The Present and Future Vitality of the Kejaman Language in Sarawak

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Introduction

Language refers to the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. It also includes any nonverbal method of expression or communication such as gestures and facial expressions. Language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings. We use language to express inner thoughts and emotions, make sense of complex and abstract ideas, to learn to communicate with others, to fulfill our wants and needs, as well as to establish rules and maintain our culture.

The existence of language cannot be separated from human life. Crystal (2000) stated that every language represents the temple in which the speaker's soul is his/her devotee. Undoubtedly, everything related to human life in the society involves language because it is through the language that interaction among tribes, ethnic groups, and religions can happen. Sad but true, certain ethnic group were not able to maintain their language, this is especially true and tangible in the multilingual societies. Language shift and language maintenance is like two sides of a coin. One side of the coin is a language that cannot be shifted by another language because its users constantly use it to carry out their daily affairs. On the other side of the coin is a language that can be shifted by another language because the speakers are not likely to use it anymore. Husband and Khan (1982) highlighted that a community that does not maintain its

language by adopting another language gradually is referred to as language shift. He also observed that under certain cultural, social and political conditions, a community might opt to change one set of linguistic tools for another.

Based on the data of UNESCO in the year of 2001, there are 6,900 languages in the world and about 2,500 of them are extincting. UNESCO says that Indonesia, India, America, Brazil, and Mexico are countries which have multi varieties of languages, but they are also facing a very big danger of language shift.

Based on the data of UNESCO, almost 200 languages do not exist anylonger after three generations, because they lost their speakers; for example Urbykh language in Turkey which extincted in 1992, Aaasax language in Tanzania in 1976 and also the Eyak language in Alaska. Today, 900 languages in the world are in danger of extinction. There are approximately about 199 languages in the world are mastered by less than a dozen of speakers; for example Lengilu language in East Borneo, Indonesia, are used by only 4 people, Karaim language in Ukraina are used by only 6 people, Wichitha language in Oklahoma, USA are used by 10 people only.

There are other 178 languages in the world which are extincting, because they are used by 10 to 150 people only. Based on the record of UNESCO, India is at the first rank in facing language shift. There are 196 shifting languages in India now. America is at the second place with 192 shifting languages. And in the third position is Indonesia with 147 shifting languages. In Indonesia, 169 ethnic languages out of 742 are facing danger of extinction because their speakers are less than 500 people.

Endangered Language

For the past few decades linguists have become more and more worried about ethno linguistic groups whom are shifting from their mother tongue to another which offers more supremacy and prospects, or whose population is getting smaller in number which leads to less opportunity of using their own language. In most part of the world languages are becoming extinct.

There are many ways of describing endangered languages; the simplest one will be when a certain language has critical number of speakers. There are three symptoms of language death: fewer speakers, fewer domains of use and structural simplification. Krauss (1992) compared language death to endangered biological species and categorized languages to three important categories. Firstly, *moribund* (languages no longer being learned as mother tongue by children), next, is *endangered* (languages which are still being learned by children) and lastly, *safe* (languages with official state support and very large number of speakers). Fishman (1991) uses an eight-stage intergenerational disruption scale to define endangered language and conclude that the most threatened languages are those used only by socially isolated old folks and a socially integrated population beyond child-bearing age and also when the particular language is used only orally with no literacy.

Preserving endangered languages are utmost important as it is a way to prevent loss of culture or way of life. When a language is said to be 'dying', it means that a distinctive creation of human beings is gone from the world. Each language is synonym to its society and it's a tool to express the society's culture. All languages has its own complex system of words, phrases, clauses and discourse patterns showing contrasts and agreements that its speakers employ to define their world and their customs. People use their language to narrate stories, recalling past

events and experience, express their plans for the future, recite their poetry and pass on their cultures and traditions. In other words, language preserves people's identity.

Language Shift

Language shift refers to the process by which a speech community in a contact situation that consists of bilingual speakers gradually stops using one of its two languages in favor of the other. The favored language normally is used by the majority or a dominant linguistic group and in many parts of the world; the favored language means the language of the current or former colonial power. If the disfavored language is one that has its last speakers the members of the community in question, then the language faces endangerment and in the long run, facing *language death*. The subject of language endangerment and death has recently become of interest to linguists after the calamitous predictions that large number of languages are foreseen to lost in the next century and work on the subject has been enhanced (Grenoble and Whaley,1996) as have efforts to reverse the process of language shift. There are very few examples where language maintenance or language revitalization efforts can be considered to have completely successful. When the process of language shift has started and language loss is looming, there is little chance that the language will ever again be spoken as the first and primary language of any community.

Ethnolinguictic Vitality

Language vitality refers to the ability of a language to live and grow meanwhile ethonoliguitic vitality concept refers to a situation ' which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity within inter-group situations' (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977). They attempted to put social psychological processes in their socio-cultural contexts in the area of inter-ethnic group behavior. Based on the concept that they had developed, they

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suggested that vitality could be measured on three basic factor such as status factors, demographic factors and institutional support factors.

Status factors are related to economic status and socio-historical prestige as well as status of the language used within and outside the community. Demographic factors include the number of speakers, distribution of speakers and proportion of speakers which include marriage patterns and immigration. Institutional support factors include the extent to which the ethnolinguistic group obtains support from formal institution such as the government, schools and mass media, as well as intra-group informal institutions; family.

Bourhis et al. (1981) proposed the theory of 'subjective' ethnolinguistic vitality (SEV). He and his colleagues explained that subjective factors could be employed to predict the ethnolinguitic behavior of the group members. In order to discover subjective vitality, they designed a model questionnaire to test the ethnolinguistic vitality perception of the speakers or members in the community. They employed this model to test Greek and Anglo communities in Australia. Other researchers have also employed and adapted the methods at other places. These studies gave insights of the researchers understanding of the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality and eventually find out as to whether the three objectives factors such as status, geographic and institutional support factors can affect the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Kejaman group or not.

In 2003, Landweer proposes 'indicators of relative ethnolinguistic vitality. She assigns questions and a point value (0-3) in each indicator to assess a speech community. The score can help to forecast whether the language of the speech community will continue to be spoken or will face language death in the future. Landweer (2003) proposed eight indicators to assess ethnolinguistic vitality: position of the speech community on the remote and on urban continuum, domains in which the target language is used, frequency and type of code-switching,

population and group dynamics, distribution of speakers within their own social network, social outlook regarding and within the speech community, language prestige and access to a stable and acceptable economic base. This will be discussed further in the chapter for literature review. In the following paragraph, the general background of this study will be discussed.

Background of the study

This study will focus on the Kejaman language, [ISO 639-3: Kag] (Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Sixteenth Edition, 2009). The Kejaman ethnic can only be found in Sarawak. According to the State Department of Statistics, Sarawak (2012), the Kejaman ethnic is categorized under "Other Bumiputra" and in the year 2010 the population for the whole group of "Other Bumiputra" were about 156,436 people -which includes the Kayan, Kenyah, Sihan, Bhuket, Seping, Punan, Sekapan, Lahanan and Kejaman.

The Kejaman is one of the various ethnic groups whom had long resided in Sarawak. They are currently residing in two prominent longhouses; Rumah Kejaman Datah Liten and Rumah Kejaman Bak' Segaham. Their leader is called ' laja levou'. All the inhabitants of the village are Kejaman, belonging to a very small, aristocratelly organized sub-group of the Melanau (The Borneo Research Council, 1970). They are considered as one of the most endangered ethnic groups in Sarawak due to its small population: only 500 people (Wurm, 2000). The Kejamans are genocide survivors. During the James Brooke era, the Kayans were attacked by the British and they sought help from the Sihan, Sekapan and other neighboring tribes, but to no avail. The Kejamans were the only group that agreed to help them. The Kejaman women and children were sent to the mountains and hid under the "Batu Kalev'et". After the attack, many Kejaman men were killed.

Since early seventeenth century, the Kejaman has been settling at the Sungai Kajang settlements. In terms of economy, the Kejamans operate its self-sufficient economy. The basic crop is still hill paddy grown in shifting cultivation, completed by a broad variety of other crops such as maize, cucumbers, pumpkins, beans, tapioca , bananas, rambutan, hetel and illipe nuts, coffee, tobacco and sugar cane almost entirely for own consumption. Pigs and poultry provide the required protein, so do hunting and fishing. Every household has at least one boat and more than half of the household have fire-weapons.

Even though the Kejaman belonged to the sub-group of the Melanau, in terms of culture and traditions, they are more similar to the Sekapan, Lahanan and Punan or Penan Busang. Like many other ethnic languages in Sarawak, Kejaman language has no written form and is mainly used orally in the daily routines of the people. Through the observation of social events and migration of youngsters, the Kejamans are indeed shifting away from their mother tongue.

This study will address the Kejaman's language which is on the brink of facing extinction. A research will be conducted on the Kejaman language and the focus will be the language vitality and the speakers' attitude towards their language.
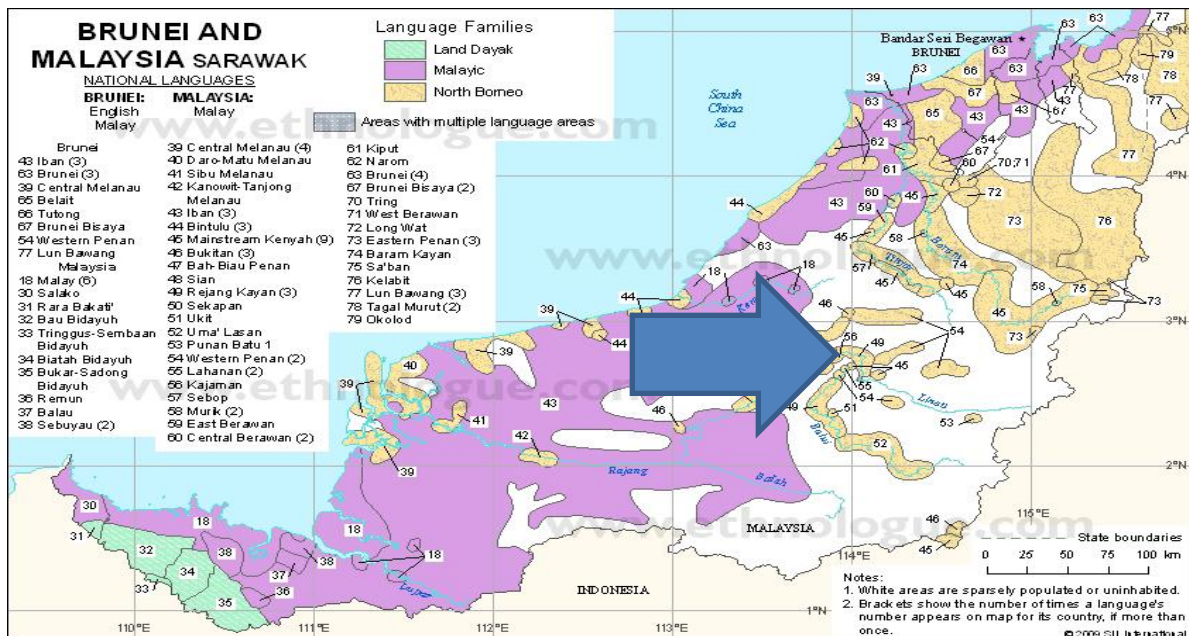
According to a report on one of the largest English daily in Borneo or Sarawak, the Orang Ulu ethnic languages are on the verge of extinction (Borneo Post, 2012). This study is worthy of an investigation as the sub-ethnic groups of the Orang Ulu Community are on the verge of extinction due to their assimilation into bigger Orang Ulu groups, namely Kayan and Kenyah. As lamented by the Assistant Minister of Culture and Heritage, Liwan Lagang (2012), the sub-ethnic groups are not only losing their identities but also their languages. This study will focus on the Kejaman people and their language- one of the smallest Orang Ulu ethnic groups in Sarawak.

The Kejaman are a good example of a community with strong ethnic identity. They keep their own traditions and use their own dialect within the community. However, the Kejaman language is endangered because the Kejaman people are sometimes embarrassed to use their language to communicate. The kejaman live among a large number of other ethnic groups such as the Iban, Kayan and Kenyah. Whenever they communicate if other ethnic groups, they will normally choose to use other ethnic group's language or dialect. This is because they think that whenever they speak Kejaman, other people will not understand them and also consider them to be rural people. So they switch to other ethnic dialects or languages such as Iban, kayan, Kenyah, Bahasa Melayu or even English language. This seems to indicate some negative attitudes towards the kejaman dialect. In recent years, due to the marriage pattern and economy, the Kejaman population has decreased, and the linguistic situation within the present Kejaman community has changed.

Below are the general information of the Kejaman based on Wurm and Hattori (1981).

Figure 1: General Information of the Kejaman

Kejaman

A language of Malaysia (Sarawak)

ISO 639-3: kag

Population	500 (Wurm and Hattori 1981).
Region	Central Sarawak, 7th Division, near Belaga on Baloi River.
Language map	Brunei and Malaysia - Sarawak, reference number 56
Alternate names	Kayaman, Kejaman
Classification	Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, North Borneo, Melanau-Kajang, Kajang
Language use	Limited comprehension of Iban [iba].

(Adopted from: Lewis, M. Paul (ed.), 2009. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Sixteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com/.)

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Purpose

The primary goal of this study is to examine the language use of the Kejaman people across age groups, the domains in which Kejaman language is strong and domains where other languages are coming in. Hence, this study will explore the following questions:

a) What is the language use of the Kejaman people across age groups?
b) In what domains is Kejaman language still strong?
c) In what domains are other languages coming in?

There are various models to measure the endangerment, disruption and loss of a language, namely Fishman's(1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), Landweer's Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (1998), Evaluative System of the Ethnologue for Language Vitality, Ethnologue's Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simons (2009) and Factors of Vitality and Endangerment proposed by UNESCO (2003). After analyzing all the models, in order to provide triangulation, this study will be using the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scales (EGIDS) model and the Factors of Vitality and Endangerment framework proposed by the UNESCO to assess the language endangerment or vitality of the Kejaman language.

Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)

Lewis and Simons (2009) have designed a 13-level model called EGIDS to assess the vitality and endangerment of languages in world, including those for which there are no longer speakers. From the scale, a language can be evaluated by answering 5 key questions regarding its identity function, vehicularity, state of intergenerational language transmission, literacy acquisition status, and a societal profile of its generational use. "With only minor modification the EGIDS

can also be applied to languages which are being revitalized" (Lewis and Simons, 2009). Below is the summary of the EGIDS levels.

The EGIDS is basically an expanded version of Fishman's GIDS model. The only difference is that its fine-grained levels have been made to correspond to UNESCO's evaluative system, taking care to cover Ethnologue's categories as much as possible.

The EGIDS (Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scales)

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION	UNESCO
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.	Safe
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the nationwide level.	Safe
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.	Safe
3	Trade	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.	Safe
4	Educational	Literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education.	Safe
5	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.	Safe
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.	Safe
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generations are transmitting it to their children.	Vulnerable
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children.	Definitely Endangered
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely Endangered
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically Endangered
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency.	Extinct
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct

FACTORS OF VITALITY AND ENDANGERMENT PROPOSED BY UNESCO

At the UNESCO Experts Meeting on Safeguarding Endangered Languages, a framework was proposed by Brenzinger and others that uses 9 factors of vitality and endangerment in measuring the level of endangerment of the world's languages. These are:

1. Intergenerational language transmission;

2. Absolute numbers of speakers;

3. Proportion of speakers within the total population;

4. Loss of existing language domains;

5. Response to new domains and media;

6. Materials for language education and literacy;

7. Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies;

8. Community members' attitudes towards their own language; and

9. Amount and quality of documentation.

Methodology

The goal of this research was to examine the language use of the Kejaman people across age groups, the domains in which Kejaman language is strong and domains where other languages are coming in. two methods were used to elicit data : questionnaires and informal interviews. The data collection method will be discussed first. This will be followed by the distribution of the subjects. In Sarawak, there are only two Kejaman villages, Rumah Kejaman Long Segaham and Rumah Kejaman Neh Long Litten. This research focuses on the Rumah Kejaman Long Litten.

Data Collection

There are two methods of data collection in this research: questionnaire and informal interviews.

Questionnaire

The majority of the questions used in the questionnaire were adapted from Baker (1992). The questions were modified as necessary. In the questionnaire, the questions were divided into two parts: *Linguistic background* and *Language use.* The survey was conducted during the school holidays.

In Part One (*Linguistic background*), the informants were asked to provide personal information such as name, age, gender, place of residence and workplace. The responses of these questions were used to examine the language use of the Kejaman people across age groups.

As for Part Two (*Language Use*), it explored language use within the Kejaman community and thus, helped identified the domains in which Kejaman language is strong and domains where other languages are coming in.

Informal Interviews

In this research, the village leader of Rumah Kejaman Neh Long Litten, Ketua Kaum Encik Senin Neh and the chairman for the Bureau of Customs and Rights for the Kejaman people, Encik George Lusat were interviewed.

Distribution of the Informants

The forty informants were categorized by four variables: age, gender, workplace and duration of stay in the village. Each variable was divided as in Table 1 below:

Table 1: The variables of the subjects under study

Gender	Age	workplace	Duration of stay in the village
1. Male 2. Female	1. 51 and above 2. 24-50 3. 12-24	1. Home 2. Village 3. Town 4. student	1. 1-2 months (per year) 2. 9-12 months (per year)

Gender

Forty respondents were chosen to answer the questionnaires. They were 14 males and 26 females.

Table 2: Social Profile of Respondents: Gender

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
female	26	65.0	65.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Age

Half of the respondents were in the younger age category, 12-24 years old. The other half were in the older age group, age more than 25 years old. The age of the respondents ranged from 12 to 63 years old.

Table 3: Social Profile of Respondents: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
51 and above	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
25-50	14	35.0	35.0	47.5
12-24	21	52.5	52.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Workplace

The respondents who responded to the questionnaires had varied workplace. Most of them worked at the timber camp and oil palm estates near the village (60.0%), 7 stayed in town, 6 were students and 3 were housewives.

Table 4: Social Profile of Respondents: Workplace

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
home	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
village	24	60.0	60.0	67.5
town	7	17.5	17.5	85.0
student	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Duration in the Village

About 55.0% of the respondents stayed about 9 to 12 months in their village and the other 45.0% stayed only 1 to 2 months at their village per year (2012).

Table 4: Social Profile of Respondents: Duration in Village

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-2 months	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
	9-12 months	22	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the findings of this study will be presented and their significance was analyzed from the perspective of language vitality and endangerment. The findings will be discussed based on the UNESCO framework and also EGIDS.

Intergenerational Language Transmission, Absolute Number of Speakers and Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population

The Kejaman settlements are closely surrounded by a variety of demographically more dominant ethnic groups such as Kayan, Lahanan, Sekapan and Iban. The Kejaman people will use Malay and English when they are outside their village especially at their workplace and educational institutions. As a result, the Kejaman people are multilingual and their language choice is determined by factors such as place, interlocutor, and situation.

Based on the findings of this study, for Factor 1, the kejaman language is likely situated at Grade 3 of the language endangerment scale as the language is used mostly by the parental generational and up. For younger generations their main languages are Bahasa Melayu and other languages like Iban, Kayan and English. However, all the respondents are able to speak the language.

Hence, for Factor 2, the degree of endangerment is at Grade 5 which is 'safe'. In the future, it is possible that this generation (age 12 to 24) will pass down Kejaman language to their children, even though it might result in language attrition. According to Opitz (2011) language attrition is the apparent loss of fluency and ability to use a language. It happens when a speaker does not use the language for a long period of time, thus, unable to remember the appropriate words to use at the right time in conversation.

In relation to the language use of the Kejaman people across age groups, the cross tabulation revealed that respondents aged twenty five and above vigorously use Kejaman language and those aged twelve to twenty four speaks more Bahasa Melayu and other languages like Iban, Kayan and English.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation for Language Use and Age

Language Use	age			Total
	51 and above	25-50	12-24	
Kejaman	2	10	0	12
Bahasa melayu	0	0	6	6
Others	3	4	15	22
Total	5	14	21	40

Absolute number of speakers

According to Wurm and Hattori (1981), there were only 500 speakers of the Kejaman language. Based on the numerical strength, the Kejaman language seems to be in a weaker position than other Sarawakian languages that have more than 10,000 speakers. However, the language seems to be in a better position than other Sarawakian languages which have 400 speakers on average. At present there are about 1200 Kejamans from two longhouses (the exact number is yet to be determined as the census had not been updated by the village leaders). Looking at the number of the population, the Kejaman language seems to be vulnerable as their surroundings ethnic demographically larger than them. The frequent intermarriages with bigger ethnic groups like kayan and Iban often lead to the sole use of the Kayan and Iban language of the family. According to the respondents, their language is difficult to be mastered by others especially the

pronunciation, and thus, they prefer to speak other languages and not let others speak their language.

Loss of Existing Language Domains

Home is the main domain and usually the last domain where a language is being used. The use of the language in home domain becomes a vital indicator of the level of endangerment of certain language. In the situation of diglossia, a situation in which two languages or two varieties of the same language are used under different conditions within a community , often by the same speakers and polyglossia, the coexistence of multiple languages in the same area, home becomes the last place where a certain language is still used vigorously. Based on Factor 4, the degree of endangerment for the Kejaman language is at Grade 3, categorized under 'dwindling domains'. This shows that the Kejaman language is slowly losing its domain and that other languages have already begun to penetrate, even to the home domains. Table 6 shows the lexical differences between the older and younger generations of the kejaman people.

Table 6: Lexical Differences of the Kejaman Language Use between the Younger and Older Generations

Words	Older Generations	Younger Generations	Words Borrowed From
Happy birthday	Selamat lau kenanek	Happy birthday	English
Good bye	Teneng lakau	Bye bye	English
Arm	Capaik	Tangan	Bahasa Melayu
Foot	Taking	kaki	Bahasa Melayu
Trousers	Celeguat	Seluar	Bahasa Melayu
Shirt	Ikieng	Baju	Bahasa Melayu

Response to the New Domains and Media

The kejaman language has very little or none at all opportunity of responding to new domains and media. This is due to the fact that the language is not used in domains like education, a domain which could establish connection with the outside world. There is also no step step taken by the community, government or even non-government organization (NGO) to extend the use of the language in those domains. From the table below, it can be observed that the existing

domains of language are diminishing. Based on Factor 5, the Kejaman language can be placed in Grade zero (0) which is 'inactive', which means that the language is not used in any new domains. The table shows various words which are borrowed from dominant languages such as Bahasa Melayu and English.

Table 7: Words Borrowed from Other Languages (Loan Words)

English	Kejaman	Words Borrowed from
Sorry	Curi	English
Parking space	Nuah paking	English
Letter-box	Kutek-curat	Bahasa Melayu (Kotak surat)
Drain	Pavip	Bahasa Melayu (Parit)
Sofa	Keleci sofa	English
Newspaper	Nius	English
Switch	Cuih	English
Sink	Sinki	Bahasa Melayu (Sinki)

Materials for Language Education and Literacy

The Kejaman language has no orthography or written form. Similar to other Malayo-Polynesian language such as the Iban and Melayu Sarawak, the kejaman language is written with the Latin alphabet. Kejaman language is closely related to the Melanau of Sarawak. As there is no written language for the Kejaman, therefore, it can be placed at Grade zero (0).

Community Member's Attitudes Towards Their Own Language

According to the Ethnolgue Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scales or EGIDS (2011), the Kejaman language is at level 6b, meaning the language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child bearing generations are transmitting it to the children. The findings from this study had revealed a different result.

The following table depicts the Kejaman language use in the home domain. There is a significant portion of respondents (70%) who still speak their mother tongue to their children. In respond to the first research question, the findings from the survey clearly show that Kejaman language is still strong in the home domain as compared to other languages. The findings reveal that a small

number of Kejaman respondents do not speak their mother tongue to their children (30%). It is an early indication of endangerment. The languages that are taking over the Kejaman households are Iban, Kayan, Bahasa Melayu as well as English. The Iban's and kayan's domination in the kejaman home domain is tangible. The Kayan and Iban infiltration is due to the intermarriage with the Iban and kayan people. According to the respondents, Kejaman people think that their language is difficult to be mastered (especially the pronunciation) by other races. When other races try to use Kejaman, they often mispronounced words, and thus lead to a distortion in meanings. For example, the word *parai bagueng* (paddy field) is rather similar to *begueng* (bear) which should be pronounced as /be'gu'eng/.

Table 8: Language Use in the Home Domain

Language	Frequency	Percent (%)
Kejaman	28	70
Kayan	3	7.5
Iban	3	7.5
Bahasa Melayu	6	15

The respondents of this study still feel that their language is very important to them (40%). However, when it comes to the most important language to learn, about 45% of the respondents opted for Bahasa Melayu and 30% of them chose to learn other languages like Iban, Kayan and Sekapan. Only 22.5% thinks that Kejaman is the most important language to learn. When asked whether they will use Kejaman language in the future, about 92.5% of the respondents circled 'YES'. More than half of the respondents (67.5%) have the opinion that their language is not in danger of extinction in the future.

This language is still a home language for the Kejaman people and based on the findings of this study, it is evident that there is transmission taking place. At this stage, Kejaman language is clearly at level 6a of the EGIDS (Lewis and Simons, 2009) as the language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by their children as their first language. As depicted by the table below, 92.5% of the Kejaman still use Kejaman language as their first language.

Table 9: First Language of the Kejaman People

Language	Frequency	Percent
Kejaman	37	92.5
Bahasa Melayu	3	7.5

Language Use in the Non-home Domain

Precipitated by elements such as communication, religion and new economics needs, the Kejaman, like any other minority groups, had changed the way they live. In search for better life, many of them had even migrated to the town areas and come into contact with speakers of a variety of languages. the growing contacts with various linguistics communities had reconfigured the linguistic ecology of the Kejaman people, resulting in new language choices to be made. The language choices are determined by education, religion, economic as well as sociolinguistic variables.

To illustrate the kejaman people's language choice in the non-home domain, Table 10 provides a list of domains which ranges from private to public circles. Kejaman language use data evidently shows the polyglossic and diglossic nature of their communication. Their mother tongue is highly used in the religious domain, approximately little in the workplace and none at all at school and government office. This is due to the fact that these places are dominated by other language communities such as the Malays, Chinese, Iban and Kayan where Bahasa Melayu plays the role of lingua franca. The fact that Bahasa Melayu is the national language and the medium of instruction at schools, it becomes the *out-group language* or high language for the Kejaman people. According to Matiki (2009), out-group languages (s) are languages used in the urban areas for communication between speakers of different vernaculars.

Table 10: Language Use in the Non-home Domain

Languages	Kejaman %	Bahasa Melayu %	Others %
Workplace	20	45	35
School	0	87.5	12.5
Worship	50	50	0
Government office	0	100	0

In respond to the third research question, it is obvious that other languages such as Bahasa Melayu, Iban, kayan and English are dominant in domains such as workplace, schools and also religion.

Conclusion

The Kejamans can be considered as a vulnerable polyglossic indigenous community with a diminishing trend of intergenerational language transmission. The younger generations opt to speak other languages in order to be able to adapt and be in par with other successful ethnics or races, socially and economically. Despite of that, they have the intention of keeping their language alive and willing to obtain education through it in school. The Kejaman language has a few dwindling domains. The speakers are experiencing language attrition and constantly employing code-switching in their communication with their counterpart. As to date, there is no effort done to document their language, not even, keeping a record of words or word list. Nonetheless, the speakers vigorously use the language in the home domain. Most of them use it as their first language. The older generations are passably fluent in the language and regard their language to be an important part of their culture and identity. At present, the Kejaman population is safe from population disintegration and genocide.

The Kejaman people present positive attitude towards their language and believe that their language will not face extinction. Based on this initiatory study, it is evident that the Kejamans need to document their language and propose the introduction of their language in school curricula, to begin with, at the pre-school level. This is feasible as there are two pre-schools at their respective villages.

In conclusion, this preliminary research, though significant is inconclusive in its findings. This study which employed an undersized sample from only one Kejaman village is inadequate to characterize the Kejaman language thoroughly. Other limitation of the study ranges from methodology to data elicitation processes. However, these should not invalidate the findings. The findings from this initial study are crucial in determining the status of the Kejaman language.

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