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Majority and minority language planning in Brunei Darussalam

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This paper is an overview of language planning as carried out in Brunei Darussalam for Malay, its official language, English, its *de facto* other official language, and for the other eleven minority languages spoken in the country. After a general introduction to the country and its sociolinguistic situation, the paper outlines the main language planning activities carried out in Brunei through corpus, status and acquisition planning. The overview of status planning includes a brief description of the linguistic landscape of Brunei. The second part of the paper discusses the advantages of education using the students' first language, something that is not happening in Brunei, and the future of education in the country after the introduction of the new education reform (SPN21). The paper closes with some general remarks on the importance of maintaining minority languages and some suggestions on how this can be achieved.

Keywords: Brunei Darussalam, language planning, Belait, Bisaya, Chinese language, Dusun, Iban, Kedayan, linguistic landscape, Lun Bawang, Malay, Mukah, Murut, Penan, Tutong

Brunei Darussalam, a small Islamic Sultanate 5,765 square kilometres in extent, situated in the north of the island of Borneo facing the South China Sea, is a multiethnic and multilingual country. Ten minority languages are traditionally spoken by the local population, in addition to the languages of recent immigrants, standard Malay, the official language, and English, the *de facto* other national language of the country: Brunei Malay, Kedayan (which may be also considered as dialects of Malay on account of their proximity to it), Tutong, Belait, Dusun, Bisaya (even though Dusun and Bisaya could also be considered two dialects of the same language), Murut (Lun Bawang), Iban, Penan, and Mukah. All are Austro-nesian languages. To these, various Chinese varieties, spoken by the local Chinese population, should also be added: Mandarin, Hakka, Hokkien, Cantonese, Hainanese, Teochew, and Foochow (Dunseath 1996, Ho 2007). Interestingly, top-down

language planning considers only two of these languages: Standard Malay and English, the only ones that very few people in Brunei speak as their first languages. Malay is the language that symbolizes Malayness and its values, including Islam, the official religion (particularly when Jawi is used to write it),¹ while English represents modernity and world-wide communication. Even though those who can master it are not many, Arabic should also be included among the languages of Brunei as strictly related to the main and official religion. Because of its constant presence in the religious sphere most Malays in Brunei can at least understand some sentences and speak a few phrases. The scheme in Table 1 may be seen as representing the linguistic repertoire of Brunei:

Table 1. The Bruneian linguistic repertoire

English (inter-ethnic communication, modernity, economic opportunities, foreigners/tourism)
Standard Malay in Jawi (Arabic) characters (Islam, the monarchy)
Standard Malay in Roman characters (nationalism, communication with the Malay-speaking world)
Brunei Malay (general communication, national identity)
Arabic (Islam)
Mandarin Chinese (communication within the Chinese community, identity for the Chinese, economic opportunities)
Other minority languages including the Chinese dialects (communication within the ethnic group, local identity)

The languages are ranked from top to bottom in order of prestige (from more to less). The most prestigious varieties also tend to be the ones that enjoy more official support. English is in first position, as the most popular and most rapidly expanding language in the country (see Ozóg 1996). In spite of its official support, Standard Malay, on the other hand, really has no major function in people's everyday life in Brunei; it is used mostly in state administration and in order to understand official sources of information or materials from other Malay/Indonesian speaking countries, such as books, newspapers, films, songs, and the like (see Martin 1996b).

Whereas English, Malay (both Standard and Brunei) and Mandarin Chinese may be considered safe, particularly the first, all the other languages are to a greater or lesser extent endangered. Some are highly endangered, like Belait, while others are not doing very well, with fewer and fewer young people speaking them, like Tutong or Dusun:

Data from a language survey [carried out between 1990 and 1992 by Peter Martin and various colleagues at the University of Brunei Darussalam] show that 63% of Tutong parents and 72% of Dusun parents below the age of 40 use Brunei Malay

to communicate with their offspring. [...] The figures for the Belait group are even more alarming. Over 90% of parents have abandoned the use of Belait as the language of primary interaction with their offspring, using instead a form of Brunei Malay. (Martin 1995: 48)

Table 2 shows the vitality rates for these languages (apart from Chinese) given by Martin (1995: 49) on the basis of the data in his possession (from 0 to 6; higher figures indicate greater vitality).

Table 2. Vitality rates for Bruneian minority languages

Language	Vitality rate
Brunei	6
Iban	5
Murut	3.5
Kedayan	3
Bisaya	3
Tutong	2.5
Dusun	2
Penan	2
Belait	0.5
Mukah	Insufficient data ²

It is hard to assess how many people still speak these languages, as official censuses group the “puak jati”, i.e. the seven ethnic groups speaking Belait, Bisaya, Brunei Malay, Dusun, Kedayan, Murut and Tutong that are officially recognized as indigenous groups of the Malay race (1961 Nationality Act of Brunei), together with Malay. However, for lack of more reliable data some estimates have been made. Martin (1995) and Niew (1991), for example, reckon that there might have been as many as 77,000 speakers of the Bruneian minority languages (excluding Brunei Malay) and 60,000 speakers of various Chinese dialects and/or Mandarin, out of a population of 292,266 inhabitants in 1995,³ i.e. about 46.9% of the population. Considering that until no more than sixty years ago almost all of the population of Brunei must have been fluent in at least one local language (Noor Azam 2005), even taking into account that one of these local languages was Brunei Malay, language shift in Brunei has been remarkable.

Language planning

A distinction should be made between majority and minority language planning. The first type of language planning, usually carried out by official institutions, deals with the official state language(s), whereas the second type is concerned with minority or regional languages and is often carried out by private institutions, groups or individuals interested in preserving or spreading such languages. Only in those cases where these minority languages are officially recognized and granted some form of protection on the part of the state or region will official institutions potentially also step in (Coluzzi 2007: 120–125).

As far as majority language planning is concerned, there is no single agency in Brunei responsible for language planning or for coordinating language planning activities across the country. The main agencies that, according to general government directives, carry out activities that can be considered as pertaining to the sphere of language planning are the Ministry of Education, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei (Institute of Language and Literature of Brunei) and Radio Television Brunei. The great majority of language planning activities carried out by these three agencies favour only Standard Malay and English, with the exception of RTB, which does broadcast programmes in Chinese as well, and the Dewan dan Pustaka Brunei, which has published a few basic grammars and dictionaries for Brunei Malay, Kedayan, Tutong and Belait.

Corpus planning

Few corpus planning activities have been carried out in Brunei. This is due to the fact that both Standard Malay and English are already developed languages whose standard forms are widely accepted.⁴ However, some corpus planning has been carried out in Brunei, particularly on the Malay lexicon. The example that is most likely to leap out at anybody travelling to Brunei is the use of the second person pronoun *awda*, replacing the standard *anda* and/or *awak*. Mandarin Chinese is fully standardized as well, while both Iban and Lun Bawang have undergone a certain degree of standardization in Sarawak (Eastern Malaysia).

Status planning

Status planning and acquisition planning are the two areas where most language planning in Brunei has concentrated. In this case, too, official institutions have targeted only Standard Malay and English, whereas the few status planning activities

that have been carried out in favour of the country's minority languages are the result of efforts coming from the community of speakers itself or from abroad — from Sarawak, as far as Iban and Lung Bawang are concerned, and from China, Taiwan or Singapore, in the case of Mandarin Chinese.

Status planning activities in favour of Standard Malay include the publication of books and other types of literature, like the official government paper *Pelita Brunei*, issued three times per week. Two of the daily newspapers in Brunei, however, are in English (*Borneo Bulletin* and *Brunei Times*), whereas only one is in Standard Malay (*Media Permata*). Broadcasting on television and radio is in both Standard Malay and English, including news programmes. The only minority language having a presence in the Bruneian mass media is Mandarin Chinese, used in radio programmes for five hours daily, whereas the presence of the other minority languages is minimal — only Brunei Malay is sometimes used informally in talk shows or Bruneian TV series. This dearth of TV and radio programmes in minority languages broadcast by Radio Television Brunei is compensated by programmes in Chinese produced in Malaysia and in other Chinese-speaking countries to which the Bruneian Chinese community has easy access through satellite television, and by some radio programmes in Iban and Lun Bawang broadcast from Sarawak. DVDs and CDs in Chinese are available in most music and film shops, and even some Iban musical CDs manage to find their way into Brunei. As far as printed matter is concerned, books and newspapers in Chinese, mostly printed in Malaysia and Singapore, are also easily available in bookstores and newsagents, and occasionally even some publications in Lun Bawang and especially in Iban printed in Sarawak circulate among the two ethnic groups speaking these languages. In recent times, the Internet has also helped to give visibility to some of the minority languages spoken in Brunei. For example, there is now a group on Facebook for the Dusun of Brunei and a blog in the Tutong language (<http://tutongkita.blogspot.com>).

Another strategy that can be considered as part of status planning is the placing of posters and signs all around the country urging people to speak Malay. One can find basically three different signs with three different messages: 1) *Bahasa Melayu bahasa rasmi Negara* (Malay is the official language of the country), 2) *Utamakan Bahasa Melayu* (Make Malay your priority) and 3) *Gunakan Bahasa Melayu* (Use Malay). Whether these signs are effective and succeed in influencing people's choice of language remains to be seen.

The linguistic landscape

Very important for the visibility of a language and therefore for its prestige is the linguistic landscape, i.e. “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25). Whereas Chinese is present in the local linguistic landscape thanks to the initiative of Chinese shop and business owners,⁵ other minority languages are conspicuous by their absence. In fact, the linguistic landscape is dominated by English and Standard Malay, the latter both in Roman characters and in Jawi. In fact, probably because of its more traditional character related to Islam, the use of Jawi in both public and private signs is compulsory in Brunei; a circular from the Office of the Prime Minister issued on 19 July 1988 (no. 21/1988) clearly states:

In compliance with the speech delivered by His Majesty Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan of Brunei, it is hereby declared that all Ministries and Departments should observe and enforce the use of the Jawi script in addition to the Roman script on signs on Government buildings and on private businesses, including name signs, letterheads, notice boards, posters, advertisements, banners, names and street signs and so forth. The Jawi script must be twice as big as the Roman script and should be placed on top. (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei 2009: 19. Author’s own translation from the Malay)

Between September and October 2009, field research was carried out in the capital of Brunei Bandar Seri Begawan by the author to assess the presence in the linguistic landscape of Brunei of its various languages. All the scripts appearing on shops, businesses and signs present in Jalan Sultan, one of the main streets in the centre of the capital, were analysed, giving a total of 102 units of analysis (Coluzzi 2011).⁶ The results show that the total percentage of units of analysis where Standard Malay, whether in Rumi, Jawi or both, was present was 82.2%, a figure only slightly higher than that of the percentage of units of analysis where English was found (79.4%). Chinese, on the other hand, appeared in 18.6% of the units of analysis. Table 3 shows the languages and scripts used in all the units of analysis recorded, divided into official and unofficial:

As can be observed, the two languages dominating the linguistic landscape are Standard Malay and English, the latter even more than the first. The “other languages” referred to are Arabic, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Thai. Chinese is quite visible thanks to its prestige and the ethnic pride of the Chinese community in Brunei, but no other minority languages are present. This is due to their unofficial status, but also to their lack of prestige and of a standard form, so that even their native speakers cannot read or write their own first languages.

Table 3. Breakdown in percentage terms of the languages (including the use of Jawi) used in official and unofficial signage by units of analysis in Brunei (Coluzzi 2011).

	Total	Official	Unofficial
Jawi	65.6	8.8	56.8
Malay (Roman script)	65.6	15.6	50
English	79.4	15.6	63.7
Chinese	18.6	–	18.6
Other languages	3.9	–	3.9

Acquisition planning

Only three of the languages of Brunei are present at all levels of education; these are Standard Malay, English and Mandarin Chinese. The first two are officially taught and used as media of instruction in every school in Brunei (and have been since 1984), whether public or private (only international schools are exempted from this), whereas Mandarin is taught extensively as a subject in a few private Chinese schools. From the academic year 2010/2011 three of the minority languages spoken in Brunei have been introduced as elective subjects at the University of Brunei Darussalam: these are Iban, Dusun and Tutong. The other languages, particularly Brunei Malay, may be used informally by teachers and students alike (Martin 2003, 2008). English, however, acquires progressively more importance as students progress along their educational route. Until three years ago, in the first three years of primary school (lower primary school) English was present only as a subject, whereas in the last three years (upper primary school) about half of the subjects were taught in Standard Malay and the other half in English.⁷ In secondary school there are more subjects taught in English than in Malay (Jones 1996: 127), and the University of Brunei Darussalam mostly functions in English, apart from a certain number of subjects in the department of Malay Language and Linguistics, the department of Malay Literature and History (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), the Academy of Brunei Studies and the Sultan Hassan al-Bolkiah Institute of Education. However, in 2008 mathematics and ICT (computer skills) began to be taught in English in lower primary school as well (Curriculum Development Department, Ministry of Education 2009: 13), doubling the burden on students of having to deal with languages that are not their own.

Use of the students' first language in education

In 1953 UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) issued a report on the use of the students' first language in education that "has had a profound impact on the discussion of educational linguistic matters ever since" (Fasold 1984:293):

It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium. (Unesco 1953)⁸

Education for millions of children around the world has meant submersion in the official language, and total disregard, if not outright contempt, for their first language. Many have managed to overcome these difficulties and eventually become fluent in the "new" language (often forgetting their own), but many others have failed to reach the desired standards. As Suzanne Romaine writes (2000:206), "children who do not come to school with the kind of cultural and linguistic background supported in the schools are likely to experience conflict. This is [particularly] true [...] for children of ethnic minority background"; in fact, "because schools measure success in terms of mastery of [...] the accepted language of society [...], non-standard speech is seen as illogical, and bilingualism as a problem" (2000:208).

Generally, children in Brunei have to start school using two languages with which they have had only some passive contact through the mass media, but which in most cases they have never spoken. This is because both languages, Standard Malay and English, come from outside and are hardly spoken in the 'low' domains children are likely to interact with. Teachers obviously do their best to help them (Martin 2003, 2008), but no formal transitional education strategies are in effect that may help the children to move gradually from their first language, which nowadays is in most cases Brunei Malay (a variety that is quite different from its standard version, being only 84% cognate with the latter: Martin 1996a:7), to Standard Malay and English, the latter seen as a key to progress and development for the country.

It is true that the *dwibahasa* bilingual system in Brunei is supposed to be a form of immersion education, an approach which has given good results in many parts of the world where it has been adopted. However, immersion education can be successful only if the children's first language is strongly supported outside the school, if it is to be found in all domains and if children have a chance of becoming literate in it, passively and actively. As Swain and Cummins (1979:14, in Tosi 1989:106) have affirmed:

When the home language is a majority language valued by the community, and where literacy is encouraged in the home, then the most efficient means of promoting an additive form of bilingualism is to provide initial instruction in the second language.

Jones (1996: 130) points out that Swain's first denominator of successful bilingual education programming, "which states that the child's first language be psychologically, linguistically and cognitively maintained",

... is perhaps the one that could create the most difficulty. This would not be a problem if all Bruneian children used the school language, Standard Malay, as their first language. However, a Bruneian child's first language is likely to be either Brunei Malay, one of its close associates, or one of the other indigenous languages of Brunei.

Even though Brunei Malay is supported in Bruneian society, it is not used in all domains, particularly written domains. As for the other minority languages, they have virtually no visibility at all. In fact, all these languages find themselves in a diglossic relationship to Standard Malay and even English, even though two of them, Mandarin Chinese and Brunei Malay, do share with the latter many "high domains" and are regarded as valuable and important by most of the people who speak them (see Martin 1996b).

All this means that, rather than immersion education, the system in Brunei may be seen as a submersion one, or, as some have aptly termed it, a sink-or-swim programme, where children either learn to "swim" and are successful, or they "sink" and become semi-bilingual with low levels of Standard Malay and English, and no literacy in their first language, whether this is Brunei Malay or another of the minority languages present in Brunei. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1999:46), "this is the most common — and most disastrous — method in the present world for educating minority children." The author's personal experience as a lecturer and what has been heard repeatedly from former colleagues at Universiti Brunei Darussalam seem to confirm this. For example, the results in English "O" level tests still seem to be very poor, more than twenty years after the bilingual system was put in place. In fact, in an article which appeared in the *Borneo Bulletin* in October 2003, "the acting Minister of Education was reported as saying that over the previous five years, the average rate of success [in "O" level English exams] had been 12.8%" (Azaraimy 2003, in Nicol 2004/2005: 47). If we consider that it was approximately 10% to 12.5% in 1984/1985 (The Project Group 1987, quoted by Nicol), the effectiveness of the *dwibahasa* system as it is put into effect in Brunei may be questioned. As Nicol's article explains, there may be various reasons that account for this. One reason that is not mentioned, however, may be the fact that the child's first language is not taken into consideration when he/

she begins school. On the other hand, the results obtained by Bruneian students in Malay “O” level tests seem to be relatively good, with most of the students passing with grade B or C (in 2008 more Cs than Bs)⁹ and a very low percentage of failures.¹⁰ However, such exams are developed in Brunei to suit the skills of local students and therefore the results obtained cannot be compared with those obtained by students in other countries.

Literally hundreds of examples could be cited of experiments all over the world that have shown the advantages of using the student’s first language. We can cite just one example from Italy, the author’s own country, where an experiment was carried out in the schools of Timau-Paluzza/Paluce (where a German dialect and/or Friulian, an Italian minority language spoken in Northeastern Italy, are the first languages of most of the children) and San Pietro al Natisone/Špeter (where Slovenian, another one of Italy’s minority languages, is the first language of most of the children), both of these establishments being in the North-East of Italy. Carlo Cecchini, professor of Mathematical Analysis and Calculation of Probabilities at the University of Udine/Udin, gave the children surveyed a questionnaire with problems to solve in their mother tongue, and it was noticed that “The children who were able to reply to the questionnaire in Friulian or Slovenian obtained even better results than the others. This was not because they were more intelligent, but because the language they used was their “home” tongue. This is an indication that affective-emotional aspects can overcome hostility towards the subject” (Bogaro 2002: 4. Author’s translation from the Italian).

Further convincing evidence has been provided by Myhill (2008). He has compared basic literacy rates for scores of countries in the world, both those which use a written version of their inhabitants’ first language and those which use a standard different from the spoken variety. Since literacy rates are also dependent on the money countries are able to spend on education, he also took into account GDP per capita in these countries. The result was that literacy rates are higher in countries which use a written form of the spoken language in education, unlike what happens in Brunei. As Myhill (2008: 18) explains:

Not only is it easier to learn to read and write one’s own native language as opposed to a foreign language [...] but it is also easier to learn to read and write a more “accessible” version of one’s own native language. The findings suggest that *the most “accessible” version is one based upon one’s own specific native dialect and that it is possible to attain essentially universal literacy in a standard language based upon the local spoken dialect even with extremely limited financial resources.*

Once the child’s language is consolidated at the oral and written levels, then it should become easier to move on to other languages, partly because the child’s first language can be used for comparison. In addition, different kinds of skills

learnt through the children's first language can then be easily transferred to other languages. What De Mauro and Lodi wrote about the Italian situation (where local regional languages are normally referred to as "dialects") applies perfectly to the situation in Brunei as well:

A reliable school [...] cannot ignore the language through which the basic cultural data have been passed down to us and through which many children, their parents and the local community still express themselves. A dialect bears witness to the past, but it is also a vital part of the present. A large part of the syntactic mistakes that exasperate so many teachers is the 'presence' of the dialect, of its structures, within the Italian spoken and written by the students, which disappear when the students discover through comparative analysis that the dialect and Italian are two different languages [...] that can be used correctly only when both are known. (De Mauro and Lodi 1979: 57–58. Author's translation from the Italian)

In fact, if the word "Italian" is replaced by "Standard Malay" or "English", this can be seen as a perfect description of what is now happening in Brunei.

The Future of Bruneian education

In spite of the clear advantages of starting education with the children's first language, the education system in Brunei seems to be going in exactly the opposite direction. In fact, the new education reform (SPN21)¹¹ that has already begun to be implemented has increased the overall number of subjects taught through English.¹² What is of greatest concern, though, is that in addition to Mathematics and ICT, Science also will be taught in English starting from year one of primary school, while for Creative Arts and Technology, Art and Design and Music and Drama both Standard Malay and English will be used. This means that about half of the subjects in primary school will be taught in English and half in Standard Malay from the very beginning, with no space whatsoever for the children's first languages.¹³ Considering the available data, these changes are unlikely to improve overall performance in English and Standard Malay, and will probably accelerate the demise of minority languages while increasing the number of people who identify culturally with the Anglo-Saxon world, which may lead to a further shrinking of domains of use of Malay in the not-too-distant future. In this respect, Dr Mataim Bakar, acting director of Social Services, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Brunei, believes that "If we excessively put emphasis on the usage of English, it will change our culture" (Brunei Times 2009).

Many academics and experts in Brunei have criticized the direction taken by the education system. For example, the opening paragraph of an article included in the Brunei Times of 1 July 2009 stated that: "Three Malay language experts have

expressed concern over the new National Educational System for the 21st century (SPN21), claiming that it lays more emphasis on foreign languages at the expense of Malay". In the same article, Dr Haji Azmi Abdullah, senior lecturer at Universiti Brunei Darussalam, expressed his view that there is "no harm in learning other languages provided one must master Malay language first" (Brunei Times 2009). In a talk given at Universiti Brunei Darussalam in April 2008 he had already "noted the difficulty children have in not only having a good command of the English language, but their own mother tongue of Malay as well" (Anna Abu Bakar 2008), concluding that "when a child attempts to attain both his first language and his second language at the same time, he or she is less likely to achieve full competency in either language" (Narissa Noor 2008). Moreover, it is interesting to notice that all this is happening at the same time as the Malaysian government has decided to scrap the teaching of mathematics and science in English in Malaysian primary and secondary schools, which was introduced in 2003. This means that with effect from 2012 these subjects will be taught in Malay again in national schools and in Tamil and Mandarin in national-type schools. This decision was taken as the deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin "had admitted in Parliament last month [i.e. in June 2009] that students had not shown significant improvement in the two subjects over the past six years" (Adib Zalkapli 2009).

Another consequence of such over-emphasis on English is that the national language, Malay, gets fewer chances of being further modernized, i.e. of developing the styles and lexicon to become a full-fledged language on a par with the other big languages in the world. According to Braighlinn (1992:21, in Martin 2008:214), "the *Dwibahasa* system has thwarted the 'development of the Malay language as a medium of literary expression and analytical thought'".

An interesting phenomenon is observable here — the coming together and interacting of two well-known linguistic myths: the nationalist myth of one country / one culture / one language, and the globalization myth of the international language *par excellence*, as the language of economy and the future. The first myth holds Malay up as the national language unifying the country, and is exemplified by the many signs, referred to above, urging people to use Malay, the national language, or by the script on the façade of the central library in the capital stating: *berbahasa satu, berbangsa satu, bernegara satu* (one language, one nation, one country). The second myth supports English as a path to modernity, wealth and economic success, even though the great majority of the economically successful countries in the world do not assign as great an emphasis to English as Brunei does, apart obviously from the countries where this language is the national language. As Martin has remarked (2003:199), "The school [...] legitimises two separate languages, not based on educational reasons, but rather on competing ideological, political, socio-economic and historical factors".

Conclusions

As has been shown above, majority language planning in Brunei, i.e. language planning for Standard Malay and English, is pervasive and strongly supported by the State, whereas minority language planning, i.e. language planning for the minority languages spoken in Brunei, can be said to be carried out only for Mandarin Chinese by Chinese individuals and institutions. The other minority languages enjoy hardly any support at all from within Brunei, either on an official or on an unofficial level.

That Bruneians should be able to speak Standard Malay and English well is a comprehensible objective, but this should be attained in an effective way so as not necessarily to render likely the demise of the other languages of Brunei, a rich and irreplaceable heritage. As far as language planning is concerned, the point is not only that children learn better when they can use their mother tongue, but also that maintaining minority languages has other advantages. At least four reasons can be put forward to indicate why minority languages should be maintained and promoted:

1. Respect should be given to the linguistic rights of those people for whom they are still their first languages, particularly for some elderly people who may not be fluent in the majority language. As Corson has written (1996: 72), “an educational system serving a multilingual society but providing only monolingual [or bilingual, if the second language is not the first language of any of the students] schooling exercises power unjustly, or is being used to exercise power unjustly”. It should not be forgotten that it would appear that most minority language speakers in Brunei do want to see their languages introduced in school. For example, according to the answers given to a sociolinguistic survey undertaken by the author in Temburong in 2008 (Coluzzi 2010: 140), as many as 92.2% of the Iban interviewees and 92.6% of the Murut interviewees replied affirmatively to the question whether they thought that their heritage languages should be studied at school (Iban: 46.4% compulsory, 45.8% optional; Murut: 27.9% compulsory, 64.7% optional).
2. The disappearance of a language means the disappearance, if not entirely at least partially, of the invaluable culture sustained and transmitted by it. When a language dies, inestimable knowledge dies as well, some of which may still be useful and relevant today, such as the properties and uses of forest plants, or the sustainable use of natural resources. As Nettle and Romaine write (2000: 16), “The next great steps in scientific development may lie locked up in some obscure language in a distant rain forest”.

3. Arguably, linguistic diversity, or “glotto-diversity”, is as important for our well-being as “biodiversity” is for the well-being and sound balance of the world we live in, and “languages are elements of a socio-ecological system within which it is not possible to modify any element without compromising the others as well” (Barbina 2002: 90; author’s translation from the Italian). As Raimondo Strassoldo says (1996: 153), “There are well-known arguments for [the value of local diversity] based on principles of biological evolution and general systems theory: diversity as a source of both stability and further evolution.” According to Nettle and Romaine (2000: 199), “variety is not just the proverbial spice of life; it is a prerequisite for life.”
4. Language diversity could be an economic asset as well, particularly in the tourist field, as increasingly people are looking for places where natural beauties can be enjoyed together with local cultures. Given two equally beautiful places, culturally-oriented tourists may choose to visit the place that offers a more varied and diverse cultural environment, which includes the linguistic aspect as well as all the traditions which are inseparably linked to it.

Trying to reverse language shift for the minority languages of Brunei is not going to be easy. Publishing some literature, particularly for children, and producing some radio and television programmes in them, providing some space for these languages in the linguistic landscape, introducing them into the school curriculum — these tasks would not be easy. Corpus planning would be needed; learning materials would have to be developed; experts, translators and teachers would have to be trained. But Brunei has the resources to do this. The very fact that a minority language is written down in books and on signs, is used by artists and important persons and is a school subject may have positive effects on its status as well and further help its maintenance. The recent introduction of the three minority languages mentioned above into the university syllabus may be seen as the very first steps in that direction, but this is by no means enough to maintain these languages when everything else seems to be conspiring in their disappearance. It is to be hoped that the recent growing interest in biological diversity in the country may spread into the cultural and linguistic spheres as well and Brunei may be able to maintain what makes it such a diverse and interesting country.

Notes

1. Jawi is the Arabic-derived alphabet that was used to write Malay until the end of the nineteenth century when Rumi, the Roman script, was introduced and quickly took over. By the use of diacritic dots, it can express six sounds that are not found in Arabic. Nowadays it is mainly used in Malaysia and Indonesia in religious contexts (Islam), but can be seen in the linguistic

landscape of more conservative areas in Malaysia and is official in Brunei, where it is learnt in primary school.

2. However, according to one of the author's former students belonging to the Mukah minority, the language seems to be highly endangered, perhaps in a similar fashion to Belait.
3. http://www.theodora.com/wbf/Brunei_people.html. The estimate for the total population of Brunei in 2011 is of 401,890 individuals (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunei>).
4. However, MABBIM (Majlis Bahasa Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia, "Language Council of Brunei-Malaysia-Indonesia"), a language planning regional organization established in 1972, includes Bruneian experts as well.
5. However, this presence is bound to decrease as time goes by as the Government's recent regulations have stipulated that only Jawi and Roman characters should appear on the main signs of shops in urban areas.
6. On the same lines as in Cenoz and Gorter (2006), "each establishment but not each sign was the unit of analysis, that is, it was considered 'one single sign' for the analysis. [...] This decision is based on the fact that all the signs in one establishment, even if they are in different languages, [...] belong to a larger whole instead of being clearly separate." (Cenoz & Gorter 2006: 71).
7. However, it should be noted that the subjects that people normally relate to ideas of modernity and progress are taught in English, particularly mathematics and computer skills, in addition to English itself.
8. The Hague Recommendations on the Educational Rights of National Minorities (1996) and the UNESCO Education Position Paper "Education in a Multilingual World" (2003) reflect the same idea.
9. It seems as if the results in the Malay "O" level exam are slowly getting worse — in 2006 there were more Bs than Cs. In state schools, for example, in 2006 2,356 students out of 5,207 obtained a B, 2,183 obtained a C and 35 failed; in 2008 2,105 students out of 5,314 obtained a B, 2,250 obtained a C and 54 failed (information kindly provided by the Examination Department of the Ministry of Education of Brunei Darussalam).
10. In 2008 in Brunei state schools 2.5% of the students obtained an A, 39.6% obtained a B, 42.3% obtained a C, 11.2% obtained a D, 3.1% obtained an E and 1% failed the exam (information kindly provided by the Examination Department of the Ministry of Education of Brunei Darussalam).
11. SPN: Sistem Pendidikan Negara (National Education System). 21 stands for 21st century.
12. This can even be seen as paradoxical, considering that the major recommendation in both the Aminuddin Baki & Paul Chang 1959 Report and the Government of Brunei 1972 Report was "to make Malay the main medium of instruction" (Martin 2008: 212).
13. However, from Year 7 (first year of secondary school), students will be able to choose Mandarin as an elective subject.

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Abstrak

Perancangan bahasa majoriti dan minoriti di Negara Brunei Darussalam

Artikel ini merupakan satu gambaran menyeluruh tentang perancangan bahasa yang dilaksanakan di Negara Brunei Darussalam bagi Bahasa Melayu, bahasa rasminya, Bahasa Inggeris, bahasa rasmi lain de factonya dan juga bagi sebelas bahasa minoriti yang lain yang dituturkan di Negara itu. Setelah satu pengenalan am serta situasi sociolinguistik Negara itu, artikel ini menggariskan kegiatan utama perancangan bahasa yang dilaksanakan di Brunei melalui perancangan korpus, status dan pemerolehan bahasa. Gambaran menyeluruh perancangan status itu merangkumi satu penerangan ringkas tentang landskap linguistik Brunei. Bahagian kedua artikel ini membincangkan kelebihan pendidikan yang menggunakan bahasa pertama pelajar, sesuatu yang tidak berlaku di Brunei, dan masa hadapan pendidikan di Negara itu setelah pengenalan reformasi pendidikan baru (SPN21) dimulakan. Artikel ini berakhir dengan beberapa komen am tentang kepentingan mengekalkan bahasa-bahasa minoriti dan beberapa cadangan untuk mencapai situasi itu.

Resumo

Majoritata kaj minoritata lingvoplanado en Brunei Darussalam

La artikolo donas superrigardon de lingvoplanado farata en Brunei Darussalam por la malaja, ĝia oficiala lingvo, la angla, ĝia laŭfakte alia oficiala lingvo, kaj la aliaj dekunu minoritataj lingvoj parolataj en la lando. Post ĝenerala enkonduko pri la lando kaj ĝia socilingva situacio, sekvas resumo de la ĉefaj lingvoplanaj agadoj farataj en Brunejo per korpusa, statusa kaj akira lingvoplanado. La superrigardo de statusa planado enhavas mallongan priskribon de la lingva pejzaĝo de Brunejo. La dua parto de la artikolo esploras la avantaĝojn de edukado pere de la unua lingvo de la studentoj (afero kiu ne okazas en Brunejo) kaj la estonteco de edukado en la lando post enkonduko de la nova eduka reformo (SPN21). Oni finas per kelkaj ĝeneralaj rimarkoj pri la graveco konservi minoritatajn lingvojn kaj kelkaj sugestoj pri manieroj tion atingi.

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