

## Abstract

### **Towards a Typology of Endangerment Scenario: The Case of Sarawak**

This paper reports on an on-going research project which examines the current state of linguistic ecology in the state of Sarawak. The project makes comparison of the “endangerment scenarios” of various ethnic minorities mainly in the Miri and Kuching Division. The discussion of communities in this paper uses Himmelmann's (2010) framework which examine “endangerment scenarios” as systematization of typical constellations leading to large scale language shift in a community. Preliminary observations and previous studies have shown that the following combination of factors contributes to endangerment in the Sarawak contexts: disintegration of speech communities as a result of rural-urban migration and in-migration, recessive bilingualism, effects of language policy. Conversely, ethnic perseverance, markers of group identity other than language, and retention of personal and group values accounts for why languages of lesser communities have survived despite the impending threats to their survival. The impact of migration on the demography - e.g. decrease in size and density of speech communities will accelerate the rate of language shift in linguistics minorities. This factor will be discussed in greater detail.

Keywords: Endangerment scenario, recessive bilingualism, language shift, language maintenance, linguistic ecology

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The author is a senior lecturer attached University Malaysia Sarawak. Her research interest includes threatened and endangered languages of Sarawak. Her previous research projects were on the Bidayuh community in Kuching-Samarahan Division, and sociolinguistic consequences of Iban-Malay contact in Sebuyau, Sarawak.