LANGUAGE AS AN ETHNIC DENOMINATOR IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: A CASE STUDY OF YALA PROVINCE

MUNIRAH YAMIRUDENG

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY UTARA MALAYSIA
SEPTEMBER 2011
LANGUAGE AS AN ETHNIC DENOMINATOR IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: A CASE STUDY OF YALA PROVINCE

BY

MUNIRAH YAMIRUDENG

Theses Submitted to the Centre for Graduate Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies, University Utara Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UUM or other institutions.

Date: ……/……/ 2011  
Signature: ………………….

Name: Munirah Yamirudeng

Matric No.: 90317
PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from University Utara Malaysia, I agree that the University Library may take it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any number, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by my supervisor, Professor Dato’ Dr. Mohammed Mustafa Ishak, or in his absence, by the dean of college of Law, Government and International Studies. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain should not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to University Utara Malaysia for my scholarly use which be made by my material from my thesis

Request for permission to copy or to make other use of materials in this thesis, in whole or in part should be addressed to:

Dean of Graduate Studies
College of Law, Government and International studies
University Utara Malaysia
06010 UUM Sintok
Kedah Darul Aman
Malaysia
DEDICATION

To:

My late father

Al Marhum Haj Abdul Hamid Daud

And

My beloved mother

Azizah Wea Omar

Whose pray for my successful had never stop

“May Allah Subhanahu Wat’ala always grants you His blessings”
ABSTRAK

ABSTRACT

In the context of language contact in Thailand, ethnic minority languages are prone to change, attrition, and loss. Therefore, the general aim of this study is to explain why, how and to what extent does language as an ethnic denominator play a vital role in determining the preservation of ethnic identity among the Malay Muslims of southern Thailand. The study is based on a qualitative research approach and theories of ethnicity and sociolinguistics; it employs in-depth interviews with 38 Malay Muslims who reside in Yala; they were divided into two main groups: the elites and the public masses. Two factors have been identified regarding language and ethnicity. First, the minority language is seen as a relevant ethno-cultural marker and its usage is limited within specific contexts such as family, relatives and religion. Second, the minority language is preserved in combination with Thai, making many Malay Muslims bilingual. In both cases native language is considered as a significant unifying value and cultural marker for the group. This study serves the need for studies that analyze language as an essential component of nationalism, and not merely as a means of communication. In addition to contributing to knowledge in the mentioned areas, by examining the case of Malay Muslims, general factors that influence ethnic identity maintenance will provide a more scientific basis for decision-making related to linguistic policies and language planning that will permit linguistic pluralism and coexistence rather than assimilationist or monolingualist policies currently in force in Thailand.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my deepest appreciation to Professor Dato’ Dr. Mohammed Mustafa Ishaq my hard working supervisor, for his guidance, support and insightful advices in the improvement of my dissertation.

My gratitude goes to Al-Farouq Foundation, London, for its generous financial assistance during the first three years of my study. My deepest appreciation also goes to my brothers, sisters, friends and other individuals, who are numerous to name here, not to forget my 38 informants who supported me during the writing of this dissertation with a special thanks to Rokiah Ismail, a Malay language teacher, who worked hard to preserve the Malay language among the young Malay Muslims generation. Had it not been for their contributions and supports, this dissertation would not have been completed.

Special thanks to Professor Dr. Abdul Rahman Abdul Aziz, Director of Institute of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad’s Thoughts, for his productive assistance and valuable comments for the improvement of this thesis.

I am also indebted to Ku Majdi Yamirudeng, whose understanding has been the main key force of success. My love to my lovely kids: Ku Sara @ Ku Iman, Ku Ammar, Ku Rania and Ku Saifuddin for their patience and understanding of my busyness for the writing of this dissertation, with a hope that they will grow up preserving their mother tongue language to maintain their Malay ethnic royalty and identity.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certification of Thesis Work</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission to Use</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstrak (Bahasa Malaysia)</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgment</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>XIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>XIV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Background  
1.1 Problem Statement  
1.1.1 Language a part of the future of the Malay Muslim identity  
1.1.2 Minority and the Problem of Ethnic Identification  
1.2 Research Question  
1.3 Research objective  
1.4 Significance and contribution of the Study  
1.5 Research Methodology  
1.5.1 Study Design.  
1.5.2 The Informants  
1.5.2.1 Why choosing Malay Muslims residing at Yala Municipality city?  
1.5.3 Why In-depth Interview?  
1.5.4 Data employed in this Study  
1.5.5 Data Analysis  
1.5.6 Questions and Procedures of the Interview  
1.5.6.1 Questions of the In-depth Interview  
1.5.6.2 Duration of the In-depth Interview  
1.6 Limitation of the Study  
1.7 Organization of the thesis

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.0 Introduction  
2.1 Ethnic Group and Ethnicity  
2.1.1 The Ethnic Group  
2.1.2 Characteristics of Ethnic Group  
2.1.3 Ethnic Group from Primordial perspective
2.1.4 Ethnic Group from Instrumentalism Perspective

2.2 Meaning and Significance of an Identity to ethnic group

2.2.1 The Nature of Identity

2.2.2 Sources of Identity

2.2.3 Identity Effects on Intractability

2.2.4 Shapers of Identity

2.2.4.1 Internal Factors and Processes

2.2.4.2 Relations with Adversaries

2.2.4.3 Social Context

2.2.5 Ethnic Identity and Nationalism

2.2.5.1 Ethnic Nationalism

2.2.5.2 Civic Nationalism

2.3 Language and Ethnic Identity

2.3.1 Language and Ethnicity: Two Approaches to Ethnicity

2.3.2 Language as an Ethnic Distinction

2.3.3 Language and the Context of Group Membership

2.3.4 Language as a Marker of Identity

2.3.5 Language Shift and Language Maintenance

2.3.6 Nationalism

2.3.6.1 Language and Nationalism

2.3.6.2 Nationalism, Language Shift and Language Maintenance

2.3.6.3 The role of language in the formation of nationhood

2.3.6.4 Ideology of “official nationalism” and “Official language”

2.4 Summary

CHAPTER 3: THE MALAY MUSLIMS OF THAILAND

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Historical Background of the Malay-Muslim Southern Provinces (Mid 1400s – Early 1900s)

3.2 Islamization of Patani

3.2.1 Theory of the Arab traders

3.2.2 Theory of the Chinese traders

3.3 The First Wave of Separatism: Ethnic Malay-Muslim Identity (Early 1900s – Late 1950s)

3.3.1 Raja Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin

3.3.2 Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya

3.3.3 Patani People’s Movement and Hajji Sulong

3.4 The Categorization of Muslims in Thailand

3.4.1 The Muslim Siamese

3.4.2 The Thai-Islam / Thai - Malay (The Assimilated Group)

3.4.3 The Malay-Muslims (The unassimilated Group)

3.4.3.1 The Linguistic Profile

3.4.3.2 Malay Muslim Identity

3.4.3.3 Geographic and Socio-economic setting

3.4.3.4 Demographical Setting

3.5 Malay Identity and the Thai Society

3.6 Summary
CHAPTER 4: THE SOCIO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THAI SOCIETY

4.0 Introduction 114
4.1 The Society 114
4.2 The Population 119
4.3 Composition of ethnic groups in Thailand 122
4.4 Nation Building and the Construction of National Identity 124
4.4.1 From Muang to Kingdoms 124
4.5 Ethnicity, Regionalism and Language 127
4.5.1 Language and National Identity in contemporary Thailand 129
4.5.2 The Dominance of Standard Thai 129
4.6 Regional Tai Languages 134
4.6.1 The Thai and Other Tai-Speaking Peoples 135
4.6.2 The Non-Tai languages of Non Tai minorities in Thailand 137
4.6.2.1 The Highland, or Hill, People 138
4.6.2.2 The Khmer 140
4.6.2.3 The Mon 140
4.6.2.4 The Vietnamese 141
4.6.2.5 The Chinese 142
4.6.2.6 The Malays 145
4.7 Ethnic and Regional Relations 147
4.8 Religion 149
4.9 Summary 151

CHAPTER 5: CREATING THAINESS AGAINST THE EXISTENCE OF THE OTHER

5.0 Introduction 153
5.1 What it means to be Thai. 153
5.2 The Pervasiveness and Origins of Thainess 156
5.3 Conception of Thainess in the Ayutthayan and Early-Bangkok Periods 160
5.4 Similarities with European Conceptions of Race 170
5.5 Changes of Thai Conception of Thainess and the Confusion of Ethnicity with Nationality 173
5.6 Cultural Adaptations 178
5.7 Disorienting the Promotion of a National Language 179
5.8 From Tai to Thai 182
5.9 Summary 182

CHAPTER 6: THAI NATIONAL IDENTITY VS. MALAY IDENTITY IN THE SOUTH

6.0 Introduction 184
6.1 Ethnicity and Nationalism in Thailand 184
6.1.1 Thai Nationalism 195
6.1.2 The Tripartite Conception of Thai Identity 188
6.2 Thai Islam, Thai Muslim and Malay Muslim Label:
Ethnonyms: Exonyms and Endonyms 191
  6.2.1 Exonyms 193
  6.2.2 Endonyms 196
6.3 Thailand’s Cultural Resurgence 196
6.4 Status of Malay Muslim in Thai society 291
  6.4.1 Malay Identity and the Thai Society 205
  6.4.2 Malay Ethnic Identity Maintainance 208
  6.4.3 Cultural Dimension 213
6.5 Malay Muslims: A Thai Perspective 214
  6.5.1 Ethnic, Linguistic and Identity 216
6.6 The Impose of Thai education and its Impact on the
  Malay Muslims 217
  6.6.1 (a) Islamic Education Boarding Institutions (Pondok) 224
  6.6.1 (b) Modern Islamic Private Schools 226
6.7 Summary 228

CHAPTER 7: THE CORE VALUE OF MALAY LANGUAGE
IN PRESERVING MALAY ETHNIC IDENTIY

7.0 Introduction 231
7.1 The Relationship of Language, culture and Identity 231
  7.1.1 Bahasa Melayu and Malay Identity 233
  7.1.2 Bahasa Melayu and Religious Identity 235
7.2 Language Behaviour and Linguistic Value 237
  7.2.1 Language, Culture and Education 241
  7.2.2 Language and Malay Identity Link 245
7.3 Language and Identity Questions 247
7.4 Functions and Significance of Malay Language 250
7.5 Thai and Malay Ethnic/Cultural Identity 256
  7.5.1 Contexts of Thai Vs. Malay Language 258
  7.5.2 The Thai Identity 260
7.6 Malay Language as an Ethnic marker and social
  Organization 263
  7.6.1 Malay language as a means of religious symbol 265
  7.6.2 Malay Language as a mean of creating the
    Malay Identity 266
7.7 Summary 270

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

8.0 Introduction 273
8.1 Conclusion 273
  8.1.1 The socio politic of Thai society 273
  8.1.2 Thainess and the confusion of ethnicity with nationality 227
  8.1.3 Thai Identity vs. Malay identity in the south 279
  8.1.4 Malay language and its impact on the Malay Muslims
    Identity 281
8.2 Implications for Future Study 285

BIBLIOGRAPHY 287
List of Tables

Table 3.1  Muslim population of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat (1902-2000).  96
Table 3.2  Population Data of Yala province.  106
Table 4.1  Total Population Year 2007.  122
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Map of the three southern provinces. 3
Figure 1.2 Amphoe Muang location in Yala Province 16
Figure 3.1 Regional parts of Thailand 74
Figure 3.2 The southern most provinces of Thailand. 76
Figure 3.3 Pattani was situated between the Buddhist Kingdom of Ayutthaya
(the largest Kingdom of what became Siam) and The Muslim empire of Malacca. 79
Figure 3.4 The southern provinces of Thailand showing the Malay-Muslim majority areas 102
Figure 3.5 The distribution of the administrative divisions of Yala province 106
Figure 4.1 Map of Thailand 117
Figure 4.2 Diagram indicating the ethnic groups in Thailand 124
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Language is intrinsically connected with ethnic identity and it interweaves the individual's personal identity with his or her collective ethnic identity. Among the multitude of markers of group identity, like age, sex, social class and religion, language is considered essential to the maintenance of the group identity. It is generally regarded as a salient dimension of ethnicity, and as such is one of the most important articulations of ethnic identity, both at an individual and at a group level. This belief has led Lambert (Lambert, 1980) to posit that communicating in a language other than that of one's own group can lead to a sense of not belonging to the same culture as one's own ethnic-heritage group. One's sense of ethnic identity may therefore be threatened or lessened in some way; this is reflected in particular among groups that occupy low-power positions in terms of socioeconomic status when their members use the dominant group's language (Lambert, 1980; Giles, H. & Johnson, 1981). This is one of the many reasons why many ethnic groups consider the loss of their language as symbolizing the loss of their identity as a group. Wardhaugh (1983) warned that this aspect can have extreme results. For groups whose language has a profound value as a symbol of their ethnicity, or as a clear mark of ethnic identity, its loss is regarded as the loss of their most precious asset and may be followed by complete (not just linguistic) assimilation. It is in this situation the role of language becomes relevant and significant in maintaining one’s ethnic group.

Weinrelan (1953) pointed out that language is so inextricably bound up with group culture and identity that an attack on a language would naturally be interpreted
The contents of the thesis is for internal user only


Farrell, Juliet Campbell. (2010). Understanding the Factors that have Contributed to the Maintenance of a Jamaican Identity despite Assimilation Pressures faced by


Gunew, S. (1994). “Arts for a Multicultural Australia: Redefining the Culture.” In S. Gunew & F. Rizvi (Eds.), Culture, difference and the arts (pp. 1–12). St. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin


Mead, G. (1934). Philosophy of The Present (reprinted 1959), Open Court : Chicago,


Pavlenko, A. & Blackledge, A. (2004). “Introduction: New theoretical approaches to the study of negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts”. In A. Pavlenko &A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts* (pp. 1-33). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.


Tse, L. (1998). ‘Ethnic Identity Formation and Its Implications for Heritage Language Development”. In S. D. Krashen, L. Tse, & J. McQuillan (Eds.), Heritage
language development (pp. 15–29). Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates.


B) Journals and Articles


C) Online Supports


www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3368333.stm


http://0weblinks1.epnet.com/library.lib.asu.edu

http://www.asian-nation.org/assimilation.shtml (June 28,).

www.asiatimes.com

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FI03Ae04.html (Retreived on 25/04/2005)


http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/classroom/milosz/emig.htm. (Original work published 1968)


http://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/30065/language-is-a-key-to-southern-stability.

http://www.chat11.com/Thailand's_Southern_Border_Problems (1 of 5)31/12/2550 23:44:23
D) List of Interviews

I. Leading Communities and Religious Personalities

1) Ustaz Abdullah Hilea
   General Secretary of Yala Islamic Religious Council.
2) Ustaz Shafie Baso
   Former Mudir of Mahad al-B;that al-Diniyah – Yala.
3) Ustaz Hafiz Hilea