MODERNIZATION AND ITS IMPACT
TO MALAY BABY NAMES

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1. Introduction

Malay language has its own unique system of respects. Besides pronouns, Malay has an expression of respects and baby names. This system is used complimentarily and differs from one situation to another. Baby names in particular are one of the expressions of respects used among the family members. Not many languages in the world have baby names. There are advantages in using the baby names; such as we can gain extra information, namely the birth rank position in a family, gender and from which generation is the addressee. For instance if a speaker uses Pak Long to address a hearer, then we know that the speaker is referring to his uncle which is obviously a male and from an older generation. This explains why baby names are unique and special to the Malay.

Time has changed. It affects not only our daily life but the culture as well. We change from a traditional way of life to modern settings. The people are in the process of adopting the modern view(s) or method(s) especially tendency in matters of religious belief to subordinate tradition to harmony with modern thought. In today’s world, the heat of globalization with the concept of, ‘one size fits all’ makes the modernization more relevant. How does this have an impact to the Malay baby names? Baby names are used strictly in the Malay community. With the modernization, eventually the use of baby names has become more relax. People are no longer observed the baby names as it implies being traditional, backward and sounds very rural. People are more acquainted with the terms ‘uncle’ and ‘auntie’, which are in fact borrowed from English. These ideas will eradicate the unique Malay culture and is considered a great loss to the society.
In realizing this, a preliminary survey was carried out to measure the impact of modernization to the baby names. 1499 respondents were selected among the first year students that enrolled in the year 2000 at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The reasons of selections are as follows:

i) The respondents are representative. This means that we can collect the nationwide data on the baby names used in their geographical dialects.

ii) They are between 19-25 (majorities), which is considered as mature enough to answer the questionnaires.

iii) They are considered as modern citizen breed (as more than 50 % have their parents educate in the formal systems and working).

iv) Since this is a preliminary survey, the mass is easily reached to provide us with the overall picture of the baby names that are used by them.

This survey tries to prove that the following hypotheses are valid. The hypotheses are:

i) Modernization has an impact to the baby names

ii) There are gaps in using the baby names between inter generations and among siblings.

iii) The baby names have the tendency of fading away in future.

If the hypotheses are proven true, further steps should be taken into considerations. One of the best solutions is to document all the baby names that are used in the Malay family according to the geographical dialect. Once it has been documented, the future generation can make a reference to the lists of baby names that are used by the Malay older generation.
2. The State of the Art

Before going any further, let us see the Malay system expressions of respects. As noted earlier, Malay has three ways of addressing people. They are the pronouns, expression of respects (EOR) and the baby names. These three terms have different definitions. The differences of the terms are as follows:

**Pronouns**: words that are used to replace proper names, for example *I, you, they, etc*. In Malay there are three different types of pronouns namely, the first, second, and third person. These pronouns contain no specific information such as the gender, age and reference.

**Expression of respects (EOR)**: words that are used to replace proper names such as, *pakcik, encik, tuan, puan, kakak*, etc. In these instances, social factors such as status, age, and education will be a social determinant in using the words. These EOR are used in the society and can be divided into two - formal and informal EOR\(^1\).

**Baby names**: special names that are used to replace the proper names. It is restricted among the family and the extended family members only. Sometimes in a very close-knit relationship, the baby names can be used among the villagers. The special features for the baby names include the birth rank, generation, reference and gender.

For a clearer picture, let’s refer to table1 below:
The Malays System of Expression of Respects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronouns</th>
<th>Exp. Of respects</th>
<th>Baby Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ human</td>
<td>+ human</td>
<td>+ human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ non-human</td>
<td>- non-human</td>
<td>- non-human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- gender</td>
<td>+ gender</td>
<td>+ gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- reference</td>
<td>+ reference</td>
<td>+ reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- birth rank</td>
<td>- birth rank</td>
<td>+ birth rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- status</td>
<td>+ status</td>
<td>- status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

It clearly shows that each type of the expressions has its own features. The aim is to make bold definitions of these three types of expressions in the system. For instance, the pronouns can be used both for referring to human and non-human but not for the EOR and the baby names. Similarly, we can tell the birth–rank of an individual based on their baby names but we are not able to do so for the pronouns and the EOR. And finally, we can tell the status of the addressee by the EOR used by the addresser but not in the pronouns and the baby names. The status will tell us about the education background, the formal or informal situation that took place in the conversation.

Most researchers concentrate on the Malay pronouns and the expression of respects when discussing about the Malay system expression of respects. Collins (1982), Nik Safiah (1992), Amat Johari Moain (1989), Sumalee (1994), Nor Hashimah (1992, 1995), discussed the pronouns and the expression of respects with different approaches. Collins, Nik Safiah, Amat Johari and Sumalee analyses are based on