

**THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGE POLICIES TO TEACH MATHS
AND SCIENCE ON LANGUAGE CHOICES OF UiTM SARAWAK'S DIPLOMA
IN SCIENCE STUDENTS**

**INSTITUT PENGURUSAN PENYELIDIKAN
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
40450 SHAH ALAM, SELANOR
MALAYSIA**

BY:

**CAESAR DEALWIS
AIZA BTE JOHARI
SIMON BOTLEY @FAIZAL HAKIM**

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ABSTRACT

This sociolinguistic study focuses on the younger generation of multilingual Malaysian tertiary students who have been exposed to different mediums of instruction when studying Science and Mathematics at school before joining UiTM. This study is limited to two domains, namely friendship and study, because these are the domains where the impact of the different language policies could be more obvious in influencing the language choices of the students.

Even though there has been both positive and negative feedback on the policy of using English to teach Science and Mathematics which was implemented in 2001, the sociolinguistic aspect of it has hardly been studied. There is no information as to whether the different mediums of instruction have affected the language choices of these students once they pursue tertiary education. The Diploma in Science students at UiTM Samarahan, Sarawak best represent these two cohorts of students. Parts 1, 2 and 3 have been exposed to the learning of Science and Mathematics in English when they were at school, since Form 1. Parts 4, 5 and 6 have been exposed to the learning of Science and Mathematics in Bahasa Malaysia at school since Year 1. Being exposed to two separate medium of instructions could possibly have affected the language choices of students who pursued Diploma in Science at UiTM where the medium of instruction is in English.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language choice is one of the concerns in sociolinguistics. It has been of interest to many researchers especially in bi or multilingual speech communities where there exist not only choices between varieties of a language but also choices between different languages and dialects involving different settings serving different reasons. Researchers such as Ferguson (1959), Fishman (1971, 1972a, 1972b), Wallwork (1978), Gumperz (1971, 1982) and Heller (1988) have studied language use by focusing on language choice.

Language choice is a sociolinguistic phenomenon which refers to selecting languages for different purposes in different contexts. Multilingual societies inevitably face conflict over language choice. What makes this language choice an obvious issue and concern in a multilingual society? Is the choice natural or forced? What are the intentions of an individual when making a choice? What are the factors that influence the specific choice? These are some of the issues that encouraged investigating the impact of language policies on language choices among undergraduates in UiTM Samarahan.

Education in Malaysia is overseen by two government ministries: the Ministry of Education for matters up to the secondary level and the Ministry of Higher

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background information about language policy, language choices and code-switching which could influence language use in a multilingual tertiary setting in Sarawak. From literature search this chapter reports information which is useful in understanding the attitudes and language choices of tertiary students in Sarawak towards English, Bahasa Melayu and Sarawak Malay dialect. The various sections in this chapter also provide the basis to explain later some of the reasons for language choices among the tertiary students in Sarawak who have been exposed to English and Malay medium of instructions when learning Science and Mathematics, besides using Sarawak Malay which is the lingua franca in interethnic communication. Information on the language choices in Sarawak is necessary to understand the background of the present day language choices in a tertiary setting in the state. Other aspects which can determine the amount of either English, Bahasa Malaysia or Sarawak Malay is by examining the code-switching patterns used by students in an educational setting such as UiTM Samarahan.