GROUP	LANGUAGE/ VARIETY	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS	COGNATE% WITH PSM
Brunei	Brunei Malay	±85,000	84%
	Kampong Ayer	±25,000	82%
Kedayan	Kedayan	±30,000	80%
Tutong	Tutong	±11,000	33%
Dusun	Dusun	±9,000	40%
Bisaya	Bsiaya	<2,000	38%
Belait	Belait	<2,000	29%
Murut	Murut	<2,000	24%

Sources: Maxwell, (1980); Nothofer, (1987)

The remaining groups within the legal or census category *Malay*, are the Belait, Bisaya, Dusun, Murut and Tutong. These groups have languages which are distinct from Malay, with none of them being more than 40% cognate with Peninsular Standard Malay (Nothofer, 1987). In Brunei, however, these languages are popularly regarded as being Malay dialects. In fact, they have congeners with the languages of adjacent areas in Sabah and Sarawak.¹ These groups have a rural base and are associated with the outlying areas of Brunei.

These languages have been referred to as the "regional languages" of Brunei (Nothofer, 1987), but for the purposes of this study I will refer to the languages of these five groups as the "minority languages" of Brunei. No exact figures are available for the populations of these groups, because they are classified, for census purposes, as Malay. However, I estimate that they number approximately 25,000 with the two largest groups, the Tutong and the Dusun, numbering about 11,000 and 9,000 respectively. Significant numbers from the five groups have become Muslim in the last two centuries (Maxwell, 1980: 170) and this, coupled with intermarriage, has resulted in ethnic affiliations becoming increasingly blurred. The languages of all these groups, however, are still in use today, although there are very few, if any, monolingual speakers.

The Chinese form the second largest ethnic group in Brunei, numbering around 43,000. They speak a number of Chinese dialects, the most common being Hokkien, Hakka and Teochew. Chinese education through the medium of Mandarin is available in a small number of vernacular schools in the country.

The "other indigenous groups" consist of the Iban and Penan. The former, with a population of around 11,000, including many who have entered the country in the last fifty years, mainly live in the interior of the Belait, Tutong and Temburong districts. The Iban spoken in Brunei shows only minor differences from Sarawak Iban. The Brunei Penan live in one small, settled community and number approximately 50 persons.

The above discussion has briefly outlined the linguistic make-up of the country. However, to provide a more complete picture it is necessary to consider three other languages which have important functions in the country.

The official language of Brunei is Bahasa Melayu. (The term Bahasa Melayu is used throughout this study to refer to this formal or standard variety of the language). This is almost identical to Bahasa Malaysia (see, for example, Asmah 1985:330; Simanjuntak, 1988:3-4), although there are some phonological differences and a number of lexical borrowings from the local vernacular, Brunei Malay. It is the language of government circulars, directives and correspondence and an important language in the media. The Government newspaper, *Pelita Brunei*, for example, which has the widest circulation in the country, is in Bahasa Melayu. (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 1987). It is also one of the languages in the Sultanate's bilingual system of education, introduced in 1985. In this system, the language of instruction in the first three years of primary schools is Bahasa Melayu. From the fourth year of primary education onwards, all subjects except Malay, religious education, history, art and sports are taught in English.

As the other language in the bilingual education system, English obviously plays an important role in Brunei. Its importance also stems from its historical position in the country. In recent years Brunei has had to employ expatriate officers on contract as there has been a lack of suitably qualified Bruneians in many of the professions. English is the language of commerce and law, and is widely used in the media as well as Bahasa Melayu. The importance of English as an international language is certainly recognised by the government as a means of gaining wider access to scientific and technical knowledge, and to the international business market. Informants suggest that proficiency in the language is a necessary prerequisite for career advancement.

Finally, being a Muslim country, Arabic is the ritual language of religion and it is used in religious ceremonies and also taught in a number of religious schools in the country.

2.0 Data Collection

Data for this study comes from two sources. Firstly, it has been gathered from observations of language behaviour in Brunei over a number of years. This is supplemented by an extensive and on-going survey into language use in the country (Ozog & Martin, in prep.).

The survey was carried out using a small team of investigators. Questionnaires, or interview sheets, were used to ask speakers about their age, employment, language and educational backgrounds as well as their linguistic behaviour with different speakers in a number of situations. The potential difficulty in labelling languages and language varieties was reduced by providing a structured set of options. At present, data from 570 respondents, from all four districts of Brunei, have been analysed.

Use of questionnaires, however sophisticated, has its limitations and disadvantages in that respondents do not always report accurately on their own language behaviour. Consequently, such methods of obtaining data may only provide information about what the respondents think they do rather than probing their actual language behaviour. In other words, respondents may not be aware of certain aspects of their language behaviour or might view it in a prejudiced way. For example, where a particular language or variety is considered to have high prestige, respondents might perhaps claim to use it. The disadvantages of using questionnaires have been well-documented (see, for example, Milroy, 1987: 187). However, they do have the advantage in that comparable and specific information about patterns of language choice can be obtained from large numbers of speakers in a relatively short time.

The inclusion of data based on observation of language behaviour in this study helps to offset the potential disadvantages of using questionnaires. In fact, the two sources of language behaviour data, observation and questionnaires, have proved to be highly consistent.

3.0 Language Use

Language use in a multilingual society such as Brunei is a complex issue as there are several groups which command different subsets of the total linguistic resources available in the community" (Brown & Levinson, 1979: 309). A speaker selects a code from the available resources, in other words, his "linguistic repertoire". The choice is not random, rather it is

pragmatically determined, depending on a number of sociocultural factors such as "participants, topic, setting or context, channel, message form, mood or tone, and intentions and effects." (Sankoff, 1972:35).

Language choice in bilingual communities has been much studied (see, for example, Rubin (1968) on Spanish-Guarani bilinguals in Paraguay; Gal (1979) on German-Hungarian bilinguals in Oberwart, Austria; Bentahila (1983) on Arab-French bilingualism in Morocco. Much discussion has resulted from these and other studies as to which factors are the most significant in code selection. As Sankoff (1972:35) points out, participants, setting and topic have received the most attention. In Paraguay, for example, Rubin (1968) considers setting or location to be the most important variable in determining language choice. Gal, on the other hand, regards the identity (Gal, 1979: 119) and age (pp 136) of the participants as being more significant, whereas Fishman (1965) considers the importance of topic for language choice.

In effect, it is usually a combination of factors which is responsible for determining language choice, rather than a single factor. As Gal (1979:99) states, based on her findings in Oberwart, "it is clear that no single rule would account for all choices between languages. Statements to the effect that one language is used at home and another in school - work - street, would be too simplistic"

Any examination of code selection between a number of languages or varieties of languages can be approached from a number of different perspectives. The notion of domain, developed by Fishman (1965, 1972), groups together characteristic social situations or settings. Ferguson (1959), introduced the notion of diglossia, where two or more languages, or varieties of the same language, are allocated to different social functions in a speech community. The emphasis in the notions of domain and diglossia is on a set of societal norms. The basis of the former is social organisation, whereas the latter takes as its base the social values associated with a particular language or variety. A more person oriented approach to language choice is using a "decision-tree" model (Sankoff, 1972), in which the speaker is faced with a set of binary choices depending on such factors as ethnicity of interlocutor, the style (formal or informal) and the topic of conversation.

Having briefly mentioned a number of important standard works on the theme of language use, as well as outlining some approaches to its study, I now turn to the situation in Brunei. Observation of language behaviour and the results of the research data have highlighted a number of significant trends in the way in which languages are used in Brunei. In this section, some of these trends will be discussed. However, the comments which follow are by no means exhaustive, rather they aim to provide

some indication of how Bruneians select a code from the linguistic resources available to them.

3.1 Language Use in Brunei Darussalam

One of the reasons for studying language use in a community is that such a study should tell us something about the changing situation, that is, it should be diachronic. However, up to the present time there has been little data on language use in Brunei. Therefore, one of the aims of this study is to provide a base with which to compare language use in the future. This is particularly significant in a country such as Brunei which, since 1984, has embarked on a bilingual education programme. Other factors, including the rural-urban drift, intermarriage between different linguistic groups, increasing industrialisation and development and participation in the international community are also important in determining future trends of language use. Furthermore, such studies are important indicators of language maintenance, shift and obsolescence.

In any discussion on language use in Brunei, perhaps the most significant point, and certainly the one which is most apparent, is that all Bruneians have access to two or more varieties. Data from the present study confirms this statement, in that all respondents indicated that they could use a variety of Malay. Even in the most isolated parts of the country, there is no group that does not know some form of Malay which can, when the occasion demands it, be used as a tool of communication with other groups.

Given the historical position of Malay throughout the Archipelago and its use as the language of trade in the area, it is not surprising to find such widespread use, in a number of varieties, in the country. Furthermore, up-river trade between the coastal Malays and the indigenous peoples in the past meant that the latter in the Belait, Tutong and Temburong river systems (as well as on the rivers neighbouring Brunei) came into contact with the languages of Malay traders and tax collectors.²

The fact that Malay is spoken, in one form or another, by the whole population, makes it an essential tool for communication in Brunei. There is an overall acceptance of the language and a very positive attitude towards it. As Mahmud Baky (1967:137) states, "Malay is accepted by all Brunei nationals as the language of everyday intercourse; you're an odd man out if you happen not to know Malay in Brunei." It would therefore be unusual in Brunei to come across situations such as those described by Asmah (1987) in Malaysia. She states that some groups actively try to avoid using Malay, and gives examples where communication breaks down completely as a result of resistance to the use of the language (Asmah,

1987:17). In Sarawak, the Malaysian state neighbouring Brunei, there is also a less than positive attitude to the use of the language (see, for example, Mohd Pauzan, 1989). I have observed instances in Sarawak similar to those reported by Asmah (1987). Such attitudes plainly do not exist in Brunei.

An important additional factor in language use in Brunei is the 25,000 or so speakers, labelled Malay, yet who have a non-Malay language background. There has been little information, to date, available on how this section of the population makes use of the codes in its repertoire. Yet such a study is potentially very revealing and of great significance, not only in studies of language choice, but also in the fields of language maintenance, shift and obsolescence. Furthermore, there are important parallels to be drawn and contrasts to be made with the situation in the neighbouring states of Sabah and Sarawak. Both these states have large populations of indigenous peoples with different language backgrounds. Factors such as the movement away from the rural areas to urban centres and intermarriage between the various groups, are important in determining future trends in language choice and language shift.

In the following sections I propose to look at how and when the various varieties of Malay are used in the Bruneian speech community, and consider what factors or constraints determine code selection. This will encompass a discussion of the roles of the various varieties of Malay in a number of domains, and a consideration of the social significance of code choice. An examination of the language use of the minority language groups will then be made. This will include a discussion of the functions of these minority languages in intragroup communication, as well as the use of Malay by these groups.

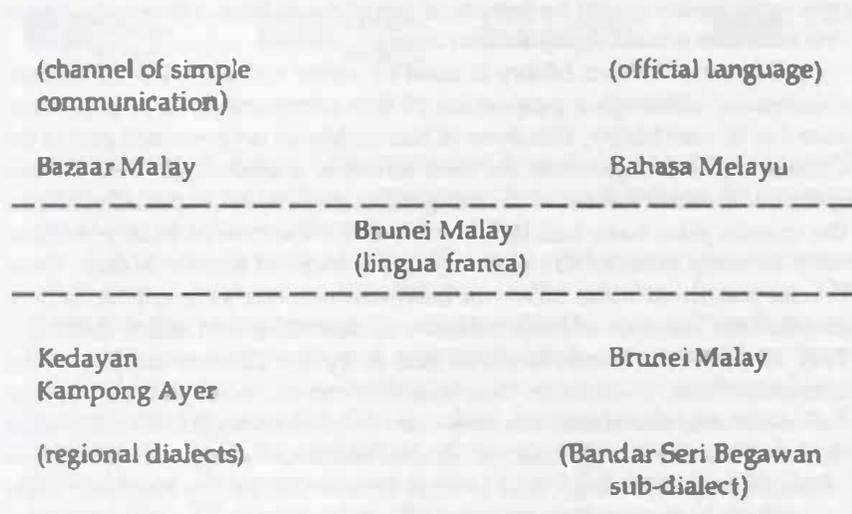
3.2 Use of the Malay varieties

The varieties of Malay used in Brunei, mentioned in the introduction to this study, include Kedayan, Kampong Ayer, Brunei Malay and Bahasa Melayu. Of these, by far the most widely used is Brunei Malay. On the one hand, Brunei Malay, or Bahasa Melayu Brunei, is the variety used by the dominant group, the *puak* Brunei, and, on the other, it functions as the lingua franca of the country.

The dominance of Brunei Malay has been recognised for some time. Ahmad (1978) states that a large proportion of the community, around 80 per cent, uses this code in informal discourse, and according to Nothofer (1987) it acts as the lingua franca "among most young and educated Bruneians". Data from the present study suggests, if anything, that Ahmad's figure might be a little conservative. Certainly 94 per cent of the respondents indicated that they used Brunei Malay at some time or other.

The majority of the puak Brunei who live in and around the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, speak Brunei Malay, using much of its extensive lexis, as well as its three vowel system.³⁴ However, the form of Brunei Malay spoken in most other parts of the country relies limited lexis, but is phonologically similar to the Brunei Malay spoken in the capital and surrounding areas. I would like to suggest that there is a continuum of varieties of Brunei Malay spoken in the country. This continuum ranges from a form which uses certain phonological features of Brunei Malay, a number of social markers, such as *bah³*, but uses a much reduced Brunei Malay lexis. At the other end of the range, much more Brunei Malay lexis is used. Such a continuum, and its relationship with the other forms of Malay used in the country is represented schematically in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A Framework for the Malay varieties in Brunei



At this point, I want to turn to the functions or roles of the various varieties of Malay in Brunei and suggest possible factors for their selection in preference to other varieties. Two of these varieties, Kampong Ayer and Kedayan, are used primarily for intragroup communication. Observation, backed up by data, suggests that many older speakers of these varieties have little knowledge of either English or Bahasa Melayu, though they can

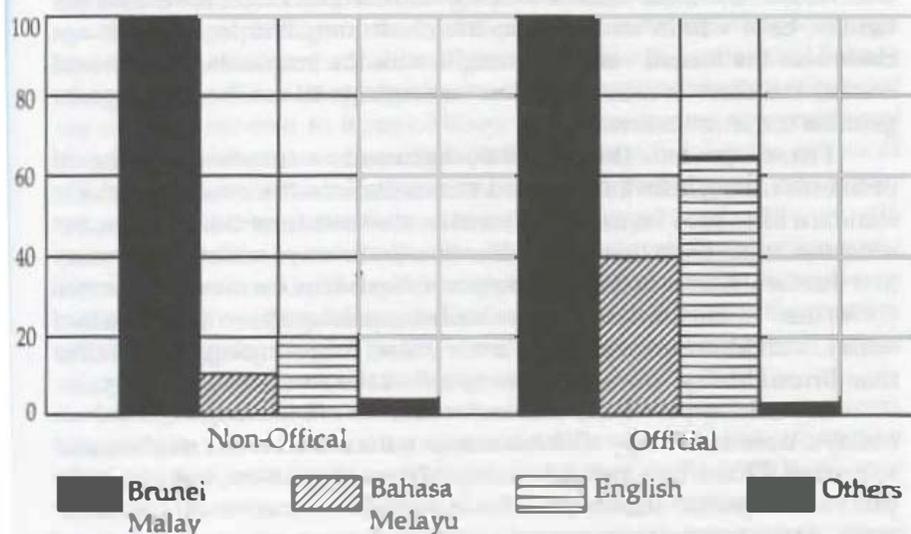
use Brunei Malay. Therefore, in both informal and formal situations, either Kedayan or Kampong Ayer is used by individuals in their respective groups. Brunei Malay is also used, usually in code-switched discourse with one of the varieties. This appears to be the only form of switching between these groups, although younger speakers of Kedayan and Kampong Ayer do introduce elements of both English and Bahasa Melayu into their speech. Thus, educational opportunities and age are obviously important factors in language choice in these groups. One further factor relating to the language use of Kampong Ayer speakers merits a brief mention here. Informants have suggested that Kampong Ayer residents who move away from the water village and resettle on land⁶ prefer not to use the Kampong variety of Malay.

Rather, they select Brunei Malay as their main means of communication. Such a shift in language use would appear to be a normal process over a period of time. What is surprising in this particular case is that the switch occurs at the same time as the move to the new location. In this particular example, both setting and social pressure to conform to the norms of the new community might be factors of significance here. Obviously, this is one area that would repay further study.

A type of Bazaar Malay is used by some members of the Chinese community although a proportion of this community has a good command of Brunei Malay. This form of bazaar Malay is very much part of the Chinese speech repertoire. As well as some members of the Chinese speech community, some of the indigenous population, especially those in the interior who have had little contact with the coastal Malays or have only recently entered the country, use a form of bazaar Malay. These Brunei pidgin varieties have not been studied, but they appear to have some of the features of bazaar Malay as described by Collins (1987:151-174). Use of such words as *punya* and *lu* by the Chinese in inter ethnic communication is common. Bruneian features are also common, such as the use of (and sometimes the over-use of) *bah*. Maxwell, (1980:241) states that the bazaar Malay used in Brunei exhibits "distinct coloration in phonology, morphology, and lexicon occasioned by the linguistic background of the Brunei dialect". Basically, this colloquial "channel of simple communication" (Collins, 1987:168) where there is a need to get a message across, usually when at least one of the participants in a group has a limited command of Malay.

At the other end of the scale is the standard variety, Bahasa Melayu. As the official language of the country, the domains of Bahasa Melayu ostensibly include official government business, education and the media. However, data from this study clearly shows that these domains are not the sole preserve of the official language and that the use of Brunei Malay

Figure 2: CODES USED FOR NON-OFFICIAL AND OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION IN BRUNEI



is also important. Figure 2 illustrates that Brunei Malay not only plays the dominant role in non-official communication, but that it has an important part to play in official communication too.

It is not really surprising that the code used in everyday communication should impinge on the domains of the standard language. Data shows that this is happening, to varying extents. Thus, although government circulars, directives and correspondence are all written in the standard language, official business is often conducted in Brunei Malay. In meetings, for example, the standard variety might be used in the introduction, with the remainder of the meeting being carried out in Brunei Malay. This is equivalent to the "letterhead format" described by Asmah (1987: 20) where use of the national language in Malaysia "purports respect for the [national language policy] but effort in implementing it in such situations appears to be defeated in the face of other considerations ..." But whereas in Malaysia, the switch will usually be towards English, in Brunei it will be towards the more informal Brunei Malay, and less commonly towards English.

The educational domain is similarly affected, as Ahmad's statement that "in schools Brunei Malay is used alongside the standard variety" (A. B. Ahmad, 1978; translation) testifies. Observation and both teacher and

student informants confirm this statement. The teaching situation plainly calls for the formal variety, but the need for the teacher to establish rapport with his students means that he or she will often revert to the more informal variety, both within and outside the classroom. Within the language classroom the formal variety is taught with the emphasis on rules and norms, and there is little provision for students to use the language for genuine communication.

I have elsewhere (Martin, 1989) discussed a number of pedagogical problems arising from the standard versus dialect situation in Brunei. The standard form may be used by Bruneian students from time to time, but observation suggests that the speaker does not always achieve the fluency in it that he achieves in the dialectal form. Certainly, the claim by Kimball (1978) that "under the demand of school examinations to write in Standard Malay, ... children are beginning to use [these] forms in many cases rather than Brunei Malay" does not seem to reflect the situation accurately.

It would appear then, that in Brunei, the official language, Bahasa Melayu, does not occupy all the domains a standard variety might expect to occupy. This is true, not only in the classroom situation, but also in the private and public sectors (see, for example, *Borneo Post*, 30 December 1989). At the present time, just over thirty years since it became the official language of the country, efforts are being made to promote the use of Bahasa Melayu (see, for example, *Pelita Brunei*, 27 September, 1989). As we have seen, it is seldom used outside the official domain, and even here it faces competition from Brunei Malay, and also English (Ozog, 1990a). Furthermore, it appears that, as far as career and society advancement are concerned, there is little prestige gained by using Bahasa Melayu. However, as a pass in the language at form five level is a prerequisite for further education, knowing the language is important. Certainly, there has been some dissatisfaction expressed over the use of Bahasa Melayu. In one case, reported in the *Borneo Post* (30 December, 1989), the Director of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Brunei, has stated his concern that the language is only used *pada papan-papan tanda sahaja*, in other words, as a notice-board language.

My argument here is that while Bahasa Melayu is necessary for educational advancement, its use does not necessarily carry prestige. Jaludin (1989) makes the point that "much of the community is more predisposed towards English, seeing as this foreign language guarantees a better future for their children". Ozog (1990a) discusses the role of English in Brunei at length, giving emphasis to the unplanned role, and states that its use appears to be on the increase, especially among the younger generation. Furthermore, informants have suggested that it is becoming increasingly acceptable to use English, especially Brunei Eng-

lish (see Ozog & Martin, forthcoming). Certainly a very common feature of communication in Brunei is codeswitching between Brunei Malay and the Brunei variety of English (Ozog, 1987; 1990b).

Language prestige is, then, of significance in determining language choice. But there are other factors. Informants have suggested that Bahasa Melayu, as the official language, has neither a Bruneian identity nor any of the values attributed to Brunei Malay. The latter is seen as a marker of social relationship, a source of pride to its users, having the values of intimacy, spontaneity and informality. It is an important code when there is a need to describe emotions, and to establish rapport and solidarity with others. Any attempt to use Bahasa Melayu as a medium for informal discourse would make the speaker appear *sombong* or artificial, and even pedantic, and would, perhaps, indicate a certain disloyalty to the community. This language might, on the other hand, be selected for more formal discourse, especially towards strangers.

The ambivalence of Bruneians towards the official language is shown, for example, in the media, where pronunciation of certain items fluctuates between that used in West Malaysia, and that in East Malaysia and Indonesia (see Poedjosoedarmo, G., forthcoming). Furthermore, at the present time, it appears that efforts are being made to Bruneianise Bahasa Melayu, that is to give it a Bruneian flavour. Indeed, one of the realisations of Brunei's participation in MABBIM is the absorption of Brunei Malay words into the standard form of Malay (see, for example, *Pelita Brunei*, 27 September 1989). Borrowing between these two codes is nothing new, but there does seem to have been an increase in Bruneian words and concepts appearing in the media lately. Recent examples are *mucang-mucang* ('co-operative work in the community') which, in some situations, has replaced *bergotong-royong*, and *awar galat* (a Bruneian concept of showing respect by one's manner). Such usage might be linked to the government's desire to 'build a community and nation where the concept of Malay Islamic Monarchy is paramount' (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 1984:1).

In this section we have seen that the roles of the formal variety (Bahasa Melayu) and the informal variety (Brunei Malay) are not as compartmentalised and static as in other diglossic situations. The data shows that there is some considerable over-lap between the functions of the two varieties. Furthermore, Bahasa Melayu is not an indispensable requirement in the achievement of social and economic status. In the next section, where language choice among the speakers of minority languages is examined, it will be seen that Brunei Malay also has an important role.

3.3 Use of the minority languages in Brunei

It will be recalled from earlier in this study that there are five *puak jati* in Brunei which have their own languages, namely, Tutong, Dusun, Bisaya, Belait and Murut. As well as these languages, Iban is spoken by a sizeable group (both citizens and permanent residents), and there is a small group of speakers of Penan. This present section looks at language use by these groups in both intergroup and intragroup communication. Population figures for the *puak jati* are not available, but I estimated earlier that there are not less than 25,000 speakers, with Tutong and Dusun being the largest groups.

Data from the present study indicate that these minority languages are mainly used with family and friends. However, in certain isolated areas of Brunei, two of the languages are used for intergroup communication. In the *ulu* Belait district, for example, Iban is the language of communication between relatively large groups of Iban and Dusun and a small, settled Penan group. Likewise, in the interior of the Tutong district, Dusun and Iban are sometimes used as a medium for intergroup communication.

An important factor in any discussion of communication within the family is marriage between individuals of different groups. Official figures are not available, but data based on this study show that approximately 15 per cent of marriages cut across linguistic boundaries (where the respondent or his/her spouse is a speaker of a minority language). Intermarriage is especially frequent between the different *puak* within the category Malay. The most common pattern is when Brunei or Kedayan individuals intermarry with individuals from other groups which are totally or predominantly Muslim. In other words, the Tutong or Belait. Another common pattern is intermarriage between Dusun, Bisaya and Chinese.

Choice of language within the family domain for all the minority language groups appears to follow a similar pattern. However, it is not the intention here to present all the data for all five groups. This would require a separate study. Instead, I propose to limit the discussion to language choice within a number of sub-domains of the family, and with friends, for the largest groups, Tutong and Dusun. A number of significant trends are apparent, and some factors contributing towards these trends are considered. It is hoped that the suggestions made here will provide the impetus for a more in-depth study of language use among the minority language groups in Brunei.

Figures clearly indicate that monolingual interaction in Tutong or Dusun is most prevalent between the respondents in this study and their grandparents. The situation is similar for communication with siblings, although approximately 10 per cent of those interviewed stated that topic

or setting might cause them to use a different code, usually Brunei Malay or English. Language use with the spouse, however, shows a totally different pattern. Obviously, intermarriage results in social relationships which often depend on the choice of language of wider communication. The language most frequently chosen is Brunei Malay

The most significant feature of code selection within these minority language groups is the language used for communication with children. Thus, 63 per cent of Tutong parents, and 72 per cent of Dusun parents, below the age of forty, use Brunei Malay with their children. Clearly, intermarriage is an important factor here. But it is not the only factor. Even in marriages where both spouses are Tutong or Dusun, Brunei Malay is still frequently selected for communication with children. In the case of both spouses being from the *puak* Tutong, 48 per cent use Brunei Malay with their children. The corresponding figure for Dusun is 57 per cent.

One other major factor in determining parents' choice of code for communication with children is education. By using a form of Malay, parents hope to provide their children with a firm foundation in the language prior to their entry into the first three years of primary education, where, it will be recalled, Bahasa Melayu is the language of instruction. In other words, mastery of a form of Malay holds the key to a better future for their children. A number of informants have suggested that Malay might also be perceived as an important marker of national identity and religion. Certainly, the Tutong and Belait identify closely with Malay culture and values. That is not to say, however, that speakers of these minority languages have no pride in their own languages. Many of them do, but their language choice in the family domain shows that they are, nevertheless, sometimes disloyal to it.

In the family domain, then, there is clear evidence that among the Tutong, Dusun and Belait (as well as the Bisaya and Murut, although data for these groups is somewhat sketchy), more children are acquiring Brunei Malay as their first language rather than the language of their parents. One consequence of this use of Brunei Malay within the family domain is that the roles of some of the minority languages appear to be shrinking and perhaps even disappearing. (For an interesting parallel, see the excellent study by Florey on the obsolescence of the Alune language). Edwards (1985: 50) cites lack of transmission of an original language from parents to children as being one of the most familiar processes by which language decline and death occur. Interestingly, speakers of these languages continue to have a strong attachment to their language. This appears to be a general phenomenon in contexts in which languages are no longer transmitted (Edwards, 1985: 51).

Speakers of minority languages in Brunei use their languages with friends of the same language groups. With friends of different language groups, however, Brunei Malay is used almost exclusively, a point made by Jaludin (1989:60) and others, and borne out by both observation and data.

The situation whereby these groups use the minority language for intragroup communication and switch to the majority language for intergroup communication is similar to that in India as described by Brown and Levinson (1979). They make the point that language choice in intragroup communication "serves to mark the group membership of those speaking minority languages to one another" (Brown & Levinson, 1979: 307-8).

Evidence from a number of Tutong speakers suggests that topic does not play a significant role in code selection. They state that even areas such as religion could be discussed in the Tutong language, depending on the identity of the participants and the history of their previous linguistic interaction. As well as the linguistic background of the participants in a conversation, age appears to be an important factor in determining language choice. It has been observed that younger speakers of minority languages are less likely to use their own languages in communication with individuals from the same language groups. Furthermore, some of these languages seem less acceptable than others. Thus, Iban, for example, although not considered a Bruneian language, is rarely used by the young outside their own environment. This is particularly so in settings where there are large numbers from other ethnic groups present. The small group of Iban students at the Brunei University always use Brunei Malay among themselves on the university campus. On being asked why, one student responded that he was "embarrassed to use Iban" and that Brunei Malay was very familiar to him anyway. This same individual habitually uses Brunei Malay to communicate with his sister (a student in the same educational institution). He stated that he would only use Iban in his longhouse environment, or with his siblings and Iban friends in a number of other settings where use of his mother tongue would not be noticed.

Such instances of language selection might be an attempt by the individual to be seen to fit into the community, as the Iban can be considered to be on the periphery of Brunei society. Thus, as Herman (1961) states, "the more marginal a person is in a particular society, the more salient for him becomes the question of language use as an indicator of group affiliation and the less he is free to respond merely in terms of the demands of the immediate situation..."

In the Tutong community, there is no such embarrassment in using the language. Informants have consistently stressed that they have pride

in using their language in intragroup communication. However, a number of factors will cause them to switch to another code, invariably Brunei Malay. An interesting feature here, is that Tutong speakers will usually switch codes not only in addressing a participant from a different language group, but also in the presence of one, even if the person is not taking part in the conversation. Bell (1984:172) calls such a person, ratified as a participant, an "auditor". Two particular instances will help to exemplify this. In the first, two people were speaking Tutong when approached by a non-speaker of the language. They immediately switched to Brunei Malay. On being asked why, they stated that it was impolite to use a code which is incomprehensible to a newcomer. They further explained that such a principle has its basis in the teachings of Islam (Hadith). In the second instance, two Tutong speakers switched to English when approached by an English-speaking colleague. The switch to English was immediate, even though the third person took no part in the discourse. On being questioned later, they responded that it would have been impolite to have continued their conversation in Tutong. Both Dorian (1981:79) and Gal (1979:124) have reported similar incidents where the arrival or presence of a third person, not conversant with the code being used, will trigger a shift to another language.

Much work remains to be done on language choice in these minority language groups. What is already very clear is that it is essential to speakers of these languages to acquire the dominant language of the community, Brunei Malay. Data from this study suggests that this is happening and that the majority of the younger generation are being brought up with Brunei Malay as the first language.

4. Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to give some insight into language use in Brunei, and to consider the factors which play a role in determining language selection. It has, furthermore, identified trends that will help us to predict the future of language use in the country.

The study has been mainly concerned with the functions of Malay and the minority languages in the community. It has been suggested that Brunei Malay is the dominant code, used by a large section of the population in a number of domains. There does not appear to be a clear-cut distinction between use of the official language, Bahasa Melayu, in formal situations and Brunei Malay in informal situations. However, speakers do introduce some level of formality into their speech if and when the occasion demands it.

Brunei Malay acts as the vehicle for intergroup communication in most areas of the country, although in a number of outlying areas this role may be taken over by Iban or Dusun.

A number of minority languages are used in Brunei, but their use is largely limited to within the family, and with friends of the same language group. Inter-marriage is seen to have a negative influence on the maintenance of these minority languages, but educational factors are important too. Within the minority language groups, more children are learning Brunei Malay as their first language rather than the code of their parents, a sure sign of language shift.

A number of factors have been suggested as being significant in determining language choice. These factors include the identity and age of the participants, educational considerations, inter-marriage, prestige associated with a particular language or language variety and location or setting. No attempt has been made, however, to ascertain which of the numerous factors are of greatest significance.

Much work still needs to be done in order to obtain a clearer picture of language selection in Brunei. It is evident that the roles of the various codes in Brunei are changing, and trends for the future are already apparent.

Notes

1. Following Hudson's (1978) classification, the languages of Brunei can be categorised as either exo-Bornean or endo-Bornean. The former includes the Malay and Iban isolects, as well as Dusun and Bisaya within the Idahan group (see also Prentice, 1970). The endo-Bornean category includes Belait, Tutong and Murut. Belait and Tutong are placed in the Lower Baram subgroup by Blust (1972), (the Baram-Tinjar sub-group of Hudson, (1978), which also includes Berawan, Narom and Miri. Murut (not to be confused with Sabah Murut) is closely allied to Kelabit, Tring, Lun Dayeh and Lun Bawang.

2. Needham (1958), in a short account of Baram Malay, comments on the contact of the Brunei Malays with the people of the Baram River and the use of Malay by these indigenous peoples.

3. Brunei Malay has the following vowels /i/, /a/, /u/, (Maxwel, 1980:247).

4. Simanjuntak (1988) calls the variety of Brunei Malay spoken around the capital, the Bandar Seri Begawan sub-dialect of Brunei Malay.

5. The particle *bah* has a number of functions in Brunei Malay, and it is used in other codes as well, notably, the bazaar form of Malay and in Brunei English. Ozog & Martin (forthcoming) have enumerated a number

of pragmatic functions of *bah*, including its use as an emphatic marker or "softener" and its roles in concurring, inviting, and parting with company and closing a conversation.

6. The government has a generous resettlement programme whereby residents of Kampong Ayer are offered subsidised housing as an incentive to move away from the water village.

7. The concept of Malay Islamic Monarchy (Melayu Islam Beraja), in existence for the last six hundred years, was reaffirmed when Brunei regained independence in 1984. The concept has recently been introduced as a compulsory course at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

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