



Language Choices in Interracial Marriage: An Insight into Malay-Melanau Families in Sarikei, East Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the language choices within interracial marriages, focusing specifically on Malay-Melanau families in Sarikei, Sarawak, East Malaysia. The primary objectives are (1) to investigate the language choices among Malay-Melanau families in Sarikei and (2) examine factors influencing their choices. A sample of 14 respondents, all hailing from Malay-Melanau backgrounds and married for over five years, was selected using purposive sampling methods. Employing a mixed-method approach, respondents completed a Google Form questionnaire comprising both open and close-ended queries. The findings underscore a prevailing inclination towards Malay as the preferred language within the household. This preference appears to be chiefly influenced by two key factors: parental guidance and immediate surroundings. Notably, the language predominantly spoken by the parents cohabiting with the couples significantly influences their linguistic selection. The study highlights the critical role of parental language choices and the immediate environment in shaping the language dynamics within these families. Additionally, it emphasizes the necessity of promoting awareness regarding language preservation, particularly the nurturing of less-dominant languages spoken within the home environment. Efforts in this direction are essential for fostering linguistic diversity and cultural vitality within mixed-ethnicity households. By understanding these dynamics, stakeholders can better support policies and initiatives that encourage the maintenance of linguistic heritage in multicultural contexts.

Keywords: Interracial marriage; Language choice; Language dominant; Language shift; Malay-Melanau

1. Introduction

A report by ilanguages (2018) shows that 40 percent of the world's population is monolingual, and the rest are bilingual or trilingual. Grosjean (2013) states that bilingualism includes "the knowledge and use of two or more languages, the presentation of information in two languages, the need for two languages, the recognition of two or more languages". In 2019, experts estimated that half of the world is bilingual (Mathew, 2019). These statistics underscore the prevalence and significance of multilingualism in contemporary society, highlighting its pervasive influence on global communication and cultural exchange.

Various factors contribute to bilingual competencies. One of the main factors is the education system. In schools, students are usually taught the national language

and the English language, and some schools even offer third language courses for their students to enrich their linguistic repertoire. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education introduces the policy of *Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Mengukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris* (MBMMBI), which means Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening the English Language (Yamat et al., 2014). It allows all Malaysian public school students to master at least two languages: Malay and English. Many Malaysians are speakers of their dialects, and the addition of two languages learned in schools makes multilingualism common among them. The incorporation of bilingual education within the Malaysian schooling system has thus fostered a culture of multilingualism among its populace, facilitating communication and cultural exchange on both domestic and international fronts.

Apart from education, another factor that leads to bilingualism is the linguistic environment in which a person lives. Urbanization has led to mass migration of people from rural areas, usually dominated by one ethnic group, to urban areas, where people of various racial backgrounds gather. According to Samat, et al (2019), the urbanization rate in Malaysia is 74%. It creates a need for a shared language for people of various linguistic and racial backgrounds to communicate. Thus, most people will communicate in the dominant language of the community, usually the national language, while retaining their mother tongue, especially when they communicate with their family members at home. For example, an Iban family who moves from Sarawak to Kuala Lumpur will have to master the Malay and English languages to communicate with other people. However, they still communicate in the Iban language among themselves. While this is a prevalent scenario nowadays, this was rather unusual back when people were still living in their villages with people of the same native language. The evolving sociolinguistic landscape, propelled by urbanization and cultural diversification, underscores the adaptive nature of language use and the enduring significance of mother tongue preservation amidst linguistic assimilation processes.

Migration also happens on a larger scale, where people move to another country, acquiring the host country's dominant language and keeping their native language. They need competency in the host country's language for survival. However, many still keep their native language within the domestic sphere. However, it is found that proficiency in the native language decreases in the latter generation of immigrants as they grow up in the host country (Bezcioglu-Goktolga & Yagmur, 2022). While external factors are essential in promoting multilingualism, home factors also contribute to developing one's multilinguistic competence. One of them is mixed marriages, where couples of different ethnicities get married and bring their first language into the family they build together. The number of mixed marriages had increased from 3 percent in 1967 to 17 percent by 2015 in the United States of America alone (Hu, 2019). A study by David (2006) states that the increase in interracial marriages worldwide reflects that people view it positively. As mentioned earlier, migration is expected in this globalized era, and this has created higher chances for people to meet partners from other ethnic backgrounds, which then led to an increase in mixed marriages. Children of mixed marriages grow up with two home languages as both parents communicate with them in their own mother tongue. This helps them to develop a native-like proficiency in both of their parents' languages. However, it should be noted that not all children of mixed marriages are fluent in their mother tongues. This issue will be delved into in greater detail in the current study.

Malaysia is a multiracial country, and its people speak various languages and dialects. The largest group of Malaysians consists of Malay, Chinese, and Indian (MyGovernment, 2021). There are also many smaller indigenous ethnic groups, especially from Sabah and Sarawak, each with their unique culture and dialect. Due to its diversity, interracial marriage is not a foreign phenomenon for Malaysians. However, comprehensive examinations into language choices within Malay-Melanau families remain scarce. Notably, the Melanau community represents one of Sarawak's ethnic minorities, contributing to the multifaceted cultural landscape of the region. The dearth of empirical investigations focusing on language dynamics within the Malay-Melanau familial context underscores the significance of this study. By illuminating the intricacies of language choice within this demographic, scholars and policymakers can gain deeper insights into the linguistic dynamics shaping Malaysian society, particularly the Sarawakian society.

Moreover, understanding the factors underpinning language preferences among Malay-Melanau families holds implications for fostering intercultural harmony and preserving linguistic heritage within Malaysia's diverse sociocultural milieu. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the language choice among Malay-Melanau families in Sarikei, Sarawak, and East Malaysia and examine factors influencing their choice. The analysis of this study would hopefully contribute to the scholarly discourse on language dynamics in multiracial societies while also providing practical insights for policymakers and stakeholders vested in promoting linguistic diversity and cultural inclusivity within Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language Choice in a Multilingual Setting

Language choice emerges when bilinguals or multilinguals must choose a dominant language to interact with others. Various factors influence language choices, such as social status, gender, educational attachment, ethnicity, age, occupation, origins, speakers, topic, settings, media, and formality of the situation (David, 2006). The choice of a dominant language is determined by its acceptance and function. Hence, it greatly influences the language choice of a speaker.

A study on language choice among Bima mixed-marriage families in West Lombok, Indonesia (Qurratua'yun, 2018) identified that the study participants preferred using Sasak as their language choice at home. One of the biggest factors influencing this choice is the neighborhood setting. Even though the Biamanese and Indonesian languages were used in daily conversation, these languages were less dominant. It was concluded that the Biamanese used the Sasak language to assimilate themselves with its cultures.

Similarly, Kadir (2021) studied the language choice of Indonesian women who married Canadians and resided in Canada. The researcher investigated their language choice in the home domain and factors that contribute to their language choice. The study found that English is the language choice in their household. While the women code-switch between English and Indonesian when communicating with their children, the children speak in English and have low proficiency in Indonesian. It may be because English is a more practical language in Canada.

Schwabe & Weziak-Bialowolska (2022) conducted a study on Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom (UK) and their language choices. Although they reside in the UK, where English is the most widely spoken and functional language, it is found that

those who live in a predominantly Polish neighborhood still use Polish as their main language. The propensity towards living in the Polish neighborhood is inversely correlated with their proficiency in the English language because of their neighbourhood. Polish is adequate for daily activities and survival. It supports the notion that language is chosen if it plays a major function in the community.

While functionality is a major factor in language choice, affective factors can also affect language choice. In a study on language choice and language attitudes in a multilingual Arab Canadian community in Canada (Dweik & Qawar, 2015) identified that the participants preferred to use Arabic in the domain of home and with family members, in worship places, and when listening to the radio. However, they used English and French in governmental offices and educational institutions. Although Arabic is a dominant language among the Arab Canadian community, they regard English as the most useful language because it symbolizes their Canadian identity. From this study, it can be derived that the participants used Arabic to preserve their ethnic identity.

Similarly, Shen & Jiang (2021) study on a group of second-generation Chinese Australian children found that ethnic identity strongly predicts language choice. The researchers interviewed thirty Chinese Australian children aged 10 to 11 to test their Mandarin proficiency. The study found that children who identified themselves as mainly Australian tended to only communicate in English. In contrast, those who identified as Chinese Australians have high proficiency in Mandarin and expressed aspirations for attaining high levels of Chinese literacy. It shows that the level of identification with one's ethnic heritage is a predictor of language choice.

In a multilingual society, the language that the larger community prefers can be considered more dominant than the language spoken by the minority. Community language benefits the speakers and influences their language choice because it helps the speakers expand their social network. Interestingly, Holmes (2013) indicates that using the dominant language will help express impersonal messages that create social distance among the speakers. In contrast, using a less dominant language is more useful as it helps the speakers build solidarity in interactions. In that regard, Barron-Hauwaert (2004) suggests that adults play a vital role in children's language development, especially in minority languages, as it allows additional language input and creates strong language bonds that can help strengthen their language.

The existing literature provides comprehensive insights into the intricate dynamics of language choice among various communities, elucidating the multifaceted influences of sociocultural, affective, and functional factors. However, notable research gaps exist regarding language choice among minority populations, particularly within the context of interracial marriages. While studies have examined language preferences among immigrant communities and second-generation ethnic minorities, there is a dearth of research focusing on the language dynamics within mixed-marriage families belonging to minority groups. Specifically, the language preferences and adaptation strategies of minority individuals remain underexplored. Investigating language dynamics within mixed-marriage families could offer valuable insights into the interplay between ethnicity, cultural assimilation, and language choice. Understanding how interracial marriage influences language preference and usage patterns within families is crucial for preserving linguistic diversity and promoting cultural identity among minority populations. Furthermore, exploring the factors that shape language choice among minority communities can inform

educational policies and community interventions to foster language preservation and revitalization efforts.

2.2. Language Choice in Interracial Marriages in Malaysia

Interracial marriage in Malaysia is not new; its number has increased over the years (Dava, 2021; Schmidt-Mackey, 1971). Malavé, (b.r.) affirms that families now raise their children to be at least bilingual. Besides, the emergence of new social concepts that refer to the progeny of specific types of inter-ethnic marriages has led to an increasing number of Malaysian mixed marriages (Chong, 2009). The well-known social concepts used to refer to inter-ethnic marriages are Chindian (Chinese-Indian), Chiban (Chinese-Iban), Bawang Cina (Lunbawang-Chinese), and Sinokadazan (Chinese-Kadazan) (Pue & Sulaiman, 2013). Apart from that, Lim (2008) discovers that, unlike Malay youths who prefer their mother tongue, Chinese and Indian youths prefer to speak English daily.

Arumugam (1990) notes that the impact and access of family members and friends is one of the contributing factors to the choice of language. Children from inter-ethnic marriages can choose at least two languages their parents speak (Rozana et al., b.r.). David (2006) identifies that children of Chinese and Indian parentage have the traits of becoming multilingual as they can speak Malay, English, Chinese, and Tamil. Children tend to be sensitive to the selection of language used by people surrounding them, and the influence is greater if the language is being directed to them (Harrison & Piette, 1980). Hence, parents play an essential role in influencing their children's language choice because they can act as agents to promote more active language selection.

A study conducted by Tuah, Shin, Gedat, & Jazlan (2021) on the Kedayan communities in Sarawak shows that the positive attitude of the speakers toward the language will influence their language choice. The study found that most of the respondents of mixed ethnicities can speak in Kedayan, alongside their other mother tongue. The researchers concluded that the Kedayan language is highly regarded in its community, and they feel the need to sustain it. Although Malay is the dominant language in the wider community, their positive attitude towards their mother tongue made them continue using the Kedayan language. Thus, it can be said that the pride one has in his or her mother tongue can also be a factor in language choice.

Children born from an inter-ethnic marriage, for example, Iban and Bidayuh in Sarawak, Malaysia, are at an advantage because they have the opportunity to acquire not only their parent language but also they are taught to speak Malay and English languages at schools (Rozana et al., b.r.). However, there is also a trend in Malaysia where children born to well-educated families use English as their medium of communication (Rozana et al., b.r.). Although the Malay language is regarded as an official language in Malaysia, parents still view the importance of the English language in various aspects.

Drawing upon the findings from these studies, it becomes evident that the evolving landscape of language choice within interracial marriages in Malaysia underscores the growing prevalence and complexity of bilingualism among the offspring of mixed unions. Despite the extensive exploration of language dynamics in multicultural contexts, significant research gaps persist, particularly regarding language choice among minority populations such as the Melanau ethnic group in East Malaysia. Existing studies primarily focus on the language preferences and adaptation

strategies of major ethnic communities, leaving a dearth of research specifically addressing the language dynamics within Melanau mixed-marriage families. Given the multicultural makeup of Malaysia and the increasing incidence of interracial marriages, there is a pressing need to investigate how interracial marriage influences language preference and usage patterns among Melanau minorities. Understanding the factors shaping language choice within Melanau mixed-marriage families is crucial for preserving linguistic diversity and cultural identity among minority populations in Malaysia. Furthermore, exploring the impact of interracial marriage on language preference can provide valuable insights into the interplay between ethnicity, cultural assimilation, and language acquisition.

3. Method

This research employed a mixed-method research design. Creswell (2013) indicates that the method includes collecting, evaluating, interpreting, and creating the study result. The study was conducted in Sarikei, the sixth division in Sarawak, East Malaysia, with participation from 14 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The selection criteria were informed by a methodological approach akin to that employed by Rozana et al., (b.r.), focusing on individuals with backgrounds in interracial marriages. Therefore, the study respondents had to meet the criteria set by the researcher: marriage for more than five years and a place of origin from a Malay-Melanau family background.

The questionnaire consisted of items related to language choice, opinions of having two or more languages spoken at home, and their views on less dominant language at home. Additionally, three open-ended questions were incorporated to obtain rich data from the respondents. Before distribution, all questionnaire items were validated by subject matter experts and underwent pilot testing to ensure clarity and relevance. Distribution of the questionnaire was facilitated via Google Forms to streamline data collection processes.

Subsequently, data collected through the questionnaire responses were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. This analytical tool was employed to organize and interpret the gathered data, enabling the extraction of meaningful insights. By adhering to this methodology, the study aims to contribute to the scholarly understanding of language choice dynamics within interracial households in Malaysia.

3.1. Demography

Table 1 shows that most respondents are middle-aged adults (40-49 = 14.3%, 50-59 = 64.3%). They mostly married for 10 to 15 years (92.9%). This demographic trend suggests a prevalence of established family structures among the respondents. The respondents also stated that they mostly graduated from secondary education (64.3%). The respondents did not provide specific information about why they did not continue their education. Nine respondents (28.6%) completed their tertiary education, and only one (7.1%) had primary education. Although the respondents did not explicitly provide the reasons for discontinuing education, the data suggests a prevailing trend of completing formal education among the sampled population.

This educational profile has implications for language proficiency, particularly in Malaysia, where Malay is the official language. Given the prevalence of secondary education completion among the respondents, it can be inferred that a significant portion possesses proficient Malay language skills, consistent with the emphasis on

Malay language mastery in secondary education curricula. Although the state administration in Sarawak, East Malaysia, allows the use of the English language, the prevalence of the Malay language remains significant within the school system.

Table 1. Demography of Respondents

	N (%)
Age	
30 – 39	3 (21.4%)
40 – 49	2 (14.3%)
50 – 59	9 (64.3%)
Years of Marriage	
5 – 9	1 (7.1%)
10 – 15	13 (92.9%)
Level of education	
Primary	1 (7.1%)
Secondary	9 (64.3%)
Tertiary	4 (28.6%)

4. Findings and Discussion

This section discusses two important findings: the language choice among Malay-Melanau families and the influence of interracial marriage on language choice at home.

4.1. Language Choice among Malay-Melanau Families

The findings show that the respondents mostly preferred Malay (57.1%) over Melanau (42.5%) as their language choice at home. The Malay-Melanau couples who stayed with their parents tended to use their mother tongue, Malay. When one language dominated over the other, the partner whose language was less dominant had to use the dominant language. This is similar to the finding of Tuah et al. (2021) on the Kedayan communities, which found that there is a tendency of some Kedayans who are from a mixed married family to speak in the Sarawakian Malay dialect rather than in the Kedayan language because the Sarawakian Malay dialect is one of the most dominant languages in Sarawak and is widely used in interracial communication. Also, it is important to note that the dominant language is used to accommodate their spouse, as the couples are proficient in the language (Aziz & Daud, 2016).

Table 2. Language Choice among Malay-Melanau Families

Language Choice	Frequency
Malay	8 (57.1%)
Melanau	6 (42.5%)

Apart from that, Malay is also an official language in Malaysia. Therefore, it has an advantage over Melanau, a home language. This status also contributed to the language choice at home because the couples sent their children to government schools, thus making them learn and use the language at school domain. Thus, they are more likely to be more fluent in Malay than in Melanau due to the strong emphasis on the Malay Language in the education system. The influence of national language policy on family language choice is also found by (Ng, Tan, Pauwels, & Cavallaro, 2022),

who studied the language choice of Malay-Chinese families in Singapore. The study found that the language spoken at home is English and not Malay or Mandarin, likely due to Singapore's emphasis on English in their education system and other official matters. These show that the language formally taught and used is more likely to be the language of choice in a mixed marriage. Undeniably, the greater emphasis on reading and writing in the Malay Language at school and work contributes to the preference for using the language in their home domain.

Although 57.1% of the respondents preferred the Malay language, many still use Melanau in their home domain. The findings also show that Malay language dominance is statistically low as the families have maintained daily usage for understanding and speaking both languages. In bilingual homes, the interacting participants have an extensive language repertoire and tend to choose the language they both have mastered. In any intermarriage home or multilingual community, it is important to acknowledge the fluid and dynamic nature of language, and this is further supported by (Antony-Newman, 2022) in his study regarding the role of plurilingual parenting in the parental engagement of immigrant families in Canada. Parents in Antony-Newman's study embraced language plurality. They employed plurilingual strategies, such as mediation and metalinguistic awareness, to foster linguistic diversity. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of language choice, influenced by intentional decisions and situational necessity within intermarriage households and multilingual communities.

The analysis elucidates the intricate interplay of factors shaping language choice dynamics within mixed-marriage households. While preferences may lean towards dominant languages like Malay, the continued usage of minority languages such as Melanau underlines the complexity and fluidity of language practices in diverse sociolinguistic contexts. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of language behavior within intermarriage settings, highlighting the need for nuanced approaches to language policy and planning that accommodate multicultural communities' diverse linguistic needs and preferences.

4.2. The Influence of Interracial Marriage on Language Choice at Home

This section presents how interracial marriage between Malay-Melanau families influenced the language choice at home.

Table 3. The Influence of Interracial Marriage on Language Choice at Home

	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
Language choice influenced by parents	1 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	13 (92.9%)
Language choice influenced by surrounding	0 (0%)	2 (14.29%)	12 (85.71%)

From these findings, the respondents (92.9%) agreed that parents played a vital role in language choice. In this study, the couples used the language spoken by the parents who stayed with them. If one of their parents is proficient in the less dominant language, it is easier to speak it at home. This finding is supported by (Kadir, 2021) study on Indonesian women in Canada, which found that English is more often used in their household than the Indonesian language because their spouses are not proficient in Indonesian. Consequently, children raised in such environments tended to favor English over Indonesian, presenting a challenge for parents aspiring to

transmit their mother tongue to the next generation, particularly when it is not the dominant language within the broader community.

The findings of this study are supported by Karpava, Ringblom, & Zabrodskaia, (2018), which involved language transmission in Russian-speaking families in multilingual settings in Cyprus, Estonia, and Sweden. It is observed that family language policy (FLP) depends on both external and internal factors such as life trajectories, socioeconomic background, exposure to linguistic and cultural resources, and preferences and practices. The study further indicated that internal factors such as ideology, identity, individual motivation, agency, and cultural awareness shaped the language choice used in multicultural settings.

Interestingly, the children were also influenced by their language choices because they were taken care of by their grandparents. Since most respondents were working parents, their children spent most of their time with their grandparents. This aspect aligns with (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004), who explains how the elderly play a major role in the children's language development. However, only one (7.1%) respondent disagreed that parents influence language choice. The respondent could be proficient in Malay and Melanau languages and use them at home. Drury (2001) state that people can adapt when encountering new or less familiar linguistic environments, especially when they grew up in a family that encourages bilingualism.

Furthermore, the respondents (85.71%) also agreed that surroundings are a factor in language choice. A report from Sarikei Divisional Administration (2022) stated that the Melanau ethnic comprises 7% of the Sarikei population, less than the Malay (16.3%). Due to this demography, the Malay language is also dominant in the social domain. Nevertheless, most respondents stayed in the village surrounded by Malay families. Interestingly, only two respondents (14.29%) stated they were unsure of the factors influencing language choice. They stated that the parents' factor is greater than the surroundings because learning a language starts at home.

From this analysis, it can be concluded that parental linguistic proficiency and interactions with extended family members emerge as a primary determinant of language practices at home. These findings contribute to a better understanding of language dynamics within multicultural contexts, highlighting the need for tailored language policies and interventions that recognize multilingual communities' diverse linguistic needs and preferences.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that Malay is the language choice among the Malay-Melanau families in Sarikei, Sarawak, East Malaysia. Parents and surroundings influenced the choice. In that regard, it is of utmost importance for the parents to use Malay and Melanau at home to encourage bilingualism. If Melanau continues to be less dominant, the language will face the prospects of being used less in the future as the younger generation tends to use the Malay language instead of communicating. To address this challenge, further research on the Melanau language is warranted, particularly examining its usage across various domains and its distinct linguistic varieties. A comprehensive understanding of these differences is essential for guiding younger generations in navigating the complexities of the language structure and fostering appreciation for its richness and diversity.

Moreover, initiatives should be undertaken to integrate Melanau language education into the formal schooling system. Similar to including Iban and Kadazandusun

languages as elective subjects at primary levels, offering Melanau language courses would elevate its status and promote its preservation. Such measures would contribute to the preservation of Melanau cultural heritage and foster linguistic diversity and inclusivity within the Malaysian education landscape.

This study has several implications for various fields. First, the findings from the study can be of great reference to the Federal of Melanau Associations of Sarawak, Malaysia. Since interracial marriage, especially between Malay and Melanau, has caused the Melanau language to be less dominant, it is time for the association to preserve its language by creating more recorded and printed resources. Proper language documentation can be displayed at the state's libraries, museums, academic institutions, cultural centers, district offices, and galleries. It will help the younger generation learn the language, particularly vocabulary, key verbs, basic sentences, and pronunciation. The Federal of Melanau Associations of Sarawak and other Melanau-related associations can organize language workshops and seminars for local people, especially those living in the urban areas heavily influenced by other dominant languages in Sarawak, like Malay.

Besides, the study also creates language awareness among the young Melanau who married people from other ethnic groups on the importance of preserving the language. The effect of interracial marriage between Malay and Melanau is a wake-up call for the Melanau parents to preserve the language by conversing it more often at home. Igboanusi & Wolf (2010) indicated that outside factors could influence language transmission only if family members allow it. Children should acquire the language while young, which explains that children easily learn languages before the critical period. In that regard, Melanau parents should expose their children to the language maximally so they can converse optimally. Since Melanau language is not taught in public schools, probably due to the regional variations, the Melanau parents should start teaching their children the language at home.

Additionally, the findings of this study could also catalyze fostering intercultural understanding and collaboration between the Melanau community and other ethnic groups in Sarawak. Given the implications of interracial marriage on language dynamics, there is a pressing need for initiatives that promote cultural exchange and dialogue among diverse communities. Community events, cultural festivals, and collaborative projects could provide opportunities for individuals from different ethnic backgrounds to engage in meaningful interactions and gain a deeper appreciation for each other's languages, traditions, and heritage. By fostering mutual respect and understanding, these initiatives have the potential to strengthen social cohesion and build bridges across cultural divides within Sarawakian society. Moreover, such endeavours could contribute to the preservation and celebration of cultural diversity, enriching the social fabric of the region and fostering a sense of belonging among all its inhabitants. Therefore, leveraging the findings of this study to promote intercultural dialogue and collaboration presents a promising avenue for promoting peace, harmony, and cultural preservation in Sarawak.

Moreover, this study will also assist linguists, researchers, academics, and students in researching the Melanau language. While the current focus centers on Malay-Melanau marriage, there is a clear imperative to extend research efforts to encompass interracial marriages between Melanau individuals and members of other ethnicities. Such expanded inquiries promise to yield a broader range of insights, data, and variables crucial for developing a comprehensive framework for language

preservation. By diversifying research perspectives and exploring language dynamics within various interracial contexts, scholars can better understand the unique challenges and opportunities in safeguarding the Melanau language from potential extinction. Thus, advocating for broader research initiatives highlights a proactive approach to preserving and revitalizing the Melanau language for future generations.

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