# Regional Identity and Lingua Franca in the ASEAN Region: A Comparative Study of Indonesian and Malay

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**How to Cite:** Sirulhaq, A., & Kurniawan, M. A. (2024). Regional identity and lingua franca in the ASEAN region: A comparative study of Indonesian and Malay. *Journal of ASEAN Studies, 12*(2), 383-412. https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v12i2.9582

## Abstract

Indonesian and Malay share a common ancestral origin. After being separated nearly a century ago, the trajectories of these two languages have diverged significantly. While Indonesian has experienced rapid growth, Malay has lagged. Amid discussions about establishing a lingua franca in the ASEAN region, both languages have been proposed as potential candidates. However, despite prolonged debate, progress in this direction has faced challenges. Neighboring Malay-speaking countries advocate for Malay as the ASEAN lingua franca, while Indonesia actively promotes Indonesian. This research aimed to examine the evolution of Malay in the Archipelago or ASEAN region while demonstrating why Indonesian is a more suitable candidate for lingua franca status than Malay. The research applied qualitative methods, specifically an integrative-critical review and a netnographic approach. The findings reveal that both language share roots in a 7th-century Southeast Asian lingua franca, which was later modernized during colonialism and played a pivotal role in regional trade. This shared historical legacy continues to influence the collective identity of ASEAN Linguistically, Indonesians have developed more complex markers than Malay, reflecting Indonesia's dynamic sociocultural evolution. These features align with universal language principles, facilitating precise and efficient communication. Additionally, sociolinguistic and geopolitical advantages have bolstered Indonesia's prominence, leading to its adoption in foreign education and UNESCO recognition. In contrast, Malay has not achieved comparable milestones.

**Keywords:** identity, ASEAN, Indonesian, Malay, lingua franca


P-ISSN 2338-1361/ E-ISSN 2338-1353
Received: 10th February 2023/ Revised: 28th January 2025/ Accepted: 18th February 2025

## Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in Bangkok in 1967 by five Southeast Asian nations: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines. The declaration issued by the five nations was composed in English. The ASEAN bloc currently has 10 member countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, and Vietnam. The region has varied geographical features, political systems, cultural traditions, and linguistic diversity. Most countries in the ASEAN region share a common historical foundation, particularly with Malay identity, culture, language, and religion (Collins, 2017; Gil, 2024; Maharam, 2021; Safari et al., 2024). This historical foundation is intrinsically linked to the strategic position of Southeast Asian countries at the crossroads of maritime routes. The region has historically enabled cultural exchange and economic relations since the rise of colonial powers (Ayuso-Díaz, 2022).

Despite a relatively harmonious relationship, ASEAN countries have experienced fluctuations in their relations. This is partly because of territorial disputes among ASEAN countries (Putten et al., 2011), for example, territorial disputes between Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, China, and Taiwan in the South China Sea (Raharjo, 2011). In addition, relations between Malaysia and Indonesia have often become heated over claims to border areas on the islands of Sipadan and Ligitan (Nabilla, 2022; Putra & Afrizal, 2016; Rochmawati et al., 2022). Moreover, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad claimed Indonesia's Riau Islands as part of Malaysian territory (Reditya, 2022). In 1962, under President Diosdado Macapagal, the Philippines also claimed the Sabah region as its territory. The claim continued under the leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos (Kadir, 2024).

Moreover, disputes between ASEAN countries often occur in the cultural sphere (Curaming, 2022; Dollah, et al., 2024; Guan & Suryadinata, 2007; Mahayana, 2010; Selo et al., 2015; Weintraub, 2013). Some ASEAN countries claim some existing cultural arts as theirs. For example, in 2008, Thailand and Cambodia had a dispute over the ownership of the Preah Vihear Temple (Mohtar,2023). This led to a political conflict that affected the bilateral relations between the two countries. In addition, some of Indonesia's cultural arts are also often claimed by Malaysia, such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet performance), *rasa sayange* song, *batik* clothes, *reog ponorogo* art performance, *rendang* food, *angklung* art performance, *pendet* dance, and *kuda lumping* dance (Lahitani, 2015).

Some territorial and cultural disputes show that the bonds of solidarity among ASEAN countries are still very fragile. As a result, the strengthening of the bonds of brotherhood still needs to be pursued. The researchers believe that one way to build a collective consciousness among ASEAN countries is to build or establish a linguistic identity. However, it is notable that ASEAN countries still tend to use English as their lingua franca or working language instead of using their native language in the ASEAN region. Indeed, the role of English in promoting a common identity and sense of belonging among member states is unclear and far removed from the historical spirit of Southeast Asian countries that have been under colonial rule for a long time (Lee, et al., 2022, 2023). In addition, the ASEAN region is home to thousands of local languages—approximately 1,200-1,300 local languages if all unique local

languages are added together—including Malay (*Bahasa Melayu*) and Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*) (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Given this linguistic diversity, the research raises the question of which languages deserve to be the lingua franca of identity in the ASEAN region.

Most of the official languages in ASEAN countries are part of the Austronesian (Malay-Polynesian) language family. Two of them, namely Khmer (Mon-Khmer branch) and Vietnamese (Viet-Muong branch), are from the Austroasiatic family (Ethnologue, n.d.). Therefore, these two languages cannot represent ASEAN's regional identity. Meanwhile, Thai and Lao (Kam-Tai branch) belong to the Kra-Dai group, which is more closely related to the languages of China (Sino-Tibetan family) than the native languages of Southeast Asia. As a result, these languages are somewhat distanced from the motherland of Southeast Asian languages. Furthermore, the scripts used by Khmer and Thai do not use the familiar Latin script. This condition makes it difficult for these languages to represent ASEAN's regional identity. Enfield (2019) even refers to these languages as mainland Southeast Asian languages. This provides an even stricter boundary as it confronts mainland Southeast Asia with the islands (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam and Timor Leste).

Furthermore, based on a typological perspective, the languages of mainland Southeast Asian have complex language characteristics. The characteristics of Austronesian languages are agglutinative, while the languages of mainland Southeast Asia are isolative and flexional, with rich in suprasegmental phonemes (tones). Austronesian languages, by contrast, are not familiar with suprasegmental phonemes. If tone languages are emphasized, it takes adjustments for speakers of other languages to adapt to the typical language. Even when compared to the number and distribution of speakers, other languages in ASEAN still fall far behind Indonesian and Malay. This disparity causes the formation of regional identity to narrow down to two potential languages, namely Indonesian and Malay.

Indonesian and Malay are descended from a common ancestor. There has been a long evolution from the emergence of Malay to the emergence of Indonesian. Although Indonesian is much younger than Malay, using it as a lingua franca in the Southeast Asia is more appropriate. On that basis, this research aims to explain the evolution of Malay in the archipelago or ASEAN region; and explain why Indonesian deserves to be proposed as a lingua franca in the ASEAN region.

## Language and Regional Identity: A Theoretical Framework

The identity of a multinational region is often complex and diverse. This complexity is due to the unique historical, cultural, and socio-political dynamics of each country in the region. The frequent crises in the Balkan region, for example, which includes countries such as Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, are partly triggered by language issues. Linguistic cleavages are endemic in the Balkans and have long been a symptom of and a cause of ethnic animosity (Greenberg, 2004; Hranova, 2002; Skendi, 1975). At the same time, despite their history and tensions, these countries share a common language, cultural traditions, and economic ties (Akova & Kantar, 2021; Citaku, 2024; Plantak & Paleviq, 2022). This shared

identity as Balkan countries is further strengthened by their collective efforts to address regional challenges such as political instability and economic development (Hudson, 2010). Indeed, the dynamics of language and regional identity in the Balkans are shaped by a combination of historical legacies, sociopolitical changes, and cultural exchanges. However, the region's linguistic diversity and the role of language in national and regional identity formation highlight the complex and evolving nature of the Balkans' cultural landscape. Language plays a crucial role in shaping national and regional identities. The codification and standardization of languages often reflect nationalistic ambitions and efforts to consolidate national identity (Jordan, 2019; Skendi, 1975).

Language as an identity and unifying factor not only applies as a link between countries in a particular region but also plays a crucial role in determining the ties that exist between regions within a country. This can be seen in the relationship between the Catalonia region in Spain. The issue of the lingua franca in Catalonia is nuanced and multifaceted, shaped by historical, political, social, and cultural dynamics. It raises a question of which language will serve as the common medium of communication in a region where multiple languages coexist, with Catalan and Spanish being the two dominant ones. Over the years, Catalan has been promoted as the region's primary language, while Spanish remains the dominant language of communication across Spain.

In Catalonia, Catalan is the language of choice in public administration, media, and education, but due to the diverse immigrant population, Spanish is the lingua franca (Boix-Fuster & Sanz, 2008). By actively promoting the use of Catalan in schools, government institutions, and everyday life, the people of Catalonia maintain a strong connection to their cultural and historical traditions. This language revival has not only helped to strengthen their regional identity but has also been a form of resistance in attempts to suppress their autonomy and distinctiveness (Canga, 2019; Woolard, 2005). Therefore, the separatist movement or referendum that Catalonia carried out in 1917 under the Spanish government cannot be separated from the linguistic identity that emerged from the Catalan language. In this way, language is a powerful tool to preserve heritage and promote unity in diverse communities. It allows the expression of unique cultural values and traditions and fosters a sense of pride and belonging among its speakers.

The emergence of a lingua franca or regional unifying language, can be traced to Aramaic, a Semitic language spoken in the Persian Empire in the 12th century BC (European Commission, 2011). It emerged long before the development of Latin and Greek. Languages with large numbers of speakers and a wide distribution of speakers, such as English, French and Spanish, have transcended national, regional and global boundaries. This has led to these languages as lingua franca in a global context. Additionally, other languages have emerged that connect regional countries, such as Swahili, Quechua, Hausa, Arabic, and Malay (Brown & Miller, 2013). Swahili, one of the Bantu languages, has become the lingua franca of countries in the African region. Quechua is the lingua franca of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Hausa is the lingua franca of Central Africa, especially in Nigeria. Arabic is the lingua franca of the Middle East.

Based on linguistic factors, a language used as a regional identity (lingua franca) must meet the requirements of the number of speakers, simplicity or ease, language distribution, and modernity. This principle aligns with Poedjosoedarmo's (2006), Pakir's, (2010) and Schneider's (2013) view regarding universal languages. Furthermore, the language selected as a lingua franca should be easily understood by different cultures and ethnic groups within the region. This aims to ensure that their messages are understood without having to find common ground (Kecskes, 2007). Additionally, the language must be adaptable to various dialects and accents to foster inclusivity and promote communication among diverse populations. Other requirements include the use of fixed expressions with clear compositional meanings and the ability to create new formulas as needed.

Besides linguistic factors, social factors also play a crucial role in the formation of lingua franca, such as power, prestige, political policy, demography, culture, history, economy, and science and technology (Amelia, 2024; Pennycook, 2011; Smakman, 2018). Furthermore, a lingua franca requires a strong infrastructure within the education sector to ensure its continued growth and relevance in the modern world (Crystal, 2003; Gil, 2022). These factors play an important role in shaping the dominance of a particular language as a lingua franca in different regions of the world. For example, English has become a global lingua franca due to the historical influence of British colonialism, the economic power of the United States, and the widespread use of English in international business and technology. As a result, English has become the lingua franca for communication in many multinational corporations, academic institutions, and diplomatic circles. Thus, the complex relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic factors is important for lingua franca communication in the modern world.

## Research Methods

To gain the empirical insights relating to Indonesian and Malay issues (Banister & Wee, 2015), the research applies qualitative methods, namely integrative or critical review (Snyder, 2019) and netnography approach (Fenton & Parry, 2022). Data is collected from various written sources, including journal articles, books, online media or websites, and archives relevant to the topic or problem. These data sources are collected, processed, coded, and validated through word processing techniques. Various tools are used, mainly by using search queries provided in online database libraries and/or in (social) media, with basic techniques of documentation, observation, listening, and note-taking.

The collected data is then systematically sorted based on its relevance and credibility. Irrelevant sources are identified and excluded, while relevant and credible sources are organized based on the themes in the research questions. For the data analysis, the research combines thematic analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis (Fenton & Parry, 2020; Kozinets, 2010), and interactive analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). As the discussion also includes analysis related to linguistic structure, the data analysis uses an approach called comparative equating and comparative differentiating (Mahsun, 2017). Thus, the steps of data

analysis in the research consist of coding, recording, abstracting and comparing, checking and refining, generalizing, and theorizing (Kozinets, 2010).

## Malay Evolution

*Its Origin and Spread in the Archipelago*

The Malay has long been spread across the Archipelago that now encompasses several countries in the Southeast Asian region, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, and Singapore (Adelaar & Himmelmann, 2005) (see Figure 1). However, according to Adelaar (2005), the traditional habitat of the Malay variety is primarily the land area around the South China Sea, specifically Sumatra, West Kalimantan, and West Malaysia, or the Malay Peninsula. During the colonial era, this region was commonly known as the Asiatic Islands, the Eastern Islands, or the Malay Archipelago (see Figure 2). Malay is part of the Austronesian language, and its origins have been the subject of extensive scholarly debate (Adelaar, 1992; Clynes & Deterding, 2011; Mahsun, 2010; Sneddon, 2003).

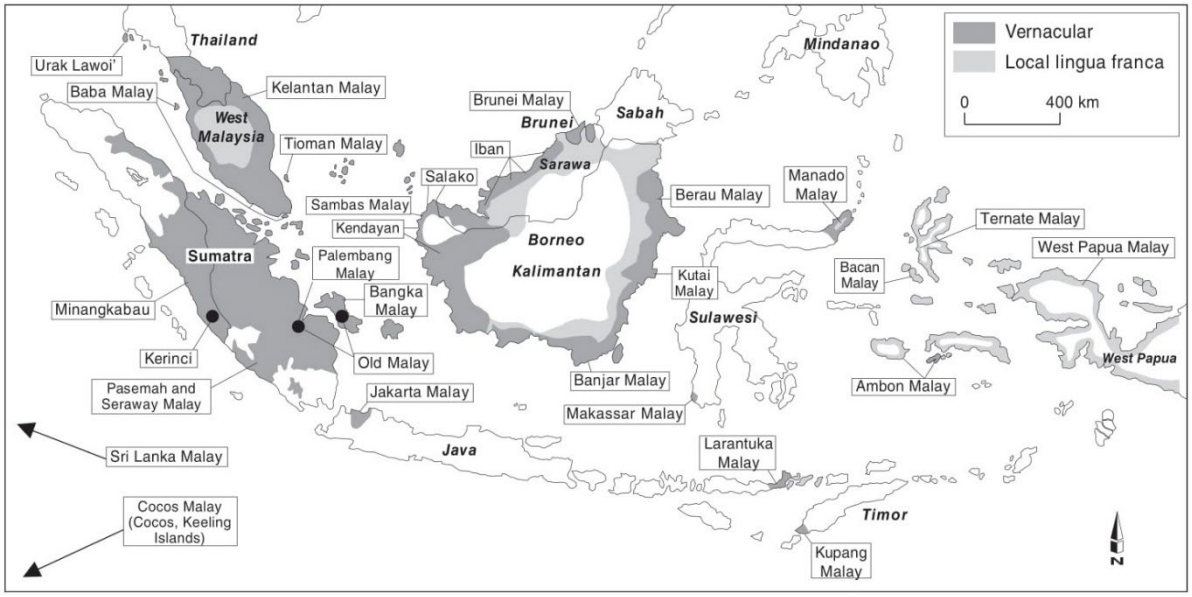


Figure 1 Map of Areas Where Malay Isolects are Spoken (Adelaar & Himmelmann, 2005).

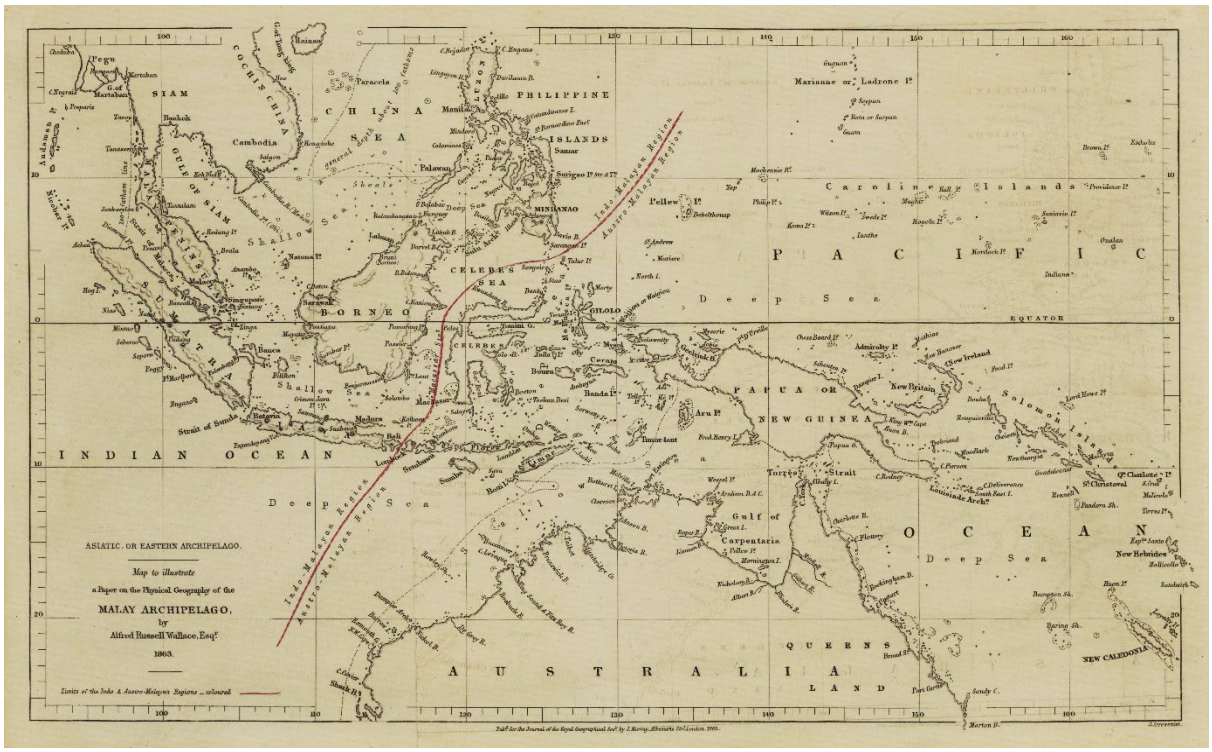


Figure 2 Map of the Asian or Eastern Islands 1863 depicting the Malay Archipelago based on a paper on physical geography by Alfred Rusell Wallace 1863 (Arowsmith, 1863)

Historically, proto-Malay speakers have spread in several areas since a thousand years ago, such as Jakarta (Betawi), Ambon, Manado, Pengambengan (Bali), Ampenan (Lombok), Kupang (Timor), and Larantuka (East Flores) (Andaya, 2001; Blust, 1988; Embong et al., 2016). Related to economic interests, Malay spread as a language of communication and trade (Maxwell, 1907; Ricci, 2013). According to archaeologists and historians, ancient Malay has been spoken in Indonesia since the 7th century (Masinambow & Paul, 2002; Maxwell, 1907). This is indicated by empirical evidence in written sources in Malay, such as the Sojomerto inscription, the Dieng inscription, the Manjusrigrha inscription, and the Karang Brahi inscription. Some other indications of the presence of ancient Malay in the archipelago are also clearly recorded by stone inscriptions in Trengganu on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula. In the early 19th century, these inscriptions were discovered by an Arab merchant and tin miner named Siayid Husin bin Ghulam al-Bokhari on the Tĕrĕsat River near Kuala Brang. Although the inscription on the stone is in Malay, it is written in Arabic (Paterson, 1924). This may be because the inscription refers to the introduction of Islam, which was brought by the Prophet Muhammad and written in Arabic script, or because the maker did not recognize Latin or other types of script. It is estimated that this inscription was written around the 13th century.

The Malay is part of the Austronesian language family, specifically within the Malay-Polynesian branch (Nothofer, 2006). Many scholars argue that the Malay language spread from the eastern region of Sumatra. However, in linguistic studies, diachronic linguistic methods are usually used to prove the origin and spread of languages. Therefore, the spread

of Malay in the Archipelago has to be proved based on the principles of diachronic linguistics, namely by reconstructing the form of the ancient language. This begins with efforts to reconstruct the proto-Malay, as has long been done by leading diachronic linguists such as Adelaar, Blust, Nothofer, Kridalaksana, and Wolff (as cited in Ahmad & Zain, 1988). Adelaar's reconstructions are performed on related languages to determine the same general patterns.

These findings have significantly contributed to the research on Malayic languages spoken in different parts of the Archipelago, especially in the Asian region. Along with the changes and development, the Malay has survived in several countries in Asia until today. At the same time, the languages have experienced changes such as the addition of the number of lexicons, shifts in the form of lexicons, and changes in grammatical structure. Scholars have reconstructed this language, suggesting that the origin of ancient Malay in Asia was on the island of Borneo (Collins, 2005, see Figure 3). This is evidenced by many dialectal variations in the region. Linguistic theory holds that language's origin can often be traced to the area with the most dialectal variants.

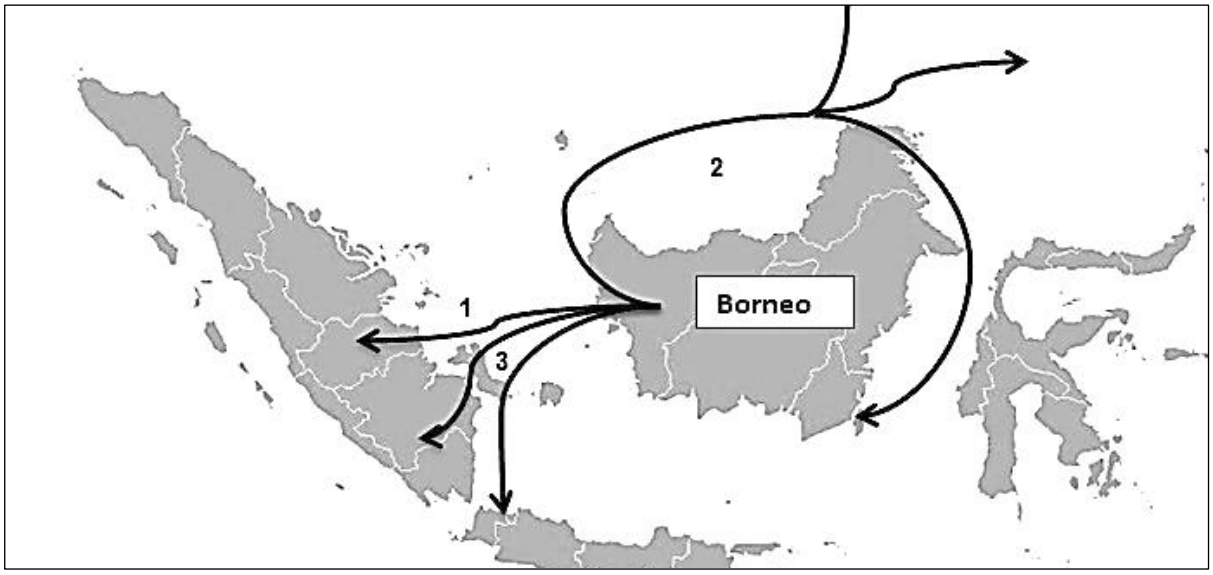


Figure 3 Map of Ancient Malay Migration in West Kalimantan according to Nothofer (in Collins, 2005).

The spread of Malay in the archipelago during the premodern era cannot be separated from cultural and imperial factors. In the early first millennium AD, the cultural center of the Malay Archipelago was initially in northeastern Borneo. During this time, the Austronesian speakers began migrating gradually southwestward, which influenced the spread and development of the Malay (Kullanda, 2006). From the 7th to 14th Century, the hegemony of the Srivijaya Empire, a Malay-speaking empire, played a crucial role in the spread of Malay. The empire's dominance in trade and governance helped establish Malay as the lingua franca across the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Borneo, and parts of the Moluccas (Omar, 2020). Trade is a key factor in the spread of Malay. Malay served as the lingua franca for traders and sailors, facilitating communication and commerce across the Archipelago region. The language's

richness in nautical and maritime terms underscores its importance in trade and navigation. Additionally, the spread of Islam significantly impacted the development of Malay, introducing Arabic vocabulary, writing, and educational practices. It helps unify different ethnicities under a common linguistic identity, further promoting the use of Malay (Ali & Alduagishi, 2024; Hoogervorst, 2024; Othman, 2023**).**

Given the wide spread of Malay over thousands of years in the pre-modern era, it is not surprising that modern Malay has many dialects across the Indonesian Archipelago. Historical factors have contributed to the dispersion of Malay dialects across several countries within ASEAN. In Indonesia, these dialects are spread from Sabang City to Merauke City (from the western tip of Sumatra to the eastern tip of Papua). There are also Chinese Malay dialects among these dialects (Oetomo, 1991). In other countries, such as Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and several other countries in the ASEAN region, Malay dialects occupy several enclaves in each of these countries. This indicates that Malay has not only survived through the centuries but also occupied several enclaves in several countries in Southeast Asia.

### *Malay in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Era*

On March 23, 1598, Frederick and Cornelis brought their crews to the Indonesian Archipelago, specifically to Weh Island off the coast of Aceh (Linehan, 1949). They were both captains of the Dutch ships (Lion and Lioness) and arrived in Aceh on June 26, 1599. On November 11 of the same year, Frederick disembarked with about 30 crew members. The Sultan of Aceh sent them gifts. According to Linehan (1949), the gifts were food to which "poison" (or drugs) had been added. While the crew was under the influence of the drug, Frederick and Cornelis were attacked and captured. While in captivity, he wrote a book on Malay. It was the first writing on Malay in Europe, published in the Netherlands a year after his release from prison in 1602 (Linehan, 1949). In Linehan's account, it is not clear whether the book was written in Malay. However, a closer examination of the timeline surrounding the creation of the Malay glossary raises strong doubts, suggesting that Frederick's work not only focused on the Malay language but also included a Malay glossary. Furthermore, the title of his book, *Spraeck ende Woord-boek in de Maleysche ende Madagascar,* reinforces this possibility. This perspective is only speculation as scholars generally believe that the first Malay glossary was recorded in Pigafetta's list of 400 Malay-Italian vocabulary words written in 1522 (Echols, 1978; Soriente, 2024).

In addition, Linehan's (1949) interesting account shows that since about the 15th century, there have been at least several countries or kingdoms that came to the Archipelago, both for trading purposes and to spread the influence of Christianity (Sokol, 1948). Among these were the Chinese (who settled in Malacca in the 16th century), the Portuguese (who took control of Malacca in 1511), the Dutch (who began to conquer the Malay Archipelago in 1461), and the British ( who began to establish their influence in the Archipelago in the 17th century) (Linehan, 1949). The arrival of these countries had a tremendous impact on the embryonic existence of the modern Malay (not proto-Malay) in the Archipelago. By the 16th century,

word lists or glossaries of Malay equivalents with other languages have emerged, such as Malay-Chinese and Malay-Italian. Regarding administrative matters, the use of Malay as a lingua franca in the commercial world was proposed in the early days of the colonial era in the late 15th century or around the beginning of the 16th century (Nugroho, 1957). This was because Malay was considered grammatically simpler than other languages, such as Javanese, which has a complex grammatical structure (Nugroho, 1957; Sokol, 1948; Steinhauer, 1980).

The Malay language occupied an important position and became a concern for immigrants from the European continent. So, the serious development of Malay is very important. Projects to develop the Malay were started, such as creating a Malay dictionary, which began in the 16th century. According to Collins (2005), in 1522, the first European-Malay vocabulary was collected by the Italian colonizer, Antonio Pigafetta, who joined Magellan on a tour around the world. The practice of making dictionaries of Malay, particularly Dutch-Malay, by Europeans continued until the 19th century (Nugroho, 1957). Some of them are the dictionary made by Thomas Bowery in 1701 printed in London (Mee, 1929), the dictionary made by Roorda van Eysinga in 1824 (Echols, 1978), and the dictionary made by Van der Tuuk in 1865 (Van der Tuuk, 1865) published by the Journal of the Royal Asian Society of Britain and Ireland. In addition to the Malay dictionary, Malay grammar began to be compiled. Malay grammar began to be written by a Swiss linguist named Werndly in 1936 (Errington, 2008; Collins, 2005; Harun, 2009). However, before that, a Malay grammar had been written by William Marsden in 1812 (Müller, 2014). Apart from the role of the colonizing countries in the development of the Malay in the archipelago, their presence also contributed to the division of the region. The East India Company and the V.O.C. agreement on March 17, 1824, in the form of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty, formalized this division between British and Dutch rule(Ahmad, 1986).

The development of Malay in the archipelago during the colonial period was more influenced by political and trade factors. This is because, in the past, the archipelago was a vital region for global trade. That is also why the articulation of the Malay concept was influenced by Western ideas, especially in the early 19th century (Müller (2014). As a result, Malayness or the Malay (epistemic) community, at least in terms of discourse, is a product of the colonizers. Nevertheless, the development of the Malay, both through the publication of dictionaries and the creation of grammars, was significant for the interests of Malay in the archipelago in the future. Some Malay words have also influenced current English vocabulary, such as orangutan, babirusa, and dugong (Scott, 1896).

At the end of the colonial era, the spirit of anti-colonialism emerged in the Southeast Asia region, including in Indonesia. Among the countries under colonial rule, only Indonesia made Malay the spirit of the struggle, and Malay was the *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian) on October 28, 1928, in the Indonesia Youth Pledge. Later, Indonesian began to differ from other Malayic languages. The end of this colonial era was a turning point in the situation of Malay in the Southeast Asian region. In Brunei Darussalam, Malay is the official language, along with English. However, English is more dominantly used for important domains than Malay. In Singapore, Malay is the official language, along with English, Mandarin, and Tamil. However, the choice of Malay in Singapore is more due to political factors to avoid the

impression of being different from Indonesia and Malaysia, which use Malay. Most of the activities of people's lives in Singapore are carried out using English. In Malaysia, Malay is the official state language, followed by English. In education for specialized subjects, such as science, Malaysia still uses English. Moreover, Indonesian is spoken in Malaysia as one of the lingua franca alongside nine other local Malay dialects. In Pattani, Pattani Malay is a dialect of Malay spoken by the Muslim Pattani ethnicity in Southern Thailand. Additionally, Malay has become the identity of certain ethnic and religious groups, and its position is that of a minority group. In the Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam, Malay is recognized as a language of communication in a small part only, and the number of speakers continues to decline.

In addition to the Malay situation in ASEAN countries, several ASEAN countries have collaborated on language-related matters post-independence. For example, in 1967, Indonesia and Malaysia created a common spelling called Ejaan Malaysia-Indonesia (Malindo). Furthermore, in 1972, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Malaysia formed a joint body called Majelis Bahasa Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia (MABBIM). Singapore is only an observer in this body, although the first international Malay congress was held in Singapore in 1952 (Ahmad, 1986). While the echo of MABBIM is not very strong, it shows that the desire of the ASEAN countries to revive the Malayness imagination or identity is still preserved. Unfortunately, neither Malay nor Indonesian has become a lingua franca in the Southeast Asian region and is not the working language of the ASEAN group of countries. After centuries in the Southeast Asian region, Malay has yet to become the master of its own house.

## Considering Indonesian or Malay to be a Lingua Franca

### *Linguistic Considerations*

Malay speakers are spread across various regions in Indonesia and other neighboring countries; the spread is still happening today. This, of course, has implications for the many dialects of Malay. Therefore, in global parlance, the term Malay does not directly refer to a particular community of speakers, as this diversity of dialects is spread within and beyond the Archipelago. The dialects of Malay also have very striking differences in terms of lexical and grammatical structures, as seen in Chaer (2007), Gil (2024), and Samuel (2008) compared with Phillips (1973), Poedjosoedarmo (2000a), Clynes and Deterding (2011), Sneddon (2003) and Hoogervorst (2018), even though several standard Malayic languages have been attempted (Payne, 1964; Omar, 1971; Rozan et al., 2007; Clynes, & Deterding, 2011; Harun et al, 2018; Hoogervorst, 2018; Mahdi, 2018).

Table 1 Comparison between Malaysian-Malay and Indonesian based on Lexicological Aspects (adapted from Chaer, 2007; Gil, 2024)

| Malay (Malaysia) | Indonesian | English |
|---|---|---|
| drebar | sopir | driver (n) |
| enjin | mesin | machine/engine (n) |
| tayar | ban | tire (n) |
| taip | ketik | type (v) |
| borang | formulir | form/table (n) |
| tiket | karcis/tiket | ticket (n) |
| basikal | sepeda | bicycle (n) |

Table 2 Comparison between Malaysian-Malay and Indonesian based on Morphological Aspects (adapted from Chaer, 2007; Gil, 2024)

| Malay (Malaysia) | Indonesian | English |
|---|---|---|
| bersetuju {ber- + setuju} | menyetujui {me-/-i + setuju} | agree (v) |
| memulakan {me-/-kan + mula} | memulai {me-/-i + mula} | start (v) |
| memandangkan {me-/-kan + pandang} | memandang {me- + pandang} | look (v) |
| tempatan {tempat + -an} | setempat {se- + tempat} | local (n) |
| memantuni {me-/-i + pantun} | berpantun {ber- + pantun} | chant (v) |
| berkendara {ber- + kendara} | berkendaraan {ber - + kendaraan} | drive (v) |
| pengingatan {peN-/-an + ingat} | peringatan {per-/-an + ingat} | commemoration (n) |

Table 1 and 2 highlight differences between the lexicon (lexicography) and affixation (morphology) of Indonesian and Malaysian-Malay, revealing not only the differences between the two languages or dialects. Therefore, using the term Malay, can lead to quite complicated and problematic linguistic implications. It is difficult to determine which dialect of Malay to use as a reference, given the language's numerous variants across different regions in Indonesia and other countries. In Indonesia, there are at least sixty Malay enclaves, including Minangkabau Malay, Banjar Malay, Ambon Malay, North Sulawesi Malay, Central Malay, East Nusa Tenggara Malay, Central Sulawesi Malay, Kerinci Malay, Jambi Malay, Bukampai Malay, and others (Gau, 2011; Paauw, 2008; Masinambow, 2002). Other differences can also be seen between Indonesian and Brunei Malay. This difference is seen in the prosody system and grammar (word order). In the grammar of the Brunei-Malay (BM) language or dialect, a sentence begins with a main phrase and ends with an additional phrase. On the other hand, in Indonesian (I) grammar, a sentence begins with an introductory phrase and ends with an auxiliary phrase (Poedjosoedarmo, 2006; Aves et al.,1998). This is illustrated in the Figure 4 (Poedjosoedarmo, 2006).

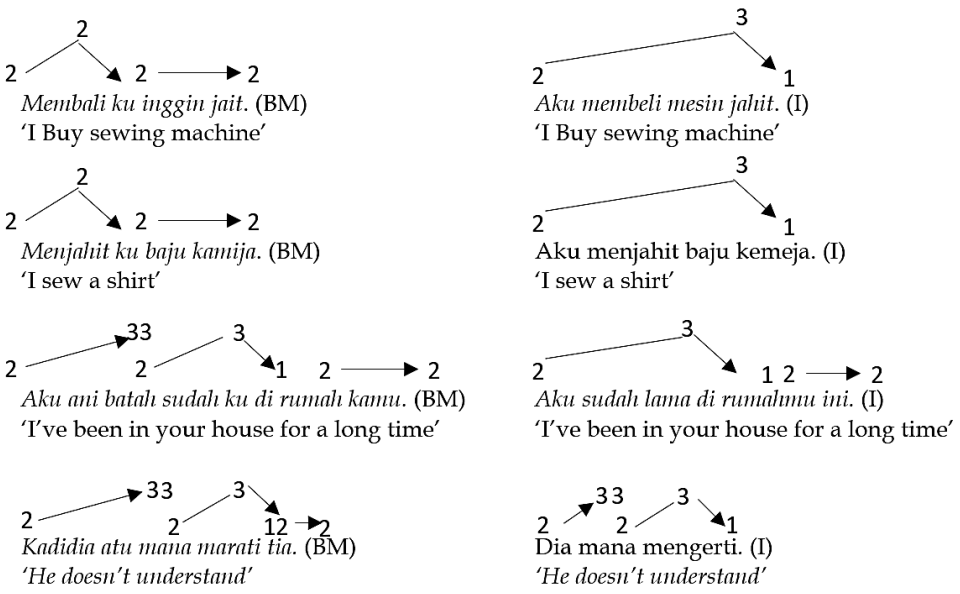


Figure 4. Comparison of the grammatical structures of Indonesian (I) and Brunei-Malay (BM)

Referring to Poedjosoedarmo (2000a, 2000b, 2000c), there are differences between Brunei Malay (BM) and Standard Malay (SM). The difference can be seen in phrase order, nominative pronouns, possessive phrases, and suffix *-i* (Poedjosoedarmo, 1996; 2004; 2005a). Another difference between SM and BM is word order, which is an important feature of a language. Following Greenberg's (in Poedjosoedarmo, 2025b) model, languages can be grouped according to word order into three main types: Verb + Subject + Object (VSO), Subject + Verb + Object (SVO), and Subject + Object + Verba (SOV). Based on these principles, the most fundamental difference between SM and BM is the word order in the sentence. In this framework, the most fundamental difference between SM and BM lies in the word order used in sentences (Mintz, 1994; Poedjosoedarmo 2000a, 2005c;). For example:

(1) *Ia mandi dulu* (SM-SVO)
He bathe first
'He took a bath first'

(1b) *Mandi tia dulu* (BM-VSO)
Bathe pert.he first
'He took a bath first'

(2) *Engkau sedang buat apa*? (SM-SVO)
You do what (interrogative marker)
'What are you doing?'

(2b) *Bahapa kau*? (BM-VSO)
Do what you (interrogative marker)
'What are you doing?'

Usually, the most notable differences in a language dialect lie at the level of phonology, especially vocabulary differences. However, one Malay with another Malay has striking differences from all existing linguistic levels, ranging from phonology, morphology, and syntax (including prosodic systems). These differences present a significant challenge if the concept or term "Malay" is maintained, as it fails to refer to a particular standardized language variant. The Brunei Malay is considered closer in pronunciation and grammar to Indonesian, while its lexical variation aligns more with Peninsular Malay (Poedjosoedarmo in Clynes & Deterding, 2011). However, the existence of standard Malay variation complicates the process

of referencing. These variations can also create challenges for foreign speakers attempting to learn Malay. Conversely, learning Indonesian is relatively easier for foreign speakers because there is only one standard language or reference in Indonesian. The situation differs from the case of English. Although there are some differences between American English and British English, there are no significant grammatical variations that could hinder foreign speakers from learning English. Thus, in a global context, with its standardized grammar, Indonesian is more ready and possible to be used as a reference.

One of the principles of universal language is efficiency, which refers to the ability of language to be conveyed fluently, concisely, and clearly (Poedjosoedarmo, 2006). Based on this principle, languages develop from simple to complex forms. The more complex a language becomes, the closer it aligns with these principles. In the development of language dialects, complexity guarantees the principles of fluency, clarity, and conciseness. As a result, there may be a slow evolution towards a standardized dialect. This happens because, in everyday communication, speakers tend to use language efficiently. Efficiency is guaranteed when a language includes complex markers that allow a sentence to be expressed in multiple variations while retaining the same meaning, ensuring clarity and conciseness.

Among the existing Malay dialects, complex markers are more commonly found in Indonesian, which is triggered by the rapid changes in Indonesian. According to Phillips (1973), this rapid change led to the change of Indonesian from an isolative language to an agglutinative language, facilitating the affixation process. Regarding the principle of language efficiency, the dramatic development of Indonesian caused Indonesian to be expressed with complex markers, ensuring fluency, conciseness, and clarity. This proves that Indonesian is more flexible and reliable than other Malayic languages, making it more appropriate as a standard language than other variants, particularly if it is proposed as the language of international *association* among ASEAN countries. *F*rom a linguistic perspective, the term *Indonesian* or the mainstreaming of Indonesian as a reference language or lingua franca in international relations can be scientifically justified. This is because the language of global association must refer to a standardized language and not be confusing when practiced and learned.

### *Sociolinguistic and Geopolitical Considerations*

Several major Southeast Asia countries still use Malay, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam. The language is also found in other countries, such as Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines. In the dynamics of the relationship between Indonesian and Malayic languages, there are similarities in the efforts made by each country to speak Malay, such as the establishment of the MABBIM. However, there are various problems between the people of Indonesia and other Malay-speaking countries, stemming from linguistic and geopolitical issues (Mahsun, 2010). These issues become the complexity of the relationship between Indonesian and Malay, which needs to be prioritized in global relations, raising questions on why Indonesian can be seen as more representative than other Malayic languages.

The long-standing use of Malay as the dominant language throughout modern Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore is one of the reasons why Malay is currently the national language in all three countries (Lowenberg, 1985). However, even before Lowenberg's statement, Indonesian began to be considered politically distinct from Malay on October 28, 1928. On this date, Malay was first announced as the Indonesian to fight colonialism. This territorial political restriction has implications for the later course of Malay and Indonesian. For instance, since its declaration as an Indonesian, Indonesian (Indonesian-Malay) has undergone rapid changes in Indonesia, which only a few languages in the world have experienced throughout history (Sneddon, 2003). Moreover, according to Sneddon (2003), Indonesian may become similar to the Malayic languages of Malaysia and Brunei in the future. The change could happen not because Indonesians follow Malaysian and Bruneian but because both languages follow Indonesian. From this perspective, the future of Indonesian is more promising than Malay.

Based on the history of Malay development, Indonesian has experienced quite complex problems compared to Malay. However, the challenges Indonesian has experienced over time have made it a resilient language. For example, Indonesian has been used as a language of unity, a form of national bonding, and an instrument to build solidarity against colonialism. The language of unity has proven to bind Indonesian national solidarity since the Indonesian Youth Pledge on October 28, 1928, and the first language congress on June 25-27, 1938 (Dardjowidjojo, 1998; Guan & Suryadinata, 2007). There is clearly no notable polemic between Indonesian and regional or foreign languages in Indonesia. In fact, modern Indonesian in the 60s and 70s showed a new political-cultural intelligence and perspective (Anderson, 1966; Grimes, 1996). The declaration of Malay becoming Indonesian had a tremendous spiritual impact on nation-state consciousness among Indonesians. The use of Indonesian also unified the resolve among the Indonesian people to repel the colonizers. Moreover, the use of Indonesian structures is a form of deep spiritual mentality rooted in traditional values in Malay culture (Anderson, 1966). Consequently, Indonesian has played a fundamental role in the structure of Indonesian, significantly as the vocabulary of other pre-existing languages, such as Javanese and Balinese, has enriched modern Indonesian.

Indonesian has also grown rapidly, enriching its vocabulary. In 1953, the number of vocabulary words in the Indonesian language dictionary was only 23,000 (Mahsun as cited in Grehenson, 2022). In 1988, Indonesia began seriously creating a dictionary known as Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI). The first edition of KBBI contained only 62,000 vocabulary words, and the sixth edition of KBBI, published in 2016, had 127,000 words, an increase of at least two times in 28 years (Sugono, 2017). In 2024, the Indonesian government, through Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa (the Language Development and Guidance Agency), undertook an ambitious project by publishing a new edition of the KBBI with 200,000 lemmas. In the same year, Indonesian was recognized as one of UNESCO's official languages. In contrast, Brunei Darussalam produced a Malay dictionary in 2003, using 62,000 words from the KBBI. Meirina (2014) states that Brunei Darussalam added only 400 vocabulary words from their Malay. The fourth edition of Malaysia's Dewan Dictionary also has much less vocabulary than the KBBI, with only 34,578 words (Redaksi Jantungmelayu, 2019).

Historically, Indonesian has undergone phases similar to those of other Malayic languages. However, two important moments set Indonesian apart from other Malayic languages. First was the establishment of Indonesian as the language of unity on October 28, 1928, and the second was Indonesian rapid linguistic modernization, including the addition of vocabulary, the formation of terms, and the refinement of the grammatical system. These two aspects are more prominent in Indonesian than in other Malayic languages. Samuel (2008) states that these two elements or moments can be referred to as language status and language corpus. This is also reinforced by the rapid development of newspapers in Indonesia during the first four decades (Grimes, 1996), which played a role in building the concept of Indonesian nationhood (Anderson, 2001; Groeneboer, 1999).

The rapid development of Indonesian compared to other Malayic languages has resulted in Indonesian having a higher social status compared to other Malayic languages, both Malayic languages in Indonesia and Malayic languages in other Malay-speaking countries. In Indonesia, this social status is represented by using formal dialect (*baku*) in various official state activities. As a result, other Malay speakers tend to follow standardized expressions in Indonesian. Similarly, Malay speakers in Malaysia tend to follow standardized Indonesian compared to Malaysian Malay. This is because they consider that Indonesian has a higher prestige than Malay in Malaysia. The phenomenon shows the differences in linguistic expressions in formal speech and songs. In formal speech, the final letter in vocabulary that sounds [e] (such as in the words *kita (*we), *saya (*me), or *berbeda* (different)) is still pronounced with [e] by Malaysian officials. However, in Malaysian songs, the vowel [e] is pronounced with [a]. These linguistic expressions reflect a tendency of these expressions to follow Indonesian. This is in line with the positive language attitudes towards Indonesian among students from ASEAN countries. In 2022, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) of ASEAN conducted research on the interest of ASEAN students in learning ASEAN languages. Interestingly, the findings showed that students from ASEAN countries were highly interested in learning Indonesian compared to other languages in ASEAN, including Malay, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Tetun, and so on (Hardini et al., 2023).

Another interesting distinction between Indonesian and Malay's standard dialect in Malaysia should also be noted. The Indonesian standard dialect does not refer to any local Malay dialect in Indonesia. So, anyone using Indonesian in formal communication (such as in a television show) does not show that the person is using a Malay dialect from any region in Indonesia. However, in modern Indonesian movies, there is a tendency to use the Jakarta dialect (Betawi dialect). Jakarta dialect cannot be used in official state speeches, national news readings, and other formal communications. This reflects that besides having a standardized grammatical structure, Indonesian also has standardized communication expressions. This contrasts with Malaysian-Malay, where it is unclear which dialect is meant by standard language (Omar, 1971). Some argue that the standard dialect is the Johor-Riau Malay dialect, while others argue that the standard dialect is the dialect used on television and radio.

These facts help to limit the dominance of foreign languages in Indonesia. Although English is considered prestigious, Indonesian as a communication tool in formal and non-formal contexts is not replaced by other foreign languages (Sneddon, 2003). As a result, the

Indonesian variant has a strong position compared to the Malay. This contrasts with the experiences of Malayic languages in other countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia. In Singapore, English is not considered problematic and cannot threaten the local language (Rappa & Wee, 2006). The strong hegemony suggests that the position of the Malay in Singapore is very weak as a counter-hegemony against foreign languages, especially if the language seeks to be globalized. This is also because Malay speakers in Singapore constitute only about 15% of the population, compared to 75% of Chinese speakers (Samuel, 2008). Moreover, Singapore has also been unwilling to join MABBIM, which indicates the lack of a political stance to make Malay a lingua franca in the international world.

In Malaysia, there is a tendency among many non-Malaysian-Malay students to openly reject Malay, and the use of English in formal settings has become a sensitive issue despite the Malaysian-Malay having been declared the national language in 1957 independence (Rappa & Wee, 2006; Omar, 1998). Furthermore, according to Hamzah and Azma (2017), compared to Adam (2014) and Coluzzi (2017), 80 percent of Malaysians believe that Malay is not suited for intellectual purposes. This situation is similar to Brunei (Goode, 2020; McLellan, 2020; Morve et al., 2023; Sharbawi, 2020). Thus, it is difficult to expect (non-Indonesian) Malay to become an international language or ASEAN lingua franca if it is not widely adopted by its speakers, as is the case in Malaysia, Singapore, or Brunei. In other words, the future of Indonesian-Malay or Indonesian is much more promising to be used as the lingua franca of ASEAN than Malay.

Along with the development of digital technology, the use of Indonesian on social media also shows very significant numbers. Statista (2020) reports that Indonesia is one of the third highest users of social networks in the world, behind China and India. Moreover, this picture is very similar to that of most Twitter and Facebook users. Indonesia ranks fourth in *Twitter* and Facebook users worldwide, behind the United States, India, and Brazil (Stevany, 2024). In the real world, statistically, as stated by Sukatman et al.(2017), out of at least 500 million people in ASEAN, 300 million speak Indonesian. In contrast, Malaysian-Malay has only about 45 million speakers (Burhani, 2014; Grehenson, 2022).

The use of Indonesian has led to its widespread research in other countries. Indonesian is also designated as a second language, for example, the use of Indonesian at Al-Azhar University in 2019 (Humas Seketariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2019). Furthermore, the Indonesian government continuously facilitates language diplomacy in other countries through the implementation of Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) (Ningrum et al., 2017; Rohimah, 2018; Solikhah & Budiharso, 2020; Tiawati, 2015). This initiative started in 1990, and the BIPA teaching affiliation started in 1999. Although the program's growth is relatively slow, it shows the Indonesian government's commitment in developing the language (Goebel, 2002). The Indonesian government has also sent 200 BIPA teachers to 22 countries with 79 host institutions (Salamah et al., 2018). The Indonesian Center for Strategy Development and Language Diplomacy carries out this step. The Indonesian government has also introduced the Indonesian Proficiency Test (UKBI), which aligns with the principles of TOEFL and IELTS.

Efforts to develop Indonesian are not only made by policymakers; leading academics in the country also provide a strong impetus to make Indonesian an international lingua franca. On November 6, 2019, in conjunction with the 55th Anniversary of Surabaya State University, the Forum of Indonesian Professors Council (FDGBI) declared Indonesian as an international scientific language with a four-point manifesto to make it an international language (Kurniawan, 2019). The manifesto highlights several points: (1) Indonesian qualifies as an international language because it has been taught in 45 countries around the world; (2) Indonesian has more than 100,000 adequate vocabulary and scientific terms in various aspects of science; (3) the number of Indonesian speakers is more than 267 million people and is widely understood in numerous countries, especially ASEAN countries, and (4) Indonesian is projected as a lingua franca in economic activities, so it is taught and studied in various countries. All points show that Indonesian is far more advanced than Malay in the ASEAN region.

Unfortunately, the FDGBI does not address the use of Indonesian in scientific journals. The policy of scientific publications is one of the weak aspects of Indonesia's language policy. As is widely recognized, the Indonesian government, along with academic institutions and communities, only consider articles written in English or one of the official UN languages to be international publications within the scientific field. Publications using Indonesian are not recognized as international publications, regardless of the quality of the article. Moreover, journals in Indonesia are only recognized as international journals by the Ministry if they are published in English or an official UN language. This is why all scientific journals in Indonesia indexed in the SCOPUS database are published in English. In contrast, Malaysia's journal publishing policy allows SCOPUS-indexed international journals to be published in English and Malay. Since the academic or scientific institutions sector is one of the crucial sectors for language promotion in international relations, this highlights the weakness of Indonesia's language policy. Furthermore, the FDGB's declaration that Indonesian is an international scientific language is really refuted by this fact.

### *Some Obstacles*

Efforts to make Indonesian one of the official languages of ASEAN have been ongoing for a long time. It started in late 2010 and was initiated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR). At the 31st ASEAN General Assembly in Vietnam, they proposed Indonesian to be one of the official languages of ASEAN (Muhammad, 2011). It is in accordance with Indonesia Law No. 24/2009 Article 44, which states, "the government will improve the function of Indonesian as an international language gradually, systematically, and sustainably." This campaign lasted several years, and the discourse reappeared at the 2015 ASEAN Summit held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Guepedia, 2016). This was followed by the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 63/2019 on the use of Indonesian by the President and Vice President in official international forums. Political support from the parliament or government is unquestionable and crucial as language policy in other countries reflects similar efforts (Zulfikar, 2019).

Despite the Indonesian elites' efforts and the advantages of the Indonesian language, the opportunity for Indonesian to become an international lingua franca in ASEAN encounters a steep road. It is because of several challenges from external and internal factors (Yang, 2008). Although Indonesian seems more representative than other Malayic languages in the context of an international lingua franca in the ASEAN region, gaining such recognition remains challenging. For example, the use of Indonesian in official ASEAN forums has proven ineffective, and it struggles to compete with English. Thus, the struggle to make Indonesian an international language at the ASEAN level faces obstacles, especially from other Malay-speaking countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. The influence of English in these countries since colonial times has played a significant role (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Lauder, 2008).

Competition with Malay can also hinder the promotion of Indonesian as a lingua franca. On one hand, Indonesia, with its majority of Indonesian speakers, favors the term "Indonesian" as the preferred lingua franca. On the other hand, Malaysia and other Malay-speaking countries in Asia prefer the term "Malay." Malaysia often tries to make Malay a lingua franca in the ASEAN region, as proposed by the former Malaysia Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yakob (Reditya, 2022). This proposal is not new, as efforts by Malaysian officials or politicians to build a Malay identity have been going on for a long time (Watson, 1996). The Malaysian proposal was immediately rejected by the former Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim. The rejection stemmed from Indonesia's belief that the Indonesian was better or superior to the Malay (Fahlevi, 2022).

Global pressures in recent years can also affect Indonesia's language policy. Policies issued by the Indonesian government in the era of President Joko Widodo weakened the position of the Indonesian language. The former president issued Presidential Regulation No. 20/2018 on the Use of Foreign Workers issued on March 26, 2018. The regulation stated that foreign workers are no longer required to speak Indonesian but must take language courses. Under the old regulation, Indonesia Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation No. 12/2013, foreign workers in Indonesia were required to speak Indonesian. Therefore, Presidential Regulation No. 20/2018 on the use of foreign workers is counterproductive compared to Law No. 24/2009 on the Flag, Language, and State Emblem, as well as the National Anthem as an effort to make Indonesian an international language. Additionally, it is not in line with Presidential Regulation No. 63/2019 on the Use of Indonesian, which regulates the obligation of the President, Vice President, and other State Officials to use Indonesian at home and abroad.

Furthermore, the attitude of Indonesian society in general does not strongly support the internationalization of Indonesian (Jazeri & Maulida, 2018; Muslich, 2010; Muslich & Oka, 2010). According to Sylado (2002), Indonesian people, especially politicians, tend to use foreign languages, especially English, in almost every political dialog on television. In addition, the use of English is also frequently seen in the titles or themes of songs, films, and television programs. This is contrary to efforts to make Indonesian the language for international communication. Damshäuser (2017) states powerlessness towards English is also a major obstacle in international relations and economic interests. The influence of English in Indonesia has an impact, including within the educational system, although not as

severe as the hegemony of English in other Malay-speaking countries (Murtisari & Mali, 2017; Nguyen & Chon, 2020). This is because English is taught from primary school to university as a compulsory subject throughout Indonesia (Herminingsih & Jazeri, 2020). However, this can be overcome by the Indonesian government's strict regulations regarding using Indonesian and English in schools (Harwati, 2012).

## Conclusion

Malay and Indonesian originate from the same progenitor that has been utilized throughout Southeast Asia since the 7th century. It has experienced modernization since the colonial era and was a strategically utilized language in the trade sector. This history fosters a shared imagination concerning allied countries in Southeast Asia, subsequently unified within the ASEAN group of countries. The dynamics of relations among ASEAN nations have fluctuated. Consequently, establishing a shared identity within the ASEAN region is crucial, including adopting a lingua franca distinct from English, as English undermines the historical ethos of ASEAN nations, most of which have endured colonization. While Indonesian and Malay may be alternatives, Indonesian is much more suitable and judicious from linguistic, sociolinguistic, and geopolitical perspectives, considering many factors.

The linguistic structure of Malay differs in phonology, morphology, and syntax. These differences pose significant challenges if the term or concept of Malay is to be preserved. This is because Malay terminology does not refer to a particular standardized language variety, unlike Indonesian terminology, which is distinct, established, and used in various aspects of social life. Indonesian has more complex markers than Malay due to the rapid changes in Indonesia. The number of complex markers in Indonesian adheres to the universal linguistic principle of allowing speakers to communicate fluently, concisely, and clearly. The advantages of the Indonesian language are also evident from sociolinguistic and geopolitical perspectives. Indonesian language's stance in promoting Indonesia has made it accepted and taught in many countries worldwide. It has been maintained until today, which has caused the language to experience an increase in vocabulary words, reaching 200,000 in 2024. Additionally, in 2024, UNESCO recognized Indonesian as one of the official languages. This achievement is lacking in Malay, whether in Indonesia or other ASEAN countries.

Consequently, Indonesian is appropriate for usage as a lingua franca in the ASEAN region and merits consideration as one of the working languages in ASEAN. Nevertheless, based on the lengthy discussion above, both Indonesian and Malay will not find an easy way to become a lingua franca in the ASEAN region and/or become the working language of ASEAN. However, suppose both parties, Indonesia and Malay-speaking countries in ASEAN, relax their nerves. In that case, a middle way may be taken, namely proposing both languages at once, Malay and Indonesian, to become the lingua franca or working language of ASEAN or by combining the names of the two languages with Malay/Indonesian or Indonesian/Malay specifically in the ASEAN region or specifically for the ASEAN working language. Despite the advantages of the Indonesian language, if the ego of Indonesian-ness

and Malay-ness is not lowered, neither Indonesian nor Malay will likely be able to become a host at home in the ASEAN region until whenever amid the siege of English.

## Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the four blind reviewers for their insightful and constructive feedback on the initial draft of this article. Their thorough comments have significantly contributed to improving various aspects of the manuscript. Additionally, the second author extends sincere gratitude to Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP/The Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education), Balai Pembiayaan Pendidikan Tinggi (BPPT), and Pusat Layanan Pembiayaan Pendidikan (Puslapdik) for providing scholarship and/or research support to the second author in pursuing a doctoral degree at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia.

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