

### **EMERGENCE OF BAHASA MELAYU AS A LANGUAGE FOR FAMILY COMMUNICATION: CASE STUDY OF A BIDAYUH FAMILY IN SARAWAK**

This research aims to investigate the impact of the national language policy in promoting the use of Bahasa Melayu as a medium of communication in a multiethnic community, specifically within the context of families with intermarriages. The case study focussed on social motivations for language choice in interactions among members of an extended Bidayuh family. The family participating in the study comprised 32 members across three generations. The first generation patriarch and matriarch are Bidayuhs from different areas, and they were not able to speak each other's language when they first met. The second and third generations intermarried with other ethnic groups. The data collection techniques employed were participant observations and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that Bahasa Melayu, particularly Sarawak Malay dialect is the main language for family communication. Among the factors contributing to this were intermarriages, geographical location, socio-economic status and educational background of the family members. The beginning point for the use of Sarawak Malay dialect was the use of this language by the first generation with each other and subsequently with their children and grandchildren, and this language was found to be a useful language for communicating with family members from other ethnic groups in the case of intermarriages. This study found that the lifestyle and culture of the Bidayuhs were maintained and transmitted to the younger generation despite the non-use of the Bidayuh language as the common language for family communication.

#### **Researchers**

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