Outline

• My Voyage in Language and Learning
• Education and English Language
• English language in Malaysia
• Transformation in ELT in Malaysia
  Key movements
  Realities of ELT in Malaysia

• What is Changing
• Conclusion
My Voyage in Language and Learning

- Starting out as a young researcher
- Stepping into the international arena
- Domains of language, literacy and learning conferences
- Encounter with renowned literacy scholars
- Bringing ideas to Malaysia
- Creating an engaging research environment
Research projects & reports

• Constructing a New Model for International Literacy Testing and Indexes, USM (2011)
• Sense About Science: Enhancing Science Literacy and Conservation Among Secondary School Students in Malaysia. MOSTI. (2010)
• Young People and New Media Literacy: Social Uses, Social Shaping and Social Consequences. MCMC (2010)
• Leadership Development for Higher Education Reform Programme. USM & University of Wollongong (2008)
• University Curriculum and Workplace Literacy, IPPTN (2007.)
• Multiliteracies In Education: Research and Development Perspectives With A Focus On Forms Of Literacy In English In Schools In Malaysia, IRPA (2006)
• Learning by Design, Australia (1996)
Research Books


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Research Books

- Ambigapathy Pandian, Shaik Abdul Malik Mohamed Ismail & Toh Chwee Hiang (Eds.), (2011). *Teaching and Learning in Diverse Contexts: Issues and Approaches*, School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, USM.

- Ambigapathy Pandian, Shaik Abdul Malik Mohamed Ismail & Toh Chwee Hiang (Eds.), (2011). *Forging Unity Amidst Diversity: From the Classroom and Beyond*, School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, USM.


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- Ambigapathy Pandian et al., (2013). *Multiliteracies in Education: Research & Development Perspectives with a Focus on Forms of Literacy in English in Schools in Malaysia*, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).


- Ambigapathy Pandian, Murshidi Harun @ Zakaria & Tan Hock Thye.(Eds.), (2013). *Berliterasi Dalam Pelbagai Konteks : Cabaran Dan Pendekatan*, Pusat Pengajian Bahasa, Literasi dan Terjemahan, USM.

My Voyage in Language and Learning

Research Articles

Book Chapters

Language Consultancies

PhD and MA supervision

External Assessor
- Programmes
- Promotions Board

Invited Speaker
English Language in the domain of education

- English and multilingualism
- Lingua franca of education
- Growth of private education (pre-school to post graduate)
- Language of communication
- Language of instruction
- Language in the academic world

We lead English Language in the domain of education
English Language in the Domain of Education: 
The Case of Malaysia

- English recognised as an international and global language from the early 20th century in Malaysia and abroad.
- Global institutions (UN, IMF, the World Bank, etc.) accepts the use of English as a necessity internally in the transformation of society to enable citizens to participate in globalization.
- The PM of Malaysia, Najib Razak, in his Foreword of the MEB, states that the education system needs to keep pace with the increasingly competitive global economy.
  - “students ... to have strong universal values such as integrity, compassion, justice, and altruism, to guide them in making ethical decisions”
  - “it is important to balance the development of global citizenship with a strong national identity”
Education reforms in Malaysia and SEA in the last few years in line with global reforms

- **Rankings** e.g. Times Higher Education, QS World University Rankings have influenced the universities development
- Malaysia’s aspirations to become an education hub → foreign universities’ branch campuses e.g. Nottingham University, Monash University, Swinburne, etc.
- **Internationalization** – marketing of university programmes around the world, active networks with other universities, and publication in high impact journals → prioritizes the support of English
# English Language in the Domain of Education: The Case of Malaysia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To attract international students</th>
<th>To gain employment in local and global economy</th>
<th>To seek richer learning experience</th>
<th>To exchange ideas</th>
<th>To be global competitors</th>
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**An emerging contender as an international market for students**

| To promote better relations between countries | To improve global rankings | To win global influence & people | To gain social mobility | English as a dominant language with considerations for unique local linguistic (Arabic, Mandarin & Tamil) and cultural assets |
## Transformation in ELT in Malaysia

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Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Key movements

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- An education system that incorporated national characteristics and offered a place in schools for children of any ethnicity or religion → national unity
- 4 school systems: Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English
- English schools are catered for any child of any ethnic background whose parents were willing to pay fees
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Key movements

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National Language Act 1970

- Malay as the main medium of instruction in all primary and secondary schools was adopted in 1970 and implemented in stages
- In 1970, English schools → national schools which meant that the medium of instruction had to be Malay, but English was and is a compulsory subject in the national as well as national type schools (Asmah 2012: 158)
- In Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah, English ceased to be the medium of instruction at the primary level in 1975, at the secondary level in 1982
We lead Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Key movements

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NEP era (1971-1990)
- National focus on social and economic issues
- Racial harmony and equity to sustain development
- National education system: similar curriculum & examinations
- Reduction of English has some shortcomings:
  - Decline in English competency of school leavers and university students
  - Older generation was more prolific in English
  - Calls for a solution to address this education deficiency
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Key movements

- In the 1990s, the Communicative inclination in the English Language syllabus allowed for students-centered activities
- In public lives, the use of English continued despite the enforcement of the National Language Policy
- However, there were always concerns about the declining standards of English in the media

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Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: ToMS (2003 – 2012)

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The teaching and learning of science and mathematics in English - a government policy aimed at improving the command of the English language among pupils at primary and secondary schools

Policy met with many difficulties, mismatch between discourse and reality

- the inadequate language skills and competencies (staff willingness, Anglophone subject specialists, rural/urban divide, training of teachers, etc.)
- Ideological objections (on the basis of cultural identity)
- the unclear status of local languages as language of science or as knowledge languages

U-Turn in the policy led to another public outcry from the more highly educated urban middle classes
## Education Reports and Govt. Initiatives

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### GTP 2.0 (Government Transformation Programme)

2 of 7 education initiatives are related to English:

- LINUS 2.0 – ensuring basic literacy in English among Year 1 – 3 pupils
- Enhancing the Quality of English Language Teachers
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Key movements

Curriculum
- KSSR (2011)
- Infusing 21st C Skills
- English Literature

Instruction
- LINUS+
- OPS-English 1.0
- SET SYSTEM
- English Language Enhancement Programme for Secondary Schools

Teacher Training
- Pro-ELT
- ICELT
- SISC+
- Native Speakers

Assessment
- PT3
- MUET (alignment to CEFR)
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Curriculum Shifts

Emphasis in ELT have shifted from Independence in 1957 to the present.

- KBSM in 1988
- CLT (communicative competence)
- English paper in SPM i.e. English 122/322
- Skills becomes crucial (critical thinking, ICT, etc.)
- Malaysian Smart Schools in 1997
- English in the 21st century?
  - Literacy Skills
  - Oral Proficiency Skills
  - Literary Skills

Azirah Hashim (2014)
HE development in Malaysia as stipulated in the MEB (2013 – 2025):

<table>
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<th>Stage (Year)</th>
<th>Developments</th>
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<td>Stage 1 (1990)</td>
<td>Convergence of a plan to reverse the 1980s higher education overseas exodus, and (b) new educational requirements of the First Industrial Masterplan (1990 policy to reverse HE export model)</td>
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<td>Stage 2 (1996)</td>
<td>Landmark reforms of 1996 Higher Education Acts (including National Council of HE Act and Private HE Act) esp. with regard private institutions which have now access to the college sector</td>
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<td>Stage 3 (2001)</td>
<td>Following 9/11 in 2001, Middle East students have become a strategic focus of the renewed internationalization policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 4 (2010)</td>
<td>In 2010 Higher Education designated National Key Economic Area (NKEA) within wider New Economic Model (NEM); EduCity and related policies have been developed</td>
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Azirah Hashim (2014)
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Higher Education

The growth of English as MOI in HE

- increasing diversity of student population
- global competition
- what kind of education is required in working life
- the demand from stakeholders
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Higher Education

Adoption of English as MOI in HE

- the language of the academia and the sciences
- English is the most taught language in most countries
- the language to prepare students for an international career in a globalizing world
English language programmes in Malaysian public universities

Zuraidah Mohd. Don (2012)
THE PROPOSED EL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

**FORMAL LEARNING**
- 4-6 Credit hours
  - Intensive English (Bands 1 & 2) (no credit hours)
  - General English (Bands 3 & 4)
  - English for Employability (Bands 5 & 6)
  - English for Specific Discipline (on request)
  - Immersion in English (Bands 1 & 2)

**BEYOND CLASSROOM LEARNING**
- Extra-curricular Activities
- Self-Access Learning
- Industrial Placements
- Icon Programme and Peer Support Programme
- Native Speaker Support Programme

Student Intake
MUET BANDS

EL Profiling for Employability (optional)
Exit Test (optional)

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

Zuraidah Mohd. Don (2012)
## TRANSFORMATION IN ELT IN MALAYSIA: HIGHER EDUCATION

### The proposed formal learning programme

#### INTENSIVE ENGLISH
- Offered to students in MUET Bands 1 and 2
- Designed to help incoming students not yet proficient in English (i.e. not yet attained Band 3) to raise their basic language abilities to a minimum acceptable standard.
- Expected performance outcome:
  - Band 1 > Band 2
  - Band 2 > Band 3
- Performance test: either MUET or preferably in-house
- Compulsory but no credit hours.

#### GENERAL ENGLISH
- Offered to students in MUET Bands 3 and 4, including those who have taken IE
- Designed to help improve general proficiency with the focus on communication
- Performance test: either MUET or preferably in-house
- Expected performance outcome:
  - Band 3 > Band 4
  - Band 4 > Band 5
- Credit hours: subject to a minimum total of 4 and a maximum of 6 for GE, EfE or ESD.

#### ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYABILITY
- Offered to students in MUET Bands 4 and 5, including those who have taken GE
- Designed to improve the EL skills required for employability and to prepare them for entry into the workforce.
- Performance test: evaluates and measures learning outcomes
- Expected performance outcome: able to achieve target learning outcomes
- Credit hours: a minimum total of 4 and a maximum of 6 for GE, EfE or ESD
- Other courses in EfE to be offered as electives.

#### ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES
- Offered on request
- The faculty may request for the ESD to be designed as a replacement for GE which means students in Bands 3 and 4 and those from IE will do ESD.
- Designed to improve and refine students’ knowledge of English according to discipline and to help them cope with their academic subjects and the associated professional requirements.
- Performance test: evaluates and measures learning outcomes
- Expected performance outcome: able to achieve target learning outcomes
- Credit hours: subject to a minimum total of 4 and a maximum of 6 for GE and ESD.
- Courses in EfE to be offered as electives.

Zuraidah Mohd. Don (2012)
Malaysian education now accepts the stipulations of the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* for languages (output-based and operationalised)

- Level A (A1 or A2): enough language competence to ‘survive’ in the foreign language
- Level B (B1 or B2) – B2, the operationally proficient level is a good exit point for school leavers (argued by the Blueprint)
- Level C (C1 or C2) – a gap to what Higher Education Institutions need
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Confronting 21st century

- encourage critical thinking
- foster innovative culture
- acknowledge diversity in global spaces

The new language classroom
Transformation in ELT in Malaysia: Confronting 21st century

The Role of Technology and Social Media

- Mobile, technology-savvy and student centred
- A world where equity is a central theme
- A context that demands new credibility in an era of information
- Varied: Malaysian, British, American or Australian English
- Addressing urban-rural and other divides (different background and learning levels)
- Constant connectivity. Teachers' role
- Approaching multiliteracies

A world where equity is a central theme

Varieties: Malaysian, British, American or Australian English

Mobile, technology-savvy and student centred

A context that demands new credibility in an era of information
The significance of English in SEA is typically connected with the foundation of ASEAN in 1967. Founding members: Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. English was assumed to be, and made, the only official and working language from the beginning. (Kirkpatrick 2010: 7) Article 34 states that “the working language of ASEAN shall be English” in the signing of the ASEAN Charter in 2009. Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Burma (later Myanmar), who later joined ASEAN and had no Anglophone past did not raise any objections when the status of English
ASEAN member countries of today are:
- at different stages of nation building
- aspire to become integrated nations by 2015 and regional and global players with partners within ASEAN and beyond

English is used for multiple functions as a second, foreign or even first language, and is accepted as the lingua franca for regional and global purposes
- A vehicle of empowerment and participation
- Performs a dynamic role in regional communication and serves as a lingua franca to enable communication between neighbours
- Has gone hand in hand with economic growth in SEA
- Competition between English and other languages is inevitable in all countries
• Students seldom read academic books and journals in English

• Students seldom read novels in English

• Students confess to having problems dealing with information in English.
Discourse vs reality

• The actual implementation of the grand educational policies at the macro level are fraught with difficulties as the realities operating at the school level are highly complicated and problematic.

• The number of required hours for teaching English per week is limited.
Students can write, but weakness in grammar and vocabulary hinder the students from writing fluently.

Students also have problems in pronunciation and grammar. Students can speak in English [if they want to] but they lack self-confidence.
Discourse vs reality

• The emphasis on tests and public examinations do not encourage effective learning in the English classroom.

• Very few teachers are involved in curriculum development for English teaching

• Fear of technology

• Respecting student voices
Malaysian students perform poorly in international English exams

- 50% fail to obtain a 1119 pass

Students lose out in employment – lack requisite proficiency

- 52% in MUET bands 1&2
- 48% of employers have rejected students due to inadequate English

... and this affects their prospects of securing employment.

Ranjit Singh (2014)

“Graduates’ poor command of English was the reason why many faced a hard time securing jobs, particularly in multinational companies”
- Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM)
What is changing

GTP 2.0 (Government Transformation Programme)

2 of 7 education initiatives are related to English:
• Learners: 2.0 – ensuring basic literacy in English among Year 1 – 3 pupils
• Teachers: Enhancing the Quality of English Language Teachers

Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025
• Shift 2: Ensure Every Child Is Proficient In Bahasa Malaysia and English Language

“a pass in English to be compulsory in SPM by 2016”
- Education Minister
  6 September 2013

10 October 2014
Prime Minister announces minimum entry and exit MUET band requirements for graduates

Ranjit Singh (2014)
What is changing

Programme: Enhancing English in Secondary Schools

Pedagogy & Content

Trust School methodology

1. Master Trainers (≈ 30 pax) (IPG, ELTC, BPG, IPT)
   - Curriculum
   - Pedagogy
   - Resources
   - Assessment
   - Co-develop with MOE
   - Specialist subject specific courses

2. Peer Coaches (1,191)

3. SISC+ (146)

Leadership Support

Trust School methodology

1. Master Trainers (IAB)
   - Instructional leadership
   - Management of English language in schools

2. SIP+ and Principals (1,191)

Ranjit Singh (2014)

STRATEGY

SPM English fail rate of ≥ 23%
1,191 hotspot schools
What is changing

70%* of all change programmes fail. Issues that must be considered:

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<th>Issue # 2</th>
<th>Issue # 3</th>
<th>Issue # 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Setting Internationally-benchmarked English proficiency standards</td>
<td>• Securing stakeholder buy-in, commitment and support</td>
<td>• Avoiding initiative overkill and burn-out</td>
<td>• Keeping the focus: Instruction, not Bureaucracy</td>
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Ranjit Singh (2014)

\[\text{"You cannot force commitment, what you can do... You nudge a little here, inspire a little there, and provide a role model. Your primary influence is the environment you create.\"} - \text{Peter M. Senge} \]
The challenging world of EL teaching in Asia: Malaysia

Six key attributes needed by every student to be globally competitive

Every student will have ...

L - Leadership skills
B - Bilingual proficiency
T - Thinking skills
E - Ethics and spirituality
K - Knowledge
N - National identity

... aligned with the National Education Philosophy
The challenging world of EL teaching in Asia: Malaysia

Five system aspirations for the Malaysian education system

Access
100% enrolment across all levels from preschool to upper secondary by 2020

Quality
Top third of countries in international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS in 15 years

Equity
50% reduction in achievement gaps (urban-rural, socio-economic and gender) by 2020

Unity
An education system that gives children shared values and experiences by embracing diversity

Efficiency
A system which maximises student outcomes within current budget
Conclusion

Highly Contested Terrain

Education

English Language
Conclusion

• English Language is here to stay, but not to replace ethnic and local languages

• Varieties in English
Conclusion

Addressing Local and International Assessments

Malaysia No. 1 in English proficiency in Asia

EF INDEX: Beats Singapore to place 11th in overall ranking

ZULITA MUSTAFA
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zulita@post.com.my

MALAYSIA'S improved ranking worldwide in terms of English language proficiency shows that government is on the right track, said Deputy Education Minister II P. Kamalanathan yesterday.

A survey conducted by Swiss international education company Education First (EF) showed that Malaysia had the highest English language proficiency-level in Asia. The nation also climbed two notches up to 11th place from 13th position last year in the EF English Proficiency Index, which saw more than 60 countries surveyed.

"As far as the command of English is concerned, we are happy and of course, this is good news," said Kamalanathan. The results also showed that Malaysia, which was placed in the "high proficiency" category, had overtaken Singapore, which fell to 12th position in the ranking. Malaysia scored 59.99 points in the survey while Singapore received a 58.92.

Kamalanathan said the Malaysia National Education Blueprint 2012-2025 would continue to strengthen the level of English language proficiency. "We will make sure the standard is raised to meet global requirements and to make Malaysia the choice destination for foreign direct investment and services," EF in a press release entitled "The World's Top 60 Countries in English according to the EF English Proficiency Index" posted on its website on Tuesday. The index's country rankings were based on tests taken by 750,000 adults from 60 countries last year.

It said the seven countries with the strongest command of English were all northern European nations, whose size compelled them to adopt an international outlook.

The analysis of evolving English proficiency over a six-year period (2007 to last year) uses test data from nearly five million adults.

Swedish topped the list of the "very high proficiency" category, with Norway and Netherlands trailing in second and third places respectively.

Other countries listed as among the best were Estonia, Denmark, Austria and Finland.

The survey also concluded that some Asian countries, such as Indonesia and Vietnam, have improved their English proficiency over the six-year period.
Conclusion

Addressing Local and International Assessments
Conclusion

Recommendations for consideration for HEIs

Describe explicit expectations for SPM English (hybrid assessment)

In addition to a compulsory pass in SPM English, students must also be exposed to English literacy skills at STPM/Pre-University/Matriculation levels.

Make English as a compulsory course in the first year at university

Make University English Exit Examination (U3E) a compulsory pass for successful graduation

Attend to processes of assessment in university English courses that match workplace English Literacy requirements

Introduce advanced English courses every year to enhance English literacy and career readiness among university students
Any enquiries, please contact:

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