

**THE IMPACT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES ON LANGUAGE CHANGE IN
A MALAYSIAN CONTEXT**

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ABSTRACT

A social network called Facebook has become a powerful and essential tool for communication. This study explored how language was used in Facebook and how its popularity online has the potentiality of affecting the languages of choice in a multilingual context. It also examined the languages that are at risk and the extent to which language change can potentially occur in Facebook. In addition, it addressed how users in Malaysia perceive language change from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. Two primary languages are in contact which are Bahasa Malaysia (BM-the National Language) and English. The findings revealed the frequent use of the vernacular forms of Bahasa Malaysia interdispersed with those of Malaysian variety of English that leads to variations that are unique to Facebook. The Malaysian English reflects features of indigenization and nativization that clearly distinguish it as a variety of English. There were objects, new concepts and new activities that may require new terms and frequent used of syntactic structures which were reduced to simpler grammatical forms, and language contact that may induce speakers to adopt forms and usages from other languages. Consequently, the areas of language that are affected are in phonology (pronunciation), morphology (word formation), semantics (meaning) and structure (grammar).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

All living languages change with time. Though they do so rather slowly compared to the human life span, language change is constant and pervasive. But it is often imperceptible affecting the lexicon and all aspects of the grammar of a particular language. On a personal level and in our daily interactions, we do not realise or notice that we constantly use new forms of language because of our intimate connections to our language. Hence, we do not overtly notice the replacement of forms and rules within a generation, but we are often aware that the generations before and after us use different forms and rules. Many of the changes are revealed when languages have written records. We know a great deal of the history of English because it has been written for about 1000 years. Old English, spoken in England around the end of the first millennium, would be unintelligible to the speaker of modern English. A language at any one time is, therefore, significantly different from its direct ancestors of some centuries earlier and definitely different from its ancestor of one or two millennia earlier. So languages do indeed change, some flourish and expand some disappear or die.

For many years, sociolinguists have tried to study language change by examining how variability is embedded in social contexts in speech communities today. We can use the present to explain the past, and the past to explain the present as it is now clear that variability is a prerequisite for change. By extrapolating from the patterns of variation we find today, we can make some predictions about the