Language Policies – Impact on Language Maintenance and Teaching Focus on Malaysia, Singapore and The Philippines

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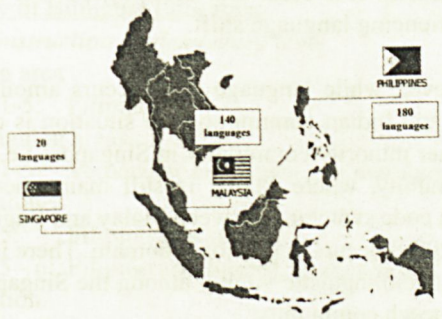
Abstract

This paper will describe the language policies, planning and implementation in selected ASEAN countries and discuss the impact of such policies on the maintenance of a number of languages and dialects. The paper will specifically examine the minority languages in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines that have been and are being abandoned, and examine how language policies, planning and implementation contribute to language shift and language death. Language learning of minority endangered languages can take place in institutional or community settings. In such settings, the use of 'multiliteracies' to revive 'threatened' languages in new learning venues will be discussed.

Introduction

How do languages die?

Nettle and Romaine (2000:2) estimate that about half the known languages in the world have disappeared over the past 500 years and Crystal (2000:19) suggests that an average of one language may vanish every 2 weeks over the next 100 years. There are several reasons for language shift and death. Apart from natural disasters resulting in the death of a speech community, many man-made factors can cause such disasters. One of these man-made factors that can cause language shift and death is language policies. In the first part of this paper, I will discuss the language policies in three countries (Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines) and show how they impact on language shift. The second part of this paper will discuss how multiliteracies in various domains and settings are used to revive some of these 'threatened' languages.



Language Policies, Planning and Implementation

Malaysia

There are around 140 languages spoken in Malaysia, a truly multilingual and multicultural society (Grimes, 2000). Soon after Malaya became independent in 1957, Malay was established as the national language with the purpose of fostering national unity. There was however a provision for the teaching of mother tongues of numerous other languages. 'Pupil's Own Language' (POL) could be taught in schools if there were at least 15 students to make up a class (Jernudd, 1999; Kaplan & Baldauf 2003; Kua, 1998; Smith, 2003). There are also Chinese and Tamil primary schools where Malaysian children can be taught in their mother tongues i.e. *Mandarin* and *Tamil* for the first six years of school., More recently (2003) a new policy makes it mandatory for mathematics and science to be taught in English (Spolsky, 2004).

In the East Malaysian state of Sarawak, other languages are also taught. The Iban language, catering to the largest group in Sarawak, is taught as a POL in both primary and secondary schools. In the state of Sabah, also in East Malaysia, Kadazandusun has been taught as POL in government schools since 1997 (Smith, 2003), and the use of Murut has just started according to Kimmo Kosonen (2005). In West Malaysia, an Orang Asli (the indigenous people of West Malaysia) language called Semai, is being used as a POL at lower primary school level in some schools where the community dominates.

The use of these minority languages does not mean that minority languages are alive, and many languages survive only if they are maintained in the home domain. Unfortunately, the emphasis on Malay, the National language, and also English as international language, are seen as more important than time spent on learning the mother tongue, and a number of speech communities are shifting away from the habitual use of their respective heritage languages (see David, 1996 on the Sindhi community, Sankar, 2004 on the Iyer community, Nambiar, 2007 on the Malayalee community, David, Naji and Sheena, 2002 on the Punjabi community, David and Faridah, 1999 on the Portuguese community)

Local communities, language foundations and non-governmental organizations have been working together in language development to have minority languages in the school system (Kua, 1998; Lasimbang & Kinajil, 2000; Smith, 2001, 2003).These will be discussed in the second part of this paper.

Singapore

In neighboring Singapore, more than 20 languages are spoken. 75% of the population is ethnic Chinese, but *English* is the sole medium of instruction at all levels of education, and three other official languages, i.e. *Malay*, *Mandarin* and *Tamil*, are taught as second languages (Grimes, 2000; Jernudd, 1999; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Pakir, 2004). Speakers of other languages can also freely choose to study a language from those offered in the school curriculum. Gopinathan, (1980: 178) states that since independence Singapore has practiced bilingualism (English and a mother tongue), because it is considered important for Singaporeans to present Singapore's ethnic and linguistic diversity identity to the world. Singaporeans also need to learn their mother tongue in schools according to their ethnic background (*Mandarin* for Chinese, *Bahasa Melayu* for Malays and *Tamil* for Indians). The objective of this bilingual policy is to promote the use of mother tongues so as to ensure identification with and maintenance of traditional cultures and their values.

Gopinathan (1988) explains that the need for social and political stability in a diverse, multi-racial society which also facilitates rapid economic growth, is the main factor influencing the Singaporean government's thinking and language policies. English is today a *de facto* national language in Singapore and is seen as a major source of economically valuable knowledge and technology, as English gives the nation access to world markets. Rapid economic growth since the 1980s seems to have helped convince the majority that knowledge of English provides better opportunities for them as individuals, as well as for the country as a whole. Therefore, despite the bilingual policy, many Singaporeans are moving towards English as a home language. Census 2000 indicates that *Mandarin* is spoken as the home language of only 45% of the Chinese. In fact according to statistics from the Singapore Ministry of Education, 9.3 % of the first year pupils of primary schools of Chinese origin used English at home in 1980. This increased to 45 % in 2003. Since 1984, the Chinese language has been reduced into an isolated subject in primary and secondary schools, and all other subjects are taught in English, which has since dominated the country's education system. There is therefore some concern regarding the lack of Chinese language usage, especially dialects among Singapore Chinese families (People Daily Online, 22 February 2004). The Chinese dialects include *Hokkien* (43.1%), *Teochew* (22.1%), *Cantonese* (16.4%), *Hakka* (7.4%), *Hainanese* (7.1%) and smaller communities of *Foochow*, *Henghua*, *Shanghainese* and *Hokchia*. Each of these sub-communities has its own 'dialect' (Li Wei, Vanithamani Saravanan & Julia Ng, 1997). Li Wei, et al (1997) conducted a study on language shift of the Singapore *Teochew* community and found that the Teochews had moved away from the dialect to the use of Mandarin and English in the family domain.

At present, as a result of the bilingual educational policy and the influence of the Speak *Mandarin* Campaign, young Chinese know and use *Mandarin* Chinese. The use of *Mandarin* has also replaced the use of other Chinese dialects, *Hokkien* in particular, for intra-ethnic communication in some domains. *Hokkien* is known and still used, but mostly by older Chinese and the less educated. Mandarin is still by and large a High (H) language, while *Hokkien* remains dominant in hawker centers, on buses, etc. (Kuo & Jernudd, 2003). In summary, even though *Mandarin* Chinese is currently listed in Singapore's education policy and is also actively promoted by the Singapore government, there is still a concern as to whether *Mandarin* and other Chinese dialects are being effectively maintained.

I shall now move on to another ethnic group in Singapore - the Indians. Singapore's Indian population comprises 6.4 % of the total population. Of that number, *Tamils* comprise 63.9%, *Malayalees* 8.6%, *Punjabis* 6.7% and there are other smaller Indian linguistic communities, for example, the *Bengali*, *Urdu*, *Sindhi*, and *Gujerati* speech communities. However, in 2000 only 3% of Singaporean Tamils used *Tamil* (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2000) as compared to 1985, when 54% of the Tamils reported that they used Tamil as the principal family language (Kuo, 1985: 28). As for the other Indian speech communities, only 15% use *Hindi*, *Gujarati*, *Malayalam*, and *Punjabi* (Saravanan, 1995). In reporting trends in the shift towards English, Saravanan (1999), reported that Tamil parents and their children tend to use English during family activities, although they use *Tamil* in prayers and in communicating with relatives. In 1991 Ramiah reports that the use of *Tamil* in the domain of friends, siblings, school and reading of primary students was low. Census 2000 confirmed that amongst all the main ethnic groups in Singapore, the Tamils were the ones who showed the largest shift from *Tamil* to English, which is most prominent for young Indians (in the age range of 5 -14 years), those of high socioeconomic status and those with high educational attainment. It is clear that the Singaporean Indians are experiencing language shift.

However, while language shift occurs among the Chinese and Indian community, the situation is different in another minority community in Singapore i.e. the Malay community, where Malay is still maintained although much code switching between Malay and English (Roxana, 2000) occurs in the home domain. There is relatively high ethnolinguistic vitality among the Singaporean Malay speech community.

Philippines

The Philippines is a multi-ethnic country consisting of 180 languages. The Bilingual Education Policy of the Philippines (1974, revised in 1987) states that *English* and *Filipino* (based on *Tagalog*) are the languages of education and the official languages of literacy for the nation. The goal of this policy is to make the population bilingual. In fact, only about a quarter of the population is estimated

to receive education in their first language. (Grimes 2000; Jernudd 1999; Kaplan & Baldauf 2003; Nical, Smolicz & Secombe 2004; Young 2002)

To some extent, the language policy has influenced the abandonment of some Philippine languages. When bilingual education was implemented in 1970, Filipino became the medium of instruction at the elementary level. However, in non-Tagalog areas, the vernacular language was used as the medium of instruction from grade one to grade four and Filipino in grade five. In addition to Filipino, English was offered as a double period subject in grade five and grade six. In the intermediate level and High school, both English and Filipino were used as the medium of instruction (Fonacier, 1987:145).

In 1973, an attempt to change the system was made where the use of vernacular language was implemented as the medium of instruction in grade one and grade two with English and Filipino as subjects. In grade three, English was the medium of instruction with Filipino as a subject. However, this policy was not accepted immediately by the public and it resulted in a revision of the policy where English and Filipino were used as the medium of instruction at all levels (Fonacier, 1987; Llamzon 1977). Because of the revised policy, the vernacular language became an auxiliary language or second language in some domains in school. The main objective of the government in implementing such a policy was to make the Filipinos bilingual in English and Filipino. This is seen in the Department of Education and Culture Order No. 25 - "the vernacular shall be resorted to only when necessary to facilitate understanding of the concepts being taught through the prescribed medium of instruction: English or Pilipino" (Sibayan, 1985).

A general overview of Philippine language policy changes over time is shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Philippines Language Policy Changes

1970: Policy of Bilingual Education

Medium of instruction at elementary level

A. Tagalog area
   Grade 1-5: Filipino
B. Non Tagalog areas,
   Grade 1-5: Vernacular languages as a medium of instruction
   Grade 5: Filipino as a subject
   Grade 5 - 6: Filipino and English as medium of instruction.

Medium of instruction at intermediate level and high school: English and Filipino

1973

Medium of instruction at elementary level

A. Grade 1-2 :Vernacular language, with Filipino and English as subjects.
B. Grade 3: English with Filipino as a subject.

Revised Policy

A. Bilingual Education: English and Filipino as medium of instruction for all levels, as stated in the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) Order No. 25
B. Vernacular languages: auxiliary languages.

To sum up, English and Filipino are the official languages in the Philippines, with Filipino as the national language. Local languages have been used in government schools as "transitional languages" for initial instruction and early literacy up to primary Grade 3, but these exceptions are carried out on a small scale. In the current revised policy, local languages have been elevated to the role of "auxiliary languages". These local languages are used mostly to explain the curriculum to students and are not used seriously as the medium of instruction. In some cases however, *Lubuagan* for example, local language or multilingual learning materials are also used with good results (Dekker & Dumatog, 2003). Situations vary depending on teachers and the availability of learning materials in local languages.

With the overall emphasis on two languages, Filipino and English, as the medium of instruction at all levels, the importance and role of other vernacular languages appear to have diminished. Many minority language speakers have developed a more positive attitude towards English or Filipino for political, social and economic reasons.

There are a few languages in the Philippines that are slowly being abandoned by the new generation of speakers and one example is the *Butuanon* language, a member of the Visayan dialect family. It should however be mentioned that some well-established majority languages like *Cebuano*, *Ilokano* and *Ilongo* have not been as much affected as other minority languages.

It should also be pointed out that, as the writing systems for most languages are fairly similar in the Philippines, many people literate in Filipino can often quite easily transfer their literacy skills into their mother tongue (Jernudd, 1999; Young, 2002).

A general overview of the language policy in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines is shown in Table 1.

Malaysia	Singapore	Philippines
Malay national language and medium of instruction in government (national schools) and Chinese and Tamil medium of instruction in national type primary schools and English taught as subject. POL (Pupil's Own Language) -minimum 15 students).	Bilingual policy – English-medium of instruction and students learn mother tongue as a subject.	English and Filipino - medium of instruction at different school levels. Mother tongue-auxiliary language at primary school level.

Table 1 Language Policy

Overall, what has caused language shift in Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines? Language policy, and speakers' attitudes regarding the pragmatic importance of learning some languages given their political and economic importance have contributed to the language shift of minority languages in these countries.

Maintenance and Revitalization of Minority Languages

Having provided the background of language policies let me move on to discuss how some of the endangered languages have been revitalized in new settings by making use of a range of literacies

Approaches to Language Revitalization

According to Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale (2001), there are five categories of approaches in language revitalization globally. These include (1) school based programmes; (2) children's programmes outside the school (after school programmes); (3) adult language programmes; (4) documentation and materials development; and (5) home based programmes.

(1) School Based Programs

Endangered Language as a Subject

The *Semai* in Peninsular Malaysia are one of the 18 aboriginal languages protected by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (JHEOA) formed in 1954. The Ministry of Education (MOE) started to introduce *Semai* as a subject in the national curriculum from year 1996 and it was fully implemented in some schools by 2000.

In Sarawak, a playschool uses Bidayuh as the medium of instruction and this is funded by UNESCO in the Bidayuh Belt (a term coined by Dundon (1989). This belt refers to areas where the Bidayuh villages are located, namely Padawan, Bau, Serian and Lundu districts.

In the Philippines, the Save Our Languages through Federalism (SOLFED) Butuan chapter sollicited assistance from two NGOs to fund the teaching of *Butuanon* in public schools. The two NGOs signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Caraga Department of Education to teach Butuanon in public schools in 2006. (Sunday Times, August 11, 2007)

(2) Children's Programmes Outside the School

In Malaysia, Sikh children are learning Punjabi in classrooms in gurdwaras i.e. the Sikh temple. These classes are normally held on Saturday. Many ethnic based associations, for example the Sindhi Association of Malaysia (SAM), also hold weekly language classes. Many of such ethnic based classes are however short-lived as attendance is erratic.

(3) Adult Language Programmes

Two adult classes for teaching Bidayuh in Kampong Quop in Kuching District and Kampong Kakei in the Serian District (2003) have started (Jey Lingam Burkhardt, 2007). They are held once a week.

(4) Documentation and Material Development

Publication, field notes and recordings made by the speakers and researchers can be used by new generations to learn what they can about their languages, and are a rich source of material that can be invaluable to language revitalization programmes. Books, audiotapes, videotapes and CD ROMs are important components of language teaching. This has been done for some minority languages. For instance, a proposed practical orthography based on linguistic analysis and preliminary phonological description conducted in November 1998, is used to help the *Iranun* in Sabah, Malaysia, to revitalize their language. Recording and transcription of *Iranun* traditional stories and history was also carried out. In addition, community members attended a three-part writers' workshop, which trained them in literature writing from 1999-2000. The results from these endeavours were:

- 175 different booklets, including children's books, and calendars.
- a grammar sketch of the *Iranun* language (printed by the Sabah Museum)
- an *Iranun* picture dictionary.
- a volume of traditional *Iranun* stories (printed by the Sabah Museum).
- a trial edition of adult learning-to-read materials.

The development of *Iranun* language orthography encouraged further development of the *Iranun* language. *Iranun* documentation and materials development have helped revitalize the *Iranun* language and created an awareness of the need to learn the *Iranun* language.

Due to the variations in their 29 isolects, one of the aims of the Bidayuh Language Development project set up in 2001, was to devise a common Bidayuh language. A unified orthography system was achieved for the four main Bidayuh dialects after a series of workshops from March 2002 to August 2003 and this has resulted in a unified symbolization for Bidayuh words.

The *Semai* language was revitalized through the development and documentation of *Semai* language materials. A lexicon is being compiled and has helped to produce a dictionary and by September 2000 more than 2000 *Semai* words were listed.

In the Philippines, the *Butuanon* dialect can only be spoken by fewer than 500 youngsters in Butuan itself (Manila Times, 11 August 2007). In June 2005, SOLFED Butuan Chapter started creating a Butuanon syllabus or grammar book, designed to be used by any classroom teacher with a working knowledge of English. Since *Butuanon* did not have any existing piece of literature in 2005, SOLFED used an existing grammar book (made by the Maryknoll Institute of Language and Culture in Davao), designed to teach Cebuano Visayan, as a guide. Cebuano Visayan is a close linguistic relative of *Butuanon*. SOLFED-Butuan members who were native *Butuanon* speakers collaborated in designing a syllabus which was then copied to a hard disc, and numerous copies were made for distribution. The recordings can be played in classrooms.

Computer Technology

According to Hinton and Hale (2001), as computer technology is part of modern culture, it might be the ultimate solution for language revitalization. They discussed several uses of computer technology, which include:

1 Development of materials and self-published books
2 Online dictionaries, grammars and other important language references
3 Multimedia curriculum for language pedagogy
4 Networking (which includes email, online newsgroup, blogs) and
5 Documentation of these materials.

With the explosive growth of today's technology, the internet has become a valuable resource for people globally in language learning. There are websites and blogs that promote the learning of minority languages. Some examples in Malaysia are:

1 *Telegu* language, www.telugu.com.my/links.htm (website)
2 *Penang Hokkien* language www.penanghokkien.com (website) and www.chineselanguage.org (website)
3 *Hakka* language http://raymondcno.blogspot.com/2007/08/learning-hakka-language-lesson-1.html (blog)

These websites and blogs even tell users how to pronounce words. Users are able to listen to the accurate pronunciation by clicking on the related icons. These websites also post songs, e.g., *Telegu* and *Hokkien* songs. Users can even have a discussion on their respective minority languages.

Other than the above stated alternatives and strategies in revitalizing minority languages, mass media is also one of the important sources of revitalizing minority languages. A Chinese radio station in Malaysia- 988 started with a 5-minute *Hokkien* programme where two to three *Hokkien* words through simple conversation are taught daily. The DJs repeat the new vocabulary several times so that the listeners learn how to pronounce the words correctly. Malaysia Radio and Television station (RTM)'s Chinese station also have five minutes news announcement in four different Chinese dialects (*Hakka, Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew*) in the evening. Radio Malaysia Sabah (RMS) airs several ethnic languages, namely Bajau, Kadazan, Dusun and Murut. Based on the feedback and response of the ethnic broadcasters of both the Kadazan and Dusun slots, the interviews display the roles of this medium in maintaining the Kadazandusun language. RTM Sarawak Bidayuh service broadcasts news items in Biatah, Bau-jagoi, and Bukar-sadong dialects. The *Catholic News* in Kuching occasionally has news reports written in Bidayuh dialects and *Utusan Sarawak*, a local Malay daily, allocates one section for news in the Iban language. In short, radio stations and newspapers in Malaysia have become the source of minority language revitalization.

As for television, there are several Chinese dialects television programmes in Malaysia. Cantonese drama series are shown on TV2, Astro channels, NTV7 and Channel 8 every evening (6.00pn – 8.00pm). Lately, Channel 8 has started a *Hokkien* drama series from Monday to Fridays from 6.00pm to 7.00pm. "Vaanavil", one of the Astro television channels, also shows half an hour each of drama in *Telegu* and *Malayalam*. One example of a *Malayalam* drama is "Gangotri". Watching drama programmes in ethnic languages is an effective way to revitalize minority languages.

Songs in different Chinese dialects are produced in cassettes, CDs and DVDs. Michael Ong, a famous Malaysian Chinese singer and writer sings *Cantonese* songs. Chinese New Year songs are produced in *Hokkien* yearly.

In the Phillipines the *Subanen* language in Zamboanga del Sur, Mindanao has been maintained through songs and folk epics (Esteban, 2003).

It is also important for us to investigate how local communities have maintained their dialects in Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines. In Malaysia, there are the ethnic subgroups that have their own associations which focus on retaining their culture. Most of the associations have been focusing their activities on promoting their culture e.g. food, wedding ceremonies etc. For example, the Malaysian Hakka Association holds a Miss Hakka contest as one of their annual activities (http://www.hakkamalaysia.com/index.html). They do not, however, appear to be emphasizing the use of the dialect.

The *Bidayuh* communities in Sarawak have attempted to promote the use of the *Bidayuh* dialects. The *Bidayuh* Language Development Project (BLDP) is a language

revitalization project initiated by the leaders of the *Bidayuh* community in Sarawak. The project goals are to:

- revitalize the language, i.e. to recover forgotten and neglected terms.
- develop a unified orthography for all Bidayuh dialects
- expand the body of literature in Bidayuh
- facilitate having Bidayuh taught in schools

In Sarawak, the Bidayuh singers play a very important role in promoting and preserving the Bidayuh language. The Bidayuh lyrics are influential in teaching reading and spelling in Bidayuh, as well as transmitting Bidayuh words to the younger generation (Renschet al 2006:18). As for the Philippines, *Surigaonon*, another minority language in the Northeastern part of Mindanao, is used in local songs, local newspapers and blogs.

In Singapore, the government is playing an important role in minority languages revitalization. In 1996, the Singapore Indian Association (SINDA) requested the Ministry of Education (MOE) to establish a committee that would review the teaching and learning of *Tamil* and consider the feasibility of introducing a standard form of spoken *Tamil* in the schools. After being urged by the respective speech communities to do so, today the government has accepted the teaching of *Hindi*, *Punjabi*, *Bengali*, *Gujerati* and *Urdu* in community run classrooms. It is clear that the Singaporean government is encouraging the learning of mother tongues of different ethnic groups in Singapore.
Table 2 will give us a general overview of how minority communities in Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines are revitalizing their minority languages, while Table 3 clearly shows the range of media used to maintain minority languages.

Languages Revitalization Strategies	**Malaysia**	**Singapore**	**Philippines**
School based programmes	*Semai* and *Kadazandusun* - POL	Mandarin, Malay and Tamil - taught as subjects in schools.	Butuanon - taught as a subject in government schools.
Children's programmes outside the school	A play school in Sarawak is using Bidayuh as the medium of instruction		
Adult language program	*Bidayuh* adult classes		
Document and material development	*Iranun* Traditional stories documented Orthography - Grammar developed 175 booklets published Picture dictionaries published *Semai* Dictionaries published *Bidayuh* Story & Prayer books & hymns		Butuanon - Grammar book
Computer technology	Websites for *Telegu* & *Hokkien*. Blog for *Hakka*		Blogs for Surigaonon
Community		SINDA, helped in the establishment of the Tamil language.	SOLFED helped in Surigaonon as a subject in schools.

Table 2 Approaches to Minority Languages Revitalization

Multiliteracies	Malaysia	Philippines
CDs	*Telegu, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka*	
Websites	*Telegu, Hokkien*	*Surigaonon*
Blog	*Hakka*	*Surigaonon*
TV programmes	*Hokkien, Cantonese, Telegu, Malayalam*	
Radio programmes	*Hakka, Hokkien, Teochew Bidayuh*	*Surigaonon*
Songs and folk epic	*Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka (songs)*	*Surigaonon, Subanen*
Newspapers	*UTUSAN SARAWAK*	*Periodico Surigaonon*

Table 3 Multiliteracies in Minority Languages Revitalization

Summary and Conclusion

David Crystal (2000) provides a number of reasons why it is important to maintain mother tongues and these include:

- Linguistic diversity enriches human ecology,
- Languages are expressions of identity,
- Languages are repositories of history,
- Languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge: each language provides a new slant on how the human mind works and perceives and records human observation and experience.

We note that in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines, language policies have affected minority languages and the respective governments have attempted to preserve minority languages by introducing the teaching of some of these languages as subjects in the school curriculum. Communities too have invited experts to conduct research and campaigns to promote these languages. Unfortunately, the majority of the minority languages speakers, especially the young ones, have shifted away from using and appreciating their respective mother tongues. Due to their learning environment and their perception of the importance of the majority languages, code switching and language shift of minority languages has occurred. Dealwis (2008) states that the Bidayuh undergraduates learning in a local tertiary institution are using less of their heritage dialects in both intra and across groups during social interactions in the university. This is due to the influence of more dominant codes in their linguistic environment namely, Sarawak Malay, Bahasa Melayu and English.

Some community leaders are expressing concern at this shift and have attempted to help preserve and maintain their respective languages. They use a variety of media and sources such as CDs, songs, blogs, websites, TV programmes and radio programmes to promote and sustain their languages.

In conclusion, I would like to state that whatever the opportunities given by education systems, community leaders and externally funded organizations; whatever the many modes of documenting language and encouraging people to use language through blogs, songs and other media, the desire to maintain and use ethnic languages depends on how ethnic minorities perceive the importance of their languages and also their desire to use these languages. If a minority language has an economic value every effort will be made to ensure its retention. For minority languages to live, opportunities must exist for their spontaneous use, and a value given to the language.

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