

## “Code-Switch” Malay – Thailand in Southern Thailand

**Djusmalinar**

Malay Section, Department of Eastern Languages  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Prince of Songkla University  
Pattani Campus

### A. Preface

The Malay language in ASEAN is identified as ‘lingua franca’ since 15<sup>th</sup> century. But in the present time it is not so in southern Thailand. The people still maintain the use of their mother language. A question arises: does the new generation of Thai Muslims in Southern Thailand still use Malay? According to Noriah Mohammad (1988:14), she believes that the new generation in southern Thailand does not use the Malay language in communication. This is because the Malay society in the south, the Muslims must learn, understand, and communicate Thai language in the office and at school.

### B. A Contact Language

In southern border provinces of Thailand namely Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, the majority of the population are Malay Muslims. In their daily life they use code switching in their speech, that is, after learning Thai, the new generation in those provinces use both Thai and Malay in communication.

Wienreich (1953:1) says “... *two or more languages will be said to be in contact if they are used alternative[sic] by the same person (or community).*” So this contact language is known as *Dwi bahasa* or double language. It consists of coordinate and subordinate. The coordinate is a person who can communicate in two or more languages and the subordinate is a person who has one language as his native and knows another language as his second language, but he may not be able to use the second language well as its native speakers.

This is an indication of an ethnic language which has become a socio-culture.

“A language becomes an authoritative language of a community which creates that language (Nik Safiah Karim, 1981:38). It is evident that the Muslim society in southern Thailand can be described by their language which is identified as part of the Malay culture. In the three southern border provinces of Thailand, the use of Malay still exists, because the Pattani Dialect is still used for communication in all villages among all the Muslim people.

Here are some examples:

#### A. At Home

Children	: Me, Ce gi mano? ?Me, ?Se gi manə
Mother	: Tahu, tadi dio ada sini. Eh! Demo tampak Pa? Su da? Ta? ʔhu, tadi dio ado? sini. Hoy Demə nampa? Pə Su də?
Other Man	: Pak Su gi de nung. ?Pa Su gee de nunŋ

This dialog illustrates the use of Malay in the daily life. Its language is simple and the Malay used is the Pattani Dialect. The examples of the vocabulary are ‘Pak Su’ for ‘father Su’; ‘pergi’ for ‘gi – go’; and ‘tidak’ for ‘dak-no’.

A part from using at home, Malay is also used in ‘code switching’ with Thai vocabulary at school:

**B. At School****Example 1:**

- Student 1 : Na, *Acan Wid* beri *kanban* dak?  
Na, *Acan Wid* buee *kanban* də?
- Student 2 : *Mi ka*. Muka dua puluh lima sampai tiga puluh.  
*Mi kha*. Mukə duə pəlooh limə sampay tigə pəlooh.
- Student 1 : Alu! Banyak! Bila antar?  
Aluy Banyo? Bilə antə
- Student 2 : *Prungni*.  
*Prunṅ nee*.  
พุงนี่
- Student 1 : *Prungni?*  
*Prunṅ nee*  
พุงนี่
- Student 2 : *Kra phom*.  
*Ṕra phom*.  
กระผม

In this dialog, Thai vocabulary is used with Malay vocabulary in their conversation.

**Example 2:**

- Teacher : *Sawasdee (kha/krab) nak rian!*  
สวัสดี (คะ/ครับ) นักเรียน
- Student : *Sawasdee (kha/krab) Acan.*  
สวัสดี (คะ/ครับ) อาจารย์
- Teacher : *Wanni mi karnsob. Nak rian nang tam tok kong tua eng!*  
วันนี้มีคนสอบนักเรียนนั่งตามโต๊ะของตัวเอง

During an exam, one student is borrowing an eraser from a friend:

- Student 1 : Wan, *yanglob sebentar!*  
Wan, yanṅ ləb sebertə
- Student 2 : *Ini!*  
*Nee*
- Student 1 : *Kulab, kor maibantad!*  
Kulab, Ṕor maybantad
- Student 2 : *Ni.*  
*Nee*

At the end of the exam, Wanna's friend recognizes that Wanna's skirt is torn:

- Student 3 : Wan, *kaprong* demo carik!  
Wan kəmpromṅ demə cari?

**Example: 3**

From the dialog bellow both students and teacher use Thai in class but outside the classroom they use both languages.

- Teacher 1 : Ni, *tengok tak baju Wa suai.*  
*Nee, tengə? də? baju Wa suay.*
- Teacher 2 : *Baju beb mana lagi?*  
*Baju beb manə lagi*
- Teacher 1 : *Chut mai.*  
*Shut may*  
ชุดใหม่

- Teacher2 : *Chut arai?*  
*Shut aray*  
 ชุตอารี
- Teacher1 : *Pamai, beb* dia ini baru timbul. Tengok Ni sama dengan di *nanjse*  
 Anisa. Demo tengok dak lagi?  
 Pamayi beb di neo baru timbul. Tengok Nee samo dengan di nanjse  
 Anisa. Demo tengok? də? lagi
- Teacher2 : *Yang*  
*Yaang*  
 ย่าง

From the above examples, you can say that people of the new generation in Southern Thailand sometimes borrow Thai into the Malay language, which has become “code-switching”. Code-switching is the juxtaposition within the same speech. It is an exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems (Romaine, 1998:121)

### C. Conclusion

It can be concluded now that the use of the Malay language is of 3 levels:

- a. Adults use Pattani dialect at home to communicate within their society;
- b. Children use both the Pattani dialect and Thai in the primary schools or the villages;
- c. Adults use double language or *dwi bahasa*: at home or at the office. But they use more Thai at work.

Category ‘a + b’ are used in the Muslim community, and category “c” is characterized as a new modern language of the Malay society. Category ‘c’ is the characteristic of the modern language of *wairun* (teenagers).

### References

- Karim, Nik Safiah. 1981. *Beberapa Persoalan Sociolinguistik Bahasa Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Mohamed, Noriah. 1988. *Sociolinguistik Bahasa Melayu di Malaysia*. Pulau Pinang: Pusat pengajian Ilmu Kemanusiaan Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Romaine, Suzanne. 1998. *Bilingualism: Second Edition*. USA: Blackwell Publishers
- Weinreich, U. 1953. *Language in Contact: Findings and Problems*. New York: Linguistics Circle of New York.