Revisiting Language Planning in the Malaysian Education System: Towards Inclusive Multilingualism

Syadiyah Huda Suhaimi[1], Lee Huan Yik[1]*, and Faraha Hamidi[1]

[1]Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

In a multilingual and multicultural country like Malaysia, languages play a pivotal role not only in maintaining ethnic and cultural identity, but also, more importantly, in promoting unity and nation-building imperatives. In recent years, however, certain segments of the population have attempted to 'sensationalise' issues of ethno-cultural and religious intolerance, as well as linguistic incompetence, particularly in the national language (and to some extent English) for vested interests and narrow socio-political agendas. These have allegedly been framed as manifestations of our adoption of 'integrationist' over 'assimilationist' ideologies since independence. With these issues in mind, this paper seeks to revisit the stigmatisation of decades-old multilingual policies in Malaysia. Grounded in Ruiz's language planning orientations and Cobarrubias' language ideological framework, this paper examines how the national curriculum helps shape students' linguistic repertoires. More importantly, it seeks to explore the potential of multilingual education in promoting unity, social cohesion, and nation-building among young Malaysians. This study adopts a qualitative document-based approach by analyzing past and present education policy documents, current media reports, and existing scholarly research relevant to multilingual education and language planning in Malaysia. This method enables a systematic understanding of how policies are framed, debated, and contested across different platforms while also revealing how language ideologies are embedded in educational planning. Through triangulating insights from these multiple sources, the study identifies recurring ideological tensions and patterns that reflect broader sociopolitical discourses surrounding language in Malaysia. Ultimately, this study reaffirms the role of multilingual education policies in balancing divergent but often complementary ideologies, demands, and aspirations of both the people and the state. Multiple identities, we argue, can co-exist harmoniously within an enabling environment. As a way forward, Malaysians should move beyond mere tolerance or acceptance of societal multilingualism. Instead, there is a need to advocate for embracive and inclusive multilingual education policies in the spirit of celebrating and sustaining ethnolinguistic diversity as valuable resources in a plurilingual society.

Keywords: Multilingual education, language policy, language ideology, nation-building, Malaysia

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a multicultural and multilingual society shaped by Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others (including indigenous groups in Peninsular and East Malaysia), where language functions as both a unifying medium and a marker of identity. In 2024, Bumiputera made up 70.4 percent of the population, followed by Chinese at 22.4 percent, Indians at 6.5 percent, and other groups classified as "Others" (Statista, 2024). With a total population of 34 million, a further breakdown showed that Malays accounted for 57.9 percent, while Chinese, Indians, and other Bumiputera represented 22.6 percent, 6.6 percent, and 12.2 percent respectively (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024). This demographic and cultural diversity has produced a rich linguistic tapestry where Malay,

Mandarin, Tamil, and English are more widely spoken, establishing Malaysia as a well-known multilingual and cultural melting pot.

After independence in 1957, Malay was declared the national language to foster social cohesion and create a common means of communication among Malaya's diverse communities (Maya et al., 2018; Gill, 2014). Immigrants had introduced a variety of languages, beliefs, and cultural practices, but the adoption of Malay provided a shared foundation for national unity.

Furthermore, multilingualism can be defined both at the individual and societal-levels. Cenoz (2013) described it as the ability of a person to use more than one language, either actively through speaking and writing or passively through listening and reading. The European Commission (2007) expanded this definition by describing multilingualism as the ability of societies, institutions, groups, and individuals to engage regularly with more than one language in their daily lives. In Malaysia, multilingualism is embedded in its historical, political, and educational contexts. Multilingual education is manifested through two main types of primary schools in Malaysia: national schools that use Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction and national-type schools that use Mandarin or Tamil. In addition, private schools generally employ English as the medium of instruction, while Bahasa Malaysia is taught as a subject (Maya et al., 2018; Gill, 2008).

Although Malay has been granted official status, Malaysia also adopts a flexible language policy that allows the use of vernacular and global languages in education. We define multilingual education as not only involving the structured teaching and learning of several languages, but also their use as mediums of instruction. For inclusive multilingualism, we openly acknowledge that multilingual education also encompasses practices such as code-switching and translanguaging in classroom settings. Language planning in schools therefore needs to reflect wider social attitudes, ideologies, and discourses within Malaysia's diverse society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background of the Malaysian Education System

The Malaysian education system has undergone numerous revisions since 1824, beginning under British colonial rule (Sivalingam, 2021). Similar to other multiracial societies, education has served both as a unifying force and as a means of managing social differences in this context. During colonial times, Malaya adopted four mediums of education such as English, Malay, Tamil, and Chinese and these are based on the British "Divide and Rule Policy." Over the years, it is found that while this approach preserved linguistic and cultural identities, it had also deepened divisions along racial, religious, and class lines, creating obstacles to national unity (Sivalingam, 2021).

Nevertheless, numerous scholars have argued that a single-medium education system holds greater potential for fostering unity and shaping national character. Rejab (2015), as cited in Phang et al. (2019), contends that a single-medium school promotes national cohesion and harmony. Similarly, Prof. Dato' Dr. Teo Kok Seong of the Institute for Ethnic Studies (KITA), in the 23rd Persada Speech forum, noted that students in single-medium schools could foster unity without losing their cultural identity. Within such a system, Chinese and Tamil would still be taught, but Malay would serve as the primary language of instruction, thereby ensuring both unity and the preservation of linguistic diversity (Phang et al., 2019). This perspective challenges the belief that vernacular schools are the sole barrier to unity, emphasizing instead that moral values and principles taught within the school system are more influential (Phang et al., 2019; Zairil Khir Johari, 2015).

Revisiting historical education policy documents, the Razak Report (1956) marked the first significant attempt to centralize education policy by recommending Bahasa Malaysia as the primary medium of instruction to promote national unity. Chapter III of the Report explicitly declared the government's intention to establish Malay as the national language, requiring its teaching and learning in all schools as a condition for government assistance (Razak Report, 1956, pp. 17–18). From today's perspective, this reflects an early recognition of language ideology as a nation-building tool, where linguistic unification was seen as vital to forging a shared national identity.

This initiative was later reinforced through the Education Act 1996 (Act 550), which underscored Bahasa Malaysia's central role in education. Section 17(1) states that "The national language shall be the main medium of instruction in all educational institutions in the National Education System except a national-type school established under section 28 or any other educational institution exempted by the Minister from this subsection." Furthermore, Section 17(2) requires the national language to be taught as a compulsory subject in schools where another medium of instruction is used (Malaysia, 1996). This demonstrates the government's strong commitment to Bahasa Malaysia as a unifying linguistic medium, while still allowing flexibility through the continued existence of Chinese and Tamil national-type schools.

Taken together, the Razak Report (1956) and the Education Act (1996) reflect Malaysia's hybrid approach to language policy in education. By promoting Bahasa Malaysia as the unifying national language while accommodating linguistic plurality, Malaysia has pursued an integrationist ideology. This approach aims to foster unity in diversity by strengthening national cohesion through a shared language, without resorting to assimilationist measures that would undermine minority linguistic rights.

Malaysian Language Policy and Planning Landscape

In Malaysia, language policy and planning have been shaped by political compromise, historical legacies, and socioeconomic needs. The approach aims to recognize the multilingual reality of its population while positioning Bahasa Malaysia as a unifying national identity marker. Malaysia is home to diverse ethnic and cultural groups, where Malay functions as the universal language while Chinese, Indian, and other minorities continue to maintain their mother tongues (Yamat et al., 2014; Tan, 2005). Article 152 of the Federal Constitution safeguards these rights by stating that no person shall be prohibited from learning or teaching any language and that the government has the authority to preserve and sustain other community languages (Federal Government of Malaysia, 2010). Thus, Malay is designated as the national language, while multilingualism remains legally and socially protected. At the same time, English is widely used in professional and social domains, resulting in many Malaysians adopting multilingual identities (Yamat et al., 2014).

Despite this recognition of linguistic plurality, the teaching and learning of Bahasa Malaysia are strongly emphasized. Askar (2012-2013) highlights that this emphasis stems from its role as a national language that unites all ethnic groups through a shared medium. Article 153 of the Federal Constitution further reinforces the importance of Malay as the lingua franca for national unity (Askar, 2012-2013; Dumanig, David, & Symaco, 2012). In this way, Bahasa Malaysia is positioned as a cornerstone of Malaysian identity while simultaneously coexisting with other community languages.

However, language planning has also been influenced by globalization, particularly in relation to English. The demand for English proficiency is tied to employment opportunities, access to higher education, and economic competitiveness (Askar, 2012-2013; Gaudart, 1987). Policies such as the Dual Language Program (DLP), the Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (PPSMI), and the adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI) illustrate Malaysia's efforts to enhance English skills without displacing the national language. DLP, for instance, allows selected content subjects to be taught in both the national language and English, nurturing bilingual literacy (Suliman et al., 2020; Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018; Freire & Valdez, 2017). PPSMI, introduced in 2003, sought to raise students' English proficiency and support mastery of Science and Mathematics, given that most global knowledge in these fields is published in English (Yunus & Sukri, 2017; Selamat et al., 2010). Similarly, EMI is defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in contexts where English is not the majority's first language (Rose et al., 2021, as cited in Macaro, 2018).

Although these policies are seen as necessary for Malaysia's global competitiveness (Yunus & Sukri, 2017), they have also sparked controversy. Supporters, especially from well-educated backgrounds, welcome them for their potential to improve English competency. Critics, however, argue that such policies undermine the role of Malay as the national language, creating tensions between modernization and nationalism (Yunus & Sukri, 2017). Former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad defended the policies, stressing that Malaysia's survival depends on future generations mastering English for scientific advancement and international engagement (Joash, 2015; Danial, 2020). His stance highlights the ongoing balancing act between strengthening English for globalization and safeguarding Bahasa Malaysia as a unifying national language.

Integrationist versus Assimilationist Language Planning

Moreover, since Malaysia gained its independence, the question of language use has often been framed within the debate between "integrationist" and "assimilationist" ideologies (Mohamad et al., 2022). Integrationists emphasize the importance of supporting multilingual education and cultural preservation. They argue that ethnic communities should be encouraged to mingle and participate in the wider society while retaining their mother tongue and cultural identity. In contrast, assimilationists promote monolingualism in Bahasa Malaysia to strengthen national identity by advocating the principle of "one nation, one language." These conflicting perspectives have generated friction in the formulation of language policies. However, research by Maezawa (2023) challenges this stigmatization by demonstrating that the Malay language can coexist with other languages, such as English, Mandarin, and Tamil, within the context of globalization while still maintaining ethnic languages and cultures. In support of this view, Al Syahid (2023) argues that language diversity and multilingualism in Malaysia can enhance cross-cultural communication and foster unity among diverse communities, thereby promoting social cohesion.

In response to these competing demands between safeguarding national identity and meeting global linguistic needs, the MBMMBI policy (Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia, Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris) was introduced in 2012, replacing the PPSMI policy in an effort to strike a balance between national unity and global competitiveness. As reported by the Ministry of Education (2015: para 1, cited in Rashid et al., 2016), the policy aims "to ensure the usage of Malay language as a medium of communication in all schools, and to ensure that each child can master both Malay and English languages well and fluently." The introduction of MBMMBI was also intended to address the struggles faced by students with limited English proficiency, particularly in comprehending Science and Mathematics when taught in English. Ahmad et al. (2012) further contend that this policy helps to reduce the achievement gap in Science and Mathematics between rural and urban schools, which had widened under the PPSMI policy (Rashid et al., 2016).

Therefore, the MBMMBI framework reflects an understanding that English is indispensable for accessing global academic knowledge, scientific advancement, and economic networks, while Bahasa Malaysia continues to function as a central symbol of national identity, unity, and social integration. This demonstrates that language policy should not be treated as a zero-sum game. Instead, both languages can develop simultaneously, performing complementary roles in the education system and in the wider sociopolitical landscape. This perspective reinforces Maezawa's (2023) argument that multiple languages can coexist without diminishing the importance and value of each language.

Multilingual Education Policy Models & Medium of Instruction Challenges

Additionally, the existence of vernacular schools such as SJKC (Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina) and SJKT (Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil) illustrates Malaysia's intricate and evolving language policies. These schools represent the state's recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity, yet they also trigger debates on their impact on national unity (Kaur & Shapii, 2018). On one hand, they provide spaces for Chinese and Tamil students to preserve their heritage languages and identities. On the other hand, critics argue that graduates from vernacular schools often face difficulties in mastering Bahasa Malaysia, which in turn restricts their ability to interact across ethnic groups (Maezawa, 2023). This has strengthened the ideology calling for vernacular school abolition under the slogan "One nation, one education system." Such debates suggest that while vernacular schools embody the principles of multilingual education, they simultaneously highlight the struggle of balancing diversity with national integration.

These concerns mirror historical debates dating back to the colonial and early post-independence period. For instance, the Barnes Report (1951) promoted bilingual education with English and Malay as the main languages, marginalizing vernacular languages. The Chinese community resisted this model as they viewed it as a threat to cultural survival and identity (Sivalingam, 2021). Conversely, the Fenn-Wu Report (1951) emphasized the importance of preserving Chinese-language education and safeguarding cultural rights. Together, these two reports captured the ideological divide between assimilationist and pluralist approaches to education. Their legacies continue to shape present-day arguments, as policymakers and communities remain divided over

whether Malaysia should move toward a monolingual national system or embrace a multilingual model that equally values all languages.

Despite Malaysia's rich linguistic diversity, tensions persist between linguistic pluralism and assimilationist ideologies. Albury (2019) argues that multilingual education is often perceived by some groups as a threat to national unity, while Pillai et al. (2021) emphasize how policies prioritizing one language can marginalize others, thereby eroding speakers' identities. The PPSMI policy (Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English) highlights this dilemma. Implemented in 2003 to strengthen English proficiency and accelerate access to global scientific knowledge, it faced widespread backlash and was abolished in 2012. Educationist Prof. Datuk Dr. Ishak Haron observed that students struggled to comprehend lessons in English, and teachers resorted to code-switching, which undermined content delivery (Sharifah, 2024). Scholars such as Lai and Lai (2012) further noted that PPSMI lacked clear objectives, thorough planning, and ongoing evaluation, which produced unintended backwash effects. To prevent similar outcomes, future multilingual policies must be inclusive, evidence-based, and contextually grounded. Importantly, capacity building among educators is essential. Teachers who receive specialized training in multilingual education are better prepared to create inclusive learning environments, foster intercultural understanding, and promote social cohesion (Amin et al., 2024; Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

Theories and Concept

This study draws on two language ideology models to explore how ideologies shape language planning in Malaysia. The first is Richard Ruiz's framework, which identifies three orientations: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. This model was developed to provide a lens for examining language learning policies (McNelly, 2015). The "language as a problem" orientation reflects concerns about insufficient proficiency in the national language, which is often framed as a threat to unity and identity. Ruiz (2010, p. 166, cited in Hult & Hornberger, 2016) explained that policies grounded in this orientation promote the dominance of the majority language while discouraging or restricting multilingualism. The "language as a right" orientation emphasizes legal protections for individuals, particularly minority groups, to learn, use, and preserve their heritage languages without discrimination (Hornberger, 1990, p. 24; Hult, 2014, p. 164; Hult & Hornberger, 2016). Finally, the "language as a resource" orientation highlights how linguistic diversity can serve as an asset that generates economic, cultural, and political benefits by strengthening social and cross-community connections (McNelly, 2015).

The second framework is Cobarrubias' (1983) taxonomy of language ideologies, which outlines four orientations: vernacularisation, linguistic assimilation, linguistic pluralism, and internationalisation. These ideologies have influenced Malaysia's multilingual education policy and reflect the state's attempts to balance diversity, unity, and social cohesion. The rationale for employing both models lies in their ability to reveal the ideological assumptions and power relations embedded in multilingual societies. They illustrate how Malaysia's multilingual education policies are not only administrative measures but also reflect contested ideas about cultural rights, national identity, and socioeconomic development.

In addition to Ruiz's and Cobarrubias's frameworks, this study incorporates postcolonial, critical multilingualism, language economics, and policy implementation perspectives to offer a comprehensive view of Malaysia's language planning. The postcolonial perspective highlights how Malaysia's colonial history, where English functioned as the language of power, still influences current debates between globalization and nationalism. This can be seen in the current language policy, Dual Language Program (DLP) that highlights the tension between the preservation of linguistic sovereignty through Bahasa Malaysia and the preservation of global competitiveness.

Building on this, the notion of critical multilingualism language awareness underscores the necessity of exmining the ways in which language policies affect social equity. According to Mary & Young (2018, p.275) cited in Hedman & Fisher (2022), regarding the concern of Multilingual Language awareness "one of the criteria used to judge the equity of a country's education system concerns its capacity to respond to the challenges posed by an increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse post-modern society". This perspective invites educators and policymakers to consider which languages are recognized within the education system and which are overlooked.

While Chinese and Tamil schools receive institutional support, indigenous languages like Iban and Kadazandusun are still not widely included in mainstream curricula. This gap highlights ongoing inequalities in language policy. In addition, from the economic point of view, being able to speak multiple languages, especially Bahasa Malaysia, English, and Mandarin, is viewed as a valuable skill that can enhance job prospects and contribute to economic growth. As noted by Civico & Grin (2020), analysing language from economic perspectives enables policymakers to systematically model linguistic choices and results, providing quantitative insights that can guide equitable and effective language planning. For instance, programs like the Dual Language Programme (DLP) and efforts to promote ASEAN languages show how Malaysia uses linguistic diversity to boost its position in the global economy.

Finally, policy implementation theory helps link broader ideological and economic factors to what actually happens in classrooms. As outlined by Stewart et al., (2008) cited in Khan (2016), policy implementation means "the execution of the law in which various stakeholders, organisations, procedures, and techniques work together to put polices into effect with a view to attaining policy goals". For example, The MBMMBI policy aims for balanced bilingualism, but its uneven application in rural and urban schools highlights the difficulty of putting national policy into practice. Together, these viewpoints show that Malaysia's multilingual education policies are shaped by a mix of historical, sociocultural, economic, and institutional influences, which still affect how language can empower some people while creating barriers for others.

On top of that, Cobarrubias' taxonomy and Ruiz's orientations are also interconnected. Cobarrubias identifies broad ideological frameworks that shape language policy, whereas Ruiz highlights how languages are valued as problems, rights, or resources. Taken together, these models demonstrate how ideological positions frame debates on multilingual education in Malaysia and provide a deeper understanding of how language planning is driven by identity, power, and national development.

METHODOLOGY

To gain a comprehensive understanding of how politics influence language planning in Malaysia's multilingual education system, this study adopts a qualitative document analysis approach. Instead of relying on interviews, the research examines key policy documents, government reports, and legislative frameworks such as the Razak Report, Education Act, and subsequent national education blueprints. In addition, recent news articles and media coverage are analyzed to capture contemporary debates surrounding multilingual education and language policy. Scholarly studies that explore Malaysia's language policies, ideologies, and planning practices are also reviewed to provide further depth and contextual understanding.

Analyzing policy texts, academic literature, and media discourse allows this study to uncover both the official intentions behind language policies and the contested narratives that emerge in public debates. Policy documents reveal how the state frames language planning in relation to national identity, unity, and globalization, while news media and scholarly research highlight the tensions, criticisms, and alternative perspectives voiced by different stakeholders. This triangulation of sources is essential for identifying the underlying language ideologies such as pluralism, assimilation, and linguistic nationalism that shape Malaysia's education system.

To enhance the methodological rigor of this approach, future research should triangulate document analysis with empirical methods, including interviews and focus group discussions with policymakers, teachers, parents, and community leaders. Incorporating these diverse perspectives would deepen understanding of the interpretation and implementation of language policies across various social and institutional contexts. Furthermore, the integration of classroom case studies and pilot evaluations may yield critical insights into the practical functioning of multilingual education policies. The combination of document-based analysis and empirical inquiry would enable future studies to achieve greater depth, validity, and representativeness in examining Malaysia's complex language planning landscape.

Ultimately, this approach demonstrates that language planning in Malaysia cannot be understood solely as a top-down administrative process. Rather, it is a dynamic and contested arena where state objectives, political negotiations, and societal responses intersect. By analyzing documents, media, and prior studies, the research traces how multilingualism is simultaneously reaffirmed as a resource and challenged as a political problem,

thereby providing a holistic understanding of the ideological and political struggles embedded in Malaysia's national education system.

Lastly, all sources used in this study were chosen and documented using a systematic approach, ensuring both transparency and credibility. Policy documents were sourced from official government repositories and checked for publication date and version accuracy. Media materials were gathered from reputable national outlets including The Star, New Straits Times, and Malay Mail based on their relevance to current multilingual education discussions. Scholarly works came from peer-reviewed journals to guarantee academic reliability. Each document was verified to confirm its origin and contextual accuracy. This thorough documentation process keeps the analysis traceable, and firmly rooted in authentic representations of Malaysia's language policy discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Richard Ruiz's Model: Three Language Orientations

Language as a Problem

In this context, the notion of language as a problem is closely tied to assimilationist ideologies. Critics argue that the use of multiple languages in schools weakens Malay dominance and disrupts social unity, while the marginalization of minority languages creates tension among ethnic groups and widens cultural divides (Hult & Hornberger, 2016). Because linguistic diversity is perceived as an obstacle to cohesion, this ideology often leads to pressure to use the dominant language, Malay. Such pressure can produce language shame, which arises when individuals feel inadequate due to their inability to meet linguistic standards or societal expectations (Amadi, 2022). For example, speakers from minority backgrounds may feel inferior because of their limited proficiency in Malay or the devaluation of their heritage languages, leading them to avoid using their native languages in formal settings and reinforcing linguistic hierarchies.

Malaysia's National Language Policy reflects elements of linguistic nationalism, which views a common language as essential to national unity and seeks to create a homogenous identity (Kiana, 2018). While this policy aims to promote cohesion, it has unintentionally produced a phenomenon of 'language shame' among those struggling with Bahasa Malaysia. The 2013 Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) reinforced Bahasa Malaysia as the main medium of instruction in line with Article 152 of the Federal Constitution (Federal Constitution of Malaysia, 1957), which designates it as the sole national language. This reflects Ruiz's (2010) concept of language as a problem, where policies limit multilingualism in favor of the dominant language, thereby contributing to linguistic inadequacy among minority groups.

At the same time, English holds a crucial role in Malaysia as the accepted second language (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). High proficiency in English is often associated with intellectual ability, although Malay nationalism remains strong. Some Malays, despite having Bahasa Malaysia as their mother tongue, prefer English due to upbringing, which has drawn criticism. Tan (2017) observed that Malays who struggle with their own national language are sometimes considered less Malaysian or even disloyal, as illustrated by the 2009 incident when Minister Rais Yatim criticized a journalist for asking questions in English rather than Malay. This example shows how linguistic nationalism frames English as a threat to national identity and cohesion, particularly in official contexts where Malay is expected to dominate. Nonetheless, English continues to play an important role in Malaysian communication, reflecting differing ideological positions that view it either as a problem or as a valuable resource.

Language as a Right

Nonetheless, acknowledging language as a right allows Malaysia to embrace its multilingual heritage as an important part of national identity. Although some oppose the preservation of vernacular schools, abolishing them would lead to forced assimilation and increase racial tension. Malaysia's commitment to linguistic rights and mother tongue education can be seen in the existence of national-type schools such as SJK(C) and SJK(T), which provide Mandarin and Tamil instruction for the Chinese and Indian communities during the first six years

of schooling. While these schools support the preservation of heritage languages, there remain gaps in addressing other linguistic needs, particularly English. Despite English being widely regarded as both a linguistic right and a tool for socioeconomic mobility, the absence of public English-medium schools highlights a mismatch between linguistic ideologies and actual educational opportunities.

This perspective also aligns with multilingual education policies that promote inclusive learning and enable individuals to study in the language they understand (UNESCO, 2025). UNESCO affirms that learning in one's own language improves outcomes and socio-emotional development, while the recognition of International Mother Tongue Day in 1999 reinforced the right to use and learn in one's mother tongue as a fundamental human right (Sabariah, 2024). In Malaysia, the Education Act of 1996 protects access to mother tongue education, ensuring cultural preservation and linguistic equity (espact.com.my, n.d.). UNESCO statistics showing that about 40% of the global population lacks access to education in their own language underline the urgency of this issue. Malaysia's support for vernacular schools, together with initiatives like Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka's work on vocabulary, demonstrates both cultural preservation and educational strategy. These measures ensure that students from diverse linguistic backgrounds are not disadvantaged by instruction solely in the dominant language but instead are provided opportunities that enhance socio-emotional and academic growth. Thus, maintaining inclusive practices is vital for fulfilling the vision of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on equitable education and for safeguarding cultural heritage.

Language as a Resource

Moving on, viewing language as a resource highlights the economic and social benefits of multilingual education. In this study, this orientation emphasizes inclusive policies that promote multilingualism for trade, diplomacy, and cultural enrichment. Programs such as the Dual-Language Programme (DLP) and English Medium Instruction (EMI) reflect efforts to equip individuals with skills for both domestic and international markets. This approach aligns with Malaysia's aim of producing a competitive workforce while balancing linguistic diversity and national cohesion. Unlike the language-as-a-problem orientation, which sees diversity as a threat, the resource perspective reframes multilingualism as a strength. By supporting pluralism rather than assimilation, language as a resource allows individuals to contribute more actively to global politics and the economy (McNelly, 2019). According to McNelly (2019), shifting from viewing linguistic diversity as a drawback to leveraging it as an advantage marks a progressive step in policy development.

The increasing enrolment of non-Chinese students in Chinese schools further illustrates this perspective. Audrey (2025) reports that around 20 percent of students in SJK(C) are non-Chinese, with higher numbers in rural areas. This trend reflects parents' recognition of the value of multilingual education and their role as key stakeholders in language policy and planning. Parents who view Mandarin as important for their children's future often adopt integrationist ideologies that shape educational choices. Despite continued calls to abolish Chinese schools, including statements by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that such schools hinder unity (Nadaraj, 2024), many parents strongly oppose their closure. Instead, they support national-type Chinese schools based on language preference, curriculum, and convenience. This reflects the concept of parentocracy, where education is determined by parental choices and resources rather than children's efforts (Halil, 2020; Brown, 1990). Parents, therefore, play a significant role in influencing language policy in multilingual contexts.

In addition, parental decisions also show an awareness of the economic value of multilingualism. Chai (2024) reports that about 20.8 percent of jobs in Malaysia require Mandarin proficiency, highlighting demand in the labor market. Enrolling children in Chinese schools provides early exposure to Mandarin, which has emerged as a key global language for employment. This aligns with the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013–2025), particularly Shift 2, which encourages every child to be proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English while learning an additional language (Ministry of Education, 2013). With Malaysia's multicultural society, students are expected to acquire multiple languages through different school systems. The growth of Arabic-medium institutions, including Sekolah Agama, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama, and Tahfiz schools, further reflects the perception of Arabic as a valuable resource. Collectively, these developments underscore the importance of multilingual education as both a cultural and economic asset.

Cobbarubias's Model: Taxonomy of Language Ideologies

Vernacularization

Firstly, vernacularization prioritizes Indigenous languages in a society's language policies. Zeng and Li (2023) note that incorporating Indigenous languages into education as a medium of instruction is a common approach to achieve vernacularization. In Malaysia, the continued existence of Chinese and Tamil national-type schools (SJKC and SJKT) since colonial times reflects the effort to preserve linguistic and cultural heritage among these communities. Although concerns remain about the impact of vernacular schools on national integration, their persistence demonstrates Malaysia's long-standing commitment to safeguarding linguistic diversity, which forms a core aspect of its multicultural identity.

Malaysia's vernacularization efforts extend to the standardization of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language. Mukhlis and Sa'eda (2021) explain that Malay exists in two forms: Colloquial Malay (CM), used mainly in informal contexts, and Standard Malay (SM), employed in formal domains such as schools and media. In a multicultural setting, promoting Standard Malay as the lingua franca ensures that its national status is respected over regional dialects. Accordingly, Sebutan Baku (SB), or standard pronunciation, is emphasized as the proper form of Standard Malay for communication (Mukhlis & Sa'eda, 2021). The adoption of Standard Malay instead of regional dialects illustrates a conscious effort to establish a unifying lingua franca that transcends ethnic and regional boundaries. This decision supports consistent national communication and aligns with broader nation-building initiatives.

Nevertheless, prioritizing Standard Malay does not necessarily marginalize other languages. Instead, it highlights the complementary role of Bahasa Malaysia within Malaysia's multilingual education system, where it coexists alongside other languages in vernacular schools. In this sense, vernacularization ensures that Bahasa Malaysia functions as a unifying force while also protecting the linguistic rights of ethnic groups. Thus, Malaysia maintains linguistic diversity while reinforcing a shared national identity through the use of a common language.

Linguistic Assimilation versus Pluralism (Integration)

Next, linguistic assimilation promotes the idea that the dominant language is superior in society and that all individuals should speak it regardless of their linguistic background (Zeng & Li, 2023). In Malaysia, this is reflected in the promotion of Bahasa Malaysia as the primary language of daily communication, government, and education. The National Language Act of 1967 institutionalized Malay as the national and official administrative language, requiring its use as the main medium of instruction in schools. While this policy sought to foster a shared linguistic identity, critics argue that it marginalized minority languages and reduced space for linguistic diversity.

In contrast, linguistic pluralism recognizes the coexistence of multiple languages and affirms that different linguistic communities can thrive without assimilation (Zeng & Li, 2023). In Malaysia, this is evident in the Dual Language Program (DLP), which permits the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English. The continued operation of vernacular schools and the use of multiple languages in media, business, and daily communication further illustrate the practice of pluralism.

Overall, Malaysia's approach aligns more closely with pluralism and integration than with strict assimilation. Although Bahasa Malaysia holds symbolic and functional status as the official language, minority languages such as Mandarin and Tamil remain institutionally supported. The coexistence of multiple education systems, vernacular schools, and multilingual media settings reflects a pragmatic understanding that national unity can be achieved without enforcing complete linguistic uniformity. Thus, Malaysia's nation-building strategy emphasizes managing and embracing linguistic diversity within a shared civic framework, reflecting integrationist ideologies that allow multiple identities to coexist under a broader national identity.

Internationalisation

Another language planning ideology discussed by Cobarrubias is internationalisation. According to Zeng and Li (2023), this occurs when a non-native language becomes a primary tool of communication, either as an official language or as a medium of instruction in education. Such cases are common in postcolonial countries that adopt the colonizer's language to support development and modernization. In Malaysia, English has been recognized as the second most important language since independence (Maezawa, 2023). Policies such as the Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI) illustrate the belief that English proficiency is essential for Malaysia's integration into the global economy. With the rapid pace of globalization, English is viewed as a crucial skill for national advancement and future competitiveness (Yunus & Sukri, 2017).

Nevertheless, internationalisation remains highly debated in Malaysia. After independence, English was retained as an official language alongside efforts to promote Malay as the sole national language (Maezawa, 2023). Globalization, however, reinforced the economic value of English, as studies show its positive influence on trade flows, financial development, and economic growth (Shaharuddin et al., 2022). Critics argue that the prioritization of English threatens the symbolic status of Malay and risks eroding linguistic identities (Lee, 2003; Lee, 2008; Lee et al., 2010). Concerns about equity also arose, particularly regarding rural and lower-income students, which led to the abolition of PPSMI in 2012.

Given these tensions, Malaysia's approach to internationalisation requires balance. While English proficiency provides undeniable benefits, policymakers must ensure that it does not undermine the national language or create linguistic hierarchies where English speakers are privileged over others. A more inclusive model would allow global and national languages to coexist as complementary resources. Reflecting this direction, the Education Minister recently announced at the Empowering Education Summit 2025 that ASEAN languages such as Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese would be introduced as elective subjects. This initiative demonstrates Malaysia's broader commitment to promoting multilingualism that is globally relevant while remaining culturally grounded (Opalyn, 2025).

Way Forward

As Malaysia continues to chart its distinctive multilingual identity, it is important to establish inclusive and sustainable approaches that maintain language diversity and foster national cohesion, particularly through education across all school types. Ensuring the sustainability of multilingual education requires addressing several critical issues in both policy and practice. One key area is the delivery of national language education. The teaching of Bahasa Malaysia, we suggest, should shift towards more contextualized and inclusive instructional methods that engage students from diverse backgrounds. Teachers should create opportunities for learners to use the language in real-life contexts, moving beyond memorization to develop communicative competence (Abdallah, 2024; Burns & Richards, 2009). For example, the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) promotes authentic communication through activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks. These methods not only enhance language proficiency but also foster social confidence (Abdallah, 2024; Nunan, 1999). By adopting this approach, national language learning can become more engaging, accessible, and relevant, contributing to social integration and academic success. Ultimately, sustaining Malaysia's vision of a multilingual and inclusive society will depend on ensuring that national language education is meaningful and inclusive for all learners.

Another pressing issue concerns the preservation of indigenous and minority languages, which is central to promoting linguistic equity and cultural sustainability. Malaysia's indigenous languages, especially those spoken by native tribes and Orang Asli communities in Sabah and Sarawak, face serious risks of extinction. To counter this, community-driven language revitalization and the integration of indigenous languages into early childhood education are essential. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the early years allows children to begin learning in their familiar languages before transitioning to Bahasa Malaysia and English. Sabariah (2024) noted that Malaysia has long safeguarded Chinese and Indian mother tongues for educational and communicative purposes even before the global recognition of World Native Language Day. In addition, the government has demonstrated commitment to preserving indigenous languages through initiatives integrated into school curricula and supported by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP). Since 1985, DBP has led projects

such as the Tribal Language Vocabulary Project and has published textbooks to aid revitalization, including the 2005 releases of Sabah Tribal Language List: Bahasa Melayu – Murut Tahol Language and Sabah Tribal Language List: Malay Language – Bajau Sama Language (Sabariah, 2024). Sustaining these initiatives is vital, as the loss of indigenous languages not only diminishes linguistic diversity but also erases traditional knowledge, oral histories, and unique cultural perspectives.

Implementation Pathways for Inclusive Multilingual Policy

To put inclusive multilingual education into practice, the Ministry of Education needs to establish a thorough implementation framework that translates policy discussions into tangible steps in curriculum, teaching methods, community involvement, and assessment. Firstly, teacher education and professional development should emphasize multilingual teaching and translanguaging approaches that recognize and support students' language backgrounds. Training modules for teachers can incorporate workshops on handling linguistically diverse classrooms, creating culturally responsive lesson plans, and applying translanguaging strategies in daily teaching.

For example, Under the MBMMBI policy, Bahasa Malaysia and English teachers can join joint professional development to support bilingual instruction. In Dual Language Programme (DLP) schools, these teachers work together to monitor students' bilingual progress and share strategies to improve understanding of subjects taught in English. This supports the Education Blueprint 2013–2025 goal of balanced bilingual proficiency and subject mastery, promoting Bahasa Malaysia as the national language while valuing English for global skills. Meanwhile, in SJKC and SJKT schools, Bahasa Malaysia teachers cooperate with vernacular school educators to help students adjust to national assessments in BM, such as by creating bilingual glossaries and translated materials. These efforts align with the Education Act 1996, which upholds Bahasa Malaysia while supporting other community languages. Furthermore, in Sabah and Sarawak, teachers can also work with local communities to include indigenous languages in lesson modules, connecting learning with local knowledge and culture.

Next, curriculum and resource development should also be closely integrated with community collaboration to reflect Malaysia's linguistic diversity in both content and practice. Creating multilingual digital storybooks, interactive e-learning platforms, and localized textbooks in minority and indigenous languages such as Iban, Dusun, Bajau, and Semai can help align national education goals with local needs. These resources should be co-developed by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), local universities, NGOs specializing in language documentation, and the communities whose languages are represented. Engaging community elders, cultural practitioners, and parents ensures linguistic authenticity and supports the intergenerational transmission of language and culture. Schools can invite these community members to serve as language mentors or co-educators, contributing oral histories, folktales, and traditional knowledge to enrich classroom learning. To formalize these efforts, elective modules such as "Language and Cultural Heritage" could be introduced in national and vernacular schools, enabling students to explore their local linguistic ecosystems through storytelling, music, and cultural research. School community initiatives such as Language and Culture Days or Multilingual Heritage Weeks can further highlight students' creative work in multiple languages, normalizing linguistic diversity in education and supporting Malaysia's vision of inclusive multilingualism.

Lastly, a robust monitoring and coordination framework should be established to support effective multilingual education policies. The Ministry of Education, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, teacher training institutes, indigenous organizations, and civil society representatives could form a National Multilingual Education Coordination Council to oversee planning, evaluation, and ongoing improvement. This council would set clear, measurable indicators, including proficiency benchmarks in Bahasa Malaysia, English, and other community languages, teacher competency standards, and community participation indexes. In addition, an annual Multilingual Education Report Card can also be implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE), to track progress, highlight challenges, and offer evidence-based recommendations. This collaborative approach would ensure policy decisions remain transparent, data-driven, and responsive to Malaysia's changing linguistic and educational needs.

Balancing Language Ideologies within the Malaysian Linguistic Ecology

Malaysia must strive to maintain its linguistic ecology by balancing language ideologies without prioritizing one language at the expense of others. As presented in this paper, the country's linguistic ecology is essentially influenced by nationalism, globalism, pluralism, and assimilation, all of which shape how languages are valued and used. To maintain this balance, Malaysia should promote linguistic coexistence where languages complement one another according to their functions. For example, English may serve as a global lingua franca, vernacular and indigenous languages function as cultural anchors, and Bahasa Malaysia provides a shared national identity. Language policy should therefore move beyond symbolic recognition and toward substantive inclusion, where each language is treated as a resource that contributes to society rather than as a barrier. By doing so, Malaysia can preserve its multicultural legacy while fostering coexistence among different languages. This approach not only strengthens social cohesion but also ensures that education policies reflect inclusivity and multilingual competence.

To sustain an inclusive and sustainable multilingual education policy, Malaysia must embrace an integrationist rather than an assimilationist model. The integrationist approach promotes linguistic plurality and respect for cultural diversity, while assimilationist practices risk erasing linguistic and cultural identities. This shift requires the Ministry of Education to develop a multilayered policy framework that institutionalizes teacher training programs for multilingual contexts, supports multilingual curricula, and encourages community-based language education. Such policies will not only promote the national language but also strengthen the value of minority and indigenous languages within the education system.

Although the implementation of Multilingual Education (MLE) in Malaysia has shown progress, significant challenges remain. These challenges include inconsistent policy enforcement, a shortage of trained multilingual educators, insufficient learning materials in minority languages, and political sensitivities surrounding language use. Addressing these issues requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, linguists, and community members. Continuous dialogue and cooperation will be essential to create adaptable MLE models that meet both regional needs and global standards. By engaging all relevant parties in this process, Malaysia can move closer to establishing a fair and effective multilingual education system that reflects the country's diverse linguistic landscape.

CONCLUSION

Malaysia's multilingual education policies have long served as a foundation for nation-building and social cohesion while managing the country's diverse linguistic landscape. Nevertheless, policies that promote linguistic diversity are often stigmatized, as debates about multilingual education continue to be framed within the tension between integrationist and assimilationist ideologies. Drawing on Ruiz's and Cobarrubias's frameworks, this paper highlights the importance of viewing multilingualism as both a resource and a right rather than as a problem. While issues of national integration and language proficiency remain, these challenges are rooted in the lack of an inclusive and balanced approach to language planning rather than in inherent weaknesses of multilingual policies.

As Malaysia continues to address the complexities of multilingual education, it is vital to shift public perception from mere tolerance of linguistic diversity to genuine acceptance and appreciation. Policymakers and educators should therefore promote inclusive, integration-oriented policies that respect and sustain Malaysia's ethnolinguistic richness. By doing so, Malaysia can ensure that its language policies not only reinforce national identity but also prepare its citizens to thrive in an increasingly globalized world.

REFERENCES

1. Abdallah, M. M. S. (2024). Some Important Facts about Language Teaching/Learning: Basics and Assumptions.
2. Al Syahid, M. I. (2023, April 9). Language Intelligence Vital for Malaysia. The Sun Daily. Retrieved from https://thesun.my/opinion-news/language-intelligence-vital-for-malaysia-NK1083 8410

3. Albury, N. J. (2019). Mother tongues and languaging in Malaysia: Critical linguistics under critical examination. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 40(1), 1–14. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26847179

4. Amadi, C. E. (2022). The Effect of Language Shaming on Second Language Learners' Self-Confidence. Interdisciplinary Journal of African & Asian Studies (IJAAS). 8 (1), 1-10.

5. Amin, T. A., Sibarani, B., Ginting, S. A., Husein, R., & Ekayati, R. (2024). mplementation of Teacher Training: Providing Specialized Training forTeachers to Handle Multilingual Classrooms Effectively. International Journal of Educational Research Excellence (IJERE). 03 (02). 599-604.

6. Askar, W. A. (2012-2013). Language Planning and Policy in Malaysia. Academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/3642241/Language_Planning_and_Policy

7. Audrey, D. (2025, February 23). Chinese Primary School Face Stiff Headwinds. New Straits Times. Retrieved from: https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2025/02/1178949/chinese-primary-schools-face-stiff-headwinds?_ga=2.103771968.1727802319.1740298309-1720271286.16 83478408

8. Cenoz, J. (2013). Section A: Introduction to Multilingualism. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 33, 3-18. Retrieved from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S026719051300007X

9. Cenoz, J. (2013). The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

10. Chai, J. (2024, December 9). Amidst Malaysia's Rising Polarisation: What More Mandarin-Speaking Non-Chinese Malaysians Show. Retrieved from: https://fulcrum.sg/amidst-malaysias-rising-polarisation-what-more-mandarin-speaking-non-chinese-malaysians-show/

11. Civico, M., & Grin, F. (2020). Language economics: Overview, applications and recent methodological developments. Language and Economy: Language industries in a Multilingual Europe.

12. Danial, D. (2020, September, 3). Dr Mahathir: Math and Science lessons in English are crucial building blocks for broadening Malaysian students' horizons. Retrieved from: https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/10/04/dr-mahathir-math-and-science-lessons-in-english-are-crucial-building-blocks/1909335

13. Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2024). Demographic statistics, first quarter 2024. https://www.dosm.gov.my/portal-main/release-content/demographic-statistics-first-quarter-2024

14. espact.com.my. (n.d.). The Education Act 1996. Retrieved from: https://www.espact.com.my/national-education-system/the-education-act-1996/10 00

15. Federal Government of Malaysia. (2010). Federal Constitution of Malaysia. International Law Book Services.

16. FederalConstitution of Malaysia. (1957). Government of Malaysia.

17. Federation of Malaya.

18. Halil, B. (2020). A School Choice Experience at the Age of "Parentocracy": Impressions from a Public Primary School in Turkey. International Journal of Progressive Education. 6 (2). 230-247.

19. https://fulcrum.sg/amidst-malaysias-rising-polarisation-what-more-mandarin-spea king-non-chinese-malaysians-show/

20. Hedman, C., & Fisher, L. (2022). Critical Multilingual Language Awareness Among Migrant Students: Cultivating Curiosity and a Linguistics of Participation. Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 24(1), 87–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2022.2078722

21. Hult, F. M., & Hornberger, N. H. (2016). Revisiting Orientations in Language Planning: Problem, Right, and Resource as an Analytical Heuristic. The Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe, 33 (3), 30-49. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/476

22. Kaur, P. & Shapii, A. (2018). LANGUAGE AND NATIONALISM IN MALAYSIA:

23. Khan, A. R. (2016). Policy Implementation: Some Aspects and Issues. Journal of Community Positive Practices. 3-12.

24. Kiana, K. (2018, November). Language Nationalism: One Nation, One Language. Babel Young Writers' Competition.

25. Lai, J & Lai, P. Y. (2012, June 4). Revealing the Reality of PPSMI. Rterieved from: https://magazine.scientificmalaysian.com/article/opinions/revealing-reality-ppsmi/

26. LANGUAGE POLICY PERSPECTIVE. International Journalof Law, Government and Communication. 3 (7). 1-10.

27. Lee, S. K., Lee, K. S., Wong, F. F., & Azizah, Y. (2010). The English Language and its Impact on Identities of Multilingual Malaysian Undergraduates. GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies. 10 (1), 87-100.
28. Maezawa, C. (2023). Malaysian Language Policy: The Impact of Globalization and Ethnic Nationalism. E-International Relations. Retrieved from https://www.e-ir.info/2023/09/22/malaysian-language-policy-the-impact-of-global ization-and-ethnic-nationalism/
29. Malaysia. (1996). Education Act 1996 (Act 550). https://www.moe.gov.my/en/policies/acts/education-act-1996
30. Mandarin-speaking Non-Chinese Malaysians Show. Fulcrum. Retrieved from:
31. Maya, K. D., Caesar, D., & Ching, H. K. (2018). Language Policy and Language Use in Multilingual Malaysia.
32. McNelly, C. A. (2015). Language Learning Policy through the Lens of Language as a Problem, as a Right, and as a Resource. NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 6(1), 5–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/26390043.2015.12067782
33. Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2013). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. https://www.pmo.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Malaysia-Education-Bluep rint-2013-2025.pdf
34. Mohamad, A. N. A., Salleh, A. R., & Mohamad, W. N. A. (2022). Malay Language as the State Emblem of Malaysia. Journal of Language and Communication, 12(1), 97-108.
35. Nadaraj, V. (2024, August 6). Chinese schools in Malaysia Are Here to Stay. UCAnews. Retrieved from: https://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-schools-in-malaysia-are-here-to-stay/105 926
36. Opaly, M. (2025, April, 21). Fadhlina: Malaysia to teach Thai, Khmer and Vietnamese as elective languages in schools to boost Asean ties. Retrieved from: https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2025/04/21/fadhlina-malaysia-to-teach-thai-khmer-and-vietnamese-as-elective-languages-in-schools-to-boost-asean-ties/173883
37. Phang, C. L., Awang, M. M., Ahmad, A. R., & Ahmad, A. (2019). Multiculturalism of education system in shaping national identity of Malaysia's students. Global Conferences Series: Social Sciences, Education and Humanities (GCSSSEH), 2, The 2nd International Conference on Sustainable Development & Multi-Ethnic Society. https://doi.org/10.32698/GCS.01105
38. Pillai, S., Kaur, S., & Chau, M. H. (2021). The ideological stance of multilingualism in education in Malaysia in the press 2000-2020. Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies, 14(2), 173-193.
39. Razak Report. (1956). Report of the Education Committee, 1956 (Razak Report).
40. Rose, H., Macaro, E., Sahan, K., Aizawa, I., Zhou, S. and Wei, M. 2021. DefiningEnglish Medium Instruction: Striving for comparative equivalence. LanguageTeaching. First View, pp. 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444821000483
41. Sabariah, B. (2024, Mac, 4). Preservation of National Cultural Heritage via Mother Tongue. Retrieved from: https://ikram.org.my/preservation-of-national-cultural-heritage-via-mother-tongue
42. Selamat, A., Esa, A., Saad, S. S., & Atim, A. (2010). TEACHING AND LEARNING MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE IN ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLSIN THE STATE OF JOHOR, MALAYSIA. Journal of Education, 16 (2011), 61-73.
43. Shaharuddin, N., Abdul Wahab, M. H., Safian, S. S., & Osman, A. A.(2022).The Role of English Proficiency and Financial Development in Stimulating Economic Growth. Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics,10(2S2),18–37
44. Sharifah, S. (2024, May). Math and Science proficiency declines, expert cites PPSMI policy as cause. Retrieved from: https://www.sinardaily.my/article/218016/focus/national/math-and-science-profici ency-declines-expert-cites-ppsmi-policy-as-cause
45. Sivalingam, A. D. (2021). History of Malaysia Education Syatem: Year 1824 to 2025.
46. Social Science Research Network. 4(7), 1-11.
47. Statista. (2024, July). Breakdown of population by ethnicity in Malaysia as of July 2024. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1017372/malaysia-breakdown-of-population-b y-ethnicity/
48. Suliman, A., Nor, M. Y. M., Yunus, M. M. (2020). Dual-Language Programme (DLP) Implementation in Malaysian Secondary Schools: from the Lenses of School Administrators. Jurnal Pendidikan Malaysia Isu Khas. 45(1), 60-67. http://dx.doi.org/10.17576/JPEN-2020-45.01SI-08
49. Tan, Z. H. (2017). Language Shaming in Malaysia. Academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/49383784/Language_Shaming_in_Malaysia

50. Thirusanku, J. & Yunus, M. M. (2014). Status of English in Malaysia. Asian Social Science. 10 (14). 254-260.
51. Yamat, H., Umar, N. F. M., & Mahmood. (2014). Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening the English Language Policy: An Education Reform. International Education Studies. 7 (13). 197-205. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v7n13p197
52. Yunus, M. M. & Sukri, S. I. A. (2017). The Use of English in Teaching Mathematics and Science: The PPSMI Policy vis-à-vis The DLP. Advances in Language and Literary Studies. 8 (1). 134-142. Retrieved from: Doi:10.7575/aiac.alls.v.8n.1p.133
53. Zeng, J., Li, X. Ideologies underlying language policy and planning in the Philippines. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications. 10, 405 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01911-8