

The Relationship Between the Malay Proverb “Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan” (Prepare an Umbrella Before Rain) and the Malay Language

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the Malay proverb "*Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan*" (Prepare an Umbrella Before Rain), highlighting its enduring relevance and multifaceted significance in the Malay language and society. Rooted in traditional wisdom, the proverb serves as a metaphor advising caution and preparedness before facing adversity. The study examines the lexical and figurative meanings of the phrase, its role as an adage imparting moral values, and its application across various contexts, including education, health, and social behavior. It discusses the proverb's linguistic construction, its philosophical underpinnings, and its parallels in other cultures and languages, such as the English maxim "Dig the well before you are thirsty." The article emphasizes the importance of proactive measures amid contemporary challenges, exemplified by the rapid formulation of new terminologies during the Covid-19 pandemic by institutions like Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP). Furthermore, the study addresses the dynamic use of language in social media, where traditional proverbs intersect with modern expressions and initialisms to aid clear communication in crises. Ultimately, the proverb embodies a universal lesson on foresight and prudence, reinforcing cultural values that guide community conduct and individual resilience in an ever-changing world.

Keywords— Malay proverb, Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan, cultural wisdom, Malay language

INTRODUCTION

A single canvas elucidates a thousand words behind a painting, mirroring the verse of the legendary artist Tan Sri P. Ramlee, which states that no words are as beautiful as language itself. A thousand words of explanation, in turn, can be encapsulated by a single proverb (Shaiful Bahri, 2019). Proverbs uphold the intellectual ethos of a society through a nuanced, beautiful, and valuable linguistic expression (Hasnah Mohamad & Amira Razlan, 2019). They articulate the importance of introspection and how actions reflect one's character. Proverbs introduce a specific nuance into communication or when documented in written works. They make the language used in conversation or writing more vibrant and elegant. A proverb is akin to a spice that enhances the flavour of food (Sinar Anwar & Silviani, 2023). Furthermore, proverbs can act as a tool for self-discipline, serving as an alternative to punishment (Shaiful Bahri, 2019). Proverbs serve as a medium to advise one another to be cautious in life. Life is a journey full of challenges, for without challenges, one's life is incomplete. Proverbs function as customary law and moral advice to guide the conduct of community members so that they do not deviate from the realities of life. Their creation is based on the genuine phenomena of a society's life (Zaitul Azma & Ahmad Fuad, 2011). This aligns with Za'ba's (1965) statement:

'...all short conversational structures that have been on the public's lips for a long time due to their pleasing and clever words, their broad and true purpose - they are used as references, examples, and lessons.'

Proverbs represent the worldview (tasawwur) of a society or a nation (Wan Azura, 2022). They are a branch of oral literary art within cultures across the world. Malay proverbs remain timeless, even as science and technology continue to dominate human life. According to Muhammad Zaid (2020), ancient societies successfully assimilated their surroundings to form Malay proverbs that are still relevant to be applied in daily life today. The teaching of proverbs is very important because they symbolise the wisdom, philosophy, and refined character of

the Malay community (Mary Fatimah & Mohd Ridzuan, 2019). The proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" (prepare an umbrella before it rains) is taught under the language arts aspect. This proverb is found in the Malay Language Textbook for Form Five on page 106. The proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" is chosen as the subject of this study because it symbolises the implicit meaning of preparing for all eventualities.

The proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" is a type of proverb categorised as an adage. Adages are figurative expressions used to convey sharp, precise thoughts that contain comparisons, examples, lessons, advice, and words of wisdom (Nur Nadirah & Vijayaletchumy, 2019). An adage is a collection of proverbs with a single layer of meaning, where the words are not concealed but have a direct and clear meaning (Muhammad Zaid, 2020). This paper aims to discuss in depth the connection of the adage "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" by looking at it from various perspectives of human life within the context of the Malay language. The discussion in this paper will clarify the meaning of the proverb and examine the relevance of using the adage "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" in the contemporary social sphere. The adage "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" also imparts a great lesson in human life, which is always to be prepared for any eventuality, as misfortune strikes unexpectedly.

Definition Of the Proverb “Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan”

The construction of proverbs uses various linguistic symbols taken from the human environment to represent a certain meaning. The use of metaphors through these symbols shows the keen observation of society towards the phenomena around them (Hasnah Mohamad & Amira Razlan, 2019).

The bidalan *sediakan payung sebelum hujan* is composed of several phrases based on their lexical meaning. *Sediakan* (prepare) means to get something ready. *Payung* (umbrella) is a symbol that protects its holder from rain or sun. *Sebelum* (before) means "at a time not yet," and *hujan* (rain) means water that descends condensed from vapor in the atmosphere. The existence of the umbrella and rain as motifs in this Malay proverb has been assimilated with human behavior, as seen through the literal meaning of the proverb. This situation shows that an umbrella is needed to prepare for a challenge. Rain, which can bring disaster, means the possible challenges that must be overcome. Therefore, everyone is advised to be prepared for future possibilities. The lexical meaning of the bidalan *sediakan payung sebelum hujan* shows that the natural characteristics of the motifs are taken into account to match the behavior being addressed, creating an ambiguity in generating a metaphor and subsequently expressing a meaning (Shaiful Bahri, 2019).

The bidalan *sediakan payung sebelum hujan* is considered cautious before a disaster occurs (Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu, 2017). The bidalan *sediakan payung sebelum hujan* advises us to always be ready to face any potential bad possibilities, such as saving money or being thrifty for the future. The figurative meaning of the bidalan *sediakan payung sebelum hujan* is that this proverb encourages a cautious attitude by making preparations before facing an undesirable situation. This is because the nature of Malay proverbs reflects the philosophy, stance, and experience of a person in facing life and its challenges (Zaitul Asma, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on previous studies, there has not been extensive research on the Malay proverb, "*Sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" (literally, prepare an umbrella before it rains). A study by Normaliza et al. (2012) on the types of Malay proverbs containing moral values and their relevance to students in Korea found that this particular proverb exhibits aspects of moral values. The moral values embedded in this proverb can provide a valuable lesson to students, allowing them to apply "*Sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" in their daily lives. Students should be prepared before attending lectures and constantly ready for any problems they might face. They must strive for success despite significant and challenging obstacles. They should not accept anything without effort, as they will not be satisfied with such an approach. This is because a key challenge in the national education system today is ensuring that students are prepared to face a balanced reality of life (Muhammad Talhah et al., 2024).

Farah Hanim & Adham (2021) conducted a study on the reflection of the environment in Arabic and Malay proverbs. The findings showed that while the stories and events in Malay proverbs may differ, the proverbs used do not deviate significantly from their Arabic counterparts. The environmental characteristics reflected in both

Arabic and Malay proverbs are very similar, even though the choice of words may vary slightly. The study highlights that Malaysia experiences two distinct seasons: a hot and humid season throughout the year, with a rainy season from September to December. The monsoon season peaks from November to February. This research demonstrates the use of proverbs that refer to the tropical climate, specifically the year-round rain and heat. In this context, the umbrella serves as a metaphor for its protective nature, shielding individuals from rain that could lead to illness.

In her study on the themes of Malay and Arabic proverbs related to pandemics and the new normal, Wan Azura (2022) explains that living with a dangerous pandemic forces humans to adopt new lifestyle norms. Among the Malay and Arabic proverbs that remind us to be constantly vigilant are:

1. "*Sediakan payung sebelum hujan*," which means to be cautious before facing hardship. To prevent viral infection, this proverb serves as a warning for us to always be vigilant and not take the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) set by the government and the Ministry of Health lightly.
2. "Prevention is better than cure," or in Arabic, "*al-Wiqayatu Khairun minal Illaj*." This means we must be cautious of a danger before it occurs. Prevention is better than cure is suitable for all diseases, especially diseases like COVID-19. Taking vaccine injections, whether Pfizer, Sinovac, or AstraZeneca, is considered a preparatory measure.

The clear connection in meaning between these Malay and Arabic proverbs is that humans should always be prepared for all possibilities, just like the proverb, "*Sediakan payung sebelum hujan*."

A Study of Proverbs Synonymous with the Maxim ‘Sediakan Payung sebelum Hujan’ (Prepare an umbrella before the rain)

Language is universal because it possesses characteristics shared by every language in the world (Sinar Anwar & Silviani, 2023). This is because the pattern and form of a language depend on who speaks it and the situation in which it is used (Nik Safiah, 1992). A literature review found that the Malay maxim *sediakan payung sebelum hujan* (prepare an umbrella before the rain) carries the same meaning as proverbs from other nations. This clearly shows that proverbs originating from traditional societies have a close relationship with proverbs found elsewhere in the world.

The Malay proverb *ingat sebelum kena, jimat sebelum habis* (remember before it hits you, save before it's gone), which means to always be cautious and careful; one must strive to avoid being too late (Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu, 2017), is synonymous with the maxim *sediakan payung sebelum hujan*. This Malay proverb has its own philosophy behind its creation. The ancient Malays created proverbs to advise future generations to always be mindful, cautious, aware, and prepared for the future (Aminudin, 2021).

The study by Nur Nadirah & Vijayaletchumy (2019) focused on the effectiveness of translating Malay maxims into English using Google Translate. Based on their analysis of the translation of Malay maxims into English, the respondents' understanding of the Malay maxims showed a relatively similar comprehension. *Sediakan payung sebelum hujan* has the same meaning as the English maxim Dig the well before you are thirsty.

Meanwhile, a study by Nik Radhiah & Kamarul Shukri (2018) on the translation strategies of Arab-Malay proverbs showed that translation can be executed using three main steps: literal word-for-word translation, followed by a general translation of the meaning, and finally a direct translation into a Malay proverb. The researchers' findings based on the analysis of sample unit 1:

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A literal translation of this would be, "Before shooting an arrow, fill the quiver first." A literal translation of this proverb is sufficient because the meaning is already understood, even if it is not translated in a general sense. This proverb can also be directly translated to the Malay proverb *sediakan payung sebelum hujan*.

Angela & Minhui (2023) conducted a study on idioms or *chengyu* (成语) in Mandarin Chinese, which are expressions that cannot be interpreted literally, either in speech or writing. Mandarin, like other languages, is

full of metaphors with broad meanings. A good example is 未雨綢繆 (wèiyǔchóumóu), which means prepare an umbrella before the rain and signifies being cautious before disaster or danger strikes. There are similarities between Malay proverbs in Indonesia and Malaysia and Mandarin proverbs. This situation aligns with Goh's (2010) opinion that geographical proximity is one factor why speakers of both Malay and Mandarin share similar environmental contexts.

The study by Ragini & Che Ibrahim (2015) on the relationship between Malay and Tamil proverbs from a social aspect found that proverbs are a manifestation of a society's way of thinking. Therefore, by knowing the proverbs of other nations, we can understand their way of thinking. This study found that the Malay proverb *Ingat Sementara Belum Kena, Jimat Sementara belum habis* (Remember before it hits, save before it's gone) is synonymous with *sediakan payung sebelum hujan*, meaning that we must always be careful to avoid regret after something has happened. The Tamil proverb also conveys the same thought through the proverb:

/alamariyamal kaalai vidaṭhey/ (Translation: Don't put your foot in if you don't know how deep it is.)

In the Tamil proverb 'Alamariyamal kaalai vidathey', the Indian community expresses their thinking through an action, which is that if you don't know about something, don't put your foot into it because it will lead to bad luck. This proverb teaches people to give due consideration before taking any action. It is abundantly clear that the Malay and Indian communities share some cultural similarities and contain similar elements embedded in the proverbs used in daily life.

The Relationship Between the Proverb “Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan” And the Malay Language

The study of proverbs involves analyzing their structure, meaning, and contextual usage within a society. This research examines the relationship between the use of the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*' (prepare an umbrella before it rains) and various language issues in the fields of education, health, social media, and social perspectives. According to Marriane Tang et al. (2021), the study of proverbs, particularly their function as a reflection of the Malay mind and scholarship, as well as their embedded values, worldview, beliefs, and knowledge, presents interesting issues worthy of further exploration.

Educational Context in Malaysia

The Malay language is a language of knowledge and a vital part of the national education system's curriculum. It holds a high status as a modern language because it fulfills the requirements of a medium of instruction from kindergarten to university. The use of the Malay language in educational institutions not only serves as a medium for knowledge but is also said to create and maintain social harmony and stability in Malaysia (Noor Azmira & Nor Azlili, 2019). The position of the Malay language as the medium of instruction is enshrined in the Education Act 1996, Section 17, which states:

"The national language shall be the main medium of instruction in all educational institutions in the national education system established under section 28 or any other educational institution exempted by the Minister from this subsection"

(Laws of Malaysia Education Act 1996, 1996).

Upholding the Malay Language and Empowering the English Language in the World of Education

The implementation of the Dual Language Programme (DLP) in selected schools has a clear objective, embodying the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*': to improve students' English proficiency through the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics. This is because the DLP aims to enhance access to various fields of knowledge to compete globally and improve students' marketability in the workforce. The DLP serves as a preparation to empower the English language in education. It was developed through the Teacher Education Institute Training Schools, where experts are sent to selected schools to improve English teaching methods through critical reading, language awareness, reading culture programs, and linguistic activities (Bernama, 2024).

Unfortunately, the implementation of the DLP is said to be a continuation of the failed PPSMI program, which has been academically proven to be a betrayal of students, parents, and educators. A study by Zuraini (2019) on the role and status of the Malay language during PPSMI, when English was the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics, found that the limited use of English indicated its unsuitability as a medium of instruction in Malaysian schools. The Malay language was seen as authoritative and capable of expressing scientific and mathematical concepts, both formally and informally.

Following the failure of PPSMI in 2016, the Ministry of Education (MOE) adopted a stance akin to the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', preparing for all possible opposition to the implementation of the DLP. The MOE has mandated that government schools must have at least one class teaching Science and Mathematics in Malay and that teachers must ensure students master the Malay language. The rationale is to give students a choice of whether to attend Science and Mathematics classes in English, Malay, or their respective mother tongues.

"Therefore, schools that agree to implement DLP must ensure all criteria are met, including proficiency in the Malay language. At the same time, proficiency in the mother tongue must be preserved as the core of the legitimacy of mother tongue implementation in vernacular schools" (Fadhlin Sidek, 2024).

However, the DLP's implementation has faced opposition from Malay language activists, who argue that it is a great mistake to treat the official status of Malay as a medium of instruction as a mere option. The Malay language is the national language, and every citizen is obligated to master it, not treat it as an option (Malaysia Gazette, 2024). Although the MOE was prepared with strategies for DLP's implementation, like the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', it still faces opposition from various parties. The DLP's implementation leads to a reduction in the function and marginalization of the Malay language as a language of knowledge.

The Relationship Between Malay Language Literacy Deficiencies and Academic Failure

UNESCO, under the 2023 Sustainable Development Agenda, emphasizes that literacy is crucial, especially in the early childhood education system, to improve the quality of a nation's education (Nurul Jamilah Rosly et al., 2021). Language literacy, or what is also known in Malay as "*kenal atau celik huruf*" (knowing or being literate), is the minimum ability to read and write in a language (Chew & Saidatul Aliah, 2023). Data from 2023 shows that 175,304 (13%) of children at the end of their primary school years in Malaysia are reportedly unable to read proficiently, while 1.01 million (5.03%) Malaysians still lack literacy skills (Faida Rahim, 2023). Meanwhile, 435,000 students in primary and secondary schools are facing learning deficiencies. This literacy deficiency among students is very worrying as it could lead to academic failure. Thus, all parties must be aware of this issue, embodying the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*'.

The MOE, as a stakeholder in the national education system, needs to take a forward-looking approach, especially in preparing for the implementation of the 2027 School Curriculum, which focuses on mastering literacy, numeracy, and character development. The MOE has implemented four curriculum intervention measures at the primary school level: the Standard Primary School Curriculum Alignment Document (KSSR) revised 2017, 3rd Edition; Early Literacy and Numeracy Detection; Parent-Friendly Classroom Assessment (PBD) reporting; and the Dissemination of the KSSR Alignment Document Revised 2017, 3rd Edition. Education Minister Fadhlin Sidek stated that the existing syllabus would still be used, but teachers would be given the opportunity and autonomy to implement it in line with the students' conditions in their respective classes (Pia Ernadya, 2024).

Schools must conduct literacy and numeracy assessments for Year One students through the PBD after three months of schooling. This assessment aims to identify students who have not yet mastered reading, writing, and counting skills and require early intervention that is appropriate to their abilities, capabilities, and learning styles. The steps taken by the MOE are in line with the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*' to address the issue of academic failure among students. This aligns with the MOE's aspiration to implement a human-centered education that uplifts individual dignity (*karamah insaniah*) by providing the best educational opportunities for every student and ensuring no student is left behind in the national education system.

Additionally, the process of rehabilitating students' literacy should not only be done in schools, but children's skills also need to be monitored by parents at home, as both parties must have a good communication relationship, thus helping each other and consistently training the students (Normarini Norzan, 2022). The collaborative efforts of the MOE and the responsibility of parents can restore the literacy deficiency rate, as this cooperation between both parties is like the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*'. The concept of Human-Centered Education also encourages inclusivity and meets the needs of diverse students.

A student's ability to master Malay language literacy will reduce the rate of language failure and increase literacy rates in Malaysia. Students who master the 3Ms (reading, writing, and arithmetic) at the primary school level will be able to be self-reliant as teenagers. If the situation of literacy deficiency among students is not taken lightly, the effects are akin to the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*': it can help students make better choices and decisions in managing their lives, especially financial matters and social interactions in the future (Samsul Farid Samsuddin, 2024).

The Malay Language as a Second Language in Malaysian International Schools

International schools were established for foreign nationals, expatriates, and diplomats working in Malaysia. The existence of international schools is intended to attract foreign investment to Malaysia, thereby making Malaysia a key educational hub in the region. The establishment of these schools has a positive impact on the country's economic growth. Unfortunately, the curriculum in these schools is designed without an emphasis on instilling national aspirations in their students. As a result, local children studying in international schools lack a strong sense of national identity. However, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has set a condition mandating that students in international schools learn the Malay language, a measure akin to "preparing a parachute before it rains," to ensure that the use of the Malay language in these schools does not vanish. Malay is a compulsory subject in international schools, even though English is the medium of instruction.

A study by Nor Ashikin Hedzir and Siti Aishan Sembai (2021) found that individuals from a high socioeconomic status (T20) or parents with a high level of education prefer to send their children to international schools. This is because these parents have a "prepare for the rainy day" mindset, prioritizing the use of English over Malay. T20 parents believe that a good command of English will make it easier for their children to pursue higher education abroad after completing their schooling. This situation arises from the parents' own attitudes, who value social class and thus devalue the Malay language, causing some children to develop a negative attitude towards the national language. Students who show a negative attitude toward the national language are often from elite families and consider the national language to have no prestige. This finding is supported by Nurulisyazila Othaman and Siti Hajar Bidin (2023), who noted that some parents encourage and emphasize the use of English as a daily conversational language for their children. This parental attitude hurts the use of the Malay language among children. However, even though T20 parents may not always prioritize their children's Malay language studies, some T20 Malay parents provide learning resources, such as buying Malay language reference books. This situation is akin to the proverb "preparing a parachute before it rains," meaning these T20 parents still want their children to master the Malay language even though they have made English the dominant language in their lives.

Malay students from T20 families with a high socioeconomic status who are studying in international schools are less interested in learning and mastering the Malay language. International school students feel that the Malay language is not very important, they do not use it as their main language for communication, and they lack confidence in speaking it (Nor Ashikin Hedzir & Siti Aishan Sembai, 2021). A key factor for international school students not mastering the Malay language is their lack of motivation to learn it. Motivation is a crucial element in second language acquisition. If students are genuinely motivated to learn the Malay language, they will take various initiatives to achieve their goals (G. Puveneswari & Wan Muna Ruzzana, 2021). These students should adopt the "preparing a parachute before it rains" mindset to motivate themselves to learn the Malay language because it is used in both formal and informal matters in this country.

A study conducted by Nor Aishah and Wan Muna Ruzzana (2024) found that there is code-switching among Malay language teachers during instruction in international schools to help students understand the learning content. This phenomenon of code-mixing and code-switching occurs naturally where speakers of more than

one language have the potential to switch from one language to another within a single clause or sentence. Code-switching among teachers during instruction is due to the factor that teachers try to ensure students understand the lesson content of a particular topic being discussed (Atika et al., 2021). To ensure students can understand the lesson, teachers adopt a "preparing a parachute before it rains" attitude, using terms that are easy for international school students to understand by using English to explain the meaning of a term or to help students comprehend. Although the reality of this code-switching phenomenon is becoming increasingly concerning because teachers in schools with a large number of native speakers choose to use code-mixing to ensure the teaching content is understood by students, the implication is that during the Malay Language Oral Examination (UBBM) in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), code-switching occurs because students verbally use English terms to convey understanding to the exam assessor.

The Malay Language in Institutions of Higher Learning

The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has launched the "Action Plan to Uphold the Malay Language as the Language of Knowledge in Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTA) 2023-2023." The effort to cultivate the Malay language as the language of unity and the primary choice in higher education institutions and schools must be carried out diligently, in the spirit of the proverb "preparing a parachute before it rains," to re-establish the prestige of the Malay language in line with its functions as the national language, language of unity, and language of knowledge (Noor Azmira and Nor Azlili, 2019).

A study by Amirul Mukminin et al. (2023) on the use of the Malay language in daily communication among Malay students at University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) found that the use of incorrect and ungrammatical sentences and limited vocabulary in writing limits the quality of students' written work. In addition, students show a more pronounced weakness when using the national language orally, especially when communicating in formal situations or presenting assignments in class. To prevent this issue from festering, UKM is acting in the spirit of the proverb "preparing a parachute before it rains," where instruction in lecture halls and faculties with complex and challenging fields such as science and technology, as well as several important courses, has been conducted in the national language. Reading materials and references in the national language at UKM's main library, the Tun Sri Lanang Library, have been and continue to be increased to provide resources for students and to enhance their proficiency in the Malay language (Amirul Mukminin et al., 2023).

Noor Azmira and Nor Azlili (2019) conducted a study on 100 students at two private higher education institutions (IPTS), namely University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Malaysia and Management Science University (MSU), Malaysia. The study found that private university students admit that the Malay language is not critically important, and they are still free to choose whether to communicate in Malay or English both inside and outside the lecture hall, even during Malay language subjects. The use of English is considered more necessary in the university learning environment. Private university students, who are predominantly non-Malay, are more comfortable using their mother tongue or English as the medium of instruction, disregarding the importance of the national language. These private university students should change their attitude by being ready to use the Malay language in the spirit of the proverb "preparing a parachute before it rains" to improve their level of Malay language usage. This is because the level of Malay language proficiency among private university students is moderate due to their unwillingness to interact with friends or university administration using the Malay language. If left unchecked, this situation will cause the Malay language to be considered unimportant in the context of higher education. The Malay language seems to be no longer relevant as the main medium of instruction for university lectures, with 90 percent of courses in both public and private universities using English as the medium (Noor Azmira & Nor Azlili, 2019).

The internationalization of education in this country has made Malaysia a choice for foreign students to pursue their studies due to the quality of education and available infrastructure. The entry of international students into public and private universities has made the Malay language course a compulsory subject to ensure all international students master the language. These international students should be ready, in the spirit of the proverb "preparing a parachute before it rains," by mastering the Malay language and subsequently the culture of this country. The Private Higher Education Act 1996 has mandated that international students must take this Malay language course as a graduation requirement. International undergraduate students are required to pass a basic communication level Malay language subject as a graduation requirement (Tuty Haryanti, 2023). In

addition, University Kebangsaan Malaysia also acts in the spirit of "preparing a parachute before it rains" by mandating international students, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, to take and pass a national language course as a foreign or third language as a preparation for being a student at the university.

Health Context

Who can deny that the number of Malay terms related to the fields of medicine and public health is growing? Terms that were once confined to the environment of medical practitioners are now circulating among the general public. When the Covid-19 virus triggered a devastating health crisis globally, it had a direct impact on the world's languages. The Malay language also adapted and evolved in response to these surrounding changes (Jeniri Amir, 2021).

Equivalence and Translation of "New Normal" Terms in Public Health

The field of public health focuses on efforts to improve and maintain the physical, mental, and social well-being of a community. Public health includes reducing the incidence of diseases and deaths, promoting healthy lifestyles, ensuring healthy and safe working conditions, and maintaining a clean environment. Additionally, the field of public health acts to enforce public health laws (Selangor State Health Department). The Covid-19 issue represents a new chapter in the field of Public Health in Malaysia. The emergence of new terms in the field of Public Health contributes to the enrichment of the Malay vocabulary and the terminology used to brand Covid-19 for the public. Many new terms and jargon in the Public Health field were absorbed from English into Malay. The spread of Covid-19 indirectly demonstrated the need for accurate and natural equivalence of terms from English to Malay. This equivalence ensures that precise and correct information is conveyed to the public to create understanding, preparedness, and awareness of the dangers of this pandemic. The proactive efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Health Malaysia and the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), akin to the proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" (prepare an umbrella before it rains), ensure that foreign languages are not continuously absorbed to replace the relevance of the Malay language in the medical field. This is because the use of new terms in the Public Health sector can provide the public with an understanding of the dangers of the pandemic.

A study conducted by Nor Diyana et al. (2022) on the equivalence of public health terms related to the Covid-19 issue states that the method of matching outlines several approaches for matching new terms not found in the inventory of the Malay language.

Translation The translation method is performed by finding a Malay equivalent for a foreign term while adhering to the conditions outlined in the General Principles of Terminology Formulation in Malay (PUPIBM). Examples of terms in the Public Health field related to the Covid-19 issue that have been matched using the translation method include:

Example: travel bubble → *gelembung perjalanan*

The source term travel bubble has been literally translated by looking at the equivalent meaning found in Malay. The word travel was translated to *perjalanan* and bubble was matched to *gelembung* to form the phrase *gelembung perjalanan*. The translation of this term provides the public with an understanding of public health terminology.

Absorption The absorption method involves absorbing or borrowing foreign terms into Malay, either with or without spelling adjustments. An example of a term in the Public Health field related to the Covid-19 issue that uses the absorption method is the term "*sut hazmat*."

Example: hazmat suit → *suit hazmat*

The term hazmat suit is matched to *sut hazmat* in Malay. The term hazmat suit is absorbed into Malay with spelling adjustments for the word suit to "sut," while the word hazmat is absorbed directly, forming the phrase *sut hazmat*. This absorption method typically involves foreign terms that have no direct equivalent in Malay and

is accepted due to the dynamic nature of the Malay language. Its dynamic nature means it does not reject the use of foreign languages but rather absorbs them as loanwords (Salmah Jan, 2022).

The process of translating one language to another requires a high level of expertise so that the information to be conveyed can be easily received by the target audience, as discrepancies in translation can cause information to be inaccurately delivered to the target language (Suraya et al, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has opened new avenues in the field of terminology, where many Malay terms are being matched with foreign languages. However, not all public health terms are directly copied from foreign languages; some are also adapted into Malay, such as the use of the term face mask becoming *pelitup muka*. According to Jeniri Amir (2021), the DBP has been proactive, pragmatic, and consistently updates the latest terms related to medicine, public health, and other issues. This step has been well-received by language users, including media practitioners, especially journalists, editors, and broadcasters, much like the proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*." The use of these new terms facilitates individuals involved in the media and writing fields as they often face the challenge of selecting or using appropriate and accurate terms, especially for writing news, articles, and analyses about Covid-19.

Meanwhile, a study conducted by Junaini Kasdan et al. (2020) found that some terms are still being used in English. Examples include the use of the terms spring cleaning, rapid test kit (RTK), and disinfectant box. This is said to be due to the immediate (ad hoc) need caused by Covid-19, which justified the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) creating terms by absorbing English terms without going through the DBP validation process. According to Hasnah et al. (2020), the phenomenon of an abundance of foreign terms in the Malay vocabulary, particularly in the fields of science and technology, also shows that society now often easily creates terms through the absorption of foreign terms for current needs. Language agencies, namely the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) and its terminology committees, cannot remain complacent but must meet frequently due to current needs and demands to formulate new terms in line with developments in their environment (Jeniri Amir, 2021), embodying the proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*," meaning the DBP must be prepared for the addition of new terms caused by fast or unexpected phenomena like the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Use of Initialism Abbreviations

Initialism is a form of compound word derived from the first letters of each word in a phrase. The abbreviation forms a word consisting of capital letters (Ismail Dahaman, 2017). Word abbreviation involves a shortening process, which is the formation of words based on reduction as a step in word formation in the Malay language. The use of abbreviations or acronyms in written form is often employed because their form is more concise and convenient without needing to consider proper grammatical aspects. The use of initialism abbreviations during the Covid-19 pandemic was a measure to quickly disseminate safety information in preparation for eventualities, much like the proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*."

A study conducted by Nur Anis Syafiq & Harishon (2022) on the use of abbreviations in text messages disseminated to the public during the Covid-19 pandemic.

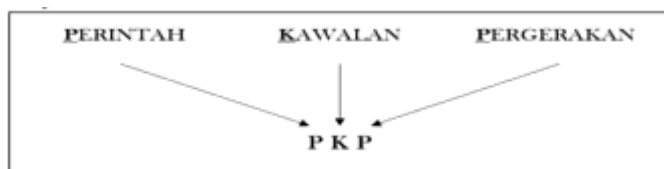


Fig. 1 The Formation of Initialisms in the Malay Language

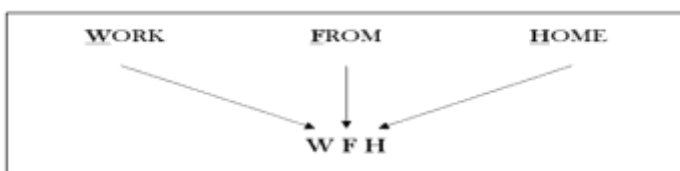


Fig. 2 The Formation of English Initialisms

The issue of linguistic confusion arises from the use of English abbreviations in Malay text messages. The rationale is that these English abbreviations are more easily understood by the public and are universal, meaning their use is recognized globally. For example, the English initialism WFH (Work From Home) is easier to use than BDR (*Bekerja Dari Rumah*). According to Nur Anis Syafiq & Harishon (2022), WFH has been accepted by all segments of society and is frequently used, even in bilingual contexts. The use of such abbreviations facilitates public understanding of information, allowing individuals to be prepared, much like the proverb "prepare a umbrella before it rains."

The use of initialisms helps society to recognize and remember abbreviations in the correct context. Due to the constraint of character limits in messages, the use of abbreviations is necessary to ensure the message is clear and understandable (Nur Anis Syafiq & Harishon, 2022). In critical situations, such as during an epidemic, the use of initialisms serves as a preventative measure—like the saying "prepare an umbrella before it rains"—to ensure the public's health and well-being are protected.

Social Media Context

The article by Salmah Jan (2022) discusses a generation confused by its own language due to a focus on commercial value in the selection of terms and sophisticated speech styles, which are also used to demonstrate high social status. Recently, expressions like "Hai guys, *apa khabar?* U all *sihat tk?*" have become common among Generation Z (Gen Z). Language users have also been surprised by the use of new terms like mewing, rizz, skibidi, and gyatt, popularized by Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) on social media or during communication (Aisyah Lutfi, 2024). This shift in meaning is prevalent among users on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Snapchat, X, and TikTok. Online media language is dynamic, changing from meaning that diverge significantly from their original dictionary definitions (Wan Robiah & Wan Sofiah, 2021). The K-pop wave in the country has also led teenagers to be more attracted to foreign languages than to the Malay language. Teenagers are also said to be experiencing a "craze" for using short, simple, and casual language, whether in spoken or written form (Wan Azni, 2023). Online communities, composed of various segments of society regardless of age, gender, education, and status, are observed using language and arbitrarily changing the meaning of words (Wan Robiah & Wan Sofiah, 2021). Gen Z and Gen Alpha are generations that have been exposed to a digital technology environment since birth, characterized by the widespread use of the internet, social media networks, and electronic gadgets. This generation is more practical and savvy due to their socialization environment being connected to the virtual world. This factor leads them to use language and change words arbitrarily based on the current situational context. All parties must be prepared for the dynamism of language on social media, embodying the proverb "prepare a net before it rains" (*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*) because language changes according to the current situation and its speakers.

The Use of Social Media Language by Generation Z and Generation Alpha

New communication media, namely social media, have been found to cause language users to be inclined to create new meanings for specific vocabulary and terms, depending on the scope and context of the communication (Wan Robiah & Wan Sofiah, 2021). The use of the Malay language on social media has significantly altered the nature of Malay words. This new nature of the Malay language has been given titles such as pseudo-Malay, mixed language (*bahasa rancid*), new Malay language, and slang language (Atiqah Abd Rahim, 2020).

The use of mixed language among Gen Z is a concern, as it might lead to a generation that is not linguistically literate and has lost its national identity. Gen Z is a digital native generation due to their ability and skill in using technological devices (Ni Luh Putu Ning Septyarani & Putu Trisna, 2020). Gen Z is a term used to describe young people born between 1997 and 2012 (Henny Mardiah & Khairun Nissa, 2024). Mixed language refers to a disordered and mixed-up state of language that violates rules in terms of spelling, pronunciation, terminology, vocabulary, and grammar. A study conducted by Nurkhairunnisha Amani et al. (2022) found that Gen Z uses mixed language when commenting in social media posts, such as mixing Malay and English, using abbreviations, and making morphological and spelling errors. Examples of mixed language use in this study include:

The use of English as a matrix language in the posts: 'U, so, I, that, mean, proud, to, born, Malay and skin'. This

study shows that the Malay language itself is dynamic and does not reject the use of foreign languages, but social media users should not marginalize Malay as the primary language of communication. If social media users do not act like the proverb "prepare a net before it rains," it will loosen their identity, especially among the younger generation, who glorify the use of mixed language over maintaining the standard language.

The common use of mixed language in daily speech will also affect the quality of writing, as this group prioritizes a casual and appealing language style over focusing on language quality (Salmah Jan, 2022). This includes the use of abbreviations in writing, such as *bagitau* (short for *memberitahu*, meaning "to inform"), *nape* (short for *kenapa*, meaning "why"), *takyah* (short for *tidak payah*, meaning "no need"), and *je* (short for *saja*, meaning "just") (Nor Fazeera Paijin et al., 2022). The use of mixed language is considered a part of community life, especially among the youth. Users should be wise in choosing the appropriate context, just as the proverb "prepare a net before it rains" suggests, for using this informal language variety, so they do not neglect the importance of speaking correctly, especially in formal situations.

Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) is a term coined by Mark McCrindle referring to children born between 2010 and 2025. The new terms used by Gen Alpha are understood only through social media because they use brainrot language. Brainrot language is a special slang of Gen Alpha or a slang language resulting from activities on social media platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, or video game communities like Roblox and Minecraft (Ajeng Tamyis, 2024). According to Shive Prema (2024), brainrot refers to a phenomenon that links things like memes, video games, and pop culture to the real world. The use of this language moved from the Roblox platform to Twitch and then to the TikTok platform. The use of terms like skibidi, ohio, and rizz is difficult for previous generations to understand and is confusing because they have context-dependent meanings and carry multiple interpretations. An example of Gen Alpha's communication using brainrot language:

1. Skibidi: carries a negative or bad connotation
 - a. Sentence: "I saw two skibidis, they tried to take my food."
2. Sigma: describes a dominant person
 - a. Sentence: "He's a real sigma, always being the leader in the group." (Ulvia Nur Azizah, 2024)

However, some Gen Alpha individuals do not know the meaning of the terms they use but still use brainrot language in communication to follow current trends. The use of brainrot language is said to reflect the humor, values, and experiences of its user generation. The proverb "prepare a net before it rains" is very fitting for the situation of using brainrot language, where all parties need to be aware of how to handle the use of this language among Gen Alpha, as the terms used do not correspond to the Malay language at all and carry no meaning except being influenced by humorous elements on social media. If the use of brainrot language by the younger generation in this country is left unchecked, it will tarnish the variety of the Malay language.

The Use of Emojis in Online Communication

Emoji are a form of non-verbal communication frequently used to provide context to verbal text (Ghina Salsabila et al., 2023). Emojis can represent all kinds of expressions. According to Norwati & Hishamudin (2019), the use of ideogram-based emojis has gained the attention of the cyber community due to the openness of the cyber world to accept any form of digital information as a medium of communication for its users. The use of emojis in online communication aligns with the Malay proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" (prepare an umbrella before it rains), which means social media users are prepared to accept emojis as visual objects in digital text, even with the potential negative impacts if emojis are misused. The use of emojis gives people various options to express their ideas and emotions. When used in online communication, emojis depict facial expressions and body language in the same way as face-to-face communication (Cika Yanuari et al., 2024). Adding emojis to social media posts can make messages easier for recipients to understand and trust (Ghina Salsabila et al., 2023). Emojis are believed to clarify the connection between the visual form of an emoji, facial reactions, and the expression of anger among the cyber community (Norwati Mohd Zain & Hishamudin Isam, 2019). Ironically,

social media users who receive emojis must be prepared, like the proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*," to interpret the meaning of the emoji they receive, which refers to the sender's emotion, whether they are angry, sad, happy, or bored.

The use of emojis on social media is influenced by factors such as the individual's situation, culture, and platform. Ambiguity and misunderstanding can arise in different situations and cultural backgrounds (Ghina Salsabila et al., 2023). Each emoji has a meaning, but not everyone knows the true meaning of the emoji they use, and it can have different meanings according to each person's understanding. People with different ages, genders, frequencies of use, and platforms may interpret the same emoji differently (Franco & Fugate, 2020; Ghina Salsabila et al., 2023), which can lead to confusion. A report in Sinar Harian (2022) stated that sending a "love" emoji is a form of harassment in Saudi Arabia. This harassment can be defined through statements, actions, or gestures with a sexual connotation. The use of certain images and expressions in online chats is also an offense if a complaint is filed by the recipient. This situation clearly shows that social media users need to be careful with their choice of emojis so they are not misinterpreted by recipients, as per the proverb "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*." Social media users cannot casually engage in conversations without the consent of another individual, as it can lead to harassment and be charged as a sexual offense.

Social Context

Issues Regarding the Malay Language in Public Spaces

The Malay language, as the national language, serves as a symbol of a nation. A country is often identified by the language it uses. One of the core issues concerning the dignity and status of the Malay language is its use in public spaces (Awang Sariyan, 2024). The use of a national language in public areas reflects the identity and culture of a place, thereby elevating the status of the national language. For instance, a visit to Seoul, Korea reveals that almost all signages and most public information are in the Korean language, which can pose difficulties for tourists who rely solely on English translations. This situation illustrates how many countries worldwide deeply revere their national language, embodying the idiom, "*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*" (literally, "prepare an umbrella before it rains"), which signifies proactive preparation to ensure their national language is continuously elevated.

In reality, this level of reverence for the national language is not adequately practiced in Malaysia. If the Malay language is not widely used in public spaces, it will continue to be perceived as a language lacking commercial value and respect, not only by foreign tourists but also by its own citizens, who may then question its viability as a language of commerce. A report by Alex (2024) based on observations at a shopping mall near Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), a location frequented by foreign tourists, suggests that the notion of using English as the sole international language, under the assumption that it is understood by most people, should be ceased, as if to "prepare an umbrella before it rains" so that the use of the Malay language is prioritized in public spaces. The author disagrees with this perception, arguing that the exclusive use of English in such public spaces fails to highlight Malaysia's identity.

The mixed use of languages in advertising phrases, such as "*Anda ingin miliki kulit flawless*" (You want to have flawless skin), and business premises signages, such as Dobi Family (Family Laundry), are examples of language contamination used by business owners for their brand names and business information (Salmah Jan, 2022). A report in Bernama (2024) found that an attitude of neglect towards the correct use of language, involving signages, advertisements, and premises names that are prominently displayed, has become a societal norm. "We're not bothering anyone; we're offering a service to the community," was the response of a man operating a photocopy business when questioned by Bernama about his shop's English-language signage. The sign had reportedly been in place for a long time and had never been addressed by any party. If left unchecked, the practice of linguistic contamination in advertisements will continue to spread, with implications for efforts to educate the younger generation on proper language use. Therefore, all parties must adopt the proactive approach of "preparing an umbrella before it rains" to ensure that the use of the Malay language in public spaces is not disregarded by society.

Implications

Implications of the Proverb ‘Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan’ (Prepare a Canopy Before the Rain) in the Context of Education

The structure of the Malay language, used as the sole medium of instruction in the National Education System, positions it as a source of national dignity and identity. Education and language are pivotal to the formation of a nation-state concept. Inconsistent language use leads to issues in the empowerment of the Malay language as a language of knowledge in educational institutions. The Dual Language Program (DLP), introduced through the Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM 2013-2025) by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2013), emphasizes bilingual knowledge and skills as a student aspiration.

The implementation of DLP is akin to the proverb ‘sediakan payung sebelum hujan’ (prepare a canopy before the rain), representing the government's long-term strategy to produce students with high levels of knowledge and bilingual skills, and who are equipped with human capital to achieve developed nation status, even while sacrificing the use of the Malay language to some extent. The implementation of DLP helps attract and assist students who wish to pursue tertiary education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields (Ismail Mat Hasan & Md Yusoff, 2020).

DLP implementation also increases students' exposure to the English language, thereby strengthening their English proficiency. This enhancement of English skills serves as a platform for increasing access to and exploration of various fields of knowledge, making students more competitive and marketable in the job market. This shows that a primary objective of DLP is to ensure students secure employment by mastering English, aligning with the principle of ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’ to secure the future of the nation's children.

However, DLP implementation also has negative consequences. Students who are not proficient in English may feel less confident in communicating, which can disrupt the teaching and learning process. Both students and instructors also face difficulties in obtaining teaching materials and reference sources.

In the school education context, the proverb ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’ can be used to identify potential issues of Malay language literacy dropout among students. The failure of Malay language literacy contributes to poor performance in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination. Based on the 2023 SPM results, 9,306 students failed Malay language. The failure of SPM candidates in the two compulsory subjects, namely Malay language and History, may be attributed to their inability to master reading, writing, and arithmetic (Nurul Izzati Zaini, 2023).

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) has taken steps to address this by encouraging students who did not qualify for the SPM certificate to retake the examination. Additionally, these students are encouraged to pursue Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a second opportunity to continue their studies (Muhammad Sufee Rosman, 2024). This aligns with the proverb ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’, as students who fail SPM can still continue their education by venturing into TVET to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills needed before entering the workforce.

At the tertiary level, many universities choose to use English as the medium of instruction for certain courses. The use of English in university instruction is seen as a move that aligns with the proverb ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’, as it meets national and international needs. This, however, destabilizes the position of the Malay language. Moreover, most key knowledge and reference materials are from English-language sources. Universities should have taken proactive measures, in line with the proverb ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’, by translating or producing more Malay-language books for student reference.

The introduction of exemptions for the use of the Malay language, especially for private higher education institutions (IPTs), allows them to use English as the primary medium for teaching and learning (Ibrahim Majdi & Maliati Mohamad, 2020). This situation risks a repetition of past history, where English could supplant the mother tongue in higher education institutions. This problem negatively impacts efforts to empower the Malay

language, as universities are key socialization institutions. All stakeholders, therefore, should continue to champion the use of the Malay language in university courses, in accordance with the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', to ensure that the Malay language remains relevant as a language of knowledge in educational institutions.

Implications of the Proverb 'Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan' in the Context of Health

The field of health science is closely intertwined with the daily lives of every segment of society, which is driven by increasing public awareness of health maintenance. Public health terms are often created using common, everyday words. The use of common words in the creation of public health terms has a positive implication: it facilitates public understanding. Furthermore, the terms produced reflect the actual language used by the community (Hasnah Mohamad et al., 2020). Accurate and correct health information must be conveyed to the public, much like the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', to explain fast-evolving environmental phenomena.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a new space for terminology in our country. The Malay language has adopted many new public health terms adapted from foreign languages. The use of these terms in public health is crucial, especially for media practitioners who cover issues verbally or in writing for the public. Public health experts can also provide information and treatment using the correct terminology to the public. This situation is akin to the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', where the public can take protective measures because they understand the public health terms used. Furthermore, society can be educated to face health challenges or in situations of epidemic spread. The use of health terms that the public understands helps them access reliable sources of information.

Implications of the Proverb 'Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan' in the Context of Social Media

The younger generation is now more exposed to foreign media and entertainment that use English as the main medium. The use of languages other than Malay in the digital environment and social media also contributes significantly to the decline in the use of the Malay language, both in formal and informal situations.

The use of "rancu" or mixed-code language on social media, such as code-mixing, code-switching, abbreviations, and slang, also has a positive impact, similar to the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', in that it facilitates communication among language users. Muhammad Aiman (2024) states that social media communication is an informal, fast-paced form of communication. Users of applications like WhatsApp, Telegram, or Snapchat require rapid responses from both the sender and receiver. In this fast-paced communication environment, language users use abbreviations as a form of preparation, akin to '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', to streamline the communication process. The use of abbreviations is considered relevant as it reduces the burden on the sender and receiver to understand the content of a message, and abbreviations are used to convey the message's meaning effectively.

The negative implication of language "rancu" on social media is linguistic confusion. The use of code-mixing creates a chaotic state for the Malay language as the national language is mixed with foreign languages such as English, Indonesian, or Korean. This linguistic confusion impacts individuals who are learning Malay as a second or foreign language. More worryingly, new users of the Malay language who are still learning will be confused by the correct language usage and will be influenced by the use of code-mixing in their communication or writing on social media. The use of code-mixing in communication and writing marginalizes the status of the national language. While language users may initially use code-switching in communication, they will eventually feel comfortable and start using foreign languages exclusively or more frequently than Malay.

The routine use of mixed language on social media impacts students during writing lessons or during the Malay Language Oral Test (UBBM) at school. Essay writing, for instance, is influenced by mixed language. The emergence of various new vocabularies erodes the origins of the Malay language. This is because slang, known only to certain groups, especially the younger generation, is highly influential. Society is said to be forgetting the use of standard Malay because it follows the trend of using slang, which is considered more casual.

Implications of the Proverb ‘Sediakan Payung Sebelum Hujan’ in the Context of Social Life

According to Norfaizal Jamain & Nur Afifah (2024), language pollution on billboards is a phenomenon that poses a significant threat to linguistic integrity and cultural heritage. The neglect of proper and accurate Malay language usage in terms of social and grammatical aspects has implications for the dignity of the Malay language. One effort to dignify the Malay language is to ensure correct language usage on billboards, brochures, notices, and banners used to promote brands in public places.

Common language pollution on billboards includes grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, slang expressions, and the use of the English language. The emergence of new vocabulary in the advertising industry, influenced by current trends, has led to a shift towards more popular and commercially valuable languages, which negatively impacts the grammatical standards of the Malay language. This situation reflects a lack of consideration and confusion among advertisers regarding the use of the Malay language in advertising discourse.

Billboards, as a medium for conveying information in public places, are often referenced by the public. However, when grammatical pollution occurs on billboards, it can confuse readers. Readers will assume that the terminology or grammar used on the billboards is correct, even if it is grammatically wrong. If the issue of language misuse is left unaddressed, it will have implications for language education and cultural identity, especially for students who are still learning linguistic competence. Students will face language "rancu" problems, which will subsequently affect their communication and essay writing.

The use of foreign languages, particularly English mixed with Malay, on public billboards has a negative effect, as it does not support the function of the Malay language as a language of unity. From a sociolinguistic perspective, merchants or advertisers in fields such as engineering, information technology, fashion, or modern lifestyles use foreign languages on their advertising billboards. This language "rancu" on billboards has implications for non-Malay speakers. The routine sight of billboards using incorrect grammar confuses them about the proper usage of the Malay language. Some common errors on advertisements include not prioritizing the national language and mixing the national language with English. Public signboards that violate the National Language Act and Local Council Bylaws include examples such as 'The Mines Resort City', 'Jalan Post Office Lama', '24 Jam Klinik', and 'Klinik Gopi' (Kamisah Ariffin et al., 2015).

From a commercial perspective, language pollution in advertising negatively impacts a brand's image. Companies that fail to use the correct Malay language are seen as unprofessional, which can erode consumer trust and lower brand loyalty. This is because if the language used in advertising heavily favors a particular language, it can be assumed that that language holds significant power within the local community (Kamisah Ariffin et al., 2015). To overcome the issue of language "rancu" in public advertising media, all parties must collaborate, in line with the proverb ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’, to ensure the continued flourishing of the Malay language in public spaces. A joint effort is needed from merchants/advertisers, Local Authorities, and the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka to verify the accuracy of the language used on public billboards before they are displayed to the public.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Malay language is a platform for forming a bond of unity and fostering a sense of hegemony among the diverse communities in Malaysia. Language is a symbol of culture, and through language development, a culture can also be influenced. Nations like Japan and Korea highly revere their respective mother tongues and have successfully become nation-states based on their own languages.

In strengthening the position of the Malay language in all fields, the proverb ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’ reminds us of the need to be prepared for the dynamic changes in the Malay language due to current circumstances, especially the dynamic changes in online language, which have a positive impact on the field of lexicography. The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) must be prepared, in the spirit of ‘*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*’, to draft and propose a simple, fast, and up-to-date alternative like an e-dictionary to record all the new word meanings that have emerged.

The increasingly worrying problem of "rancu" language can be overcome if all parties delve into the lifestyle of the younger generation and see the world through their lens. The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), local higher education institutions, and anyone concerned with language issues should invite social media influencers to create content related to the Malay language and Malay culture on social media. Upholding the dignity of the Malay language is not an impossible task when all parties play their respective roles, in line with the proverb '*sediakan payung sebelum hujan*', in determining appropriate language use, because language reflects the identity and image of its users. This is because there are still members of society who prioritize the importance of speaking well to preserve the dignity of the Malay language from being buried by various linguistic problems.

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