

Language Attitudes of Youth Towards The Kelantan Malay Dialect In Bachok, Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

Kelantan Malay dialect is one of the major dialects that reflects the cultural identity of the East Coast community. However, in the era of globalization and digitalization, its position is increasingly influenced by Standard Malay, English, and digital language use. This study examines the language attitudes of youth in Bachok towards the Kelantan dialect based on the theoretical framework of Garvin & Mathiot (1968), which emphasizes three main components: language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of norms. A quantitative method was employed, using questionnaires administered to respondents aged 15 to 30. Data were analyzed using the Likert scale to assess language attitudes empirically. Findings reveal that Bachok youth maintain positive attitudes towards the Kelantan dialect, particularly within family and community domains. This demonstrates that the dialect functions not only as a medium for communication but also as a symbol of cultural identity and social solidarity. The study contributes significantly to Malay sociolinguistics, language policy, and cultural empowerment efforts to maintain the sustainability of local dialects.

Keywords: Kelantan dialect, Language attitude, Language loyalty, Language pride, Norm awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Language functions not only as the primary medium of communication but also as a fundamental marker of cultural identity, social cohesion, and collective heritage. In multilingual societies such as Malaysia, regional dialects represent an important component of linguistic diversity and cultural continuity. Among these, the Kelantan Malay dialect is recognized as one of the most distinctive Malay dialects because of its unique phonological, lexical, and syntactic characteristics. Beyond its communicative function, the dialect symbolizes the cultural identity and shared heritage of the Kelantanese community. Nevertheless, the increasing influence of globalization, urbanization, formal education, and digital communication has transformed language practices, particularly among younger generations.

The widespread use of Standard Malay in education, English in professional and academic contexts, and multilingual interactions through social media may gradually reduce the use of regional dialects in everyday communication, raising concerns regarding their long-term maintenance (Crystal, 2000 & Holmes, 2013).

Bachok, a predominantly Malay district in Kelantan with approximately 98% Malay population, provides an appropriate setting for investigating this issue because the Kelantan Malay dialect continues to be widely used in family, community, and informal interactions. Despite this relatively homogeneous linguistic environment, younger speakers are increasingly exposed to Standard Malay, English, and various forms of digital communication, which may influence both their language practices and their attitudes towards the dialect. Previous studies have examined language attitudes, dialect variation, and dialect maintenance in Malaysia; however, most have focused on university students, urban communities, or language use in general. Comparatively little attention has been given to rural youth in traditional communities such as Bachok. Furthermore, existing studies rarely examine language attitudes comprehensively through the dimensions of language loyalty, language pride, and norm awareness while simultaneously considering patterns of language use across different social domains. This limitation indicates an important empirical and theoretical gap that warrants further investigation.

To address this gap, the present study adopts Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) language attitude framework as the primary theoretical foundation, supported by Fishman's (1972) concept of language domains to explain language use across different social contexts. Specifically, the study aims to analyse the language attitudes of youth in Bachok towards the Kelantan Malay dialect based on the dimensions of language loyalty, language pride, and norm awareness, and to examine the social and linguistic factors influencing their use and appreciation of the dialect across different domains of interaction. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how language attitudes contribute to dialect maintenance within a rural Malay-speaking community, while also considering the influence of contemporary sociolinguistic changes, including digital communication and increased language contact.

This study makes several significant contributions to sociolinguistic research. Theoretically, it extends the application of Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) framework by integrating it with Fishman's (1972) language domain theory to explain dialect maintenance among rural youth. Empirically, it provides evidence on the language attitudes of young speakers towards the Kelantan Malay dialect in Bachok, an area that has received limited scholarly attention despite its strong linguistic identity. Practically, the findings may assist educators, language planners, and cultural institutions in developing initiatives that strengthen dialect preservation among younger generations. Ultimately, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how positive language attitudes support the maintenance of regional dialects as living expressions of cultural identity, social cohesion, and Malaysia's linguistic heritage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language attitudes have long been recognised as one of the most influential concepts in sociolinguistics because they shape language choice, identity construction, and language maintenance within multilingual societies. Positive language attitudes encourage speakers to preserve and transmit their mother tongue across generations, whereas negative attitudes often accelerate language shift towards socially dominant languages. Garvin and Mathiot (1968) conceptualised language attitudes through three interrelated dimensions, namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms, which remain one of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks in studies of language maintenance. Complementing this perspective, Fishman (1972, 1991) argues that the survival of a language depends largely on its continuous use across different social domains, particularly within the family and local community. Likewise, Holmes (2013) maintains that language attitudes are closely associated with identity, prestige, and social interaction, while Crystal (2000) highlights that globalisation, formal education, and technological development have intensified pressures on minority languages and regional dialects. Recent studies continue to support these classical perspectives by demonstrating that positive language attitudes, family support, and community participation remain essential determinants of language vitality, particularly among younger generations living in multilingual environments.

Within the Malaysian context, language attitude research has consistently demonstrated that sociocultural identity plays a significant role in sustaining heritage languages and dialects. Sa'adiah Mat Alip (2011) found that positive language attitudes strengthened ethnic identity and encouraged the maintenance of the Narum language among indigenous communities in Sarawak. Similarly, Lam and Kamila (2012), Puah and Ting (2015), and Ting and Chang (2008) reported that language choice among multilingual communities was strongly influenced by cultural identity, family interaction, educational background, and communication domains. More recent Malaysian studies further reinforce these findings. Dilah Tuah et al. (2020) and Dilah and Chong (2021) demonstrated that language maintenance among local communities is closely associated with positive language attitudes and continuous intergenerational transmission within families and communities. Likewise, Ma'alip and Abd Wahab (2024) and Sa'adiah and Wahab (2024) argued that family language practices remain fundamental to sustaining heritage languages despite increasing exposure to Standard Malay and English. Recent research involving Malaysian youth also indicates that positive language attitudes continue to influence language choice, even when young speakers are highly exposed to foreign languages and digital media, suggesting that cultural identity remains an important motivation for language maintenance.

Research specifically concerning the Kelantan Malay dialect has primarily focused on its linguistic characteristics and sociocultural significance rather than on language attitudes among younger speakers. Asmah Haji Omar (1996) identified the Kelantan Malay dialect as one of the most distinctive Malay dialects because of its

unique phonological, lexical, and syntactic characteristics, which differentiate it clearly from Standard Malay while simultaneously functioning as an important symbol of regional identity. Similarly, Yusuff and Zakaria (2018) emphasised that the dialect represents an essential component of Kelantanese cultural heritage and collective identity. Although previous studies have significantly advanced understanding of language attitudes and dialect maintenance, several important limitations remain. First, most Malaysian studies have concentrated on multilingual communities, ethnic minority groups, university students, or urban populations, whereas comparatively little attention has been given to rural Malay-speaking youth living in linguistically homogeneous districts such as Bachok. Second, many studies have described dialect variation, language choice, or language maintenance without systematically examining the three dimensions of language attitudes proposed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968). Third, previous research has rarely integrated Garvin and Mathiot's language attitude framework with Fishman's theory of language domains to explain how language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms influence dialect use across family, friendship, educational, and community settings. Finally, despite the rapid expansion of digital communication and social media, empirical evidence regarding their influence on attitudes towards the Kelantan Malay dialect remains limited. Consequently, existing literature provides only a partial understanding of the complex relationship between language attitudes, language domains, and dialect maintenance among younger generations.

Therefore, the present study addresses these empirical and theoretical gaps by examining the language attitudes of youth towards the Kelantan Malay dialect in Bachok, Kelantan, through the dimensions of language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms proposed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968), while interpreting language use through Fishman's (1972) concept of language domains. Unlike previous studies that mainly emphasised dialect description or general language use, this study integrates language attitudes with patterns of language use across different social domains to provide a more comprehensive explanation of dialect maintenance among rural youth. Furthermore, by focusing on Bachok, a predominantly Malay district with a strong dialectal tradition yet increasing exposure to Standard Malay, English, and digital communication, the study offers new empirical evidence on how contemporary sociolinguistic changes influence dialect sustainability. Accordingly, the findings are expected to contribute theoretically by extending the application of language attitude theory within the Malaysian context and empirically by enriching the literature on dialect maintenance, youth language attitudes, and regional linguistic identity, while providing practical implications for language planning, cultural preservation, and educational initiatives aimed at strengthening the continued use of the Kelantan Malay dialect.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is primarily based on the language attitude

model developed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968), which serves as the principal theoretical foundation for examining the attitudes of youth towards the Kelantan Malay dialect in Bachok, Kelantan. According to Garvin and Mathiot (1968), language attitudes comprise three interrelated dimensions, namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms. Language loyalty refers to speakers' commitment to maintaining and continuously using their mother tongue despite increasing exposure to dominant languages. Language pride reflects the positive emotional attachment and sense of belonging that speakers associate with their dialect as a symbol of cultural identity and regional heritage. Meanwhile, awareness of language norms represents speakers' understanding of appropriate language use according to different communicative situations and social expectations. Collectively, these three dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the extent to which positive language attitudes contribute to the maintenance and sustainability of the Kelantan Malay dialect among younger speakers.

To strengthen the interpretation of language use, this study incorporates Fishman's (1972) Domain Theory as a complementary perspective. Fishman argues that language maintenance depends not only on positive language attitudes but also on the extent to which a language continues to be used across different social domains, particularly within the family, friendship, community, education, religion, and workplace. This perspective enables the present study to explain how the three dimensions of language attitudes are reflected in the everyday language practices of youth in Bachok. In other words, positive language attitudes are expected to encourage more frequent and consistent use of the Kelantan Malay dialect across various domains of interaction, thereby strengthening its long-term vitality.

The framework is further supported by the sociolinguistic perspectives of Asmah Haji Omar (1996), who identifies the Kelantan Malay dialect as one of the most distinctive regional dialects in Malaysia due to its unique phonological, lexical, and syntactic characteristics, making it an important marker of cultural identity among the Kelantanese community. Likewise, Holmes (2013) emphasizes that language attitudes are dynamic and continually influenced by social change, educational experiences, globalization, and technological advancement. In contemporary society, young people are increasingly exposed to Standard Malay, English, and digital communication through formal education and social media. These external influences may either reinforce or weaken their attachment to the dialect depending on the strength of their language attitudes and the frequency with which the dialect is used in everyday communication.

Accordingly, this study proposes that the sustainability of the Kelantan Malay dialect among youth in Bachok is fundamentally influenced by the interaction between language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms, as conceptualized by Garvin and Mathiot (1968). These attitudes are reinforced through continuous dialect use across different social domains, as explained by Fishman (1972), while sociocultural and technological changes provide the broader context within which

language attitudes are formed and expressed. Therefore, the conceptual framework integrates psychological, sociolinguistic, and contextual perspectives to explain how positive language attitudes contribute to the preservation of the Kelantan Malay dialect as a living symbol of cultural identity among the younger generation. By positioning Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) framework as the central theoretical model and using supporting perspectives to explain contextual influences, this study provides a coherent and comprehensive foundation for analysing the factors that shape dialect maintenance in contemporary Malaysian society.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the language attitudes of youth towards the Kelantan Malay dialect in Bachok, Kelantan. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables the collection of objective and measurable data from a relatively large number of respondents, allowing patterns of language attitudes to be identified through descriptive statistical analysis. The study focused on three dimensions of language attitudes proposed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968), namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms, while also examining selected social factors that may influence dialect use among the younger generation.

The study was conducted in Bachok District, Kelantan, a predominantly Malay district located on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Bachok was selected because the Kelantan Malay dialect continues to be widely spoken in family, community, and informal interactions, making it an appropriate setting for investigating language attitudes towards the dialect. According to available demographic information, the district is inhabited predominantly by ethnic Malays, providing a relatively homogeneous sociolinguistic environment for examining dialect maintenance among youth.



Map of the Bachok, Kelantan.

Source: [wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Bachok_District,_Kelantan](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Bachok_District,_Kelantan)

The target population consisted of Malay youths aged between 15 and 30 years who were permanent residents of Bachok, Kelantan. A total of 100 respondents participated in the study. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, as this technique enables the researcher to recruit individuals who possess the specific characteristics required for the study, namely being members of the younger generation who are familiar with and actively use the Kelantan Malay dialect in their daily communication. This sampling technique is widely employed in sociolinguistic research where participants are selected based on predefined criteria that are directly related to the research objective. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed through Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. Section A collected respondents' demographic information, including gender, age, educational background, and occupation. Sections B, C, and D measured the three dimensions of language attitudes based on Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) framework, namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms. Section E examined several social factors that may influence respondents' use of the Kelantan Malay dialect, including family environment, peer influence, educational background, and media exposure. All attitudinal statements were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was designed to obtain respondents' perceptions of dialect use across different domains of communication, including family, friendship, and community interactions.

Before the actual data collection, the questionnaire items were developed based on previous literature and adapted from the language attitude dimensions proposed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968). The questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms, allowing respondents to complete it voluntarily. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that their identities would remain anonymous and that all information collected would be used solely for academic purposes. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, informed consent, and respondents' right to withdraw from the study at any stage were observed throughout the research process.

The collected data were exported from Google Forms and analysed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistical analysis was employed by calculating frequencies and percentages for each questionnaire item. The results were then presented in tables and interpreted according to the distribution of respondents' responses across the five-point Likert scale. This descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the primary objective of the study was to describe the language attitudes of youth towards the Kelantan Malay dialect rather than to examine causal relationships or test statistical hypotheses. The findings were subsequently discussed by relating the observed response patterns to the theoretical framework of Garvin and Mathiot (1968) and the concept of language domains proposed by Fishman (1972), thereby providing a comprehensive interpretation of language attitudes and dialect maintenance among youth in Bachok.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on questionnaire responses collected from 100 Malay youths aged between 15 and 30 years in Bachok, Kelantan. The data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered using Google Forms and analysed descriptively using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were employed to examine respondents' language attitudes towards the Kelantan Malay dialect. The presentation of findings is organised according to the objectives of the study and the three dimensions of language attitudes proposed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968), namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms. In addition, the study examines selected social factors that influence dialect use among the younger generation. Each subsection presents the statistical findings followed by an analytical discussion that relates the results to previous studies and the theoretical framework adopted in this research. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the maintenance of the Kelantan Malay dialect among youth in Bachok.

In addition, the study discusses social factors and linguistic experiences that influence dialect use, such as family environment, peer interaction, education, and media exposure. These factors were found to shape both the frequency and context of dialect use, with family and community settings serving as the strongest domains for dialect maintenance. The interviews further revealed that while some youth felt pressure to adopt Standard Malay in formal situations, they continued to value the Kelantan dialect as a marker of identity in informal and cultural contexts.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that Bachok youth maintain positive attitudes towards the Kelantan dialect, aligning with previous findings that speaker attitudes are a key determinant of dialect vitality (Holmes, 2013). By linking the results to broader sociolinguistic perspectives, the study underscores the importance of loyalty, pride, and norm awareness in sustaining the Kelantan dialect as a living symbol of cultural identity in the face of globalization and linguistic standardization.

No.	Statement	Percent (%)
1	I use the Kelantan Malay dialect in my daily communication.	88.4
2	I feel more comfortable speaking the Kelantan Malay dialect than Standard Malay.	90.4
3	I always use the Kelantan Malay dialect with my family members.	91.3
4	I will continue using the Kelantan Malay dialect even when I am outside Bachok.	67.4
5	I will not abandon the Kelantan Malay dialect despite being exposed to other languages.	85.5
6	The Kelantan Malay dialect should be inherited by future generations.	95.2

Table 1. Language Loyalty

Language Loyalty towards the Kelantan Malay Dialect

The findings indicate that Bachok youth demonstrate a consistently high level of language loyalty towards the Kelantan Malay dialect, reflecting their strong commitment to preserving and continuously using the dialect in everyday communication. As presented in Table 2, 88.4% of respondents reported that they use the Kelantan Malay dialect in their daily interactions, while 90.4% expressed greater comfort communicating in the dialect than in Standard Malay.

This suggests that the dialect remains the preferred medium of communication among young speakers, despite increasing exposure to Standard Malay and English through formal education, mass media, and digital communication. The preference for the dialect in daily life indicates that it continues to function not only as a practical means of communication but also as a symbol of shared identity and social belonging within the Bachok community.

Language loyalty is particularly evident within the family domain, where 91.3% of respondents indicated that they consistently use the Kelantan Malay dialect when communicating with family members. This finding reinforces the important role of the family as the primary agent of intergenerational language transmission and demonstrates that the dialect continues to be naturally acquired and maintained within the home environment. Nevertheless, only 67.4% of respondents stated that they would continue using the dialect when living or communicating outside Bachok, while approximately one-third expressed uncertainty or disagreement. This pattern suggests that although language loyalty remains strong, external sociolinguistic influences, such as educational mobility, urbanisation, workplace expectations, and interaction with speakers from different linguistic backgrounds, may gradually influence language choice in wider social settings.

The findings further reveal a strong ideological commitment towards dialect preservation. A substantial 85.5% of respondents stated that they would not abandon the Kelantan Malay dialect despite being exposed to other languages, while 95.2% agreed that the dialect should be passed on to future generations. These findings demonstrate that respondents perceive the dialect not merely as a communication tool but as an important component of their cultural heritage and collective identity. Such attitudes indicate that language maintenance is supported not only by habitual language use but also by a conscious desire to preserve the dialect for future generations.

These findings strongly support the theoretical perspective of Garvin and Mathiot (1968), who define language loyalty as speakers' willingness to maintain and protect their mother tongue despite the influence of dominant languages. The consistently high percentages observed across all language loyalty indicators suggest that the respondents possess both behavioural commitment and emotional attachment towards the Kelantan Malay dialect. The findings are further consistent with Fishman (1991), who argues that the family constitutes the most influential domain for language maintenance because regular intergenerational interaction strengthens language

transmission and reduces the likelihood of language shift. Likewise, Nettle & Romaine (2000) emphasises that minority languages are most resilient when they continue to be actively used within intimate social domains such as the family and local community. The present findings also correspond with previous Malaysian studies. Dilah Tuah et al. (2020) reported that strong family support and frequent use of the mother tongue contribute significantly to language maintenance among younger generations in Sarawak. Similarly, Dilah and Chong (2021) found that positive language attitudes strengthen community identity and encourage the preservation of local linguistic varieties in border communities. In the context of Kelantan, the present study demonstrates that despite the growing influence of Standard Malay, English, and digital communication, the Kelantan Malay dialect continues to occupy a central position in the linguistic practices of Bachok youth. Overall, these findings suggest that language loyalty remains the strongest foundation for the long-term maintenance of the Kelantan Malay dialect, ensuring its continued vitality as both a medium of everyday communication and a symbol of regional cultural identity.

No.	Statement	Percent (%)
1	I feel proud when speaking the Kelantan Malay dialect.	93.3
2	The Kelantan Malay dialect reflects my cultural identity.	96.1
3	The dialect represents the uniqueness of the Kelantanese community.	93.2
4	The dialect strengthens solidarity among the local community.	93.2
5	The Kelantan Malay dialect is an important symbol of identity in Bachok.	95.2
6	The Kelantan Malay dialect possesses high cultural value.	96.1

Table 2. Language Pride

Language Pride towards the Kelantan Malay Dialect

The findings reveal an exceptionally strong level of language pride among Bachok youth towards the Kelantan Malay dialect, as demonstrated in Table 3. A substantial 93.3% of respondents reported feeling proud when speaking the dialect, while 96.1% affirmed that it reflects their cultural identity. Similarly, 93.2% perceived the dialect as a distinctive marker that differentiates them from other Malay dialect communities, and an equal percentage (93.2%) agreed that it enhances social solidarity among the local community. In addition, 95.2% recognised the dialect as an important symbol of collective identity in Bachok, and 96.1% emphasised its high cultural value. These consistently high percentages indicate that language pride is not peripheral but deeply embedded within the sociocultural identity of young speakers.

The strength of this pride suggests that the Kelantan Malay dialect functions not merely as a communicative tool, but as a symbolic resource for identity construction and group affiliation. Respondents' strong association between dialect use and cultural

identity indicates that speaking Kelantan Malay is closely tied to emotional attachment, community belonging, and cultural authenticity. This implies that even in the presence of Standard Malay and English, which dominate formal education and professional domains, the dialect continues to retain high symbolic capital within the local community. Such findings suggest that prestige in this context is not derived from global or institutional status, but rather from local identity and cultural continuity.

These results strongly support the framework proposed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968), where language pride is defined as the positive evaluation of one's mother tongue as a valued cultural asset. The findings also align with Giles and Johnson's Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (1987), which posits that linguistic pride reinforces in-group identity and strengthens group cohesion. Similarly, Edwards (2009) argues that positive emotional attachment to a mother tongue enhances resistance to language shift, particularly in minority language communities. Crystal (2000) further emphasises that emotional attachment and pride are central determinants in the survival of endangered or minority languages, while Spolsky (2005) and Milroy (1987) highlight the role of language as a marker of solidarity and social belonging.

Comparatively, these findings are consistent with Malaysian sociolinguistic studies which report that strong language pride is often associated with ethnic and regional identity preservation. The results suggest that despite increasing exposure to external linguistic influences through education, media, and digital communication, Bachok youth continue to perceive the Kelantan Malay dialect as an essential symbol of heritage and identity. Overall, the findings demonstrate that language pride serves as a crucial sustaining force for the continued vitality of the dialect, reinforcing its role not only as a means of communication but also as a living emblem of cultural heritage and collective identity among the younger generation.

No.	Statement	Percent (%)
1	I use Standard Malay in formal situations.	92.3
2	I know when to use the Kelantan Malay dialect and when to use Standard Malay.	96.1
3	The Kelantan Malay dialect is most appropriate in informal situations.	96.1
4	The dialect is appropriate for communication within the local community.	78.9
5	Standard Malay is more appropriate in formal educational settings.	72.1
6	The Kelantan Malay dialect should be used correctly and appropriately according to social norms.	96.1

Table 3. Awareness Norms

Awareness of Language Norms

The findings indicate that Bachok youth exhibit a well-developed and context-sensitive understanding of language norm awareness in relation to the Kelantan Malay dialect. As shown in Table 4, a substantial 92.3% of respondents reported that they switch to Standard Malay in formal settings such as education, administrative matters, and official communication. Furthermore, 96.1% acknowledged the importance of understanding when to appropriately use Kelantan Malay versus Standard Malay, reflecting a high level of sociolinguistic competence among the respondents. In informal domains, 96.1% agreed that Kelantan Malay is the most suitable variety for everyday interaction, while 78.9% recognised its relevance in broader community communication. In educational contexts, 72.1% indicated that Standard Malay is more appropriate for formal learning situations, whereas 96.1% emphasised that the dialect should be used appropriately and ethically according to social norms. These results demonstrate a clear pattern of functional language differentiation across communicative settings.

This pattern suggests that respondents are not engaging in random or inconsistent code usage but rather demonstrating a structured form of domain-based language allocation, where linguistic varieties are selected according to situational appropriateness. The high awareness of when to use Standard Malay versus Kelantan Malay reflects an internalised understanding of functional bilingualism, where both varieties are assigned distinct social roles. In this sense, Kelantan Malay continues to function as a marker of solidarity, intimacy, and local identity, while Standard Malay operates as the language of formality, education, and institutional authority. This division reflects a stable sociolinguistic equilibrium rather than a language conflict, indicating that dialect maintenance is compatible with standard language acquisition among youth.

The findings strongly align with Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) concept of norm awareness, which refers to speakers' sensitivity to appropriate language use across different social contexts. The results also correspond with Ferguson's (1959) concept of diglossia, where two language varieties coexist with distinct functional distributions, as well as Hudson's (1996) interpretation of diglossic stability in bilingual communities. Holmes

(2013) further argues that language choice is shaped by social networks, institutional expectations, and perceived prestige associated with different linguistic varieties. In the context of Bachok, these theoretical perspectives collectively explain why respondents are maintain Kelantan Malay in informal domains while simultaneously adopting Standard Malay in formal environments without weakening their attachment to either variety.

When interpreted collectively, the findings demonstrate that Bachok youth possess not only strong language loyalty and pride but also a sophisticated level of sociolinguistic regulation in their language behaviour. Their ability to shift between Kelantan Malay and Standard Malay according to context reflects linguistic

adaptability rather than language loss. This balanced linguistic competence ensures that Kelantan Malay remains actively used in everyday interaction while Standard Malay fulfills its institutional function. Consequently, such norm awareness plays a crucial role in sustaining the vitality of the Kelantan dialect, as it allows the dialect to coexist with dominant language varieties without being displaced. Ultimately, these findings suggest that the preservation of Kelantan Malay is not solely dependent on emotional attachment, but also on the speakers' ability to negotiate linguistic norms within a multilingual and institutionally structured society.

Social Factors Influencing the Use and Appreciation of Kelantan Malay Dialect among Bachok Youth

The findings indicate that social environment plays a decisive role in shaping the language attitudes of Bachok youth towards the Kelantan Malay dialect, particularly in reinforcing both its daily use and symbolic value. Among all social domains examined, the family emerges as the most influential factor, functioning as the primary site of intergenerational transmission. Continuous exposure to the dialect within the household normalises its use as the default medium of intimate communication, thereby strengthening emotional attachment and linguistic familiarity. This finding strongly supports Fishman's (1991) assertion that the family domain constitutes the most critical foundation for minority language maintenance, as it ensures sustained exposure during early language acquisition and daily interaction.

Beyond the family, peer networks also play a significant role in sustaining dialect use.

The findings suggest that communication among friends encourages linguistic solidarity and reinforces shared identity, particularly in informal contexts. This is consistent with Holmes (2013), who argues that peer groups are powerful agents of linguistic cohesion due to their role in shaping everyday interactional norms and identity expression. In addition, the school environment presents a dual influence: while Standard Malay dominates formal instructional settings, Kelantan Malay continues to be actively used in informal peer interactions outside the classroom. This indicates a clear functional separation of language use according to communicative purpose.

Furthermore, social media platforms have emerged as an important contemporary space for dialect maintenance. The use of Kelantan Malay in digital communication such as messaging applications, comments, and informal online interactions demonstrates that the dialect is not confined to oral communication but has extended into written digital discourse. This development aligns with Coulmas (2005), who notes that digital communication can reinforce minority language visibility and vitality by providing new domains of use. It also reflects Ferguson's (1959) concept of functional differentiation, where linguistic varieties coexist across distinct communicative domains, including emerging digital spaces.

The place of residence further reinforces dialect stability, particularly in rural settings such as Bachok, where linguistic homogeneity promotes consistent exposure to

the dialect. Respondents from village areas reported continuous use of Kelantan Malay in daily interaction, indicating that geographical concentration contributes to stronger language maintenance. This supports Nettle & Romaine (2000) argument that minority language resilience is strongly influenced by ecological and community-based factors, where dense social networks facilitate sustained linguistic continuity. However, in formal contexts such as education and administrative settings, respondents consistently reported switching to Standard Malay, reflecting awareness of institutional expectations and linguistic prestige.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that social factors operate in a complementary rather than competing manner in shaping language attitudes. Family ensures foundational exposure, peers reinforce identity and solidarity, education introduces formal linguistic norms, media expands usage domains, and place of residence strengthens community-level continuity. Together, these factors sustain a dynamic balance between dialect maintenance and standard language acquisition. This pattern reflects Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) concept of language attitude dimensions, particularly in how positive attitudes are translated into actual linguistic behaviour across domains. Consequently, Bachok youth exhibit not only strong attachment to the Kelantan Malay dialect but also sociolinguistic adaptability, ensuring its continued relevance as both a communicative tool and a cultural identity marker in a multilingual environment.

Linguistic Experiences Influencing the Use and Appreciation of the Kelantan Malay Dialect among Bachok Youth

The findings reveal that linguistic experiences significantly shape both the emotional attachment and behavioural patterns of Bachok youth towards the Kelantan Malay dialect. Early childhood exposure within the family environment is identified as the most influential experience, where consistent use of the dialect in daily household communication fosters natural acquisition and deep emotional familiarity. This early immersion not only facilitates linguistic competence but also strengthens affective bonds associated with identity and belonging. Such outcomes align closely with Fishman's (1991) emphasis on the family as the core domain of language transmission and Nettle & Romaine (2000) assertion that minority languages are most resilient when embedded in intimate social interactions.

In addition to early exposure, positive linguistic experiences in contemporary communication contexts further reinforce language pride and continued usage. Respondents reported frequent use of Kelantan Malay in social media interactions, particularly in messaging applications and informal digital communication among peers. The visibility of the dialect in digital spaces contributes to its symbolic reinforcement, where youth perceive it as a living and relevant form of communication rather than a declining vernacular. This supports Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) notion that language pride is strengthened when speakers perceive their mother tongue as socially meaningful and culturally valuable beyond traditional settings.

However, the findings also reveal that challenging linguistic experiences contribute to increased awareness of language norms. Exposure to environments

outside Kelantan, particularly in educational institutions or interactions with non-Kelantanese speakers, compels respondents to adapt by switching to Standard Malay to ensure effective communication. These experiences highlight the development of pragmatic linguistic competence, where speakers consciously regulate language choice based on situational demands. This reflects Ferguson's (1959) concept of diglossia and Hudson's (1996) interpretation of functional language separation, where different varieties serve distinct communicative purposes.

Despite such challenges, respondents consistently demonstrated the ability to balance linguistic loyalty, pride, and norm awareness. Rather than weakening attachment to the dialect, external exposure appears to enhance metalinguistic awareness, allowing youth to appreciate the functional value of both Kelantan Malay and Standard Malay. This indicates that linguistic experience does not merely influence language choice but also shapes identity negotiation processes among bilingual speakers. The dialect remains strongly associated with intimacy, identity, and emotional connection, while Standard Malay is associated with formality and institutional communication.

These findings suggest that linguistic experiences both positive and challenging play a complementary role in shaping a resilient and adaptive language attitude system among Bachok youth. Early exposure builds foundational loyalty, digital communication reinforces pride, and external mobility strengthens norm awareness. In combination, these experiences ensure that the Kelantan Malay dialect continues to function as a vital marker of cultural identity while coexisting with Standard Malay in a structurally balanced multilingual environment. This dynamic reflects the core principles of language maintenance theory, where sustained use is driven not only by habit, but also by identity, experience, and contextual adaptation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Bachok youth maintain consistently positive attitudes towards the Kelantan Malay dialect, shaped by the interplay of language loyalty, language pride, and norm awareness as outlined by Garvin & Mathiot (1968). The findings reveal strong loyalty, with daily use of the dialect in family and community domains, and a clear ideological commitment to its preservation across generations. Equally, pride in the dialect is deeply embedded, as youth associate it with cultural identity, uniqueness, and social solidarity. At the same time, norm awareness is evident in their ability to adapt language use to different contexts, switching to Standard Malay in formal domains while maintaining Kelantan Malay in informal and communal interactions. Together, these components confirm that the dialect is not merely a communication tool but a living symbol of identity, dignity, and heritage.

Beyond attitudes, the study highlights the importance of social factors and linguistic experiences in sustaining the dialect. Family remains the cornerstone of transmission, peers reinforce solidarity, and school and media provide supplementary spaces for dialect use, including digital platforms where Kelantan Malay thrives as a marker of identity. Early exposure, positive experiences of pride, and negative experiences requiring adaptation collectively shape a mature and resilient linguistic outlook. Ultimately, Bachok youth embody a balanced orientation: loyal to their dialect, proud of its cultural value, and norm-aware in adjusting its use. This equilibrium

ensures the sustainability of Kelantan Malay in the face of globalization and linguistic standardization, safeguarding it as both a practical medium of communication and a vital cultural heritage for future generations.

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