DICTIONARY MAKING AND THE STANDARDISATION OF MALAY (BAHASA MALAYSIA)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. *SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION IN MALAYSIA*

Malaysia is a multi-racial country. Unlike its neighbours, its racial and linguistic composition is heterogeneous. There are three major races living in the country, i.e. Malays, Chinese, and Indians. They speak different languages. In addition, there are small racial groups but these are not very significant linguistically, e.g. the Portuguese, the Arabs, the Sikhs etc. As such, the linguistic situation in Malaysia is no doubt complex. Malay is widely spoken by both the indigenous and the immigrant races. Although the variety of Malay spoken may vary from community to community, it is nevertheless a language whose usage is widely distributed. Almost all the Malays speak the formal variety of the language as well as their own local dialects. A form of creolized Malay is spoken by an earlier group of immigrant Chinese settling in the state of Malacca and to a lesser extent in Penang. The racial communities have virtually been kept away from one another, except perhaps for the daily business of buying and selling and other limited social contacts. This is not a conducive situation for learning the Malay language well; as a consequence many members of these immigrant races only speak a kind of pidgin Malay which often proves to be quite adequate for their commercial and limited social functions. However this is not the entire picture. Those who have been educated in Malaysian schools have now achieved good proficiency in the language and use it for administrative as well as other functions according to their professions.

Statistically, Chinese is the largest immigrant race. They speak

various dialects which to a large extent are not mutually intelligible.
The Chinese are concentrated in the urban and mining areas. Very few
of them speak Mandarin except those who have been educated in Chinese
schools. The dialects spoken by this community are Hokkien, Cantonese,
Hakka, Tiechiu, etc. The Indians also make up a sizeable group. They
also speak various languages, depending on the state where they orig-
inated from, like Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Punjabi, Urdhu, Benggali
and Sinhalese. There are also other minority groups. One which is
worth mentioning is the Thai, who are citizens of Malaysia residing
near the border of Thailand. Most of them are Thai-speaking Malays.
There is also a small number of Arabs but they are being assimilated
quickly into the Malay community. In Malacca, there is a kind of
Portuguese Creole which is spoken by a small group of Portuguese de-
scendants.

The indigenous languages are just as varied especially in Sabah and
Sarawak. This is because the linguistic situation there is influenced
by the geographical terrain of the country. The most important lan-
guages in those two states are Iban spoken by the Sea Dayak of Sarawak,
Bedayuh spoken by the Land Dayak and Melanau which is divided into
various dialects, Bisaya, Murut, Kelabit, Kayan, Kenyah and Punan. On
the Malaysian mainland we may identify three groups of indigenous lan-
guages, namely those spoken by the 'Proto-Malays', the Senois, and the
Negritos.

Besides all these indigenous languages there is a widespread use of
English, especially since until lately it was one of the languages of
instruction in the schools as well as the language of administration.
However, the claim made by Le Page (1964:67) that English was the
interracial/lingua franca among the educated in the country was more
true of pre-independence Malaysia, and also probably during the first
few years after independence, than it is today. Today, there is a
conscious effort to switch to the National Language (Bahasa Malaysia),
and thus limit the use of English. Moreover, the elite in Malaysia is
no longer composed of those solely educated in English. A substantial
portion of them have now been educated in Malay and Arabic, and they
use little or no English at all.

1.2. THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE SITUATION

1.2.1. The Choice of a National Language

There is no doubt as to the choice of a national language in Malaysia
today. Of course, this is a political question. During the colonial
days, no real or discernible efforts were made towards choosing a

national language. The situation was that English was widely used as
a language of administration and education. This was undoubtedly the
policy of the colonial rulers who fully realised the multi-ethnic
nature of the population and, to consolidate their own power, wanted
the people to remain divided culturally, economically, and linguisti-
cally.

However, the National Language policy became more apparent after
Malaya was given political autonomy. This autonomy was of course due
to the political awakening of the people. Autonomy in government, as
argued by the Sastrawan 50 (a group of writers in 1950s) was meaning-
less if the people could not participate fully in their own political
discussions, or take part in their own government. At that time only
10% of the population could speak English which was the language of
administration. This automatically excluded most of the Malays and
other races from taking active part in the running of their own affairs.
Therefore it was not desirable to continue using English in adminis-
tration.

The Sastrawan 50 saw the weakness in the continued use of English
as a language of administration and education. The population com-
rising of the three major races: Malays, Chinese, and Indians would
remain divided. The three different ethnic groups speaking different
languages and with different cultural backgrounds had no common
factor to unify them. English could not remedy the situation in any
way. Furthermore in a newly independent nation, there was the need
for a common national identity, and this could only be achieved if the
gap dividing the people could be reduced peacefully. The need for a
national language was thus quite urgent. There were other factors and
considerations too. For example, Malay was the largest community in
the population - 43% of the people. The second largest community was
Chinese 36%, and Indian 9%. The remaining 2% comprised of other minor
races. Although only 43% of the population were Malays, the language
was also spoken by the other races in the country as a language of
contact between the ethnic groups. On the other hand the immigrant
languages as described above were not uniform and it would appear to
be undesirable to select any one of these as the National Language of
Malaysia. The use of the Malay language was widespread among the popu-
lation irrespective of their races. What was more important was prob-
ably the fact that the language spoken was quite uniform, i.e. it was
intelligible to a large number of the population. In these terms,
Malay was undoubtedly the language spoken by most of the population of
Malaysia.

Making Malay the National Language did not actually mean that the

other languages would be discriminated against (cf. Constitution of
Malaysia 1972:116-7). The policy of the government was to allow peace-
ful co-existence, but in a process of national building such as in
Malaysia some form of subordination would have to be adopted so that
the National Language could be allowed to develop and become established.

1.2.2. Implementation of the National Language Policy

The political awakening of the Malays also prompted efforts to
develop their language (cf. Ferguson, 1968:28). These efforts could be
traced back very far into history alongside the development of Malay
nationalism. However concrete and effective efforts were only apparent
until Malaya achieved self-government and eventually became politically
independent. Policy was laid out in the constitution making Malay the
National Language of the country. This was to be implemented in phases
through the educational system. Malay was supposed to replace English
gradually as a language of administration and education. However the
government's implementation policy lacked firmness in the beginning.
The implementation was expected to be carried out through persuasion.
This was not very effective. There was to be a period of ten years
after independence i.e. in 1967 during which English was to be replaced
by Malay in schools as well as in administration. Whilst the people
sympathised with the government's policy, it lacked, as a matter of
fact, a sense of urgency.

However, these initial efforts did not end in complete failure.
The population in general symphatised with the policy and to a certain
extent blamed the government for not taking firmer steps in implement-
ing it. Soon after, the government took bolder steps to gradually
phase out English as a medium of instruction in the schools. After
almost seven years of operation Malaysia witnessed encouraging signs
towards this end. The target of the government was that Malay would
be fully used as a medium of instruction in schools and universities
by 1983. The current situation seems to indicate that in some univer-
sity courses Malay has been used as a medium of instruction and thus
the actual implementation of the policy is well ahead of the target
date.

The government's policy is at present rapidly being implemented.
At the same time steps have been taken to develop the language. The
process of development includes the three conceptually distinct
components: (a) graphisation, the use of writing; (b) standardisation,
the use of supra dialectal norm; and (c) modernisation, the development
of vocabulary and forms of discourse (cf. Ferguson 1968:34). From here
on we will focus our attention on the role of Lexicography in achieving

these objectives.

a) The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and its Role

After Malay was officially made the National Language, several problems immediately arose. The language was then inadequate and handicapped to assume its new role. Heretofore, its use was mainly confined to functions which were quite inferior and less sophisticated compared to that of English. It was a language used only in everyday social contacts. In education it was used only in Malay primary schools. It was not required until then to assume other functions such as administration and higher education. Its function and usage were indeed very limited. It lacked special vocabulary items.

The Malay political leaders and the Sastrawan 50 were fully aware of the difficiencies of the National Language. They held conferences to discuss and find solutions to the problems. They submitted a memorandum to the government containing a comprehensive list of pro-posals. Among these proposals were: (1) to establish a Balai Pustaka, which was later re-named Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Language and Litera-ture Agency), to spearhead the efforts to develop Malay systematically; (2) extend the teaching of the National Language to all schools; (3) to establish secondary schools using the National Language as the instructional medium; (4) to make the passing in the National Language examination a requisite for the award of a certificate; (5) to set up a Language Institute, and a teacher training college for the teaching of the National Language; (6) to initiate co-ordination efforts with Bahasa Indonesia; and (7) to form terminology to meet the present inadequacies of the National Language in this area. (cf. Memoranda Angkatan Sastrawan 50, 1962).

These proposals were fully adopted and implemented by the government. In July 1956, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka was established and charged with the duty of carrying out the development of the National Language. From then onwards, conscious and concerted efforts were made by the government to upgrade Malay as the National Language. The National Language was also known as Bahasa Malaysia since 1969.

As stated in the Ten Year Progress Report of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in 1967 its function vis-a-vis the National Language was that of developing and enriching it. This could then, as the name of the institution suggested, be carried out in two big fields, namely (a) Literature, and (b) Language.

This function of the Dewan in planning and promoting the National Language was further specified by the Constitution of the Dewan as follows:

(1) To standardise the spelling and pronunciation, and to form

appropriate terminologies in the National Language;

(2) To compile and publish a National Language dictionary.

These two objectives were pursued vigorously by the Dewan, and it goes without saying its impact on the development on the National Language was quite considerable.

The development of Bahasa Malaysia could not have taken place so rapidly had it not been for the textbooks which employed the standardised vocabulary compiled in the dictionaries. The circulation of these textbooks in schools of course helped a great deal in making the language fairly uniform, especially by way of vocabulary items, both the general and specialised ones. On this matter the Dewan, printed and supplied almost all the textbooks required in schools and including some of those used in higher education. These books were mainly published in Bahasa Malaysia. They were both written specially for the schools or translated from another language, namely English. To give an example of the size of the undertaking; in 1972, the Dewan published 94 titles for primary schools, 39 titles for secondary schools and 198 titles for higher education. There were also books published for other purposes, such as general education, 12 titles, and reference materials 40 titles. Meanwhile the Dewan also reprinted books published earlier, as well as magazines and journals; mostly in Bahasa Malaysia.

b) The Ministry of Education and its Role

To mention only the role of the Dewan when discussing the process of development would be quite inadequate. There were also other factors and institutions which contributed to the effective development of Bahasa Malaysia. Of particular importance was the role played by the Ministry of Education in setting up the Language Institute for training teachers to teach the National Language. Also the Ministry played a vital role in implementing the policy in the schools and examinations.

After Independence in 1957, the teaching of Malay began to gather momentum as the government gradually implemented the use of Malay as the National Language. The learning of Malay became more rapid and widespread inside and outside schools. Proficiency in Malay became a requirement for jobs in the government service as more and more administrative matters were conducted in Malay. However the government for one failed to fully establish Bahasa Malaysia as the sole National Language as it had originally planned by 1967 i.e. ten years after independence. At any rate, ten years was perhaps too soon for things to change so drastically and for the country to be able to switch from one language to another especially when the new National Language was not quite ready to shoulder its new functions. This situation was

aggravated by the fact that the government lacked firmness in implement-
ing its policy. The government expected its citizens to gradually use
Malay in stages such that by 1967 everyone would be using Bahasa Malaysia
in all domains of activity.

All this changed after 1967. Since then, more positive and firm
steps have been taken. Meanwhile the dictionaries both for general and
specific purpose were published. The implementation became more rapid
and its progress was obvious and encouraging.

  c) Other Agencies

There were also individual efforts of various writers as well as
that of commercial publishing firms in complementing the efforts of
the Dewan in publishing Malay teaching materials, supplementary reading
materials and dictionaries. Special mention here should be made of the
role played by the publishing firm 'Sinaran Brothers' in Penang which
took upon itself the task of publishing teaching and reading materials
in Malay for schools in the fifties and early sixties when the Dewan
was only beginning its operation. All these contributed to the general
rapid progress in developing and implementing Malay as the National
Language of Malaysia.

Actually, books are published by individuals as well as by commercial
publishing houses. These books, however adhere to the regulations
stipulated by the Ministry of Education especially with regards to
spelling, technical terms and so on. It is necessary to obtain the
ministry's approval in order to use those books in schools. Violations
of these regulations may prevent the books from being sold in the
schools and colleges.

2. MALAY DICTIONARIES YESTERDAY AND TODAY

2.1. *DICTIONARY BROADLY DEFINED*

I come now to the precise topic of this paper which is the role of
lexicography in the development of the National Language. However,
before starting, I would first like to explain an important notion
which forms the basis of my discussion, namely the notion of dictionary.
In the statement regarding the functions of the Dewan, it was implied
that dictionaries and terminologies were two different things. For the
purpose of this discussion, it is important that the term dictionary
be taken to bear as general a meaning as possible. There are of course
two kinds of dictionaries. There is the general purpose dictionary and
the special purpose dictionary. Under special purpose dictionaries we
may include dictionaries for technical terms such as dictionaries for
Geography, Geology, Chemistry, Biology, etc. In this paper I would

like to consider both types of dictionaries. The Dewan is at present
in the process of collating and compiling both types of dictionaries
as a means of updating the machinery of the language and enable the
language to assume its function as a medium of instruction in insti-
tutions of higher learning, and also its equally important function as
a medium of administration.

2.2. *SURVEY OF MALAY DICTIONARIES IN THE PAST*

There are three categories of dictionaries that fall under this
survey (cf. Yusuf Hitam, 1961). The first are the primitive forms of
the dictionary, namely word lists as they were termed. This mostly
consists of tallies of rudimentary lexical items in Malay. They were
compiled not for the purpose of producing a complete dictionary of
Malay but rather for the purpose of providing vocabulary items for
traders, administrators, missionaries and the like. The second type
is a number of dictionaries which were compiled together with grammati-
cal descriptions are ommitted.

2.2.1. Word Lists

The first documented word list is that of Malay-Chinese, believed
to have been completed before the fifteenth century as it contained no
traces of Portuguese influence which colonised the sultanate of Malacca
in 1511. It was written in Chinese. The second word list is that of
Pigafetta's (1521) which was compiled when his ship called at Tidor,
one of the Moloccus Islands. It was prepared in Malay-Italian using
the Roman alphabet. The third word list was compiled by Frederick de
Houtman (1603) in Dutch. It also included words from Malagasy. Later
Albert Ruyl translated the book into German. The book was also trans-
lated into English by Augustine Spalding in 1624, who published it in
London. The word list in English was based in Gothard Arthus's edition
of Houtman's word list. Later in 1623, Caspar Wiltens and Sebastian
Danckearts published a Dutch-Malay, Malay-Dutch word list at the Hague.
It was apparent that much of the academic interest in the Malay lan-
guage was first encountered among the Europeans, especially the Dutch,
Germans and the English. This was to set the future trend in Malay
lexicography. This investigation, until recent times was very much
under the control of the Europeans, mainly English and French scholars.

2.2.2. Dictionary and Grammar

A missionary by the name of David Haex compiled a dictionary in 1631 called *Dictionarium Malaico-Latino et Latinum-Malaicum*. With this, Malay lexicography advanced a step forward such that the book can now rightly be termed a dictionary. The nature of the work was very much like that of a word list because it was based on a word list compiled by Wiltens and Danckearts. It was actually a translation of Wiltens and Danckearts work. It was recorded from the Malay language as it was spoken in Ambon, Java, Banda and the Moluccas. However this piece of work could not be termed a dictionary in its proper sense because it included also proverbs and idiomatic expressions alongside a brief account of Malay grammar. The grammar included some descriptions of the use of the prefixes: me, pen, ber, ter, kan, the particles: lah, tak, and pronominal clitics mu, ku, nya, etc. Nevertheless it was now no longer a mere word list. On the other hand it was not a full dictionary as it included other pieces of information. Other writers followed the footsteps of David Haex and improved on his work. One such work was by Thomas Bowery who wrote *Malay-English and English-Malay Dictionary* in 1701. His improvement was the addition of vocabulary items for commerce and trade as well as some political terms commonly used in Johore. The data was collected from many areas of the Malay Archipelago. It also recorded some usage of Malay at that time. In other words it contained grammatical descriptions as well. Undoubtedly these works were mainly intended for the use of traders and administrators during that time.

In 1801 J. Howison, an Englishman, compiled another dictionary which was very much similar to that of Bowery's. Howison's dictionary nevertheless contained two changes. It left out the speech varieties, but included grammatical descriptions. Nevertheless the grammatical description section was reduced and the dictionary became the major part of the description.

In 1852 another dictionary and grammar was compiled by John Crawford entitled *The Grammar and Dictionary of the Malay Language*. This work consisted of two sections. Volume 1 was a historical and grammatical description of Malay which was termed a dissertation and grammar. It provided a lengthy account of history as well as a comparative study of Malay and a short grammatical description. The second volume was called *Malay-English and English-Malay Dictionary*. Crawford listed a large number of lexical items giving relevant information such as the word class and meaning of each word in English. However the work of Crawford did not supersede that of Marsden which was printed earlier.

Marsden's work was most comprehensive and the definitions were more
elaborate. Moreover, it returned to the old system of lexicography
which included grammatical and other pieces of information.

2.2.3. Dictionary Proper

William Marsden's monumental work which was published in 1812 (before
Crawford's), was probably the first comprehensive work in Malay lexi-
cography. It brought a new era into Malay lexicography. Marsden was
a scholar and executed his work scientifically. This was a new con-
tribution, and it marked the end of dictionaries produced by traders
and missionaries. Marsden wrote another book, *The Grammar of the
Malayan Language* which was not related to the dictionary. In this work,
he utilised both the Roman as well as the Arabic alphabet. This was
different from the work of Bowery's which used the Roman alphabet based
on the Dutch sound values. Marsden transliterated the Arabic spelling
system into the Roman alphabet and thereby started the Romanized spel-
ling system of Malay.

The development of Malay lexicography though not outstanding was
nevertheless worthy of notice. The dictionary could not be compiled
if there was no adequate knowledge of Malay culture, way of life, and
history etc. At the same time there were also a number of other works
produced by Dutch and French scholars, among whom were P.P. Roorda van
Eysinga, P. Bose, A. de Wilde, C.P.J. Elout and l'Abbe P. Favre. How-
ever, they brought nothing new to Malay lexicography. Favre compiled
two volumes entitled *Dictionaire Malais-Francais*, published in 1875.
He concentrated on the change of the meanings and pronunciation of the
words. Like Marsden, Favre must have faced a lot of difficulties since
there was no standard spelling system. The Arabic, Palava, Kawi and
Rencong scripts did not adequately represent the phonology of the lan-
guage. Favre also collected his material from the Malay archipelago
which differed in pronunciation from one area to another. He neverthe-
less made a distinction between 'good' and 'imitation' Malay.

Towards the end of the 19th century a few more dictionaries were
compiled by English as well as Dutch scholars such as those by H.C.
Klinkert, R. Brons Middel, J.C. Toorn, H. Clifford, F.A. Swettenham,
L.Th. Mayer and Cowie. However their works were no improvement on the
works of Marsden and Favre. The next significant contribution to Malay
lexicography was that of R.J. Wilkinson's *A Malay-English Dictionary*
(1901). He undoubtedly made good use of the information available to
him from Marsden and Favre. In his dictionary Wilkinson described his
efforts in collecting the material. Between 1901 to 1903 he collated
the data. He was also the first man to systematically transliterate

Arabic spelling into the Roman alphabet. His first work listed the
lexical entries in the Arabic alphabet which was later (in 1932) trans-
literated into the Roman alphabet. This is still one of the best dic-
tionaries in Malay though it lacks a methodological framework as well
as a complete etymology of the lexical entries. Secondly his weakness
was that since he himself was a botanist there was a tendency on his
part to put more stress on botanical terms. Thirdly he depended
heavily on classical written data which almost gave the impression that
Malay was not a living language. There were other dictionaries produced
after Wilkinson but they did not quite measure up to the same level as
that of Wilkinson. They were the works of Winstedt (1922), Hamilton
(1923), and Swettenham (1927). Of these two probably Winstedt's had
the most merit in the sense that it was brief and contained geographical
information on the lexical items of the various dialects. One important
feature was the inclusion of Indonesian words in his dictionary.
Winstedt's work began to show that there was a great deal of similarity
between Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Indonesia.

   After 1930 Malay lexicographers entered the scene, among whom were
Shamsuddin Hj. Mohd. Yunus (1935), Mustafa Abdul Rahman Mahmud (1940?),
Haji Abdul Hamid Ahmad (1941), Mohammad Haniff (1955), Mohd. Shah,
Munji and Abdullah Samad (1957), Farid Wajidi (1959), Ali Asraf (1959),
Zainal Abidin Safarwan (1966) and a few others. However the works
produced by these writers were not in a real sense innovations. Their
works were for the most part based upon previous works such as that of
Wilkinson and Winstedt.

2.3. *SURVEY OF MALAY DICTIONARIES RECENTLY PUBLISHED*

   It is difficult to determine the exact nature and extent of studies
in this area in Malaysia today. Of course as indicated earlier in the
paper, the biggest single effort made in this area is that which is
being carried out at the Dewan in Kuala Lumpur, where there is a section
which is charged with the duty to do research and develop Malay. The
duty is divided into three areas: language usage, lexicography and
terminology. We will not touch here upon the topic of language usage;
instead we will deal with the topic of lexicography. Then we will
discuss matters relating to terminology in the next section. In this
section we will discuss chiefly the work carried out in lexicography.
The lexicography project undertaken by this section falls under these
main topics: monolingual dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries and
dictionaries for general purpose.

2.3.1. Monolingual Dictionaries

In 1970 after 12 years of hard work the Dewan Bahasa published its
first volume of a Bahasa Malaysia monolingual dictionary the *Kamus Dewan*.
It claims to have listed 28,000 lexical items and that surpasses all
other Malay dictionaries published to-date. This year, the department
has undertaken a project to simplify the dictionary. This is done in
order to meet the need of language learners of Malay.

Another monolingual Malay dictionary project is also being simul-
taneously carried out. The objective is to compile an encyclopaedic
Malay dictionary for children. However, this project has just been
launched, and it is hoped that the work will be completed in 1976.
When published, it will provide useful aid for the young learners of
Malay.

Inspite of the fact that the *Kamus Dewan* had been published, there
still remained a great need for simpler dictionaries for the purpose
of teaching children and adults alike. This need was soon met by the
commercial publishers. A few monolingual as well as Malay-English
dictionaries appeared within a short space of time. These are: A.S.
Hornby et. al. (1972), A.K. Mohd. (1973), Mohd. Salleh Daud (1973),
Sulaiman Masri (1973), Meji Sulung (1974) and Kadir M.A. (1974).
Although the motive of producing these dictionaries was a commerical
one, they nevertheless fulfilled a very important function, i.e. meet-
ing the needs of school children and Malay language learners in general.

2.3.2. Bilingual Dictionaries

Another project under way is the making of two bilingual dictionaries.
The first is a compilation of a Malay-English dictionary and the other
is a compilation of an English-Malay dictionary. The English-Malay
dictionary should be in print by the end of the year and the Malay-
English one by next year. These dictionaries are of course intended to
aid language learners through the English language or Malaysians to
learn English through the Malay language. This is of course, in line
with the country's policy to achieve bilingualism where the people are
expected to achieve a certain level of proficiency in the National
Language and English.

2.3.3. Dictionaries for Special Purpose

There are three kinds of dictionaries for special purpose planned
by the Dewan. These are dictionaries of synonyms, antonyms and a
thesaurus. The dictionary of synonyms will provide synonyms for each
of the lexical entries, and likewise a dictionary of antonyms will

furnish antonyms for each lexical item listed. The dictionary of syn-
onyms should be in print this year and the dictionary of antonyms next
year.

Simultaneously, the project also includes the compilation of a
thesaurus of Malay. The thesaurus will record all the current
language usage in Bahasa Malaysia and state the source where it
was found. The compilation is expected to be completed next year
and to be published afterwards.

2.3.4. Other Projects

It is not easy to ascertain the number of projects on Malay lexi-
cography in Malaysia at the moment. It is quite difficult to obtain
reliable information on this matter. It is quite safe, however, to
assume that there are not many such projects undertaken by individuals
outside the Dewan. There is one project sponsored by the Universiti
Sains Malaysia on the compilation of a monolingual dictionary of Malay.
This project is being undertaken by the Centre for Language Studies of
the University. The dictionary project also intends to assemble ety-
mological information on the relevant lexical entries. It is expected
to contain about 35,000 lexical entries. The project is however quite
vast, and there is a lack of personnel to work on the project.

2.3.5. Special Purpose Dictionaries (Technical Terms)

I come now to discuss the other important aspect of lexicography
namely the formation of technical or scientific terms. When Malaysia
became independent in 1957, the Razak and Rahman Talib reports recom-
mended that Malay eventually replace English in education. However,
Malay was never before employed for the first six years of school
teaching. As a result there was indeed a serious deficiency, if not a
total vacuum in modern and scientific terminology especially in the
field of natural sciences. There were scanty works such as that of
Mc High (1948), *Words and Phrases Used in Malay Broadcast During the
Period 1942-1945*, and Mohammad bin Hanif's (1949), *Kamus Politik*.
There was virtually nothing else. Nevertheless, there was a sudden
upsurge of nationalism in the country. The recommendation was timely
and well received. It was felt that it was the right of the people to
be given education in their own National Language rather than be bur-
dened with the learning of another language before they could gain
access to knowledge. In line with the country's policy in education,
secondary and tertiary education in Bahasa Malaysia was yet to be

implemented.

Two kinds of problems emerged. Firstly, there were no textbooks in
Malay both for the secondary and tertiary levels of education. There
were practically no such textbooks. A solution had to be found, i.e.
textbooks in Malay had to be published. They could be written by
individuals or at least translated from English. The second problem
was intimately connected with the first. Even if there were individuals
who were ready to tackle the first problem, Malay lacked the necessary
technical terminology. The need for such terminology was acute; with-
out it the whole policy of implementing Malay as the language in admin-
istration and education could become jeopardised. The vacuum had to
be filled.

The responsibility of preparing the scientific terminology was
placed upon the Dewan. The Dewan concentrated its efforts on developing
the language so that it could become an effective tool, to perform the
new functions it was required to do. Although the matter was urgent
and had to be solved quickly, there had to be careful planning. The
Dewan, upon realising the urgency of the matter regarding the forming
of scientific terms, immediately embarked on a terminology project.
The system had to be sufficiently viable that it may function with
minimum difficulties. Working committees were formed. Each committee
was responsible for producing scientific terms for a certain subject
area or discipline. The committees numbered as many as 24 at one time.
The committee members consisted of scholars (including linguists),
professionals, and educated individuals who were competent in specific
areas of knowledge. They were called upon to participate in the process
of forming the urgently needed scientific terms in Bahasa Malaysia.
They worked with such dedication that within a period of ten years they
enriched the Malay language with no less than 71,000 technical terms.
Today, the output has been more than doubled.

The Terminology Section of the Dewan was also responsible for co-
ordinating the output of the various subject committees. The section
acted as a secretariat which called the meeting of the Terminology
Committees. Each meeting was probably better called a workshop, for
in actual fact it worked on that basis. The Dewan was also responsible
for publishing and disseminating the scientific terms (istilahs) formed.
In so doing the Dewan was able to ensure a uniform terminology through-
out the country. To-date, the Dewan has formed and published English-
Malay scientific terms (istilah) in the following: Designations and
Departments (1960), Administrative (1962), Economy (1965), Education
(1966), Geography (1967), Biology, Forestry, Agriculture, Physic,
Mathematics and Chemistry (1968), Engineering (1970), Law, Linguistics,

Literature, Postal (and Telecommunications) (1972), Commerce, Industry, Accountancy, History, Domestic Science (1973), Music, Art (1974). These istilah items were made official by the Ministry of Education and are now widely used in schools, colleges and universities and other relevant institutions.

It goes without saying that the Dewan would not have been able to carry out a project of such magnitude alone. There were complimentary efforts in forming scientific terms outside the Dewan. Certain areas of studies were quite sophisticated or newly introduced in the universities, hence it would have been foolhardy for the Dewan to attempt to form 'istilahs' items for these subjects or disciplines too. In such cases, it was not an uncommon practice for the universities to take the responsibility to form the 'istilahs' required. Now the practice is for each University to have its own Istilah Committee established to solve immediate problems in the use of scientific terms for teaching. Normally such committees would include a representative from the Dewan, and would be expected to send a list of 'istilahs' formed to the Dewan for the purpose of preventing duplication of efforts by other institutions. The University committees normally would co-opt working committees to carry out specific functions. At the Universiti Sains Malaysia, there are now several such working committees to form 'istilahs' for the following disciplines: anthropology, political science, architecture, building technology, rubber technology, food technology, plastic technology, pharmacy, computer science, marine biology, biochemistry, termodynamics, organic chemistry and non-organic chemistry. Similar efforts are also being carried out in other universities in the country.

2.4. *THE KAMUS DEWAN*

As mentioned above, the Dewan Bahasa published its first volume of a Bahasa Malaysia monolingual dictionary, the *Kamus Dewan*, in 1970. It is now rated as one of the best dictionaries in Malay. Whilst this dictionary has many points to its credit, it has flaws too. We will now examine some of these. A review of the said dictionary has also been written by Asmah Hj. Omar (1971:177-190).

The Dewan claims that the dictionary listed about 28,000 entries, but on closer examination it is obvious that not all the 28,000 entries are lexical items. Some of the entries are only accronyms and abbreviations such as M.B., (Menteri Besar) *Chief Minister,* 'Markas Besar', M.B.A.L., (Markas Besar Angkatan Laut) *Navy Headquarters,* etc. Of course one would expect these items to be included in the dictionary

as they are also important in the language, but perhaps they should
more appropriately be placed in the appendices. The *Kamus Dewan* is a
general purpose dictionary, and is too comprehensive for use in school.
It gives a lot of information on the origin of the entries especially
lexical items borrowed from various local dialects or languages. It
also included quite a lot of newly coined technical terms. However,
since most of these technical terms are not fully assimilated into
Malay, their inclusion appears to be misleading. It would probably be
wiser to publish the technical terms in special purpose dictionaries.

Most people consult a dictionary to find the meanings of words.
They go to the dictionary for other types of information, too, but
primarily to find out what a word means. To a large extent the *Kamus
Dewan* has fulfilled this function well; however, it manifests weak-
nesses here and there in providing such meanings. For instance hitong/
hitung - is defined as 'perihal membuat kira-kira'. Here the entry and
its meaning do not tally in their class membership. Hitong, belongs to
the verbal class while the meaning given is in the nominal class. The
primary meaning of hitong should be put together with menghitong (verb)
and 'perihal membuat kira-kira' should be more suitably put together
with penghitongan (noun) (Asmah Hj. Omar 1971:178). A further example
is the meaning given of dirus which is 'mengayeri'. It must be conceded
that it is not always easy to define the meanings of words in a mono-
lingual dictionary; however, here the assigned meaning is unacceptable
since mengayeri means *to irrigate* whereas dirus means *to pour water
(on plants)*.

Another defect is that, all the lexical items are defined in the
positive sense, whereas some words carry only negative meanings, e.g.
the word peduli is defined as 'menghiraukan - mengambil perhatian,
endah akan'. It is defined as having only a positive meaning, whereas
it is used in the negative sense only. Thus a non-native speaker would
tend to use the word in a positive sense, and that would be ungrammati-
cal.

We now come to the subject of illustrations of the usage of the
lexical entries. Some of the illustrations given are not only compli-
cated and misleading but also ungrammatical. (Asmah Hj. Omar 1971:187).
For instance, 'bahagia dan kelazatan yang sejati hanya terdapat bila
mana kita mengingati Allah' is given to illustrate the usage of
kelazatan. This is too complicated. On the other hand 'Ariff sudah
bermanja dicelah kangkangku' is given to illustrate the use of bermanja.
This is misleading. Finally 'kita mesti berhormat pada guru' is given
to illustrate the use of berhormat. This is, of course, ungrammatical
in Malay.

The spelling system used is another important matter. Dictionaries must be able, among other things, to provide the correct spelling of words. There was a standard spelling system when the *Kamus Dewan* was published in 1970. However, the compilers chose not to use it. Instead, they listed all the possible spellings of each entry. Instead of providing a guide to spelling, they further confused their readers. The biggest source of confusion was in the use of vowel harmony, and the numerous cross references, e.g. telur → telor etc. All this could have been avoided if one spelling system had been adopted. Today there is a new spelling system, and the *Kamus Dewan* needs to be revised in accordance with this system.

Another aspect of the dictionary that requires comment are entries like anggor, rana, etc. If the authors meant these to be taken as root words, then the information given is misleading. These forms, are not roots in their own right. They are bound forms which occur only in the words menganggor, merana; but those affix-like initial syllables may not be segmented as they are integral parts of those words. Hence, they must be entered in the dictionary as menganggor *to be jobless* and merana *to pine*. Strangely enough, merpisang, merkubang, merlilin, etc. are entered as full lexical entries though the affix mer is quite obvious. There is inconsistency here.

There are other entries made in the dictionary which cannot be justified. Example abidin, abadiah, etc., which are from Arabic, and abonemen, jagabaya, etc. which are Indonesian. These words are neither used, nor potentially popular in Malay. The entry, therefore, of such lexical items cannot be justified.

As mentioned earlier, the *Kamus Dewan* also gives information on the dialectal origin of the lexical entries. One may call in question the advisability of double entries, e.g. dirus 'menyirami, mengayeri' and jirus 'menyiram dengan ayer'. These two lexical entries are probably only dialectial variations of the standard word jirus. A lexicographer should either decide which one should be entered into the dictionary, or if he enters both items he should indicate that one is a dialectal variant of the other.

Although, the discussion so far focusses mainly on the imperfections of *Kamus Dewan*, it has nevertheless many good points. It is the most up-to-date dictionary so far. It has listed the most number of lexical items since Wilkinson's. A good dictionary is often judged by the amount of lexical items it has listed.

Another point worthy of mention is the fact that the dictionary provides, on the whole, excellent definitions to the lexical items. The imperfections pointed out above should not affect its overall

excellence as a dictionary.

The dictionary also is a good source for idiomatic expressions in
Malay. Idioms and popular expressions are listed under each lexical
items concerned. In this respect, the *Kamus Dewan* is very thorough. For
instance, under the lexical item **kapak** *axe*, the dictionary provides a
whole list of expressions; **kapak menyelam beliong** (proverb), **bagai
kapak naik peminangan, di mana kapak jatoh di situ baji makan, habis
kapak berganti beliong,** etc. In other words it is very good formulation
of Malay usage.

2.5. *NEED FOR A NEW DICTIONARY TO STANDARDISE BAHASA MALAYSIA*

It is difficult to measure the extent of the role played by any
dictionary in standardising a language. However, we can possibly
narrow down the scope by looking at some particular aspects of the
language and examining how dictionaries influence changes. Words
listed in a dictionary are supposedly the true record of the 'supra
dialectal norm' of a language at that time and place. The dictionary
then becomes a guide to acceptable usage of the language at that time.
Its information may be on the meaning of a certain lexical item, its
class, spelling, pronunciation, grammar, etc. So when dictionary plays
such a role and this is accepted by a large number of speakers of the
language, then it would be correct for us to assume that those speakers
would use the language in a fairly uniform manner as a result of adher-
ing to the same source of information.

2.5.1. The Need for a New Monolingual Dictionary

We have seen from my previous discussion that there is no dictionary
that can be said to be completely satisfactory in every respect. Al-
though the *Kamus Kewan* surpasses other dictionaries in many respects
it needs itself to be perfected and updated. Another monolingual
dictionary is needed. This could take the form of a revised edition
of *Kamus Dewan*, which is currently being looked into, or could mean
the preparation of a totally new dictionary. The proposed dictionary
should of course incorporate all the good points found in earlier
dictionaries. On the other hand it should also make up for the short-
comings of other dictionaries. Such a dictionary will in turn become
a model for the current Malay language. This would indeed become
instrumental in making the language standardised.

2.5.2. Etymology

Most of the dictionaries now available do not actually provide adequate etymological information on their lexical entries. Of course, they do provide such information; but it is mainly restricted to the geographical origin of such words. Thus most of them will indicate whether a word is borrowed from **Sanskrit, English, Arabic, Indonesian, Minangkabau, Chinese,** etc. But no information is given beyond this. A new dictionary can fill in the gap if it also includes other information on etymology also as, for example, information on its origin in Austronesian languages, and its proto-form, and its cognates in other languages akin to Malay. All this information is now available as the result of the work of such scholars as Dempwolff and Dyen. Maybe the usefulness of such an information may not appear to be clear at all, but nevertheless, such information could serve as an important factor in language planning. This is especially, true in language planning in Malaysia, where, in terminology coining, a great many new words are required to carry new meanings and concepts. Borrowing of new words or terms may take place from dialects or languages from the Austronesian family; as for example, the words matang *matured* and aneh *peculiar* were borrowed from Javanese. Such a dictionary containing etymological information will facilitate this process of using loan words or formatives from other Austronesian languages.

2.5.3. Spelling and Pronunciation

Before the introduction of the new spelling system in August 1972, Bahasa Malaysia was using the Wilkinson – Za'ba spelling system. It was employed in schools, colleges, universities as well as in government departments throughout the country. Although this spelling system was fairly standard and stable it contained some inconsistencies. (cf. Alisjahbana 1965:23). After the introduction of the new spelling system, as expected, there was a period of confusion. The switch over from one spelling system to another could not be expected to take place smoothly especially when it involved millions of people using the language. The government then gave a period of five years for the complete change to take place in order to minimise the difficulties caused especially to textbook publishers by the sudden change. The situation was quite chaotic in the beginning as the people were only given a small pamphlet on the new spelling system which gave no clear explanation in most cases. It was deceptive in the sense that the system looked very simple but in fact it was difficult to implement and posed many problems. The local newspapers switched to the new spelling system immediately. Rules were misinterpreted or overapplied in some

cases. The matter was further aggravated by the fact that no dictionary,
written in the new spelling system, existed. Thus there was no guidance.

It goes without saying that this fact makes the learning of the lan-
guage more difficult not only for non-Malays but for Malays as well;
it retards the growth of the National Language. (cf. Alisjahbana 1965:
28). The new orthography requires the use of i or u in closed final
syllables if the preceding syllable contained i, a, u or e (pepet) e.g.
bilek → bilik *room;* balek → balik *to return;* buket → bukit *hill;* betek
→ betik *papaya;* hidong → hidung *nose;* batok → batuk *to cough;* buloh →
buluh *bamboo;* and telor → telur *egg.* The phonemic justification is
that the phonological distinction between /i/ and /e/; and /u/ and /o/
is neutralised in the above environments. This rule is simple and neat
to linguists but quite misleading to the others. There are three main
errors. First, the rule is over applied in some cases. Although the
rule categorically states that the vowel occuring in prefinal syllable
influences the one in the final; it has been interpreted in the reverse.
Thus words such as pereksa *to examine* and dewan *hall* have been sometimes
written as periksa and diwan respectively. The second common error is
that the rule is applied too liberally. Thus all words ending in e or
o are sometimes spelled as goring for goreng *to fry* and bolih for boleh
can, beluk for belok *to turn,* etc. The third type of widespread error
is due to the failure to recognise that the letter e is now made to
represent two phonemes /e/ and /ə/. As for example: tempoh [tempoh]
duration and tempoh [təmpuh] *to pass through,* telor [telor] *accent* and
telor [təlur] *egg.* According to the new rule, only the latter members
of the two pairs will be affected and respelled as tempuh and telur,
respectively. However the result is that both pairs of words are some-
times spelled as tempuh and telur.

This state of affairs has now lasted about one and a half years ever
since the commercial publishing firms in the country have seen the
financial opportunities of this situation and have begun to cash in
with dictionaries in the new spelling system. Some have incorporated
their misinterpretations of the rules of the new spelling system into
their lexicons. Nevertheless they have performed one praiseworthy
function, namely they have been acting as guides for correct spelling
in the new system. Within months after their appearance, spelling
became more stable and uniform again. This does not mean that the
story has come to the end. No, there is need to introduce a new dic-
tionary that contains no orthographic errors. It is now, when the
orthographic system is still being standardised, that the people need
such an authoritative dictionary to guide them.

Pronunciation is an important information to be included in a

dictionary.   There are two consistent errors with respect to the pres-
ent pronunciation of Malay.   The first is the result of using one let-
ter e to represent both /e/ and /ə/.   All the dictionaries so far,
except the *Kamus Pelajar*, the *Advanced Malay-English Dictionary* of
Zainal Abidin Safarwan, and that of Winstedt and Wilkinson, do not
indicate this phonemic distinction clearly.   Winstedt and Wilkinson
represent the two phonemes with e and ĕ respectively.   However, since
of late, the difference in the sound values between the two letters
have been ignored.   This is an unwise move, especially in view of the
fact that Bahasa Malaysia is being actively learned by the population.
This has led to the mispronunciation of the letter e (pepet) as [e] and
not [ə].   The situation is further complicated by the fact that it is
not easy to predict the occurrence of each.   This has created some
homographic but non-homophonous words, such as sepak *to kick* and sepak
to slap, bela *to avenge*, and bela *to rear* etc.

   The pronunciation is indeed a problem especially to non-active
speakers of Malay.   They have no guide to the sound value of e in
orthography.   Thus such words as lebah [ləbah] *bees* is pronounced as
[lebah]; dengan [dəŋan] *with* as [deŋan], etc.   In fact the tendency is
to pronounce the letter e as [e] everywhere.   The fact is, this error
can be eliminated easily if the dictionaries included this information;
and probably now is the time to introduce the letter ĕ into the spel-
ling system again.   This will help solve the problem.

   The second problem is really very minor compared to the first one.
However, it can be avoided by including the information on pronunci-
ation in dictionaries, that when k occurs at the end of a syllable
in Malay it should be pronounced as a glottal stop [ʔ], e.g. masak
[masaʔ] *to cook;* makna [maʔna] *meaning;* and letakkan [lətaʔkan] *to
emplace,* etc.   It will be of help to language learners if such infor-
mation can be obtained from dictionaries.

   Often, the dictionary is the authority to be consulted for pronunci-
ation.   But most Malay dictionaries do not provide information on this
matter.   On the other hand the dictionaries could be used as one of the
vehicles by which standard pronunciation may be disseminated, and hope-
fully become adopted by the new learners of the language.   Another
important aspect connected with spelling and pronunciation involves
borrowed forms.   Two ways are adopted to standardise the spelling and
pronunciation of such forms.   Firstly, the borrowed forms are completely
assimilated into the Bahasa Malaysia phonological system; i.e. the
words are completely re-spelled in Bahasa Malaysia orthography e.g.
science → sains; *physic* → fizik; *pension* → pencen; etc.   Secondly, only
necessary alteration is introduced in the orthographic shape of the

borrowed terms. The word is then pronounced according to the Malay
sound system. This is necessary, for a drastic change in the spelling
of the borrowed words may create ambiguity and confusion. This is
particularly true with respect to technical terms in the natural
sciences. Take the following two homophonous endings in Chemistry
terms. The ending -ine indicates the presence of nitrogen, while the
ending -in refers to any compound. It is important to distinguish
between these two endings because, for instance, if the word amine is
re-spelled according to its pronunciation it would become amin. That
would make it look as if it means *any compound*, as the case is in
stearin, and then the distinction between the presence and absence of
nitrogen is lost. The same problem arises in two homophonous endings
-ol indicating alcohol in general such as methanol, ethanol, etc. and
-ole indicating a five-membered heterocyclic compound such as pyrrole,
oxazole, etc. If pronunciation becomes the basis for the transcription
of these terms into Bahasa Malaysia, then the above terms will be re-
spelled as metanol, etanol, pirol and oksazol. The distinction between
the -ol and -ole suffixes will be lost. A serious problem is thereby
created in chemistry. In view of such considerations, it seems reason-
able to retain the distinction between the word endings, -ine, -in;
(amine and stearin); and -ole, -ol (pirole and metanol) and assign them
the Bahasa Malaysia sound values. Thus the words will be pronounced
as [amine], [stearin]; [pirole] and [metanol]. These suggestions, if
followed, should help in standardising Malay spelling and pronunciation.

2.5.4. Grammar

Perhaps a dictionary can also influence the standardisation of a
language by providing information on grammar. Current Malay diction-
aries exclude a lot of grammatical information. More information on
morphology syntax and semantics would probably be able to dispel a
great deal of confusion in the nature and use of grammatical formatives
and so on.

In the morphology of Malay, we may encounter numerous problems, just
as in its spelling and pronunciation. Until recently, it was quite
common for schools to adopt a certain attitude in the teaching of Malay,
i.e. the children must not be bothered by the use of numerous affixes.
The result is that voice affixes such as me 'active' di 'passive', ter
'non volitive active/passive' ber 'reflexive' and transitive affixes
such as kan, i, and per are often ommitted. Thus we have textbooks
propagating the teaching of sentences such as Ali panjat pokok
(memanjat), Dia membenar saya pergi (membenarkan), Adek menyiram bunga

(menyira<u>mi</u>), etc. This mistaken concept has created some inadequacies
in the mastery of the language for both native and non-native speakers
of Malay. Take the case of the use of -kan as a causative transitiviser.
This is always confused with that of meng-, a prefix indicating active
voice. This has resulted in incomplete derivation of such words as
mengguna *to use*; which should have been first derived fully as a tran-
sitive verb gunakan *to cause to use;* followed by the active voice pre-
fix menggunakan; or passive voice prefix digunakan. Alisjahbana has
best summarised this situation by saying that it makes the morphology
of the Malay language rather unstable (1965:29).

The confusion in the Malay morphology, especially in the application
of transitive affixes, varies from one dialect to another. In the Kedah
dialect, the affixes -kan, di- and -nya are completely absent; the
suffix -kan to a very limited extent is replaced by the prefix per-
(e.g. panjangkan *to lengthen,* becomes perpanjang), and the passive
form (di-) is replaced by anjing itu kena pukol dengan Mat (anjing itu
dipukol oleh Ahmad) (cf. Ismail Hussein 1969:2). There are other
examples but the ones cited above will suffice to illustrate the nature
of the problem.

There is, of course, an urgent need to re-assess and re-state the
function of the affixes in Malay in order to meet the new role it plays
in the National Language. Although some work has been done along these
lines (Asmah, 1968: Abdullah: 1974) the propagation of such findings
have not taken place as actively as it should. An inclusion of such
information may probably help to standardise the morphology of Malay
more rapidly. Although the *Kamus Dewan* does include some of these bits
of information, a more adequate illustration and listing of the appli-
cation of the affixes is necessary.

Another important point is the fact that a new dictionary is re-
quired which will not only provide the above information but also
indicate the form class of each entry. No doubt the form class may
shift according to usage, but at least the primary class should be
stated to guide the users of the dictionary.

It is always a problem to a lexicographer to determine how much
grammatical information should be included in a dictionary. In fact a
dictionary is to be used in conjunction with a grammar book, for the
dictionary may not replace or make a grammar book redundant altogether.

Some lexical entries have certain restrictions in their occurence.
It would certainly help the users of a dictionary if they can obtain
this type of grammatical information. For instance banyak *many* can
only occur with no human nouns; and ramai *many* only with human nouns.
Another example is the word peduli *to care,* which can only be used in

the negative sense and not in the positive sense. Such grammatical
information is, of course, also useful in standardising usage. Word
order is another important matter in Malay, where a change in the
word order can result in a significant change in the meaning of certain
lexical items. For an example, ayam bapak means *father's chicken* while
bapak ayam means *rooster*. Of course it is difficult to ascertain how
much of this type of information should be included.

Another aspect of grammatical information that can influence stan-
dardisation is the fact that there are few affixes in Malay but each
carries many functions, varying according to the context and base forms.
For instance, me- in membawa indicates active voice, but me in malayang
indicates an active state, while me in menggunung indicates merely a
state, and mengantuk indicates reflexive action, etc.

The next important matter on the information to be included in a
dictionary relates to the semantic information. What is meant by this,
of course, is information on the synonyms and antonyms of various lexi-
cal items. The advantage of providing this type of information may not
seem to be very clear, but it certainly has an implication on the de-
velopment of the language. The availability of synonyms and similar
semantic information will no doubt help to modernise the language in
the sense that a description in that language could be made more
precise. For instance, the words hancur, luluh both mean *to disinte-
grate* but they also indicate differences in the manner and degrees of
disintegration of rocks in geography.

Thus we see that if the proposed new dictionary can include all this
information it will indeed become a very influential tool in standard-
ising Malay.

3. ROLE OF DICTIONARY IN STANDARDISATION

3.1. *WHAT IS STANDARDISATION*

By standardisation is meant efforts to create a 'norm' of standard
usage of a language in an area where various social and local vari-
ations exist (Punya Sloka Ray, 1963:12). In most countries in Asia
and Africa, a standard language often coincides with the official lan-
guage of the country. The official language is of course the language
of official pronouncements and administration as well as education.
The official language is often the factor that encourages solidarity,
unification and modernisation. In other words, standardisation is a
natural process in the growth of languages for the benefit of social,
cultural and political integration of these nations (Alisjahbana 1965:
15).

A standardised language is, therefore, a fairly uniform norm or the supra-dialectal usage by speakers of a language. Here we are treating language as a tool of communication by which the speakers of a community interact. In such a situation then the more efficient a standardised language is, the more it is desirable. By efficiency is here meant the capability of the language to express what its speakers want to say.

The norm varies with respect to place and time. Although in the ideal situation, the norm should not vary, that is commonly conceded as an impossible situation. There will always be variation in a standard language, as the result of geographical as well as social dialects. For instance a speaker of Malay from the South may pronounce a in word final position as [ə], whereas a speaker from the North may pronounce it as [a]. There are other variations, such as the selection of affixes. For instance, the Northern (Kedah) dialect of Malay prefers the transitive affix per- to -kan in deriving transitive verbs (e.g. perhangat (North), hangatkan (South) *to heat*). Of course, there are also grammatical differences, too.

Language also changes in time. It is easy to see that the norm of a standard language may change from one period to another. What is considered standard at this time may not be accepted as such in the future. In other words, language is constantly undergoing a process of changes; thus the norm of a standard likewise changes.

3.2. *DUAL ROLE OF DICTIONARIES IN STANDARDISATION*

It was commonly accepted in the eighteenth century that dictionaries should try to standardise the spelling, pronunciation, meaning and general usage of words. In fact it was sometimes held that dictionaries should fix the words of good English for all time. Nowadays, on the contrary, it is generally felt that dictionaries should be limited to recording language development. However, although the twentieth century point of view is different from that of the eighteenth century, the fact remains that dictionaries inevitably act as language standardisers (cf. Whittaker, 1966:25).

The role of dictionaries in standardisation is twofold. It formulates and propagates the standard norm of a language. A dictionary is a compilation of lexical items existing in one language at any one time. It records the meanings, and other aspects of language such as spelling, pronunciation, grammatical usage current at that time and place. Such a collection of information about a language, if scientifically recorded, would represent the true usage of that language then. Such a dictionary would contain accurate statements on correct and acceptable usage.

The other role of dictionaries is that of furthering language
development, by bringing about uniformity in spelling, pronunci-
ation, grammar, etc. This can be achieved, if the dictionary gains the
confidence of the people since it contains accurate statements on
correct and acceptable usage. Such dictionaries will go a long way in
helping to standardise a language. If the speakers consult such dic-
tionaries over matters like spelling, pronunciation, grammar, etc. it
will eventually propagate the correct and acceptable usage recorded in
the dictionary.

3.3. *NEED FOR UPDATING DICTIONARIES TO KEEP UP WITH LANGUAGE CHANGES*

The imperfections of the *Kamus Dewan* have been discussed above in
2.4. In addition to that already mentioned in that section, one should
also point out that Bahasa Malaysia has changed since its publication.
Therefore, at least the lexical entries in that dictionary have to be
recast in accordance with the newly approved spelling system. There
are also imperfections in the *Kamus Dewan* that will have to be improved
to enable that dictionary to propagate a standard usage of the language.
It is because of this that an updated monolingual dictionary for Bahasa
Malaysia is needed. Such a dictionary would not only speed up the
whole process of standardisation but also ensure the growth of the
National Language.

4. CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, Bahasa Malaysia now has been able to cope with
its new roles as the language of administration and education. It has
gone a long way since it started as a language full of inadequacies.
What is probably more significant, however, is that we are now in an
advantageous position to be able to plan the development of a supra-
dialectal norm to be used as a standard. It is an opportunity for
linguists to be more active in language engineering, for the sake of a
more standard and modernised language. The progress attained so far,
of course allows us to be quite optimistic that the implementation of
Bahasa Malaysia as the sole National Language of the country will be
successful.

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