














Similar but Not Same: Language Barriers and the Facet of Life Faced by the Indonesians as International Students in Malaysia

Muhamad Khairul Zakaria¹, Rocky Harisman Saputra¹, Abdul Mutalib Embong¹, Kais Amir Khadim¹,
Noor Azida Ab Wahab¹, Salamun Hailan¹, Firdaus Khairi Abdul Kadir¹, Junaidah Munawarah²,
Nurul Ashikin Abdul-Kadir³, Nur Yuhanis Mohd Nasir⁴, Kasyfullah Abd Kadir^{1*}

¹ Centre for Foundation and Continuing Education, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Terengganu 21030, Malaysia

² Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, State Islamic University of Ar-Raniry, Darussalam 23111, Indonesia

³ Faculty of Electrical Engineering (FKE), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, UTM Johor Bahru 81310, Malaysia

⁴ Faculty of Modern Languages And Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, UPM Serdang 43400, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: kasyfullah.kadir@umt.edu.my

Copyright: ©2024 The authors. This article is published by IETA and is licensed under the CC BY 4.0 license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

<https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.190412>

ABSTRACT

Received: 30 November 2023

Revised: 21 March 2024

Accepted: 7 April 2024

Available online: 28 April 2024

Keywords:

linguistic adaptation, cultural integration, academic engagement, intercultural communication, English language proficiency

In the realm of global education, Malaysia stands out as a beacon of excellence, offering a plethora of diverse and flexible academic opportunities. It proudly ranks as the 11th preferred educational destination worldwide, with Indonesia emerging as a pivotal contributor to its international student demography. The annual surge in Indonesian student enrolment in Malaysian universities highlights a trend fueled by the allure of competitive tuition fees, geographical closeness, and shared cultural legacies. However, this growing educational exchange is not without its challenges. Indonesian students in Malaysia navigate a complex linguistic landscape, marked by the country's rich tapestry of languages reflective of its pluralistic society. This research meticulously examines the multifaceted linguistic barriers Indonesian students encounter, both within the academic sphere and in their social interactions. Through an extensive electronic survey, this study delves into the intricacies of academic language comprehension, active participation in academic and extracurricular activities, and the broader spectrum of interpersonal communication, peer acceptance, and adaptation to an English-medium educational setting.

1. INTRODUCTION

The storied relationship between Malaysia and Indonesia is emblematic of a profound intercultural synergy, rooted in a shared history of cultural and linguistic affinities and strengthened through years of collaborative educational exchanges. Their geographical proximity belies the depth of their cultural and linguistic connections, particularly evident in bordering regions where cultural practices and languages intermingle. Despite sharing a common linguistic heritage derived from the Standard Malay of historical royal courts, Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia exhibit distinct differences, particularly in vocabulary. This nuanced linguistic relationship provides Indonesian students in Malaysia with a unique advantage, allowing them to navigate a multilingual environment where English also plays a crucial role in academic and social interactions.

Historical ties, such as the union between Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh and a Malaysian princess, serve as enduring symbols of the countries' intertwined legacies, showcasing a rich tapestry of cultural and political alliances. In the contemporary educational landscape, Malaysia has ascended as a premier destination for Indonesian students, drawn by its renowned universities, accessible tuition, and globally

recognized academic credentials. The parallel structures of their educational systems, underscored by the prominent standing of Malaysian universities in Southeast Asian rankings, further solidify this educational corridor.

This scholarly exploration seeks to shed light on the lived experiences of Indonesian students in Malaysia, focusing on their adaptive strategies and experiences in a context marked by linguistic diversity and cultural plurality. Employing a robust empirical methodology, this paper endeavors to uncover the layers of challenges and adaptive mechanisms employed by one of the largest international student populations in Malaysia. It aims to furnish educators, policy-makers, and academic scholars with nuanced insights into the dynamics of cross-cultural adaptation and linguistic navigation in the realm of international education.

The Genesis and Evolution of Bahasa Indonesia: A Reflection on Socio-Economic Migration and Academic Pursuits

The intricate socio-economic fabric of Indonesia's relationship with Malaysia has been historically significant, especially in the context of labor migration and educational exchanges. Malaysia, with its robust economy and close geographical and cultural ties to Indonesia, has long been a

beacon for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), attracting a substantial number due to its plentiful employment opportunities, cultural familiarity, and the strategic proximity of the two nations. The scholarly work of [1], underlines the historical and ongoing allure of Malaysia for these workers, a trend that saw a notable evolution post the transformative Indonesian reform period of 1997-1998.

In this era of change, there was a marked shift in migration patterns, increasingly characterized by the youthful demographic of Indonesians seeking not just employment but also educational opportunities in Malaysia. This shift aligns with the broader educational aspirations of the Indonesian populace, driven by a quest for quality education and better employment prospects. The establishment of online learning programs such as the PJJ-UT and its branches, known as "Pokjar-UT," across Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah-Sarawak, catered to this new wave of educational migrants. These programs, detailed by researchers such as [2], mirror the Indonesian constitutional mandate for every citizen's right to work and live decently, further emphasizing the right to fair remuneration and treatment in employment relationships as per Articles 27 and 28D of the 1945 Constitution. It also means that individuals feel the need to be autonomous, competent, and related where individual can choosing his own behaviors, competent to his adapting to the environment, and finally 'relatedness' means his being close to others [3].

The migration for educational purposes has seen a significant upsurge, with the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) reporting over 9,000 Indonesian students enrolling in Malaysian institutions in 2009 alone. This figure places Indonesian students among the most substantial international student cohorts in Malaysia, highlighting the critical need for an in-depth exploration of their academic and socio-cultural experiences. Such analysis is vital for educational psychologists, college counselors, and student affairs administrators aiming to devise supportive strategies for these students. Furthermore, it underscores the necessity for academic scholars and lecturers, especially within universities where these studies are undertaken, to develop a nuanced understanding of the cultural adjustments and challenges encountered by Indonesian students.

This paper seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by offering a comprehensive examination of the Indonesian students' journey in Malaysia. It is unique in the sense that based on the available literature, not much has ever conducted a study about the experience of language assimilation among Indonesian students who study in Malaysia particularly the Klang Valley as most of the tertiary institutions are located there.

By focusing on their linguistic adaptations, cultural assimilation, and academic engagements, the study aims to illuminate the multifaceted experiences of these students. Among the issues studied were the mechanisms of Indonesian students use to cope with the language barriers and its psychological effects. It endeavors to contribute significantly to the academic discourse on cross-cultural education, migration studies, and the dynamics of Southeast Asian educational migration. Through this exploration, the paper aspires to inform and enrich the strategies employed by educational institutions and policymakers in nurturing a conducive and inclusive academic environment for international students, thereby enhancing their educational experience and cultural integration in Malaysia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Interconnected Linguistic Heritage of Malay and Indonesian Languages

The Malay and Indonesian languages, colloquially known as Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia respectively, stand as monumental symbols of the rich linguistic heritage that pervades the Malay Archipelago. These languages, emerging from the Austronesian linguistic family, encapsulate the complexity of historical, cultural, and societal evolutions that have sculpted the region over millennia. According to studies [4, 5], the genesis and evolution of these languages are indelibly marked by the trade routes, colonial legacies, and vibrant cultural interchanges that have enriched their vocabularies and nuanced their linguistic structures.

Delving into their origins reveals a tapestry of influences that have not only expanded the lexicon but subtly nuanced their grammatical and phonetic dimensions. Despite their close genetic ties, the development of Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia has been shaped by their unique sociopolitical and cultural landscapes. Indonesia's remarkable ethnic diversity, housing over 300 distinct ethnic groups, has fostered a linguistic environment ripe for the absorption of new linguistic elements, thereby enhancing Bahasa Indonesia with a rich array of borrowed lexemes. Contrastingly, Malaysia's relatively homogenous cultural composition has nurtured a more traditional linguistic atmosphere, making Bahasa Melayu somewhat resistant to foreign lexical incorporation.

The mutual intelligibility between Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia belies a deeper labyrinth of distinctions, particularly evident in their phonological landscapes. The influence of regional dialects, shaped by the geographical, social, and historical milieu, introduces a spectrum of phonetic diversity that distinguishes the speech patterns of, for instance, a Jakarta resident from their Kuala Lumpur counterpart. Study [6] highlights the phonological idiosyncrasies that, despite a shared core sound system, underscore the unique accents and pronunciations endemic to each language.

The structural linguistics of Malay and Indonesian, predominantly adhering to the subject-verb-object (SVO) syntactic order, reveal intricacies especially in the formation of complex sentences or passive constructions. Study [7] offers an insightful analysis into these syntactic nuances, elucidating the subtle divergences and parallels that coexist within their grammatical frameworks. This structural linguistics lead to the theory in this study, in which both Malaysian and Indonesian languages are conceived as a self-contained, self-regulating semiotic system whose elements are defined by their relationship to other elements within the two language systems. It is heavily relied on semantic where at this semantic level, the vast shared vocabulary between the two languages attests to their common heritage.

However, the dynamic nature of language means that semantic fields evolve, leading to distinctions in word meanings and usages. For instance, the word 'buku' in Indonesian can denote 'book' and, contextually, 'joint,' whereas in Malay, its usage is predominantly limited to 'book' [8].

The historical narrative of the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago is rich with accounts of trade, cultural exchanges, and the influence of foreign languages such as Sanskrit, Arabic, and Dutch. Malaysia's post-colonial linguistic landscape presented its own set of challenges and

complexities. While Malay was elevated to the status of the national language, English continued to wield influence, especially in domains like education and commerce) [9].

This linguistic amalgamation has not only enriched both Malay and Indonesian but has also prepared them for the challenges of modernization and nationalism in the 20th century. Study [10] discusses how Indonesia's pursuit of a distinct national identity led to significant lexical innovations in Bahasa Indonesia, diverging from traditional Malay.

Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Malay-Indonesian Linguistic Dynamics

The sociolinguistic examination of Malay and Indonesian unravels the complex interplay of factors that have influenced their evolution. The prestige of dialects, the impact of colonialism, the quest for linguistic identity post-colonialism, and the roles of media, education, and politics have collectively shaped the linguistic landscapes of Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia. The colonial legacies, with Dutch influence in Indonesia and British in Malaysia, introduced a plethora of loanwords, embedding colonial history within the linguistic fabric of both languages.

In the modern era, the challenges of globalization, and the intensification of cross-community interactions necessitate a profound understanding of the linguistic nuances of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. Such comprehension fosters enhanced communication, cultural appreciation, and collaboration, highlighting the importance of linguistic studies in navigating the complexities of global interconnectedness.

Language Barriers Among Students: A Focused Study

The exploration of linguistic challenges confronting international students unveils a complex landscape of communication barriers that significantly affect their academic and social integration. Scholarly works [11-13] emphasize the myriad difficulties students encounter when acclimating to the linguistic environment of their host countries. These range from mastering pronunciation nuances to overcoming apprehensions about effective communication. McFarlands' comprehensive theoretical framework, as referenced by study [14], categorizes these obstacles into linguistic, cultural, and personal barriers, each contributing to the overarching challenge of establishing effective communication.

Delving deeper, this study highlights the profound influence of cultural diversity, individual perception, and emotional well-being on the ability of students to engage successfully in their new environments. Specifically, Indonesian students in Malaysia face formidable barriers in grasping academic language, navigating fears of judgment from peers, and confronting potential isolation. Prior to this, they need adjustment suspending at least some culturally based reactions to become more tolerant of the local culture [15]. This scrutiny does more than underscore the pivotal role of linguistic adeptness; it also identifies potential avenues for mitigating these barriers. The ultimate goal is to significantly improve the educational journey for international students, ensuring their transition is both enriching and fulfilling.

Linguistic Similarities and Divergences: The Case of Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia

A comparative study of Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia unveils a rich tapestry of linguistic parallels and divergences, which intricately influence the experiences of

students and migrants alike. The subtle yet impactful differences in vocabulary, orthography, pronunciation, and instances of 'false friends' mark critical linguistic challenges within cross-cultural exchanges. Understanding these linguistic nuances is indispensable for students embarking on their educational endeavors within a foreign linguistic milieu. It lays a foundational stone for surmounting language barriers, thereby fostering a profound interconnection between Malaysia and Indonesia.

Sociolinguistic Adaptation and Integration of Indonesian Students in Malaysia

The increase in academic mobility between Indonesia and Malaysia has significantly boosted the number of Indonesian students in Malaysian higher education institutions. This influx is not simply a demographic shift but also a complex process of sociolinguistic adaptation and integration within Malaysia's diverse academic and social landscapes. Recent research highlights the layered experiences of these students, focusing on the linguistic hurdles and cultural adjustments they encounter. For instance, research by Enh et al. [17] discusses how positive social interactions and the development of close relationships are crucial for successful cultural adaptation among migrants in Malaysia, which likely reflects the experiences of Indonesian students as well.

Similarly, the reciprocal nature of intercultural adaptation, observed in both Malaysian students in Indonesia and Indonesian students in Malaysia, suggests common underlying sociolinguistic processes [18]. Moreover, communication challenges such as anxiety and hesitation, which stem from fear of error, appear to be common among students in both countries, pointing to a shared educational and cultural backdrop [19].

Adaptation strategies among these students are also shaped by their use of digital social platforms, which help them navigate and acclimatize to new cultural and educational settings [18]. The role of educational policies and curricular initiatives in facilitating student integration into foreign academic environments is crucial, as these can mitigate sustainability and inclusivity issues within higher education [18].

Additionally, gender-specific adaptation challenges are particularly pronounced among female students, paralleling findings from studies on female migrants [17]. The integration experiences of Indonesian students are further complicated by their involvement in activities that create new cultural spaces and participate in transnational political actions, illustrating the complex web of daily life and adaptation [17].

A study by Hamuddin and Natsir [20] vividly captures the cultural shock phases experienced by Indonesian students abroad, including the initial euphoria followed by irritation, gradual adjustment, and eventual acceptance and integration into the new environment.

Thus, building upon initial discussions, this comprehensive review seeks to weave together sociolinguistic insights, historical and cultural evolutions, and the tangible ramifications of linguistic barriers faced by Indonesian students in Malaysia. By infusing this discourse with detailed analyses and enriched narratives, the study aims to offer a nuanced perspective on the linguistic dynamics within the Malay-Indonesian axis. The aspiration is to underscore the importance of linguistic proficiency and cultural acumen in bolstering educational exchanges across borders. This endeavor not only illuminates the academic discourse on the

Malay-Indonesian linguistic continuum but also highlights the critical need for strategies that bridge linguistic divides, thereby enhancing the academic and social experiences of international students in a culturally diverse world. Through this enriched dialogue, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complex interplay between language, culture, and education in the context of international student mobility.

3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Examination of Linguistic Adaptation and Integration Strategies

This study delves into the nuanced experiences of Indonesian students in Malaysia, with a focus on their linguistic adaptation and social integration. Recognized as a pivotal aspect of their educational journey, language plays a crucial role in their academic success and social engagement. This investigation aims to dissect the multifaceted language barriers these students encounter, including challenges in understanding academic language, participating actively in lectures and group tasks, and engaging in extracurricular activities. Additionally, it probes into the personal dimensions of communication, such as self-confidence in language proficiency, acceptance and inclusion by peers, and the transition to using English as a medium of instruction and interaction.

The study is guided by two primary objectives:

1. **Explanatory Objective:** This facet of the research employs data from an extensive review of conversational strategies utilized by Indonesian students navigating the bilingual (Malay and English) educational settings in Malaysia. The goal is to unravel the complexities of language barriers that these students face and how such barriers impact their academic and social life in a foreign environment. By doing so, the study seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic hurdles and the socio-cultural dynamics at play.
2. **Normative Objective:** Building on the insights garnered, this study aims to chart a course towards effective strategies for overcoming linguistic challenges. It aspires to equip current and future Indonesian students with a toolkit of adaptive strategies and coping mechanisms for navigating Malay and English language obstacles, thereby enhancing their academic performance and social integration.

4. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

To anchor this exploration in empirical evidence, the study employs a quantitative research methodology, leveraging an electronic survey distributed among Indonesian students across various universities in Malaysia. Data collection through an online survey appears to have the potential to collect large amounts of data efficiently (it may have less error due to the lack transferring written data on to a computer), economically (as it requires low human resource efforts while collecting or managing data) and within relatively short time frames. In addition, it is quite current in this technological era. The survey was done along the whole month of July 2024, opened to all Indonesian students from private and public universities in Klang Valley, Malaysia. These are highly

developed boroughs with one of the most densely population in the country. In addition, there are a number of educational institutions and training centres that offer a conducive place for both students to pursue their dreams.

Instrument

The survey consists of two sections (i) Demography where respondents were asked about their gender, age, level of education and institutions and (ii) Their adaptation to the Malay language and language proficiency. There are five Likert Scales for each question in section II;

This 5-point Likert scale is a psychometric response method where respondents can easily answer questions and state their level of agreement in five points

The survey garnered 123 responses, providing a rich dataset for analysis. Designed with a Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, the survey meticulously covers a spectrum of questions tailored to uncover the depth of language-related challenges and the efficacy of adopted coping strategies.

Three separate analyses were conducted based on this survey. The examination of respondent demographics, including gender, age, and educational attainment, is done in the first section of the study. Their response to the adaptation, as described in section (ii) above, was the second component in the results. The statistical analysis is covered in the third final part. Initially, the standard deviation is measured for the linguistic challenges and adaptation among Indonesian students in Malaysia, to observe how the response disperse from whole respondent. Once the pattern of standard deviation observed, the process of establishing a relationship or connection between samples are done using Pearson correlation coefficient (R) which measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. Next is analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the differences in research results from unrelated samples. The regression analysis is the final step in observing the difficulties and emotional experiences that influence Indonesian students in Malaysia. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software is used to do the regression analysis. Here are some other findings. Further findings are as follows.

This methodological approach facilitates a dual-layered exploration: firstly, quantifying the prevalence and intensity of language barriers as perceived by the students, and secondly, identifying patterns and correlations between language proficiency levels, engagement in academic and social activities, and overall student well-being and satisfaction. Through this lens, the study advances a nuanced understanding of linguistic adaptation in the context of international education, contributing valuable perspectives to the discourse on cross-cultural learning environments and integration strategies.

5. RESULTS

Part 1

Analysis of Respondent Demographics

Overview of Participant Profiles

The demographic composition of the participants offers a foundational understanding of the diversity within the study group, crucial for contextualizing the research findings. This section delineates the demographic attributes of the

respondents, encompassing gender distribution, age range, and educational attainment, providing a snapshot of the study's participant pool. Table 1 illustrates the demographic breakdown of the respondents, highlighting significant differences in gender, age, and education level.

Table 1. Demography of the respondents

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	76	61.8
Male	47	38.2
Total	123	100
Age		
18-23 Years Old	76	61.8
24-30 Years Old	12	9.8
31-39 Years Old	34	27.6
40 and Above	1	0.8
Total	123	
Education		
Undergraduate	76	61.8
Master's Degree	45	36.6
PHD	3	1.6
Total	123	

Gender Distribution

The study engaged a total of 123 participants, with a gender distribution that leans slightly towards female respondents. Specifically, the group comprised 76 female participants, accounting for 61.8% of the total, and 47 male participants, representing 38.2%. This gender distribution is reflective of the broader trends in international education, where gender dynamics may influence the experiences and perceptions of academic and social integration.

Age Composition

The age distribution of the respondents highlights the predominance of younger adults in international education, with a significant concentration in the 18-23 years age bracket.

This group forms the majority, with 76 individuals or 61.8%, illustrating the youthful demographic pursuing higher education abroad. The survey also captured the participation of individuals in the 24-30 years age group (12 respondents or 9.8%), the 31-39 years age group (34 respondents or 27.6%), and a solitary respondent above 40 years of age (0.8%), showcasing a modest but vital representation of mature students in the academic milieu.

Educational Level

In terms of educational attainment, the survey respondents predominantly consist of undergraduate students, numbering 76 or 61.8% of the total. This is followed by 45 respondents (36.6%) enrolled in master's degree programs, highlighting a substantial engagement in postgraduate education among the participants. The doctoral student representation, though minimal with 3 respondents (1.6%), underscores the presence of high-level academic pursuit within the Indonesian student community in Malaysia.

Summary

The demographic analysis reveals a diverse participant group, predominantly young and female, engaged primarily in undergraduate and postgraduate studies. This diversity underscores the varied experiences and perspectives that enrich the study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic adaptation and social integration processes of Indonesian students in Malaysia. Through this demographic lens, the subsequent analysis of language barriers and coping strategies will draw upon a broad spectrum of student experiences, enhancing the relevance and applicability of the research findings in the context of international education.

Part 2

Section A: Analysis of Linguistic Challenges Encountered in Malay Language

The analysis of the results from this section are as follows:-

Table 2. Hardship dealing with Malay language

Items	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Statement (%)
I really had hard time with the Bahasa Melayu which is a foreign language to me	15 (12.2)	23 (18.7)	27 (22)	22 (17.9)	13 (10.6)	100%
I really had hard time with the Bahasa Melayu Dialect/Accents that is different from Bahasa Indonesia	0 (0)	10 (8.1)	19 (15.4)	39 (31.7)	29 (23.6)	100%
I really had hard time with the Bahasa Melayu Jargon and Slang	7 (5.7)	7 (5.7)	19 (15.4)	31 (25.2)	41 (33.3)	100%
I really had hard time with the Bahasa Melayu word choice which lead to ambiguity and Verbosity	10 (8.1)	23 (18.7)	47 (38.2)	22 (17.9)	21 (17.1)	100%
I really had hard time with the Bahasa Melayu structure of the language	32 (26)	43 (35)	17 (13.8)	22 (17.9)	9 (7.3)	100%

Evaluation of Difficulties with Bahasa Melayu

The analysis delves into the specific linguistic hurdles faced by Indonesian students in adapting to Bahasa Melayu, revealing varied degrees of difficulty across different aspects of the language. The structured inquiry comprised five key areas: general language challenges, dialects and accents, jargon and slang, word choice leading to ambiguity, and understanding the structural complexities of Bahasa Melayu. Table 2 details the challenges participants faced with the Malay language, categorized by various aspects such as dialect and slang.

General Language Adaptation

Regarding the overall challenge of adapting to Bahasa

Melayu as a foreign language, the responses indicate a mixed experience among the participants. A total of 15 respondents (12.2%) strongly disagreed, suggesting no significant difficulty, whereas 23 respondents (18.7%) disagreed with experiencing hardships. However, a notable portion remained neutral (27 respondents, 22%), and a combined total of 35 respondents (28.5%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, highlighting a substantial group finding Bahasa Melayu challenging to some degree.

Dialects and Accents

The dialects and accents of Bahasa Melayu posed a notable challenge, with no respondents strongly disagreeing with the difficulty. A minimal 10 respondents (8.1%) disagreed, while

19 (15.4%) remained neutral on the issue. The majority found it challenging, with 39 respondents (31.7%) agreeing and 29 (23.6%) strongly agreeing that the distinct dialects and accents of Bahasa Melayu compared to Bahasa Indonesia were difficult to navigate.

Jargon and Slang

The use of jargon and slang in Bahasa Melayu was another significant barrier, with 7 respondents (5.7%) each for strongly disagree and disagree, indicating a lesser degree of challenge. However, the difficulty escalates as 19 respondents (15.4%) remained neutral, and a combined 72 respondents (58.5%) agreed or strongly agreed on the challenges posed by jargon and slang, underscoring the substantial impact of colloquial language on comprehension.

Ambiguity and Verbosity in Word Choice

The ambiguity and verbosity resulting from certain word choices in Bahasa Melayu were also scrutinized. Here, 10 respondents (8.1%) strongly disagreed, and 23 (18.7%) disagreed with facing such difficulties. However, a significant number (47 respondents, 38.2%) remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty or variability in their experiences. Meanwhile, 43 respondents (35%) agreed or strongly agreed that word choice led to challenges in clarity and comprehension

Structural Complexity

When addressing the structural aspects of Bahasa Melayu, a more pronounced consensus on manageability emerges. A substantial 75 respondents (61%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating a relative ease in adapting to the structural components of the language. Conversely, 31 respondents (25.2%) found the structural complexities challenging to some degree, with the remainder (13 respondents, 10.6%) expressing neutrality.

Summary of Linguistic Adaptation Challenges

The detailed exploration of Indonesian students' experiences with Bahasa Melayu underscores a spectrum of challenges, with particular emphasis on dialects, accents, and the informal language of jargon and slang. While certain elements such as structural complexity were deemed more navigable, the variability in responses highlights the diverse experiences of students in adapting to a linguistically and culturally distinct environment. These insights form the basis for further investigation into effective strategies for linguistic adaptation and integration, aiming to enhance the academic and social experiences of international students in Malaysia.

Section B: Analysis of Emotional Experiences: Navigating Internal Feelings Among Indonesian Students

Table 3. Internal feeling

Items	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Statement (%)
I feel lonely because of my weak Bahasa Melayu command	56 (45.5)	23 (18.7)	17 (13.8)	22 (17.9)	5 (4.1)	0 (0)
I feel low sometimes in the class because I don't understand Academic in Bahasa Melayu	13 (10.6)	27 (22)	22 (17.9)	37 (30.1)	24 (19.5)	0 (0)
I feel left out because I cannot comprehend the Bahasa Melayu like others	46 (37.4)	45 (36.6)	13 (10.6)	7 (5.7)	12 (9.8)	0 (0)

Emotional Resonance with Language Proficiency

This segment delves into the emotional landscape navigated by Indonesian students in Malaysia, particularly focusing on the feelings of loneliness, inadequacy in class, and a sense of exclusion due to challenges in mastering Bahasa Melayu. The emotional responses were categorized under three main areas: feelings of loneliness attributed to language barriers, feelings of inadequacy in academic settings, and feelings of exclusion in social contexts. Table 3 captures the emotional impacts of language barriers on participants, particularly feelings of loneliness and exclusion.

Navigating Loneliness

A considerable proportion of students reported feelings of loneliness linked directly to their proficiency in Bahasa Melayu. About 45.5% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with feeling lonely due to language barriers, suggesting a resilience or adaptation to the linguistic challenges. However, a notable minority experienced loneliness (22.2%), highlighting the critical role of language proficiency in fostering a sense of belonging and connection within a new cultural and academic environment.

Academic Challenges and Emotional Well-being

The struggle to grasp academic content in Bahasa Melayu significantly impacts students' emotional well-being, with nearly half of the respondents (49.6%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that their academic performance and classroom engagement suffer due to language difficulties. This finding underscores the deep connection between language comprehension and academic confidence, where nearly 18%

of students remain ambivalent, reflecting varied experiences of academic integration among the participants.

Social Integration and Exclusion

Despite the linguistic kinship between Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia, a fraction of students (15.5%) reported feelings of exclusion, unable to fully comprehend or engage in the local dialect and colloquial language. Interestingly, a large portion of respondents (74%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with feeling left out, suggesting that the similarities between the languages provide a foundational bridge for social integration, though challenges persist for some.

Summary of Emotional Impacts

The exploration into the internal feelings of Indonesian students reveals a complex emotional landscape shaped by language proficiency. While a significant number of students exhibit resilience and adaptability, the emotional toll of academic challenges and social exclusion highlights the need for comprehensive support systems. These systems should aim not only to enhance language proficiency but also to address the broader emotional and social needs of international students, ensuring a more inclusive and supportive academic journey. By acknowledging and addressing these emotional dimensions, educational institutions can foster a more nurturing and empathetic environment for all international students navigating the challenges of studying abroad.

Section C: Assessment of Bahasa Melayu Proficiency Among Indonesian Students

Table 4. Language proficiency of Bahasa Melayu

Questions	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Statement (%)
Because of language proficiency I missed some good and vital point during the lecture	89 (72.4)	13 (10.6)	8 (6.5)	13 (10.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Because of Language proficiency I missed some good and vital points during extra co-curricular activities	33 (26.8)	23 (18.7)	41 (33.3)	20 (16.3)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)
Because of language proficiency I missed some good and vital points doing the task given	43 (35)	37 (30.1)	22 (17.9)	02 (1.6)	19 (15.4)	0 (0)
Because of Language proficiency my peers make fun of me	33 (26.3)	25 (20.3)	21 (17.1)	25 (20.3)	19 (15.4)	0 (0)

Analyzing Language Proficiency's Impact on Academic and Social Experiences

This section presents a detailed exploration into how Bahasa Melayu proficiency influences the academic engagement and social experiences of Indonesian students in Malaysia. The analysis is structured around four pivotal aspects: comprehension during lectures, participation in extracurricular activities, performance in academic tasks, and social interactions with peers.

Academic Lecture Comprehension

A significant majority of students (82.5%) reported no difficulties in grasping vital points during lectures, attributing this success to their language proficiency levels. This overwhelming consensus highlights the substantial number of students who, despite linguistic differences, manage to navigate academic lectures effectively, suggesting a degree of linguistic adaptability or the presence of supportive academic environments that mitigate language barriers. Table 4 outlines the levels of Malay language proficiency among participants and correlates these with academic and social engagement.

Engagement in Extracurricular Activities

The participation in extracurricular activities unveils a nuanced picture of language proficiency's role, with a notable 49.9% of respondents experiencing no challenges, while 21.2% faced difficulties due to language barriers. This distribution suggests that while a significant portion of students comfortably engage in these activities, a considerable minority struggles, underscoring the need for inclusive programming that accommodates diverse language proficiencies.

Performance in Academic Tasks

Language proficiency's impact on academic task completion presents a mixed response. A total of 65.1% of students did not find their language skills a barrier to

understanding and completing academic tasks effectively. However, a small yet significant proportion (16.5%) encountered obstacles, indicating areas where academic support could be enhanced to ensure equitable access to learning opportunities.

Social Interactions and Peer Dynamics

The survey revealed that 46.6% of Indonesian students felt unaffected by language proficiency in their social interactions, while 35.7% experienced some form of ridicule or exclusion from peers due to language differences. This finding points to the critical importance of fostering an inclusive campus culture that actively discourages language-based discrimination and promotes understanding and respect among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Conclusion: Language Proficiency as a Facilitator of Integration

The detailed examination of Bahasa Melayu proficiency among Indonesian students in Malaysia reveals that, for the majority, language does not serve as a significant barrier to academic success or social integration. However, the challenges faced by a noteworthy minority underscore the importance of targeted support mechanisms. These mechanisms could include language support services, culturally sensitive pedagogy, and initiatives that promote inclusivity and respect for linguistic diversity on campus. Addressing these needs is essential for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to fully engage with their academic and social environments, thereby enriching their educational experience and fostering a more inclusive academic community.

Section D: Analysis of English Language Proficiency Impact on Indonesian Students in Malaysia

Table 5. Language proficiency of English

Questions	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Statement (%)
Because of language proficiency I missed some good and vital point during the lecture	8 (6.5)	0	0	102 (88.4)	13 (10.6)	0
Because of Language proficiency I missed some good and vital points during extra co-curricular activities	23 (18.7)	20 (16.3)	6 (4.9)	33 (26.8)	41 (33.3)	0
Because of language proficiency I missed some good and vital points doing the task given	19 (15.4)	22 (17.9)	0	45 (36.8%)	37 (30.1)	0
Because of English Language proficiency my peers make fun of me	12 (19%)	13 (10.6%)	33 (26.3)	46 (37.4)	19 (15.4)	0 (0)

Investigating the Influence of English Proficiency on Academic and Extracurricular Engagement

This section delves into the profound impact of English language proficiency on Indonesian students' academic learning and social integration within the Malaysian educational landscape. The analysis is segmented into four key

areas: comprehension during lectures, involvement in extracurricular activities, completion of academic tasks, and the dynamics of peer interactions. The impact of English proficiency on understanding lecture content and engaging in extracurricular activities is detailed in Table 5.

Lecture Comprehension Challenges

An overwhelming 99% of respondents reported challenges in grasping essential points during lectures, attributing these difficulties directly to their level of English proficiency. This statistic starkly highlights the critical role of English language skills in understanding course content and suggests a pressing need for language support services aimed at enhancing lecture comprehension among non-native speakers.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

In the realm of extracurricular activities, 60.1% of students faced obstacles due to their English proficiency, with a significant portion missing out on key learning and networking opportunities. These findings underscore the importance of creating an inclusive extracurricular environment that accommodates diverse language backgrounds, ensuring all students can fully participate and benefit from these experiences.

Academic Task Performance

The impact of English proficiency on academic task performance reveals that 66.9% of students encountered difficulties in understanding and completing assignments, which is indicative of the barrier language proficiency can pose to academic success. This emphasizes the necessity for tailored academic support, including language assistance and adaptation of materials to accommodate non-native English speakers.

Peer Interaction and Social Inclusion

Regarding social interactions, 52.9% of Indonesian students experienced mockery or exclusion by peers due to their English language skills, illuminating a significant area for cultural sensitivity and inclusion training within the student body. Promoting a campus culture that values diversity and encourages supportive peer relationships is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging among international students.

Conclusion: Enhancing English Language Support for Academic and Social Integration

The detailed exploration of the impact of English language proficiency on Indonesian students in Malaysia illuminates substantial challenges in both academic and social spheres. The data advocates for a comprehensive support system that includes English language training, culturally responsive teaching methods, and initiatives aimed at cultivating an inclusive campus environment. By addressing these areas, educational institutions can facilitate a smoother transition for international students, enriching their academic journey and fostering a more welcoming and supportive community for all students.

Section E: Analysis of Cultural Adaptation and Environmental Acclimatization Among Indonesian Students in Malaysia

Table 6. Adapting to the new culture and environment

Questions	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Statement (%)
I make friends with the locals and slowly adjust myself with new place	5 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	105 (85)	13 (11)	0
I am adapting the way the locals use English Medium	10 (8)	13 (11)	6 (5)	20 (16)	74 (60)	0
They are nice people and I finally have no issues with them	9 (7)	10 (8)	7 (6)	55 (45)	40 (33)	0
I am positive with the new Malaysian life even it is not that similar to mine	2 (2)	3 (2)	13 (11)	56 (46)	49 (40)	0

Table 7. Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hardship Dealing with Malay Language	123	1.60	3.60	2.5350	0.49023
Internal Feeling	123	0.67	2.67	1.5203	0.59620
Proficiency of Malay Language	123	0.50	2.25	1.2947	0.48442
Proficiency of English Language	123	1.00	3.50	2.5447	0.73623
Valid N (listwise)	123				

Exploring the Dynamics of Cultural Integration and Environmental Adaptation

This analysis section meticulously examines how Indonesian students navigate their transition into the Malaysian cultural and educational environment, focusing on their adaptation strategies, social interactions, and overall attitude towards the new setting. It provides an in-depth look into the assimilation process, highlighting students' efforts to integrate, adapt to the English medium, establish rapport with locals, and maintain a positive outlook despite the challenges encountered. Table 6 presents findings on how participants adapt to cultural differences and new environmental settings, while Table 7 provides descriptive statistics that support the analysis of hardship dealing with the Malay language and other factors.

Social Integration and Making Connections

An impressive 96% of respondents reported actively

forging friendships with local students and community members, showcasing a strong inclination towards social integration and cultural exchange. This proactive approach to building relationships underscores the importance of social support systems in easing the transition into a new cultural and academic setting.

Linguistic Adaptation to the English Medium

Approximately 76% of the student cohort indicated a successful adaptation to the use of English as the medium of instruction and communication, reflecting significant linguistic flexibility and resilience. This adaptation is crucial for academic success and serves as a bridge to broader social integration within the campus and beyond.

Perceptions of the Host Community

The data reveal a generally positive perception of the Malaysian community among Indonesian students, with 78% expressing no issues in their interactions with locals. This

positive sentiment is indicative of a welcoming host environment and the students' openness to embracing new cultural experiences.

Positivity and Resilience in the Face of Change

Despite the inherent challenges of adjusting to a different life and academic system, an overwhelming 86% of respondents maintained a positive outlook on their experiences in Malaysia. This optimism is reflective of the students' resilience and determination to make the most of their international education opportunity, viewing it as a pivotal step towards personal and academic growth.

Conclusion: The Path Forward in Fostering Seamless Cultural and Academic Integration

The detailed exploration of Indonesian students' adaptation to the Malaysian cultural and academic landscape highlights a journey marked by significant effort, resilience, and a positive disposition. The findings advocate for enhanced cross-cultural programs, language support initiatives, and community engagement activities designed to further facilitate the integration process. By investing in these areas, educational institutions can ensure a more inclusive and supportive environment that not only aids in the smooth transition of international students but also enriches the cultural fabric of the academic community. Such efforts will pave the way for a more interconnected and empathetic global student body, fostering mutual respect and understanding across cultural divides.

Part 3

Section A: Descriptive Analysis of Linguistic Challenges and Adaptation Among Indonesian Students in Malaysia

Overview of Descriptive Statistical Findings

This segment presents a detailed statistical analysis of the linguistic challenges encountered by Indonesian students in Malaysia, alongside their emotional experiences and proficiency in Malay and English languages. The dataset encompasses responses from 123 participants, offering a robust basis for examining the nuances of linguistic adaptation and its implications on the student experience. The statistical insights from Table 7 help quantify the extent of linguistic and emotional challenges faced by the study participants.

Linguistic Hardships in Navigating Bahasa Melayu

The analysis of hardships related to Bahasa Melayu revealed a spectrum of experiences among the respondents, with hardship scores ranging from 1.60 to 3.60 and an average hardship rating of 2.5350. The standard deviation of 0.49023 indicates a relatively concentrated distribution of scores around the mean, suggesting a commonality in the degree of linguistic challenges faced by the students. This highlights the need for targeted language support to mitigate these challenges and enhance the educational journey of Indonesian students in Malaysia.

Emotional Well-Being and Internal Feelings

The exploration of internal feelings associated with linguistic adaptation yielded a broad range of emotional states, from a minimum score of 0.67 to a maximum of 2.67, with an average feeling score of 1.5203. The observed standard deviation of 0.59620 points to a moderate variability in emotional experiences, underscoring the diverse emotional landscapes navigated by students as they adjust to a new linguistic and cultural environment.

Proficiency in Malay Language

The proficiency levels in Bahasa Melayu among the

students showed variability, spanning from a low of 0.50 to a high of 2.25, with an average proficiency score of 1.2947. The standard deviation of 0.48442 reflects a range of language skills among the respondents, indicating differing levels of comfort and capability in engaging with the Malay language. This variability accentuates the importance of providing language learning opportunities tailored to varying proficiency levels.

English Language Proficiency: A Broader Spectrum

When assessing English language proficiency, the data exhibited a wider range of scores, from 1.00 to 3.50, with an average score of 2.5447. The higher standard deviation of 0.73623 compared to Malay language proficiency illustrates a broader diversity in English language skills among Indonesian students. This diversity in proficiency levels suggests that while some students are well-equipped to navigate academic and social interactions in English, others may benefit significantly from additional language support.

Concluding Insights on Linguistic Adaptation

The descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive snapshot of the linguistic challenges, emotional dynamics, and language proficiencies of Indonesian students in Malaysia. These insights underscore the complexity of linguistic adaptation and its profound impact on students' academic success and emotional well-being. Addressing these challenges through tailored language support programs and emotional counseling can facilitate a smoother transition and more enriching educational experience for international students.

Section B: Analysis of Correlations in Linguistic Adaptation and Academic Engagement

Table 8. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.920 ^a	0.846	0.840	0.210

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hardship dealing with Malay language, Internal Feeling, Language Proficiency of BM, Language Proficiency of EN, age

Model Overview of Linguistic Adaptation Factors

The analytical model, as summarized in the presented statistics, elucidates the relationships between various factors influencing the academic engagement of Indonesian students in Malaysia. The model's correlation coefficient (R) of 0.92 signifies a strong positive correlation between the combined independent variables — namely, linguistic challenges with Bahasa Melayu, internal emotional states, proficiency in both Bahasa Melayu (BM) and English (EN), as well as age — and the dependent variable, which is the students' educational outcomes.

Detailed Interpretation of Model Effectiveness

The R-Square value of 0.846 indicates that 84.6% of the variance in the educational outcomes of Indonesian students can be explained by the specified independent variables. This high percentage underscores the substantial impact of linguistic proficiency and emotional well-being on the academic performance and integration of these students into the Malaysian educational context.

The Adjusted R-Square value, slightly lower at 0.840, takes into account the number of predictors in the model, offering a more conservative estimate of the model's explanatory power. Despite this slight adjustment, the model remains highly effective in illustrating the critical role of language proficiency

and emotional factors in the educational journey of Indonesian students abroad.

The Standard Error of the Estimate at 0.210 further reinforces the model's precision and reliability in predicting the educational outcomes based on the identified linguistic and emotional variables.

Conclusions Drawn from Model Analysis

This comprehensive model highlights the intricate interplay between language barriers, emotional experiences, and academic success among Indonesian students in Malaysia. The strong correlation between these factors and educational outcomes emphasizes the necessity of addressing linguistic challenges and supporting the emotional well-being of international students to foster their academic achievement and integration into the host country's educational system.

The findings advocate for the implementation of targeted language support programs and psychological services tailored to the needs of international students, aimed at enhancing their linguistic competencies in both Bahasa Melayu and English, as well as providing them with the emotional support necessary to navigate the challenges of studying in a foreign environment. By addressing these critical factors, educational institutions can significantly improve the academic experience and success rates of international students, thereby enriching the educational landscape for all participants.

Section C: Comprehensive Evaluation of Variance Analysis in Educational Adaptation Study

Table 9. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	28.339	5	5.668	128.993	.000 ^b
Residual	5.141	117	0.044		
Total	33.480	122			

a. Dependent Variable: Education
b. Predictors: (Constant), Hardship dealing with Malay language, Internal Feeling, Language Proficiency of BM, Language Proficiency of EN, age

Detailed Overview of ANOVA Results

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) outlined in the study meticulously assesses the impact of linguistic and emotional variables on the educational outcomes of Indonesian students in Malaysia. The model rigorously quantifies the variance explained by these independent variables, offering insightful revelations into their collective influence on academic success.

Statistical Breakdown and Interpretation

Table 8 provides a detailed overview of the regression analysis results, illustrating the significant correlations between demographic and linguistic variables with educational outcomes. The ANOVA table delineates a significant model with a Regression Sum of Squares at 28.339, distributed across five degrees of freedom, yielding a Mean Square of 5.668. This statistical measure, combined with an F-value of 128.993, compellingly indicates that the model variables significantly predict the students' educational performance, evidenced by a p-value of less than 0.05.

The Residual Sum of Squares stands at 5.141 for 117 degrees of freedom, translating to a Mean Square of 0.044, further underscoring the model's efficacy in explaining the variability in educational outcomes among the studied cohort.

The Total Sum of Squares, capturing the overall variance in education levels, is calculated at 33.480, distributed across 122 observations. This comprehensive aggregation of variance components validates the robustness and relevance of the model in the context of the research.

Significance and Educational Implications

Table 9 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which quantifies how much of the variance in educational outcomes can be explained by the independent variables we have studied. The ANOVA results authenticate the substantial correlation between the dependent variable — educational outcomes — and the collective independent variables, including the hardship encountered with the Malay language, internal emotional states, language proficiency in both Bahasa Melayu and English, and the age factor.

This significant statistical relationship underscores the imperative for educational institutions to adopt multifaceted strategies aimed at alleviating language barriers and supporting the emotional well-being of international students. By doing so, they can significantly enhance these students' academic engagement, performance, and overall educational experience.

The findings advocate for a proactive approach to designing and implementing comprehensive support systems that address the linguistic and emotional challenges faced by international students. Such initiatives would not only bolster the academic success of this demographic but also contribute to a more inclusive and empathetic educational environment that values diversity and fosters intercultural understanding and cooperation.

Section D: Analysis of Regression Results: Insights into Educational Dynamics Among Indonesian Students in Malaysia

Table 10. Result of analysis regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.410	0.246		-1.667	0.098
Age	0.453	0.041	0.787	11.017	0.000***
Hardship Dealing with Bahasa	0.112	0.055	0.104	2.018	0.046**
Internal Feeling	0.013	0.050	0.015	0.268	0.789
Language Proficiency of Bm	-0.063	0.049	-0.058	-1.281	0.203
Language Proficiency of Eng	0.111	0.044	0.155	2.495	0.014**

*p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

Comprehensive Interpretation of Regression Outcomes

The regression analysis conducted utilizing SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) reveals a nuanced

understanding of how various factors, including linguistic challenges and emotional experiences, impact the academic journey of Indonesian students in Malaysia. The regression

model, as illustrated in Table 10, employs unstandardized and standardized coefficients to elucidate the relationship between independent variables and educational achievements.

Detailed Examination of Influential Factors:-

- **Age as a Determinant:** The analysis shows that age significantly correlates with educational outcomes, with a beta coefficient (β) of 0.453, indicating a robust and positive influence on academic performance. This relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), highlighting the critical role of age in shaping the educational experiences of respondents.
- **Linguistic Hardships and Academic Integration:** The hardship encountered in grappling with Bahasa Melayu presents a statistically significant challenge, as evidenced by a beta coefficient (β) of 0.112 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that overcoming language barriers is crucial for enhancing the educational engagement and success of Indonesian students in Malaysia.
- **The Role of Internal Feelings:** Contrary to expectations, internal feelings did not exhibit a statistically significant impact on educational outcomes, as indicated by a beta coefficient (β) of 0.013 ($p > 0.05$). This finding invites a deeper exploration of the complex interplay between emotional well-being and academic performance.
- **Proficiency in Bahasa Melayu:** Interestingly, proficiency in Bahasa Melayu did not significantly affect the academic outcomes, denoted by a beta coefficient (β) of -0.063 ($p > 0.05$). This outcome suggests that other factors might play a more pivotal role in the academic integration of Indonesian students.
- **English Language Proficiency as a Lever for Success:** A notable finding is the significant positive relationship between English language proficiency and educational outcomes, with a beta coefficient (β) of 0.111 ($p < 0.05$). This underscores the importance of English language skills in navigating the academic environment effectively.

Synthesis and Educational Implications

The regression analysis offers valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that shape the educational trajectories of Indonesian students in Malaysia. The significant predictors identified through this analysis—age and English language proficiency—underscore the necessity for targeted support strategies aimed at enhancing linguistic competencies and acknowledging the varied experiences that different age groups bring to their educational pursuits.

This nuanced understanding of the determinants of academic success illuminates the path for educators, policymakers, and student support services to devise holistic interventions. By addressing linguistic barriers and fostering an inclusive academic environment, stakeholders can empower Indonesian students to achieve their full academic potential, thereby enriching the educational landscape in Malaysia with diverse perspectives and experiences.

6. DISCUSSION

Navigating the Confluence of Language, Culture, and Education

Unraveling the Linguistic Tapestry: A Comparative Insight

The linguistic journey from Bahasa Indonesia to Bahasa Melayu epitomizes the broader narrative of cultural and historical interconnections across the Malay Archipelago. As

[4] astutely observes, the genesis and evolution of these languages are emblematic of the archipelago's rich socio-historical saga, influenced profoundly by trade, colonization, and cultural exchanges. While sharing a common Austronesian lineage, Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia have charted distinct paths, shaped by the unique socio-political and cultural landscapes of Malaysia and Indonesia, respectively. This divergence, accentuated by phonological variations and semantic differences as highlighted by [6] and [8], presents a nuanced linguistic landscape for Indonesian students in Malaysia, offering both challenges and opportunities for cross-cultural and linguistic exploration.

Overcoming Linguistic Hurdles: A Multidimensional Challenge

The academic and social assimilation of Indonesian students into the Malaysian educational system is a multidimensional endeavor, underscored by linguistic barriers that extend beyond mere language proficiency. The works of [11-13] (bring to light the myriad linguistic and cultural challenges these students face, affecting not only their academic engagement but also their social integration. These challenges necessitate a comprehensive approach, encompassing linguistic support and cultural orientation, to mitigate the impact of these barriers and enhance the educational experience for Indonesian students in Malaysia.

Bridging Cultural and Academic Divides: Towards Integration and Success

The linguistic similarities and divergences between Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia set a complex stage for the cultural and academic integration of Indonesian students in Malaysia. This study underscores the importance of cultural adaptation, as advocated by [16], in navigating the academic landscape, highlighting the correlation between cultural acclimatization and academic achievement. Emphasizing the need for enhanced linguistic proficiency in both Bahasa Melayu and English, alongside fostering cultural understanding, the study advocates for a holistic educational strategy to support Indonesian students' integration into the Malaysian academic and social milieu.

Implications for Interdisciplinary Scholarship and Policy

By weaving together empirical findings with theoretical insights, this discussion transcends disciplinary boundaries, contributing to linguistics, sociology, and education policy. The study elucidates the interplay between language proficiency, cultural adaptation, and academic success, offering a nuanced understanding of the educational trajectories of international students. It beckons a collaborative educational framework that not only addresses linguistic barriers but also embraces cultural diversity, enriching the educational landscape for both host and guest communities.

Towards an Inclusive and Collaborative Educational Ecosystem

In navigating the linguistic and cultural confluence of Indonesian students in Malaysia, this study illuminates the path towards an inclusive and dynamic educational ecosystem. By acknowledging the shared linguistic heritage and embracing the complexities of cultural integration, educators and policymakers are poised to foster a nurturing environment that celebrates diversity and promotes academic excellence. This collaborative approach, underscored by targeted strategies and interdisciplinary insights, promises to bridge linguistic divides and catalyze a more inclusive and enriched educational paradigm, heralding a new era of international education that is as diverse as it is unified.

7. CONCLUSION

Navigating New Horizons in International Education

Embarking on an international education journey represents a foray into a world brimming with both challenges and opportunities. This venture, while fraught with obstacles, especially linguistic barriers, unfolds an unparalleled adventure in personal and academic growth. For Indonesian students in Malaysia, the voyage is marked by the dual familiarity and novelty of navigating between Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia, languages that are closely related yet distinct in their own right. This unique cross-linguistic landscape not only tests their resilience but also enriches their academic journey with deep cultural insights and enhanced linguistic skills.

The crux of this educational odyssey lies in overcoming linguistic hurdles, a challenge that, although daunting, catalyzes growth, adaptability, and a broader understanding of the world. Through various strategies, from language exchange partnerships to the utilization of digital tools for language learning, students forge paths over these barriers, turning them into opportunities for deeper cultural immersion and academic excellence. This process is not merely about acquiring linguistic proficiency but also about embracing the rich tapestry of cultural nuances and perspectives that shape their host country.

Moreover, the immersion into a multilingual environment extends beyond language acquisition, fostering global competencies and preparing students for a future in an intricately connected world. The essence of studying abroad transcends academic achievements, encapsulating invaluable lessons in cultural adaptability, resilience, and global citizenship.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The insights gleaned from the experiences of Indonesian students in Malaysia bear significant implications for policymakers and educators in the realm of international education. To enhance the educational journey for international students, it is imperative to:

- 1. Develop Comprehensive Language Support Programs:** Institutions should offer robust language support services, including preparatory language courses and ongoing language assistance, tailored to the linguistic backgrounds of international students.
- 2. Foster Cultural Exchange and Integration:** Universities should create platforms that facilitate cultural exchange, encouraging interactions between international and local students to promote mutual understanding and integration.
- 3. Implement Inclusive Teaching Strategies:** Educators should adopt inclusive teaching practices that accommodate the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students, ensuring that language barriers do not impede academic success.
- 4. Encourage Multilingualism:** Encouraging the learning of both the host country's language and English as an international lingua franca can broaden students' linguistic capabilities and enhance their global competencies.
- 5. Guide Policy Development:** The experiences and challenges faced by international students should inform the development of educational policies that support the academic and social integration of these students into their host countries.

Future Directions

This study's exploration into the linguistic experiences of Indonesian students in Malaysia unveils a broader dialogue on the dynamics of international education. Future research should delve deeper into the longitudinal impacts of language proficiency on academic success and social integration, examining how initial linguistic challenges shape the long-term educational outcomes of international students. Additionally, comparative studies across different linguistic and cultural contexts could offer richer insights into the global landscape of international education, informing best practices for supporting students in their academic journeys abroad.

Embracing a Global Educational Vision

In conclusion, the journey of Indonesian students in Malaysia exemplifies the transformative potential of international education. By confronting and overcoming linguistic barriers, students not only achieve academic growth but also emerge as culturally adept global citizens. This journey underscores the importance of embracing challenges as opportunities for enrichment, advocating for a more inclusive and supportive international educational environment. Through collective efforts from educators, policymakers, and the students themselves, the path of international education can be paved with success, fostering a world where linguistic and cultural boundaries are bridges to understanding and collaboration.

REFERENCES

- [1] Azra, A. (2002). *Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Nasional: Rekonsiliasi dan Demokratisasi*. PT Kompas Media Nusantara.
- [2] Othm, I.W., Yusoff, M.S., Ationg, R., Esa, M.S., Shah, M.K.M. (2020). The influence of culture and family towards the decision to pursue study abroad: A case study of Malaysian public universities. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 17(6): 10688-10714.
- [3] Sneddon, J.N. (2003). *The Indonesian Language: Its History and Role in Modern Society*. UNSW Press.
- [4] Ridwan, M. (2018). National and official language: the long journey of Indonesian language. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 1(2): 72-78. <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v1i2.14>
- [5] Adelaar, K.A. (1989). Malay influence on Malagasy: Linguistic and culture-historical implications. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 28(1): 1-46.
- [6] Steinhauer, H. (1991). Focus and topic in Indonesian. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 30(2): 181-190.
- [7] Collins, J.T. (1998). *Malay, World Language: A Short History*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- [8] Ting, S.H., Marzuki, E., Chuah, K.M., Misieng, J., Jerome, C. (2017). Employers' views on the importance of English proficiency and communication skill for employability in Malaysia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(2): 315-327. <http://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i2.8132>
- [9] Subekti, N.B., Lawson, M.J. (2007). Vocabulary acquisition strategies of Indonesian postgraduate students through reading. *International Education Journal*, 8(2): 485-496.
- [10] Errington, J. (1998). *Shifting Languages: Interaction and*

- Identity in Javanese Indonesia. Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Sulistiyono, B.B., Hjaazi, M.Z. (2019). Malaysia–Indonesia: In the vortex of interpretation. *Jurnal Ilmiah M-Progress*, 9(2): 339. <https://doi.org/10.35968/m-pu.v9i2.339>
- [12] Nasir, M. (2012). Effects of cultural adjustment on academic achievement of international students. *Journal of Elementary Education*, 22(2): 95-103.
- [13] Milroy, L., Muysken, P. (1995). *One speaker, two languages: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on code-switching*. Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Sawir, E. (2005). Language difficulties of international students in Australia: The effects of the prior learning experience. *International Education Journal*, 6(5): 567-580.
- [15] Singleton R.A., Stratts B.C. (2009). *Approaches to Social Research*. University Press. New York: Oxford.
- [16] Sutopo, A.H. (2002). Sociolinguistic change in an Indonesian society. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 6(3): 419-435.
- [17] Enh, A.M., Wahab, A., Azlan, A.A., Talib, K.A., Sakti, A.M.T., Sultan, F.M.M. (2024). Life experiences and cultural adaptation among migrant workers in Malaysia. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-023-00360-1>
- [18] Ridaryanthi, M., Pawanteh, L. (2010). From you (U) to double you (W): Intercultural adaptation patterns of Malaysian students in Indonesia. In the 16th Annual Conference of Intercultural Communication Studies. https://www.academia.edu/13007890/From_You_U_to_Double_You_W_Intercultural_Adaptation_Patterns_of_Malaysian_Students_in_Indonesia.
- [19] Nadesan, N., Shah, P. (2020). Non-linguistic challenges faced by Malaysian students in enhancing speaking skills. *Creative Education*, 11: 1988-2001. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2020.1110145>
- [20] Hamuddin, B., Natsir, M. (2017). Culture shocks experienced by Indonesian students studying overseas. *International Journal of Educational Best Practices*, 1(2): 87-105. <https://doi.org/10.31258/ijebp.v1n2.p87-105>