



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**TRANSACTIONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN COMPUTER  
SALESPERSONS AND CUSTOMERS AT A COMPUTER RETAIL SHOP**

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**Bachelor of Education with Honours  
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**TRANSACTIONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN COMPUTER  
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PHE SIAW CHING

This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
Bachelor of Education with Honours  
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The project entitled ‘Transactional interaction between Computer Salespersons and Customers at a Computer Retail Shop’ was prepared by Phe Siaw Ching and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education with Honours (Teaching English as Second Language).

It is hereby confirmed that the student has done all necessary amendments of the project for acceptance:

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TRANSACTIONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN COMPUTER SALESPERSONS AND CUSTOMERS AT A COMPUTER RETAIL SHOP**

*By*

**Phe Siaw Ching**

This study examines transactional interaction between computer salespersons and customers at a computer retail shop. It is concerned with investigating how people in multilingual speech communities make appropriate language choices in first-time encounters with unfamiliar people, specifically in the context of a computer retail shop. The objectives of the study were: (1) to identify language choices of computer salespersons in interactions with customers, (2) to determine uncommon and inappropriate language choices and the context in which they occur, (3) to examine the responses to the uncommon and inappropriate language choices including how inappropriate languages choices are repaired, and (4) to examine the structure of the transactional conversations. To achieve these objectives, a computer retail shop was identified in Kuching, where salespersons and customers are from diverse language and cultural background. The techniques used for data collection were participant observation, audio recording and semi-structured interview. A total of 114 transactional conversations were observed, recorded and transcribed. The findings revealed that the common languages used included Local Malay, Mandarin, Bahasa Malaysia, English, Hokkien and Hakka. The inappropriate language choices occurred because of misjudgement of the customers' language repertoire. When the customers gave a strange look and replied in their preferred language, the salesperson quickly repaired the situation by switching to their preferred language. Some of the stages in their structure are obligatory for instance, 'Sales Request' and 'Purchase' in buying transactions. Others such as 'Greeting', 'Sales Enquiry' and 'Finis' are optional. The findings provided insights into the languages used for transactional purposes in a multilingual speech community.

## ABSTRAK

### INTERAKSI TRANSAKSI ANTARA PENJUAL KOMPUTER DAN PELANGGAN DI KEDAI COMPUTER

Oleh

**Phe Siaw Ching**

*Kajian ini mengkaji interaksi transaksi antara penjual komputer dan pelanggan di sebuah kedai komputer. Kajian ini melibatkan penyelidikan dalam cara seseorang penutur bahasa di dalam komuniti penuturan pelbagai bahasa membuat pilihan bahasa yang sesuai dalam pertemuan yang pertama dengan orang yang tidak dikenali, terutamanya dalam konteks sebuah kedai komputer. Objektif-objektif kajian ini adalah untuk: (1) mengenal pasti pilihan bahasa penjual-penjual komputer dalam interaksi dengan pelanggan-pelanggan, (2) menentukan pilihan-pilihan bahasa yang luar biasa dan tidak sesuai dan konteks di mana pilihan bahasa yang tidak sesuai itu berlaku, (3) memeriksa tindak balas pelanggan terhadap pilihan bahasa yang tidak sesuai termasuk cara-cara pilihan bahasa yang tidak sesuai diperbaiki, dan (4) mengkaji struktur perbualan transaksi. Untuk mencapai objektif-objektif ini, sebuah kedai komputer di Kuching telah dikenalpasti, di mana penjual komputer dan pelanggan adalah daripada pelbagai bahasa dan budaya. Teknik yang digunakan dalam pengumpulan maklumat ialah pemerhatian daripada peserta, 'audio recording' dan temubual semi-struktur. Sebanyak 114 interaksi jual beli diperhatikan, direkod dan ditranskripkan. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahasa-bahasa yang biasa digunakan termasuk Bahasa Sarawak, Mandarin, Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Inggeris, Hokkien dan Hakka. Pilihan bahasa yang tidak sesuai berlaku disebabkan kesilapan dalam menentukan koleksi bahasa yang dimiliki oleh pelanggan-pelanggan. Apabila pelanggan menunjukkan satu mimik muka yang pelik dan membalas dengan bahasa mereka, penjual itu memperbaiki situasi itu dengan menukar kepada bahasa yang digunakan oleh mereka dengan cepat. Sebahagian daripada struktur generik seperti 'Sales Request' dan 'Purchase' dalam interaksi jual beli adalah wajib. Struktur-struktur lain seperti 'Greeting', 'Sales Enquiry' dan 'Finis' adalah tidak wajib. Penemuan ini menyediakan wawasan dalam bahasa-bahasa yang digunakan untuk tujuan transaksi dalam sebuah masyarakat berbilang bahasa.*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Chapter one presents sections on interactions in transactional domain, sociocultural background, aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study, operational definition of terms and scope of the study.

#### 1.1 Interactions in Transactional Domain

Language can be used differently in different situations. When considering how and when a particular language is used in a particular situation, we have to examine some of the major spheres in which everyday communication occurs (Platt and Weber, 1980, p. 116). A number of spheres, or domains, have been proposed with regard to other speech communities (cf. Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1971 cited in Platt and Weber, 1980, p. 116). The domains include family domain, friendship domain, transactions domain, employment domain, education domain, media domain, government domain, law domain and religion domain (Platt and Weber, 1980, p. 116). The domain we are going to focus on in this study is transactions domain.

The transactions domain takes in all those situations in our daily communication where verbal exchanges occur in relation to shopping, the use of public transport, banking and similar transactions involving the exchange of money and/or commodities in the wider sense (Platt and Platt, 1975 cited in Platt and Weber, 1980, p. 116). Platt and Weber's (1980) finding on language use in transactions domain in Malaysia revealed that *Bahasa Pasar* has always been important as an inter-ethnic means of communication except in the more fashionable type of shop or such special situations as airline booking offices, where English was usually available as an alternative. Among Indians of the same language background, transactions such as shopping would generally be carried on in their own speech variety, e.g. Tamil with Tamils, Punjabi with Punjabis.

Among the Chinese there is typically a dominant ‘dialect’, e.g. Cantonese in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh, Hokkien in Penang, and those of another ‘dialect’ background would typically use the dominant ‘dialect’ when communicating with those of a different ‘dialect’ background from their own. (Platt and Weber, 1980, p.158)

Nevertheless, Platt and Weber’s research finding examined speech variety use of people in transactions domain in Malaysia as a whole. It did not examine language use in a specific sub-domain. Therefore, we could not identify which language is widely used as an inter-ethnic communication in a specific sub-domain such as computer retail shop. This is relatively important to study because it is a place where all ethnic groups meet to purchase things and also it is a site where different ethnic groups interact with one another by using different languages. There is a need for them to have a common language for the buying and selling transaction to take place.

## **1.2 Sociocultural Background of Sarawak**

Sarawak is a community where three major ethnic groups such as Iban, Chinese and Malay live in. Because of its multiethnic aspect, most of the people in Sarawak are bilingual or multilingual. This means they can speak two or more languages in their communication with others. Consequently, these ethnic groups are believed to be able to apply different language choices in different situations depending on what the purposes of the interaction are. As a matter of fact, knowing different languages are necessary nowadays to function well in various domains. The domains here refer to family domain, friendship domain, transactions domain, employment domain, education domain, media domain, government domain, law domain, and religion domain.

In Sarawak, there are 1,949,008 people (Sarawak, Department of Statistics, 2000) which consist of 27 distinct ethnic groups. These diverse ethnic groups practise their unique cultures, traditions and language (which comprises of several

dialects). Among these groups, Iban (known as ‘Sea Dayak’) about 30% (586,548) (Sarawak, Department of Statistics, 2000) of the population is the largest ethnic group. All the Ibans share one language among them although the slang may vary from place to place.

The second largest is Chinese which consists of 26% (512,426) that cover a wide range of dialect groups, namely, Foochow (35%), Hakka (31.5%), Hokkien (13%), Teochew (7%), Cantonese (6%), Henghua (3%) and others (4.5%) (Sarawak, Department of Statistics, 2000.). Even though Chinese has so many different dialects, they share one standard language – Mandarin as an inter-dialect language for communication with one another. For those who cannot speak Mandarin, they may use English or *Bahasa Melayu* as a common language to convey their meaning. The Malays constitute about 23% of the population and it is the third largest group. They speak one particular language called *Bahasa Sarawak* which is different from the Malays of Peninsular Malaysia. The slight difference in *Bahasa Sarawak* is their slang from different areas.

The rest of the 21% population in Sarawak consists of other indigenous groups like Bidayuh (known as ‘Land Dayak’), Melanau, Kenyah, Kayan, Kadayan, Kelabit, Murut, Berawan, Punan and Kajang. They speak languages which are totally different from each other. Besides that, there is also a small community of Indians living in Sarawak who speak Tamil or Punjabi. From general observations, when these indigenous groups communicate with other races, they speak English or *Bahasa Melayu* because they are the common languages shared by others. Although Sarawak is made up of 27 ethnic groups who speak different languages and dialects, they still can communicate by using the official language of Malaysia, *Bahasa Melayu*, and also English.

For this study, the focus is on Kuching, the capital of Sarawak which has 509,374 inhabitants (Sarawak, Department of Statistics, 2000.). People all around Sarawak gather in Kuching to look for a job, run their business, further their studies or do other investments. Kuching is a fast developing city, thus, it

becomes the highest populated city in Sarawak. It is a multicultural city where people have diversity in their languages, cultures and traditions. This diversity does not become a hindrance in intercultural communication as *Bahasa Melayu* and English are widely used among the ethnic groups in Kuching where they learnt these two languages in school and from the people around them.

Besides, *Iban* and Mandarin also are means for people to communicate among themselves. Mandarin is no longer a language which is just known by Chinese only. A lot of Malays, Dayaks and Indians do speak mandarin due to the education they received in school. Moreover, intermarriage between ethnic groups is very common in the multicultural society in Kuching. Thus, it is not a surprise that a Malay can speak Mandarin or any Chinese dialect or an Iban can speak Tamil. A particular language or dialect is no longer as a privilege to that particular ethnic; it belongs to anybody who wishes to learn it.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to examine interactions between computer salespersons and customers in the transactional domain. The objectives of this study are:

- 1) to find out languages commonly used for transactional interactions between computer salespersons and customers at a computer retail shop,
- 2) to determine when uncommon and inappropriate language choices are made and the context in which they occur,
- 3) to examine the responses to the uncommon and inappropriate language choices including how inappropriate languages choices are repaired; and
- 4) to examine the structure of transactional conversations in a computer retail shop.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study finds out what common languages are used for interaction in a transactional domain. It also identifies uncommon and inappropriate language choices, and analyses the responses to inappropriate language choices including how inappropriate languages choices are repaired.

This study is significant because transactions domain has not yet been studied in detail in most of the related studies. Furthermore, it is an interesting domain to study in terms of research purpose.

## **1.5 Operational Definition of Terms**

Certain terms related to the proposed study are defined below.

### **i. Communication**

Barker and Barker (1993) view communication as a process in which a desired outcome is achieved through two or more elements interacting in a particular system. On the other hand, Adler and Rodman (1991) say that communication can be divided into two categories: verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication refers to spoken or written which everyone knows. For nonverbal communication, it involves the tone of voice, sighs, gestures, movement, appearance, facial expression and the use of touch. As for Ruben and Stewart cited in Samovar and Porter (2001), human communication is perceived as a process in which an individual will create a message as a respond to that person. For the purpose of this study, communication refers to both verbal and nonverbal communication as long as the goal in interaction for buying and selling is achieved.

ii. Transactions Domain

According to Platt & Platt (1975) in Platt & Weber (1980), the transactions domain refers to the situations where verbal communication occur involving the exchange of money or other commodities in the wider sense. For instance, shopping, the use of public transport, banking, hawker centers, post-office counters, airline offices and others. In the case of this study, transactional domain refers to computer retail shop where the process of buying and selling computers and its accessories is involved.

v. Bumiputera

This term is specifically referred to Malaysia indigenous groups: a Malaysian of Malay and other indigenous origins such as Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau, Kenyah, Kayan, Kadayan, Kelabit, Murut, Berawan, Punan and Kajang. Each of the group has their own mother tongue (dialect) and some have different slang according to certain areas.

vi. Chinese

This term here is specifically referred to immigrants who came from China and their generations who are born in Malaysia. Chinese covers a wide range of dialect groups, particularly Foochow, Hakka, Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Henghua, and others. Even though Chinese has many dialects, they share one standard language – Mandarin as an inter-dialect language for communication with one another.

vii. Local Malay

The native tongue of Malay people in Sarawak. It is a language shared by all the Malays regardless of areas and divisions. Besides, it is also a choice of language use by other ethnic group in order to communicate with Malays. For



example, when asking a person “have you eaten?”, the local Malay language will ask “Kitak udah makan?”

#### viii. Standard Bahasa Melayu

Since 1957 in Razak’s Report (Laporan Razak), Bahasa Melayu has been declared as the national language and as the first language medium learns in school. It has its own standard structures and grammatical rules. It is a language learnt through formal education in school and its purpose is for unity. An example that shows a difference between Bahasa Pasar and Standard Bahasa Melayu will be as follow:

For example, Bahasa Pasar: “Lu sudah makan?”

Standard Bahasa Melayu: “Kamu sudah makan?”

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on transactional interaction at a selected computer retail shop in Kuching which involves computer salespersons and customers. It does not survey transactional communication at all computer retail shop. Furthermore, this study does not compare language choices in this transactional domain with other domains such as boutiques and coffee shops. As such, this is an in-depth case study on interactions between computer salespersons and customers who are from different ethnic groups at a computer retail shop.

This chapter has covered interactions in transactional domain, sociocultural background, aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study, operational definition of terms and scope of the study. Consequently, the next chapter will cover the related literature of this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter presents sections on related literature of the study. Section one presents communication in multilingual speech communities. Section two talks about language choice. Section three presents the use of English in various domains. Finally, the last section of this chapter presents context of culture and context of situation.

#### **2.1 Communication in Multilingual Speech Communities**

Sarawak has a multilingual speech community make up of three major ethnic groups, with many sub-groups for each of these major groups. Each sub-group has its own distinct language and dialects. Thus, for effective communication among one another in the multilingual society, each ethnic group must have the ability to know more than one language besides his or her mother tongue, so that he or she will be able to speak other languages when interacting with other ethnic groups. For this purpose, this section will look at ethnic language, language for wider communication, vernacular language, standard language, code-switching and code-mixing. The role of standard language in Sarawak in ethnic unity, and finally, the social functions and purpose in code-switching also be discussed in undertaking common language choice and uncommon language choice.

##### **2.1.1 Ethnic Language**

Ethnicity can be referred to how an individual identify himself or herself as a member of certain group of people. It is very difficult to identify oneself to a certain ethnic group because there is no one specific criterion to be used as a yardstick. Fishman (1977) claimed that ethnicity is not just how an individual recognized himself or herself belongs to a particular ethnic group, but it is also

considered how an outsider categorizes him or her to that ethnic group. He viewed ethnicity as complex phenomena since it involves many interrelated factors. Some may relate ethnicity with inherited, stable, existential and rational factors, whereas, others may view it as acquired, changing, contrastive and extra-rational factors.

Fishman (1977) categorized ethnicity into three categories: paternity, patrimony and phenomenology. He defined the concept of ethnic paternity as “bio-kinship” which relate with the hereditary of blood from the parents. It is the question on “those who have it” and “those who do not have it”. For instance, a person will be categorized as a Chinese when the parents are Chinese. The term “kinship” is strongly emphasized in paternity since it is “the basic of the felt bond to one’s own kind”. Indeed, the features of “kinship” belonging will show through one’s trait and behaviour. The distinct features will be the physical appearance and language used. Besides, temperamental qualities such as intelligence are also included. Language is considered as one of the features in ethnic paternity because it is believed that “language is acquired with the mother’s milk” (Fishman, 1977) which normally refer to one’s mother tongue.

According to Fishman again, the second view of ethnicity, patrimony, is very much related to ethnic paternity. They may integrate and reinforce each other, but they are different from each other. He explained ethnic patrimony as something more changeable because it is learned and not inherited. It is always related to one’s culture on how a particular ethnic group behaves and what they should do in order to express their membership. This point of view had been explained earlier by DeVos (cited in Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1990) when he mentioned that “ethnic identity of a group of people consists of their subjective symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from other groups”. Fishman (1977) defined it as a collective of defining behaviours such as wearing, cooking, celebrating, attitude and beliefs. One’s ethnicity is determined from the culture he or she practices and this includes language used. He further explained that language has been viewed as

ethnic paternity (especially mother tongue attitudes), but when it concerns language learned for the purpose of interethnic communication, it is more related to ethnic patrimony. “Language is not only code but Code” in which Fishman said that language is much more than for the sake of communication with others. Thus, language can be viewed as part of the ethnic patrimony as well.

The third category in Fishman’s view on ethnicity is phenomenology. Fishman reasons that it was necessary to know how we view our own ethnicity and how we view others’ ethnicity and also how others view us as a member of certain group of people. In parallel with this view, Despres (cited in Gudykunst and Ting-Toomy, 1990) had pointed out earlier in his study where he integrated self-categorization and other-categorization when an individual intend to categorize himself or herself to one particular ethnic group for the purpose of interaction. Apart from Despres, Giles and Johnson (1981) also have the same view in looking at ethnic patrimony in which he defined ethnic groups as “those individuals who identify themselves as belonging to the same ethnic category”.

According to Giles and Robinson (1990), the consensus on how to define ethnicity still needs to be considered since not many have the same opinion. It is hard to get a consensus because one cannot be categorized to a particular ethnic group based on his or her language used or the culture that he or she practices.

In addition to the views on self-categorization, Ting-Toomey (cited in Giles and Robinson, 1990) had presented ethnicity as four possible options of intergroup impression:

- i) member categorizes or identifies self as a typical group member, and behaves typically;
- ii) member categorizes or identifies self as an atypical group member, and behaves atypically;
- iii) member categorizes or identifies self as a typical group member, but acts atypically;
- iv) member categorizes or identifies self as an atypical group member, but

acts typically;

(pp. 330-311)

These four options are important in identifying one's perceptions and interpretations rather than how others project their perceptions in an encounter. Ting-Toomey (cited in Giles and Robinson, 1990) found that the four options is essentially important because "an individual's knowledge of an outgroup, the degree of favorableness towards the outgroup, the levels of expectations of the role enactment from outgroup members and the degree of tolerance of ambiguity" will then determine either a positive or negative atmosphere for interethnic interaction.

Other than that, in relation to the question of ethnicity and language, ethnolinguistic identity also plays an important role in interethnic interaction for "members of ingroups to react favorably to outgroup members who linguistically converge toward them" (Bourhis & Giles, 1976; Giles & Smith, 1979, cited in Giles and Robinson, 1990). In conjunction with linguistical convergence, Giles et al. (1987) further clarified that this situation requires both speaker and the recipient to have the same speech style or language used which is appropriate and valued in that encounter. Subsequently, Giles mentioned that the purposes of communication convergence are for social confirmation, for high effectiveness in one's communication, for a shared-self or group-presentation and for an appropriate identity clarification.

Therefore, language might affect ethnicity but there is no definite remark that a particular language must belong to that particular ethnic group. Haamann in Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (cited in Giles and Robinson, 1990) claims that "language can be a basic aspect of ethnicity but it is not a 'crucial' feature.". For the purpose of this study, the ethnicity-language link is of interest in the sense of finding out whether customers and the sellers use their ethnic language for the transactional encounter.

### 2.1.2 Language for Wider Communication

Sarawak is a multiracial society in which over half of the population is bilingual, that is, most can speak his mother tongue and the language of his education or language learnt through informal education. Through observation, many of them are multilingual who not only master their mother tongue and the language learnt through formal education but are also able to speak other languages for wider communication in different contexts for different purposes such as at market-place, working place, official matters and also with tourists. The language for wider communication refers to a lingua franca which means a language used for communication between people whose first languages differ (Holmes, 2001). Holmes also pointed out lingua franca serves as a “trade language” in which some countries may use their official language or the national language as the lingua franca for business.

During colonial British times, English was an official language in Malaysia. It is widely used in all the domains of business, banking and finance and industry as well. Even though English is no longer an official language in Malaysia, it still plays an important role as the second most important language which use in public administration and education. According to Shanta (2000), English is a language for business because of “its supremacy as the language of international trade and industry” of business in Malaysia. Chitravelu (cited in Shanta, 1985) mentioned, “English is the main lingua franca of Malaysian business except in the traditional sectors and in those trades in which there is a preponderance of Chinese”. As such, English is the lingua franca in business trade in both public and private sectors.

Another language that could be lingua franca at the market place is *Bahasa Pasar* as mentioned in Platt & Weber (1980). *Bahasa Pasar* is a common language used by sellers and buyers whose come from different ethnic groups in the process of selling and buying things in an open-air market. It is a language learnt through informal education as a trade language so that the process of buying

and selling will run smoothly and miscommunication would not occur. As mentioned in Platt and Weber (1980), *Bahasa Pasar* is for the purpose of interethnic communication except in big companies, more high class and fashionable type of shops, hotels, MAS office and other private institution where English is the preferred language. Besides, *Bahasa Pasar* is considered as a pidgin in which it has no native speakers and it develops “a means for interaction between two ethnic groups who do not have a common language” (Holmes, 2001). Furthermore, it is developed as a language for traders. Platt & Weber (1980) also claimed *Bahasa Pasar* as a pidgin in explaining its role in transactional domain. Other than *Bahasa Pasar*, vernacular languages may be used in the transactional domain.

### **2.1.3 Vernacular Language**

Holmes (2001) refers to the term “vernacular” most basically as “a language which has not been standardized and does not have official status”. Secondly, it is acquired at home as the first variety and those who close to you. Thirdly, its function is limited to certain circumstances only. Besides, vernacular also means the most colloquial variety in one’s linguistic repertoire. Holmes explained it as the language of solidarity between members of the same ethnic group. One distinctive feature about vernacular language is, according to Holmes, it must have native speakers and if it does not belong to any speaker’s mother tongue, then it would not be considered a vernacular language.

The vernacular language of one ethnic group of people vary with geographical regions and social groups. A vernacular language may have many dialects. Fromkin and Rodman (1998) clearly explained their views on dialects in saying that “when dialects become mutually unintelligible-when the speakers of one dialect group can no longer understand the speakers of another dialect group-these “dialects” become different languages”. For instance, Chinese as the second largest ethnic group in Sarawak consists of 10 different dialects namely Foochow, Hakka, Hokkien, Teochew, Kantonis, Hanghua, Hainan, Hokchia, Kwongsai and

others in which they are mutually unintelligible. Although these dialects of Chinese as be considered as different languages spoken by its community, it is graded as dialects instead of different languages due to the fact that they are spoken in Sarawak, the same geographical regions and they share one standard language and writing system, which is Mandarin. Fromkin and Rodman supported this view when they gave an example of dialects in China. They mentioned “the various languages spoken in China, such as Mandarin and Cantonese, although mutually unintelligible, have been referred to as dialects of Chinese because they are spoken within a single-country and have a common writing system”.

Sarawak is a region consists of three major ethnic groups (indigenous, Chinese and Malays) and in its major group, it has many dialects which are mutually unintelligible with each other. In order to unite multilingual community, one standard language across all the ethnic groups is needed so that miscommunication would not occur and consequently create a harmony society.

#### **2.1.4 Standard Language**

Standard language is essentially important in a multilingual society as a means for unity. According to Holmes (2001), standard language is a language which has undergone codification, is written, has its prestigious variety and is used for official purposes, at court, academic writing, for literature and management which served high functions. On the other hand, Holmes defines national language as “the language of a political, cultural and social unit”. It is important as a symbol of national unity which serves the functions to identify the nation and to unite its people.

Bahasa Melayu has been declared as national language and also as a standard language since 1957 until 1969 as stated by Asmah (1985). But during that few years, English was the preferred language for official communication although Bahasa Melayu is the national language. Only after 1969, Bahasa Melayu became more important than English as an official language. As for