

## THE ROLE OF MALAY LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AS A MEDIA FOR PEACE IN PATANI THAILAND AND THE ARCHIPELAGO

**Phaosan Jehwae**

University of Fathoni, Thailand

Email: [fazdany@hotmail.com](mailto:fazdany@hotmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The existence of Malay language and literature has a very strategic meaning in the region of Southeast Asia, not only in the aspect of communication and interaction among the Malays, but also the relations between Malays and non-Malays, between minorities and the majority. This paper attempts to explain that in fact the Malay language has become a means of communication and interaction that is able to foster peace in various countries in the Nusantara or Southeast Asia region. While in Southern Thailand, the Patani community is not easy to live peacefully because Malay is less understood by government officials working in Southern Thailand. It also explains that one of the keys to fostering peace in the region is to make Malay language grow naturally, it is not complicated to use it and is also used by some government apparatus working in the provinces with the majority of Malays.*

**Keywords:** *Malay Language, Malay Literature, Lingua Franca, Nusantara*

*When the Nusantara is the sea,  
then sail the ocean*

*When the Nusantara is sky  
then shout is the horizon*

*When the Nusantara is earth  
then Malay is the land (Phaosan)*

### **Introduction**

Malay language and literature is a very important vehicle in the archipelago. The Malay language is not only a means of communicating and relating to the Malay community, but it also serves as the language of the spread of religion, political language, education language, trading language and others. Meanwhile, literature is a work of art delivered through language. Languages and literature are two different components, but have become one.

For the community of Patani in Southern Thailand, languages and literature are two things that are considered the same. In Patani, when we talk about literature we will indirectly speak about Malay. Malay language and literature have become a unity in the Malay community in Patani. Therefore, it is not strange if in every ritual and event, either religious or celebration or party, literature becomes mandatory menu both in small scale and massive rank. Literature cannot be separated from the Malay community in Patani so that literature has become the belief and life of the Patani Malays.

The role and position of the Malay language has been studied quite well. James T. Collin (2005, 23–24) for example, explains that Malay is a language that is used as a means of communication among nations, such as among Austronesians in the interior and people living

outside the limits of the waters of Borneo. Bahasa Melayu is also used as a European missionary language in achieving colonial missions in Southeast Asia.

While according to Nik Safiah Karim (2004) Malay language is a language that has a great role and position as an international language of communication, but in the education system, Malay language is set aside because of the increased use of English in the country's education system.

This article will discuss the role and position of Malay language and literature in the archipelago not only as a language of communication, trade, diplomacy and religion, and even Malay has become the language of peace both in the Archipelago and in Patani, Southern Thailand. This article will also show how the relationship between Malay language and literature and the Islamic religion.

### **Functions of Malay Language and Literature**

Malay language has emerged estimated since the 15th century AD. At that time the first Malay language vocabulary was collected by the colonizers of the Italian nation, Antonio Pigafetta, who joined Magellan on a voyage around the world (James 2005, 21–23). The Malay literature has existed since the 13th century AD, which appeared in various forms, such as folklore, written literature which later became oral literature, for example magical bird stories which formed the basis of the stories of Hikayat Ahmad and Muhammad, and Hikayat Bayan Budiman which contained stories of king who understands animal language.

Historically Malay has been used by Malay people in various regions of the Malay world for centuries. The Malay world region according to experts includes Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, South Philippines), East Asia (Taiwan) and Africa (Madagascar) (James 2005, 3–4).

For the Indonesian context Malay language and literature had developed very rapidly. Several regions in Indonesia were once centers of Islamic studies and Malay literature. According to Steenbrink, there has been a shift in the center of the study of Malay and Malay literature in the archipelago during the period of the 14th century to the 20th century. The grandeur of the scientific and literary center is as follows: Pasai (1300-1450 AD), Malacca (1450-1511), Johor (1511-1580), Aceh (1580-1680), Palembang and Banjarmasin (1680-1800), Riau (1800-1900), and West Sumatra (1880-1930) (Steenbrink 1984, 65–66).

From the aspect of Language Science, like other languages in the world, one of the functions of Malay is as the lingua franca. Lingua Franca comes from Latin which means "the language of the Franks." This is a linguistic term which means "language of instruction" or "language of association" somewhere, in which there are speakers of different languages. Indonesia has translated the term lingua franca with the terms *basantara*, from *basa* or language and *antara*, which refers to an intermediate language, which is an intermediary language for several different language groups, for example the lingua franca is Malay or Indonesian in Southeast Asia. In this region this language is used not only by the speakers of their mother (ethnic language), but by many second speakers as the language of instruction, other examples are English, Spanish, Arabic, internationally (Takari 2013). Namely the language used for association among fellow community members for example for commercial reasons, and for diplomatic and administrative convenience, and as a means of exchanging information and knowledge between scientists and other scholars from various countries.

## **The Role of Malay Language and Literature as a Language of Peace in the Archipelago**

Malay has a very important role in the archipelago. History has proven that Malay has become the lingua franca of countries in Southeast Asia and the world for centuries. Malay has been used as a means of communication among people living in the archipelago with immigrants such as traders, diplomats, and travelers who come from various countries in the world both from Southeast Asia, Central Asia, China, India and Europe (Takari 2013).

Malay is an important tool for important conversations and relationships in building the welfare of fellow Nusantara people. Malay is also the official language in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. In addition to being the official language in these countries, Malay is also a significant language of communication and language of communication in several countries in Southeast Asia such as in Southern Thailand Patani, Moro (Philippines), Cambodia and the Burmese Islands. Malay language used by speakers in several countries has similarities and differences because of the distance between these countries. The difference is also because of the geographical and cultural background but basically the same and still understandable. Malay is a soft and polite language and the main intermediary language among the people of the archipelago.

Malaysia is a mixed country of race and ethnicity. Malaysian development states that Malay is the national language and official language. The very important position of the Malay language can be a language of unity and unity and peace among multiracial and tribal Malaysians. Indeed, the Malaysian government does not prevent multiracial and racial nations such as China, India, and male tribes from speaking their native languages and learning any language. The Malaysian government gives equal rights and opportunities to its people in all areas of life. The Malaysian government helps non-Malay schools such as Chinese schools and Tamil schools. The Malaysian government also includes Chinese and Tamil in the government curriculum and private schools (Hassan, Angterian, and Yusop 2017, 19–25).

By treating such a policy, the Malaysian government gained huge profits, both in the fields of economy, politics, technology and in the field of diplomacy. Malaysians can master the world's main languages, such as mastering Malay as the main language in Southeast Asia; Malaysians can master Tamil (one of the main languages of India) as a ruling country of economics and technology; and Malaysians can rule China as the new ruler of the world. The freedom of language practiced by the Malaysian government can build trade and diplomatic relations well with the world's giant economies, India and China. Thus, the position of Malay as a national and official language in Malaysia does not preclude freedom and the development of minority languages.

Example of one minority who is given freedom of speech in Malaysia, the Siamese. The Siamese are Malaysians from Siam (Thailand). The total population in Malaysia does not reach 1 percent. Siamese are found in Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and Penang. The Malaysian government pays Thai language teachers to teach in public schools in Malaysia that have 15-year-old Siamese students. The government has placed Malaysians who are Thai-speaking government officials in strategic places, such as working at the Malaysia-Thailand border immigration, becoming translators at the Malaysian embassy for Thailand, becoming professional traders in the country of Thailand. Malaysia has benefited greatly from the policy. Malaysians of Siamese origin also feel peaceful and happy because they can learn their native language. Policies and policies managed by the Malaysian government show that the position of Malay as an official and national does not prevent them from learning their native language. Thus, Malay plays an important role as a unifying and peaceful language for all Malaysians of all races and tribes.

Mastery of the Malay language and the implementation of national language policies in Malaysia have never restricted the development of living and foreign languages, but ethnic dialects have the potential to be a source of Malay vocabulary. All government officials at all levels must use Malay in all official matters with confidence and earnestness, while at the same time trying to convey government policies effectively. At the same time, quarter language must continue to be used by each ethnic group as between maintaining their identity. Policies and policies managed by the Malaysian government show that the position of Malay as an official and national does not prevent them from learning their native language. Malay serves as a unifying language and peacebuilding for Malaysians who are multiracial and multiracial.

Indonesia is a large and densely populated country. Indonesia's population exceeds 200 million people spread over 17,508 islands and small islands. The country of Indonesia consists of various tribes and languages. Indonesian / Malay language became the unity language of all nations that differed from ethnicity and language in the spirit of youth oath on October 28, 1928. By making Indonesian language the official language of the country can unite the people of Indonesia who have different dialect languages between one region and region. very wide and far away.

Indonesian also functions as the language of peace. In Indonesian it is possible to reconcile misunderstandings between tribes because they have different languages. I quote two stories about misunderstandings due to language differences in Indonesia. The first story tells of the division to divorce his wife because of a language misunderstanding spoken because of a different language and the second story is a fight between two couples because of a misunderstanding using their dialect language.

Regarding the importance of the role of language, there is an interesting story. In a sub-district in South Sulawesi there had been an incident, the *Camat* (head of district) divorced his wife due to a misunderstanding of language. Incidentally the sub-district wife was from another tribe. First mistake, when reading the speech. Understandably the secretary's habit shortens the words with the ladies and gentlemen and reads "*Bapak Dua, Ibu Dua*" ("Father two, Mother two") even though the actual meaning is "ladies and gentlemen". This is actually not the wife's fault, not because she did not go to school, she graduated from high school, only because in her school she was not used to writing using abbreviations, so when she found her father she read "*Bapak Dua*" which shocked invited guests. That was the first mistake that embarrassed the *Camat*. The second mistake, when the guest came from the district, the *camat* told his wife to make dishes with the local language "*bette mallibu*" *bette* means fried, while *mallibu* means round. This is a dish that the Bugis call eggs for cow eyes. But because the wife did not know this term, the egg was fried in full with its shell. This really embarrassed the husband, who finally because of this language problem, the *Camat* finally divorced his beautiful wife.

The second story, one day a pair of husband and wife argued because his wife told his wife to close the car window because it rained using Bugis language "*ki kacoto otoa, bosu !!*" which was misinterpreted by his wife, because he thought his body was smelly, because his wife is a Mandar, *bosu* means rotten, whereas in Bugis, *bosu* means rain.

These two stories are very clear to show the existence of Indonesian as a language of unity and language of peace between ethnic groups who have different languages. Indonesian can function as a language to unite tribes that have their own language but do not hinder the development and use of other tribal languages. Indonesian is enriched with terms and vocabulary originating from tribes in Indonesia. Indonesian can also function as a language of

peace because using Indonesian in different contexts and situations, ethnicity and language can avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

Brunei Darussalam is a country that makes Malay language the national language and official language of the country. With Malay, people in Brunei are required to learn Malay. Malay as the official language in Brunei Darussalam does not include other languages especially in developing English in the country. The education policy in Brunei has made its people able to master two languages (Malay and English) very well. The Government of Brunei Darussalam embraces the philosophy of MIB, the King of Islamic Malays as an alliance of its people. The MIB philosophy shows the landscape in maintaining the political stability of Brunei Darussalam, thus enabling Brunei multiracial people to get justice and peace.

The country of Singapore is a small country with a population of four million consisting of several races and descendants. Among them are Chinese, Malay, Indian, Arabic, European and others. Malay is the national and official language of Singapore. Three other national and official languages are Chinese, Tamil and English. However, the Singapore government and the Malaysian government provide equal opportunities for multiracial people to learn their native language. The Kingdom of Singapore makes a great day for each race as a public holiday, such as making festive parties, Chinese New Year's day, Depavali days and Christmas days as public holidays in all Singaporeans.

Malay is a very important language in Singapore because it is adjacent to the Malay-speaking country as a national and official, namely Malaysia and Indonesia. Singapore has invested nearly 80 percent in Indonesia and Malaysia. With that awareness, the Kingdom of Seymour obliged all government officials to master the Malay language so that the government sent officers to take Malay language courses in various study institutions both locally and abroad. The Kingdom of Singapore made Malay a compulsory subject for all Malaysians in Singapore. Singapore has many benefits on a language basis. With many languages and cultures, the Singaporean government can be a small country whose inhabitants master various languages of the world so that they have sophisticated assets in developing society and the country.

The position of Malay as a national and official language in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, does not suppress the development of minority languages and even related governments that support minority language curricula. Minority languages become capital that strongly supports the economic development and diplomacy of the country concerned. Based on historical records, it is clear that the development of Malay easily accepted the influence of other languages in its language. Malay is strongly influenced by Sanskrit today before the advent of Islam. Malay is strongly influenced by Arabic after the Malay community embraced Islam. Malay was influenced by English during its colonial era. Malay also accepts local dialects. Malay language accepts a variety of foreign languages and dialects to enhance the richness of Malay language. On the contrary, in a country where Malays are a minority, Malay language was suppressed and abolished, resulting in prominent geography and conflict that caused many casualties, such as Malay in Patani Thai Selatan (Fathi 2001).

### **Realizing Peace on Patani through Malay**

Malay in Southern Thailand or Patani is the majority language. Malay is the language of the majority in five southern Thai provinces. Communities in Southern Thailand are Muslim, speak Malay and adhere to Malay customs. For the Patani community, Malay language is rooted in the language of the Qur'an. Jawi's writing is the writing of the Qur'an.

Malay culture is based on the culture of the Qur'an. Therefore, Malay Language and Literature are very important for Malay society. They consider Malay and literature a part of Islam. Malay religion and Islam have become one. This has become the ideology of Patani Malay society. For example, when they ask someone's religion, they will ask "what is your language" instead of asking "what is your religion?" The question explains the position of Malay language is very important even if they equate Malay with Islam.

Malay in Thailand is a minority language because Thailand makes Thai (Siam) the only national and official language of the country. The majority of the population in Thai Buddha are Buddhists, Siamese and Siamese. Malay in Thailand was once the language of communication and diplomacy between Siam and the countries that came to trade and make contact with diplomacy. Before 1909 AD, Patani had become an independent country and made Malay the official language of the country. For several times Siam (Thailand) attacked the Patani Darussalam Sultanate until finally in 1909 AD, Patani were generally forced to submit to or be colonized by Siam. The position of Malay as a national and official language was also affected and eliminated. Two nations, the Patani and Siamese, are very far away. Historical, religious, linguistic and customary differences. With that difference, the Thai government is able to use various political policies to eliminate Malay language in Southern Thailand. Malay is a barrier to inducing Malay communities in Southern Thailand (Malek 2006).

Based on historical records, as long as Patani was under the country of Thailand from 1909 to 2012 AD, various conflicts and events occurred. The conflict and tragedy of the Patani demonstrators in the 1950s, which caused many South Thai residents to die and flee abroad. The Patani community must flee to protect themselves because they are hunted by the Thai government. Keresek and Takbai conflicts that sacrificed many innocent Malays. At one point the conflict and tragedy caused the Patani community to be in insecurity and the Thai empire was also suspected.

The Thai government strives with various approaches and ways to reconcile the Malay community in Southern Thailand. The government tried to be closer to religion and culture but the conflict further aggravated the tragedy until the Thai government was trapped in finding a solution. Although over 100 years the Patani community has been in the Thai government but the Patani Malays rarely speak Thai and Thai government officials working in the South of Thailand do not master the language of the local Malay community (Malay). The conflicts and tragedies that occurred in the past were caused by misunderstandings because many Thais did not understand Malay.

There was an incident that took place in Saiburi district, Patani area between police officers and the village community. The public reported about a family murder case carried out by neighboring villages but the case was increasingly unclear, innocent villagers were arrested and found guilty of being released. The incident left villagers dissatisfied with the police station until they became community protesters at the police station. The problem that triggered this problem was based on a language error problem. Police officers dominated the Malay language and the villagers did not master the Thai language so well that they could not resolve the conflict and provide justice to the villagers. Although officers use language translation services, but not the same as mastering the local language (Malay) itself.

In this case, try to reflect on the message behind the story. If said police officer tried to master the Malay language which is the language of the indigenous people in the South of Thailand, the conflict that had erupted so far among the residents would certainly be handled well and full of justice. It is important to remember that Malay is the native language of the

people of Southern Thailand. Malay has been around for centuries and has whitened meat with local residents. Malay and 'Malay' are very meaningful for other things in the Southern Thai community. Malay is a very sensitive problem. For people in Southern Thailand as important as Islam. Malay religion and Islam are one.

The second incident that caused a mistake between Malays and Thai government officials was the use of language in government offices and signs in Southern Thailand. Since Phibun Songkram as prime minister at that time, has aroused the spirit of nationalism by implementing the policy of *Ratthaniyom Thai*. The basics introduced by Phibun are as follows:

1. Prohibit educational institutions from teaching in Malay because language is not the official language of the country.
2. Close Islamic religious institutions that teach in Malay.
3. Forbid Malays from speaking Malay.
4. Forcing Malays to change Malay names into Siamese names.
5. The conversion of village names in Malay became the Siamese language throughout the Malay region.
6. Trying hard to cause difficulties for Malays who speak Malay when dealing with government offices, and forbid Malays from wearing Malay clothing (Rosana Jehma, Sumardi 2017, 71) .

Because of the policies set by Phibul, all minority languages in Thailand, including in Southern Thailand, were abolished so that all officials and signboards were written only in Thai. Most Patani Malays cannot communicate and reading in Thai causes great difficulties. They were afraid to meet and report something to government officials to increase inequality and misunderstandings between Patani Malay officials and people.

Back to four countries, namely the countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore which made Malay language national and official. With Malay as a unifying language and uniting the state, governments in these four countries do not prevent multiracial people from learning their native language. Governments from four countries have benefited a lot by providing language freedom to practice so that the government gets good rewards from the policy. The four governments have good cooperation and good intentions in the fields of economics, education, technology and in the field of diplomacy.

The Thai government must be proud of the language differences that exist among its people, especially the Southern Thai people. The Thai government needs to support and care for the Malay language because besides Malay can be used as a means of peace, it can also be an important trade and economic language in Southeast Asia and the world today. With more than 300 million speakers, language is the fourth language in the world. Malay is the most widely used language in Southeast Asia, reaching more than 60 percent of Malay speakers in Southeast Asia. Malay is an important language in producing economics and diplomacy (James 2005, 103–4).

The Siamization Base pioneered by Phibul Songkram in uniting all its colonies with Siamese bases, 1 language and 1 culture has killed a wealth of racial languages in Thailand. The devastating impact of the policy was by closing schools that were not in line with the Thai government, schools that taught in Chinese and Malay. With a great background and protests and resistance from the Patani community, finally there are still many school huts that still survive. Chinese schools are incompatible with cottage schools in Southern Thailand, the Thai government has abolished and closed all Chinese schools in Thailand to date, nearly 100 percent of Thai-speaking Chinese do not master Chinese. Meanwhile, China is now a giant

and new world power in various fields, both in education and in economics. This is a Thai country whose people have to master Chinese for trade and diplomacy. This is the result of sensitivity to valuable language awards that eventually disappear because of superficial and narrow judgments.

Likewise, the policy of the Thai government about Malays in Southern Thailand. The government launched various policies and tricks to get rid of the identity of the Malay community in Southern Thailand. With various policies, that day has exacerbated the conflicts and tragedies that occurred after the deaths of the people and the government. The Patani Malay community increasingly hated the Thai government and ongoing conflicts were revealed. The Thai government does not see Malay traditions in Southern Thailand as valuable gifts in gaining profits in trade and diplomacy. The Thai government does not see local indigenous language (Malay) as a way of resolving various conflicts that occur so many innocent victims. The Thai government is very curious about the Malay language and acts to eliminate Malay language identity in Southern Thailand. The various policies that have been dealt with by the Thai government are the fact that the Malay community is actually a thorn which is the cause of the prolonged conflict in Southern Thailand.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis above, it is clear that Malay can be the language of peace in the archipelago. For centuries Malay became a message of peace in the archipelago. The arrival of British and European colonialists in the archipelago reduced the role of Malay as a lingua franca language but Malay became a very important language. Malay, which is the official language in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, also acts as a language that conveys the message of peace and happiness. Malay is not a barrier to the development of other languages, even supporting the country's economy. Malay is also a catalyst for diplomacy among Malay language users. Malay is a unifying language and unity and is able to create peace in the archipelago.

Malay is trying to be a means to foster peace in Southern Thailand, if the Thai government gives the right and opportunity for Southern Thai people to learn Malay freely and make that language must be understood by all Thai government officials who work in Southern Thailand. By mastering the Malay language, it is hoped that a misunderstanding between Patani and Thai government officials will no longer be a cause of widespread conflict and destructive life.

By obtaining the rights and opportunities given by the Thai government to the Malay community in Southern Thailand at least can erode suspicion and torture for years. Security and progress will sprout. Real peace will occur. The Thai government will lose its fear and suspicion, while Malays in Southern Thailand will feel a safer and fairer life.

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